THE INVESTIGATION ON PUBLIC AND PRIVATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY

Derya Yilmaz,
Aihemaituoheti Wujiabudula[i]
Uludag University,
Turkey

Abstract:
This article attempted to investigate the difference between university students' Intercultural Sensitivity in terms of age, gender, being public and private university student, native tongue, English level, years of learning English, and students' being abroad experience. A 15-item version (ISS-15) Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (Wang, 2016) which consists of 5 sub-factors was used to figure out and compare students' (public and private universities) competence of intercultural communication. The number of participants in this survey was 232. Spss 22 Version was used to find out the difference between public and private university participants' ICC. The findings suggest, considering the whole scale, that participants' Intercultural Sensitivity differ in terms of their gender and English level; No significant differences were found in terms of age, native tongue, university types and participants' being abroad experience. This paper offers valuable insights for applied researchers and scholars in terms of Intercultural Sensitivity when engaging in teaching Intercultural Sensitivity to English language learners.

Keywords: intercultural sensitivity, public and private university, second language acquisition, culture and language

1. Introduction

Recently, academicians and linguists have been endeavoring to carry out numerous researches in English language education, in particular, investigating the competence of language learners on listening, reading, speaking and writing have become the main focus for research areas in question.

Teaching culture, the target culture, is also of great importance for English language education. Due to this emerging trend, not only has teaching target culture,

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[i] Correspondence: email alanhoca@gmail.com

but also testing and assessing the Intercultural Sensitivity has also been a salient topic for many researchers in the field of both linguistic and foreign language education.

Divulging the significance of Intercultural Sensitivity is out of question due to the fact that learning a foreign language(s) does not mean solely acquiring the 4 competence, namely: listening, reading, writing and speaking. However, acknowledging the target culture and understanding the meaning of idioms or formulaic languages in the context of target culture also has brought a prominence for English language education. Therefore, testing and assessing English language learners' Intercultural Sensitivity has been becoming a gap to investigate and carry out more research since the considerable importance. So, it is significant factor for learners to improve and cultivate Intercultural Sensitivity for promoting communication and acknowledgement of target culture (Leask, 2009; John Cobert, 2003).

Even though innumerable researches have been done with regard to intercultural communicative competence, however, the studies comparing and contrasting the learner's perceptions towards ICC in state and private universities could not be found in literature. Therefore, it is believed that the research will fill the gap in this field. By comparing the students' intercultural communicative competence, this research may demonstrate some direction to language practitioners and educator in terms of cultivating Intercultural Sensitivity among students and helping students acquire this significant competence in order to be supportive for their foreign or second language learning process.

In this research, historical definitions are mentioned chronologically along with the review of literature, and research questions are presented prior to proceeding the methodology, result, discussion and future implications.

2. Review of Literature

Intercultural Sensitivity is not the totally new subject in English language education. Throughout the history, Intercultural Sensitivity has been undergoing various change of names even though this is still a debating topic. Its names and definitions have been approached considerably by many researchers and scholars.

In the literature, numerous conceptualizations have been found by many researchers. Intercultural Sensitivity was put forward by Byram in 1997 as "*intercultural competence*". (Byram, 1997), "*intercultural awareness*" (Quinlisk, 2005), "*intercultural sensitivity*" (Bennet, 1993). In these aforementioned definitions, intercultural competence or intercultural sensitivity has received the widespread acceptance by many researchers and academicians in the field of second and foreign language education (Byram, 1997; Sercu, 2006; Borghetti, 2013).

As for the definition of intercultural communicative competence, much definition could be found in the literature (Hymes, 1972; Ruben, 1976; Gudykunst & Wiseman, 1978). Hymes primarily postulated the definition which suggested that Intercultural Sensitivity represented the deep-rooted or inherent grammatical competence and the capability of putting grammar skills into various communicative

activities (Hymes, 1972). Byram indicated the conclusive definition which stated ICC is the sociolinguistic competence, which impacts the communicative situation such as building relationship and interaction when engaging in communication in target language (Byram, 1997). Bennet also tended to define ICC as knowing the norms and values of the target culture and oral and non-verbal communication as well as the body language of the communication (Bennet, 1986; Bell, 2000). Throughout the literature numerous researchers also approached the definition from psychological, linguistic, motivational, perceptional aspects (Hammer, 1978; Moran, 2001; Wiseman, 2002, Fantini, 2003; Güven, 2015; Wang & Zhou, 2016).

In Chinese cultural context, Gao also considered Intercultural Sensitivity from the cultural aspects, which indicated that "Dao (道)" and "Qi (气)" factor is the main core of the ICC. From the "Dao" and "Qi" perspective, "Dao (道)" represents the interaction and "Qi (气)" is the skills and the techniques of communication (Gao, 1998). Wang and Zhou also suggested 5 different components of ICC, respectively, "*interaction engagement, respect cultural difference, interaction confidence, interaction enjoyment and interaction attentiveness*" (Wang & Zhou, 2016).

In this article, we consider Wang and Zhou's classification as our components of ICC. Our questionnaire also approaches ICC components from five different factors. These factors comprise "*interaction engagement, respect cultural difference, interaction confidence, interaction enjoyment and interaction attentiveness*" (Wang & Zhou, 2016).

Sercu et al (2005) conducted a research on English teachers' perspective towards ICC teaching. Their result indicated teachers have become more intercultural even though their profile did not match all the components of regarding knowledge, abilities and attitudes that are required to be ICC teacher. Similar studies have been done relating to evaluating students' intercultural communication competence. Damnet (2008) conducted a research over teaching and learning intercultural competence. The results showed that teachers are expected to teach ICC using several teaching methodologies such as role-play and films.

Another study also suggested that indoctrinating Intercultural Sensitivity in foreign language education plays an important role in learners' acquisition of target language. It also indicated that culture teaching also is of the motivation for English learners. (Abdollahi-Guilani, 2012).

Atay et al (2009) also investigated teachers' attitude towards ICC, then the result showed that even though teachers show a positive perspective towards ICC, it is not common to integrate culture related teaching material in their English language classroom.

There is also one study conducted in 2 Chinese universities, the results showed that the students from Non-ELT departments demonstrated a low level of ICC, and it indicated that the level of ICC is unsatisfactory (Wang and Yu, 2008). Wu and Peng (2013) also performed a study over Chinese university students ICC level, the results suggested that students are aware of inadequacy of their knowledge of dissimilar/foreign culture, however, students normally do not motivate themselves to take action to adapt their behavior to communicate with people from different cultures.

Karabinar and Güler (2013) also investigated the language teachers' opinion on teaching intercultural communication competence. The result of this study showed that incorporating culture in English language teaching is sine qua non, however, it does not hold distinguished position in English language classroom due to the overload requirements of curriculum and constraints of their English teaching environment. This study appeared to suggest that integrating culture in ELT classrooms do have effects on improving student's language and cultural competence (Karabinar et al., 2013).

Maria Isabel Pozzo (2014) also conducted a study regarding to assessing medical students' intercultural communication competence, the findings pointed out that a high level of institutional commitment is a driving force to promote students' intercultural communicative competence. The results also suggested that achievements have a positive effect on developing intercultural development of the host community when facilitating sociocultural integration of function goal of ICC.

Kurt et al (2009) conducted research upon teachers perception of integrating intercultural competence in their classroom teaching, the result indicated that teachers appeared not to be willing to apply cultural classroom practices and the result focus attention to the significance of including cultural aspects in their curricula in teacher education courses in order to prepare prospective teachers with intercultural awareness and intercultural competence by which teachers will be more eager to incorporate intercultural practice in ELT classrooms (Cetincvi, 2012).

Over the past few decades, Intercultural Sensitivity has been becoming one of the most attention-grabbing topics in the field of applied linguistics and English language education. However, most researches have been focusing on the evaluation of English language learners' perception or attitudes towards intercultural communication competence, less focuses have been put the comparison and contrast of students' Intercultural Sensitivity between the students from public and private universities. This study intended to elicit participants' general perception of Intercultural Sensitivity as well as identifying the differences of perception and compare the contrast the Intercultural Sensitivity from the participants of state and private universities rather than conducting the research only about participants' attitudes in a narrow-scope.

Based on aforementioned literature review, our research intended to find answers to these research questions, the research questions in this study concentrated on comparing participants Intercultural Sensitivity in terms of age, gender, native tongue, the types of university they go to, their being abroad experience, years of learning English experience and their English level.

2. Research Questions

1) Do participants' Intercultural Sensitivity demonstrate any difference with regard to their gender, native tongue, state or private universities and their being abroad experience?
2) Do participants ICC reveal any statistical difference concerning their age, English level and the time length of learning English?

In the following section, a specific research method is provided.

3. Methodology

The quantitative research method was conducted in order to find answers to our research questions. The participants of this research are students, from public and private universities, are students who have been exposing to English language in their academic studies. Therefore, they are considered as the target participants who may surely demonstrate the considerable degree of intercultural communicative competence. Random sampling method was used in order to collect data. Meanwhile participants were from both Department of English language education and Translation and Interpretation Department. There were 232 participants who replied our both online and printed questionnaires and they were found to have similar educational background and they have/had been learning English for at least 4 years.

There were 137 (59.1%) female and 95 (40.9%) male participants. All of the participants are university graduates who have been studying in department of English language or translation and interpretation departments. And most of the participants are native Turkish speakers (222, 95.7%) while only 10 (3.4%) participants' first language is not Turkish. Majority of participants are intermediate English speakers (52, 22.4%). In terms of types of universities, 153 participants study in private universities while 79 participants are public university students.

In terms of using questionnaire, Intercultural Sensitivity scale (Wang, 2016) was performed due to the fact that the questionnaire in question was highly regarded with its significant level of reliability and validity. On the research questionnaire, firstly, participants' demographical data was given. For instance, age, participants' gender, native tongue…etc. afterwards, the questionnaire items were given with Likert's 5 scale and in this scale, "1" represents "Strongly disagree", "3" represents "Neutral" and "5" represents "Strongly agree".

The ICC Scale consisted of 5 factors, respectively, "*interaction engagement, respect for cultural difference, interaction confidence, interaction enjoyment, interaction effectiveness*" (Wang, 2016). These each five factors contain 3 questions to measure aforementioned factors in relation to intercultural communicative competence.

Data collection procedures consist of 2 parts. First of all, 300 questionnaires were printed and sent to a lecturer who has been working in a public university in Bursa. Half of the questionnaires were sent to a public university coordinator who distributes the questionnaires to the lecturers in translation and interpretation departments. The second stage of data collection was about collection all the questionnaires answered by participants in English language department and translation and interpretation departments, respectively, in public and private universities. At the final stage, total 232 questionnaires were collected to be analyzed statistically. SPSS 22 Version was used to analyze descriptive and other comparison between public and private university participants' intercultural communicative competence.

At the stages of data collection, normal distribution of data was tested, and the given statics suggested that our data was not distributed normally. From this result, in order to find out the difference between participants ICC, Man-Whitney U test was applied to differ Intercultural Sensitivity between public university and private university participants' age, gender, native tongue and being abroad experience.

As for finding whether participants' English level and years of learning English differ between public and private universities, Kruskal Wallis Test was used to compare public and private university participants ICC. At the final stage of data analysis, five factors in our scale were calculated as total scale and find out if the total scale differs between public and private universities in terms of whole scale. The last stage of this research entailed the classification of findings and conclusion, and all the findings are tabulated, and results of this research were provided.

5. Findings and Conclusion

The results and findings of this research will be presented in quantitate form. In this section, first of all, descriptive statics of participants' demographic information was provided. Then all the research questions were answered based on the statics tabulation and results obtained from SPSS version 22.

5.1 Descriptive Statics of Demographic Information

The majority of participants are female 137 (59.1%), and the number of male participants are 95 (40.9%); in terms of age, 104 (44.80%) participants age ranged from 15 to 20 years, the participant's age between 20-25 consisted of 155 (49.6%) which were the most dominant age group in this research, 4 participants are between age group 25 to 30 with 1.7%, and the number of participants with age over 30 were 9 (3.9%); 79 (34.1%) participants were from public universities whereas the number of participants from private universities were 153 (65.9%). The descriptive statistics reveals that 222 (95.7%) participants' native tongue is Turkish while 10 (4.3%) participants are not non-native Turkish or their first languages are not Turkish.

In terms of participants English level, it could be seen from descriptive statistics that 38(16.4%) participants are elementary level English speakers, pre-intermediate English speakers consists of 45 (19.4%) of whole participants. Intermediate English speakers from this research are 52 (22.4%), and 43 (18.5%) participants are upper-intermediate English speakers. Advanced English speakers in this research proportioned with 54 (23.3%). The majority of participants are intermediate (22.4%) and advanced English speakers (23.3%).

When it comes to the participant's' years of learning English, it could be told that 43 (18.5%) participants had from 1 to 4 years of learning English history. Participants who had 5-8 years of learning English experience were 35 n(15.1%), students from 9 to 12 years of learning English experience consists of 106 (45.7%), 48 (20.7%) participants were found to have more than 13 years of learning English history. From this statistic, it could be clearly said that the most participants had from 9 to 12 years of learning

English experience, the least proportion of this belonged to the participants (15.1%) with 5 to 8 years of English learning Experience. In this research, 44 (19%) participants had been abroad before while the majority participants, 188 (81%) participants had never been to a foreign country (countries).

Research Question 1: Do participants' Intercultural Sensitivity demonstrate any difference with regard to their gender, native tongue, state or private universities and their being abroad experience?

In order to answer research question 1, firstly, the whole scale which consists of 5 dimensions was calculated in order to measure if there is a significant difference between ICC in terms of native tongue. It could be seen obviously that there are 222 native Turkish speakers and 10 non-native Turkish speakers.

The Man-whiney U test results shows that being native and non-native Turkish speakers has no significant difference in terms of Intercultural Sensitivity (P>0.05, 0.426). Following the result, participants ICC in terms of gender was calculated. The table also reveals that a slightly significant difference was found in terms of gender (P<0.05, 0.048). From the table, it can conclude that gender shows difference in ICC, stating that male participants' Intercultural Sensitivity is slightly higher than female participants (Female Mean Rank= 109.28, Male Mean Rank=126.92).

As to replying the research question 1, it can be concluded that no statistical significance was found in terms of age and being a native or not. In terms of age, it can be said that Intercultural Sensitivity hardly differs in terms of age and native tongue. However, it is found that Intercultural Sensitivity differs in terms of gender. Male participants have slightly higher Intercultural Sensitivity than female participants.

In order to test whether participants' ICC differ in terms of the university types participants go to, Mann-Whitney U test was applied. From the Mann-Whitney U test table, it can be clearly said that no significant difference was found between public and private university participants' Intercultural Sensitivity (P>0.05, 0.104).

For further trying to find out if the 5 dimensions of total scale respectively makes the difference on participants' ICC in terms of university types, Mann-Whitney U test was again applied to the all single dimensions of whole scale. Interaction Engagement (IEN), respect for cultural Difference (RCD), interaction confidence (IC), interaction enjoyment (IENJ), interaction effectiveness (IEF) were put into Mann-Whitney U test. As the chart suggests, even though, no significant difference found between public and private university participants' ICC when taking the whole scale into our consideration, however, there are some slightly significant differences were found in terms of public and private university participants' ICC when taking each 5 dimensions of scale were taken into account.

When all 5 dimensions were taken into account, it can be clearly see that, even though participants ICC did not show the difference in terms of university types, however, participants' Respect for Cultural Difference (RCD) differs in terms of university types (P<0.05, 0.000), which suggests that participants from private universities (Mean Rank=129.84) show more respect for cultural difference than the participants from public universities (Mean Rank=90.66). Moreover, participants'

Interaction Enjoyment (IENJ) differ from each other in terms of university types (P<0.05, 0.001). The participants from private university (Mean Rank= 126.54) shows higher level of interaction enjoyment (IENJ) than the students from public university (Mean Rank= 97.05). The other dimensions of total scale show no difference of participants' ICC in terms of university types, respectively, Interaction Engagement (P>0.05, 0.668), Interaction Confidence (P>0.05, 0.139), Interaction Effectiveness (P>0.05, 0.782).

As to answering research question 2, it can be concluded that participants shows no difference of ICC in terms of Intercultural Sensitivity when taking the whole scale into our account. (P>0.05, 0.104), however, when taking 5 sub-dimensions of whole scale into consideration, it can be said that participants' "respect for other culture" (P<0.05, 0.000) and "Interaction Enjoyment" (P<0.05, 0.001) differ in terms of university types, there is no significant difference found between public and private university students' Intercultural Sensitivity in terms of these aforementioned demotions such as "Interaction Engagement" (P>0.05, 0.668), "Interaction Confidence" (P>0.05, 0.139), "Interaction Effectiveness" (P>0.05, 0.782).

The next stage aims to answer if participants' ICC differs in terms of being abroad experience. From Mann-Whitney U test table, it can be concluded that no significant difference was found between participants who had going abroad experience and these who had no being abroad experience (P>0.05, 0.910). However, when 5 dimensions were taking into account, only, participants' "Interaction Confidence" (P<0.05, 0.023) differ between the participants having going abroad experience and those who had no going abroad experience, which indicates that participants who had going abroad experience show higher mean rank (Mean Rank=137.05) in terms of interaction enjoyment than those who had not (Mean Rank=111.69). Participants shows no significant difference among Interaction Engagement (P>0.05, 0.483), respect for Cultural Difference (P>0.05, 0.177), Interaction enjoyment (P>0.05, 0.078) and Interaction effectiveness (P>0.05, 0.360).

Table 1: Mann-Whitney U test result

Items	M	Sig. (2-tailed)
Gender		
Male	109.28	0.48
Female	126.92	

Research Question 2: Do participants ICC reveal any statistical difference concerning their age, English level and the time length of learning English?

In order to find out if participants' ICC show difference in terms of years of learning English and English level, Kruskal Wallis Test was applied to both due to non-normal distribution of our data.

Kruskal Wallis Test was applied to test if there is a significant difference in terms of age about the participants' intercultural communicative competence. The Kruskal Wallis Test result suggests that there is no meaningful significance between ages in terms of ICC (P>0.05, 0.523). From the finding it could be concluded that there is no significant difference among ages in terms of intercultural communicative competence.

Kruskal Wallis Test table shows that participants' ICC hardly differ in terms of years of learning English (P>0.05, 0.227). However, when taking 5 dimensions into our statics respectively, it is found that participants' respect for other cultures differ in terms of their years of learning English (P<0.05, 0.031), which indicates that participants who had between 9 to 12 years learning English experience had the highest mean rank (Mean Rank= 107.49). From this, it can conclude that the much more years of learning English participants have, the much higher Respect for other cultures they possess. Moreover, the other dimensions show no difference of ICC of participants in terms of years of learning English, namely, interaction engagement (P>0.05, 0.288), interaction confidence (P>0.05, 0.094), interaction enjoyment (P>0.05, 0.544), interaction effectiveness (P>0.05, 0.773).

To conclude whether participants ICC differ in terms of their English level, Kruskal-Wallis Test was conducted to evaluate it. From the Kruskal Wallis Test Table, it can be concluded that participants ICC does significantly differ in terms of their English level (P<0.05, 0.002), which suggests that the more proficient the participants are, the much higher Intercultural Sensitivity the participants have.

Even though, the meaningful difference was found, our research attempted to check the 5 dimensions of whole scale in order to be able to confirm if all sub-dimensions differ in terms of participants' English level. From the Kruskal Wallis Test table of all sub-dimensions of the whole scale, it can be clearly seen that participants', namely, respect for other culture (P<0.05,0.000), interaction confidence (P<0.05, 0.001), interaction enjoyment (P<0.05, 0.021), interaction effectiveness(P<0.05, 0.049) differ in terms of their English Level except from Interaction engagement (P>0.05, 0.882). From this result and findings, it can be clearly concluded that participants who have much more years of English learning Experience have much higher intercultural communicative competence.

Table 2: Kruskal Wallis Test Results

English Profiency	Mean Squares	Sig.
Between Groups	111.118	.002
Within Groups	64.191	
Total		
Sig. < 0.05		

6. Findings and Conclusion

The main purpose of this present paper was to compare English learners' Intercultural Sensitivity in terms of their age, gender, native tongue, university types, years of learning English, English level and finally participants' being abroad experience. First of all, the results obtained from the whole scale were evaluated in relation to the difference as to test the relationship between aforementioned demographic information of participants and their intercultural communicative competence. Then, all the sub-dimensions of the whole scale were taken into our consideration and relationship between this demographic information and each dimensions of whole scale were tested

with Mann-Whitney U test, Kruskal Wallis Test due to the non-normal distribution of our data. Frequencies of participants demographic information was obtained by Descriptive Statics Test. The whole data obtained from participants was evaluated and results of our research were provided in order to answer the research questions of the present paper in question.

A 15-item ICC scale was used to compare participants' Intercultural Sensitivity in terms of their age, gender, native tongue, university types…. etc. This scale was chosen due to the fact that even though there are many research scales has been found in the literature, the questionnaire has less questions with clear dimensions or factors of whole scale which enabled our research to compare the results not only in the big scale, but also it provided the research to compare the other sub-dimensions of the whole scale. It was also taken into consideration that participants would join this research and would be eager to answer the question without taking a wild guess.

From our findings, it can be drawn a clear picture that majority of participants of present survey were females (59.1%), and the number of male participants (40.9%) are a slightly lower than female participants. In terms of age group, the highest number of participants was from private (65.9%) university whereas the lowest number of participants was from public university (34.1%). When it comes to participants' native tongue, participants with the number of 222 (95.7%) are native Turkish speakers whereas 10 (4.3%) participants are either non-Turkish speakers or their first language was not Turkish. When the English level of participants was taken into consideration, intermediate (22.4%) and advanced level of English speakers (23.3%) were in the majority. Participants with 9 to 12 years of learning English experience (45.7%) held the larger number in this research. In addition, most of the participants (81%) had no going abroad experience whereas only 44 participants (19%) had been abroad.

From our research, these conclusions can be drawn according to our statistical data and results/findings. The meaningful significant difference occurred in terms of Intercultural Sensitivity when taking gender into our account. From the Mann-Whitney U test results, it can be said that male participants' Intercultural Sensitivity significantly differs from female participants in terms of gender ($P<0.05$, 0.048). In terms of native tongue and age, no significant difference was found between native-Turkish speakers and non-Turkish speakers ($P>0.05$, 0.426). Additionally, it was found that participants ICC showed no difference in terms of age ($P>0.05$, 0.523).

In terms of university types, participants' ICC did not differ from each other when taking the whole scale into account ($P>0.05$, 0.104). However, the universities participants go to show difference on participants' Intercultural Sensitivity when taking the sub-dimensions of whole scale was considered. To illustrate, participants' "respect for culture difference" differ in terms of university types ($P<0.05$, 0.000), which indicates that participants from private universities (Mean Rank=129.66) show more respect to the cultural difference than these who go to public universities (Mean Rank= 90.66). Not only do participants' "Respect for culture difference" differ from each other, but also participants' "Interaction Enjoyment" differ from each other with regard to the universities they go to ($P<0.05$, 0.001), the result suggested that participants from

private universities show higher mean rank (Mean Rank=126.54) than those who attend public universities (Mean Rank=97.05).

From students' being abroad experience Mann-Whitney U test, it can be said that participants ICC did not differ in terms of being abroad or not (P>0.05, 0.910) when taking the whole scale into our consideration. However, participants' interaction confidence differ with regard to their going abroad experience (P<0.05, 0.023), proving that participants who had being abroad experience (Mean Rank=137.05) are more confidence in terms of interaction with people from different cultures than those who had never been to abroad (Mean Rank=111.69).

Participants' years of learning English was concerned, participants ICC show no difference when taking the whole scale into the statics (P>0.05, 0.227). As considering the sub-dimensions of whole scale, participants' "Respect for other culture" (P<0.05, 0.031) differ in terms of years of learning English, which indicates that much more years of English learning participants have, the much higher respect to other cultures they have.

When considering participants ICC with regard to their English level, it can be clearly concluded that participants' ICC differ in terms of their English level (P<0.05, 0.002). The result suggests that the more proficient the participants are, the much higher Intercultural Sensitivity they have. Over all, participants' ICC differs in terms of gender and their English level. Even though the significant difference of participants ICC level was not found in this present study, participants ICC differ in terms of sub-dimensions of the scale used for this research.

In this section, our findings are matched with the previous studies, and detailed evidence is provided. Even though many researches have been found on second language learners' attitudes and beliefs about intercultural communicative competence, nevertheless, very scant attention given either to measure language learners' Intercultural Sensitivity or to compare Intercultural Sensitivity of language learners who go to public or private universities.

First and foremost, the center of the present research is mainly on measuring participants' Intercultural Sensitivity and comparing the different groups' ICC in terms of age, gender, university type…etc. In the previous literature, very few information or similar studies have been found so that the present paper is supposed to the initiative of measuring language learners' intercultural communicative competence. It is believed that this present paper attempted to fill the gap in literature with regard to measuring intercultural communicative competence. Even though, the similar studies have not been found in literature, previous studies with similar content or regarding the attitude and believes were given as to confirming our study and significance of our research in the literature.

In terms of university types, participants' Intercultural Sensitivity has no significant difference when taking the whole scale into our account. The findings of our research suggest that the students from private universities show higher respect for dissimilar cultures than those in public universities, which indicates institutions pay very important role in improving students' ICC. From the literature review, it can be

clearly seen that our findings match the study carried out on assessing medical students' ICC. The aforementioned study indicated that high level of institutional commitment is a driving factor to enhance students' intercultural communicative competence. The study also suggested that intercultural development could be achieved in the situation of facilitating sociocultural integration of the function of goal (Maria Isabel Pozzo, 2014).

From our research, it is found that age, native tongue, university type, participants' being abroad experience shows no significant difference when taking the whole scale into account, which means participants ICC from these aspects were dissatisfactory. Wang and Yu's study was in accordance with our findings. Wang and Yu's study postulated that participants from non-ELT departments demonstrated a low level of ICC, which suggested that students were unaware of adequacy of knowledge to dissimilar culture (Wang and Yu, 2008). In our study, similar results were found. Participants' ICC had no significant difference in terms of interaction engagement (P>0.05, 0.668), interaction confidence (P>0.05, 0.139) and interaction effectiveness (P>0.05, 0.782). Our findings are in good agreement with the Wang and Yu's findings.

Penbek and Yakup's study also confirms our findings in terms of participants' going abroad experience. Penbek et al carried out a research on students' ICC from different departments. Their findings suggested that students equip themselves with sufficient intercultural sensitivity when departments or universities provide educational support with international materials such as Erasmus program and language courses (Penbek et al, 2009). In our research, "Intercultural Confidence" of participants who had being abroad experience demonstrated higher than those who had no being abroad experience. Our findings substantiate the previous findings of literature (Penbek et al., 2009).

Further tests carried out on Erasmus students' attitude towards the host country and dissimilar culture concurred with our initial findings. Gloria et al investigated on profiling the ICC of university students at the beginning of their placement. The study suggests that participants show a positive attitude towards the host countries at the beginning of their placement, even though prejudices still pose the educational difficulties for the students and their host and home countries (Almarza, Martinez, Llavador, 2015). In our study, the participants' "respect for other cultures" are significantly positive in terms of their learning English experience (P<0.05, 0.031). Our finding is also consistent with the Gloria et al's findings in the literature (Almarza, Martinez, Llavador, 2015).

A similar study was also found in terms of measuring Erasmus students' ICC. Bloom and Miranda investigated students' intercultural sensitivity through short-term study abroad. Their findings suggest that students made little changes in intercultural sensitivity by Erasmus program. Findings of our present study also suggest that participants' being abroad experience had no or little effect on their Intercultural Sensitivity when taking the whole scale into account. It is also found that participants being abroad experience only affect their "Interaction Confidence" which indicates that

participants who had been abroad feel more confident than those who had never been to foreign countries. Our findings also match well with the previous study in literature.

In terms of participants' being abroad experience, our research also has a number of similarities with Bean and Boffy-Ramirez. Bean et al carried out a research in order to determine whether Chinese students who study in USA report difference in Intercultural Sensitivity compared to their university classmates who study in China (Bean, Boffy-Ramirez, 2017). Their findings indicated that results showed no significant difference in reported Intercultural Sensitivity between students who do their undergraduate degree in USA and those who remain China. Our findings are in accordance with the study in question. Our findings reported that participants' ICC did not differ in terms of their being abroad experience (P>0.05, 0.910). However, participants' being abroad experience can boost their "Interaction confidence". Our finding appears to be well-sustained by the previous studies in literature.

Another study on intercultural challenge was also carried out on pre-service teachers who are senior students in a public university in Turkey (Genç, 2018). The study indicated that half of the pre-service teachers have poor intercultural communicative competence. The study also suggested that, especially male participants who had studied abroad showed the higher level of intercultural communicative competence. Our present research has not confirmed the previous study. Our finding reported that being abroad experience had no impact on participants' intercultural communicative competence. However, only interaction confidence was improved by going to other countries.

Accounting for the results, it can be concluded that, in this study, participants' Intercultural Sensitivity differs in terms of gender and participants' English level. The findings and results account for the sampling and may be the reason for unbalanced sampling of male and female participants. It can be also concluded that the present research was done only in a public university and private university; this can be the reason for having no difference of participants' Intercultural Sensitivity in terms of age, university types, being abroad experience and English learning years.

In summary, the research presented offers contrastive outcomes of participants' intercultural communicative competence. The preliminary purpose of this study was to measure participants' intercultural competence by taking the whole scale as a one unit, however, it is later found that taking the intercultural sensitivity scale as a whole may not lead a significant and valid relationship between participants' demographic information and ICC. Taking the other sub-dimensions of aforementioned scale could give more detailed and specific relationship between participants' ICC and other factors. This is due to the fact that in some information of participants had no relationship with their ICC when taking the scale as a whole unit. However, taking other dimensions of this scale gave us the specific relations between each other.

What is new in our study is the comparison between public and private university students' Intercultural Sensitivity in terms of various factors. Due to similar fewer or no studies have been found in literature, so this study is supposed to fill the gap in literature with regard to intercultural communicative competence.

On the basis of findings and results from the present research, it can be concluded that participants' being abroad experience had no significant impact on their intercultural communicative competence. Furthermore, it could be suggested to English language educators and language actioners to engage in delivering more intercultural communicative comcompetence-orientedassroom actives and teaching materials to enhance English language learners' intercultural communicative competence.

From our research, it can be also postulated that English language learners' Intercultural Sensitivity differ in terms of their English level, the more proficient the English language learners, the higher Intercultural Sensitivity they have. To this respect, it is suggested that not only do language educators emphasize on English language learners' listening, reading, writing and speaking abilities, but also it is suggested to integrate intercultural course contents and worksheets when teaching languages to English language learners. The present study raised a number of interesting differences, but a large corpus is needed to establish how the results can be generalized in terms of English language learners' intercultural communicative competence.

Of course, the results from the present research are rather speculative and based on a small sampling. Increasing the sampling number and varying the universities chosen may yield more reliable and wide scope for English language learners' intercultural communicative competence. Moreover, equalizing the number of participants for the future research may lead to more valid and reliable results for the future studies. Our only limitation of present research could be choosing a public and a private university in Turkey, so this research may not generalize the English language leaners' Intercultural Sensitivity as a whole. Choosing more participants from different universities in various regions in Turkey may yield significant result of intercultural communicative competence.

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