

The Interculturality of Graduate Turkish Sojourners to English L1 Countries

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In this chapter, we report on the findings of an investigation into Turkish students engaging in study abroad programs and discuss how the results of that research contributed to the designing of a syllabus to develop the intercultural competence of such study abroad students (See Appendix B). The findings provided the thematic outline of the syllabus content, which was structured within the framework of Deardorff's (2006) process-oriented intercultural competence development model.

BACKGROUND

Sending students abroad has a long history in Turkey as part of the state's policy of modernizing the education system. In 1929, the parliament approved Act No. 1416, the "Legislation of Sending Students Abroad to Study" (Karagözoğlu 1985), which also provided scholarships for graduate students deemed eligible by the Ministry of Education or other state institutions to pursue their studies in foreign countries upon completion

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of their undergraduate education. In recent years, the number of Turkish students studying abroad under this act has increased. In 2002, 630 Turkish students sponsored under the act undertook their graduate studies in foreign countries; by 2011, this number was up to 1723. An overwhelming majority of these students undertake their studies in English L1 countries, especially in the United States. The figures show that 577 of the 630 sojourners in 2002 and 1577 of 1723 in 2011 were enrolled in programs in the USA and England. Under the current provisions of the Act, students who lack sufficient language skills are required to take a six-month-long preparatory language course prior to their departure. These courses are offered at the departments of foreign languages of certain state universities, in order to prepare the students for internationally recognized exams such as the TOEFL and IELTS.

According to the Council of Turkish Higher Education (2005) figures, 43 % of the government-sponsored students who returned to Turkey *without* completing their education did so due to academic failure. It can be assumed that the figures could be even higher if we consider the numbers of those who undertake their advanced studies abroad without government sponsorship. As the studies of Khawaja and Stallman (2011) and Poyrazlı and Kavanaugh (2006) found, low academic achieving international students studying in the USA reported lower levels of English proficiency and greater overall adjustment strain, from which it can be proposed that lack of sufficient intercultural competence (IC) could be contributing significantly to the academic problems experienced by these students.

Despite the long history of English preparatory programs offered for government-sponsored Turkish international graduate students, there has been scant research to date to demonstrate to what extent the candidates who undertake these programs have been able to develop sufficient IC needed for their academic progress abroad. While the success criteria of these programs are bound by the candidates' sufficient preparation for the TOEFL and IELTS exams, which are also set as the primary achievement objectives by the program providers, there has not been any academic attempt that would address the views of the program students on their IC needs, as based on their own experience and reflections. Furthermore, IC development has become an inseparable dimension of communication domains in the context of English L1 countries, as cross-cultural communication in these countries is the reality of everyone's daily interactions. It has to be considered therefore in terms of the global nature of English,

that is, from the perspective of English as a Lingua Franca (henceforth ELF), particularly for those whose first language is other than English.

The program on which the present study focused is offered at a state university in Istanbul, Turkey. The program consists of 125 days of full-time studies. In the first term, the students are placed according to European Language Portfolio proficiency level and are given intensive course-book-based instruction. They are reshuffled at the beginning of the second term to undertake intensive TOEFL and IELTS exam preparatory instruction. Upon completion of the program, the participants are entitled to take another six-month language course abroad if they still do not have sufficient language skills or if they simply choose to. If they have sufficient TOEFL or IELTS scores, they are allowed to start their graduate programs immediately without taking any further language course. Once they complete the program in Turkey, they are allowed to begin their sojourns without being obliged to meet any other linguistic criteria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The characteristics of global speech events are inconsistent with the principles and priorities of traditional norm-based ESL/EFL pedagogy. However, recent theoretical approaches to English language teaching (ELT) from a critical perspective (Hülmbauer et al. 2008) provide grounds on which researchers and practitioners can reconceptualize ELT. For example, in ELF-informed/ELF-aware pedagogy (Bayyurt and Sifakis 2015; Seidlhofer 2011), learners are not expected to conform to native-speaker norms. They are primarily considered to be *users* of the language, where the main consideration is not formal correctness but functional effectiveness. Gnutzmann (2000) indicates that when used as a lingua franca, English is no longer founded on the linguistic and sociocultural norms of native speakers and their respective cultures. Widdowson (1994) claims that language learners cannot be autonomous in a learning environment where another culture and its language are imposed upon them, and proposes to “shift the emphasis away from context of use to context of learning, and consider how language is to be specially designed to engage the student’s reality and activate the learning process” (p. 387).

Other studies undertaken over the last decade concerning ELF-awareness in ELT (e.g. Bayyurt and Akcan 2015; Bayyurt and Sifakis 2015) also indicate that the pedagogic perspective of ELF, with its global features and cross-cultural role, shifts the focus of English teaching toward

communication skills and procedures abandoning unrealistic notions of achieving “perfect” communication through “native-like” proficiency. They indicate that exposure to a wide-range of varieties of English and a multilingual/comparative approach are likely to facilitate communication strategies and accommodation skills, which include drawing on extralinguistic cues, gauging interlocutors’ linguistic repertoires, supportive listening, signalling non-comprehension in a face-saving way, asking for repetition, paraphrasing, and so on (Jenkins 2014; Matsuda and Friedrich 2011).

One dimension that needs to be considered as an essential factor inseparable from ELF-informed pedagogy is its emphasis on intercultural awareness and intercultural communicative competence/intercultural competence (IC). Recent studies in the field focus on IC as an essential element of global culture, global citizenship, and global communication skills and their development in ELF interactions (Alptekin 2002; Baker 2011; Seidlhofer 2011).

In their report prepared for the Council of Europe, Barrett and Byram (2013) define IC as:

a combination of attitudes, knowledge, understanding, and skills applied through action which enables one, either singly or together with others, to understand and respect people who are perceived to have different cultural affiliations from oneself; to respond appropriately, effectively and respectfully when interacting and communicating with such people; establish a positive and constructive relationship with such people; and understand oneself and one’s own multiple cultural affiliations through encounters with cultural ‘difference.’ (p. 7)

There have been a variety of terms used by different researchers to describe IC or intercultural understanding, such as “interpersonal communicative competence” (Ruben 1976), “cross-cultural adaptation” (Kim 1993), “intercultural sensitivity” (Bennett 1993), “intercultural effectiveness” (Stone 2006, p. 338), “intercultural competence” (Deardorff 2006), “intercultural literacy” (Heyward 2002), and “global competence” (Hunter et al. 2006). However, there has been scant consensus on how concepts related to IC should be defined (Deardorff 2006; Freeman et al. 2009; Stier 2006). Although what they all try to account for is the ability to step beyond one’s own culture and to function with other individuals from linguistically and culturally distinct backgrounds, Deardorff (2006)

argues that the differences in the use of terminology and the lack of specificity in the definition of IC is caused by the difficulty of identifying the specific components of the concepts attributed to IC.

The literature indicates that IC and related skills can be interpreted as the abilities to behave and communicate effectively and appropriately in multicultural settings, suggesting that the development of IC skills involves an on-going learning process of interpretation, self-reflection, and negotiation that gradually transform one's attitude, knowledge, and skills toward cultural differences, in which language functions as a means of interaction and communication to facilitate its development.

Although there is no complete agreement on the definition of IC between researchers and scholars, a study conducted by Deardorff (2006) applied both survey and Delphi methods to bring together a range of intercultural experts, scholars, and administrators to encapsulate the many perspectives on IC into a single consensus definition that could serve as the compromising basis and starting point for future IC development attempts and purposes. The model was developed through identifying the aspects on which the experts reached consensus, and then categorizing and placing them into a model that lends itself to better understanding and furthering the development of measurable outcomes. Briefly, the model defines IC as "the ability to interact effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations, based on specific attitudes, intercultural knowledge, skills and reflection" (Stiftung 2006, p. 5).

The model describes IC as a process orientation that is organized at two levels or stages, individual, and interaction, each of which contains separate steps. At the individual level, the first step requires one to possess the attitudes of respect, value for other cultures, openness, ability to withhold judgments, and curiosity to discover, while tolerating ambiguity. The second step requires one to develop specific knowledge and comprehension that would include cultural self-awareness, deep cultural knowledge, and sociolinguistic awareness. Consequently, to continually acquire and comprehend this kind of knowledge, one must possess the skills to listen, observe, evaluate, analyze, interpret, and relate. At the interactional level, this definition of IC distinguishes between two types of desired outcomes: internal and external. The internal desired outcomes demonstrating IC are an informed frame of reference change that comes through adaptability, flexibility, ethnorelative view, and enthusiasm. The external outcome desired from this process orientation is that all of these developmental gains are integrated holistically so that the individual demonstrates

effective and appropriate communication and behavior in an intercultural setting.

Much of the literature concerning IC development (Bennett 1993; Chen and Starosta 2000; Zhao 2002) has noted that the more intercultural sensitivity a person has, the more intercultural competent s/he can be. Various intercultural sensitivity areas that can be used as indicators of IC development and assessment have been identified:

- Interaction Engagement
- Respect for Cultural Differences
- Interaction Confidence
- Interaction Enjoyment
- Interaction Attentiveness

As the word “international” implies intercultural, IC plays a key role in ELF as well as in foreign language programs (Baker 2011; Bayyurt 2006, 2013), in which language and culture are traditionally treated as separate constructs (Byrnes 2002; Crawford-Lange and Lange 1984; Kramsch 1993). While the traditional notion of communicative competence requires learners to learn the cultures of the native speaker’s norms, such an approach to culture teaching would not be appropriate for ELF-aware teaching, which involves cross-cultural communication among speakers from different backgrounds.

Thus, educating students to become ELF users means to accustom them to be intercultural sensitive; and to equip them with the ability of acting as cultural mediators, seeing the world through others’ eyes, and consciously using culture learning skills (Sen Gupta 2002). Within this framework of intercultural learning, the learner is viewed as an “intercultural speaker,” someone who “crosses frontiers, and who is to some extent a specialist in the transit of cultural property and symbolic values” (Byram and Zarate 1997, p. 11).

Deardorff (2006) suggests that a fundamental aspect of study abroad programs is adequate preparation of the students in intercultural learning that occurs beyond declaring “it changed my life.” This indicates that adequate preparation means helping students gain an understanding of IC frameworks, vocabulary, and concepts so that they can apply them to their learning, before, during, and after the experience.

Focusing on the significance of the teacher’s role and the learner’s perceptual change in an EFL context, Bayyurt and Altınmakas (2012)

reported that some significant changes were observed in the students' perspectives about native speakerism during the implementation of an ELF-aware oral and written communication course designed for an English Language and Literature undergraduate program in Turkey. They indicated that despite the students' rigid view of standard English forms being the ideal forms and emphasizing the primacy of learning these norms, their exposure to global varieties of English led to the recognition of the significance of mutual intelligibility, which also was reflected in a shift both in their concepts of self and in their attitudes to other cultures. Emphasizing the significance of the teacher's role in the development of global culture through English, they reported that the students' initial stereotypical images mainly stemmed from their high school education and their teachers' lack of knowledge about global characteristics of English. Such stereotypical attitudes developed through all stages of English language teaching based on native speakerism, which is one of the main characteristics of the Turkish education system (Bayyurt 2006, 2012).

THE STUDY

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the current study was to design an IC-focused syllabus for Turkish international graduate students to be implemented prior to their departure to English L1 countries where English is used as a medium of real communication (henceforth ELF context), and thus to equip them with the necessary IC skills they would need to resolve their communication problems in English during their graduate studies, and to improve their capability of communicating their own identities, affairs, opinions, and reflections in global settings. The outline of the syllabus resulting from this study can be found in Appendix B.

Research Questions

In order to identify the participants' IC development needs, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the IC needs of government-sponsored Turkish international graduate students who are preparing to undertake studies in English L1 countries?

2. How can we design an IC development course that could better equip and prepare these students with the capability of communicating their own identities, affairs, opinions, and reflections in global settings?

Data Collection and Analysis

In order to answer the above research questions, a needs analysis was conducted by collecting data from 25 participants who were preparing to go abroad for their academic studies. Initially, a demographic features questionnaire and a *Needs and Attitude Analysis Questionnaire (NAAQ)* adapted from Bayyurt and Karataş (2011) were administered to all the participants before they started their study abroad English preparatory program. The *NAAQ* consists of 18 statements to be responded to using a 5-Level Likert-type scale ranging from *Least Important*, *Partially Important*, *Important*, *Very Important* to *Extremely Important*. This questionnaire elicits the participants' opinions on the purposes for which learning English serves and to what extent learning English is important for these purposes.

Following completion of the preparatory English program in Turkey an E-mail interview questionnaire (Holliday 2005) was later sent to these same participants during their sojourn in English L1 countries. This questionnaire consisted of open-ended questions in which the participants were asked to assess their own intercultural experience in the ELF context (See Appendix A).

The descriptive statistics of the questionnaire data were analyzed using SPSS version 17.0. Thematic analysis was used to analyze and categorize the themes that emerged in the E-mail interviews, as will be explained in detail in the following section.

Results and Discussions

The descriptive statistics results of the *NAAQ* indicated that, prior to their sojourn, the participants considered learning English relatively more important than developing intercultural sensitivity in terms of their academic progress and professional life. They also emphasized that learning English was more important for their communication needs with native speakers compared to their communication needs with non-native speakers. As the subsequent section will reveal, several of their initial ideas changed once they began their sojourns abroad.

The following themes emerged as a result of the analysis of the participants' e-mail interview responses during the period of their study-abroad programs: *perceptions of the "ideal English" and native speakerism* (i.e. their attitudes toward English used by its native speakers compared to its use by non-native speakers); *perceptions of their own English*; *views on their English learning experiences*; *intercultural awareness and views on intercultural development needs*; and *receptivity to ELF*.

When the participants were asked to describe "ideal English" and its speakers, they stated that their opinion of these concepts changed drastically after arriving in the host country. Their responses indicated a shift away from a normative approach that considers native-American or British English as the "ideal variety," toward the realization of the existence of many varieties in the host country, as seen for example in the following excerpts:

The English you need to use for communication abroad is different than the ideal English. (participant 9)

I do not think that there is anything like ideal English. Everyone speaks English at different levels. (participant 13)

From these and others' responses, it could be concluded that the instruction content of the preparation class syllabus has to focus on the existence of different varieties of English in the host countries, and on the subjectivity of the "ideal English" concept.

The participants' shift in opinion was also evident in their responses concerning native speakerism. The participants stated that English used in daily communication was much different from the way it was used in academic writing or in teacher–student communication in the classroom context, and they noted that native speakers also made a lot of mistakes in their oral interactions, just as non-native speakers do. In the words of participant 1:

Although I have developed English needed for social life in a short period of time, the academic level of English is much different. The vocabulary world is very broad especially in the area of social science. There are very complex sentence structures in the articles. It is very difficult to express what you want in the street. English is not spoken grammatically by uneducated people in the way it is taught to us. (participant 1)

Although the participants expressed that their views on "ideal English" had changed since their arrival in the host country, they all firmly believed

that communication was more important than conforming to the norms. As some of the participants stated:

When we consider the U.S., intelligibility of English varies between the states. (participant 6)

I have confronted many different accents here such as Scottish, Irish and American. Scots were the most difficult for me to understand. I have realized that I still have shortcomings in English and yet there is a lot more to learn. I have also seen that even the English have uncertainties about their own language and often do not make sense of some of the grammar rules... (participant 24)

The participants' responses, whether consciously or subconsciously, tended to point out the significance of communication, and to issues involved with being exposed to the different varieties that exist in the host country, rather than conforming to any particular norm.

The participants' responses concerning their perceptions of their own English revealed that they had difficulties especially in their oral communication with native speakers, contrary to their expectations that native speakers would strictly conform to all the rules that the students had been taught. Examples of this observation can be seen in the responses of participants 16 and 17:

English used in daily communication is not like the proper and intelligible English we heard in the classes; and unfortunately I've had some minor difficulties as Americans do not speak like the English do by following the rules. (participant 16)

What I used to think was that knowing more vocabulary would make it easier for us to speak; but as far as I have seen here, what is important is not just to know the vocabulary, but is to know how to use it. In short, chicken translation is completely over for me. (participant 17)

The participants' responses indicated that the instruction content of the syllabus needs to provide sufficient sociolinguistic awareness especially in the areas concerning the nature and the cultural dimension of language, such as self-concept, idiolect, irregularities, and variation in language.

As one of the enrolment prerequisites of the participants' graduate programs in the host country was to obtain a sufficient achievement result on an internationally recognized normative exam such as TOEFL and IELTS, and since their English preparatory program was based on achieving this

objective, the participants did not dispute that the program's contents and activities had been directly related to the preparation for these exams. However, their dissatisfaction with the program became apparent when they viewed their English learning experiences in terms of their interaction with people of different cultural backgrounds in the host country. A majority (15) of them expressed their dissatisfaction by suggesting the addition of listening and speaking classes, and by recommending that an interactive teaching approach be used in all the classes so that they could have an opportunity of interaction in the classroom context, for example:

As a solution to accent differences some activities can be directed towards local varieties. Training can be given to provide support in daily speaking and difficulties confronted in education life. (participant 6)

More conversation classes might be helpful. I think direct instruction on the idioms and structures and more practice will contribute to comprehension and adaptation. (participant 18)

The participants' responses stressed the significance of interaction in the classroom context and indicated that the syllabus content should include activities that would generate in-class discussions guided by the instructor who should act as an interactant/participant instead of assuming the role of information provider.

The participants' responses revealed that only four of them had, prior to their sojourn abroad, some brief, general, and partial intercultural awareness of their non-native associates in the host countries. The remaining 21 students affirmed that they had not had the faintest idea on this matter. Here are some of the examples extracted from the participants' responses that demonstrate typically their lack of intercultural awareness:

I absolutely did not have any knowledge of the cultures of people around me before I came here. All I can say is that I had thought I had had some narrow knowledge about American culture that I had learned from films and TV series, but when I got here I realized that I had been wrong. (participant 3)

I did not have any knowledge but I had thought that our cultures had been very different. But when I got here I realized that their cultures matched Turkish culture one to one, except for religious issues; except for the Indonesian culture. I thought I knew more or less something about Arabic culture and thought that it would be the closest to our culture; but when I got here I realized that I was completely wrong about that. For

example, I have not met anyone Arab who would not drink, except for just a few. (participant 5)

The participants also stressed the significance of intercultural training prior to sojourn as a contributory factor to adjustment problems. In some of their responses, they raised the suggestion that the English preparatory programs should provide some intercultural training to their candidates to develop sufficient awareness in the cultures that might exist in the host country prior to their departure. They considered such training as a way to establish understanding to ease up their adjustment process and interaction with those of other cultural backgrounds, as the examples provided below reveal:

I think if a course that is based on the culture of the host country is provided by an instructor who has lived in that country it would help students by averting them from feeling like a fish out of water. In the classic system I suggest more listening. (participant 3)

More weight should be given to the host country's culture and spoken language to overcome the adaptation process earlier. (participant 20)

I definitely advise them (the newcomers) to be open to innovations and to prepare themselves psychologically at the very beginning. (participant 23)

The participants' responses indicated that the syllabus content should include a cultural awareness development component that would inform the participants about the different cultures that exist in the host country. This would help enable them to overcome cultural barriers and ease their interactions with people from different cultural backgrounds within the host country.

Finally, the respondents were asked whether they had any suggestions to new sojourners that might be useful for tackling the difficulties that could be posed by cultural, national, ethnic, and language differences. Among their responses were the following:

Along with being respectful and tolerant, it is also essential to understand others' points of views and interpretations of cultural similarities and differences. (participant 11)

I advise them to be open-minded and be respectful and understanding to other people. Besides, interpreting people's behavior from different culture according to their own culture and habits, and drawing conclusions from

such interpretations might mislead them, which might often lead to touchiness and impediment in relationships. (participant 24)

These examples among their responses provide support for the idea that a preparatory syllabus should aim to develop IC qualities prior to sojourn. Such qualities include flexibility, open-mindedness, being tolerant and respectful, and avoidance of stereotypes.

In summary, the participants' responses contributed to the development of the thematic content of the syllabus as their responses stressed the following points. The participants stated that their perceptions of "ideal English" and its speakers had changed since their arrival in the host country, indicating a shift away from a normative approach that considers native-American or British English the "ideal variety," toward the realization of the existence of many varieties of English in the host country. The participants stated that the English used in daily communication was much different from that used in academic writing and in teacher–student communication in the classroom context, and that native speakers, like non-native speakers, also made a lot of mistakes in their oral interactions. They all expressed the belief that communication was of greatest importance, and some participants drew attention to the existence of variation among native speakers and the difficulties posed by their own lack of familiarity with such variation. They all had difficulties, especially in their oral communication with native speakers, contrary to their pre-sojourn expectations that native speakers would strictly conform to the rules in the way the students had been instructed. As one of the enrolment prerequisites of the participants' graduate programs in the host country was to obtain a sufficient achievement result on an internationally recognized normative exam such as TOEFL and IELTS, and their English preparatory program was based on achieving this objective, the participants did not initially dispute the programs' content and activities directly related to the preparation for these exams. However, their dissatisfaction became apparent when they viewed their English learning experiences in terms of their interaction with people of different cultural backgrounds in the host country. More than half (15) of them then expressed their dissatisfaction and suggested the addition of listening and speaking classes and an interactive teaching approach to be used in all the classes so that they could have the opportunity for interaction in the classroom context.

Only four of them stated that they had had some brief, general, and partial intercultural awareness of their non-native associates in the host

countries, with 21 affirming that they had not had the faintest idea on this matter. The participants also stressed the importance of having intercultural training prior to sojourn in order to ease adjustment problems, supporting the idea that a preparatory class syllabus should be a means to establish understanding to ease up their adjustment process and interaction with people of other cultural backgrounds. Once traveling to their host countries, these students had come face to face with the reality of ELF posed by the presence of people of different backgrounds using different varieties of English as their second languages for communication. Although the participants, in a technical sense, may not have known what ELF referred to, their responses revealed that they were developing a strong propensity toward the notions related to ELF. As a result, the instruction content and model they expressed support for reflected an ELF perspective of the global communication model. Their views, which suggest exposure to different varieties of English and to the associated cultures in the host country, as well as their advice to those who would like to pursue their graduate studies abroad, clearly indicated their receptivity to ELF, with its emphasis on IC development and sensitivity. Namely, their responses suggested that the syllabus should expose newcomers to different varieties of English and to the cultures existing in the host country, prior to their sojourn.

The IC Development Syllabus

The resulting IC development syllabus was designed to be spread over an eight-week instruction period with 4 hours/week instruction or a 16-week instruction period with 2 hours/week. Its weekly instruction was conceptualized, classified, and described within the syllabus categories of instruction materials, activities, IC development focus areas, IC development goals, and intercultural sensitivity goals. The content of the syllabus was conceptualized and presented as ELF topics in a sequential order spread over the eight-week instruction period with one topic specified for each week.

Based on the data from the students' input, the goals and objectives of the syllabus were set to develop awareness about the global nature of the English language and its function as a lingua franca in global communication. It was designed to enhance the participants' IC through their exposure to ELF-based materials and their participation in in-class activities focusing on the changing notions of and concepts about the global culture

and ELF. The goals and objectives of the syllabus were therefore set to be achieved consistent with Deardorff's (2006) process-oriented model, which defines the involvement of the participants in their attainment of IC development by their own involvement in in-class activities at two levels: individual and interactional.

The instruction materials were chosen to expose the participants to ELF varieties in the context of English L1 countries, and intercultural topics deemed essential for the development of intercultural awareness and competence needed for global communication. They include films, videos, and written materials. The written material was compiled and adapted from academic sources, including extractions from Bayyurt (2012, 2013), Wardhaugh (1986), Jenkins (2014), and Parker (1986). The adaptation was accomplished by redundancy and simplification to match the participants' linguistic levels and the IC development areas identified in the syllabus.

The medium of instruction model in the implementation of the syllabus, as well as in the redundancies and simplifications for material preparation, was conceptualized according to Matsuda and Friedrich (2011), who suggest that the most appropriate medium of instruction for an ELF program for learners from the same region or country should be based on the established variety that is dominant in these areas, as they would be consistent with the learners' background in English. Since English classes in the Expanding Circle countries are predominantly held in American or British English, ELF-aware curricula (Bayyurt & Sifakis 2015; Sifakis 2014; Seidelhofer 2011) in these countries should adopt one of them as the instructional model. This did not contradict with the syllabus objectives, which intended to expose the participants to many different ELF varieties used in their host countries.

The activities specified in the syllabus are to be conducted in line with Deardorff's process-oriented model, which is consistent with sociocultural learning theory. The participation of the subjects in the activities was conceptualized within this approach by the activation of the students' skills to listen, observe, evaluate, analyze, interpret, and relate in the classroom context to develop, step by step, first an attitude of respect, value for other cultures, openness, ability to withhold judgments, and curiosity to discover while tolerating ambiguity, and then specific cultural knowledge and comprehension.

CONCLUSION

The current English preparatory programs provided for government-sponsored Turkish graduate sojourners generally fall short when it comes to developing participants' IC, as the success criteria for these programs are instead bound by the candidates' sufficient preparation for the TOEFL and IELTS exams. These criteria fail to meet the sojourners' communication needs as they ignore the global nature and functions of English and the existence of ELF domains in English L1 countries. Data collected from participants during their studies abroad demonstrate the shortcomings of the current preparatory programs in these areas. They also indicate the participants' desire for complementing these skills through a pre-departure course to be provided during their preparation period.

The syllabus that was designed as a result of this study aims to meet such students' IC development needs. It consists of three major aspects: ELF content; an IC development dimension as defined by Deardorff's (2006) process-oriented model; and a sociocultural outlook to be followed in the implementation of the syllabus, which is intended to turn all three aspects into a common culture to be enjoyed by all those involved—the instructor as an interactant mediator, the learner as an interactant participant, and the administrator as a researcher participant.

Guided by sociocultural learning theory, the IC development process defined by the model and used as the framework in the development of this syllabus, requires the internalization of knowledge shared in the classroom by all the participants, with the mediation of the instructor as an interactant. The learning process designed in the syllabus aims to promote individual development by encouraging the individual's in-class interaction, thus, development can be achieved at both the individual and interactional levels.

APPENDIX A

E-mail Interview Questions

1. Where are you currently living and studying?
2. Are any of your colleagues, close friends, and lecturers native speakers of English?
3. Do you have any non-native English speaker colleagues, friends, and lecturers? Where do they come from?

4. Prior to arriving in the host country did you have any knowledge about their culture? Please explain briefly.
5. Have you had any adjustment problems such as with language, culture shock, differences in body language, religion, ethnicity, nationality, gender, clothing etc.? Please explain.
6. What are the important issues required for intercultural communication (open-mindedness, social initiative, emotional stability, flexibility, patience, humor, curiosity, and ability to deal with stress)? Please explain.
7. Since you have been abroad has there been any change in your perception of what the ideal English language is and who its speakers are? Please explain.
8. What kind of advice would you give to those who will go to study abroad if they encounter problems resulting from culture, national, ethnic, and language differences?
9. In terms of these issues, do you think the English preparatory program you attended prepared you to live and study abroad?
10. In your opinion, what can be added to the English preparatory program you attended in Turkey in terms of its contents and subjects that would facilitate convenience for living in these countries and ease communication with people living in these countries?

APPENDIX B: INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT (ICD) SYLLABUS

The weekly instruction content of the syllabus was organized according to the material used in a weekly session, and the activities were organized for each session according to the IC focus, identified as “IC and sensitivity development goals,” to be achieved on a weekly basis for gradual IC development within the eight-week instruction period.

Week 1: Registration and Introduction; Stereotyping

- Material:* YouTube videoclips of different varieties of English; Written Handout 1: “Social Categorization and Stereotyping.”
- Activity:* Information exchange on the differences between the students; Discussions on how stereotypes are constructed in societies

- Focus:* Recognizing differences between individuals within the group; recognizing differences between cultures
- IC goal:* Withholding judgments; tolerating ambiguity; valuing other cultures
- Intercultural Sensitivity goal:* Respect for cultural differences; interaction attentiveness

Week 2: The Concept of “Self” and “Idiolect”

- Material:* YouTube videoclips: different people talking about a common subject; Extracts from the *New York Times*, the *Guardian*, the *Times of India*, the *Turkish Daily News*; Written Handout 2: “Self-Concept”; “Idiolect.”
- Activity:* Students’ reports and opinions on the same subjects; Discussions about the news content with particular reference to differences in daily activities and preferences and their cultural variation dimensions; discussion about what makes a person a New Yorker, Londoner, Istanbulite, etc.
- Focus:* Awareness of “self”; awareness of cultural differences between English speaking societies; multiculturalism in the sense of being a world citizen and recognizing others as members of the same world
- IC goal:* Withholding judgment; cultural self-awareness; sociolinguistic awareness
- IS goal:* Interaction confidence; interaction attentiveness; interaction enjoyment

Week 3: English in Turkey; English in L1 Countries

- Material:* YouTube Videoclips: people from English L1 countries speaking different varieties of English; Written Handout 3: “English in Turkey”; “Variations in English in L1 Countries.”
- Activity:* Debate over their contents with particular reference to what is “ideal” in terms of learning, teaching, and practicing English; discussion on the possible difficulties to be confronted in interaction with similar people in the clips, and what could be done to pursue communication with them

- Focus:* Awareness of the concept of “ideal” and English learning/teaching practices in Turkey; Communication problems posed by linguistic and cultural variations in English L1 countries and their remedies; strategies to perpetuate communication
- IC goal:* Tolerating ambiguity; withholding judgment; deep cultural knowledge
- IS goal:* Interaction confidence; interaction attentiveness

Week 4: Irregularities and “Errors”; Global Varieties of English

- Material:* YouTube Videoclips: People from different parts of the world using different ELF varieties; Written Handout 4: “Irregularities and Variations in English”
- Activity:* Discussions on the significance of “errors” in terms of cultural exchange and their communicative function; debate over “grammaticality” and whether “errors” should be corrected; debates and discussions on the contents of the material
- Focus:* Communicative function of language; and communicative function of English in the global context; reciprocal influences of languages; inevitability of language change as a process of representing societal change
- IC goal:* Valuing other cultures; tolerating ambiguity; deep cultural knowledge; sociolinguistic awareness
- IS goal:* Interaction attentiveness; interaction enjoyment

Week 5: ELF Practice

- Material:* Videos/TV programs presented by native and non-native speakers; watching the movie *Kite Runner* or other
- Activity:* Students’ reports, views, and debates on the content and language use; reports and discussions on the setting and scene, themes and the protagonists
- Focus:* Differences between variants of English; difficulties posed by such differences
- IC goal:* Tolerating ambiguity; sociolinguistic awareness; deep cultural knowledge
- IS goal:* Interaction confidence; interaction enjoyment

Week 6: English in Modern Science; Globalism and National Cultures

- Material:* Videos/films; Written Handout 5: “Global Varieties of English”
- Activity:* Students’ reports, views and debates on the topics presented in the material discussions
- Focus:* Linguistic variation and intelligibility; the role of English as a means of global culture and the issue of whether it is a threat to national culture
- IC goal:* Valuing other cultures; cultural self-awareness; deep cultural knowledge; sociolinguistic awareness
- IS goal:* Interaction confidence; interaction enjoyment; respect for cultural differences

Week 7: ELF in the International University

- Material:* Written Handout 6: “Globalism and ELF”
- Activity:* Discussions about the contents
- Focus:* The role of ELF in advanced education worldwide; the development of awareness of the significance of ELF in advanced education
- IC goal:* Deep cultural knowledge; sociolinguistic knowledge
- IS goal:* Interaction attentiveness; interaction enjoyment

Week 8: Evaluation of the Course

- Material:* -
- Activity:* Discussions about the course and its improvement with particular reference to the participants’ intercultural development; strengths and weaknesses of the course
- Focus:* Significance of ELF and intercultural competence in global communication
- IC goal:* Improvement of the course
- IS goal:* Interaction engagement; interaction enjoyment

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