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**INVESTIGATING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION SENSITIVITY OF  
FIRST AND FOURTH GRADE ELT LEARNERS**

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**İNGİLİZ DİLİ EĞİTİMİ BİLİM DALI**

**BİRİNCİ VE DÖRDÜNCÜ SINIFTA İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLİĞİ OKUYAN**

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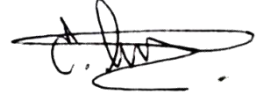
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Bu çalışmada tüm bilgilerin akademik ve etik kurallara uygun bir şekilde  
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## **SAVUNMA SONUCU**



## **Abstract**

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### **INVESTIGATING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION SENSITIVITY OF FIRST AND FOURTH GRADE ELT LEARNERS**

Over the last decades, the world has become a global village with the effect of developing technology and communication opportunities, and this intercultural communication has increased the importance of the concept of sensitivity as never before. However, when the literature is examined, the number of studies focusing intercultural communication sensitivity levels of ELT teachers, who are more exposed to cultural concepts, is limited in relation to variables such as watching TV series, overseas experience and playing online games. Therefore, the objective of the current study is to investigate pre-service ELT teachers' intercultural communication sensitivity depending on these variables. The universe of the study comprises 210 freshmen and seniors; 114 of whom are freshmen, and 96 of whom are seniors at ELT departments in Turkey. In this particular study, a mixed-method

design is provided with quantitative and qualitative data. To obtain quantitative data, an Intercultural Communicate Sensitivity Scale designed by Chen and Starosta is administered. This scale includes five sub-dimensions involving interaction engagement, respect of cultural differences, interaction confidence, interaction enjoyment, and interaction attentiveness. Obtained results from the data indicate that intercultural communication sensitivity levels of seniors is higher compared to freshmen. It has been revealed that there is a positive correlation between time spent for watching foreign TV series and ICS level of pre-service ELT teachers. These results underline that the level of ICS can be improved by taking trend educational paradigms into consideration to provide better culturally-loaded learning environments for ELT departments in Turkey.

*Key words:* culture, intercultural communication, communication sensitivity, English language teachers, intercultural competence

## Özet

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## **BİRİNCİ VE DÖRDÜNCÜ SINIFTA İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLİĞİ OKUYAN ÖĞRENCİLERİN KÜLTÜRLERARASI İLETİŞİM HASSASİYETİNİN ARAŞTIRILMASI**

Son yıllarda, gelişen teknolojinin ve iletişim fırsatlarının etkisiyle dünya küresel bir köy haline geldi ve bu kültürlerarası iletişim hassasiyeti kavramının önemini daha önceden hiç olmadığı kadar arttırdı. Ancak, literatür incelendiğinde, ELT bölümünde öğrenim gören öğrencilerin kültürlerarası iletişim hassasiyeti seviyesine, yabancı dizi izleme, yurtdışı tecrübesi ve bilgisayar oyunları oynama gibi değişkenleri dikkate alarak odaklanan çalışmaların sayısı sınırlıdır. Bu yüzden, bahsi geçen bu çalışmanın amacı yukarıdaki değişkenlere bağlı olarak İngilizce öğretmeni adayı olan öğrencileri araştırmaktır. Hedef kitle, Türkiye’de ELT bölümünde öğrenim gören 114’ü birinci sınıf, 96’sı dördüncü sınıfta

olmak üzere toplam 210 katılımcıdan oluşmaktadır. Bu çalışmada, karma yöntem metodu kapsamında nicel ve nitel verilerlerden yararlanılmıştır. Sayısal verileri elde etmek için Chen ve Stratosta tarafından oluşturulan Kültürlerarası İletişim Ölçeği uygulanmıştır. Bu ölçek, diğer kültürlerle saygı, etkileşim güveni, etkileşim dikkati, etkileşim hazzı ve etkileşim bağlılığını içeren 5 alt başlıktan oluşmaktadır. Elde edilen veri, dördüncü sınıfta okuyan İngilizce öğretmen adaylarının kültürlerarası iletişim hassasiyetinin birinci sınıflardan daha yüksek olduğunu göstermiştir. Buna ek olarak, yabancı dizi izlemeye ayrılan süre ile İngilizce öğretmenliği bölümünde öğrenim gören öğrencilerin kültürlerarası iletişim hassasiyeti seviyesi arasında pozitif bir korelasyon olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Elde edilen bu sonuçlar, Türkiye’deki ELT bölümleri için daha iyi kültürel yüklü öğrenme ortamları sağlamak amacıyla güncel eğitim paradigmaları dikkate alınarak kültürlerarası iletişim hassasiyeti seviyesinin iyileştirilebileceğinin altını çizmektedir.

*Anahtar kelimeler:* kültür, kültürlerarası iletişim, iletişim hassasiyeti, İngilizce öğretmenleri, kültürlerarası yeterlilik

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## **List of Abbreviations**

- ELT:** English Language Teaching
- ICS:** Intercultural Communication Sensitivity
- EFL:** English as a Foreign Language
- MEB:** Ministry of National Education
- P:** Participant
- RQ1:** Research Question 1
- RQ2:** Research Question 2
- RQ3:** Research Question 3
- RQ4:** Research Question 4
- RQ5:** Research Question 5
- RQ6:** Research Question 6
- SPSS:** Statistical Package for Social Sciences
- TTKB:** Board of Education

## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

This chapter of the study provides the background of the study, problem statement, and purpose of the study, research questions and limitations.

#### **1.1. Background of the Study**

Intercultural communication has attracted a lot of attention with the advances in transportation, communication and information technologies during last two decades in areas such as finance, trade, politics and tourism. In order to become successful in international trade, our workforce should have a sufficient level of intercultural communicative competence and intercultural sensitivity. Having intercultural awareness, intercultural sensitivity and related skills such as working together and living together has never been felt so much globally. As a result many studies have been carried out in the literature starting from 1990s (Canale and Swain, 1980; Chen and Starosra, 1997; Fantini, 2005; Hanley, 1999; Kim, 2005; Rengi and Polat, 2014; Taylor, 2012). People are always on the go to work, live and travel. In particular, people who are in search of professional and financial means have made efforts to gain professional advantages in economically advanced countries or to attract investors from these countries to their own countries. With the increase in communication facilities, this effort has increased even more, and the world has rapidly become globalized.

However, despite making initiatives related to foreign language teaching in recent years, it can be said that Turkey remains in the background along with foreign language and culture education (Bal, 2020; Celik and Erbay, 2013; Karatepe and Yılmaz 2018; Onalan, 2005). Teachers play an essential role in foreign language teaching as in most points, but whether teachers have acquired the concepts of intercultural communication or intercultural communication sensitivity together with language is a major challenge in the Turkish EFL

context. It is not possible for a teacher to teach what s/he does not know sufficiently . From this point of view, first of all, it is vital to raise the awareness of student teachers about the concept of intercultural communication in order for enabling Turkish youth to be a competent player in the progressively globalizing world and to open new horizons for the education, finance and services sectors (see also Karatepe 2019)..

Higher Education Council (YÖK) is the sole authority that regulates teacher training programs at both graduate and undergraduate levels in Turkey. The main focus of the study is pre-service ELT teachers. When we look at the latest English language teacher training programs which were released in 2018, we see that teaching cultural issues and pragmatics are limited to a few elective courses (YÖK, 2018). However, it is known that some universities tend to not open these courses because they are elective. One reason for this maybe lack of qualified lecturers to teach about such issues. Because teaching them requires lecturers to have special expertise. As a result, some students are not able to directly receive tuition on cultural issues. However, the course programme offers other courses on literature where student teachers learn the concepts related to culture indirectly. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that Turkish pre-service ELT teaching programmes do not seem to aim to raise intercultural communication competence and intercultural sensitivity of student teachers directly. It appears that this is expected to happen as a natural outcome of the entire course programme. The present study aims to determine what extend the 4- year period has enabled them to develop intercultural communication sensitivity of Turkish ELT student teachers.

The main objective is to determine the extent to which there are differences between the 1st year and 4<sup>th</sup> year pre-service ELT students' intercultural sensitivity levels. Although many studies have been published on the intercultural sensitivity of ELT student teacher (Bal, 2020; Koroglu, 2009; Yetis and Kurt, 2016), none of them attempted to determine the impact of the existing course programme on ELT student teachers' intercultural sensitivity level.

However, some studies also report that lifestyle, hobbies and world view also play an essential role in developing individuals' intercultural communicative competence (Jacobone & Moro 2015; Muhamad and Yang, 2019; Sayoof, 2018; Tarchi et. al., 2019). Thus, the present study endeavours to look into the benefits of hobbies such as playing online computer games, watching films in English and travelling abroad. Some studies indicate that these can contribute to the intercultural communicative competence of learners. However, these issues have not been dealt with in such detail within Turkish ELT teacher training programmes.

In short, intercultural communication competence, which is defined as the ability to communicate effectively, has a deep relationship with intercultural sensitivity (Fantini, 2006). Intercultural communication competence develops in time. It is a gradual and lengthy process and Chen and Starosta (1996) described its stages. One of the important one of these stages is intercultural sensitivity. This concepts is vital for some of the branches especially for English teachers. It is important to enhance the intercultural communication sensitivity of the pre-service ELT teachers. In this respect, focusing on the concept of intercultural sensitivity have of great importance. As mentioned, the concept of intercultural communication competence does not consist of only intercultural sensitivity stage. As Byram (1993) mentioned, it includes stages such as knowledge, attitudes and skills of interpreting. However, when focusing on cultural concepts, special attention should be paid to the intercultural sensitivity stage (Chen and Starosta, 2000).

It has been emphasized that the concept of intercultural communication sensitivity has vital importance for the success of intercultural communication effectively (Chen and Starosta, 1996; Chen and Starosta; 2000). According to Chan and Starosta (1997), intercultural sensitivity is an "individual's ability to develop emotion towards understanding and appreciating cultural differences that promote appropriate and effective behaviour in intercultural communication" (p. 5). As in all other countries and cultures, Turkey also works

with relevant concepts such as intercultural communication and increased awareness of the importance given to this concept. Bekiroglu and Balci (2014) presented that Turkey has taken steps to express oneself point in the sure and stressed that these steps are crowned by increasing the awareness of Turkish citizens' intercultural communication. For this reason, in this particular study, intercultural communication sensitivity was investigated in the Turkish context.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

As Bennett (1998) stated, recent developments have increased the importance of intercultural communication. Business at this point is the area most in need of communication and intercultural sensitivity. At this point in Turkey and all over the world, the number of multinational companies is increasing. This information states that e workers now should have the ability to communicate effectively with people from different cultures. The declaration of 2008 as the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue has further increased this importance (European Council, 2008).

Güven (2005) emphasizes the importance of the concepts of intercultural communication and sensitivity in the field of education and states that multicultural countries such as the USA, Australia and Canada attach great importance to the idea of intercultural sensitivity and that since the preschool period, education that emphasizes anti-racism and discrimination and tolerance has been included in the curriculum. The Council of Europe (2008) is another institution that attaches importance to intercultural sensitivity. The Council of Europe offers some suggestions to counties that are a member of EU and candidate members like Turkey regarding humans' rights, enhancing global dialogue and being open-minded to other cultures. For this reason, Turkey, as a country which tries to get European citizenship, has to consider intercultural concepts. Exemplifying Turkey's geophysical and spiritual characteristics is essential for detecting the problem statement of this particular



study. Turkey has an important strategic position. The vast majority of its territory is in Asia, but a significant part is in the European continent. Turkey has numerous tourist areas. Turkey became a NATO member in 1952, and in that year, Turkey started to make arrangements to join the European Union. Turkey's geopolitical and political position is increasing the chances of its encounter with different cultures (Kırkgöz, 2005). According to Çoşkun (2006), Turkish citizens should have the ability to communicate effectively with people from different cultures due to the multiculturalism of Anatolia, Ottoman heritage in other countries, foreign expansions and workforce. From this point on, strengthening cultural communication between visitors from overseas countries and Turkish citizens is vital. As stated by the Council of Europe (2008), the curriculum's cultural concepts and the processing of these skills from an early age are essential. In light of this information, teachers have a great duty and responsibility in terms of intercultural communication sensitivity, and this situation constitutes the problem statement of this particular study.

### **1.3. Purpose of the Study**

This particular study attempted to identify intercultural communication sensitivity levels of freshman and senior-level pre-service ELT teachers. It also investigates the demographic structures of the participants. In this respect, gender differences were analyzed. On the other hand, one of the fundamental aims of this particular study is to determine the relationship between intercultural sensitivity levels and watching foreign TV series. Finally, the relationship between gaming and intercultural communication sensitivity were aimed. In this respect, investigating such variables ‘interacting with other gamers’ and ‘frequencies of interaction with other gamers’ with intercultural communication sensitivity was aimed.

### **1.4. Research Questions**

This current study wants to find answers to the research questions that follow:

1. How do first-year students and senior-level pre-service ELT teachers view the intercultural communication sensitivity?
2. Is there any significant difference between these two groups of participants in Intercultural Communication Sensitivity?
3. Does gender show significant difference among them?
4. Are there any correlational relationship between watching foreign TV series and ICS?
5. How does going abroad affect participants' ideas about intercultural sensitivity?
6. Do playing computer games and having contact through games affect intercultural communication sensitivity?

### **1.5. Significance of the Study**

Thanks to its position, Turkey is hosting different cultural colours, but it is a closed society to foreign countries in general. Its geographical conditions, political characteristics and belief style make Turkish citizens more cautious towards foreigners. Various tools are needed to break this prejudice. The focus is on pre-service English teachers, mostly because they are more exposed to cultural norms. Besides, they are the most effective tools to transfer this knowledge to students. Even though this issue is considered necessary only in terms of the global economy, trade and tourism, the humanistic dimension is also essential. Due to its geographical location, Turkey has received many immigrants and refugees from a close war zone in recent years. Therefore, there are immigrant and refugee student in nearly every school in Turkey. It is known that there are some disagreements between Turkish society and foreigners, even if there are not deep conflicts. Building cultural bridges are essential for healthy dialogue, and teachers play a vital role in building these bridges.

As Bennett (1998) and Chen and Starosta (1998) state, intercultural communication sensitivity has become life-important concepts for our increasingly interactive and globalizing world. Thanks to its geopolitical position and cultural values, Turkey is a country that has

often met people from different cultures. Therefore, it is necessary to explain concepts such as respect for cultural differences, understanding different cultures and being open. Teachers have a great responsibility in the acquisition of these values acquired from an early age. Numerous studies about intercultural communication sensitivity concept were conducted in Turkey (e.g., Akin, 2016; Güncü & Parker, 2015; Bekiroglu & Balci, 2014, Cubukcu, 2013; Penbek, Yurdakul & Cerita, 2009; Color & Parker, 2014).

However, when the literature is overviewed, no study analyses the intercultural communication sensitivity levels of first-year students and senior-level pre-service ELT teachers by including variables such as overseas experience, gender difference, watching TV series, playing games, and interacting with gamers.

#### **1.6. Limitations of the Study**

This particular study was administered with 210 first-year students and seniors pre-service ELT teachers in different universities in Turkey. However, the study's findings are not generalizable, which is one of the study's limitations. The reasons for this are two-fold: firstly, due to extraneous circumstances resulting from Covid-19, we could not seek assistance from a variety of universities. Therefore, the participants of the study do not fully represent the entire Turkish pre-service-ELT student teachers. Secondly, the number of participants could have been higher. The data was collected through social media platforms because of Covid-19 restrictions. For future studies, it is advisable to have a more balanced participant number in terms of university variety and gender. Furthermore, Increasing the university and participants numbers will increase the study's validity. These points could be stated as the limitations of this particular study.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

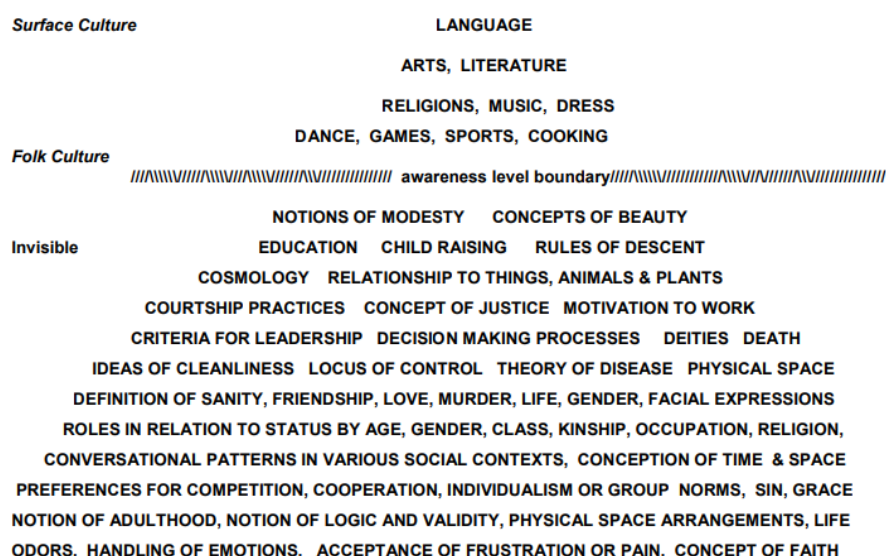
#### **2.1. Culture**

According to Kramsch and Hua (2016), English learning and teaching has gone through various processes. English learners and people trying to jump the career ladder to teach English have taken different approaches over time. The political and economic limitations imposed by the world of the 1970s deeply affected the field of language learning and teaching, as well as the whole area of life. During these cold war times, language was used only for functional purposes. However, in the 1990s, the sharp political borders of the world began to disappear. Thus, the language is no longer viewed only from a functional perspective, but also from a communicative and cultural perspective. In other words, culture has begun to become one of the basic building blocks of language. In addition, Baker (2012) states that the world has become globalized more rapidly than ever before. Stating that developing communication technologies facilitates human relations, Baker states that cultural awareness has increased more than ever. He also claims that language and culture are inextricably linked and that a focus on culture is vital for us to understand the structure and function of language. These researches and these ideas put forward reveal the importance of culture. In addition, the important relationship of culture and language is an undeniable reality as mentioned above. Based on these expressions, it is important to understand what culture is and how it is defined for the later stages of the research.

Throughout history, culture has been an important concept for societies and various definitions have been made. According to the Oxford Dictionary, culture is beliefs, arts, customs and a way of social order of a special group or country (Simpson, Weiner and Oxford University Press, 1989). Culture shows itself on the ordinary behaviours and habits of that people. Their morality, their religious beliefs and their attitudes towards each other are

embroideries of culture. Tylor (1920) states that the concept of culture is a complex and highly interconnected phenomenon and includes common perceptions of society such as knowledge, art, tradition, abilities, habits. Özkalp (1993) assumes that culture is a social heritage and this heritage influences the kind of person we are by learning from others. He argues that the society in which a person lives deeply affects his personal characteristics. In other words, in this definition, the phenomenon of environment comes to the fore. Güvenç (2002) has brought a different dimension to cultural definitions. Güvenç has looked at culture more anthropologically and stated that culture is one of the biggest phenomena that distinguishes humans from animals, and revealed that it comes into being with life, experience and knowledge. It is seen that natural effects are more pronounced in this definition.

Hanley (1999) gave the iceberg example while describing the culture and talking about its features. According to this definition, culture is not just what is seen, but more of what does not look like an iceberg. It emphasizes that culture is often overlooked in our lives and business life. In addition, Hanley states that culture has an important relationship with communication and argues that necessary research should be done without ignoring it. Figure 1 has some cultural features and cultural problems, and as you can see the parts that do not appear like an iceberg are much more than the visible parts.



*Figure 1. Iceberg Model*

As can be clearly seen in the figure, culture brings many concepts with it. Notions of modesty, courtship practices, gender, love, acceptance of frustration or pain, kinship and many other concepts constitute the invisible part of the iceberg at the point of culture. Culture has been on the tables of many researchers as given some definitions above, and common habits and beliefs have been similar expressions of most definitions.

One might ask, what is the relevance of culture to this research? Bada (2000) claims that culture and language reflect each other and adds that they cannot be separated from each other. He points that the language can be taught separately from the cultural values and social characteristics of the target language, but under this condition, many facts will be incomplete. This situation emphasizes that it will leave the person incomplete in learning the features of the society from which they learn the language. In addition, Bada clearly indicates that learning the culture of the target language does not mean that the person will be attached to the target culture without question, in other words, he will be assimilated. He states that this situation will make the person more universal, more sophisticated and freer from narrow patterns.

## **2.2. Multiculturalism and Interculturality**

As mentioned above, the increase of innovations and improvement of technological possibilities have brought a rapid change in people's living conditions and social status. Definitions of culture were given above and its importance was mentioned. However, the changes are not limited to the realization of the culture. Concepts such as multiculturalism and interculturality have also entered life and have greatly influenced norms such as language and education. Focusing on these definitions will help us to better understand educational and linguistic concepts.

According to Taylor (1992), multiculturalism means the politics of identity, recognition and awareness, and it aims to give back their rights to the groups who are disadvantaged in terms of their cultures and lifestyles. Yoon, Song & Bae (2008) emphasize that there are various cultures and cultural groups in the society and claim that these groups should be accepted and settled. They argue that the claims and demands of people such as language, race, sect, religion and nationality should be evaluated and thus a more peaceful common mind can be developed. Fowers and Richardson (1996) point that multiculturalism has attracted great attention in recent years and has begun to be studied in diverse sciences, especially psychology and education. The American Psychological Association (APA, 2002) put forward that multiculturalism has a very important place in the society and this importance is reinforced day by day. On the other hand, APA suggests various definitions and expressions for multiculturalism. In this context, multiculturalism is an important norm that accepts diversity as a value. It is based on respect for all groups and subgroups and argues that equal treatment should be essential.

According to Gül and Kolb (2009), multiculturalism is a kind of awareness. This awareness includes differences such as language, religion, gender and social class. If people accept that these differences exist and do not lose their cultural values while doing so, the concept of multiculturalism will come into being. In other words, people gain competence over two cultures, themselves and someone else's thanks to multiculturalism. Özben (1991) argues

that different wishes in multicultural life should be together and under equal conditions. Because communities have differences in their traditional, customary, political and legal practices, behaviours and thoughts. It is aimed to create a common culture with multicultural life and this is only possible by approaching the differences in society with understanding and ensuring the equality of the differences. In other words, differences should reach equality not only in a respectable sense but also in a legal sense. Finally, according to Bauman (2006), demonstrates that multiculturalism is a puzzle and is waiting to be solved. There are 3 parties in multiculturalism; those who seek their identity for traces of their culture, those who believe in a monopolized national culture, and those who see their religion as their own culture. These 3 parties are asking each other how to provide justice. Multiculturalism comes into play here. Multiculturalism presents a very new, attributed and pluralistic culture of old cultures.

Another expression related to the culture norm after multiculturalism is interculturality. Interculturality is a series of processes, in which relationships between different cultures are built. The ultimate aim here is to enable subgroups and individuals from different cultures to establish connections with each other in a respectful manner, without geopolitical and social differences (Leclercq, 2003).

Igus (2015) claims that the concept of interculturality implies that cultures that interact with each other reveal new hybrid cultures and indicate new cultural encounters. However, there is no mention of hegemony here, that is, the dominant culture's influence on the minority culture contradicts the concept of interculturalism. On the contrary, a diversity of colours, cultural diversity and tolerance are mentioned here. Mutual respect, meeting and communication between cultures is a more accurate explanation than a culture destroying another culture completely or a culture that is a minority disappearing in a dominant culture. Igus, from this point of view, reveals that the concept of interculturalism must be an inevitable phenomenon and that there is a relationship between people from different and various cultures.



She points out that this necessity brings with it the norm of interculturality. She also states that talking about intercultural relations can sometimes lead to complexities and definition ambiguities. However, whichever definitions are used when talking about this concept, interculturalism emphasizes that it necessarily involves interaction.

It is obvious that the concepts of multiculturalism and interculturalism, whose definitions and explanations are given, emphasize different meanings, although they have some similarities. There are some basic principles emphasized by the concept of multiculturalism; The first and foremost principle is to share the same space and time, that is to have the same geopolitical features. On the other hand, the second basic principle is that individuals adopt a pluralist approach without losing their own culture while sharing the same field. However, in another concept, interculturality, people can meet and interact with their colleagues from different cultures. Interculturality points out exactly this interaction. The main difference in multiculturalism is that many cultures live at the same time in the same society, as in the USA, Canada, and various empires. In this environment, the legal struggles given during life and the ambitions to reach the principles of equality are among the details of the concept of multiculturalism. However, as mentioned above, there is a communication between cultures. Unlike multiculturalism, people do not live at the same time with people from many different cultures, but the attitudes and respect frames they display when they come across express interculturality (Taylor, 2012).

Parekh (2002) reveals that societies have come to an interlinked form due to the rapid globalization of the world and those societies can no longer be separated and isolated from each other. The most important issue here is that societies should live with each other and with this global diversity. The suppression and hegemony of the cultural diversity and differences existing in the world means the destruction and prevention of technology, innovations, ideas,

literature, art and beliefs. The spread of balance, harmony and tolerance in society is possible with a deep understanding of these concepts.

### **2.3. Intercultural Communication**

The phenomenon of intercultural communication have been talked about frequently, but this concept started to gain importance academically after the Second World War, namely in the 1950s and 1960s. After the WWII, the United States of America began to position as a superpower and tried to prove its age worldwide by taking steps to establish the United Nations. In the same period, the Cold War reigned and the countries that gained new independence in Asia and Europe experienced very rapid change and development. Meanwhile, the United Nations declared the 1960s as the "Decade of Development", and McLuhan (1962) put forward the expression which accepted by all segments. McLuhan has stated that the world has become a *global village* and the borders are only on paper. The USA tried to spread the concepts such as idealism, human rights and optimism with The Peace Corps founded by John F. Kennedy in 1961. Some researchers who were former members of The Peace Corps have begun to acquire new interests. They focused on how cultures that do not belong to Western societies realize their communication practices. Thanks to these intercultural communication researches, the Speech Communication Association (now the National Communication Association, or NCA) was founded in the early 1970s. This association became a division in the 1980s and turned into the Intercultural Communication Division. Thus, intercultural communication has become a livelier and more effective field of study (Kim, 2005).

The transfer of symbols, meanings and norms in the historical process is a different definition of culture. Based on this definition, emphasizing the symbols and the meanings attributed to the symbols will remind us of communication and therefore intercultural communication. Cultural communication provides the transfer of meanings. To put it more briefly, culture is communication and communication is culture (Hall, 1980). These statements

emphasize the importance of intercultural communication in this literature review. Kartari (2006) suggests that intercultural interaction is an interdisciplinary approach that enables people from different cultures to communicate and convey meanings, to understand foreigners more clearly and to explain cultural differences by taking into account.

According to Kim (2005), the work of people from different cultural and cultural fields to transfer their experiences to each other is called intercultural communication. Advocating that intercultural communication is a discipline, Kim focused on racial communication. In addition, the intercultural communication discipline not only conducts research on these areas of interest, but also tries to ensure that people meet in intercultural dialogue. Selçuk (2005) states that as long as people with different cultures do not know their communication culture, they will interpret symbols and expressions according to their own culture. Communication conflicts are common in intercultural communication. Matsumoto, Yoo & LeRoux (2007) emphasized that there may be ambiguity and complexity of meaning in intercultural communication. Culture has a great influence on communication, and this effect prevents the same level of understanding of the message in two different cultures. Conflicts and misunderstandings necessarily occur in intercultural communication. When interacting with people from different cultures, their behaviour may not meet our expectations or may go against our values. Together with the ambiguity and complexity of meaning, this situation appears as a conflict. In order to prevent or minimize these conflicts, intercultural communication discipline should be well predicted. Based on these statements, the Council of Europe has defined intercultural communication as the exchange of views of persons belonging to various cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious circles and persons with different heritage, and added that these definitions are within the framework of respect and tolerance. Intercultural communication, democracy and the rule of law, human and children's rights also serve universal concepts. To elaborate this, societies with intercultural communication and dialogue will avoid attitudes that

alienate, and marginalize (White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue 2008: 17). However, Casse (1981) states that not having the same culture means not having the same beliefs, feelings, behaviours and thoughts, and states that intercultural communication is a very complex process. Nevertheless, even if problems are encountered, intercultural communication becomes an integral part of our lives. The point that the world has reached at the moment necessitates communication and dialogue. Breakthrough innovations in communication and transportation technologies are being introduced, and this confirms the *global village* prophecy. The changes that took place in the last 50 years of the world do not allow any country to exist alone by isolating itself. Communication networks reach everywhere, the world population is increasing rapidly, and student exchange programs such as Erasmus are becoming widespread, political relations, tourism booms, and the importance of intercultural communication is increasing day by day (Kartari, 2001). Finally, this situation can be summarized as follows; How to establish communication with different communities was only a question of high-ranking people until 20 years ago, this question is now asked by every ordinary person (Bennett, 1998).

## **2.4. Language Competences**

Intercultural competence and sensitivity to intercultural communication constitute the basic principle of this study, but in order to understand what these concepts are and their depth, it is necessary to focus on the notion of competence. Chomsky's book '*Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*', published in 1965, was the first place where the notion of competence was firstly introduced and became a fundamental phenomenon in linguistics. Competence has attracted great attention and developed by experts after this process. Claiming that language is a perceptual process, Chomsky stated that *performance* is the use of linguistic codes of language, and *competence* is a set of stored rules and information. In other words, he broke new ground by introducing the concepts of performance and competence. There are a couple of language related competences; linguistic competence, pragmatic competence, sociolinguistic

competence, communicative competence and intercultural communication competence (Newby, 2011). It would be necessary to briefly mention these competencies for the essence of the study.

To begin with, linguistic competence can be defined as having knowledge of the language itself, its features and structure. Accurate is the knowledge and competencies acquired to have language use features. This competence can be achieved by perceiving, noticing and understanding the structures of the target language.

There are 2 important concepts for linguistic competence; recognize and produce (Hymes, 1976). In addition, Zerey (2019) emphasized that when viewed from the Chomskian perspective, researchers focus only on the structure of the language in linguistic competence and exclude contextual and pragmatic concerns. For this reason, it is important to take a short look at the pragmatic competence. Chomsky defines pragmatic competence as the attitude of mastering the semantic framework of the language or using the language correctly (Bach, 2005). Cultural and social conditions are also included in the pragmatic competence norm. People with pragmatic competence produce chunks in accordance with their own conditions. If people have pragmatic combinations and produce language at an acceptable level, they have this competence. In other words, the pragmatic competence is the use of the appropriate context of the language, the recognition of illocutions and the knowledge of sequential aspects of speech acts (Barron, 2003). As mentioned, social contexts and cultures have a great influence on pragmatic competence. Therefore, a detailed sociolinguistic competence definition has been proposed. It is not possible to explain these competences without the sociolinguistic competence. Sociolinguistic competence is the adaptation of people's speech according to their social culture and social identity and their specific circumstances (Tarone & Swain, 1995). Hymes (1972) emphasizes that it is not enough to have proficiency only grammatically, that is,

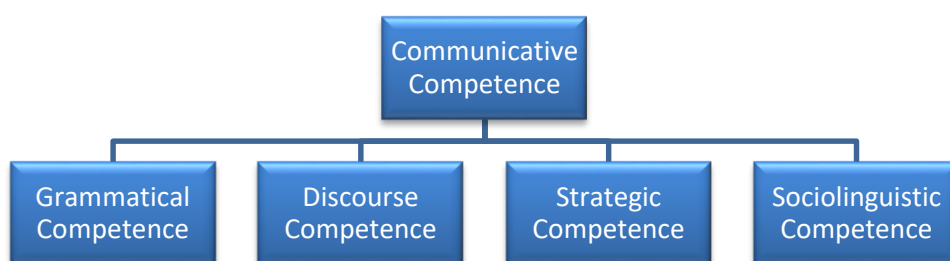
linguistically, and emphasizes that social and cultural situations should be evaluated. In this respect, culture and sociological norms have a great influence on language.

## **2.5. Communicative Competence**

Although Chomsky's concept of competence was of great importance for applied linguistics, it was criticized or developed by some researchers (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Canale & Swain, 1980; Hymes, 1972; Savignon, 1972; Van Ek, 1976; Widdowson, 1983). Chomsky's handling of only linguistic competence in the use of language in his theories has been a subject of great criticism. First, Hymes (1972) expanded on this subject, put forward his communicative competence norm and gave a new perspective to the concept of competence. In his definition, Hymes focused not only on grammatical terms but also sociolinguistically in the use of language. He tried to explain exactly what people must do to communicate. According to Hymes, communicative competence briefly knows what to say and when. However, Savignon (1972) focused more on skills in terms of competence. During the communicative exchange, a dynamic process is experienced and during this process, language proficiency should adjust itself to informational input, interlocutors. The emphasis here is that interaction and competence is a dynamic process.

Instead of describing communicative competence one by one, modelling has been formed over time. Talking about these models helps us understand the concept of communicative competence. Canale & Swain (1980) and Canale (1987) made these concepts, which started with Chomsky and continued with Hymes, more systematic and schematic in the following years. They emphasized that structure of skills and knowledge are necessary for communication and stated that they make a combination. Canale and Swain (1980) have been influenced by previous research and the model they have put forward is much more detailed than previous studies (Taş & Khan, 2020). In the first models they made, Canale & Swain made 3 sub-competencies. These are grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence and

strategic competence, respectively. However, Canale (1983) later upgraded this model by adding the fourth sub-competence; the discourse competence. Discourse competence, which was first under the title of sociolinguistic competence sub-competence, was later separated by Canale in 1983. Taş & Khan (2020) states that this model is widely accepted due to its detailed applications and suggestions in terms of syllabus design, teacher education, and materials. With this model, it is aimed that people who use language reach communicative competence through meaningful communication.



*Figure 2. Canale & Swain's Communicative Competence Model*

The competence that includes areas such as lexical knowledge, syntax, grammatical understanding, and morphology rules is a *grammatical competence*, and this competence is almost equivalent to the linguistic competence introduced by Chomsky (Coperias Aguilar, 2002). The competence that focuses on the socio-cultural rules that determine the acceptability, the meaning integrity and internal consistency of the words is a *sociolinguistic competence*. The sub-competence area that deals with the concepts of coherence and cohesion and examines their situation in large texts is *discourse competence*. As mentioned before, some breaks or problems may occur during communication. People use some verbal or signic strategies in order to prevent these breaks or miscommunication. The sub-competency area that examines these

strategies, which can be grouped under two headings as grammatical and socio-grammatical strategies, is the *strategic competence* (Canale & Swain, 1980).

Bachman & Palmer (1996) included communicative competence in the communicative ability model they developed. Referring to language ability first, Bachman & Palmer defined this concept as the unification of language knowledge and metacognitive strategies. This combination gives language users the ability to interpret discourse, relay information, and respond to written and non-text tests or talks. Expressing language knowledge as a field for interpreting discourse, Bachman & Palmer states that this domain is revealed by metacognitive strategies. According to them, language knowledge consists of two main groups; organizational knowledge and pragmatic knowledge. Organizational knowledge is the information used to organize formal structures, in other words to control them. This knowledge exists to produce grammatically and textually acceptable outputs. The organizational knowledge, which consists of two areas as grammatical knowledge and textual knowledge, can be detailed as follows; Knowledge of vocabulary, knowledge of syntax, knowledge of phonology / graphology constitutes grammatical knowledge, while knowledge of cohesion and knowledge of rhetorical or conversational organization constitute textual knowledge. Pragmatic knowledge is the knowledge used to interpret discourse. Intentions, utterances and sentences are the areas of interest of this knowledge. Pragmatic knowledge consists of two areas as functional knowledge and sociolinguistic knowledge. Functional knowledge (illocutionary knowledge) explains the implications of sentences, utterances and texts. The heuristic, manipulative, ideational and imaginative functions of the language are explained with this knowledge. Knowledge of dialect / varieties, register, natural or idiomatic expressions, cultural references and figures of speech are related to sociolinguistic knowledge. Finally, metacognitive components or strategies, more terminologically speaking, strategic competence is the competence that enables us to do cognitive management in language use and consists of areas such as goal setting, assessment



and planning. Figure 3 clearly shapes the language ability model introduced by Bachman & Palmer.

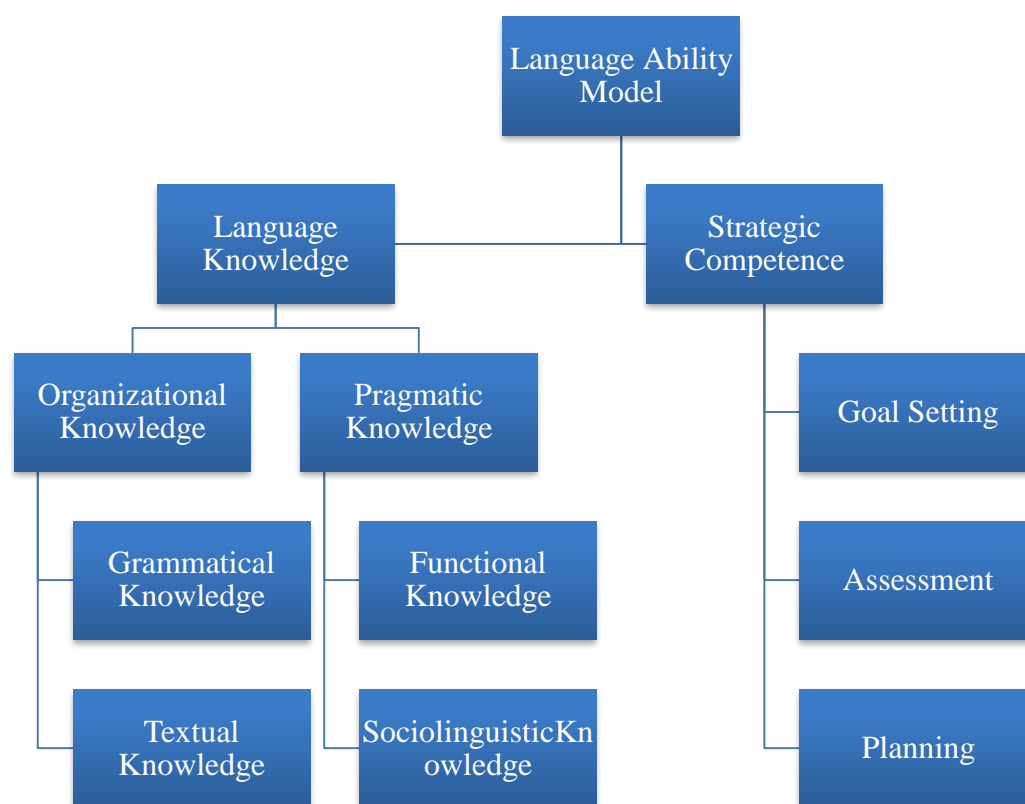


Figure 3. Bachman and Palmer's Language Ability Model

## 2.6. Intercultural Communication Competence

The rapid change of our age has led us to many innovations. The advantages of technology have improved our communication possibilities and enabled us to interact more with different cultures. Concepts such as interculturality and multiculturalism, whose details are given above, have started to find more place in our lives and educational environments. The main focus of this study is *intercultural communication sensitivity*, which has a deep connection with culture. However, we need to analyze the intercultural communication competence in order to better understand this concept. Because intercultural communication competence is a umbrella norm and includes intercultural communication sensitivity (Chen & Starosta, 1996). Looking at its historical background, the concept of intercultural communication competence first gained attention with the initiatives of the Peace Corps in the 1950s and 1960s. Cultural

problems experienced in these years, when people or companies started to interact with each other more, led to the consideration of these concepts. In the 1970s and 1980s, the content of this concept was further expanded, including factors such as international trade, citizens living abroad, education abroad, and student exchange. Researchers generally conducted studies under the name of intercultural communication competence by keeping reports and making observations. The main objectives of these researchers were to find the reasons for the failure of the seashore and to increase the success, to determine what qualifications should be sought by selecting personnel, and to prepare appropriate trainings for the guests, and these objectives remained limited. Today, however, the reasons researchers focus on intercultural communication competence have changed and expanded. This concept, which is needed in many areas from international schools to residence permits, has gained an important place in our lives (Spitzberg and Changnon, 2009).

When the literature is analyzed, it is seen that the term intercultural communication competence is used in different ways, and it appears most often as intercultural competence. Fantini (2006) stated this clearly in his literature review and listed some terms used instead of intercultural communication competence. Some of these terms are as follows; cross-cultural awareness, international communication, cross-cultural adaptation, global competence, ethnorelativity, biculturalism, international competence, cultural sensitivity, intercultural sensitivity. As can be seen, all these nomenclatures focus on the concept of globalism and internationality. Chen & Starosta (1996) however criticizes this diversity; they state that they have some differences even if they are close to each other, but the term intercultural communication competence covers all of them. When the literature is examined in detail, it is seen that the term intercultural communication competence and the term intercultural competence can be used interchangeably.

Numerous definitions and explanations have been given to the concept of intercultural communication competence, or its other common name, intercultural competence. Kartari (2006) defined the concept of intercultural communication competence as being able to communicate effectively. This effective communication is realized by people who grew up in different physical and symbolic environments. In addition, Kartari states that it has similar features with its communication competence. Kartari says it is the most effective competence to avoid conflicts and misunderstandings, and adds that thanks to this competence, people can predict the behaviour of people who are not of their own culture and are not odd. This prediction is very important during communication because possible predictions about the culture of the other party are very comforting. Chen & Starosta (1997) prioritized tolerance and positive attitudes in their recognition. If people can communicate effectively and appropriately by using some of their skills in the different environment they are in, they are capable of intercultural communication competence. Taylor (1994) briefly defines the concept of intercultural communication competence as gaining a new perspective against the counterculture. Lustig & Koester (1999) included a broader definition and explanation in their *Intercultural Competence: Interpersonal Communications Across Cultures* books. They define intercultural communication competence as a process, especially as a personal internal process. According to other definitions, this definition is not result-oriented but process-oriented. A person who has intercultural communication competence gains some cognitive, affective and behavioural features. Some of these features are the ability to deal with alternative views, empathy, and flexibility in behaviour, and interpersonal communication. In other words, intercultural communication competence is a growth process and people can reveal their implicit knowledge in this way. People do not only have these features, they can also have foreign language competence and technical knowledge thanks to this competence. In addition, intercultural

communication competence is contextual, meaning that there are bonds between individuals and cultures as well as links within individuals.

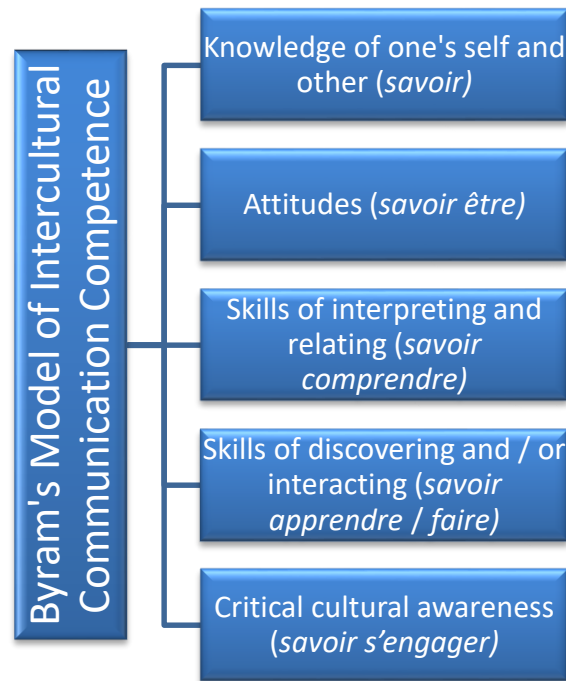
Tamrakar (2007) mentioned three main components in his definition of intercultural communication competence; knowledge (cognitive factors), motivation (attitude) and skills (competence in social relations). He states that each component is tightly interconnected and intercultural communication cannot be achieved without any of them. When the definitions mentioned above are examined in general terms, it is seen that adapting to different cultures or being successful in different cultural contexts is the basis. In addition, it has been clearly emphasized that this competence is not a result, but a multi-element process, in other words, it is a process of self-awareness.

As with language competence, various models of intercultural communication competence have been proposed by researchers (Bennett, 1993; Byram, 2000; Chen & Starosta, 1996; Dearforff, 2006; Fantini, 2006). Intercultural communication competence has been developed and modelled by researchers in the historical process. Handling these models in their chronological order provides us with more clear information about the details of the development process. Firstly, Bennett (1993) developed a model under the name of the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) and in this model; he grouped the evolution of interaction into three ethnocentric stages and three ethno-relative stages. However, detailing of DMIS is discussed in the following sections. Since it is closely related to intercultural sensitivity, which is the focus of this particular study, it will be examined under the subtitle Intercultural Sensitivity.

Byram (1993) emphasizes that intercultural communication should be handled with social context in mind, and only in this way the non-verbal dimensions that constitute an important part of communication and which are greatly influenced by traditions are taken into account. For this reason, Byram has developed a model which he stated that especially foreign

language education teachers, instructors and instructors can benefit from it. In this model, five different factors are mentioned in order to achieve an effective communication and these factors can be seen as follows; *savoir* (knowledge of one's self and other), *savoir être* (attitudes), *savoir comprendre* (skills of interpreting and relating), *savoir apprendre / faire* (skills of discovering and / or interacting), and *savoir s'engager* (critical cultural awareness).

In this model, attitudes are defined as curiosity, readiness and openness, and they are developed to avoid attitudes, mistrust and doubts towards other cultures. Byram states that generally negative attitudes such as prejudice and stereotype should be prevented and more positive attitudes such as curiosity and openness should be included. People should acquire different thoughts and attitudes with different perspectives according to this factor. The second factor, knowledge, is defined as knowing how social groups and identities function in different cultures and in one's own culture. People acquire this knowledge through primary socialization (in the family) and secondary socialization (in formal education). Byram talked about various skills in the other stages of the model he created. Firstly, he introduced skills of interpreting and relating, and according to these skills, people can examine, interpret and associate events in different cultures from their own. In this way, people can compare the facts with their own culture more easily and reach more tolerant results. In the skill of discovering and interacting, people can discover norms in different cultures by communicating and interacting. Finally, people develop critical cultural awareness. As can be understood from its name, this factor indicates that people can get closer to different cultures from different perspectives and evaluate them critically.



*Figure 4. Byram's Model of Intercultural Communication Competence*

Fantini (2000) states that there are three basic themes in the concept of intercultural communication competence: the ability to develop and maintain relationships, the ability to communicate, the ability to attain compliance and obtain cooperation with others, and effectively and appropriately with minimal loss or distortion. He claims that it includes not only intercultural relations but also interpersonal relations. He adds, however, that relations become more complex as commonality decreases at the intercultural level. From this point on, Fantini mentions that both language and cultural elements are effective in the development of the concept of intercultural communication competence. Language and culture are two inseparable parts because people transfer their life standards, life styles, thinking structures, that is, their culture, to another person through language. In addition to the three basic themes mentioned above, Fantini also added three different areas; traits, five dimensions and developmental process.

Traits deals with the attitudes that people should adopt in intercultural relations. People should have traits such as empathic, flexible, respectable, caring, patient, open to innovations,

motivated, and a sense of humour in order to communicate more effectively with different cultures.

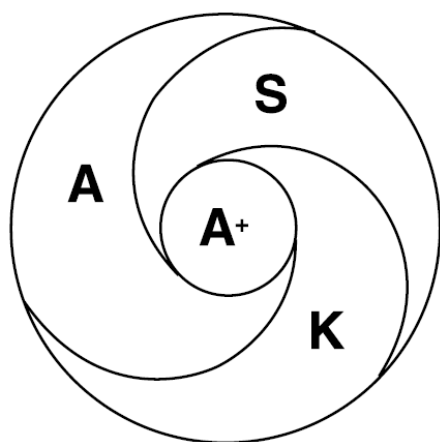


Figure 5. Fantini's A+ASK quartet.

In the model developed by Fantini, there are five different dimensions in Intercultural Communication Competence; awareness, attitudes, skills, knowledge (A + ASK), and proficiency in the host tongue. As seen in the figure above, awareness is located in the middle of the quartet because awareness is the basic building block of effective communication and affects elements such as attitudes, skills and knowledge. To what extent and how we develop awareness is vital to enhance the ICC concept. Finally, the developmental process area was mentioned in this model. This concept expresses that ICC is a life-long and uninterrupted development process. People may experience stagnations or slowdowns at this competence point from time to time, but this development never stops completely.

Finally, Deardorff (2006) proposed a model of emergence in a panel where internationally renowned intercultural scholars from one of the world's leading universities presented to discuss intercultural communication competence. In today's world, where internationalization efforts are accelerating, compilations have been made to measure the intercultural competence of students. Deardorff calls this model the *Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence*. As mentioned above, the concept of ICC is used with different

terminologies in the literature, and one of the most used among them is *intercultural competence*. Deardorff (2006) points out that the model developed is a compilation of ICC models, definitions and explanations that have been put forward by various researchers in previous years. The ICC concept creates a framework according to this model, and different levels can be added within this framework. To explain more clearly, the components at the lower level of the pyramid develop the components at the upper level. In this model, the attitude has been the basic starting point and this point progresses to the expected external problems. Attitudes, behaviours and acquisition of knowledge are of great importance in terms of the this particular model. Because attitude and understanding are the basic principles in order to communicate with different cultures comfortably and effectively. Saying that it is normal for some biases or negativities to occur, Deardorff emphasizes that people who overcome these stages can reach the intercultural competence. In addition, as can be clearly seen in Figure 6, there is a back and forth relationship between knowledge & comprehension and skills factors. Finally, Deardorff clearly states that the ICC concept covers a very wide area and cannot be restricted to this model alone.

## **2.7. Intercultural Sensitivity**

Chen and Starosta (1996) state that the concepts of intercultural communication competence and intercultural sensitivity are widely discussed. They point out that this complexity stems from a misunderstanding of the concepts of intercultural awareness, intercultural communication competence and intercultural sensitivity. Even if these concepts are related to each other, they mean different things and the concept of intercultural communication competence is the umbrella term in them. The concept of intercultural communication competence is divided into three main groups as cognitive, affective and behavioural ability. Cognitive aspect refers to cultural awareness, behaviour aspect refers to intercultural adroitness, and finally affective aspect refers to intercultural sensitivity. The terms



cultural awareness and cultural adroitness will be explained in the following sections. Under this heading, the concept of intercultural sensitivity will be focused.

Terms, models and associations related to culture are explained in detail in the above sections of this literature review. However, since this particular study focuses on intercultural communication sensitivity, it would be appropriate to focus on this concept. When the literature is examined extensively, it is clearly seen that there have been many studies related to the concept of intercultural sensitivity (Chen & Starosta, 1996; Bhawuk & Breslin, 1992; Chen, 2010; Bennett, 1996; Bennett, 2017 etc.) Chen and Starosta (1996) emphasizes that the world has become a global community with the latest developments and they point five trends which lead to this situation. According to Chen and Starosta, (1) people from different cultures have gained the opportunity to communicate more frequently thanks to recent technological developments, (2) the recent political and economic event has caused large masses of people to migrate to different countries, thus making countries more cosmopolitan. (3) globalization has affected not only people's communication but also the economy, and firms sought employees from different cultures as the diversity of countries and firms with which they had to compete increased, (4) the importance of nation states decreased, and (5) diverse countries have begun to seek new workforce. Chan and Starosta illustrate these five trends with striking examples. According to the numerical information given by them, 70% of the immigrants living in the USA in 1940 were Europeans, but this figure has decreased to 15% in recent years and the rates of other continents have increased. Many students in US schools have different skin colors, and the number of students who do not speak English has approached 5 million in recent years. These examples say that focusing on cultural diversity should be the *norm*, not the exception, in the globalizing world, especially in the USA.

The definition of the concept of intercultural sensitivity has been made by different researchers. According to the Chan and Starosta (1997) intercultural sensitivity is an

"individual's ability to develop emotion towards understanding and appreciating cultural differences that promotes appropriate and effective behaviour in intercultural communication" (p. 5). Gudykunst and Kim (2002) describe intercultural sensitivity as the ability to have positive emotions during, before and after communication. This skill brings people social orientation and satisfaction later because people can interpret their counterparts' feelings and thoughts well.

According to another definition, intercultural sensitivity is the ability to be aware and gain experience. Thanks to these abilities, people can get to know and reduce the culture of the other party better (Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003). Bulduk, Tosun & Ardic (2002) defined intercultural sensitivity as an active desire. This desire provides motivations such as accepting, understanding and appreciating different cultures. Bhawuk and Brislin (1992) state that if people behave in a sensitive way to the perspectives of individuals from different cultures, they reach intercultural sensitivity. Samover, Porter, and McDaniel (2010) defined intercultural sensitivity as understanding the world view of others. When the above definitions are examined in a general sense, it will be seen that all of them underlie the counterculture.

Although there are many definitions of the concept of intercultural sensitivity, Chen & Starosta (1996) made the broadest definition and elaboration. Chen and Starosta define intercultural sensitivity as a sub-dimension of intercultural communication competence. This sub-dimension is a cognitive sub-dimension. On the other hand, they put forward four qualifications of intercultural sensitivity; open-mindedness, self-concept, non-judgmental attitudes and social relaxation. With the self-concept, it is expressed how people perceive themselves. People can communicate and mediate with the world thanks to their self-concept features. Self-esteem is an important factor at the point of self-concept. People with high self-esteem understand other people better and are easily accepted by other people and are more positive towards differences. With open-mindedness, it is meant that people are more open in

terms of opinions when expressing their own opinions or hearing other opinions. People with this trait have broader ideas and know well that the world is not centred around particular views, and they are more enthusiastic in intercultural interactions. Non-judgmental feature means not having prejudices. People with this feature provide a more comfortable atmosphere to other people. Because the counterparts know well that they will not be judged or etherized and thus they express their views more effectively. Finally, it emphasizes being comfortable and not creating a tension-filled atmosphere during intercultural interaction with social relaxation. These tensions can be experienced when different cultures first interact with each other. However, socially comfortable people will instantly soften the environment and allow a positive interaction. Having these features provides an overall enjoyment of communication, and this is an extremely important element.

The concept of intercultural sensitivity is of great importance in many areas. Many experts from fields such as Communication Studies, Psychology, International Business and Education have focused on this subject (Moran, Harris & Morran, 2007). Many of these experts state that intercultural sensitivity is vital for effective and productive communication. Chen and Starosta (2000) adds that intercultural sensitivity includes features such as interaction engagement, interaction confidence, respect for cultural differences, interaction attentiveness and interaction enjoyment and emphasizes that these are essential for intercultural communication.

One person who discusses the concept of intercultural sensitivity and put forward models is Milton J. Bennettt (Bennett, 1986; Bennett, 2017). Bennett developed The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) to explain intercultural sensitivity and relates this model with constructivist perception and communication theory (Bennett, 1986). With DMIS, Bennett has examined and classified individuals who have reached the competence of intercultural communication. Seeking an answer to the question "what to do

next" in intercultural education programs, Bennett determined the stages of the acquisition of competence and then modelled it as a structure. Bennett argues that perception is the biggest factor in people's sensitivity and integration to new cultures. He emphasizes that people or children are more adaptive when perceiving things relevant to them. Bennett explains this with the example of pasta (Bennett, 2017). Pasta for Italian children is the relevant category but not for American children. While Italian children can easily perceive which shape of pasta and which sauce is more effective, this definition will be meaningless for American children.

What is meant here is that the culture brings us distinctions and is an important factor in establishing new structures. When the Bennett's model is examined in general terms, it is seen that it consists of two stages (Bennett, 1986). The first stage is the ethnocentric stage and the second is the ethnorelative stage. There are three more stages in the content of each stage. In the ethnocentric section, there are denial, defence and minimization stages, while the ethnorelative section includes the stages of acceptance, adaptation and integration. Bennett emphasizes that people who progress between stages can eventually reach intercultural sensitivity. Movement between stages is inevitable. There is no rule that persons who reach a separate stage will definitely progress to a higher stage. People cannot easily proceed from ethnocentric stages to ethnorelative stages. However, they can easily regress from the next stage to the previous stage (for example; from minimization to defence) and this model is one-sided. DMIS is a model that includes all cultures, that is, establishing in one culture indicates that it can be applied to all cultures.

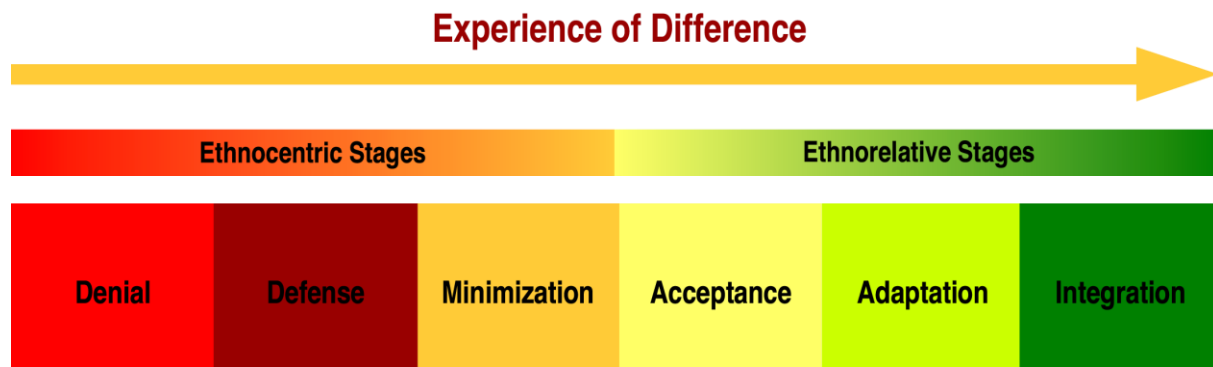


Figure 6. Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity Stages

The first stage of the ethnocentric division is *denial*. Bennett also calls this stage default condition. People at this stage deny the existence of other cultures, other thoughts. They describe others as "foreigner" or "minorities". They may even go further and emphasize that they are not even human. People can enable genocide by exhibiting hostile attitudes. *Defense* appears as the second stage. At this stage, people gradually begin to realize that different cultures take place in the world. This is often the case when a refugee community enters the community. The distinction between "us" and "them" is palpably large. At this stage, people deny with stereotyped ways and can interpret different cultures as a disease of society. Different cultures are inferior while their own culture is superior to them. However, denial can also occur in the opposite way, i.e., "them" superior "us" may be inferior. Here, the situation of seeing one's own culture inferior and romanticizing another culture takes place. *Minimization* is the last phase of the ethnocentric period. In this period, people develop a little more acceptance, but only superficial issues such as food culture. In this period, people stop humiliating people, but they minimize cultural differences, that is, they standardize them by reducing them to their own views. People argue that their experiences are experienced by all people and emphasize that their beliefs are the same. Bennett stated that the first phase of the ethnorelative period was *acceptance*. People realize many points at this stage, that is, they accept that cultural diversity is equal, but that there are differences in form. However, this situation is not always positively

expressed. People can negatively judge different cultures. In the acceptance phase, people start to become more curious about different cultures. The second phase is *adaptation* and, in this phase, people start to think differently from their own cultural context. People can act as if they are attached to a different culture, and this usually occurs in situations that require living abroad. People begin to gain cultural empathy and start to adopt other people's perspectives. The last stage is *integration*; people who have reached this stage can now interpret behaviour from many different cultural perspectives, and for these people there is no longer a single right or a single mistake. To summarize, people move from a stage in which they ignore cultures in the ethnocentric period to an ethnic relative stage, where they enjoy cultural differences. Bennett shed new lights on the definition of the concept of intercultural sensitivity with DMIS. The definitions provided by this model are supported by the results of Chen (2010). Chen defines ethnocentrism as a person's strong attachment to their own culture and ethnic ties and their pride of them. Ethnacist people set their own criteria within the framework of their own culture and judge other cultures using these standards when evaluating other cultures. Chen's research indicated that people with high levels of intercultural sensitivity were less ethnocentric.

Brislin (1981) mentioned that intercultural sensitivity is being developed with training programs such as T groups, case studies, cultural orientation programs and role playing. This expansion has occurred with the increasing importance given to the concept of intercultural sensitivity in the globalizing world (Chen, 1997). In other words, the concept of intercultural sensitivity is also integrated into training programs in many areas. The purpose of these trainings is to increase the intercultural sensitivity by increasing awareness and trying to avoid misunderstandings. Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey & Wiseman (1991) mention that there are six general categories of intercultural training programs to increase intercultural sensitivity; cognitive training, affective training, area simulation training, behavioural training, self-awareness training and cultural awareness training. The training given to try to increase the

sensitivity and motivation of people while communicating with people from different cultures is called affective training. Cognitive training is given to understand cultural differences. Behavioural training is in a way skill training and it is taught how people behave during interaction. The training in which people spend some time in the target culture to get real life experiences is area simulation training. Cultural awareness training is given to teach that cultural norms are universal. Finally, self-awareness training is given so that people can understand their own emotions, thoughts and prejudices.

## **2.8. Intercultural Adroitness and Intercultural Awareness**

As mentioned above, intercultural communication competence is an umbrella concept and has three sub-dimensions: cognitive, affective and behavioural (Chen & Starosta, 1996; Chen, 2010). Intercultural adroitness is related to the behavioural part of these sub-dimensions. People engage in certain behaviours when interacting between cultures, but these behaviours can be desired or unwanted. At this point, minimizing unwanted behaviours and increasing desired behaviours is explained with this sub-dimension. As people develop positive communication behaviours, they are able to fulfil their communicative goals more effectively. Communication skills, communication channels, verbal and non-verbal communication ways are related to this sub-dimension. Cognitive sub-dimension deals with the concept of intercultural awareness. Thanks to this sub-dimension, people gain the ability to distinguish between similarities or differences that cultures have. Individuals with high self-awareness know themselves better and this gives them the opportunity to understand others better and thus communicate better with different cultures. Likewise, this situation can be mentioned in a cultural sense. To explain in more detail, people with cultural awareness can interpret the characteristics, thought and life style given to them by their own culture and thus they can understand the opposite culture (Kartari, 2003).

## **2.9. Studies on Abroad About the Intercultural Sensitivity**

Intercultural awareness concept has been the subject of numerous studies in Turkey and abroad. Intercultural sensitivity and the factors affecting it have been tried to be understood through researches. In this part of the study, studies conducted abroad on intercultural sensitivity will be included. Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen & Hubbard (2005) conducted a longitudinal study to investigate the development process of intercultural sensitivity. Students with an average age of 21 who study at private universities are the participants of the study. There are 2 foreign students in the study and 10% of the students are student of colour. Using The Intercultural Developmental Inventory (IDI) in their research, Anderson et al. conducted two tests, a pre-test and a post-test after the 4-week abroad travel of the students. According to the research, even for a short term, travels abroad affected their intercultural sensitivity. Compared to pre-test results, post-test results are higher, meaning students' intercultural sensitivity has increased.

Straffon (2003) conducted a study to measure the intercultural sensitivity of high school students attending international schools. 450 participants from 40 different countries and studying at an international school were included in the study. By comparing quantitative and qualitative data, Straffon obtained valuable data in the field of intercultural sensitivity. The results of the study showed that studying in an international school increases cross-cultural sensitivity. According to the results, most of the students took part in Adaptation and Acceptance stages. In addition, a statistically significant relationship was discovered between students' time spent at international school and their intercultural sensitivity. So the more time students spend in this school, the more intercultural sensitivity they had.

Williams (2005) investigated the effect of studying abroad on intercultural sensitivity in his study. In this study, in which 92 students participated in total, 44 students spent one semester abroad. 48 students stayed on campus. According to the results of the study, students who spent their semesters abroad made a great improvement in terms of intercultural sensitivity. In



addition, the results indicated that exposure to different cultures significantly affected communication skills. Sarwari and Wahab (2017) examined the relationship between intercultural awareness and intercultural communication competence in their work. 108 international postgraduate students from 17 different countries participated in the study. The results of the research showed that the concepts of intercultural sensitivity and intercultural communication competence are vital for effective intercultural communication. It was observed that students with higher intercultural sensitivity were able to communicate more.

Another study dealing with intercultural sensitivity is the one by Roh (2014). Roh, who measured the intercultural sensitivity of 450 Korean middle and high school students, included individual differences of students such as gender, location, age and level of multicultural experience. Students generally showed an above average level of intercultural sensitivity. However, according to the results, students with more multicultural experiences showed a more significant difference. These students were more sensitive than others. The study emphasized that individual differences are an important factor in intercultural sensitivity.

Holm, Nokalainen & Tirri (2009) discussed the role of gender and academic achievement in intercultural sensitivity in their work. The researchers, who included 549 participants in their studies, used the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale Questionnaire (Bennett, 1993). The results of the study indicated that women have higher intercultural sensitivity than men. In addition, students who were successful academically had a higher level of intercultural sensitivity than those who were unsuccessful.

Morales (2017) measured the intercultural sensitivity of third culture kids in his study. 139 international high school students participated in the study. Of these participants, 43 were Korean and 96 were non-Korean students. In addition, 81 participants were male and 58 participants were female. The results of the research showed that there is no difference in terms

of intercultural sensitivity between women and men. However, non-Korean students who were exposed to more cultural diversity showed higher intercultural sensitivity than Korean ones.

The literature shows that the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and gender, achievement and overseas experience is not the only subjects that have been studied. For example, Pandey (2011) examined the relationship between the use of movies as learning tools and intercultural sensitivity in his research. In the study with 14 participants, students were given an elective course called "managing cross-cultural issues". In addition, students were shown two films, *Outsourced* and *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, in connection with this elective course. The reactions of the students while watching these films were observed. The students stated that these and similar films are of great importance in understanding intercultural differences. In addition, after the test, it was understood that the students showed higher intercultural sensitivity after taking this elective course associated with movies. Pandey suggested that films and some special cultural-related elective courses can be of great help to students in issues such as intercultural sensitivity and communication.

Chao (2013) investigated the cultural effects of movies and television series in his research. In the study, in which 52 EFL university students from Taiwan participated, he examined the opinions of the students at the end of a course they had taken. Students attended a special course that foreign films used as an instructional tool and received intercultural competence training. According to students' opinions at the end of the course, the course was very effective in understanding and developing intercultural differences and sensitivity. Chao emphasizes that such courses should be added to the curriculum.

Coffey, Kamhawi, Fishwick & Henderson (2013) measured the effect of the virtual environment and the Web environment on the intercultural sensitivities of the participants using the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale of Chen and Starosta. In the study with 159 participants, emphasis was placed on new media environments. According to the results of the research,

willingness and effort toward understanding an intercultural interaction (interaction attentiveness) have the most important effect on intercultural sensitivity. In addition, this effect was seen mostly in the virtual environment channel. Research results also showed that men felt more enjoyment and women felt more attentiveness.

Soyoof (2018) examined the cultural impact of video games. He stated that video games can be an important resource for experiencing cultural differences. Soyoof, who interviewed 6 students who were very good with games in his research, reached important results. The students stated in the interviews that games are the main factor for their intercultural views. The students emphasized that thanks to the cultural differences they encountered in the games, they became less prejudiced in real life. The results indicate that video games can be used as a new method to overcome cultural shock.

Degens, Hofstede, Beulens, Krumhuber & Kappas (2016) emphasize that digital intercultural training tools can be very important factors to improve intercultural sensitivity today. They developed new tools by using experiential and story-based approaches in their work. Researchers who plan fictional events with virtual characters have observed cultural experiences in their experiments. According to the results of the research, this tool plays an important role in improving people's intercultural sensitivity.

Based on the idea that the games can be used not only for entertainment purposes, but also for cultural training, Muhamad & Yang (2019) conducted a study to moderate the intercultural sensitivity of the participants. They conducted an experimental study of three stages as game, reading and control and examined the effect of the game called BAFA on intercultural sensitivity. They say that the video game called BAFA is a role-playing game and people are exposed to different cultures with simulations. 31 participants took part in the game section, 32 participants in the reading condition and 30 participants in the control group. Important data were obtained in this study in which a balanced distribution of participants was

observed. According to the results of the study, games are of great importance for intercultural sensitivity. Participants who played BAFA showed higher intercultural sensitivity also in real life.

Jacobone & Moro (2015) investigated the impact of participating in student exchange programs on people's intercultural sensitivity. 505 students participated in the study and 257 of them were in the observation group and 258 in the experimental group. The students in the experimental group were those who participated in the Erasmus student exchange program. The students stated that Erasmus was a very valuable exchange program for them and added great value to them culturally. In addition, Jacobone & Moro emphasized that the hypothesis that the student exchange program is very effective in developing students' personalities is confirmed. Finally, it was seen that the students participating in the Erasmus student exchange program were statistically significant different in terms of intercultural sensitivity.

Tarchi, Surian & Daiute (2019) also examined the relationship between student exchange programs and intercultural sensitivity. 60 students who came to Italy for educational purposes participated in this research. 32 of these students came from America and 28 of them came through Erasmus Program. According to the results of the research, students who came to Italy with the Erasmus program showed higher levels of ethnorelative orientations. Stating that the Erasmus student exchange program is a program in the European continent and covers a large number of countries and cultures, Tarchi et al. claimed that these results were expected.

## **2.10. Studies About Intercultural Sensitivity on Turkey**

Intercultural sensitivity is a concept became a research agenda in many countries, and Turkey is also one of those countries. Firstly, Çubukçu (2013) measured the intercultural sensitivity of English language teacher trainees in his study. In this study involving 65 volunteer Turkish students, two different intercultural sensitivity scales were used. The results showed that students were enthusiastic about cultural issues and argued that culture-oriented courses

should be added to the curriculum. Teacher trainees have been found to have attitudinal knowledge, tolerance, empathy and sympathy towards different cultures.

Arslan, Güncavdı & Polat (2015) investigated the effect of the Peace Education Program (PEP) on intercultural sensitivity in their study. They stated that the PEP university curriculum contains an elective course and cultural teachings. 25 students from Kocaeli University participated in this study and Chen and Starosta's Intercultural Sensitivity Scale were administered as a pre-test and a post-test. The results of the study showed that there was a statistically significant difference in cross-cultural sensitivity between pre-test and post-test. After the course, the students showed more intercultural sensitivity, interaction attentiveness and interaction engagement. However, no significant difference was found as a cultural difference.

Penbek, Yurdakul & Cerit (2009) examined the relationship between intercultural sensitivity levels and contributions of education and intercultural experience on the formation of intercultural communicative competence. A total of 2000 students from Dokuz Eylül University and İzmir University of Economics participated in the study. According to the results of the study, it was learned that the students had some views. Accordingly, the students; They emphasize that cultural simulations, some non-academic programs, student exchange programs and internship experiences in university education are important in developing intercultural sensitivity. It was observed that the respect, sensitivity and empathy of the students increased as they participated in international interactions.

Rengi & Polat (2014) conducted a study to investigate the intercultural sensitivity of primary school teachers and what they see as intercultural differences. Chen and Starosta's Intercultural Sensitivity Scale was used in this study, in which 286 primary school teachers participated. In addition to the scale, teachers were asked "What do you think about your students as cultural difference?" According to the results of the research, it was observed that

primary school teachers generally approached cultural differences positively. It was seen that the most encountered one among the teachers' perceptions of cultural differences was "cultural differences related to language". In addition, no findings were found regarding gender roles. In addition, it has been proven with the findings that primary school teachers have high intercultural sensitivity levels.

In their study, Abaslı & Polat (2018) examined the views of 337 Turkish and foreign students at three state universities on intercultural sensitivity and cultural intelligence. The results of the research showed that the intercultural sensitivity of the participants was moderate. The study revealed that students make an effort to understand and empathize with different people. Aksoy (2016) claimed that the importance of intercultural communication has increased in recent years and that it has begun to be included in the curriculum of university education. In her study with 42 students studying at the Faculty of Communication of Izmir University of Economics, she organized an in-class activity based on the Bennett's DMIS and analyzed the texts written by the students. The analysis made revealed that the students saw themselves in the acceptance stage and had hesitations about the adaptation stage.

Another study that has an importance in the field of intercultural sensitivity in the Turkish concept is the study conducted by Bekiroglu & Balcı (2014) with the students of Selcuk University Faculty of Communication. Chen and Starosta's Intercultural Sensitivity Scale was used in this study, in which 302 students participated. It was observed that 4 factor groups emerged from the 5 factors of the scale. Responsibility and attention, self-confidence, enjoyment of interaction, and respect for cultural differences were the factors in interaction. In addition, the relationship between some variables and intercultural sensitivity was examined in the study. According to these results, it was determined that there is a positive relationship between the frequency of following the media of foreign countries, the desire to benefit from Erasmus exchange programs, the frequency of communicating with different cultures on social

media, the level of foreign language knowledge and the desire to live in a country with different cultural norms and intercultural sensitivity.

Bulur, Usta & Dinçer (2017) examined the intercultural sensitivity of the students studying at the health vocational school and the factors affecting this. In the study, which has 229 participants, the level of intercultural sensitivity was below the middle. When the sub-factors were examined, it was seen that respecting cultural differences in interaction and responsibility in interaction got medium scores. However, the factors of self-confidence in interaction, enjoying the interaction, and being careful in interaction remained low. It has been observed that students who know foreign languages, communicate with other cultures and perceive communication with different cultures positively have a higher level of intercultural sensitivity.

In his study, Akin (2016) examined the relationship between the intercultural sensitivity of the students of the Turkish language teaching department and the variables of classroom, parent education, gender and socioeconomic level. 220 students from Siirt University participated in the study. According to the analysis, it was seen that the intercultural sensitivity of the students was at a medium level. It was found that there was no relationship between intercultural sensitivity and variables such as gender, parental education level, and having friends from different cultures. However, a negative relationship was observed between socioeconomic level and intercultural sensitivity. In addition, it was observed that as the grade levels of the students increased, their intercultural sensitivity increased.

Koroglu (2009) aimed to analyse ICS level of 61 freshmen from the department of ELT at Gazi University. She used Chen and Starosta's ICC scale. 51 of the pre-service teacher candidates were female and 10 of them were males. Results suggested that being aware of differences between cultures increased their willingness to ICS. Furthermore, she found that freshmen have quite high interaction confidence with the percentage of 93%. Lastly, she stated

that mean rank of respect of other cultures is above the average. As it can be understood from her study, freshmen at Gazi University have high level of ICS.

In her study, Bal (2020) has investigated ICS level of preparatory class students in Ankara. The universe of the study was 113 English language teacher candidates. Most of the participants' age were between 18 and 22. As a total conclusion, she emphasized that level of ICC of EFL learners was above average. In terms of interaction enjoyment, the study revealed that participants feel quite happy whenever they had a chance to spend time a person from other cultures. She concluded her study by presenting some specific implications such as providing workshops related to ICS for learners and adopting cultural elements to the syllabus to increase ICC level of EFL teacher candidates.

Yetiş and Kurt (2016) conducted a study to investigate level of intercultural sensitivity of pre-service foreign language teachers consisting of freshmen, sophomore, junior, and seniors studying at different departments such as English, German, and French. The number of their participants was 1049, 494 of whom were ELT pre-service teachers. Results obtained from their study indicated that English foreign language teachers have high level of ICS. However, they also stated that interaction confidence and interaction attentiveness had the lowest level. To increase two sub-categories, they suggested that learners could be encouraged to attend exchange programs. Also they found that seniors studying at ELT departments had higher level of ICS compared to freshmen.

A similar study was employed by Arcagok and Yılmaz (2020) in order to understand perceptions of pre-service-EFL teachers studying at Çanakkale 18 Mart University. The population of the study was composed 91 seniors. Mixed method design was used to obtain more reliable and valid results. According to data derived from their study participants who worked in social organizations had higher level of ICS compared to others



Mighani and Moghadam (2019) set forth a study in which they wanted to see whether interactive culture focused tasks could enhance EFL teacher candidates' level of intercultural sensitivity. The number of the participants was 31 pre-service EFL teachers as juniors at Farhangian University in Tehran. Findings claimed that speaking tasks including cultural element had a very important role in ICS level. Furthermore, they also emphasized that interaction engagement of the participants raised thanks to these activities. As an implication, they recommended that using culture-loaded speaking activities affects ICS level positively.

## **Chapter III**

### **Methodology**

This part presents information about the research methodology used in this research. Some detailed information will be presented about research design, participants, data collection tools, and data collection procedures.

#### **3.1. Research Questions**

Objective of this particular study is to find answers following research questions.

- 1) How do freshmen and senior level pre-service ELT teachers view the intercultural communication sensitivity?
- 2) Is there any significant difference between these two groups of participants in terms of Intercultural Communication Sensitivity?
- 3) Does gender show significant difference among them?
- 4) Are there any correlational relationship between foreign TV series and ICS?
- 5) How does going abroad affect participants' ideas about intercultural sensitivity?
- 6) Do playing computer games and having contact through games affect intercultural communication sensitivity?

The coming sections present information on data collection tools, procedures, and analysis have been reported in a detailed way.

### **3.2. Research Design**

This particular study has been conducted with mixed-method design to examine the intercultural communication sensitivity levels of first-year students and seniors and their demographic variances. Qualitative and quantitative methods have some advantages and disadvantages (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Nonetheless, Ma (2015) suggested that quantitative and qualitative studies' problems can be eliminated by preferring a mixed-method research design. In this method, both qualitative and quantitative research are combined in this way a triangulation is provided. Firstly, an Intercultural Sensitivity Scale was distributed to the participants. After the data was collected, an interview was conducted by asking three questions related to the intercultural sensitivity, watching foreign TV series and playing online games. In this mixed-method research, particularly explanatory sequential design was used. Creswell & Clark (2017) stated that in explanatory sequential design, the first-time researcher collects quantitative data through scales or questionnaires. After that, the researcher gathers qualitative

data through interviews to explain quantitative results. It is vital to present that each participant perceived as an equal individual to prevent bias.

### 3.3. Participants

Population for this research was first and fourth ELT students studying at different universities in Turkey. Besides, first graders are called as freshmen and fourth graders are called as a senior. There were 66 participants from Bursa Uludağ University, 41 participants from Edirne Trakya University, 61 participants from Sakarya University, 24 participants from İstanbul Kültür University, and 18 participants from Kayseri Erciyes University in Turkey (Table 1).

Table 1

*Demographics of Scale Participants: University*

	University	N
<b>Universities of Participants</b>	Bursa Uludağ University	66
	Edirne Trakya University	41
	Sakarya University	61
	İstanbul Kültür University	24
	Kayseri Erciyes University	18

The sample group consisted of 114 first-year students and 96 seniors. The universe of this study is composed of 79 male and 131 female students. All the participants were willing to take part in the study.

In the study, snowball sampling under the title of non-probability samples has been used. Cohen et al. (2007) stated;

In snowball sampling researchers identify a small number of individuals who have the characteristics they are interested in. These people are then used as informants to

identify, or put the researchers in touch with, others who qualify for inclusion and these, in turn, identify yet others – hence the term snowball sampling. This method is useful for sampling a population where access is difficult (page 116).

Due to Covid-19 pandemic, it was really hard to carry out the survey to all the target people in a defined society. Thus, a group of people who reflects characteristics of other groups in terms of their gender, education level, age, etc. has been chosen and were asked to recommend someone appropriate for the study. To specify, it enables the audience to get reliable information by using non-probability sample since it represents the population. However, it is evident that there were some drawbacks to the study. That is, the sample group's composition may not reflect the rest of the target group.

To gather more reliable data, five experts were involved in the adaptation process of this scale. Two of whom were instructors at state universities, one of whom was a PhD student at a private university, and two English teachers who had Master's Degrees were determined. An effective communication was established between the experts to provide good feedback.

### **3.4. Data Collection Tools**

In this part, two different data collection tools are presented. That is to say, the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale has been chosen as quantitative research, and the semi-structured interview has been carried out to support quantitative findings with qualitative data collection tool.

**3.4.1. Quantitative Data Collection Tools.** A questionnaire designed by Chen and Stratosta (2000) was used to get quantitative results about research questions after some adaptations. Some words and sentence structures have been slightly modified according to the experts' evaluation. it was not possible to translate some sentences directly into English. For example, the phrase “culturally-distinct counterpart” can be perceived as a confusing word

since most participants have no idea about the meaning of this expression. Instead of using this expression, experts suggested using the phrase “people from different cultures”. Also, the questionnaire has been translated into Turkish to enable students to understand each item clearly.

The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale consisted of 24 items. The first part included demographic items which aim to determine learners’ gender and grade, watching foreign TV series and overseas experience. Intercultural Sensitivity Scale was a Likert-type instrument which provides five different responses: (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) No opinion, (4) Agree, (5) Strongly agree. The reliability has been calculated by SPSS Package Program V. 23. The value of Cronbach's Alpha is 0.89, which means that the survey is highly reliable for the current research. Chen & Starosta (2000) found with the factor analysis that 24 items used in Intercultural Sensitivity Scale had high factor loadings in the total 44 items.

Moreover, Wang & Zhou (2016) conducted a study for validating Chen & Starosta’s Intercultural Sensitivity Scale. Their research indicated that the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale showed significant reliability and validity and acceptable internal consistency. They also stated that this scale was suitable for cross-cultural research settings with limited time constraints. Also, this questionnaire was chosen as a data collection tool because it covers most of the main features of intercultural communication sensitivity.

The study participants have indicated their opinions on the issues expressed in twenty-four items related to five different sub-categories of intercultural sensitivity. These are ‘respect of cultural differences, interaction enjoyment, interaction attentiveness, interaction confidence, and interaction engagement’. The items including 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, are related to ‘*respect of cultural differences*’. Furthermore, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 items refer to ‘*interaction engagement*’. ‘*Interaction confidence*’ consists of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 18. While 6, 7, 15 items reflect

characteristics of ‘*interaction enjoyment*’, the items 13, 14, 16 are concerned with ‘*interaction attentiveness*’. The questionnaires were typed in the form of Google document, and they were posted online. The participants were contacted through social networks such as student Whatsapp groups.

**3.4.2. Qualitative Data Collection Tools.** In addition to quantitative survey data, semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain more detailed information. As a first stage, ten students from each grade were asked if they would volunteer for the interview. Indeed, they are encouraged to volunteer by assuring confidentiality of the data. The interviewees were asked three questions. (See Appendix B)

- 1) What are your opinions on the concept of intercultural communication sensitivity?”
- 2) Is there a relationship between watching foreign TV series and sensitivity to intercultural communication?
- 3) Do you think online gaming and communicating with other players affect the sensitivity to intercultural communication?

### **3.5. Data Collection Procedure**

This part will present detailed information about data collection procedures. First of all, how the quantitative data have been collected will be explained. Then, details of the interview protocol will be given.

**3.5.1. Quantitative data collection procedure.** In the pilot study, the researcher conducted a study with 20 students; 10 of whom were freshmen and 10 of whom were seniors at Bursa Uludağ University during the fall semester 2020-2021 academic years. The number of male and female participants was equal. All the participants have been informed about the questionnaire. The participants who were not included in the main study's universe were

willing to take part in piloting. In the light of numeric data, The Cronbach Alpha value has been found as 0.84 in the study.

To conduct the main study, consent was requested from the University's Research Ethics Committee. After the consent was approved, all the procedures were planned. It took ten days to distribute and collect numerical data. Students were not forced to give some specific information such as name, surname, and phone number as data to make the participants feel more comfortable. Following the pilot study, 210 students filled in the online survey in the form of Google documents. The alpha value was 0, 89. Former procedures have been followed respectively.

**3.5.2. Qualitative data collection procedure.** An interview protocol with 20 participants provided the qualitative data similar to the survey data collection procedure; the participants were interviewed via online APPS and phone calls due to some limitations imposed on us by the unprecedented circumstances. The interviewees were asked three questions and conversation performed in Turkish. Then, the participants were given information about the procedure, and they were assured that their responses would not be shared or used with third parties, and the data would only be used for academic purposes. The interview process was audio recorded, and some notes and keywords were composed by utilizing from participants' responses. Following that, qualitative data was coded to reach both reliable and valid analysis of the study.

### **3.6. Data Analysis Procedure**

Both qualitative and quantitative analysis methods have been used to elicit rich data to increase the study's reliability. As a first step, data collected through questionnaires was analyzed via the SPSS 23 program and descriptive analysis was used to demonstrate the differences between the groups. Some items have been reversed in order to analyze and make

a comment on the data collected through questionnaire. These items are 2, 5, 6, 7, 9, 12, 15, and 23. Aiming to measures the findings, a scale has been conducted (Table 1). By considering this scale, mean scores ranged from 1 to 5. The scores between 1 and 2.75 were accepted as ‘‘low’’. What’s more, mean scores of 2.76 and 3.75 were considered ‘‘moderate.’’ Mean scores from 3.76 to 5.00 were regarded as ‘‘high’’.

Table 2

*Interval scale of Intercultural Communication Sensitivity in the scale*

Intercultural Communication Sensitivity Level	Mean
Low level	1.00- 2.75
Moderate level	2.76-3.75



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Table 2 above shows that the quantitative results were summarized in a detailed way in the findings part, and several meaningful implications were suggested. In order to analyze the qualitative data, content analysis technique was utilized by the administrator of the study. All of the participants' responses were coded by considering some dominant features, such as keywords. Cohen et al. (2007) stated that one of the effective methods of presenting an analysis of qualitative data is by research question since it enables to put together all the relevant data to reach the purpose of 'closing the loop'. As well as the first coding, the other two researchers have made coding to increase the study's reliability. Following that, all of the results have been compared with each other and the final coding accepted. After finishing coding, they were presented with an organization schema separately.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Results**

In this chapter, the researcher will present the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire adapted from Chen & Starosta's (2000) Intercultural Sensitivity Scale and qualitative data gathered through interview.

The data was analyzed with SPSS Package Program V. 23. For the first step of the analysis, a test of normality was computed in SPSS to find out if the data distributed normally. This specific test was used to apply an appropriate test in the program. In the normality section examination, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test's result indicated that data derived from Chen &

Starosta's Intercultural Sensitivity Scale was not normally distributed ( $p=.000 < p=0.05$ ). Because of this, non-parametric tests of SPSS 23 were applied such as the Kruskal Wallis tests for variables that include three or more sub-groups and the Mann Whitney U tests for variables which include two sub-groups such as gender and grade level (freshmen and senior levels). Besides, the Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to analyze the correlations relationship between ICS and other variables. All of the results were presented based on the research questions. Moreover, qualitative data obtained from interviewees were presented accordingly.

#### **4.1. How do first-year students and senior-level pre-service ELT teachers view the intercultural communication sensitivity?**

This research question aimed to find statistical evidence about general intercultural sensitivity levels of freshmen and senior pre-service ELT teachers. According to the mean scores, (4.14) (see Table 2 below), pre-service ELT teachers had a very high level of intercultural communication sensitivity. This questionnaire had five sub-groups; ‘‘interaction engagement, respect of cultural differences, interaction confidence, interaction enjoyment, and interaction attentiveness.’’

When the mean scores of the responses to the statements in these sub-groups were calculated, results show that four of these sub-groups had very high mean scores. As Table 3 shows mean scores of pre-service English teachers' *interaction engagement* (Mean= 4.20), *respect of cultural difference* (Mean=4.20), *interaction enjoyment* (Mean= 4.36), and *interaction attentiveness* (Mean= 4.35). The score for *interaction confidence* was lower than others with a mean score of 3.82.

Table 3

*General and sub-group's intercultural communication sensitivity levels.*

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>
General Intercultural Communication Sensitivity Level	210	4.14
Interaction Engagement	210	4.20
Respect for Cultural Differences	210	4.20
Interaction Confidence	210	3.82
Interaction Enjoyment	210	4.36
Interaction Attentiveness	210	4.35

For better interpretation, the results were shown in two separate tables. Table 4 and Table 5's mean scores of the pre-service ELT teachers' responses to the items were presented. Scores for sub-categories were ordered from the highest one to the lowest. It was clearly shown that most of the items had high mean scores, and only some had moderate levels. According to the results, participants showed high respect (95.2%) to the values of people from different cultures (Item 10). They respected (93.8%) the behaviours of people from different cultures (Item 11). Participants were eager to (92.4%) get information about other cultures (Item 13), and they were open-minded (91.4%) about them (Item 19). They liked to be (90.5%) with people from different cultures, and they accepted (90%) their opinions (Item 5 and Item 12). They did not feel that they were useless (83.3%) when interacting, and they were willing to (85.3%) to use verbal and nonverbal cues while communicating (Item 7 and Item 20). It also resulted in highly observant (79.5%) in terms of cultural differences (Item 16). They gave positive responses (81%) to their culturally distinct counterparts during their interaction, and they were not discouraged (76.2) among them (Item 17 and Item 6). They were also confident (77.6%) and social (67.1) in terms of cultural differences (Item 18 and Item 4).

Additionally, some statistical evidence indicated that pre-service ELT teachers had some hesitations (54.8%) about what to say while interacting with culturally distinct counterparts (Item 3). Half of them thought their culture was superior (52.4%) among other cultures (Item 9). Only half of them (47.2%) tented to wait before forming an impression of a culturally-distinct counterpart (Item 24). Lastly, it was obtained that only 40% of participants could tell when they upset their culturally-distinct counterpart during their interaction (Item 8).

Table 4

*Participant's general intercultural communication sensitivity levels (part 1)*

<b>Items</b>	<b>Disagree (%)</b>	<b>Undecided (&amp;)</b>	<b>Agree (%)</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
10. I respect the values of people from different cultures.	1.4	3.3	95.2	4.733	.5913
11. I respect the ways people from different cultures behave.	2.4	3.8	93.8	4.657	.6893
13. I try to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different cultures.	0.5	7.1	92.4	4.629	.6378
22. I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures	2.4	9.0	88.5	4.576	.7555
19. I am open-minded to people from different cultures	1.9	6.7	91.4	4.571	.7035
5. I don't like to be with people from different cultures.*	3.4	6.2	90.5	4.567	.8459

12. I would not accept the opinions of people from different cultures.*	3.3	6.7	90	4.567	.8172
7. I often feel useless when interacting with people from different cultures.*	8.5	8.1	83.3	4.348	1.0527
21. I have a feeling enjoyment towards differences between my culturally-distinct counterpart and me.	2.9	13.8	83.4	4.348	.8404
20. I often show my culturally-distinct counterpart my understanding through verbal or nonverbal cues.	2.4	12.4	85.3	4.324	.8184
16. I am very observant when interacting with people from different cultures	3.8	16.7	79.5	4.267	.9204
15. I get upset easily when interacting with people from different cultures.*	6.2	15.2	78.5	4.210	1.0090

\* The items which were reversed in terms of meaning for clearer comments.

Table 5

*Participant's general intercultural communication sensitivity levels (part 2)*

Items	Disagree (%)	Undecided (%)	Agree (%)	Mean	SD
17. I often give positive responses to my culturally different counterpart during our interaction.	4.8	14.3	81.0	4.210	.8606
6. I often get discouraged when I am with people from different cultures*	9.5	14.3	76.2	4.186	1.0621
14. I am sensitive to my culturally distinct counterpart's subtle meanings during our interaction.	3.9	16.7	79.5	4.171	.9378
18. I feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures.	6.6	15.7	77.6	4.152	.9662
23. I avoid those situations where I will have to deal with culturally-distinct persons.*	11.9	16.2	71.9	3.995	1.1260

1. I am pretty sure of myself in interacting with people from different culture.	9	22.4	68.5	3.952	1.0155
4. I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting people from different cultures.	14.7	18.1	67.1	3.890	1.1543
2. I find it very hard to talk in front of people from different cultures*	27.6	10	62.4	3.567	1.3369
3. I always know what to say when interacting with people from different cultures.	21	24.3	54.8	3.538	1.1158
9. I think my culture is better than other cultures.*	23.8	10	52.4	3.448	1.3729
24. I tend to wait before forming an impression of culturally-distinct counterpart.	19.1	33.8	47.2	3.429	1.1396
8. I can tell when I have upset my culturally-distinct counterpart during our interaction.	22.9	37.1	40	3.229	1.2238

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\* The items which were reversed in terms of meaning for clearer comments.

On the other hand, to provide qualitative data for this research question, an interview was conducted with 20 students (10 of whom were freshmen and 10 of whom were seniors) by asking “What are your opinions on the concept of intercultural communication sensitivity?” A content analysis was done and results were obtained. According to the responses, all of the participants had positive thoughts about the intercultural communication sensitivity. Researcher provided some extracts from the content analysis (Table 6). They mentioned the importance of this concept by giving some examples. To give an example response, P11 said;

I think it is very important to respect different cultures, understand them, and communicate because now people can meet each other everywhere. For example, I live in a village in Burdur, I met a foreigner last summer, and I helped him. Tourists pleased that I was respectful and sensitive to him, and we are still in contact (Participant 11).

Also, P18 stated the importance of the ICS like this;

I think people should be respectful of different cultures and different beliefs. I believe that the reason for many conflicts in the world is the lack of sensitivity to intercultural communication. Sensitivity will bring understanding, understanding will get respect, and disputes will stop (Participant 18).

However, P3 focused on the different lifestyles among people like this;

Intercultural communication sensitivity is very important to me. Yes, the lifestyle of people from different cultures may not be suitable for me and my spiritual views, but being respectful of their culture, beliefs and thoughts will increase their respect for me (Participant 3).

Other participant related English learning with ICS;

Learning different cultures provides us with new perspectives. For example, we can evaluate daily events in various aspects. Also, if we learn about other cultures, especially English, we can learn and teach English easily. Thus, ICS is an important element for pre-service ELT teachers (Participant 5).

Lastly, another participant pointed another angle of thought;

Of course, culture is a very broad term. But if we think relationship culture and English teaching, I can list some items. For example, if we know culture differences, we can use correct structures in daily dialogues. On the contrary, if we do not know, we misinterpret some words. Therefore, the importance of ICS should be taught every student (Participant 1).

Table 6

*Interviewees' thought about ICS*

Interview question	Theme	Student Comment
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What are your opinions on the concept of intercultural communication sensitivity?	ICS's importance	<p>I think it is very important to respect different cultures, to try to understand them and to communicate because now people can meet each other everywhere.</p> <p>I think that the reason for many conflicts in the world is the lack of sensitivity to intercultural communication.</p> <p>ICS is very important for being respectful for others.</p> <p>Learning different cultures provides us new perspectives.</p>
	Being cautious about ICS	<p>Yes, the lifestyle of people from different cultures may not be suitable for me and my spiritual views</p> <p>We should be careful about other cultures because we may assimilate.</p> <p>Although communicating with people from different cultures is important, we must be cautious.</p>

#### **4.2. Is there any significant difference between these two groups of participants in terms of Intercultural Communication Sensitivity?**

To find whether the time the participants spent in the English language teaching department has helped them gain intercultural sensitivity, first-year students and seniors were considered separately. The data has been analyzed by using the Mann Whitney U test from the nonparametric tests of SPSS 23. The results of the analysis were presented in Table 7 below. As it can be perceived from statistical data, there was a statistically significant difference between time spent in ELT department and ICS level ( $p = .001 < p = .05$ ). In addition, mean ranks were clearly given in terms of grades. While the mean rank of first first-



year students was 92.57, seniors' mean rank was 120.86. Findings revealed that ICS of seniors was higher than first-year students.

Table 7

*General ICS levels of freshmen and seniors pre-service ELT teachers.*

	<b>Grade</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
General ICS Level	Freshmen	114	92.57	0.001
	Seniors	96	120.86	
	Total	210		

The second research question aimed to determine whether there was any significant difference between freshmen EFL teacher candidates and senior EFL teacher candidates in terms of ICS. To get more detailed statistical evidence, five different subgroups; *interaction engagement, respect of cultural differences, interaction confidence, interaction enjoyment, and interaction attentiveness* were compared with the time spent in the ELT programme. It has been found that there was no statistically significant difference in terms of *interaction engagement* and time spent in ELT department ( $p = .168 > p = .05$ ). It is also evident that freshmen and seniors appear to have a similar perception in terms of *interaction engagement* (MR=100.21 and MR=111.78)

Table 8

*Interaction engagement and period of the study*

	<b>Grade</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Interaction engagement	Freshmen	114	100.21	0.168
	Seniors	96	111.78	

Mean scores for *respect for different cultures* are presented in Table 9. The results were calculated via the Mann Whitney U test since there was no normal distribution. The mean scores illustrate that both groups have approximately the same mean rank (MR=102.61 and MR=108.93). That is to say, it has been seen that there was no statistically significant difference between two groups ( $p = .450 > p = .05$ ).

Table 9

*Respect of cultural differences and period of the study.*

	<b>Period of the study</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Respect of Cultural Differences	Freshmen	114	102.61	0.450
	Seniors	96	108.93	
	Total	210		

Table 10 presented information on the question of whether there was a statistically significant difference between *interaction confidence* and time spent in the ELT department. It is obvious that the period of the study may positively affect intercultural sensitivity of pre-service ELT teachers and there is a statistically significant difference between them ( $p = .000 < p = .05$ ). Following that, *interaction confidence* of the seniors was higher (MR=132.28) in comparison to that of the freshmen was low (MR=82.95).

Table 10

*Interaction confidence and period of the study*

	<b>Grade</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Interaction confidence	Freshmen	114	82.95	0.000
	Seniors	96	132.28	
	Total	210		

The mean scores for the relationship between *interaction enjoyment* and time spent in ELT were presented (Table 11). As it can be derived from the Mann Whitney U test, *interaction enjoyment* of seniors was higher level (MR=114.77 ), similarly, *interaction enjoyment* of freshmen could be accepted as low (MR=97.70). In the light of the numeric data, it is possible to deduce that there was a statistically significant difference between *interaction enjoyment* and time spent in ELT programme (p= .034 < p= .05).

Table 11

*Interaction enjoyment and period of the study*

	<b>Grade</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Interaction enjoyment	Freshmen	114	97.70	0.034
	Seniors	96	114.77	
	Total	210		

Table 12 showed the time spent in the ELT department could contribute to the learners' *interaction attentiveness* (Table 12). The results offered that there was no

statistically significant difference between the period of the time spent in ELT department and *interaction attentiveness* ( $p = .160 > p = .05$ ). Besides, mean ranks followed a similar line for freshmen and seniors (MR=100.21 and MR=111.78).

Table 12

*Interaction attentiveness and period of the study*

	<b>Grade</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Interaction attentiveness	Freshmen	114	100.21	0.160
	Seniors	96	111.78	
	Total	210		

#### 4.3. Does gender show significant difference among them?

This particular research question aimed to find the effect of gender on the pre-service EFL teachers' ICS levels. Gender differences were the first demographic variable in the questionnaire. As typically happened in language study departments, our sample had more number of female participants ( $n=131$ ) than male participants ( $N=79$ ). Since particular data was not distributed normally, the Mann Whitney U test was calculated and results were obtained (Table 13). According to the results there was no statistically significant difference between male and female participants in terms of ICS levels ( $p=.982 > p=.05$ ).

Table 13

*Gender and intercultural communication competence*

	<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Gender and ICS	Female	131	105.43	.982
	Male	79	105.62	

To gather more detailed answers for this question, items were analyzed on by one since there was no statistically significant difference in general meaning (Table 14). According to the results, five items showed statistically significant difference in terms of gender and intercultural sensitivity level (Item 8, Item 10, Item 11, Item 14, and Item 22). According to the results, male participants appeared to more aware about knowing the exact time when they felt upset their culturally distinct counterpart (Mean rank= 119.49,  $p = .007 < p = .05$ ). However, the female participants appeared to show more ‘respect to values of people from different cultures’ than the male participants (Mean rank= 119.49,  $p = .010 < p = .05$ ). The female participants, on the other hand, appear to have higher tendency to show respect to peoples’ behaviors who are from different cultures (Mean rank= 113.13,  $p = .002 < p = .05$ ). The female participants seemed also more sensitive to their culturally-distinct counterpart’s subtle meanings during their interaction than male participants (Mean rank= 113.15,  $p = .011 < p = .05$ ). Lastly, the female participants seemed to show higher tendency to use any opportunity where they would have to deal with culturally-distinct persons when compared to the male participants (Mean rank= 111.68,  $p = .044 < p = .05$ ). When these items were overviewed generally, in the four items (Item 10, Item 11, Item 14, and Item 23) females showed more mean ranks than males and in one item (Item 8), male participants showed more mean ranks than female participants.

Table 14

*Items that show significant difference between gender and ICS*

Item	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sig.
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8. I can tell when I have upset my culturally-	F	131	97.07	.007
distinct counterpart during our interaction.				
	M	79	119.49	
10. I respect the values of people from different	F	131	111.43	.010
cultures.				
	M	79	95.67	
11. I respect the ways people from different	F	131	113.13	.002
cultures behave.				
	M	79	92.85	
14 I am sensitive to my culturally distinct	F	131	113.15	.011
counterpart's subtle meanings during our				
interaction.				
	M	79	92.81	
23. I avoid those situations where I will have to	F	131	111.68	.044
deal with culturally-distinct persons.				
	M	79	95.25	

#### 4.4. Is there any correlational relationship between foreign TV series and ICS?

This research question aimed to find out whether watching foreign TV series has a direct impact on ICS of participants. The results have been analyzed via the Kruskal Wallis test under the title of nonparametric tests of SPSS 23 in order to reach more reliable results (Table 15). Obtained results illustrates that there was a statistically significant difference between watch TV series and intercultural communication sensitivity ( $p = .000 < p = .05$ ). Also, mean ranks were given according to time spent on watching. Mean rank of “I don’t

watch'' was the lowest (MR=84.72). Following that, it was clearly understood that mean rank of the learners who say ''1-3'' hour is also accepted as low (MR=87.59). Moreover, participants who spend 3-8 hours watching foreign TV series were moderate (MR=105.11). Finally, as it can be benefitted from Table 15, watching foreign TV series more than 8 hours increased learners' ICS (MR=131.84).

Table 15

*Watching foreign TV series and ICS level.*

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
ICS Level and Foreign TV Series	I don't watch.	18	84.72	.000
	1-3 Hour	72	87.59	
	3-8 Hour	56	105.11	
	More than 8 Hour	65	131.84	
	Total	210		

Table 16 aimed to reveal whether there is a correlation between watching foreign TV series and ICS level. Results gathered from the numeric data have revealed that there was a statistically significant positive correlation between these two elements.

Table 16

*Correlation between watching foreign TV series and ICS level.*

		<b>ICS Level</b>	<b>Watching Foreign TV Series</b>
<b>ICS Level</b>	Correlation coefficient	1	.31
<b>Watching Foreign TV Series</b>	Correlation coefficient	.31	1

The correlation is significant.  $p < .01$  (two-tailed).

To provide qualitative data for this particular research question, an interview was conducted with 20 participants by asking "Is there a relationship between watching foreign TV series and sensitivity to intercultural communication?" Responses were collected and analyzed (Table 17). According to the responses obtained, many participants state that watching TV series can increase the sensitivity of intercultural communication. P1 found that watching foreign TV series is beneficial by stating that "*I think watching TV series is very important for learning culture because we see their lifestyle in the TV series. Thus, our ICS may increase* (Participant 1)." Some of the participant were focused on the watching foreign TV series in terms of not only ICS concept but also English proficiency; "*In my opinion, level of ICS can be high thanks to TV series. For example, we learn the most common used phrases during Tv series* (Participant 13)." Additionally, another participant focused that "Watching TV series is essential for ELT teachers because if we want to teach English, we should also teach culture if they learn other cultures, ICS will be high (Participant 10)." P2 mentioned that for Turkish citizens TV series are great opportunities for getting know the target culture;

I think the best way to understand foreign cultures for Turkish people is to watch foreign TV series because the possibility of coming together with foreigners for Turks



is quite low due to economic conditions. To deal with this problem, they can watch TV series from Netflix and thus their ideas about ICS can change (Participant 2).

It was clearly understood by the responds that participant thought that Turkish citizens had high level of prejudice; “Watching TV series can break prejudices against different cultures, but can also create negative thoughts. I think Turkish citizens have a great prejudice against foreigners, I think this should be overcome (Participant 15).” It was also clear from the responds that P4 had negative thoughts about watching foreign TV series;

Watching TV series can also create bias in people because the TV series sometimes do not focus on every aspect of life, and the fact that some TV series emphasize sexual elements creates negative attitudes for conservative Turkish people. (Participant 4).

Table 17

*Interviewees’ thoughts about watching foreign TV series and ICS*

Interview question	Theme	Student Comment
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Is there a relationship between watching foreign TV series and sensitivity to intercultural communication?	Positive effect of foreign TV series on ICS	I think watching TV series is very important for learning culture because we see their lifestyle in the TV series. Thus, our ICS may increase
		In my opinion, the level of ICS can be high thanks to TV series.
		Watching tv series is essential for ELT teachers because if we want to teach English
	Negative effect of foreign TV series on ICS	Watching TV series can also create bias in people because the TV series sometimes do not focus on every aspect of life, and the fact that some TV series emphasize sexual elements creates negative attitudes for conservative Turkish people.
		Watching TV shows from different cultures can lead to misunderstandings.

#### 4.5. How does going abroad affect participants' ideas about intercultural sensitivity?

This research question has attempted to find information on the influence of pre-service ELT teachers' overseas experience on their ICS level (Table 18). The Kruskal Wallis test from non-parametric tests has been utilized and findings indicated that having been spent time in various countries lead to a statistically significant difference in the ICS level of pre-service ELT teachers ( $p = .002 < p = .05$ ). Moreover, mean ranks were presented in a detailed way. The universe of the study was 210. The number of learners who have never been abroad was 133; that's why, it had the lowest mean rank (MR= 94.18). In contrast, the participants who stayed abroad between 1 and 6 months had the highest mean rank (MR= 134.87). It was also seen that the number of participants and mean rank decreased provided that period of

staying in different countries increased gradually (MR= 112.40). Lastly, mean rank of the participants who say ‘‘6-12 months’’ was mentioned (MR= 114, 61)

Table 18

*Overseas experience and ICS level.*

	Frequency	N	Mean Rank	Sig.
Staying in foreign countries	I have never been in abroad.	133	94.18	
	1-6 months	42	134.87	.002
	6-12 months	14	114.61	
	More than 12 months	21	112.40	
	Total	210		

Purpose of the researcher was to find whether there was a considerable correlation between going abroad and ICS level (Table 19). According to the results obtained from quantitative data, it has been underlined that there was a positive correlation staying in different countries and ICS level.

Table 19

*Correlation between overseas experience and ICS level.*

		ICS Level	Overseas experience.
ICS Level	Correlation coefficient	1	.14
Overseas experience.	Correlation coefficient	.14	1

The correlation is significant.  $p < .01$  (two-tailed).

#### 4.6. Do playing computer games and having contact through games affect intercultural communication sensitivity?

Since playing computer games was one of the most preferred daily activities by freshmen and seniors, the researcher tried to find out playing computer games and having contact with other people through games affect learners' ICS level. The Kruskal Wallis test was computed to find the most reliable and valid results for the research question (Table 20). At first glance, the results derived from the data demonstrate that there was no statistically significant difference between playing computer games and ICS level of participants level ( $p = .409 > p = .05$ ). It is also clear that mean ranks had a similar level. Participants who say "I don't play computer games" were the highest ( $N=100$ ). Its mean rank was low ( $MR=102.34$ ). Furthermore, the mean rank of playing computer games 1 or 3 hours in a week had the highest mean rank ( $MR=114.67$ ). Findings have also shown that the mean rank of playing computer games between 4 and 8 hours in a week was average ( $MR=110.22$ ). Lastly, the mean rank of 'more than 8 hours' was 92.30 with 25 participants.

Table 20

*Playing computer games and ICS level.*

	Frequency	N	Mean	Sig.
			Rank	
Playing computer games	I don't play games.	100	102.34	
	1-3 hours a week.	55	114.67	.409
	4-8 hours a week	30	110.22	
	More than 8 hours	25	92.30	
	Total	210		

Objective of Table 21 was to reveal whether there was a statistically significant difference between ICS and choosing gamers to communicate with. As it can be understood from the table, choosing gamers to communicate with created statistically significant difference level ( $p = .001 < p = .05$ ). However, the number of participants who say ‘‘I don’t consider this’ was 108 with the lowest mean rank (MR=96.14). In addition, the mean rank of participants who say ‘‘Sometimes’’ was moderate (MR=98.94). On the other hand, the mean rank of the participants who choose other people to communicate with was the highest (MR=136.27).

Table 21

*ICS levels and those who choose to communicate privately with the gamers.*

	Frequency	N	Mean	Sig.
			Rank	
Participants' choosing gamers to communicate with.	Yes	45	136.27	.001
	Sometimes	57	98.94	
	I don't consider this.	108	96.14	
	Total	210		

To seek better answers for whether playing computer games and having contact through games, the relationship between ICS and frequency of having contact with foreign people through games has been demonstrated (Table 22). In the light of the results gained from quantitative data, there was a statistically significant difference between ICS level and frequency of having contact with other people ( $p = .043 < p = .05$ ). Mean ranks were calculated in order to determine the effect of frequency of having contact while playing online games on ICS level. Participants who choose "More than 3 times" had the highest mean rank (MR=120.63). It was also inferred that mean rank of participants who say "1-3 times a week" was above average (MR=115.92). Lastly, the number of participants who prefer not contacting other people was high; nevertheless, their mean rank was the lowest (MR=96.30).

Table 22

Relationship between ICS level and those who contact with gamers.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
			<b>Rank</b>	
People that choose to contact with gamers.	I don't contact with gamers.	118	96.30	.043
	1-3 times a week.	65	115.92	
	More than 3 times.	27	120.63	
	Total	210		

As it can be deduced from the results indicated below, frequency of having contact with foreign people through games may affect participants' ICS level (Table 23). Spearman's rank correlation results illustrated that there was a positive correlation between ICS level and frequency of having contact with foreign people. It can be concluded that ICS increases depending on frequency of communicating with other people.

Table 23

*Correlation between foreign contact frequency and ICS level.*

		ICS Level	Contact frequency with other gamers
Contact frequency with other gamers	Correlation coefficient	1	.17
ICS Level	Correlation coefficient	.17	1

The correlation is significant.  $p < .01$  (two-tailed).

On the other hand, an interview was conducted with 20 participants to gather qualitative data for this research question by asking “Do you think online gaming and communicating with other players affect the sensitivity to intercultural communication?” According to the results most of the participants had positive attitudes towards online gaming (Table 24) and its benefits about ICS. P2 gave a detailed example to state the importance of gaming and communicating with other gamers about ICS;

I can communicate with people from all over the world in online games. I can ask them how they lived, what they ate, and their important days. Sometimes they cannot enter the game when I ask questions to find out why, they say that they celebrate their special days. Thus, I can obtain information about their culture and act more precisely (Participant 2).

Also, P7 stated this;

I am not a person who plays games very often, but since I am in the English department, when I play, I can communicate effectively with other people and question their lifestyle. I think online games are great opportunities to learn about different people and different cultures. Most of them are free (Participant 7).

According to another example games are good ways to gain ICS;



ICS and playing computer games have strong relationship. For example, my friends contact with other people through games and they give me interesting examples about different cultures. As it can be seen, playing game and communication affects ICS positively (Participant 10).

P13 stated that online games would be beneficial for understanding other cultures;

Now, regardless of men or women, many people play games and even form a team and chat with them. People can get very good friendships thanks to games. For example, I have a friend from Indonesia and he is Muslim. I compare their lifestyle with the lifestyle of the Turks and I can break my prejudices against them (Participant 13).

However, some participants didn't have positive attitudes toward online games in terms of ICS concepts; "Games can be important for communication and cultural knowledge, but I think people can swear or be angry because of their ambition to win in the game. I think this prevents us from getting to know the counterculture (Participant 18)."

Table 24

*Interviewees' thoughts about playing online games.*

Interview question	Theme	Student Comment
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Do you think online gaming and communicating with other players affect the sensitivity to intercultural communication?	The impact of online games on understanding other cultures	I can communicate with people from all over the world in online games. I can ask them how they lived, what they ate, and their important days.
		I can communicate effectively with other people and question their lifestyle.
		ICS and playing computer games have strong relationships.
	Negative	<p>Now, regardless of men or women, many people play games and even form a team and chat with them. People can get very good friendships thanks to games.</p> <p>I think people can swear or be angry because of their ambition to win in the game.</p> <p>I think this prevents us from getting to know the counterculture</p>

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## Chapter V

### Discussion

In this chapter, the research provides the findings of the study obtained by qualitative and quantitative data by corresponding with each of the research questions. In light of

previous research from the related literature, statistical findings were discussed, implemented and illustrated. Nonetheless, possible reasons behind the statistical findings were tried to find out by abstaining from clear-cut or absolute answers since it would affect further studies in negative way. To make it more reader friendly and to make a clear framework, discussion chapter was organized in order of the research questions.

### **5.1 How do freshmen and senior level pre-service ELT teachers view the intercultural communication sensitivity?**

The first research question was about intercultural communication sensitivity of freshmen and seniors. Results propound that students have a very high level of ICS with the mean score of 4.14. Secondly, Intercultural Communication Scale (Chen & Starosta, 2000) was used. The Means scores of its sub-dimensions (*interaction engagement, respect of cultural differences, interaction confidence, interaction enjoyment, and interaction attentiveness.*) were calculated (Table 3), and it was found out that all of these sub-dimensions had very high-level mean scores (respectively M=4.20, M=4.20, M=3.82, M=4.36, and M=4.35). Lastly, an interview was conducted with 20 participants to gather qualitative data for this research. According to the qualitative data analysis, all of the participants had positive thoughts about intercultural communication sensitivity. They pointed out that intercultural communication sensitivity was quite crucial for the understanding of people from different cultures. They also stressed that respecting the culture of others would increase the prestige of their own culture. However, it was surprising that participants viewed their culture superior to other cultures. It might be due to the pressure of the Turkish culture.

Generally speaking, the freshmen and seniors pre-service ELT teachers appeared to have a high level of intercultural communication sensitivity (Table 3, Table 4 and Table 5). This result showed a resemblance to some studies in the literature. First of all, Anderson et al. (2005) conducted a study with college students, and they found out that students had a high

level of intercultural sensitivity. Roh (2014) also conducted a survey of 450 Korean middle and high school students. Results of the study indicated that middle and high school students had a high level of ICS. This study was in line with Roh's research in a better way. In the Turkish context, this study also showed some resemblance to other studies. For example, Çubukçu (2013) conducted a study to measure 65 volunteer ELT teachers' ICS level. Participants had a high ICS level, which indicated that this study was in line with Çubukçu's research.

Additionally, Rengi and Polat (2014) conducted a study with 286 primary school teachers. According to the results, primary school teachers approached cultural difference positively. This study had similarities with Rengi and Polat's survey because of similar results and using the same scale (Intercultural Communication Sensitivity). Lastly, Balcıoğlu & Bekir's (2014) study revealed that Selcuk University, Faculty of Communication students showed high mean scores in ICS. Balcıoğlu and Bekir computed a factor analysis and results indicated that 4 of 5 different sub-dimensions had a high level of factor loading at above the moderate level. In this particular study, factor analysis was not a computer; however, students had high levels of means scores at these same five-dimensions; *interaction engagement, respect of cultural differences, interaction confidence, interaction enjoyment, and interaction attentiveness*.

Apart from similarities, this particular study has shown contradiction with some other studies on the literature. Bulur et al. (2017) conducted a survey with 229 health vocational school students to measure the intercultural sensitivity levels. The study results indicated that students' intercultural sensitivity levels were below moderate, contrary to the current study. Akın's (2016) review was another example that shows contraction with this study. Akın conducted a 220 Turkish language teaching department student in Siirt province of Turkey. According to the obtained results, students had a medium level of intercultural sensitivity. As

Bennett (2017) suggested, ICS was a key concept for understanding other cultures. Acquiring ICS would bring people to communicate without contradictions, which enable a more beneficial interaction.

In some of the studies mentioned above, participants have moderate or low-level intercultural communication sensitivity. When these studies are examined, it can be seen that the participants have less chance of communicating with people from different cultures because of their low proficiency in English. However, the pre-service ELT teachers in this study naturally have more opportunities to interact with different cultures because their ability to interact in English is better than from students studying in other departments. . For example, Akin (2016) reported that the students of the Turkish Language Teaching Department had low ICS. This difference may be due to the difference in cultural exposure. To have a contact with people from other cultures, one needs to speak English or another foreign language . When s/he cannot speak English, exposure to other cultures remains unlimited.

## **2. Is there any significant difference between these two groups of participants in terms of Intercultural Communication Sensitivity?**

This research question was one of the main objectives of the current study. The researcher wanted to reveal that period of the study affects ICS level of pre-service ELT teachers; freshmen and seniors positively. To reach this certain objective, mixed method design was employed. As a first step, the data indicated that there was a statistical difference between the time spent in ELT department and ICS level ( $p = .001 < p = .05$ ). It can be concluded that interaction confidence increases depending on the period of the study (Table 7). Yetiş and Kurt conducted a similar study in 2016. Yetiş and Kurt (2016) also used the Kruskal Wallis test from nonparametric tests. Given results obtained from their research indicated that seniors had a higher level of ICS than first-year students. According to the

results found in the previous studies, time spent in ELT affects pre-service ELT teachers' ICS level positively.

Additionally, the current research question also aimed to determine differences between the study period and sub-categories; *interaction engagement, respect of cultural differences, interaction confidence, interaction enjoyment, and interaction attentiveness*. That is to say, how freshmen and seniors studying ELT departments perceived these elements. As a first analysis, the level of interaction engagement was investigated. Obtained data via the Mann Whitney U test showed that there was no statistically difference between the period of the study and interaction engagement ( $p = .168 > p = .05$ ) by depending on freshmen and seniors mean rank (MR=100.21 and MR=111.78). On the contrary, numerous studies have focused on the same issue. Mighani and Moghadam (2019) stated that the pre-service EFL teacher's interaction engagement level was low at the beginning. They proposed that culture-loaded speaking tasks raised participants ICS level at the end of the study, especially interaction engagement.

Following that, the researcher investigated whether there was a statistical difference between respect of other cultures and the ELT department's time. Results demonstrated that both freshmen and seniors had a similar respect for *other cultures* (MR=102.61 and MR=108.93). Depending on the current results, it is possible to say that freshmen and seniors respect other cultures and enjoy communicating with people who have different values and lifestyles. Moreover, the findings of the current study are congruent with previous studies implemented by other researchers. For example, Koroglu (2009) and Arcagok and Yilmaz (2020) examined ICS level of pre-service EFL teachers. In their study, Arcagok and Yilmaz (2020) found that respect for other cultures had the highest level than other sub-categories.

Another sub-category analyzed in the study was interaction confidence (Table 10). A lot of studies have focused on interaction confidence in the literature so far. Koroglu (2019) wanted to measure ICS level of pre-service EFL teachers at Gazi University. The number of participants was 61. As a general finding, she underlined that freshmen had a high level of ICS. Also, interaction confidence has the highest mean rank compared to other sub-categories. In contrast, the current study demonstrated a statistical difference between the period of the study and interaction confidence ( $p = .000 < p = .05$ ). In other words, seniors had a higher level of interaction confidence than freshmen. Results gained from the data indicated that freshmen have difficulty in speaking with other people from other cultures and do not know what to say in some circumstances. Yetiş and Kurt (2016) came up with similar results in their study in which they investigated ICS of pre-service foreign language teachers from different departments. They stated that interaction confidence had the lowest percentage. That is, it was difficult to speak in front of other people from different cultures.

Interaction enjoyment was another sub-category in Intercultural Communication Scale composed by Chen and Stratosta (2000). Chen and Stratosta (2000) underlined that interaction enjoyment covers the participants' moods and attitudes when they join the intercultural environment or have contact people from other cultures. The obtained result from the current study emphasized a statistically difference between interaction enjoyment and the study period ( $p = .000 < p = .05$ ). In other words, interaction enjoyment of seniors was higher than freshmen (Table 11). As a result, it can be said that the time spent in ELT department is an essential factor on ICS level of pre-service ELT teachers, especially interaction enjoyment. Bal (2020) searched ICS of pre-service EFL teachers at Gazi University. The results recommended that participants feel confident and happy when interacting with other people from other cultures. Thus, the level of their interaction enjoyment was above average.

Lastly, interaction attentiveness was examined via the Mann Whitney U test by the researcher (Table 12). Given data from the study indicated that the study period does not have a major impact on interaction attentiveness. Therefore, there was no statistically significant difference between interaction attentiveness and the time spent in ELT department ( $p = .160 > p = .05$ ). As it can be deduced from the results, both freshmen and seniors would like to learn new things and observe people from different cultures. As opposed to the current study, Yetiş and Kurt (2016) found that interaction attentiveness level of pre-service foreign language teachers was the lowest level compared to other sub-categories such as *interaction engagement* or *respect of other cultures*.

As not only the current study but also former studies, emphasized, period of the study is an important factor affecting pre-service EFT teachers' ICS level. The longer time they spend in the ELT department, the higher ICS level they improve

### **5.3. Does gender show significant difference among them?**

For this, a Mann-Whitney U test was computed to examine the gender effect on intercultural communication sensitivity. There were 131 female participants and 79 male participants. The study results revealed no statistically significant difference between male and female participants in terms of intercultural communication sensitivity ( $p = .982 > p = .05$ ). Items were analyzed separately, whether there is any difference between male and female participants. According to the results, there was a statistically significant difference between male and female participants regarding intercultural communication sensitivity on five items (Item 8, Item 10, Item 11, Item 14, and Item 22). To expand this, female participants are more respectful of people's values and behaviours from different cultures (Item 10 and Item 11). They are also more sensitive to subtle meanings, and they don't avoid being at the same place with culturally-distinct persons. However, male participants are more aware of whether their counterpart is upset or not during their communication.



This study showed some resemblance with other studies on the . Morales (2017) conducted a study of 139 international high school students to measure ICS. There were 81 male participants and 58 female participants in that study. Results revealed no statistically significant difference between male and female participants in terms of ICS, which shows that this study is in line with Morales' research. Rengi & Polat (2014) conducted a survey of 286 primary school teachers and indicated no findings regarding gender roles. Lastly, Roh's (2014) study showed no connection between gender and ICS, which is in line with this study.

On the other hand, this study has shown some contradiction with other studies on literature. Firstly, Holm et al. (2009) surveyed with 549 participants using Sensitivity Scale Questionnaire (Bennett, 1993). They discussed the role of gender, and they found out that female participants have higher ICS than male participants. Akin's (2016) study with 220 Turkish language teaching department students showed that females had more ICS than male participants.

As mentioned above, it was seen in this study that gender did not affect ICS, and this result is similar to some studies but contradicts with some studies. In ELT department in Turkey, it is known that female pre-service teachers are more numerous than male participants (Kırkgöz, 2005). This may cause inequality in terms of gender distribution on studies about ELT departments. In this study, women were more than men in terms of number. Generalization cannot be made due to available number of participants, but different results may be obtained with a more balanced gender distribution. For this reason, a value that is far from being significant such as .982 may have been obtained. When the items were examined separately, it was seen that women were more respectful of the behaviors and values of people from other cultures and were more sensitive to subtle meanings. This may be because women may differ from men in terms of personality or emotionality. However, in this case, a sexist interpretation should be avoided. In addition, according to the results of Item 8,

it was observed that the men were more aware of when they upset the other party. Item 8 is in line with the items above mentioned in which women are superior. It was surprising for the researcher that men gave different answers than women in this item.

#### **4. Is there any correlational relationship between watching foreign TV series and ICS?**

In this research question, the researcher aimed to find out whether watching foreign TV series increases ICS level of pre-service ELT teachers. To answer this question appropriately, the Kruskal Wallis test was used for analysis. Chao carried out a similar study in Taiwan by taking students a process in which they were exposed to both films and movies, including cultural elements. Chao (2013) underlined that integrating cultural elements into the lessons, especially movies, inevitably improved students' ICS. Furthermore, this study followed the same path as Chao's study. That is to say, results obtained from the data proposed that watching foreign TV series affect pre-service ELT teachers' ICS. A statistically significant difference was found between ICS and watching foreign TV series. ( $p = .000 < p = .05$ ). Results have also shown that those who spend more than 8 hours watching TV series had the highest ICS (Table 15). As can be deduced from the findings, it is quite possible to assume that learners' intercultural communication sensitivity enhances depending on watching foreign TV series.

Besides quantitative data, qualitative data was gathered via interview to determine how watching foreign TV series can affect the ICS. At this point, positive and negative ideas were uttered by freshmen and seniors during the interview (Table 17). To give an example;

I think the best way to understand foreign cultures for Turkish people is to watch foreign TV series because the possibility of coming together with foreigners for Turks is quite low due to economic conditions. To deal with this problem, they can watch TV series from Netflix and thus their ideas about ICS can change (Participant 2).

Qualitative results state that spending time watching foreign TV series is one of the easiest ways of acquiring other cultures. On the contrary, P4 claimed watching foreign TV series may affect ICS negatively; ‘ ‘ Watching TV series can also create prejudice in people because the TV series sometimes do not focus on every aspect of life, and the fact that some TV series emphasize sexual elements creates negative attitudes for conservative Turkish people. (Participant 4).”

Additionally, Pandey (2011) investigated the relationship between movies and ISC of participants. He emphasized that using films or movies as a material increase learners’ ICS level. Also, this current study has come up with some common results. To illustrate, one of the pre-service ELT teachers emphasized the importance of integrating cultural elements into the lessons to teach English effectively. “Watching TV series is essential for ELT teachers because if we want to teach English, we should also teach culture if they learn about other cultures, ICS will be high. In order to reach this goal, we can use films or short videos related to the target culture (Participant 10).”

By considering the current study and other research conducted by different scholars, watching foreign TV series or movies broaden students’ horizon in terms of intercultural communication. By depending on that, most of the researchers recommended that adding these kinds of materials to the syllabus can provide new perspectives.

## **5. How does going abroad affect participants’ ideas about intercultural sensitivity?**

Over the past decades, a number of studies have been employed to investigate the relationship between going abroad and ICS level of students in different countries. As a first example, Jacobone & Moro (2015) aimed to determine whether taking part in exchange a program, especially Erasmus has a positive effect on ICS. In their study, the universe of the

study was 505. According to the results obtained their research, it was seen that the ones who participated in exchange programs had A higher level of ICS as well as their personal development. A similar result was found in the current study. Results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between going abroad and ICS level ( $p = .002 < p = .05$ ). That is, even though the number of pre-service ELT teachers who travelled to different countries was low, the mean rank was the highest (MR= 134.87). As it can be concluded from the results spending time in foreign countries has an important role in pre-service ELT teachers' ICS level. Therefore, it would be appropriate for teachers to encourage their students to visit different countries and contact new people.

In addition, a positive correlation was found between time spent abroad and ICS. To put it in other words, the ones who stayed abroad more than six months have the highest ICS compared to ones who have never been abroad. Tarchi, Surian & Daiute (2019) implemented a similar study to find out how exchange programs may increase ICS level of participants. In their study, they focused on ethno relative orientations. They concluded their study by stating that the ones who took part in Erasmus programs have A higher understanding of ICS. Meanwhile, at the light of the results gained via data analyzed with the Kruskal Wallis test, the number of pre-service ELT teachers who stayed abroad between 1 and 6 months was 42. It was the highest preferred option. This may suggest that most of the participants have been abroad thanks to the Erasmus program. Another study was carried out in Turkey. Penbek, Yurdakul & Cerit (2009) examined 2000 students from Izmir Dokuz Eylul University. Findings derived from the study indicated that students were quite satisfied since they had a chance to take part in exchange programs and non-formal programs. They also stated that their intercultural communication sensitivity increased thanks to these programs. A similar conclusion was proposed in the current study. One of the seniors emphasized importance of exchange programs during the interview;

I think having an idea about different cultures offers people new opportunities. For example, I went to Poland last year via an exchange program called Erasmus. During this period, I learned many new things about Polish culture and had a chance to compare two cultures. After the Erasmus program, I realized that I had positive attitudes about other cultures which improved my ICS (Participant 19).

As it can be deduced from the previous studies, ICS level of a person could depend on whether he/she has been abroad before. To explain, it is quite possible to say that learners will be good at coping with since they are exposed to countless cultural elements when they have overseas experience.

#### **4.6. Do playing computer games and having contact through games affect intercultural communication sensitivity?**

In this particular study, participants have answered some questions about online gaming and communicating with other gamers such as “How many hours do you play online games in a week?”, “Have you chosen to communicate privately with the individuals you play with?” “Do you communicate with the individuals you play with, and if so, how many times a week?” These questions were asked in the scale for the sake of answering the research question “Do playing computer games and having contact through games affect intercultural communication sensitivity?” To get statistical evidence for this research question, the Kruskal-Wallis test and Spearman’s rank correlation were computed, and results were obtained. It is clear from statistical evidence that playing computer games affected the sensitivity of intercultural communication. Since the p-value was .40, it was observed that there was a significant difference between playing computer games and weekly playing time and ICS. It was found that those who played 1-3 hours a week had more ICS levels. However, this may be due to the unbalanced distribution of the responses. According to the answers

given, 100 participants who never played computer games, 55 people who play 1-3 hours a week, 30 people who play 4-8 hours and 25 people who play more than 8 hours.

As another, the effect of participants' choosing to communicate with computer players on ICS was investigated. Statistical tests performed in this context reveal a significant difference with .001 significance value (Table 21). Studies have shown that those who have contact other gamers have a higher level of intercultural sensitivity than those who choose to communicate sometimes consider this issue (MR = 136.27).

In the light of the above information, in order to better interpret the relationship between playing games and ICS, the relationship between the frequency of playing games and ICS was investigated, and a significant difference was found ( $p = .043$ ). It is clear that those who communicate more than 3 times a week have higher ICS levels (MR = 120.64). A correlational analysis was performed to determine this relationship, and a positive relationship was found. Finally, according to the results of qualitative data, the relationship between ICS and online games was tried to be determined more clearly. According to participants' answers, most of the participants emphasized that playing games positively contributed to ICS. Stating that they can communicate with people from all over the world without time and space limitations, the participants said that they could compare their own lives and those of people from other cultures better and they can empathize better. However, some participants did not agree with this. P18 stated that *people who play games could act differently than they do because of their ambition and anger, and this situation may create prejudice for the other gamers* (Participant 18). According to Bennett's (2017) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity Stage, people move from ethnocentric stages to ethno relative stages in order to reach ICS, but this progress is not easy. People sometimes experience regression depending on the situations they encounter. Interviewee's answer given above may provide an example of the situation Bennett has mentioned.

In general, it can be said that there is a positive relationship between ICS and online games based on the above statistical data, and these results are similar to some studies in the literature. Coffey et al. (2013) used the Intercultural Communication Sensitivity Scale to examine the effects of virtual and Web environments on ICS. According to the research results, virtual environments significantly increased the participants' ICS levels. Therefore, this study is in line with Coffey et al.'s study. Sayoof (2018) conducted a study investigating the cultural impact of video games. In the interviews, the participants stated that the games contribute a lot to them regarding cultural respect and tolerance. In addition, the participants suggested that games can be used to prevent cultural shock. In this study's qualitative data, the participants gave similar examples like Sayoof's study. They stated that games add meaningful values in terms of empathy, respect, tolerance and ICS, and clearly show similarities between these two studies. Degen et al. (2016) prepared a digital tool in their experimental study and concluded that this tool played an important role in the emblem of ICS. Finally, Muhamad and Yang (2019) developed a game called BAFA in their experimental study. Thanks to this game, experimental group students were shown simulations from different cultures and role-playing was done. The results obtained emphasized that this game visibly improved the students in terms of cultural sensitivity. As can be seen above, this study bears similarities with some studies in the literature. This situation explains the relationship between game and culture more clearly and opens the way for more detailed studies.

## **Chapter VI**

### **Conclusion**

#### **6.1. Summary**

The world is advancing day by day in areas such as communication, technology and transportation, and innovations are constantly emerging. Thanks to these innovations, the interaction and encounter between cultures has become more possible than ever before. This situation has positive effects as well as problems. The lack of people to understand each other caused conflicts (Yetiş & Kurt, 2016). According to the text published by the Council of Europe (2008), education should be equipped with cultural elements, and cultural sensitivity should be given importance for a more livable society. At this point, ELT teachers have an important role to play since they can be more exposed to different cultural norms. In the light of this information, this particular study aims to measure the intercultural communication sensitivity of freshmen and seniors pre-service ELT teachers and compare this with variables such as watching foreign TV series, experience abroad and playing online games.

This study has attempted to shed some light on the issues of pre-service teacher trainees' intercultural sensitivity and some variables related with students' life style and hobbies (Chen & Starosta, 2006; Kartari, 2006; Kim, 2005; Selçuk, 2005). Many definitions and researches have been made about intercultural communication sensitivity (Chen & Starosta, 1996; Bhawuk & Breslin, 1992; Chen, 2010; Bennett, 1996; Bennett, 2017). Chen and Starosta (1997) define intercultural communication sensitivity as understanding their behaviours, feelings, thoughts and beliefs and empathize with people from different cultures while communicating. In addition, Chen & Starosta (2000) emphasized that the concepts of intercultural communicative competence and intercultural communication sensitivity should not be confused or used interchangeably. Because the concept of intercultural communicative competence is an umbrella term that includes intercultural communicative sensitivity, at this



point, Chen and Starosta (2000) stated that there are five different subgroups on the 24-item scale they developed; *interaction engagement, respect of cultural differences, interaction confidence, interaction enjoyment, and interaction attentiveness*.

The STUDY'S main focus is the concept of intercultural communication sensitivity, which has been studied from different angles by scholars. Some researchers have examined methods to increase ICS levels and the overall ICS levels of participants (e.g., Arslan et al., 2015; Anderson et al., 2005; Çubukçu, 2013; Penbek et al., 2009; Straffon, 2003; Williams, 2005). Some researchers have focused on the relationship between gender difference and ICS (e.g. Akin, 2016; Morales, 2017; Holm, 2009; Rengi et al., 2014). Others have focused on the impact of virtual environments and movies (Degens et al., 2016; Jacobone and Moro, 2015; Muhamad and Yang, 2019; Tarchi et al., 2019).

There are six research questions in this study as follows: (1) How do freshmen and senior level pre-service ELT teachers view the intercultural communication sensitivity? (2) Is there any significant difference between these two groups of participants in terms of Intercultural Communication Sensitivity? (3) Does gender show significant difference among them? (4) Is there any correlational relationship between watching foreign TV series and ICS? (5) How does going abroad affect participants' ideas about intercultural sensitivity? (6) Do playing computer games and having contact through games affect intercultural communication sensitivity?

RQ1, "How do freshmen and senior level pre-service ELT teachers view the intercultural communication sensitivity?" aimed to find general levels of freshmen and seniors pre-service ELT teacher's intercultural communication sensitivity. It also aimed to analyze the means of the subgroups. The obtained finding suggested that first-year students and seniors pre-service ELT teachers had A very high level of intercultural communication sensitivity (Mean= 4.14). There were five subgroups in scale that administered in this study. The

findings were listed in this way; *interaction engagement* was 4.20, *respect of cultural differences* was 4.20, *interaction confidence* was 3.82, *interaction enjoyment* was 4.36, and *interaction attentiveness* was 4.35. To triangulate the quantitative data, an interview was held, and results show that participants have positive thoughts about ICS. These findings concurred with other studies on literature (e.g. Balcıoğlu and Bekir, 2014; Çubukçu, 2013; Rengi and Polat, 2014; Roh, 2014).

RQ2: “Is there any significant difference between freshmen and seniors in terms of Intercultural Communication Sensitivity?” aimed to determine whether the period of the study has an impact on ICS level of pre-service ELT teachers. Results stated that there was a statistically significant difference between the time spent in ELT department and ICS level. To exemplify, seniors’ level of ICS is higher than freshmen. Also, when the sub-categories were analyzed, it was found that *interaction confidence* of first-year students had the lowest mean rank. From this point of view, the results are congruent with other studies in the literature, especially Yetis and Kurt (2016). Lastly, *respect of different cultures* had the highest mean rank as it was found in Arcagok and Yılmaz (2020).

RQ3, “Does gender show significant difference among them?” aimed to explain the gender effects on intercultural communication sensitivity. Results indicated no statistically significant differences between male and female participants in terms of intercultural sensitivity ( $p=.982 > p=.05$ ). On the other hand, items of the scales were analyzed separately. Results show that in five items there were statistically significant differences (Item 8, Item 10, Item 11, Item 14, and Item 22). It is clear that female participants were more respectful than males towards the behaviors and thoughts of the people from other cultures when the items were analyzed one by one. These results showed a resemblance with other studies on the literature (e.g., Morales, 2017; Rengi and Polat, 2014; Roh, 2014)

RQ4, ‘‘ Is there any correlational relationship between foreign TV series and ICS?’’ attempted to reveal watching foreign TV series could increase ICS of pre-service ELT teachers. Obtained results indicated a positive correlation between watching foreign TV series and ICS level of participants. In other words, the ones who spend much more time watching have a higher level of ICS. By depending on that, they are quite happy in culture-loaded environments. As it was found in the previous studies; Pandey (2011) and Chao (2013), findings of the current study also emphasized that integration of foreign TV series involving cultural elements that help pre-service ELT teachers increase ICS level was one of the prominent key features. Moreover, it was found that the more time they spend watching foreign TV series, the higher ICS level they will have.

RQ5, ‘‘ How does going abroad affect participants’ ideas about intercultural sensitivity?’’ intended to reveal whether going abroad affects freshmen and seniors’ ICS. Results gathered from both quantitative and qualitative data demonstrated that there was a statistically significant difference between joining exchange programs and ICS level. Similar results have been found in the previous studies, especially the study of Tarchi, Surian & Daiute (2019). Furthermore, findings proposed a positive correlation between time spent abroad and ICS level of participants. As it can be deduced not only previous studies but also the current study, going abroad, especially exchange programs are a good opportunity for pre-service ELT teachers in order to increase their ICS level.

RQ6, ‘‘Do playing computer games and having contact through games affect intercultural communication sensitivity?’’ aimed to find out whether there is any relation between intercultural sensitivity and online games, choosing online games as an interaction way and time spent to communicate with other gamers. According to the results, there were no statistically significant differences between playing online games and intercultural communication sensitivity levels ( $p=.40 > p=.05$ ). Another variable’s results indicated a

statistically significant difference between choosing online games as a communication method and ICS levels. Participants who choose games as a communication method had higher levels of ICS. Lastly, time spent to communicate with other gamers showed A statistically significant difference with ICS levels. Participants who communicate more than three times with other gamers had higher levels of ICS. To triangulate the quantitative data, an interview was held, and results indicated that gaming is a positive effecting factor for ICS. Their findings concur with other studies on the literature (e.g. Coffey el. al., 2013; Muhamad and Yang, 2019; Sayoof, 2018).

## **6.2. Implications**

The results of the study have proposed some implications for English teachers, policymakers, and authorities. Kılıç S. (2013) claimed that it is essential for people to think globally and act locally by mainly depending on the profound influence of globalization. In order to sustain global thinking, intercultural communication sensitivity should be considered by English teachers.

Results derived from both quantitative and qualitative data indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between time spent in ELT department and ICS level of pre-service ELT teachers. To exemplify, seniors appear to have A higher level of ICS than freshmen. They are more willing to take part in culturally-loaded environments and have a quite high tendency to communicate with people from different cultures. However, it was also found that while some subcategories are quite high, interaction confidence was determined as the lowest mean rank for freshmen. In this respect, some innovative regulations should be done by English instructors to boost *their interaction confidence*. Also, it would be advisable for YOK to consider this issue.

The findings of the study showed that there was no statistically significant difference between ICS level and gender. Nevertheless, when the items were examined separately, it was noticed that the female participants appear to have a higher level of ICS than male participants. To make it more concrete, female participants tend to respect people from different cultures during an interaction. In this respect, materials can be adopted by taking female participants' needs since the number of female pre-service ELT teachers is much more than male pre-service ELT teachers.

In addition, the current study indicated that there is a significant difference between watching foreign TV series and ICS level of participants. The ones who spend much more time watching foreign TV series have higher level of ICS compared to other participants. Moreover, a positive correlation was determined between time spent on watching foreign TV series and ICS. From this aspect, English teachers need to be encouraged their students to watch foreign TV series. Also, it is essential for them to design their lessons by integrating TV series or short movies in which ICS elements are taken into account. Lastly, it would worth stating that policymakers need to update programme by considering results of such kind of studies.

As it is clearly stated in the results, a statistically significant difference was found between overseas experience and ICS level. That is, participants who have been abroad before have positive thoughts about intercultural communication compared to ones who have never been abroad. For example, they appear to show more willingness to take part in culturally-loaded environments where intercultural communication is the main focus. From this point of view, pre-service ELT teachers could be encouraged to participate in exchange programs by their instructors. However, there is a drawback blocking this issue. To exemplify, the number of students who are allowed to join exchange programs is limited. In

order to find a permanent solution for this problem, the Higher Education Council may offer new regulations.

The particular study has revealed that playing computer games do not have a direct impact on ICS level. Nevertheless, there was a statistically significant difference between ICS and choosing other gamers to communicate with during the game. In other words, participants who interact with people from different cultures tend to show more positive towards ICS. Besides, results indicated that the frequency of having contact with other gamers increases ICS level of participants. At this point, English teachers may create a stress-free environment in which students can comprehend intercultural communication elements through contacting with other people from many cultures. As a result, decision-makers need to redesign programme by considering new trends into account.

Finally, factors affecting level of intercultural communication sensitivity of pre-service ELT teachers was discussed in a detailed way. Some variables such as spent time in ELT department, gender, watching foreign TV series, overseas experience and frequency of having contact with other people from different cultures have been taken into account. It was also seen that overseas experience and watching foreign TV series increased ICS level of pre-service ELT teachers. It would be recommended that instructors organize tasks in which freshmen and seniors are exposed to cultural elements that help them have high level of ICS to be more successful in certain contexts. In addition, it is necessary for the Higher Education Council to increase the number of courses that pay attention to intercultural elements at universities.

### **6.3. Suggestions for Further Research**

The current study consisting of research questions, methods and findings, has been conducted at several universities in Turkey. Due to the fact that the number of participants is 214, this particular research can be admitted that it has some drawbacks. Moreover, only five

universities are integrated into the study. By depending on these limitations, it is quite difficult to make generalizations. For the upcoming research, it is highly suggested that increasing the number of not only universities but also participants can enable to researchers to reach more extensive results. Furthermore, as it can be deduced from the findings, watching TV series and visiting different countries have positive impact on intercultural communication sensitivity of learners. Hence, various materials focusing on cultural elements can be adopted by English language teachers in order to increase learners' intercultural communication sensitivity. Finally, adding new variables may help researchers comprehend the current subject from different perspectives.

## Appendix A

Dear Participant,

I need your valuable opinions for my upcoming study. This survey is one of the stages of my Master thesis. The questionnaire is composed of two parts. In the first part, demographic information is presented and items are provided related to Intercultural Communication Sensitivity in the second part. First, read the judgments carefully given below on this subject. Mark one of the five opinions in the right column, to what extent you agree with them or not. The opinions are "strongly disagree", "disagree", "undecided", "agree" and "strongly agree". Please choose the right option that you want to express your thoughts and feelings in the best way. This is not a test and we will not share your answers with third parties without your permission. Please be sure to give your answers sincerely. Thank you for sparing your precious time. The questionnaire lasts between five and ten minutes.

Emin Gürkan

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Bursa Uludağ University

Faculty of Education

English Language Education

Bursa

### PART 1

**Gender:** Male (.....) Female (.....)

**Grade:** 1. Grade: (....) 4. Grade: (.....)

**How many hours do you watch foreign TV series in a week?**

I don't watch (.....)

1-3 hours in a week (.....)

4-8 hours in a week (.....)

More than 8 hours in a week (.....)

**How long have you been abroad?**

I have never been abroad (....)

I have been 1-6 months (....)

I have been 6-12 months (....)

I have been more than 12 months (....)



**Please write the name of the countries that you have been. If you are not, you can pass this part.**

.....

**How many hours do you play online games in a week?**

I don't play games (.....)

1-3 hours in a week (.....)

4-8 hours in a week (.....)

More than 8 hours in a week (.....)

**Have you chosen people that you play with to contact especially in English?**

Yes (.....)

Sometimes (.....)

I don't consider this (.....)

**Do you communicate with other gamers?**

I don't communicate (.....)

I communicate 1-3 times in a week (.....)

I communicate more than 3 times in a week (.....)

## **PART 2**

<b>Intercultural Sensitivity Scale</b>						
		<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

1	I am pretty sure of myself in interacting with people from different cultures.	1	2	3	4	5
2	I find it very hard to talk in front of people from different cultures.	1	2	3	4	5
3	I always know what to say when interacting with people from different cultures.	1	2	3	4	5
4	I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different cultures.	1	2	3	4	5
5	I don't like to be with people from different cultures.	1	2	3	4	5
6	I often get discouraged when I am with people from different cultures.	1	2	3	4	5
7	I often feel useless when interacting with people from different cultures.	1	2	3	4	5
8	I can tell when I have upset my culturally-distinct counterpart during our interaction.	1	2	3	4	5
9	I think my culture is better than other cultures.	1	2	3	4	5
10	I respect the values of people from different cultures	1	2	3	4	5
11	I respect the ways people from different cultures behave.	1	2	3	4	5

12	I would not accept the opinions of people from different cultures.	1	2	3	4	5
13	I try to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different cultures.	1	2	3	4	5
14	I am sensitive to my culturally distinct counterpart's subtle meanings during our interaction.	1	2	3	4	5
15	I get upset easily when interacting with people from different cultures.	1	2	3	4	5
16	I am very observant when interacting with people from different cultures.	1	2	3	4	5
17	I often give positive responses to my culturally different counterpart during our interaction.	1	2	3	4	5
18	I feel confident when I have contact with people from other cultures	1	2	3	4	5
19	I am open-minded to people from different cultures.	1	2	3	4	5
20	I often show my culturally-distinct counterpart my understanding through verbal or nonverbal cues.	1	2	3	4	5
21	I have a feeling enjoyment towards differences between my culturally-distinct counterpart and me.	1	2	3	4	5

22	I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.	1	2	3	4	5
23	I avoid those situations where I will have to deal with culturally-distinct persons.	1	2	3	4	5
24	I tend to wait before forming an impression of culturally-distinct counterpart.	1	2	3	4	5

## Appendix B

Sayın Katılımcılar,

Gerçekleştirecek olduğum araştırmada, değerli görüşlerinize ihtiyacım bulunmaktadır. Bu anket yüksek lisans tezi çalışmasının bir parçasıdır. Anketimiz 2 kısımdan oluşmaktadır. 1. kısımda demografik bilgiler sorulmaktadır. 2. kısımda ise kültürlerarası duyarlılık hassasiyetiyle alakalı yargılar bulunmaktadır. Öncelikle bu konu hakkındaki aşağıda verilen yargıları dikkatlice okuyun. Sağdaki sütunda verilen beş görüşten birini, bu görüşlere ne ölçüde katılıp katılmadığınızı işaretleyin. Görüşler "kesinlikle katılmıyorum", "katılmıyorum", "kararsızım", "katılıyorum" ve "kesinlikle katılıyorum" şeklindedir. Lütfen düşüncelerinizi ve duygularınızı en iyi şekilde ifade ettiğini düşündüğünüz doğru seçeneği işaretleyin. Bu kesinlikle bir sınav değildir ve cevaplarınız sizlerin isteği olmadan üçüncü kişilerle paylaşılmayacaktır. Değerli vaktinizi ayırdığınız için teşekkür ederim. Anketimiz yaklaşık 5-10 dakika sürmektedir.

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İngiliz Dili Eğitimi ABD

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### 1. KISIM

**Cinsiyet:** Erkek ( ) Bayan ( )

**Sınıf :** 1.Sınıf ( ) 4. Sınıf ( )

**Haftada Kaç Saat Yabancı Dizi İzlersiniz:**

Yabancı Dizi İzlemem (...)

Haftada 1-3 saat ( )

Haftada 4-8 saat ( )

Haftada 8 saatten fazla ( )

**Yurtdışında Ne Kadar Süre Bulundunuz?:**

Hiç Yurtdışında Bulunmadım( )

1-6 Ay Bulundum ( )

6-12 Ay Bulundum ( )

12 Aydan Fazla Bulundum( )

**Lütfen yurtdışında bulunduğunuz ülkeleri belirtiniz. Eğer yurt dışında bulunmadıysanız bu kısmı boş bırakabilirsiniz.**

.....

### **Haftada Kaç Saat Oyun Oynarsınız?**

Oyun Oynamam ( )

Haftada 1-3 Saat ( )

Haftada 4-8 Saat ( )

Haftada 8 saatten fazla ( )

### **Oyun oynadığınız bireyleri özel olarak İngilizce iletişim kurmak için seçtiğiniz oldu mu?**

Evet ( )

Bazen ( )

Bu konuyu göz önüne almam. ( )

### **Oyun oynadığınız bireylerle iletişim kuruyor musunuz?**

İletişim kurmam( )

Haftada 1-3 kez iletişim kurarım( )

Haftada 3'ten fazla iletişim kurarım. ( )

## **2.KISIM**

<b>Kültürlerarası İletişim Hassasiyeti Ölçeği</b>						
		<b>Kesnikle Katılmıyorum</b>	<b>Katılmıyorum</b>	<b>Fikrim Yok</b>	<b>Katılıyorum</b>	<b>Kesnikle Katılıyorum</b>

1	Farklı kültürlerden insanlarla etkileşim içinde olduğumda kendimden oldukça eminim.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Farklı kültürlerden insanların önünde konuşmayı çok zor bulurum.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Farklı kültürlerden insanlarla etkileşimde bulunduğumda her zaman ne söyleyeceğimi bilirim.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Farklı kültürlerden insanlarla etkileşim halindeyken olmak istediğim kadar sosyal olabilirim.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Farklı kültürlerden insanlarla birlikte olmayı sevmem.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Farklı kültürlerden insanlarla birlikteyken çoğunlukla cesaretim kırılır.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Farklı kültürlerden insanlarla etkileşimde bulunduğumda genellikle kendimi işe yaramaz hissederim.	1	2	3	4	5
8	Etkileşimimiz sırasında, kültürel açıdan farklı insanları ne zaman üzdüğümü söyleyebilirim.	1	2	3	4	5
9	Kültürümün diğer kültürlerden daha iyi olduğunu düşünürüm.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Farklı kültürlerden insanların değerlerine saygı duyarım.	1	2	3	4	5

11	Farklı kültürlerden insanların davranış biçimlerine saygı duyarım.	1	2	3	4	5
12	Farklı kültürlerden insanların fikirlerini kabul etmem.	1	2	3	4	5
13	Farklı kültürlerden insanlarla etkileşim kurarken elimden geldiğince çok bilgi edinmeye çalışırım.	1	2	3	4	5
14	Etkileşimimiz sırasında kültürel olarak farklı insanların ifade ettiği ince anlam yüklü ifadelerine karşı duyarlıyım.	1	2	3	4	5
15	Farklı kültürlerden insanlarla etkileşimde bulunduğumda kolayca üzülüyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
16	Farklı kültürlerden insanlarla, etkileşimim sırasında çok gözlemci olurum.	1	2	3	4	5
17	Etkileşimimiz sırasında, kültürel olarak farklı insanlara sıklıkla olumlu tepkiler veriyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
18	Farklı kültürlerden insanlarla etkileşimde bulunduğumda kendimi özgüvenli hissederim.	1	2	3	4	5
19	Farklı kültürlerden insanlara açık fikirliyim.	1	2	3	4	5
20	Kültürel açıdan farklı insanlara, anlayışımı sıklıkla sözlü olarak veya vücut dili ile ifade ederim.	1	2	3	4	5



21	Kültürel açıdan farklı insanlarla benim aramdaki farklılıklardan hoşlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5
22	Farklı kültürlerden insanlarla etkileşim kurmaktan zevk alırım.	1	2	3	4	5
23	Kültürel açıdan farklı kişilerle uğraşmak zorunda kalacağım durumlardan kaçınırım.	1	2	3	4	5
24	Kültürel açıdan farklı bir kişi izlenimi oluşturmadan önce bekleme eğilimindeyim.	1	2	3	4	5

## **Appendix C**

### **Interview Questions:**

- 1) What are your opinions on the concept of intercultural communication sensitivity?”
- 2) Is there a relationship between watching foreign TV series and sensitivity to intercultural communication?
- 3) Do you think online gaming and communicating with other players affect the sensitivity to intercultural communication?

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