



Sarıgöz, İ. H. (2014). The effects of foreign language learning on intercultural awareness of non-native EFL teacher trainees. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching (IOJET)*, 1(5). 332-346.
<http://iojet.org/index.php/IOJET/article/view/67/94>

THE EFFECTS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING ON INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS OF NON-NATIVE EFL TEACHER TRAINEES

İskender Hakkı Sarıgöz

Gazi University

iskender@gazi.edu.tr

Biodata

İskender Hakkı Sarıgöz is an associate professor in Gazi University ELT Department. He holds MA and Ph. D degrees from Gazi University. His professional interests are teacher training, methodology, interdisciplinary dimensions of ELT, and translation. He has lectured in Gazi University ELT Department for 30 years. He has also lectured in some universities in Turkey and Europe (Erasmus) including Anadolu University DELTTP.

Copyright by Informascope. Material published and so copyrighted may not be published elsewhere without.

THE EFFECTS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING ON INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS OF NON-NATIVE EFL TEACHER TRAINEES

İskender Hakkı Sarıgöz
iskender@gazi.edu.tr

Abstract

This research focuses on the impact of teacher trainees' professional education in English Language Teaching (ELT) program on their perceptions of the intercultural diversity and awareness. It attempts to understand the relationship between foreign language learning as a part of foreign language teacher training and the development of personal intercultural perspectives. The paper argues that intercultural awareness would contribute to the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teacher trainees' personal development and future teaching performance in terms of development of global dialogue. The main assumption in this research is that foreign language instruction affects ELT teacher trainees' intercultural awareness in a positive way by the exposure it offers, and such an awareness may increase their contribution to global social behavior and interaction. In this vein, foreign language teachers play an important role in the construction of intercultural and international dialogue. The subject group's being ELT department teacher trainees in a non-English speaking country makes the results of the study more significant since the great majority of English teachers are not native speakers.

Keywords: intercultural awareness, learning and teaching English as a foreign language, teacher training, teacher trainees

1. Introduction

A successful foreign language learning experience enables the individual to speak a new language but this is not the only development to be observed. Foreign languages facilitate the exposure to the entire world. The personal improvement promoted by this exposure may be unlimited. Such a disclosure may be more important when one is learning to teach a foreign language. The main concern of this paper is to observe the progress of this sort in the sample teacher trainee group that may result from the acquisition of the English language. This way, they may contribute to the development of global communication. Bennet (1998) raises the discussion of how people come to mutual understanding when they do not have shared cultural experience. Yesterday it was diplomats', emigrants', and occasional international travelers' responsibility to answer this question. Citizens of the global village face this question every day. It is clear that matters of intercultural understanding require responses to other complex questions such as "How will the atmosphere of respect be realized in intercultural situations?"

1.1. Lingua Franca for Global Dialogue

The discussion of global social dialogue centers on communication, specifically intercultural communication. The ever growing international relations and the communicative performance it requires necessitate a medium of communication which will mediate



intercultural interaction. In this vein, English is used by millions of non-native speakers all over the world as a lingua franca. For most regions of the globe, the existing lingua franca which is English seems to be the most popular and affordable medium of cross cultural communication at the present time. Alptekin (1996) points at the weaknesses of the argument which underlines the impossibility of learning a foreign language without its culture base. English as a lingua franca includes numerous social contexts and cannot be associated only with its native settings. When there is a mismatch, the sound way is to build up conceptual bridges between the culturally familiar and unfamiliar by referring to the universal concepts of human experience. According to Blommaert and Verschueren (1991) it would be an illusion to claim that successful intercultural interaction could be achieved simply by accommodating to each other's style, or by taking shelter in a neutral language.

1.2. Foreign Language Learning as a Social Process

Learners' perception and knowledge of the world will not be limited to what is available locally after the acquisition of a foreign language. They do not have to limit their process of global perception mostly to the translated discourse. By using the target language, as practiced in foreign language lessons, through speaking, listening, reading, and writing they are exposed to the literary, scientific, social and cultural topics created by distant communities. There will be fewer boundaries for them in perceiving the world. Such a freedom enables them to review all sorts of materials and interact with each other without borders. This way, they have access to the cultural diversity and sets of values of far away societies. Such a familiarity and knowledge about distant cultures elevated by the ability of speaking foreign languages will help teacher trainees develop an understanding of respect for other cultures. Moreover, it may play an important part in curing the universal pathology suffered in cross cultural interaction. Sercu (2005) states that teaching a foreign language in the classroom connects students to a culturally different world. Consequently the aims of foreign language teaching (FLT) include teaching intercultural communicative competence as well as communicative competence.

1.3. Self Development, Social Behavior and Intercultural Diversity

Learning a foreign language, the struggle it necessitates and the acculturation it brings to the learner are multidimensional matters to look into. The learner is to acquire a very complicated system and has to use it in social interaction. The learning course itself is a long and graded task. It requires adopting new learning strategies and nurturing them intensively. The learner has to operate many linguistic and non-linguistic systems at the same time, consciously and automatically. Due to their characteristics, foreign language learning activities foster the development of intrapersonal and interpersonal confidence. Throughout the learning process the individual's self image and self confidence in interaction may increase significantly. The learner who is a teacher candidate, as in this research, can develop the mental faculty of processing the new intake into universally positive output.

1.4. The Issue of Culture

It is impossible for any methodologist or foreign language teaching practitioner to avoid the subtle matter of culture in the classroom. Nevertheless, the place of culture in FLT is still a controversial issue; at least its dose creates debates. When we look into dispute of this sort, we encounter opposing ideas. Some argue that language and culture are inseparable and must be treated so in FLT. Others think that the native speaker based model is not feasible and not realistic but there are other ways to deal with cultural differences that lead to communication breakdown.

Every individual's culture may represent reality differently. For this reason, Cultural clashes across the world are inevitable and it causes weakening of international and intercultural dialogues. The foreign language teaching and learning may linguistically help the consistent softening of dissimilar societies to understand each other. Blommaert and Verschueren (1991) argue that in order to approach intercultural or international communication from the view point of linguistic pragmatics, it must be clarified whether the distinctions in communicative properties are universally definable, or culture specific, or merely individual.

The representation of the target culture in ELT programs and materials may require serious attention in different teaching settings due to the priorities of the local culture and the perception of the world by its people. Problems of cultural mismatch may not occur in geographically close and culturally similar societies. Nevertheless a mismatch of this sort is very real in many parts of the globe even in geographies labeled as "developed." A sound intercultural awareness approach which promotes intercultural communicative competence may be useful in solving linguistically the intercultural accidents and chaos.

Davcheva and Sercu (2005) investigate the dimensions of culture in FLT materials and state that international respondents claim to be satisfied when the cultural content in course books matches learners' interest. Information about the variety of customs and traditions, historical aspects, geography, religion and cultural heritage of the country are among the valued. Alptekin (2002) criticizes the native speaker based notion of communicative competence since English cannot function as a lingua franca this way. The notion of communicative competence should be redefined accordingly to conceptualize English as a world language. Blommaert (1991) briefly defines culture in intercultural communication as a heterogeneous phenomenon which manifests itself in various shapes both at a very formal level as well as at a situation dependent level. In this vein, intercultural communication theories that focus mainly on one of the various aspects of the phenomenon run the risk of oversimplifying a very complex matter.

2. ELT Programs

ELT programs can serve as tools for the contextualization of the teaching of intercultural dialogue. Unbiased and universally balanced thematic presentation of issues in the ELT program provides suitable environment for teaching social dialogue as well as the target language. Such a program design is rather demanding for the native speaker designers who may prefer the contextualization based on the native speaker mindset. Alptekin and Alptekin (1990) discuss that non-English-speaking countries should launch culturally neutral, non-elitist and learner oriented EFL programs where less attention is paid to instruction models based on native-speaker norms and values.

2.1. Teacher Training Programs

English language teacher training programs in non-English speaking countries have two main goals. The first one is to teach English to trainees through language skills based courses. The second goal is to train them as foreign language teachers. To learn a foreign language and to learn how to teach it as a foreign language are demanding academic experiences which require the integration of theoretical and applied studies. From the perspective of intercultural awareness, ELT teacher trainees are advantageous because they may study various topics about different geographies and cultures in obligatory courses like literature and reading. They may participate in thematic discussions and talk about many shared, or distant, or controversial cultural features. The close link between FLT and intercultural

awareness is an important issue which cannot be overlooked in foreign language teacher training.

2.2. ELT Teacher Trainees

As discussed above, teacher trainees in non-English speaking countries have a complicated action plan during their training. They will learn a foreign language at university, and they will learn how to teach it in local, formal education. However, when they start teaching they need to convince their students that learning a foreign language is vital for their future life and career. This is a challenging task where the target language is a completely foreign language and it is only one of the subjects in the curriculum. Students barely use it outside the English classes.

Ryan and Sercu (2005) discuss that if foreign language teachers prepare students for future intercultural contact situations and assist them to better comprehend their own cultural identity, they should understand target cultures as well as their own besides the general understanding of foreign cultures.

Teacher trainees should be aware of the global diversity and fundamental differences between communities stemming from different cultural backgrounds and life experiences. In this respect, teacher training should have an intercultural awareness raising component so that teacher trainees can think about the reasons for intercultural communication breakdown and success in terms of linguistic pragmatics.

Stern (1983) discusses that it is not possible to teach a language for long without coming face to face with social context factors that have influence on language and language learning process. He highlights the assumption that speech varies in different social settings and that there are speech varieties within a single speech community. Frick et al (2010) discuss that the transition from higher education to real teaching is a discouraging experience for pre-service teachers who often think that they are ill-prepared for the challenges, uncertainties and realities they face. Schoeman and Mabunda (2012) argue that the endeavor to become a teacher is a complicated and responsible process and requires a real personal revolution.

3. Method

The research focuses on the effects of foreign language learning on intercultural awareness of ELT Teacher Trainees. The subject group consists of teacher trainees who attend an English language teaching department to become instructors in primary schools and high schools. The research was conducted in Ankara.

3.1. Research Questions

The first part of the scale attempts to find answers to the following research questions:

Do the teacher trainees deal with intercultural topics in their main language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) activities? Do they deal with them in contexts where all language skills are used in an integrated fashion?

The second part of the scale seeks answers to the following questions:

Does intercultural awareness expansion affect their personal and interpersonal development, and knowledge of the world? Can they carry out better social dialogue in intercultural settings?

Furthermore, the research looks for meaningful differences between the findings obtained from both parts of the research and the demographics about the trainee group such as the type

of high-school they graduated from, their year of education in college, education and income levels of their parents, and their having been abroad.

3.2. Instrument

“The Effects of Foreign Language learning on Intercultural Awareness of ELT Teacher Trainees” scale includes 30 questions and all items have been developed by the researcher. For the responses the five item Likert-type scale has been used. It has two main parts as described above. The statistical analysis has been displayed in eleven tables below. The research also contains demographic data about the subject group and their parents.

3.3. Participants, Administration of the Scale

A sample of 201 teacher trainees enrolled in the department of English Language Teaching (ELT) participated in the first administration of the scale. To check the construct validity of the scale, an exploratory factor analysis was applied. The orthogonal technique Varimax (maximum likelihood) has been used in this study (Çokluk, Şekercioğlu ve Büyükoztürk, 2010). The factor loadings of the items obtained by the exploratory factor analysis have been analyzed. The 30 item scale has two factors. Two items of the scale had factor loadings less than .30. Hence these items were removed from the scale, and factor loadings were re-calculated. At the end of the analysis, it was found that 5 of the 28 items loaded in factor one, and 23 of them loaded on factor 2. The KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) value of the scale is .88 and Barlett’s test value is 2670.56. The factor loadings of the first factor vary between .453 and .774 and factor loadings of the second factor vary between .451 and .716. The variance explained by the first factor is 33.62 % and the variance explained by the second factor is 8.65%. The total variance explained by the scale is 42.27%. The Cronbach’s Alpha value of the scale for the first factor is .81 and the same value for the second factor is .83. The Cronbach’s Alpha value for the whole scale is .86. The results of the exploratory factor analysis are given in Table 1.

Table 1. *Exploratory factor analysis results of “the effects of foreign language learning on intercultural awareness of EFL teacher trainees” scale*

Item Number	Factor Loadings		Communalities
	Factor 1	Factor 2	
M1	.774		.62
M2	.739		.55
M3	.639		.43
M4	.752		.57
M5	.755		.58
M6	.453		.29
M7		.462	.33
M8		.631	.44
M9		.669	.47
M10		.716	.51
M11		.654	.44
M12		.707	.51
M13		.681	.53
M14		.658	.44
M15		.632	.44
M16		.640	.45

M17	.592	.36
M18	.581	.38
M19	.451	.29
M20	.584	.35
M21	.571	.34
M22	.570	.32
M23	.552	.34
M24	.602	.39
M25	.563	.32
M26	.600	.40
M27	.542	.39
M28	.463	.32
	%33.62	%8.65

4. RESULTS

This section contains detailed discussion and interpretation of the findings questioned in the scale.

Second Administration of the Scale and the Data Obtained

After the first application, the number of the items in the scale was reduced to twenty eight. Two questions were deleted as described above. The sample group in the second administration consisted of 257 ELT department teacher trainees who attended second, third, and fourth years of their education. The administration was carried out in classrooms by their lecturers. The data about age, gender, academic average, academic year attended, whether they had traveled abroad, education levels of students' parents, type of the high school they graduated from, and monthly income level of the family were also collected. The

In this application, the KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) value of the scale is .94; Barlet test is 4181.00. The Cronbach's Alpha value of the scale for the first factor is .84; the Cronbach's Alpha value for the second factor is .95. The Cronbach's Alpha value of the whole scale is .95.

Gender Distribution of the participants:

Thirty six (% 14.0) teacher trainees (ELT students) are male and 221 (%86) are female.

Age Distribution of the Students:

The data show that 11 (% 4.6) students are at the age of 19, and 57 (% 24.1) students are at the age of 20. Ninety (% 38.0) students are at the age of 21, and 54 (% 22.8) students are at the age of 22. Seventeen (% 7.2) students are at the age of 23, and 4 (% 1.7) students are at the age of 24. Three (% 1.3) students are at the age of 25 and 1 (% 0.4) student is at the age of 28.

Distribution of the Participants' Education Year in College:

The data indicates that 63 (% 24.5) students are in the 2nd year of college, 99 (% 38.5) students are in the 3rd year and 95 (% 37.0) students are in the 4th year.

Distribution of the Participants' Mothers' Education Levels:

According to the data 121 (% 47.5) teacher trainees' mothers are primary school graduates, 35 (% 13.7) are secondary school graduates, 56 (% 22.0) are lycee (high school) graduates and 43 (% 16.9) are university graduates.

Distribution of the Students' Fathers' Education Levels:

Seventy (% 27.3) of the students' fathers are primary school graduates, 40 (% 15.6) are secondary school graduates, 70 (% 27.3) of them are lycée (high school) graduates and 76 (% 29.7) of them are university graduates.

Type of High School They Graduated from:

According to the data 101 (% 39.9) students are Teacher Lycee graduates, 92 (% 36.4) students are Anatolian Lycee graduates and 10 (% 4.0) students are (regular) lycee graduates.

Distribution of the Income Levels of the Participants' Parents:

The income levels of 14 (%5.6) students' parents are high, 215 (85.3) of the students' parents' income levels are middle, 21 (8.3) have low income levels, and 1 (0.4) student's parent's income level is very low.

Table 2. *Frequency and percentage distribution of the students' foreign language learning and intercultural awareness (1 strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 undecided, 4 agree, 5 strongly agree)*

Part 1 In foreign language learning classes						
Item	Degree	Degree				
		1	2	3	4	5
1-I read about international and intercultural topics.	f	4	32	56	130	35
	%	1,6	12,5	21,8	50,6	13,6
2-I listen to international and intercultural topics.	f	6	37	59	125	30
	%	2.3	14.4	23.0	48.6	11.7
3-I write about international and intercultural topics.	f	38	100	72	39	8
	%	14.8	38.9	28.0	15.2	3.1
4-I speak about international and intercultural topics.	f	9	38	68	110	32
	%	3.5	14.8	26.5	42.8	12.5
5-the International and intercultural topics I discuss in foreign language classes arouse my attention	f	7	21	44	137	48
	%	2.7	8.2	17.1	53.3	18.7
6-I use integrated foreign language skills for developing my knowledge of the world.	f	47	199	1	0	10
	%	19.0	80.6	0.4	0	0.6
Part 2 After learning a foreign language						
7-my desire to develop my knowledge of the world has increased.	f	5	9	26	115	102
	%	1.9	3.5	10.1	44.7	39.7
8-I appreciate myself in a more reflective way.	f	3	6	66	127	55
	%	1.2	2.3	25.7	49.4	21.4
9-I learn more about myself and my capacity.	f	2	6	28	144	77
	%	0.8	2.3	10.9	56.0	30.0
10-my self-confidence develops.	f	3	6	23	142	83
	%	1.2	2.3	8.9	55.3	32.3
11-my intrapersonal confidence develops.	f	4	10	33	140	70
	%	1.6	3.9	12.8	54.5	27.2
12-my interpersonal	f	4	6	29	144	74

confidence develops.	%	1.6	2.3	11.3	56.0	28.8
13- my intercultural	f	3	10	46	135	63
confidence develops.	%	1.2	3.9	17.9	52.5	24.5
14-I can easily interact in	f	3	18	83	104	49
multicultural environments.	%	1.2	7.0	32.3	40.5	19.1
15-I feel that I can be	f	3	10	70	121	53
intersocially successful						
depending on my acquisition						
based on the foreign language(s)	%	1.2	3.9	27.2	47.1	20.6
I speak.						
16-I feel and will always feel	f	4	12	75	109	57
better and be well equipped in						
intercultural situations and	%	1.6	4.7	29.2	42.4	22.2
settings.						
17-I can better analyze and	f	2	14	45	152	44
understand new intercultural						
and social topics of all sorts.	%	0.8	5.4	17.5	59.1	17.1
18-my life skills have been	f	2	4	39	142	70
developing.	%	0.8	1.6	15.2	55.3	27.2
19-my power of imagination	f	2	10	34	129	81
develops and I become more						
creative	%	0.8	3.9	13.3	50.4	31.6
20-I can flexibly and better	f	2	6	57	127	64
analyze the happenings around						
me.	%	0.8	2.3	22.3	49.6	25.0
21-I can react to the	f	2	12	51	135	57
happenings around me flexibly.	%	0.8	4.7	19.8	52.5	22.2
22-I learn to be more open to	f	1	11	44	127	74
criticism.	%	0.4	4.3	17.1	49.4	28.8
23-I can see the differences	f	3	8	19	126	101
and similarities between						
cultures.	%	1.2	3.1	7.4	49.0	39.3
24-I try to figure out	f	3	9	50	120	75
different concepts in other						
cultures.	%	1.2	3.5	19.5	46.7	29.2
25-I can better react to hot	f	5	15	86	113	38
intercultural issues.	%	1.9	5.8	33.5	44.0	14.8
26-I can better carry on	f	3	14	64	136	40
social dialogue in intercultural						
settings.	%	1.2	5.4	24.9	52.9	15.6
27-I understand and respect	f	2	7	28	143	77
intercultural diversity.	%	0.8	2.7	10.9	55.6	30.0
28-I think that intercultural	f	3	4	28	110	112
awareness and language						
competency is important for						
intercultural and global conflict						
deterrence and it is necessary	%	1.2	1.6	10.9	42.8	43.6
for global harmony.						

Table 3. *Descriptive statistics: results for the relation between “in foreign language learning” classes and “after learning a foreign language” parts and the students’ education year*

	Education Year	n	\bar{x}	S
In foreign language learning classes	2 nd Year	63	3,24	,67
	3 rd Year	99	3,50	,65
	4 th Year	95	3,51	,78
	2 nd Year	63	3,82	,47
After learning a foreign language	3 rd Year	99	4,12	,47
	4 th Year	95	3,94	,68

Table 4. *One Way Variance Analysis (ANOVA) results for the relation between “in foreign language learning classes” and “after learning a foreign language” parts and the students’ education year*

Parts		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Scheffe
In foreign language learning classes	Between Groups	3,244	2	1,622	3,263	,040	---
	Within Groups	126,260	254	,497			
	Total	129,504	256				
After learning a foreign language	Between Groups	3,740	2	1,870	6,019	,003	* meaningful difference between 2 nd and 3 rd year teacher trainees
	Within Groups	78,921	254	,311			
	Total	82,661	256				

*p<.05

Although there is a significant difference “in the foreign language learning classes” part in the variance analysis, the conducted post hoc test (Scheffe test) showed that there is not a significant difference (F:3,263; p>.05) between the two parts. In the second part which focuses on the data “After learning a foreign language” a significant difference has arisen in the analysis. Post hoc test (Scheffe test) was conducted to identify in which years the differences had occurred. According to the findings, a significant difference was revealed between the second and third year students (F: 6,019; p<.05).

Table 5. Descriptive statistics: results for the relation between “in foreign language learning classes” and “after learning a foreign language” parts and the students’ graduated high school type

		Graduated High School Type	n	\bar{x}	S
In foreign language learning classes		teacher lycee	101	3,6040	,67283
		Anatolian lycee	92	3,3768	,71221
		private lycee	10	3,2333	,76255
		Lycee	50	3,2700	,73377
After learning a foreign language		teacher lycee	101	4,0716	,49778
		Anatolian lycee	92	3,9670	,58103
		private lycee	10	3,9273	,64397
		Lycee	50	3,8564	,64671

Table 6. One Way Variance Analysis (ANOVA) and Scheffe test results for the relation between “in foreign language learning classes” and “after learning a foreign language” parts and the type of high school trainees graduated from

Parts		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Scheffe
In foreign language learning classes	Between Groups	4,955	3	1,652	3,342	,020	-----
	Within Groups	123,045	249	,494			
	Total	128,000	252				
After learning a foreign language	Between Groups	1,647	3	,549	1,715	,164	-----
	Within Groups	79,725	249	,320			
	Total	81,372	252				

Although there is a significant difference “In the foreign language learning classes” part according to the high schools graduated from in the variance analysis, the conducted post hoc test (Scheffe test) showed that there is not a significant difference (F:3,342; $p>.05$). In the second part which focuses on the data “After learning a foreign language” a significant difference has not been noted according to the high schools graduated from in the analysis (F:1,715; $p>.05$).

Table 7. Descriptive statistics: results for the relation between “in foreign language learning classes” and “after learning a foreign language” parts and the trainees’ mothers’ education level

		The Student’s Mother’s Education Level	n	\bar{x}	S
In foreign language learning classes		primary	121	3,3815	,73580
		secondary	35	3,3952	,73218
		Lycee	56	3,5565	,63188
		university	43	3,5078	,71728
After learning a foreign language		primary	121	3,9343	,63643
		secondary	35	4,0831	,40797
		Lycee	56	4,0722	,46377

language	university	43	3,9249	,58848
----------	------------	----	--------	--------

Table 8. *One Way Variance Analysis (ANOVA) results for the relation between “in foreign language learning classes” and “after learning a foreign language” parts and the trainees’ mothers’ education level*

Parts		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
In foreign language learning classes	Between Groups	1,439	3	,480	,950	,417
	Within Groups	126,764	251	,505		
	Total	128,203	254			
After learning a foreign language	Between Groups	1,228	3	,409	1,274	,284
	Within Groups	80,639	251	,321		
	Total	81,867	254			

Both “In the foreign language learning classes” and “After learning a foreign language” parts a significant difference has not been viewed in terms of their mother’s level of education ($F: ,950; p > .05$; $F: 1,274; p > .05$).

Table 9. *Descriptive statistics: results for the relation between “in foreign language learning classes” and “after learning a foreign language” parts and the trainees’ fathers’ education level*

	The Student’s Father’s Education Level	n	\bar{x}	S
In foreign language learning classes	primary	70	3,3595	,64745
	secondary	40	3,4125	,70810
	Lycee	70	3,4452	,76018
	university	76	3,5307	,71942
After learning a foreign language	primary	70	3,9774	,54699
	secondary	40	4,0705	,60029
	Lycee	70	3,9519	,56423
	university	76	3,9719	,57525

Table 10. *One Way Variance Analysis (ANOVA) results for the relation between “in foreign language learning classes” and “after learning a foreign language” parts and the trainees’ fathers’ education level*

Parts		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
In foreign language learning classes	Between Groups	1,110	3	,370	,733	,533
	Within Groups	127,170	252	,505		
	Total	128,279	255			

After learning a foreign language	Between Groups	,385	3	,128	,397	,755
	Within Groups	81,483	252	,323		
	Total	81,868	255			

Both in the foreign language learning classes and the after learning a foreign language part a significant difference has not been viewed in terms of their mother's level of education (F: ,733; $p > .05$; F: ,397; $p > .05$).

Table 11 *Descriptive statistics: results for the relation between "in foreign language learning classes" and "after learning a foreign language" parts and the trainees' having been abroad*

Part	Having Been Abroad	N	\bar{x}	S	sd	T	P
In foreign language learning classes	Yes	47	3,67	,65846	244	2,437	,016*
	No	199	3,39	,71363			
After learning a foreign language	Yes		4,17	,53490	244	2,509	,013*
	No	199	3,94	,56324			

* $p < .05$

A significant difference has been revealed between the "In foreign language learning classes" part and the trainees' having been abroad ($t=2,437$; $p < .05$). A significant difference has also been revealed between the "After learning a foreign language" part and the trainees' having been abroad ($t=2,509$; $p < .05$).

5. Discussion

According to the findings, going abroad and exposure to diverse environments play an important role in perceiving the importance of intercultural awareness. This significant difference appears in both parts of the scale. Many teacher trainees take part in international exchange programs, teaching assistantship programs, and other similar activities. They interact professionally and socially in these environments. They also attend work and travel programs in distant geographies. Experiences of this sort are precious and very influential in terms of improving intercultural awareness and global, social dialogue as well as intrapersonal and interpersonal development (see table 11).

In the third year of the teacher training program, they take the most intense ELT methodology courses. This heavy academic demand and intense microteachings they perform and heavy exposure to ELT experiences of all sorts may have caused the difference illustrated in table 4. This is a stage where they pass from theory to intense methodological practice.

In the first part of the scale, more than half of the participants state that they read about intercultural and international topics. Fourteen percent stated that they have not read such topics. Almost twenty two percent are in between. However the exposure to intercultural themes can be increased. About sixty percent think that they listen to international and intercultural topics. Seventeen percent do not do so. Twenty three are undecided. When the

importance of this skill is considered, the need for more listening activities reflecting intercultural differences can be observed. The situation in writing is critical because only eighteen percent write about such topics. Writing is the detailed disclosure of what we think. For this reason it requires urgent attention from the perspective of intercultural awareness. Fifty five percent speak on intercultural topics. Almost eighteen percent do not speak and twenty six percent are undecided. As the most critical skill for intercultural communication speaking requires definitely more attention. The international and intercultural subjects arouse the attention of seventy two percent of the participants. This is an encouraging rate. Nearly all participants state that they do not use integrated foreign language skills for developing their knowledge of the world. This serious reminder signals that, in ELT programs, there should be more integrated skills activities designed for this purpose. The activity range should naturally include international and intercultural interaction through all means available including exchange programs, teaching assistantship programs, youth projects, travel, and other activities through current means of communication. Briefly the items in this part suggest that many ELT teacher trainees deal with international and intercultural matters in four main foreign language skills activities in a disintegrated manner.

The second part of the questionnaire focuses on the participants' perceptions "after learning a foreign language." Almost all believe that their desire to develop their knowledge of the world has increased. Although they cannot nurture this by using integrated foreign language skills for the present as discussed above, their eagerness is worth discussing. This may be an accelerating factor in international and intercultural awareness development activities. Seventy one percent claim that they appreciate themselves in a more reflective way on the other hand the three percent stated that they do not think so. Such an appreciation helps eighty six percent of the participants learn about themselves and their capacity. Eighty six percent of the students stated that such an appreciation develops their self confidence. Additionally, eighty one percent think that after learning the foreign language, their intrapersonal confidence developed. These achievements in turn eventually developed the interpersonal confidence of the learners drastically, as claimed by eighty four percent of the participants. Such a self reflection and development in self confidence may help teacher trainees to behave better in intercultural interaction.

The experience of foreign language learning developed their intercultural awareness according to one hundred ninety eight participants out of two hundred fifty seven. This can be considered a good means of developing the desired social sensitivity. Fifty nine percent believe that they can easily interact in multicultural environments whereas thirty two percent have doubts or are undecided. Nevertheless, sixty seven percent of the participants feel that they can be intersocially successful depending on their acquisition based on the foreign language(s) they speak, twenty seven percent are unclear, and only five percent disagree. The term intersocial represents, in this study, solely the socially interactive domain in international, intercultural settings. The percentage of the participants who feel and will always feel better and are well equipped in intercultural situations and settings is sixty four. Six percent do not think so, and twenty nine percent are still undecided. When they have more exposure to such settings, the positive rate may increase since they will be able to use the foreign language for effective communication. This finding shows that they need exposure to international settings.

Seventy six percent of the teacher trainees state that they can better analyze and understand intercultural and social topics of all sorts. Only six percent do not think so, and seventeen percent are undecided. As a conclusion, eighty two percent believe that their life skills, which construct personal social immune system, have been developing after learning the foreign language. This outcome is extremely important for it raises their hopes for a better

life thanks to the intersocial and intercultural awareness enhancement it provides. Eighty two percent believe that their power of imagination develops and they become more creative. Only thirteen percent of the sample are undecided. This finding shows that learning a foreign language develop learners' power of imagination by providing intercultural variety and scenes provided in the lessons. Seventy four percent think that they can more flexibly analyze the happenings around them. Against disagreeing five percent, seventy four percent of the sample say that they can react to the happenings around them flexibly. Seventy four of the teacher trainees think they learn to be more open to criticism, only four percent disagree. These findings indicate that the foreign language learning experience develops their metacognitive skills and critical thinking skills in interpersonal and intrapersonal domains which are essential in intercultural interaction.

The last six items of the scale focus on the perceptions of the sample on intercultural awareness. Eighty eight percent say that they can see the differences and similarities between cultures, and seventy eight percent try to figure out different concepts in other cultures, only four percent claim that they do not do so.

Fifty nine percent of the teacher trainees feel that they can better react to hot intercultural issues, almost eight percent do not think so, and thirty three percent are undecided. The uncertainty may be due to the inadequate international exposure during the university years. As for the ability to successfully carry out social dialogue in intercultural settings, sixty eight percent of the sample feel ready, twenty five percent are undecided, and only six percent is not ready. The uncertainty in this item may also result from the insufficient personal intercultural interaction. Eighty five percent of the participants state that they understand and respect intercultural diversity, eleven percent is neutral, and three percent do not think so. Finally eighty six percent of the sample think that intercultural awareness and language competency are important factors in coping with intercultural and global conflicts and they are necessary for global harmony. Only two percent disagree and eleven percent are undecided. The last two findings show that learning foreign languages and the intercultural exposure it supplies play an important part in fostering the global peace. (See table 2)

6. Conclusion

Foreign language teaching and intercultural awareness are interrelated topics. As the findings indicate in this research, the teacher trainee group is well aware of the fact that exposure to international and intercultural topics in EFL classes is crucial for developing awareness. The trainees deal with such topics to some extent while practicing language skills. This exposure can be expanded. Nevertheless, they do not seem to use "integrated" foreign language skills for developing their knowledge of the world in the learning process of the target language. This finding shows the necessity for the creation and use of activities where the target language is used with all its dimensions for this purpose. Practice in one language skill in isolation is not enough in a globalized world.

Upon learning the target language, the sample group experiences a significant increase in the desire to develop self confidence, self development, intercultural awareness, and interpersonal confidence in evaluating, responding and carrying out intercultural interaction. Moreover a new language enables them to perceive and understand cultural differences better and respect diversity.

The findings indicate that education levels of trainees' parents do not make any difference in their views about the statements in both parts of the scale. Neither do the types of high schools they graduated from cause significant differences in their perceptions.

In geographies where the target language is a completely foreign language and is not needed much in daily life, both learning English and learning how to teach it are methodologically demanding tasks. Teacher trainees go through both courses of action in four or five years at college. Meanwhile as the research discloses they have the opportunity to deal with and to think about the topics related to distant cultures. The mutual understanding of this sort developed by learners in foreign language lessons all over the world contributes to the global social dialogue. On the large scale, the work force who speak foreign languages will enhance the progress of the economies of developing geographies as well as the developed ones and increase the resources allocated for the rehabilitation of their education systems.

References

Alptekin C and Alptekin M 1990. The Question of Culture: EFL Teaching Non-English-Speaking Countries. In R. Rosner and R. Bolitho (eds.) *Currents of Change in English Language Teaching*, 21- 27. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Alptekin C 1996. Target-Language Culture in EFL Materials. In T. Hedge and N. Whitney (eds.) *Power Pedagogy Practice*. 53-61. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Alptekin C 2002. *Towards Intercultural Communicative Competence in ELT*. *ELT Journal*, 56(1), 57-64.

Bennet JB 1998. Intercultural Communication: A Current Perspective. In MJ Bennet (ed.) *Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication-Selected Readings*. 1-34. Maine: Intercultural Press.

Blommaert J 1991. How much Culture is there in Intercultural Communication. In Blommaert J and Verschueren J (eds.) *The Pragmatics of Intercultural and International Communication*. 13-31. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Blommaert J and Verschueren J 1991. Intercultural and International Communication. In Blommaert, J. and Verschueren J (eds.) *The Pragmatics of Intercultural and International Communication*. 1-12. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Çokluk Ö, Şekercioğlu G and Büyüköztür Ş 2010. *Sosyal Bilimler İçin Çok Değişkenli İstatistik*. Ankara: Pegem Akademi.

Dvcheva L and Sercu L 2005. Culture in Foreign Language Materials. In L Sercu, and others. *Foreign Language Teachers and Intercultural Competence - An International Investigation*. 90-109. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters LTD.

Frick L, Carl A and Beets P 2010. Reflection as learning about the Self in Context: Mentoring for Calatylist for Reflective Development in Pre-service Teachers. *South African Journal of Education*. 30: 421-437.

Ryan P and Sercu L 2005. Familiarity and Contacts with Foreign Cultures. In Sercu L and others. *Foreign Language Teachers and Intercultural Competence an International Investigation*. 39-49. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters LTD.

Sercu L 2005. Teaching Foreign Languages in an Intercultural World. In L. Sercu, and others. *Foreign Language Teachers and Intercultural Competence - An International Investigation*. 1-18. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters LTD.

Schoeman S and Mabunda P L 2012. Teaching Practice and the Personal and Socio-professional Development of Prospective Teachers. *South African Journal of Education*. 32: 240-254.

Stern H H 1983. *Fundamental concepts of language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.