

## Ideal L2 Self as a Predictor of Intercultural Communicative Competence

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**ABSTRACT** The present research reported the findings of the study which investigated the relationship between the ideal L2 self and intercultural communicative competence (ICC). A total of 216 undergraduate English majors at a major state university in Ankara, Turkey were included in the study and were asked to anonymously complete the ideal L2 self and the ICC questionnaires. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between the ideal L2 self and ICC. Further, the ideal L2 self was a significant predictor of ICC and its three components, and gender had the potential to moderate between the ideal L2 self and ICC. Thus, it was concluded that these findings contributed to promoting intercultural awareness among undergraduate English majors and that the integration of cultural contents into the existing pedagogical paradigm and fostering self-evident tendency among language learners and directing their-self guides to develop ICC can lead to success in L2 learning.

### INTRODUCTION

In the last two decades, second or foreign language (L2) teachers, teacher trainers and researchers have recognized that the fundamental goal of L2 instruction is to enable learners to interact or communicate with the people from linguistically and culturally different backgrounds in an intercultural world (Kramsch 1993; Byram 1997; Alptekin 2002; Sercu 2005; Byram 2009; Hismanoglu 2011). Today, in the world of globalisation people are expected to attain the ability to successfully communicate with people of other cultures or acquire intercultural communicative competence (ICC) as well as linguistic skills to deal with diverse cultural issues effectively and appropriately.

ICC is defined as “the ability to interact effectively with people of cultures other than one’s own” (Byram 2000: 297). According to Jackson (2014), intercultural competence entails transition from a monocultural perspective to an intercultural mindset. While the construct of ICC is often described with such dimensions as awareness, attitudes, skills, and proficiency in the target language (Deardorff 2006, 2011; Fantini

2000), it is also associated with some behavioural and personality characteristics or traits like motivation, respect, empathy, flexibility, patience, curiosity, openness (Fantini 2000), interest in cultures, flexibility, tolerance, open-mindedness, initiative, sociability, and positive self-image (Paran 2010).

Bastos and Araujo e Sa (2014) observed that the ICC is a multidimensional competence comprising three defined components, namely affective, cognitive and praxeological. They further argue that these components and related attitudes, knowledge and abilities are strongly interrelated in a recursive and integrated logic. In addition to the linguistic and cultural dimensions, Bastos and Araujo e Sa (2014) remarked that the ‘Self’ factor seems to be vital in ICC development and is visible both in the presence of the self in all components and ‘Personal skills’. This highlights the logical, integrated, and recursive relationship between ICC and ideal L2 self.

Over the past three decades, social psychologists have sought to find out relationship between motivation to learn an L2 and the social foundation of intercultural communication. Gardner’s (1985) socio-educational model of learning an L2, for instance, integrates aspects of traditional motivational research on L2 learning and social psychological insights. The former puts emphasis entirely on individualistic or psychological aspect of learning an L2, while the latter addresses social, cultural, and psychological dimensions and the relationship between L1 and L2 communities (Dornyei 2005). Thus, it is as-

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sumed that L2 motivation can serve as a primary force that can enhance or hinder intercultural communication and affiliation. Mirzaei and Forouzandeh (2013), for instance, found a reciprocal association and dynamicity between L2 motivation and ICC. They concluded that language socialization or “learners’ intercultural dispositions to foreign language learning and aligning with *otherness* influence their L2 motivation, and motivational factors, in turn, guide the learning process and ensure achievement” (2013: 312).

There is already ample research evidence that L2 motivation, as an individual difference variable, plays a crucial role in the rate and success of L2 learning (Azarnoosh 2014; Dornyei 2005, 2014; Dornyei and Kubanyiova 2014; Dornyei et al. 2015; Dornyei and Skehan 2003). In fact, it provides L2 learners with the initial impetus to start learning an L2 and then the driving force to continue the long and often tedious L2 learning process (Dornyei 1998; Dornyei and Ryan 2015). Research into L2 motivation has often been based on Gardner’s (1985) social psychological model highlighting integrative motivation and the cognitive-situated model adapted from Deci and Ryan’s (1985, 2002) self-determination theory emphasizing intrinsic, extrinsic and integrative motives (Noels 2001; Dornyei 2005). However, recent conceptions of L2 motivation have been firmly grounded in a process-oriented paradigm, including such notions as the possible self, motivation conceptualized at the group level, motivational self-regulation, and teacher-controlled motivational strategies, and L2 motivational self-system (Dornyei 2005, 2014; Dornyei and Ryan 2015; Dornyei and Ushioda 2009, 2011; Hadfield and Dornyei 2013). Azarnoosh (2014), for instance, found that attitudes toward L2 learning within motivational self-system framework are crucial for motivated learning behavior. Similarly, Khan (2015) reported that ideal L2 self highly affects both the motivational level to learn an L2 and formal L2 achievement.

The ideal L2 self is defined as the “L2-specific facet of one’s ideal self” (Dornyei 2005: 106). The ideal L2 self not only subsumes the traditional conceptualizations of L2 motivation but also presents a broader frame of reference with increased capacity for explanatory power (Dornyei 2005). As the ideal L2 self is an individual difference (ID) variable, it is, thus, assumed that there might be a link between ICC and the ideal L2 self within the self framework. That is,

interaction between one’s attitudes towards intercultural community or ‘international posture’ and his/her future self-images may serve as powerful incentives for developing ICC and being a successful L2 speaker. This necessarily demands familiarity with one’s own cultural values and other cultures - knowledge of self and others (Byram 1997).

People tend to learn English increasingly as a “self-evident part of education” (Dornyei et al. 2006). More importantly, each L2 learner has his/her own set of skills, knowledge, and attitudes that influence his or her cultural development and identification with the other people (Moeller and Faltin Osborn 2014; Moeller and Nugent 2014). It is assumed, therefore, that the linkage between ICC and the ideal L2 self in L2 learning context can be a vantage point to language achievement, since, learning an L2 is enhanced through interaction and communication which involve an alternation of one’s self-image, and desire for new social and cultural behaviours and ways of being. Besides, it is suggested that fostering an appreciation for cultural and linguistic diversity, the willingness to participate in plurilingual and intercultural encounters, and adopting a didactic approach to diversity “are the gateways that facilitate the process of developing personal and professional competences in ICC” (Bastos and Araujo e Sa 2014: 5). Therefore, the present study sought to explore the state of the art of ICC in a Turkish context and investigate its association with the ideal L2 self as a motivational factor in accordance with the aforementioned process-oriented paradigm in L2 motivation research.

## Literature Review

### *Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)*

The construct of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) was introduced by Michael Byram during the 1990s. It has undergone substantial changes ever since, and despite ample evidence regarding its importance in L2 learning, the controversy over its definition, constituent components, and assessment is still a thorny dispute in the field (Byram 1997; Byram and Risager 1999). Many researchers (Chen and Starosta 1996; Deardorff 2004, 2006, 2009, 2011;

East, 2012; Feng et al. 2009; Kramsch and McConnell-Ginet 1992; Lazar 2014; Neuliep 2012; Mirzaei and Forouzandeh 2013; Paran and Sercu 2010; Sercu 2004; Risager 2007; Young and Sachdev 2011; Taylor 1994; Wiseman 2002;) have made attempts to define and reconceptualise ICC from different perspectives and based on various components underpinning the construct. The major themes of proposed definitions of ICC are given in Table 1.

In an attempt to provide a comprehensive definition of ICC, Deardorff asked 23 top intercultural experts from the US to propose definitions of ICC. The most welcomed definition came to be “the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one’s intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes” (2006: 13). As seen, most of these definitions are revolving around familiarity with the foreign culture, acquiring knowledge, skills, motivation and critical awareness of other cultural in order to become intercultural speakers and successfully engage in communication with members of intercultural communities. These echo Byram’s (1997) basic formulations of factors underpinning ICC and are corroborated by Deardorff’s (2006) definition of the construct which has been used as the operational definition of ICC in the current study.

Over the last three decades, a number of L2 researchers, teachers and educationalists have been trying to adopt an ‘intercultural approach’ to language teaching and use ICC as a new paradigm rather than the conventional language teaching methodology which focuses mainly on the acquisition of native-speaker competence. Many researchers (Byram 1997, 2000; Byram et al. 2013; Kramsch 1998; Alptekin 2002; Corbett 2003) argue that the concept of native-like speaker is imprecise and is a ‘nonexistent abstraction’

(Alptekin 2002). Thus, an intercultural style is proposed to overcome divergence in dyadic interactions where the two interlocutors come from two different social identities rather than accepting the native speaker or monolingual norm (Byram 1997). Byram (1997) proposed the intercultural style to overcome divergence in dyadic interactions where the two interlocutors come from two different social identities rather than accepting the native speaker or monolingual norm. From ICC perspective, according to Byram (1997), it is appropriate to refer to an L2 learner as an ‘intercultural speaker’ who “crosses frontiers, and who is to some extent a specialist in the transit of cultural property and symbolic values” (Byram and Zarate 1997: 11). Further, it is asserted that a successful interaction should be safely grounded and judged both in terms of the effective exchange of information and in terms of the establishing and maintenance of social relationships.

In line with recent developments in language teaching and intercultural education all over the world, recent research in Turkey (as in Alptekin 2002; Atay et al. 2009; Hismanoglu 2011) has also emphasized the inevitability of the shift from prevailing English teaching paradigm, that is, conventional communicative language teaching with its standardized native-speaker norms, which, in its best, puts emphasis on fostering linguistic competence and a utopian ‘native-speaker based’ notion of communicative competence (Alptekin 2002) towards realization of ICC. By integrating features of earlier approaches to teaching culture within communicative paradigm, it is assumed that the ICC-based curriculum will certainly have the potential to accommodate cultural topics which are important from motivational perspective, encourage acculturation, and more importantly raise the cultural awareness among L2 learners.

**Table 1: Definitions and conceptualizations of ICC**

1	Assisting learners to gain intercultural awareness.
2	Fostering intercultural communicative competence in learners.
3	Turning out intercultural beings; training intercultural speakers.
4	Life-long intercultural learning; life-long learners of interculture.
5	Having cultural knowledge, communicative competence, personal attitudes, self-awareness, and knowing others’ values and norms in order to deal successfully with different cultures.
6	Developing an awareness of cultural dynamics and discerning multiple identities in order to maintain a state of multicultural coexistence.
7	Negotiating linguistic and cultural differences appropriately using language, or relating to otherness effectively.
8	Acquiring knowledge, motivation, and skills to effectively communicate with the members of other communities.

The available evidence highlights the multifaceted nature of ICC construct whose constituents have been subject of inquiry by many scholars. According to Chen (1989), ICC is made up of four components: *personal attributes, communication skills, psychological adaptation and cultural awareness*. Byram (1997: 34) singles out five ingredients or the constituent components for the ICC construct. These components, which he referred to as five *saviors* of ICC, include *knowledge of self and others, skills of interpretation and relating, skills for discovering and/or interaction, attitudes, political education and critical cultural awareness*. Broadly speaking, these components of ICC empower L2 learners to negotiate linguistic and cultural differences appropriately via the medium of language (Byram 1997; Mirzaei and Forouzandeh 2013).

Language and culture are regarded interrelated constructs and culture is viewed as glue which binds languages together (Brown 2007) in the sense that culture for language is as water is for fish. Besides, considering the 'no culture, no language' maxim, it becomes clear that culture free communicative competence is impossible (Byram 1997; Kramsch 1998; Corbett 2003) and learning an L2 without culture ends up with what Bennett et al. (2003: 237) refer to as "becoming a fluent fool" who knows the language well but lacks the 'shared rules of interpretation' and the familiarity with beliefs, values, norms and cultural issues that are the building blocks of any language. In addition, from multilingual and multicultural perspectives, ICC has the potential to help L2 learners "to develop an awareness of cultural dynamics and to discern multiple identities in order to maintain a state of multicultural coexistence" (Chen and Starosta 1996: 364).

### *Ideal L2 Self*

Dornyei (2005) proposed the model of the L2 Motivational Self-System to answer the challenges levelled against the validity of integrative concept. The proposed model consists of three main components: the ideal L2 self, the ought-to L2 self and the L2 learning experience. The ideal L2 self represents one's self image to be a competent L2 learner. The integrativeness is regarded as central to the ideal L2 self in L2 motivational system (Taguchi et al. 2009). The ought-to L2 self concerns controlling 'possible negative outcomes' and contains 'attributes that one believes

one ought to possess (Dornyei 2005: 106). The L2 learning experience concerns with the attitudes towards language learning environment, that is, the teacher and the course, and "situation specific motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience" (Dornyei 2005: 106).

Dornyei (2005, 2009) argued that future *self guides*, that is, both ideal and ought to selves, echo the approach/avoid orientations in Higgins' (1987, 1998) discrepancy theory. According to Higgins' discrepancy theory, the discrepancy between one's actual self, or 'current sense of self', and his/her future self guides brings about discomfort and this motivates one to reduce that feeling of discomfort (Taguchi et al. 2009). In another way, motivation in this sense, according to Dornyei (2005: 100), entails "the desire to reduce the discrepancy between one's actual and ideal or ought selves".

Both ideal self and ought to self involve the attainment of 'a desired end-state' in learning an L2. However, like Higgins (1998), Dornyei (2005, 2009) distinguished between the two concepts and uses the term instrumentality to refer to the prevention or avoidance orientations of L2 learners' future self guides. While the ideal self-guides (that is, ideal L2 selves) have a "promotion focus, concerned with hopes, aspirations, advancements, growth and accomplishments (that is, approaching a desired end-state)", the ought-to self-guides (that is, ought to L2 selves) have a "prevention focus, regulating the absence or presence of negative outcomes, concerned with safety, responsibilities and obligations (that is, avoidance of a feared end-state)" Dornyei (2009: 28). It is concluded, therefore, that in learning an L2, the discrepancy between one's two different senses of self, that is, actual self, or present state of learning an L2, and ideal self, that is, ideal L2 speaker, causes discomfort in L2 learning and the motivation to settle down the existing conflict between one's *actual self* and what he/she would like to be in future, the *ideal self*, serves as a strong impetus for the person to become a successful L2 learner and speaker.

In contrast to the post-structuralist perspective which regards language learners imagined identity as a fundamental concept to language learning (Norton 1995, 2000, 2001; Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004), Dornyei's (2005) L2 motivation self-system draws upon the insights of self psychology (Higgins 1998) and approaches the is-

sue from a psychological perspective. This theoretical model assumes the exercise of more power, autonomy and agency by learners in L2 learning. The core content of Dornyei's (2005) motivation model is that learners with the ideal L2 self imagine their future selves as L2-users, and this self image strongly motivates them to learn an L2.

### *Intercultural Communicative Competence and Ideal L2 Self*

The rationale for the present study is the contention that the concept of integrativeness to learn an L2 in Gardnerian tradition has been seriously challenged recently (Dornyei 2005, 2009; Kormos and Csizer 2008; Csizer and Kormos 2009; Yashima 2009; Xie 2011). In Gardner's (1985) socioeducational model it was assumed that the sociocultural milieu influences L2 learners' attitudes towards the target language, affecting L2 learning motivation. This model posited that motivation to learn a second language is to be identified with the target language community or native speakers of the language. That is, integrativeness is the core content of motivation to L2 learning.

The core problem with integration is the fact that today most L2 learners learn an L2 with the purpose of being able to communicate with other non-native speakers or significant others in an international encounter (Kormos and Csizer 2008) and with the purpose of intercultural being or becoming intercultural speakers (Byram 1997). Indeed, the ownership of English no longer stays with native speakers and, in fact, English has been detached from both its native speakers and their cultures (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000). Thus, the present state of English language as a lingua franca might better be expressed by English as an Intercultural language (Sifakis 2004), indicating that English is most often used in intercultural encounters in the third millennium.

Recent developments in motivational research and interest in the role of self as a key factor in learning an L2 has taken the debate on a new turn. Yashima (2002) broadened the notion of integrativeness and viewed it as an 'international posture' or 'World English identity' (Dornyei 2005), which plays a significant role in learners' interest in international affairs, and their willingness to communicate with intercultural partners. Further, international posture in EIL

contexts denotes much more than integrativeness and identification with any specific L2 group. It concerns one's desire to "relate oneself to the international community" (Yashima 2009: 145).

### **The Purpose of the Study**

Both ICC and the ideal L2 self are regarded as motivational factors that can exert great influence on an individual's tendency to learn an L2. Mirzaei and Forouzandeh (2013), for instance, reported a reciprocal relationship between L2 motivation and ICC. In fact, ICC enriches L2 learning and helps an L2 learner not only to become a competent speaker and hearer of another language, but also a 'cultural diplomat' who serves as a mediator between different cultures (Corbett 2003). On the other hand, the ideal L2 self serves as a driving force for L2 learning and can help language learners to imagine their future as ideal L2 users. As such, it became evident that both constructs are complementary regarding successful language learning.

Given the centrality of the two constructs to L2 learning and use, the present paper investigated how an individual's future self guides within the construct of L2 motivational self-system shape one's intercultural communicative competence in an as-yet-unexplored context of Turkey. The prime objective of the study was to find out whether there is a relationship between the ideal L2 self and ICC and whether the ideal L2 self has the potential to predict variability in the participants' perceptions of ICC. Further, the study investigated the main and interaction effects of the ideal L2 self and gender on ICC among the participants. For these purposes, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What are the perceived levels of undergraduate EFL students' ICC and ideal L2 self?
2. Is there any significant difference between male and female participants in terms of their ICC and ideal L2 self in Turkey?
3. Is there any interaction effect between gender and the ideal L2 self on ICC, and does gender moderate the relationship between levels of the ideal L2 self and ICC?
4. To what extents can the ideal L2 self predict the variability in intercultural communicative competence of the undergraduate EFL students?

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

The present study was conducted with a quantitative research design and a survey methodology to collect data. Participants provided perceptions of their ideal L2 self, ICC, and socio-demographic characteristics.

### Setting and Participants

The study was conducted in January 2014 in an undergraduate EFL teacher training program at a major state university in Ankara, Turkey. A total of 216 students (females: 163, 75.5% and males: 53, 24.5%) enrolled in the department voluntarily participated in the study, responding to the statements in two different surveys, the ideal L2 self and ICC. The majority of the participants were year two students of English major and their mean age was 20.40 years ( $SD = 1.22$ , range 19~25). They had either attended a one-year preparatory program and passed the general proficiency exam, or had been exempted from the cited preparatory program as they demonstrated a proficiency level of B2, and thus were taking advanced language skills courses in their department. Without any consultation among themselves they completed the anonymous survey during the regular class hours and also gave consent for data collection.

### Instrumentation

#### *Intercultural Communicative Competence Questionnaire (ICCQ)*

The intercultural communicative competence questionnaire (ICCQ) adopted from Mirzaei and Forouzandeh (2013) was employed to measure the participants' ICC. The ICCQ consists of 22 statements to measure participants' ICC, based on Deardorff's (2006) large-scale investigation. It contains 12 items for assessing the participants' knowledge such as cultural self-awareness, culture-related information, linguistic knowledge, and socio-linguistic awareness, 5 skill items for assessing the participants' ability to communicate across cultures, and finally 5 attitude items for assessing the participants' respect for and openness to different cultures as well as their tolerance of ambiguity (Deardorff 2006; Mirzaei and Forouzandeh 2013). Sample statements used

in the study were: *I believe that intercultural experiences can add some information to my previous knowledge; I can take part in any L2 conversation dealing with daily life issues; When I am uncertain about cultural differences, I take a tolerant attitude.* The participants rated the statements on a 5-point (ranging from 1. *strongly disagree* to 5. *strongly agree*) Likert scale. The internal consistency of the original scale was  $\alpha = .71$  based on Cronbach's Alpha. In the present study the internal consistency of the scale was  $\alpha = .75$ , which constitutes a reliable index for measurement.

#### *The Ideal L2 Self Measure*

A 10-item ideal L2 self measure (Dornyei and Taguchi 2010) was used to assess the participants' desired L2 self-images, future self guides or their views of themselves as successful L2 learners in the future. The participants responded to the statements on a 6-point (ranging from 1. *strongly disagree* to 6. *strongly agree*) Likert scale. The internal consistency of this instrument was also measured using Cronbach's Alpha, and it was  $\alpha = .93$  in this study. The present study focused on the ideal L2 self component only to avoid undesirable outcomes because there are some items in ought to self scale and feared self components that seem culturally controversial, for example, *"It will have a negative impact on my life if I don't learn English"* or might evoke assimilation *"I think that there is a danger that Turkish people may forget the importance of Turkish culture, as a result of internationalisation"*. It should be noted that the participants' ratings in both scales were converted to standardized z scores for the ease of data analysis.

### Procedures for Data Collection and Analysis

Data for this study were gathered using the intercultural communicative competence questionnaire (ICCQ) and the ideal L2 self measure administered in January 2014 during the regular class hours in the study setting cited above. Data analysis was carried out to address the research questions formulated for the present study. The statistical analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics 21. The relatively large dataset allowed the researcher to conduct a range of statistical procedures, t-test, Chi square test, factorial ANOVA, and regression analysis. Based on

the self-developed cut-off points, estimated mean values for the High, Moderate and Low, that is, 4.25 and above, 2.5-4.25, and 1-2.5 respectively, the perfect scores for ICC were considered as *High* if they were in the upper third of the normative distribution (81-110), *Moderate* if they were in the middle third (51-80), and *Low* if they were in the lower third (22-50). As for the ideal L2 self, the perfect scores obtained for each participant ranged from 10 to 60 and the scores were similarly considered as *High* if they were in the upper third of the normative distribution (46-60), *Moderate* if they were in the middle third (26-45), and *Low* if they were in the lower third (10-25).

As the data met normality assumption for the employment of parametric tests, the t-test was used to assess the role of gender difference in perceptions of ideal L2 self and ICC, and factorial ANOVA was employed because it can both determine the main effect of each independent variable and present the significant interaction effect between the indicator variables on the criterion variable. A Chi Square test for independence and cross tabulation were used to determine the association between different levels of criterion and indicator variables. The chi square test is used when we have categorical or ordinal variables with two or more categories in each. Finally, simple multiple regression analysis was used to see whether the ideal L2 self is a predictor of ICC in L2 learning.

**RESULTS**

The present study investigated the relationship between the ideal L2 self and ICC and the predictive power of ideal L2 self in relation to ICC. This section presents the results of the current study in terms of descriptive and inferential statistics, followed by a discussion of the findings.

**Descriptives and Gender Differences**

As shown in Table 2, the scores obtained for overall ICC in females ( $M = 83.53, SD = 8.04$ ) and males ( $M = 82.72, SD = 8.10$ ) were not so high as to make differences between groups. The similarity of mean scores for the components of ICC also revealed no significant differences between groups. As for ideal L2 self, the results reported almost similar mean scores for females ( $M = 50.23, SD = 8.27$ ) and males ( $M = 51.00, SD = 8.56$ ). This implies that both groups have similar perceptions towards their future self guides and becoming intercultural beings. Further, the results based on the self-developed cut-off points revealed that 61.1 percent of pre-service EFL teachers had high levels of ICC, whereas 38.9 percent fell within moderate group. Interestingly enough, none of the participants' score fell within low group. Regarding ideal L2 self, 75 percent of the participants' scores fell within high group, 23.6 percent within moderate group, and only 1.4 percent within low group.

An independent sample t-test was also conducted to find out whether there were any significant differences between the ICC and ideal L2 self scores of males and females. The results, as shown in Table 1, revealed no significant differences between groups neither in ICC nor its three components.

**Relationship between Levels of the Ideal L2 Self and ICC**

The results of chi square test for independence of groups, as can be seen by the frequencies cross-tabulated in Table 3, revealed that there was statistically a significant relationship between levels of the ideal L2 self and ICC,  $\chi^2(2, 216) = 42.33, p < 0.05$ , and  $\phi = .44$  which is con-

**Table 2: Descriptive statistics and t-test for participants' perceptions of ICC and ideal L2 self**

Variables	Components	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig.
ICC	Knowledge	Female	163	43.01	4.32	.638	214	.524
		Male	53	42.57	4.70			
	Skills	Female	163	19.18	2.64	-.100	214	.920
		Male	53	19.23	2.75			
	Attitudes	Female	163	17.55	1.76	-1.599	70.42	.114
		Male	53	18.13	2.44			
Overall	Female	163	83.53	8.04	.636	214	.525	
	Male	53	82.72	8.10				
Ideal L2 Self	-	Female	163	50.23	8.27	-.586	214	.558
	-	Male	53	51.00	8.56			

**Table 3: Cross-tabulation of the ideal L2 self and ICC levels**

Variable	ICC	
	High	Moderate
Ideal L2 Self		
High	73.5%	26.5%
Moderate	25.5%	74.5%
Low	0.0%	100%

sidered a moderate effect according to Cohen's (1988) criteria for effect size. According to the results of cross-tabulation, 73.5 percent of the participants with high levels of ideal L2 self had high ICC, while 26.5 percent had moderate ICC. Moreover, 13 percent of the participants with moderate ideal L2 self had high ICC and 38 percent moderate ICC. All the participants with low ideal L2 self had moderate ICC.

#### The Interaction Effect of Gender and Ideal L2 Self on ICC

A factorial or two-way between group analysis of variance (two-way ANOVA) was conducted to explore the main and interaction effects of gender and levels of ideal L2 self on ICC and its components. There was a statistically significant main effect for ideal L2 self,  $F(2,210) = 28.85, p < .05$  in ICC,  $F(2,210) = 24.05, p < .05$  in knowledge, and  $F(2,210) = 21.04, p < .05$  in skills. The effect size was large in ICC and the two significant components,  $\eta^2 = .21, .18$  and  $.16$  respectively. How-

ever, the main effect for gender did not reach statistical significance neither in overall ICC nor in its components. Further, the interaction effect between gender and ideal L2 self was statistically significant,  $F(2,210) = 4.50, p < .05$  for ICC and  $F(2,210) = 4.83, p < .05$  for skills. The effect size was small both in ICC and in skills. There was also no main and interaction effect between levels of ideal L2 self, knowledge and attitudes. The results of Tukey's post hoc test indicated that the mean scores of all groups differed significantly in overall ICC, knowledge and skills.

#### Ideal L2 Self as a Predictor of ICC

The results of standard regression analysis, as shown in Table 4, demonstrated that there were statistically strong positive correlations (Cohen 1988) between the ideal L2 self and ICC ( $r = .623$ ) and its components of knowledge ( $r = .552$ ) and skills ( $r = .558$ ), and a slight positive correlation between the ideal L2 self and attitudes ( $r = .172$ ).

Further, the findings, as displayed in Table 5, revealed that the ideal L2 self significantly contributed to the prediction of overall ICC,  $\beta = .60$ , skills,  $\beta = .17$ , knowledge,  $\beta = .29$ , and attitudes,  $\beta = .04$ . The ideal L2 self also explained a significant proportion of variance in ICC scores,  $R^2 = .388, F(1,214) = 135.87, p < 0.01$ , and its three components of knowledge,  $R^2 = .305, F(1,214) = 93.75, P < 0.01$ , skills,  $R^2 = .311, F(1,214) =$

**Table 4: Correlation between ideal L2 self and ICC**

	Ideal L2 self	ICC	Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
Ideal L2 self	1				
ICC	.623**	1			
Knowledge	.552**	.853**	1		
Skills	.558**	.748**	.500**	1	
Attitudes	.172*	.322**	.167*	.227**	1

\*Significant at .05 level (2-tailed).

\*\* Significant at .01 level (2-tailed).

**Table 5: Ideal L2 self as a predictor of ICC**

Variables	Standardized coefficients			
	Dependent	$\hat{a}$	$t$	Sig.
Ideal L2 self	Knowledge	.293	9.68	0.000
	Skills	.179	9.83	0.000
	Attitudes	.042	2.54	0.011
	Overall ICC	.602	11.65	0.000



96.71,  $p < 0.01$ , and attitudes,  $R^2 = .029$ ,  $F(1,214) = 6.49$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . The model proved to be a good fit to the data as the ideal L2 self accounted for nearly 39 percent ( $R^2 = .388$ ) of the variance in the participants' perceptions of overall ICC.

## DISCUSSION

The above findings are discussed here to find answers to the research questions which were the objectives of this study. The study yielded some significant findings regarding the undergraduate EFL students' perceptions of the ideal L2 self and ICC.

The results of descriptive statistics revealed that Turkish undergraduate EFL students had high levels of ICC and ideal L2 self. This implies that the participants were aware of the importance of ICC in establishing intercultural communication. Similar results were found by Atay et al. (2009). By the same token, the high percentages of ideal L2 self are indicative of their sound self-appraisal of their intent of learning an L2 and their future ideal selves. Additionally, the results indicated that there were strong positive correlations between the ideal L2 self and ICC. The close association between the ideal L2 self and ICC highlights the significance and the strengths of language learners' intercultural and motivational self-guides in L2 learning and identification with otherness as prerequisite for entry into worldwide communication and 'international citizenship' (Byram 2008, 2013). Put simply, self and intercultural awareness empower language learners to do comparative analysis of both their own cultures and those of the L2 they are learning as the strengths of intercultural education and ICC in L2 learning "lie in the critical comparative analysis of 'other' cultures and 'ours'" (Byram 2013: 59). Indeed, ICC-based education aims to foster in learners' various types of competences (Canale and Swain 1980; Canale 1983) in language, coupled with intercultural competences in the analysis and comparison of cultures. What matters in ICC is the experience of acquiring skills and attitudes for exploring the culture of any social group or community learners face with (Byram 2013: 59).

The results further revealed that high levels of the ideal L2 self correlate significantly with high levels of ICC. That is, L2 learners with higher ideal L2 self have higher levels of ICC and, hence, are more motivated to learn an L2 and

reach out to other cultures. These findings are congruent with the abundant literature on the contribution of motivational factors to language achievement (Deci et al. 1991; Dornyei 2005; Dornyei and Csizer 2002; Gardner and MacIntyre 1993; Noels 2001, 2003). Given that the literature on the effect of the ideal L2 self on ICC is fairly scarce, the findings of the present study will provide significant implications for future research on the contributions of the motivational capacity of the future self-guides to cultural awareness and intercultural communicative competence.

From an ICC perspective, the high levels of ideal self guides can encourage L2 learners to engage in interaction with a wider range of communities and strive for identification with 'internationalism' and international communities (Byram 2013). Simply put, the process-oriented conceptions such as self-awareness, self-concept, possible selves, self regulations, future self guides and L2 motivational self-system are of great importance for language achievement and ICC. Hou et al. (2012) found that self-perception of L2 communicative competence is of high significance for intercultural difficulty management when delivering messages in an L2 in an intercultural context dealing with power issues in relation to language and interlocutors of the dominant culture.

Contradictory results were found by Roger (2010) among Korean graduate students. The findings reported little evidence of a strongly visualized second language self. While identification with the notion of global citizenship was appealing to some participants, others categorically rejected the global citizen label (Roger 2010) since they believed that the desire to be intercultural being is inherent in their individual perspectives, that is, their own self-conception and future self guides. Thus, Roger's findings and the present study highlight the contention that the participants' views on the global significance of ICC do not act as an extrinsic motivating factor (Noels 2003), but are internalised motives (Dornyei 2009; Dornyei and Ryan 2015) that are deeply rooted in their L2 self-concept or ideal L2 self (Csizer and Kormos 2009). These findings are also congruent with those of Lantolf and Thorne (2006), who, from sociocultural perspective, assert that learning a second language has the potential to mediate our interaction with the world and with our own psychological self imag-

es and self-actualization. That is, the ideal L2 self and ICC are interrelated and complementary, and from sociocultural and self perspectives, any L2 learning should provide learners with necessary knowledge and skills of how to relate to others as well as how to envision themselves as L2 users – their ideal L2 self. Additionally, according to National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project (NSFLEP 2014), their own cultural research can help learners to interact with native speakers using written or spoken language and comparing their own culture practices to those of the target culture. This would evoke the development of diverse goal ideas from the World-Readiness Standards (Moeller and Faltin Osborn 2014; NSFLEP 2014).

The findings of the present study confirmed that the highly significant role of the ideal L2 self in shaping motivated behaviour and its great predictive power of ICC indicate that integrativeness is better to be completed or ‘re-labeled’ by ideal L2 self as it has seemingly more explanatory power in ICC than integrativeness in learning an L2 (Taguchi et al. 2009). Understandably, this perspective does not invalidate the results accumulated in the field of L2 motivation research in line with traditional conceptualization of the construct. Rather, the possible self theory and Gardner’s (1985) socio-educational theory of integrative motivation are much more complementary rather than being “mutually exclusive” (MacIntyre et al. 2009). Further, motivational research findings in the past will be revitalized and taken up on a new turn within the L2 motivational self-system.

The results also indicated that gender had no significant main effect on ICC. However, it moderated the relationship between levels of the ideal L2 self and ICC. These findings add to the existing conflicting results on the role gender factor can have in ICC differences. That is, gender differences as studied in their classic forms may not yield rewarding results and that the results can be more insightful if we take the role of other factors such as sociocultural milieu, sample size, sociocultural affordances (Mirzaei and Forouzandeh 2013) or social, psychological and cultural support into account.

### CONCLUSION

The present study showed that the reciprocity observed in association between the ideal L2 self and ICC has implications for intercultural

education. It was argued that in the multilingual or multicultural world of communication one’s idealized future self and his/her desire to be identified with intercultural communities serve as strong motivational factors in L2 learning. Further, one’s tendency to reach out to other cultures through critical analysis of his/her own culture and other cultures is of great significance for international citizenship and intercultural communication. Indeed, the ICC is a “double-edged” construct. Consequently, linguistic and cultural developments in another language provide and maximize the opportunity for powerful reflections into one’s own native world view. The findings of this study also confirmed that the ideal L2 self has the potential to predict the variations in language learners’ perceived levels of ICC and this opens new avenues of study in SLA and particularly in the field of language learning motivation regarding ICC. Therefore, future research should aim at designing and using specific teaching tasks and activities in order to enhance L2 learners’ ICC and L2-learning motivation to ensure that from ICC perspective they have reached what is known as ‘third place’ — the position that transcends the culture of home and that of any social group that they meet.

As noted above, the spoken and unspoken goal of ICC is not the ‘native speaker competence’ but rather an intercultural communicative competence. The ICC-based education, therefore, should try to help language learners to gain necessary knowledge and skills to deal with intercultural differences across different linguistic, discourse, and ethnolinguistic communities and “achieve the valuable skills of observation, explanation and mediation that contribute to ‘intercultural’ communicative competence.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The ICC aspect of L2 learning should be incorporated into L2 learning curricula to raise intercultural awareness among students and teachers alike because fostering of skills of observation, interpretation and critical cultural awareness are quintessential for ICC. However, as ICC concerns intercultural communication rather than cross-cultural communication, adequate care must be given to the fact that ICC involves a two-way communication rather than a one-way one. Needless to say, a necessary ICC specific education is a needed at the initial stages of learn-

ing an L2. This can be done through teaching language learners the necessary ethnographic skills, participating in cultural programs in and outside the campus and encouraging learners to be intercultural observers and interpreters through teaching interview skills and techniques which help language learners to accumulate information about their home and target culture. As people often represent themselves in interviews, these are of great importance in ICC since they directly link ICC to our future self guides. It is also recommended that L2 learners should be provided with the opportunity to self-analyze, to define their own way of L2 learning based on their own motivational self-system, the way they envision themselves ideal L2 speakers, and to monitor and self-regulate their intercultural development process more consciously and in a more reflective way.

### LIMITATIONS

Like other studies in social sciences, this study is not without limitations. The present study was carried out in an EIL context through using only questionnaires and survey methodology. Further, the greater strength of ideal L2 self in predicting ICC can be influenced by setting and might be an artefact of measurement. Thus, as the literature regarding the relationship between the ideal L2 self and ICC is scarce, the findings of this study should be generalized cautiously for other intercultural encounters where language learners are exposed to a multitude of cultural differences and have to interact with intercultural speakers within a radically diverse social milieu. Future research should use mixed-method research designs in order to probe the issue in depth in intercultural contexts. Only then we can make sure that the participants assess their future self guides and ICC equally the same in different settings and increase the chance of coming to right conclusion about the significance of the research and generalizability of its findings.

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