

Research into Pre-service English Teachers' Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in Turkish Context

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ABSTRACT This study aims at exploring pre-service English teachers' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in a Turkish setting and examining whether such factors as study abroad, gender and academic achievement reveal any differences in their ICC. A total of 89 participants completed the Intercultural Communicative Competence Questionnaire. Results revealed that participants achieved a high level of ICC, with higher mean scores in the knowledge dimension. There were no significant differences in male and female participants' ICC levels. Correlational findings showed that there was no significant relationship between the participants' ICC and their academic achievement. However, further correlation findings showed strong positive correlations between the participants' studying abroad and their ICC levels. Studying abroad was strongly correlated with knowledge, skill, and attitude dimensions of ICC. This study concludes that encouraging pre-service teachers to participate in study abroad programs and giving them the opportunity to take elective intercultural education courses will promote their ICC.

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the last two decades, many globally occurring changes have brought about a lot of cross-cultural contact among world languages and cultures (Khawaja et al. 2014; Zheng 2014). Today, people from all over the world can have extensive mutual cooperation and experience. Educators, researchers and teachers have, therefore, acknowledged that a fundamental goal of teaching a second or foreign language (L2) is to enable learners to be able to communicate effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds (Kramersch 2013; Jin 2014). A number of researchers maintain that teachers should have a profound and complete understanding of language and culture in order to promote L2 learners' Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), or their abilities to communicate and interact across cultural boundaries (Byram 1997; Hismanoglu 2011). Similarly, Sercu et al. (2005: 2) argue that people need to possess many intercultural competencies and characteristics such

as "the willingness to engage with the foreign culture, self-awareness, the ability to look upon oneself from the outside, the ability to see the world through other people's eyes, and the ability to cope with uncertainty..." Emphatically, people need to "step outside of" their "frame of reference" (Bennet 2009: 122), distance themselves from this framework, and regard themselves as outsiders (Alred 2003). There is now ample evidence that such knowledge, skills and attitudes play a crucial role in communicating effectively with members of other cultures without misinterpretations or conflicts.

Learning an L2 does not involve merely knowing the grammar, syntax, and vocabulary of a language, but it is more appropriate to learn a systematic means of communication to accomplish an individual's communication goals (Zhou and Griffiths 2011; Huang 2014). As communicating in real and given L2 situations always bears contextual and cultural dimensions, culture and communication cannot be separated from each other (Kramersch 2001; Valdes 1986). In other words, there is a consensus among scholars that L2 learners need to possess a number of intercultural competencies and characteristics to be able to cope with intercultural experiences (Sen Gupta 2002; Sercu 2002; Sercu et al. 2005; Byram and Feng 2005; Byram 2008; Atay et al. 2009; Penbek et al. 2009; Zheng 2014). Thus, enabling L2 learners to possess intercultural competencies is a sig-

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nificant task of language teachers, particularly when their goal is to promote communicative competence. On these grounds, one can argue that L2 instruction is an intercultural process which demands that L2 teachers have intercultural knowledge, attitudes, and skills so that they can promote ICC acquisition among their learners (Bastos and Araujo e Sa 2014; Zheng 2014). To this end, the present study attempts to investigate pre-service English as a foreign language (EFL) for teachers' level of ICC in a Turkish setting and to find out whether such factors as study abroad or overseas experience, gender and achievement reveal any differences in their ICC.

Research on teachers' ICC is grounded in a large empirical investigation that seeks to explore the cultural dimension or profile of the intercultural L2 teacher (Sercu et al. 2005). Intercultural competence, in the context of second or foreign language education, is associated with communicative competence. Communicative competence refers to "a person's ability to act in a foreign language in a linguistically, sociolinguistically and pragmatically appropriate way" (Council of Europe 2001: 9). Communicative competence is a very broad term in the present day globalized world and may be insufficient as long as the goal of L2 learning and teaching comprises of widely accepted intercultural competencies and characteristics. L2 teachers are nowadays required to teach their learners how to communicate and interact across cultural boundaries (Byram 1997; Kramsch 2013).

ICC acts as an essential need for learners to interact with others without any misunderstanding. Bennett (2009: 122) emphasizes that in order to interact with others without conflicts or misunderstandings, learners need to distance themselves from their "frame of reference". Phipps and Gonzalez (2004: 3) also assert that "to enter other cultures is to re-enter one's own", which is similarly called one's ability to "decenter" (Byram 1997). These statements reveal that L2 learners' cultural awareness not only calls for learners' target cultural awareness, but also their native cultural awareness. When put in another way, learners' native cultural knowledge as well as target cultural knowledge is essential for the people to behave adequately with others. It is only in this way that language learners can get aware of cultural differences, "behaving adequately and in a flexible manner when confronted with actions, attitudes, and expectations of representatives of foreign cultures" (Meyer 1991: 137).

The current literature reveals that ICC builds on communicative competence (Hymes 1972) as a whole background, and enlarges it to incorporate intercultural competence, involving both the knowledge of the native culture and the target culture awareness as well as the cultural differences. This knowledge of pluriculturalism provides language learners with the opportunity to learn different languages with different cultures as well as to "build up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact" (Council of Europe 2001: 4). In different conditions, people can call flexibly upon different aspects of this competence to attain effective communication with a specific interlocutor. In order to explain the concept of intercultural competence to educators and L2 teachers, Byram (1997) organized a conceptual framework (*saviors*) composed of the knowledge, skills/behaviours and attitudes/traits which together make up intercultural communicative competence.

From the aforementioned descriptions of intercultural communicative competence in L2 education, it is clear that learning L2 must include the attainment of intercultural communication between people from different cultural backgrounds. A number of studies have pinpointed that L2 learners' level of ICC has a significant effect on their success in language learning and appropriate language usage (Carrell 1984; Takahashi and Beebe 1987; Holliday 1994; Trosborg 1995; Coleman 1996; Kramsch 2001; McKay 2002; Hismanoglu 2011; Mirzaei and Forouzandeh 2013). These scholars emphasize that lack of awareness of differences between cultures may bring about frustration and failure in language classrooms as well as conflict and misunderstanding. As a result, teachers, program developers, and educational settings are supposed to take into consideration learners' sociocultural backgrounds and how to be careful and sensitive in selecting appropriate materials and educational approaches for specific contexts of teaching cultural dynamic pinpoints because disregarding students' norms and expectations means denying their experiences. As Sercu et al. (2005: 5) point out, L2 teachers and teacher trainees need "an adequate sociocultural knowledge of the target language community, frequent and varied contacts with it and a thorough command of the pragmatic rules of use of the foreign language in contexts that may be considered to belong to their professional sphere".

With respect to gender differences in ICC level, contradictory results were reported in the literature. For instance, Tannen (1994) reported that men and women used highly gendered discussions and employed interactional features such as overlap, eye-contact, and topic initiation differently in communication since they were exposed to different sociolinguistic subcultures. Recent gender studies have generally acknowledged that societal structures basically intersect with gender to shape opportunities and constraints of males and females in their access to language education, language use, and in the case of this study, intercultural communication (Kouritzin 2000; Kobayashi 2007; Warriner 2007). Several studies reported higher ICC levels for either female L2 learners (e.g. Clark and Trafford 1995; Sung and Padilla 1998) or, conversely, for male learners (e.g. Kim and Goldstein 2005; Pan 2007). Yet, other studies found no relationship between L2 learners' gender and their ICC (Matveev 2002; Patricia 2005; Mirzaei and Forouzandeh 2013). This controversy highlights the need for further research to explore ICC differences by gender in different contexts.

L2 learners' achievement and proficiency level were also observed to have significant associations with their ICC level. For instance, similar to the results of the previous research reports (Carrell 1984; Takahashi and Beebe 1987; Trosborg 1995; Koike 1996), Hismanoglu's (2011: 814) findings revealed that "higher-proficiency learners were able to soften their refusals with modal adverbs, whereas the lower-proficiency learners were inclined to utilize direct refusals like I can't". These research studies showed that students with higher linguistic proficiency gave more acceptable responses to the communicative situations than those with lower linguistic proficiency. Similarly, studying abroad or overseas experience has been reported to play a significant role in developing L2 learners' ICC level. Some related studies (Jung 2002; Jular 2007; Williams 2005; Hismanoglu 2011) reported that studying abroad or overseas experience had a high level of intercultural communicative knowledge. The findings of these studies also highlight the need for further research to study the association with more details in order to explore how studying abroad or overseas experience affects components of ICC.

Given that ICC plays a key role in L2 learning and teaching and that there is also the need for

further research to study learners' and teachers' ICC, this study sought to explore pre-service English teachers' levels of ICC. To this end, the present study was more precisely designed to address the following research questions:

1. What are the pre-service English teachers' levels of intercultural communicative competence (ICC)?
2. Is there any significant difference between female and male pre-service EFL teachers' ICC?
3. Is there any significant relationship between pre-service EFL teachers' ICC levels and their achievements?
4. Is there any significant relationship between spending a longer period abroad and pre-service EFL teachers' ICC levels?

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Design

This study was conducted using a quantitative research approach whereby a self-report questionnaire was used to gather data about pre-service EFL teachers' intercultural communicative competence. Creswell (2012) states that as a cross-sectional study conducted at one point in time, this research design is useful for implementation when researchers try to collect data both quickly and economically.

2.2. Sample

This study was carried out in December 2013 in an English language teaching (ELT) department at a major state university in Ankara, Turkey. A total of 89 pre-service English teachers enrolled in the department voluntarily participated in the study, and responded to the statements on a 5-point Likert scale. They were 69 females (77.5%) and 20 males (22.5%). Their mean age was 21.43 years ($SD = 1.09$, range 19-25). At the time of data collection, participants were in their 3rd and 4th years of teacher education program, and some of them had already undergone study-abroad experience due to the Erasmus Exchange Program available at the university. Thus, to get a better insight into the sample, the participants were asked whether they had spent a longer period (at least a total of three months) in English speaking countries (e.g., travelling, studying). Among all the participants, 15 (16.9%) reported

having done so, thanks to the Erasmus exchange program.

2.3. Research Instrument

The instrument for this study included a self-report questionnaire consisting of two parts. The first part included questions about the participants' demographic information such as gender and grade point average (GPA), while the second part contained the intercultural communicative competence questionnaire (ICCQ) (Mirzaei and Forouzandeh 2013). The ICCQ consists of 22 statements to measure intercultural communicative competence (ICC), based on Deardorff's (2006) large-scale investigation. It contains 12 items for assessing the respondents' knowledge, such as cultural self-awareness, culture-related information, linguistic knowledge, and sociolinguistic awareness, 5 skill items for assessing the participants' ability to communicate across cultures, and finally 5 attitude items for evaluating the participants' respect for and openness to different cultures as well as their ambiguity tolerance (Deardorff 2006; Mirzaei and Forouzandeh 2013). Internal consistency was examined using Cronbach's alpha for the whole scale. Cronbach's alpha in the original study was $\alpha = .71$, while Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was $\alpha = .82$ after reverse-coding the "unfavorable" statements in the study.

2.4. Procedures for Data Collection and Analysis

The participants who enrolled in department courses voluntarily completed the assignment by responding to the statements in a 5-point Likert, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The questionnaire also included questions about the participants' demographic information, for example, gender or any previous experience of traveling or studying in any English-speaking country for at least three months. The data were fed into the computer and statistical analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 21. In order to determine appropriate statistical tests to analyse the gathered data, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test and visual inspection of histograms as well as Q-Q plots and box plots were performed in order to reveal possible errors in the data, to test for a normal distribution, and to determine whether parametric or non-

parametric tests should be used. The results indicated that the participants' ICC scores were not evenly distributed, and so requires the use of non-parametric tests to analyse the gathered data.

After exploratory data analysis, descriptive statistics were used to find the participants' ICC level. Based on the self-developed cut-off points to judge participants' ICC (Table 1), the scores were considered *High* if they were in the upper third of the normative distribution, *Moderate* if they were in the middle third, and *Low* if they were in the lower third. This was followed by *Spearman (Rho) correlation coefficient* test done to know how ICC components were correlated. Then, the *Mann-Whitney U* test was conducted to find out whether there was any significant difference between female and male participants' ICC. Finally, *Spearman (Rho) correlation coefficient* test was performed to find out the extent to which participants' ICC level and GPA and studying abroad are related to each other.

Table 1: Criteria of intercultural communicative competence level

ICC Level	Mean	Options
High	4.5-5.0	Strongly agree
	3.5-4.4	Agree
Moderate	2.5-3.4	Neither agree or disagree
Low	1.5-2.4	Disagree
	1.0-1.4	Strongly disagree

3. RESULTS

This study sought to examine pre-service EFL teachers' levels of ICC in a Turkish setting and find out whether such factors as gender and overseas experience reveal any differences in their ICC. This section presents the results of the study in terms of descriptive and inferential statistics, followed by a discussion of the findings.

As shown in Table 2, the results of descriptive analyses revealed that the participants achieved a high level of ICC ($n = 89$; $Md = 83$;

Table 2: Medians for ICC and its components

	Descriptive Statistics for ICC Level			
	Knowledge	Skills	Attitude	Total ICC
Female	45.0000	19.0000	20.0000	83.0000
Male	44.5000	19.5000	19.0000	83.5000
Total	45.0000	19.0000	19.0000	83.0000

77%). Studying the components of the ICC for more details, as represented in Table 2, the results indicated that the participants' median in knowledge component ($n = 89; Md = 45$) was significantly more than the other two components, i.e. skill component ($n = 89; Md = 19$), and attitude component ($n = 89; Md = 19$).

Spearman (Rho) correlation coefficient test was also computed to investigate the relationship between mean scores in ICC components. As represented in Table 3, there were strong, positive correlations between *ICC and Component 1 - Knowledge*, $r(89) = .847, p < 0.01$, *Component 2 - Skills*, $r(89) = .727, p < 0.01$, and *Component 3 - Attitudes*, $r(89) = .710, p < 0.01$. *Component 1 - Knowledge* was positively and strongly associated with *Component 2 - Skills*, $r(89) = .455, p < 0.01$, and *Component 1 - Knowledge*, $r(89) = .459, p < 0.01$. *Component 2 - Skills* was also positively correlated with *Component 3 - Attitudes*, $r(89) = .328, p < 0.01$. All correlations were positive and significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Controlling each of the components in *partial correlation coefficient test*, we also found no significant decrease in any of the correlation levels. The results of the *partial correlation coefficient test* showed that there were strong positive consistent correlations between ICC and its components.

Table 3: Correlation matrix for ICC and its components

	<i>Md</i>	1	2	3	4
1 - ICC	83	1			
2 - Knowledge	45	.847**	1		
3 - Skills	19	.727**	.455**	1	
4 - Attitudes	19	.710**	.459**	.328**	1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The aim of examining the ICC inter-component correlations was to explore how the components were correlated with respect to the participants' ICC level, and to find out which compo-

Table 4: Results of Mann-Whitney U test and medians for ICC by gender

<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Group</i>						<i>U</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
	<i>Female</i>			<i>Male</i>					
	<i>MR</i>	<i>Md</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>MR</i>	<i>Md</i>	<i>n</i>			
ICC	45.55	83	69	43.10	83	20	652	-.201	.708

$p > 0.05$

nent had a significant effect on their level of ICC. The results of the study revealed that there were positive intensive significant correlations among the components of ICC and overall ICC. Moreover, the components of ICC (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) were positively and strongly associated with each other, and there was an order pattern among the inter-component correlations with respect to the overall ICC level. This means that there were strong consistent correlations between the pre-service EFL teachers' ICC level and their knowledge, skill and attitudes in intercultural communicative components.

In addition, the Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to explore whether there was any significant difference between female and male participants' ICC. Table 4 represents the results of the Mann-Whitney U test. Accordingly, there was no statistically significant difference in the ICC levels of males ($Md = 81, n = 20$) and females ($Md = 81, n = 69, U = 562, z = -.201, p = .70, r = .02$). This means that male participants did not perform differently on the ICC questionnaire in comparison with female ones. The magnitude of the differences in the means was very small (eta squared = .02), suggesting that gender differences do not seem to have resulted in significant differences in the participants' ICC in this research study.

Then, a Spearman (Rho) correlation coefficient test was performed to explore the relationship between the participants' ICC and their grade point averages (GPA). As indicated in Table 5, there was no significant correlation between the participants' ICC and their GPA, $r(89) = -.159, p > .05$.

Finally, a Spearman (Rho) correlation coefficient test was conducted to explore the relation-

Table 5: Correlations among ICC and achievement variables

	<i>Academic (GPA)</i>	<i>Achievement</i>	<i>Sig.(2-tailed)</i>	<i>n</i>
ICC	-.159		.138	89

ship between the ELT pre-service teachers' ICC and studying abroad. As Table 6 shows, there were significant strong positive correlations between the participants' overseas experience (studying abroad) and their ICC, $r(89) = .444, p < 0.01$. In this study, we also found that studying abroad was strongly correlated with *knowledge*, $r(89) = .418, p < 0.01$, *skills*, $r(89) = .258, p < 0.05$, and *attitudes*, $r(89) = .341, p < 0.01$.

Table 6: Correlations among ICC and studying abroad variables

	<i>N</i>	<i>ICC</i>	<i>Know- ledge</i>	<i>Skills</i>	<i>Attitu- des</i>
Study Abroad	89	.444**	.418**	.258*	.341**

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

4. DISCUSSION

This study set out with the aim of assessing the intercultural communicative competence (ICC) of pre-service English teachers in English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher education program. The above findings were discussed here to find answers to the research questions which were the objectives of this study. The study yielded some significant findings regarding pre-service English teachers' ICC level. The following is a discussion of the findings structured along with the research questions formulated previously.

4.1. Pre-service English Teachers' Levels of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

The current study found that overall pre-service English teachers had a good ICC level. In other words, participants received a satisfactory level of ICC. The students' mean and median scores in *Knowledge* component were significantly more than their mean and median scores in the other two components, which are *Skill* and *Attitudes*. The research instrument used in the study includes; knowledge component assessed cultural self-awareness, culture-related information, linguistic knowledge, and sociolinguistic awareness. Skill component evaluated the participants' ability to communicate across cultures, while attitude component was intended to

assess the respondents' respect and openness to different cultures as well as their ambiguity tolerance. Accordingly, the results of the present research study showed that the pre-service teachers' ICC knowledge compared to two other ICC components was reasonably very good. However, the results revealed that their ICC levels in skill and attitude subscales were relatively low. A possible explanation for these results may be lack of ability to communicate across cultures, lack of openness to different cultures, and ambiguity tolerance.

It is important to bear in mind that acquiring ICC is a lifelong learning (Zheng 2014). When people with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds interact socially, they bring along with them their knowledge about their own cultural environments and that of other people (Byram 1997; Kramsch 2013). People's success of such interaction will depend on establishing and maintaining human relationships, something which depends on attitudinal factors. Furthermore, it should be emphasized that both knowledge and attitude are influenced by the intercultural communication processes, that is, the skills of interpretation and constructing ties between aspects of the two cultures and also the skills of discovery and interaction. From this point of view, it is important to pinpoint that all the components of ICC (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) have the same importance in ICC level and its effect, as well as L2 learning and teaching.

Some of the issues emerging from these findings relate specifically to the significant and the dominant role that language learners' ICC plays in their L2 learning and successful performance. L2 learners should operate perfectly in a context in which at least two languages and two cultures exchange (Kramsch 2001; Jin 2014; Zheng 2014). Therefore, learners should be able to communicate and interact with people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, stepping out of their own outlook and adopting another. They should be competent in coping with different clarifications of reality. According to Alred (2003) and Bennett (2009), any lack in the ICC level can lead to conflict and misunderstanding. It should also be noted that any lack of consideration of variations in cultures of learning can lead to frustration and subsequent failure in language classrooms (Holliday 1994; Li 1998; Khawaja and Yang 2014). In order to promote their L2 learners' ICC in the future, pre-service English teachers should not only possess a high level of ICC, but also

become familiar with methods of conveying ICC to their L2 learners. Teachers, program developers, and educational settings should therefore take learners' sociocultural backgrounds into consideration and also become careful and sensitive in choosing the appropriate materials and pedagogical approaches for particular contexts of teaching cultural dynamic pinpoints because ignoring the students' norms and expectations is denying their experiences (Holliday 1994; Coleman 1996; McKay 2002; Lazar 2014).

4.2. Differences between Female and Male Pre-service English Teachers' ICC

With respect to gender differences on ICC level, the results of the study revealed that both male and female participants received the same median score on ICC level. That is, male pre-service English teachers did not perform differently on the ICC questionnaire in comparison with their female counterparts. Although these results differ from findings of some published studies (Tannen 1994; Clark and Trafford 1995; Sung and Padilla 1998; Kouritzin 2000; Kim and Goldstein 2005; Kobayashi 2007; Pan 2007; Warriner 2007), they are consistent with those of other studies (Matveev 2002; Patricia 2005; Mirzaei and Forouzandeh 2013). This finding highlights the need for further research to explore gendered ICC differences different societal contexts by employing both quantitative and qualitative methods as well as a larger sample.

4.3. Relationship between Pre-service English Teachers' ICC Levels and Their Achievement?

Some previous studies (Carrell 1984; Takahashi and Beebe 1987; Trosborg 1995; Koike 1996; Hismanoglu 2011) reported that students' ICC level had a significant effect on their proficiency and achievement. However, the results of this study revealed that there was no significant relationship between students' ICC and their academic achievement. This finding also needs further investigation to explore the effect of ICC on the academic achievement of pre-service English teachers and their language proficiency level.

4.4. Relationship Between Spending a Longer Period Abroad and Pre-service English Teachers' ICC

With respect to the relationship between studying abroad and ICC, the findings of this

study are consistent with those of other studies (Juang 2002; Williams 2005; Jular 2007; Hismanoglu 2011) and indicated that there was a strong positive association between the pre-service ELT teachers' ICC level and their overseas experience or abroad studies. More specifically, it was also found that all ICC components (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) were positively correlated with studying abroad. In other words, studying abroad helped the students to develop their ICC. Given that those students with an experience of studying abroad had higher ICC, it can be concluded that L2 learning contexts provide richer input than foreign language learning contexts for learners' exhibiting convergence to native speaker pragmatic behaviour (Jung 2002; Williams 2005; Jular 2007; Hismanoglu 2011). On the other hand, all students may not have the opportunity to participate in study-abroad programs or international exchange trips. It can thus be suggested that teachers or teacher trainers can promote their students' competencies in ICC by engaging them in international web collaboration projects (Lazar 2014).

5. CONCLUSION

The main goal of the current study was to investigate: what Turkish pre-service English teachers' ICC level was, whether gender differences had any significant association with the pre-service teachers' ICC levels, whether there was any relationship between ICC level and achievement, and finally whether studying abroad had any significant effect on pre-service English teachers' ICC level. The findings revealed that the participants' ICC level was good, and the ICC inter-correlation results indicated that there was a strong, positive relationship between the pre-service teachers' ICC level and all three components. Furthermore, the ICC components were strongly and positively correlated with each other. Turkish female and male pre-service teachers, with respect to ICC level, did not perform differently. The findings also showed that there was no significant association between the subjects' ICC level and their academic achievement. It is important to note that the findings of the research study revealed that the students' experience of studying abroad had a significant positive effect on their ICC and all ICC components.

Taken together, these findings pinpoint that language learners' level of ICC has a significant

effect on their success in language learning and appropriate usage of language. As a result, teachers, program developers, and educational settings should take into consideration the learners' sociocultural backgrounds and to be careful and sensitive in choosing appropriate materials and pedagogical approaches for particular contexts of teaching.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the current study enhance our understanding of the intercultural dimension of language teaching. Therefore, ICC training deserves instructional time for both language learners and prospective language teachers. ICC training can be conducted in English language teacher (ELT) education for various aims, such as for enabling pre-service EFL teachers to gain more knowledge about sociocultural variation in language learning and teaching, for probing and foregrounding teachers' preconceived notions of various learner groups, and for evaluating the sociocultural appropriateness of their proposed language teaching methodology for particular target learner groups.

7. LIMITATIONS

Like other studies in social sciences, this study is not without its limitations. Firstly, the sample consisted of 89 participants. A future study with a large group of pre-service English teachers may be needed to confirm the consistency of the study. Second, the data were collected by a single administration design using a questionnaire. Further research may include interviews to further examine intercultural communicative competence in such foreign language contexts.

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