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Turkish EFL Instructors' Perception of
Culture and Intercultural Competence in ELT

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ABSTRACT

In Turkey recently, English has been the most dominant foreign language. It is simply due to the fact that English plays a key role in politics, technology and the global economy. English has become so important that in certain universities in Turkey, even the medium of instruction is English, meaning the studies are in English. If students who are to attend these universities do not have a certain level of proficiency in English, it is compulsory for them to attend a one-year intensive English course at English preparatory schools.

At these preparatory schools, while English has been taught, the relationship between culture and intercultural competence has always been open to discussion. It can even be said that the lack of sensitivity to culture and intercultural competence has been the case. To understand this issue, it is crucial to know the opinions of instructors teaching English. In this regard, it has been aimed to discover EFL instructors' perception of culture and intercultural competence in this study. Furthermore, it is conducted as a case study, meaning only an English preparatory school at one specific university.

In this study, data have been gathered and analyzed in two forms: quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative data have been analyzed by calculating mean scores as Sercu (2005) suggests in her study. In addition, for the qualitative data, content analysis has been applied to the interviews to make meaningful interpretations about the instructors' ideas about this topic.

Quantitative findings have indicated that the instructors present a positive attitude towards integrating culture and intercultural competence into teaching English, and make use of a variety of activities in their classes. Additionally, qualitative findings have revealed that the instructors have a considerably high level of awareness about culture and intercultural competence in English language teaching although there is no direct link to them in the objectives.

1   INTRODUCTION

There has been a continuing debate regarding the relationship between culture and language and how much culture there should be in language teaching. According to Sun (2013: 373), "in the past, foreign language teachers put emphasis on linguistic aspects and neglected the place of culture in language teaching". As a result, students had problems using their learned language properly to communicate. In this regard, learning a language with its culture plays a crucial role in communicating with people from a variety of backgrounds.

At the same time, with regard to understanding a language, "it is not only related to grammar, phonology and lexis but also certain characteristics of culture" (Qu 2010: 58). These studies emphasize the importance of integrating culture into language teaching. However, more research is still needed as to understand what the teachers, teaching the foreign language, think about it. Moreover, this topic has not been empirically studied at X University, hence I study EFL instructors' perception of culture and intercultural competence in this research.

In this chapter, I present background information about culture, language, language teaching, the objectives of this study and research questions. In addition, the methodology, motivation, scope of the study, limitations together with the outline of the thesis are presented.

1.1 Background

Throughout history, people have lived in different parts of the world and moved from one place to another for different purposes, such as trade, immigration, war, and finding new places to live. This shows that there have been continuous interactions between different societies and groups of people. This type of interaction can be considered to be intercultural interaction. In this regard, such intercultural interactions have made it

significant to acquaint ourselves with each other's languages and cultures; in other words, learning these languages and cultures.

Language and culture are two of the most important key terms in foreign language teaching. It would be difficult to teach or talk about a language without mentioning the cultures that it accommodates and vice versa. Senft (2009: 6) mentions that a language reflects its speech community's culture, meaning that language can be thought of as the mirror of the lifestyle, customs, beliefs or any other elements that are included in the culture and cultural background of the people speaking a language. Thus, this puts emphasis on the idea that language is the key that provides us with the possibility of understanding culture better.

As there is such a relationship between language and culture, it is very important to know what culture means. Rai and Panna (2010: 1) define culture as all that people learn and acquire simply due to being a member of a society. Similarly, it is understood that culture is learned and acquired in a society. At the same time, it plays a crucial role in an individual's self-development. This is due to the fact that people, as a part of a society, are exposed to culture from birth. Moreover, for every living organism, it is important become accustomed to the surrounding environment in order to stay alive since only in this way they can continue to live. Therefore, it can be inferred that in order to survive in a society, one has to adapt to the culture that is dominant in the society in which a person lives and behaves accordingly.

On the other hand, it is essential to know more about what the direct relationship between language and culture. Levi-Strauss (1963: 68) considers language to be a condition of culture, so culture is learned and sustained with the help of language. This indicates that language represents, preserves and transfers culture both within one specific group of people and over generations. Furthermore, Sarangi (2009: 96) points out that language not only carries cultural values and norms also plays a central role in sustaining and changing the practices in culture. In this regard, it can be thought that language and culture are the very dynamic elements of a society with a tight connection between them.

So far, the relationship between culture and language has been mentioned from the point of view of their mutual interdependency. However, how does this relationship relate to language teaching? Before focusing more on this, it is important to understand first what language teaching is. According to Safaya (2009: 120), the main aspect of language teaching is related to literary and cultural education. In this respect, the main need of language teaching arises from the fact that people need to find a common way to communicate with others. Therefore, they need to learn each other's languages to a certain extent in order to conduct basic successful communication, which means the smooth exchange of ideas.

It has been a very common question in language teaching as to whether it is sufficient only to teach certain linguistic features or include also certain context related elements; in other words, small pieces of culture. While discussing language teaching, it is important to start from the possible definitions of language. Once the definition of language is known, language teaching can be better understood. In this regard, Safaya (2009: 91) provides the following definitions of language:

- "Language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols used for communication."
- "Language is a systematic means of communication ideas or feelings by the use of conventionalized signs, sounds, gestures or marks having understood meaning."

From these definitions, it can be inferred that language can be seen as both only a system of structures and words and as a tool consisting of various elements of body language and other signals to communicate. In other words, the first definition is related to linguistic features, whereas the second refers to paralinguistic features, meaning not only structural features of a language but also its properties (Reder, Marec-Breton, Gombert & Demont 2013: 687).

Nowadays, the language teaching process is considered to be the enabling of learners to communicate. In this respect, Risager (2006: 1) states that "since the 1990s large sections of linguists […] to an increasing extent highlighted the relationship between language and culture", which means that teaching language and culture together has become

increasingly popular. At the same time, Byram (2000: 8) indicates that as language teaching and culture in an integrated way have been gaining attention, teachers are seeking opportunities to go beyond. That is to say, the students' understanding of the relationship between language and culture is supported in this process. This has also been supported by Kramsch (2006: 11) saying that "culture has always been an integral component of language teaching". Therefore, it could be said that language teaching and culture teaching are "two sides of the same coin." In order to be able to communicate in a foreign language, one has to have the necessary competence that is not only linguistic knowledge but also a wider general knowledge related to culture.

So far, language and culture teaching have been discussed. I now move from this to the interaction of people from different cultural backgrounds. In other words, intercultural communication. Risager (2000: 14) points out that intercultural communication is broader than the linguistic dimension, and it is related to the content which can be seen as a greater knowledge of the world. Thus, it can be said that in intercultural communication, not only linguistic features but also general knowledge about the world is involved. Similarly, these aspects cooperate with each other.

Another important aspect related to this issue is how and how much of culture should be integrated into this process of foreign language teaching so that learners can develop better skills for communication. When language teaching is considered, it can be seen that a group of linguists hold the view that it is only related to individuals' mental properties, whereas another group claims that it is closely connected to the norms and habits of a speech community (Whong 2011: 95). However, it is quite open to discussion as to how much emphasis has been put on the importance of culture in foreign language teaching classes. Do teachers provide students with opportunities to improve both their cultural and intercultural competence? How can a student develop better understanding of culture and use it in the classroom setting? These are the questions that should be asked as language teachers, both as sources of knowledge and as guides, should be the facilitators of culture teaching and help students to improve their intercultural competence in foreign language classes.

In the light of the questions given above, what can be focused here is signified that including culture in the process of language teaching is vital. Furthermore, Risager (2006: 2) points out that "language teaching must therefore work for maximum integration between teaching the target language and teaching in the target language culture". Thus, language and culture are attached to each other in an inseparable way, and it is possible to communicate successfully by also taking advantage of presenting culture.

In Turkey, the medium of instruction is English in a number of universities. This means students are required to have a certain level of English proficiency in order to continue their education in those universities. If their level of English is insufficient, students are required to attend a compulsory English language preparatory school, meaning one academic year of intensive English language learning. After this year, the students are expected to reach a specific level of English language proficiency that will enable them to follow courses and do their assignments in their studies in their respective departments.

Each English preparatory school in the universities has a different idea about how to teach English well. Some put emphasis on modern approaches such as communicative language teaching, while others make a point by using technology; in other words, integrating technology into teaching. In this way, these universities have the belief that students can improve the four basic skills, namely reading, listening, speaking and writing in English to an optimal level more effectively. These four skills represent two sides of communication. That is to say, while reading and listening improve comprehension-related skills, writing and speaking focus more on production-related competencies.

When the information stated above about English preparatory schools is taken into account, it can be seen that culture has not been directly linked or it has been considered in the second place. In this respect, it is very important to acquire the opinions of instructors about culture, intercultural competence and intercultural communication as well as its teaching and practical applications. Conducting this research at X University English Preparatory School has presented the possibility of obtaining a better understanding of instructors' perception of culture and how they apply it in their teaching practices. Thus, in this research, I would like to focus on this issue from this aspect.

1.2 Objective of the Study and Research Questions

In this study, I focus on Turkish EFL (English as a Foreign Language) instructors' perception of culture and intercultural competence in English language teaching (ELT). More specifically, I take the case of X University English Preparatory School. The research questions are as follows:

1 What is the EFL instructors' understanding of culture, intercultural communication and intercultural competence at this English preparatory school?

2 What activities related to culture, intercultural competence and intercultural communication do the EFL instructors integrate in their teaching practices?

1.3 Methodology

This study is a case study. As described by Gillham (2010: 1), a case is "a unit of human activity embedded in the real world" and it is studied and considered only in this very specific context. Therefore, a case study does not consider the issue from a wider perspective; it only endeavors to find answers to the questions about a "case" which is actually only one single part of the bigger picture. Furthermore, according to Gillham (2010: 102), "organizations can be illuminated by case studies." This means that case studies help us better to understand how organizations work, what their dynamics are and how they survive. When the objective of the study is taken into account, a case study for such a research becomes ideal.

Data have been gathered in the following manner: first of all, a survey prepared by Sercu (2005) was used. In her book, "*Foreign Language Teachers and Intercultural Competence: An International Investigation*", Sercu provides findings about the issue of foreign language teaching and intercultural competence. Furthermore, Sercu (2005: viii) describes the study as being a quantitative and comparative study which focuses on teachers' answers received from Belgium, Bulgaria, Poland, Mexico, Greece, Spain and Sweden. Similarly, Sercu has wanted to learn about the situation of this topic in these countries. With that study, Sercu and her colleagues have aimed to find the definition of

the main attitudes towards the cultural dimension of language teaching among teachers (Sercu 2005: viii).

In the survey given in Sercu's book, there are 11 sections that deal with different aspects of culture and language teaching; however, I only take Sections 3.3 and 6 and the first part of Section 11 of the survey into consideration. These parts deal with an understanding of culture in foreign language teaching, culture teaching activities in foreign language teaching and intercultural foreign language teaching. With the help of this survey, I have gathered data about their understanding of culture in foreign language teaching, the kinds of cultural activities that are practiced and how extensively instructors deal with the cultural aspects in their classes. Thus, quantitative data has been gathered and analyzed. With regard to the analysis, mean scores have been calculated following the same methodology as Sercu (2005) in her research. Therefore, these scores have been used to make interpretations about these aspects.

This has followed by interviews. Five interviews have conducted. The interviewees have been selected based on gender and experience and their proportion relative to the total number of participants. The interviews have been conducted in depth as "the root of the in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning that make of their experience" (Seidman 2006: 9). These interviews have helped me to understand the instructors' perception of culture, intercultural competence, intercultural communication and the teaching of culture and ELT.

While working on the data gathered through interviews, I have applied content analysis, which is a method used in research and is a process of making valid inferences from the text available (Weber 1990: 9). Furthermore, when the objectives and the scale of this research are taken for granted, content analysis is the very type of analysis to have been used here. Additionally, Weber (1990: 11), quoting Aries (1973), states that "content analysis can be applied to substantive issues such as culture and social interaction, and can also be used to study micro-groups of the society." As I deal with the issues of culture and teaching which can be considered as a form of social interaction between teachers and students in this study, it is crucial to benefit from content analysis. At the same time,

the case I have studied is a micro group out of many other institutions having similar purposes. All in all, these applications of content analysis make it important to analyze the data in this manner.

1.4 Motivation, Scope of the Study and Limitations

I have been working as an instructor of English language for approximately six years at this institution. My language teaching philosophy mainly concerns enabling students to communicate successfully in the language that they are learning, meaning that communicating successfully so that the students should be able to express themselves and their ideas comfortably in any social or academic setting. In other words, they should be able to communicate well. While it is widely thought that language teaching is a process of improving students' grammar, vocabulary and the four language skills (reading, listening, writing and speaking), I hold the view that language teaching is related not only to these aspects but also to the pragmatic use in a real-life setting. Furthermore, the overall explanation of language teaching given above is adequate, but what is lacking is authenticity, meaning that all these aspects are merely artificial and simply do not prepare students for real-life situations if the teacher fails to present culture and expose students to it in some manner.

Another important point is that students should be culturally competent. Thus, so as to communicate successfully, students should be given the possibility to raise awareness about any cultural aspect of language learning. Otherwise, while students do not have any problems with accuracy, meaning knowledge of grammar and vocabulary and using them correctly, they may have difficulty in communicating fluently. All in all, allocating time to activities that make students culturally aware plays a crucial role in the language teaching process.

Furthermore, personally, I believe that having a job is not only related to completion of the tasks given; it is also closely associated with the contribution to the professional development of the institution. Thus, the main objectives can be accomplished more

effectively. In this respect, this study will hopefully enable teachers working at X University English Preparatory School to see what the picture about the integration of culture in language teaching is, understand the importance of culture in language teaching and perform better in order to make the most of culture in their practices. Therefore, these are the main considerations behind the motivation to conduct such research.

As this is a case study, it covers only the instructors who currently teach English at X University English Preparatory School. In other words, the study is only related to this specific institution. In addition, it does not aim to generalize about the views and practices of instructors teaching in other institutions. This is closely linked to the nature of the case studies. That is to say, the findings are only related to this specific group of instructors, their beliefs and their practices. Thus, while certain insights about their perceptions of culture and intercultural competence in language teaching are gathered, it will not be possible to generalize it in such manner that it covers other universities or institutions teaching English in Turkey. This can be considered the basic limitation of this study.

1.5 Outline of the Thesis

There are six chapters in this study. Firstly, the introduction part aims to create a niche together with the research questions, methodology, motivation, scope and limitations. In the second chapter, the basic concepts such as culture, intercultural communication, intercultural awareness and intercultural competence are dealt with. The third chapter focuses on English as a lingua franca, English language teacher education and the teaching of English in Turkey. The fourth chapter consists of a description of the data collection process, instruments and their applications. The findings of the research are presented in the fifth chapter. In the last chapter, the summary of the study together with suggestions for further studies are presented.

2 CULTURE, INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND COMPETENCE

Culture, intercultural communication and competence are the key terms in this research. In this chapter, I provide the theoretical background for these terms.

2.1 Definition of Culture

According to the OED (2015), "culture is defined as the distinctive ideas, customs, social behavior, products or way of life of a particular nation, society, group of people, or period". Once these aspects are taken into account, the definition of culture becomes rather complex and it also involves many components that are not easy to describe. In this respect, it can be said that culture has always been a controversial term to define. Jenks (1993: 1) points out that the concept of culture is so complex and divergent that it is very challenging to present a single definition. The reason for this is that it can easily go to the level of stereotyping of certain sample behaviors of people living in a certain community, or people can simply consider it from a different perspective, which is not logical or rational.

An interesting point has been aroused by Richardson (2001: 1), who points out that the concept of culture is different between humans and animals. While animals endeavor to survive in their wild environment, this is not the case for humans. For example, babies are born, and their needs for protection are met by their parents. However, this is not sufficient to survive, and they need other skills, meaning cultural skills including the social aspects. In this regard, people improve such skills which are related to behaving in certain ways in specific cases in order to "survive" in an environment that other people have created for themselves. The notion of survival in such a context refers to being accepted by others. In Richardson's (2001) explanation, what should be given the utmost importance is people's creation of an environment themselves.

With regard to McOmie's perspective, he considers culture as a process of the cultivation of the behavior, illustrated. Thus, according to McOmie (1990: 177):

> The word "culture" comes from the Latin cultivare, from which the English "cultivate" is also derived. […] If we think of culture as the selective cultivation of behavior, then we are close to the most crucial thing about it: the fact that certain specific behaviors, out of the whole range of possible behaviors, are cultivated by a certain group of people in a certain environment at a certain time for the purposes of adaptation and group solidarity. […] A culture, therefore, is the result of the mass cultivation of a certain way of seeing, thinking, assuming, believing, and behaving in the members of a society.

From this definition, it is understood that culture is the end product of the cultivation of certain behaviors by a specific group of people throughout a period of time.

When the ideas of Richardson (2001) and McOmie (1990) are summarized, it can be claimed that firstly, there are certain behaviors out of many others. In addition, these behaviors are important in order to be a part of a society and continue to live in that society. In other words, as mentioned in the structural functionalist approach, culture consists of values that direct people's lives, give meaning to what they do and bring them together (Macionis 2012: 70–71). These values in this approach are directly related to the meanings attached to certain behaviors that have been created over a period of time. Then, people in a specific community and society process these behaviors. In other words, they manifest the accepted behaviors in society or the community. Over time, these behaviors may change, lose importance or acquire new meanings attached to them. At the same time, while more meanings and importance are linked to some of them so that they can make better sense, others may lose their importance and meaning to people. All in all, while people become adapted to the behaviors, culture plays an important role to be part of a society and live in it. Moreover, the behaviors and their meanings do not remain the same, but undergo continuous change.

Furthermore, various factors, such as social, political, economic and environmental factors, affect which behaviors are more important than others. After all, there is mass exposure, meaning people who happen to be a part of a certain society are exposed to culture either directly or directly. Jenks (1993: 9) considers culture to be an important element generating a concept that unifies people. In this way, people learn to be a part of a bigger group.

The ideas mentioned above have dealt with the topics of how different meanings are attached to different sets of behaviors and how culture has been created through this process. However, another important question to be asked is whether it is the same meaning for different people perceiving and interpreting the same behavior. Goodenough (2003: 7) points out that people have different backgrounds, so the attached meanings to a certain set of behaviors have differences among people. Here, it is understood that the experiences that people gain throughout their lives are the basic determinant that directly affect what kind of meanings people have for certain behaviors. The question arises: how are they able to communicate, then? As the main purpose of communication is to send intended messages, it can be said that it is just enough as long as the messages are conveyed successfully even if they ignore, and even sometimes they are not aware of any differences (Goodenough 2003: 8). Thus, it can be said that culture is related to communicating successfully regardless of any differences that people may have due to their background.

Culture is an evolutionary process that started in the past and has an impact on today and the future. In this regard, culture can be considered as the roots and wings of a society. While roots represent the past, wings stand for the future. At the same time, culture is "today" for people. In this respect, it is inevitable that everyday activities are involved in culture. Although there may be individual differences with regard to the meanings attached to these activities, Goodenough (2003) mentions that the aim is to have a successful and cooperative interaction with others. To sum up, culture enables people to interact and it consists of what people have inherited from the past. At the same time, it is related to the ways people interpret and perform culture now and what aspects they will legate to future generations.

All these perspectives discussed so far have brought up the issue that culture has been defined by different scholars from different points of view; so the questions are what kind of criteria should be taken into account while defining culture and how one culture should be distinguished from another. Here, I basically deal with two views.

The first view considers nationality as a big picture of the culture. The reason for this is that "one of the aims of cross-cultural research is to promote cooperation among nations" (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov 2010: 21). In this way, nations will understand each other very well and work together. According to Hofstede et al. (2010: 21), "using nationality as a criterion is a matter of expediency because it is immensely easier to obtain data for nations" as they provide all kinds of statistical information about their respective populations. In other words, what is emphasized here is to look at the issue from a wider perspective with statistics. This idea appears to be quite practical; however, there are also certain serious questions to be asked. How concrete and specific results could one obtain if culture were to be considered as one whole nation? What will be the difference between defining a nation based on their culture and stereotyping it?

The second view concentrates on the idea that considering culture that belongs to a nation reveals a number of pitfalls in analysis, such as stereotyping, missing details and ignoring variety. In this respect, it is important to take culture into consideration from another perspective. Here, the concept of "small culture" emerges. Holliday (1999: 237) points out that "a "small culture" paradigm attaches culture to small social groupings or activities wherever there is cohesive behavior, and thus avoids culturist, ethnic, national or international stereotyping". In this manner, a more specific picture of the behaviors and beliefs can be interpreted. Goodenough (1976: 5) mentions that as people are in interaction with more than one micro-culture, meaning a sub-group belonging to the macro one, they are likely to have knowledge based on the micro-cultures to which they belong. Such knowledge in a micro group may not be parallel to the knowledge in the macro group or the other micro groups. Similarly, how people behave and what meanings they attach to certain behaviors are all related to their experiences within these cultural groups. Furthermore, Holliday (1999: 247) indicates that "regardless of any ethnic, national and international entities, culture is a combination of adhesive behaviors within any social grouping." In other words, these social groupings are considered to be small cultures to which people belong.

Much earlier than this definition of small cultures, Goodenough (1976: 4) also states that it is important to note that there are differences among individuals and families; therefore,

it is noteworthy not to look at societies in their entirety because of the simple fact that people have different aims and interests in their social interactions. In this regard, it can be stated that cultures thought as a whole nation or society are not necessarily homogeneous entities, but multifaceted and complex. Here, Goodenough (1976) argues for the concept of multiculturalism in a simple society, and it can be inferred that this notion of multiculturalism is comparable to the small cultures, the notion of which was put forward later in the literature. Thus, while nation is a too broad a criterion to define culture, it will lead to better conclusions when the idea of small cultures is taken for granted (Holliday, 1999).

So far in this part, I have looked at culture from different perspectives, different dynamics that play a crucial role in the creation of culture and what kind of criteria should be taken for granted.

2.2 From Culture to Intercultural Communication

Moving from culture to intercultural communication, it becomes more paradoxical. Piller (2011: 144) states that intercultural communication is related to who makes culture relevant for a certain group of people in a specific context for certain purposes. In other words, in intercultural communication, the key elements are culture, context and purpose. In order to understand the notion of intercultural communication better, it is crucial to be aware of what kind of context and what purposes are involved. Furthermore, in relation to the cultural aspect, as intercultural communication is the interaction of at least two parties from different cultural backgrounds, it is important to know which side is dominant in deciding the "culture" of the interaction, and which one is adapting the behavior. What is understood from this statement is that there is more than one culture meeting simultaneously for a purpose.

As understood from the information given above, in intercultural communication, there is the involvement of at least two parties from different social, cultural, economic, ethnic or religious backgrounds. Here, I firstly discuss Novinger's ideas (2001), and continue

with Günthner and Luckmann's (2001) perspective. First of all, Novinger (2001: 4) points out that "communication is a system of behavior". This means that since different cultures demand different types of behavior, "intercultural communication is more complex than communication between persons of the same culture" (Novinger 2001: 4). What Novinger (2001) emphasizes here is that there is a cultural demand regarding how to behave in certain cases. In other words, in this definition, behaviors refer to any acts that are needed for a communicative interaction. Thus, understanding and dealing with intercultural communication is even more difficult as there are more cultures involved in communication.

Secondly, Günthner and Luckmann (2001: 63) point out that for any communication, it is necessary to have a minimal level of shared knowledge. This is also the case in intercultural communication. If the level of shared knowledge is low, it means that there is asymmetry with regard to knowledge. Furthermore, it is the extent of this asymmetry that causes problems in intercultural communication (Günthner & Luckmann 2001: 63). As people have different cultural backgrounds and personal experiences, it is unavoidable that there may be problems in intercultural communication due to lack of shared knowledge meaning asymmetry of knowledge. Thus, intercultural communication is related to developing shared knowledge and managing any asymmetry so that people from different cultures can communicate successfully.

As mentioned above, although intercultural communication is quite complex, it can be achieved if there is sufficient shared and symmetric knowledge. As a result, it becomes important to increase the level of such knowledge. However, there are two questions to be answered here. Firstly, can all the knowledge be acquired or learned? Secondly, how should people behave when there is uncertainty? The answer for the former question is "no" as there is not even a single culture that has accomplished that. If there were a way, people would not be talking about communication related problems. Before the latter question is answered, it is important to discuss uncertainty. Uncertainty is related to lack of knowledge in an intercultural interaction. Loenhoff (2011: 57) states that intercultural communication is not only performed with explicit knowledge but also with implicit knowledge which is defined as tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge can be considered as

knowledge that people have but are not aware of it. Furthermore, tacit knowledge has the following characteristics (Zappavigna 2012: 32):

- It is not formally acquired;
- It is not closely related to awareness;
- It is unlike a set of rules, but multifaceted ones; and
- It is of practical value for those knowing it.

With regard to the exemplification of tacit knowledge, it can be said that a child acquires his/her mother tongue in such a way that he/she is not aware of the grammar structures of the utterances that he/she is making use of to communicate. In this regard, it can be pointed out that tacit knowledge is not related to the process of learning syntactic rules, but becoming acquainted with "how to mean" in a specific context manner (Zappavigna 2012: 35).

Moreover, it can be beneficial to use tacit knowledge in an intercultural setting as it supports better communication between people from different cultural backgrounds. However, the main problem is that these people are not simply aware of the fact that they can use this piece of knowledge. How can people take advantage of such a piece of knowledge? Here, Loenhoff (2011: 57) responds that tacit knowledge can be applied in intercultural communication by assessing the appropriateness and relevance of the knowledge in their own culture. This means that, as people simply cannot learn all the necessary knowledge to communicate with people not only within the same society but also from other cultures, they need a survival skill which is the awareness of tacit knowledge here in order to communicate successfully.

In this respect, it is understood that there is the possibility of encountering problems in intercultural communications. Xu (2013: 380) points out that the main focus of intercultural communication is to manage cultural differences. That is, regardless of any differences, successful communication should be achieved.

Bowe and Martin (2007: 1–2) mention:

> An understanding of intercultural communication is crucially related to an understanding of the ways in which the spoken and written word may be interpreted differently, depending on the context. […] Although speakers engaged in intercultural communication typically choose a single language in which to communicate, individuals typically bring their own sociocultural expectations of language to the encounter.

The explanation given above indicates that either consciously or unconsciously, people bring their expectations based on their cultural background to the intercultural communication setting even if they communicate in another language. Thus, "intercultural communication relies on the idea of culture and bearers of culture" (Durant & Shepherd 2009: 156). Moreover, it is not only verbal and non-verbal expressions that both sides bring together with them but also the context that plays an important role in intercultural communication.

When people are attempting to communicate with someone from another cultural background, primarily they are not aware of the differences that they may have in their knowledge. Such differences in knowledge that they already have are related to the asymmetry of knowledge, meaning people's possession of different qualities and quantities of knowledge (Kastberg 2011: 137). Additionally, Günthner and Luckmann (2001: 63) state that such asymmetries involved at different levels and kinds are an important aspect of communication. In this respect, the level of such differences in knowledge can be high with regard to the differences of people's cultures in interaction. Thus, when involved in intercultural communication, it is crucial to bear these issues in mind.

Furthermore, due to these differences in the shared knowledge, creating reciprocity is also a problematic process due to the simple fact that people involved in such communications have different experiences and expectations about the same situation. To overcome such issues, it is important to note that reciprocity can be regarded as a significant principle and a crucial intervening variable (Gouldner 1960: 161). In addition, Gumperz (1982: 3) points out that socio-cultural knowledge is to be shared in order to be able to maintain the

communication. This can be considered as an attempt to construct reciprocity and deal with the asymmetries. All in all, these are the very variables to be taken into account when intercultural communication is considered.

2.3 Intercultural Awareness and Competence

As mentioned in the previous section, in intercultural communication, there is the tendency to have certain problems between the people involved simply because of the fact that they are from different backgrounds. FitzGerald (2003: 1) mentions that "different cultural values and communication styles present the causes of difficulties in intercultural interaction". In this regard, becoming acquainted with these differences plays a crucial role in such communications. Thus, in order to accomplish successful intercultural communication, intercultural awareness and competence are required.

According to Gumperz (1982: 1), communication is related to knowledge and abilities that are beyond grammatical competence, and they help people to interpret messages. In intercultural communication, such knowledge and abilities are prerequisite in order to succeed. At the same time, in such a communication setting, knowledge is closely related to awareness, and the abilities to handle it could be referred to as strategy. In this regard, it is crucial to note that intercultural awareness is related to being aware of the fact that people from different cultures may have different values and backgrounds. They are "strangers" to each other. Schuetz (1944: 499) states that a cultural pattern is suitable only for those living in that specific culture and it is relevant to their "thinking as usual." In order to proceed further into intercultural awareness and competence, the key is how such differences are handled. In other words, what kind of strategy is applied so as to achieve communication in an intercultural setting.

It can be said that people are supposed to have experience so that they can develop strategies. In this way, they can become better adjusted socially for such communication. Keeping these ideas in mind helps people in interactions to have more effective communication. Thus, as the overall purpose of communication is to convey the intended

messages to the others that are involved, and ensure that messages are correctly or, for the most part correctly, interpreted. Being aware of such cultural differences enables people to have more successful communication.

According to FitzGerald (2003: 209), the reason for this is the ignorance of these differences creating barriers to achieve successful communication. How can these barriers be overcome? It is suggested that understanding of language and culture together with the impacts of culture-bound schemas and frames is needed (FitzGerald 2003: 210). That is to say people should try to put some effort into understanding other cultures in intercultural communication. This is not related to artificial meanings attached to certain acts, but to the understanding of the reasons and results of them. Thus, people overcome these cultural differences and carry out successful intercultural communication. All in all, this is also the manner in which people can develop intercultural awareness.

What is intercultural competence then? According to Piller (2011: 53), "Intercultural competence is characterized by the ability and desire to engage with realities other than our own". At the same time, Deardorff (2011: 66) defines intercultural competence as "appropriate behavior and communication in intercultural situations, which again can be further detailed in terms of indicators of appropriate behavior in a specific context". In other words, intercultural competence is related to having knowledge of different communication styles, their equal validity and how they reflect cultural values (FitzGerald 2003: 210).

The key terms here to be kept in mind are knowledge, effectiveness and appropriateness. However, who decides on them? As communication is a mutual process, both sides should take an active part in it. That is to say;

> First, intercultural competence development is an ongoing process. […] Second, critical-thinking skills play a crucial role in an individual's ability to acquire and evaluate knowledge. […] Third, attitudes—particularly respect, openness, and curiosity—serve as the basis […] and have an impact on all other aspects of intercultural competence. […] Fourth, intercultural experts agreed on […] the ability to see from others' perspectives. (Deardoff 2011: 68)

In addition, according to Byram, Nichols and Stevens (2001: 5–7), five components are included in intercultural competence:

- Attitude: It is related to being interested in and open to other cultures. At the same time, it is about readiness towards and the suspension of disbelief about both other cultures and one's own culture.

- Knowledge: This notion is associated with the knowledge of groups and practices in a society not only one's own but also the other. Moreover, it is about the understanding of society-related processes and interactions between individuals.

- Skills of Interpreting and Relating: It is to comprehend a case from another culture and make connections with one's own.

- Skills of Discovery and Interaction: This is about how to find a piece of new knowledge in another culture, and make use of it during communication and interaction with people belonging to that culture.

- Critical Cultural Awareness: This is related to the critical evaluation of one's own culture and the other, and being aware of the fact that there could be similarities and differences between different societies.

Here, this approach can be considered to be a step-by-step process about how to develop intercultural competence. It focuses not only on behavioral aspect of such as competence but also on initiatives of developing a wider understanding and awareness. In brief, knowledge, skills and attitudes are drivers of creating intercultural competence (Byram et al. 2001: 7).

As a result, it can be said that nowadays it is very common for people to be in interaction with others from different backgrounds more often than they were in the past. This means that intercultural communication has become a part of everyday life. In addition, intercultural communication is the occasion on which people having different and specific ways of life and belonging to different cultural groups and backgrounds come together to communicate (Piller 2011: 16). That is to say, different cultures meet so as to succeed in communication by cooperating and dealing with these differences. Having an effective intercultural communication depends on the fact that people are aware of the differences

in values, beliefs and ideas, and at the same time they try to cope with them and cooperate with others to accomplish a successful interaction. In this respect, intercultural competence, the heart of successful intercultural communication is becoming more important.

As people learn a foreign language to communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds, the idea to be kept in mind here is that intercultural communication is directly related to foreign language teaching. As a result, "all foreign language educators are now expected to exploit this potential and promote the acquisition of intercultural competence in their learners" (Sercu 2005: 1). All in all, this shows the importance of the teaching of intercultural competence embedded in foreign language teaching.

3   ENGLISH AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

In this chapter, I discuss the importance of English as the language of the world from a global perspective in the first place. Next, English language teaching in Turkey and intercultural communication and intercultural competence in English language teaching programs are addressed.

3.1 English as Lingua Franca

Through the centuries, people have been on the move. They have travelled to different parts of the world for different purposes such as trade, war, immigration and business. This means that people have been involved in communication with people with whom they do not share the same mother tongue. In such cases, they have used a third language to communicate, known as a lingua franca. In the OED (2015), "lingua franca" is defined as "any language that is used by speakers of different languages as a common medium of communication". In other words, it can be said that a lingua franca is a common language between two people speaking different languages, and neither of them speak this language as a native one.

In history, there have been different lingua francas. Different languages have been more dominant than others in different historical periods. For example, while French was dominant during the 19th century, it was replaced by English approximately one century later. Dewey (2007: 333) emphasizes that "English is like no other language in its current role internationally, indeed like no other at any moment in history". The greater importance of English can be interpreted from this idea. In this regard, English is considered the language of the globe as there are more non-native speakers of English than native speakers. In this regard, "English as a lingua franca refers to the (mainly spoken) English used in communication among the so-called 'non-native' users of the language" (Sifakis 2007: 359). Thus, this puts special importance on the teaching of English. Furthermore, people with English language skills apart from their mother tongue are at a greater advantage in both educational and professional life. Consequently, the

importance of English comes from the fact that millions of people speak it and communicate in intercultural contexts with it.

3.2 English Language Teacher Education in Turkey

As in many other countries, the needs in the fields of politics, economics and culture as well as the changes in the economy and in technology are important determinants with regard to foreign language teaching in Turkey (Atay 2005: 224). Today, English is the main language in international economy, technology and politics. That is to say it is in a prime position in schools to teach as a foreign language. Furthermore, this need of learning English is becoming increasingly dominant. In this growing demand for English language teaching, it is important to observe how EFL teachers are educated and trained in Turkey. In this respect, I, here, discuss the place of the Council of Higher Education, two important updates affecting ELT programs and what is emphasized during university education.

In Turkey, the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) is the central body coordinating academic, institutional and administrative affairs of universities in Turkey in accordance with Higher Education Law No. 2547 enacted in 1981 (CoHE 2016a). In this respect, all the programs belonging to faculties of education are subject to following the regulations and guidelines provided by the CoHE.

Here, I would like to mention two significant updates in the teacher training programs in Turkey. First of all, the eight-year compulsory basic education was put into practice in the 1997-1998 school year. Following this, it became clear to make certain updates in the teacher training programs in the faculties of education in order to meet the needs of this change. In this aspect, the restructuring of these programs was completed and implemented in the 1998-1999 academic year (CoHE 2016b). Secondly, another general update was made in 2006 in order to rectify problems due to the previous update and to describe and achieve the learning outcomes expected by the European Higher Education Area of which Turkey became a part in 2003 (CoHE 2016b).

In the light of these updates, I discuss further the education of English language teachers in Turkey. Prospective teachers of English are expected to obtain a university degree consisting of a four-year course of study (Haznedar 2012: 40). According to Akyel (2012: 33), there is a significant emphasis on the following activities:

- acquiring theoretical knowledge;
- reflecting on previous knowledge, experiences and practices;
- scheduled observations;
- microteaching practices;
- interaction with peers, supervisors and teachers in cooperation; and
- developing skills of study, observation and cooperation.

Prospective teachers of English take courses in three main areas: content courses (59%), pedagogical courses (22%) and courses related to general knowledge (19%) (CoHE 2016c). The percentages show the allocation of the courses in these areas in the overall program. It can be understood that these programs aim at preparing these prospective teachers not only pedagogically and professionally but also culturally. Thus, for future teachers of the English language, studying culture is considered necessary and not an arbitrary activity (Genç & Bada 2005: 80).

3.3 Intercultural Communication and Competence in Turkish ELT Programs

The teaching of English and intercultural communication has been attributed more importance since the start of the process to join the EU (Bektaş, Çetinkaya & Börkan 2012: 108). It shows that there has been an awareness of intercultural communication while teaching English. Furthermore, according to Bektaş Çetinkaya and Börkan (2012: 109), modifications made in English Language Teaching programs in 2006, aimed at improving prospective English teachers' intellectual skills though effective communication skills.

In order to observe the place of intercultural communication and competence in ELT programs in Turkey, it is crucial to examine the overall curriculum in these programs. As stated above, curricula are determined by the CoHE. This means that programs do not have the possibility to change it. However, it is often at the lecturer's discretion to design course content. In other words, the lecturer can decide what to include in the course and how to organize it.

First of all, when courses in the curriculum for a four-year study period are considered, there are courses related to the four basic skills, pedagogical courses, teaching methods and approaches, literature and teaching, Turkish language, history and second foreign language courses (Kavak, Aydın & Altun 2007: 215).

Secondly, when objectives of English Language Teaching programs are considered, it can be said that the main emphasis is put on characteristics such as being responsible, being aware of modern approaches, use of technology in language classes (Hacettepe University 2012 & Gazi University 2012). It can be said that intercultural communication and competence are not among the primary objectives; as a result, these aspects of language teaching may not receive enough attention.

In addition, according to Atay's study (2005: 232), future language teachers have revealed that there is inconsistency between language teaching and culture teaching. In the same study, there are two more interesting findings (Atay 2005: 232-233):

- A number of those teachers reflect that they have insufficient relevant knowledge to deal with cultural issues in a class setting.
- While some of them consider this issue to be merely the transmission of information available in course books, others simply believe that it is not necessary to teach culture at all.

Comparing these findings with those of Sercu (2005), the fact is that many EFL teachers who are not native speakers of English lack sufficient knowledge and confidence to teach about cultural issues. These findings point out that there is a parallel view regarding the place of intercultural communication and competence in ELT between non-native

teachers from different countries. Furthermore, in both the studies of Sercu (2005) and Atay (2005), it is clear that intercultural communication and competence are considered to be the process of transmitting knowledge mainly managed by teachers. This leads to question the adequacy of training preparing these future teachers to cope with intercultural communication and competence in their classes. All in all, the reasons behind this issue can be seen when the objectives of ELT programs and the courses in these programs are considered.

4   METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I present that this study is a case study. In addition, it is stated that the data have been gathered quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative data have been analyzed on SPSS, while content analysis has been applied to the qualitative data.

4.1 Case Study

In this study, the aim is to understand the perceptions of a specific group from a certain organization regarding culture and intercultural competence in English language teaching. Thus, as the target group is a smaller and specific community, it is ideal to apply case study to this research.

In this respect, it is crucial to define in the first place what a case study is from a wider perspective. According to Woodside (2010: 1), a case study aims at describing and understanding an individual person, group or organization on which the research has the focus. In a case study, it is important to have a deeper understanding of how the participants think and feel about a specific topic. Woodside (2010: 6) points out that having such an understanding is the product of a process which involves:

- focusing on what the participants perceive;
- putting what they perceive into a frame; and
- interpreting how they accomplish it.

From Woodside's (2010) ideas, it can be said that these are the steps to be taken into account in a case study. Therefore, it is crucial to keep this process involving those steps in mind so that a more comprehensive understanding of a case can be achieved.

In research, case studies also receive certain criticism. One major criticism of case studies is that their findings cannot be generalized to a larger group or population. However, it can be said that its main objective is not to generalize a theory or a model, but to examine

the process deeply in this specific case (Woodside 2010: 9). All in all, when the overall objective of this study and the research questions are taken for granted, it is highly beneficial to do so with the help of a case study method.

4.2 Participants

The instructors participated in this research are the EFL instructors of X university. The total number of the instructors involved in the survey is 38. Following the survey, 5 instructors were selected to be interviewed based on two criteria, namely their gender and years of experience and their proportion among the entire group.

4.3 Data Collection and Analysis

In this research, two different types of data have been gathered and analyzed: quantitative and qualitative. It is important to note that the official permission from the Ethics Committee of X University has been taken to conduct the survey there. In addition, before each interview, the instructors have presented their consent to be interviewed.   In the following sections, detailed information on how these data were collected and studied is presented.

4.3.1   Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis

Muijs (2004: 2) points out that quantitative research has the aim of explaining a specific phenomenon with the help of collected numerical data. From this definition, it can be understood that quantitative data collection is related to statistical information derived from these data. The advantage of using quantitative data and analyzing it is that quantitative data enable the researcher to consider the case from a wider perspective (Gilham 2010: 80).

For this study, the survey that I have employed consists of two sections. In the first section, questions related to biographical information such as gender, years of experience, in which field they have their BA degree, have been asked. The second section has been taken from Sercu (2005), who has conducted an international investigation about foreign language teaching and intercultural competence. She has gathered the data via an 11-section survey and she has conducted a comparative research. I have complied the survey from the one Sercu (2005) used and taken certain sections into account: namely Sections 3.3 and 6.1 and the first part of Section 11, which includes 37 items in total.

There are two reasons for the selection of those specific parts of the survey. Firstly, certain parts have included other subjects apart from language teaching. Secondly, the remaining parts have been irrelevant to the topic of this study. For these reasons, the other parts have been excluded.

The data have been analyzed on SPSS, which is a software package calculating numerical equations from data analysis (Muijs 2004: 85). Firstly, mean scores for each item have been calculated. These calculations have been made in the manner Sercu (2005) presents in her book. Then, overall interpretations have been made for each of the three sections of the survey, which included the understanding of culture in foreign language teaching, culture in foreign language teaching and intercultural foreign language teaching.

4.3.2   Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis

Qualitative research is an approach having many dimensions and it is the investigation of culture, society and behavior with analyses of people's words and/or behaviors (Hogan, Dolan & Donnelly 2011). In other words, ideas to be interpreted are hidden in people's speech and attitudes.

According to Saldana, Leavy and Beretvas (2011: 3), qualitative research is a general term for a variety of approaches and methods. The data can be available in different forms such as written and visual. This suggests that data in different forms can be gathered in

different ways and interpreted accordingly. In this research, qualitative data have been gathered via interviews. Interviews offer participants the possibility to convey their perspectives, opinions and values (Saldana et al. 2011: 32). In this study, semi-structured in-depth interviews have been conducted. Such a type of interview provides the researcher with the flexibility regarding the structures and the quality of the data (Gilham 2005: 70). At the same time, the researcher endeavors to understand participants' ideas and perspectives by determining a few general topics (Shkedi 2005: 60).

To gather qualitative data, it has been necessary to sample the participants joined the survey. In order to select these participants, stratified random sampling has been applied. Thompson (2012: 141) states that in such a sampling, the participants involved in the research are partitioned into different strata or categories. In this study, the strata have been decided by taking two basic independent variables into account: gender, meaning male and female, and years of experience, meaning 8 years or fewer and 9 years or more.

For the interviews, 5 participants have been selected: 2 with 8 years or fewer, and 3 with 9 years or more experience. As the population has been predominantly female, 3 out of 5 have been selected as female, and 2 males have been the remaining participants. In this way, the main objective of the stratified random sampling, which is the selection of samples in the manner that represents the whole population (Thompson 2012: 141), has been accomplished.

The interviews have been analyzed with the help of content analysis which is a research technique to make inferences which are valid and replicable from a text (Krippendorff 2013: 24). According to Krippendorff (2013: 24), the main goal of content analysis is to provide the researcher with new insights related to a certain context. In other words, it is used to acquire a deeper understanding of a situation.

Furthermore, in content analysis, it is important to look for different meanings to be inferred in a text which can be either written or recorded. In this regard, the qualities of texts proposed by Krippendorff (2013: 28–30) are such that:

- Texts are not independent of the reader. The reason for this is that the readers are expected to make sense of them.

- Texts have more than one meaning depending on the conceptualization of the reader.

- The meanings that can be inferred from a text are relative to the context and discourse in which they are situated.

By taking the characteristics stated above into account, I have analyzed the interview recordings and drawn conclusions accordingly.

5   FINDINGS

In this research, I have gathered data in two forms: quantitative and qualitative. For the quantitative aspect, I have conducted a survey of 37 items from Sercu's (2005) study to which 38 instructors have responded. With regard to the qualitative aspect, I have interviewed 5 instructors working at X University English Preparatory School. Here, I present the quantitative findings followed by the qualitative findings.

5.1 Quantitative Findings

First of all, I present basic statistics about the quantitative aspect of the study. 38 instructors working at X University English Preparatory School have participated in this study, 28 of whom have been female and 10 have been male. Among these participants, 23 hold a BA degree in English Language Teaching, 8 in English Language and Literature, 5 in English Linguistics and 2 in other fields such as management and communication. In addition, 8 instructors have 8 or fewer years of teaching experience, meaning relatively less experienced. On the other hand, 23 of them have 9 or more years of teaching experience; in other words, relatively more experienced. Finally, I have calculated the reliability of the survey on SPSS and found that Cronbach's alpha value is ,853, meaning that there is a good level of internal consistency.

5.1.1   Understanding of Culture in Foreign Language Teaching (FLT)

In the section of understanding of culture in FLT, there are 9 items. Castro and Sercu (2005: 26) has categorized these items into three dimensions: the knowledge dimension, the attitude dimension and the skills dimension (see Table 1). Such a categorization enables us to understand better which item is related to which specific dimension of culture teaching objectives. Thus, more meaningful interpretations can be made.

An overall mean score for each item has been indicated next to it (see Table 1). Moreover, based on the mean scores, an overall mean score is calculated for each dimension. In this respect, before moving to interpretations, it is good to understand how mean scores should be interpreted.

- 1,00-1,99   most important   2,00-2,99   important
- 3,00-3,99   not important   4,00-5,00   least important

Table 1. Possible Culture Teaching Objectives (Castro & Sercu 2005: 26)

Knowledge Dimension (Overall Mean Score: 2,05)	Mean Scores
• Provide information about the history, geography and political conditions of the foreign cultures.	2,42
• Provide information about daily life and routines.	1,95
• Provide information about shared values and beliefs.	1,87
• Provide information with a rich cultural variety of expressions (literature, music, theatre, film, etc.)	1,97
Attitude Dimension (Overall Mean Score: 1,79)	**Mean Scores**
• Develop attitudes of openness and tolerance towards other people and cultures	1,79
Skills Dimension (Overall Mean Score: 1,82)	**Mean Scores**
• Promote reflection on cultural differences	1,61
• Promote increased understanding of the students' own culture	1,82
• Promote the ability to empathize with people living in other cultures	1,87
• Promote the ability to handle intercultural contact situations	1,97

Firstly, I discuss the dimensions. It can be said that Turkish EFL instructors attach the most importance to the dimension of attitude. Next, the skills dimension is almost considered as important as the dimension of attitude as the difference is not big between these dimensions. However, the knowledge dimension seems to remain in the second place with regard to the importance attributed to it. The reason behind this could be that Turkish EFL instructors aim for students firstly to develop attitudes and skills which are

supposed to help them in their whole life, and they can even acquire knowledge themselves with the help of these attitudes and skills later in life.

With regard to the single items, "reflection on cultural differences" has been thought to be by far the most important. The idea behind it could be that students should build an awareness that there may be differences between cultures. Next, this is followed by "openness and tolerance." Once such an awareness towards differences is raised, it is expected to be followed by attitudes, such as being open to such differences and tolerating them. More interestingly, "students' understanding of their own culture" is considered to be very important, as well. Instructors may hold the view that understanding other cultures starts with understanding one's own culture. The remaining items are also to some extent believed to be important except for the item related to "the history, geography and political conditions of the foreign cultures." It can be interpreted that such knowledge about the history, geography and political conditions of foreign cultures may be too specific to deal with in limited, valuable classroom time. At the same time, it may be also something that students can deal with by themselves.

5.1.2 Culture in Foreign Language Teaching (FLT)

In the section on culture in FLT, 17 items are listed. Each item is a specific type of activity that can be used in foreign language classrooms. These activities are listed based on their frequency from those occurring more "often" to those almost "never" occurring (see Table 2). In other words, the mean scores can be interpreted in the following manner: from 1 to 2 meaning from "often" to "once in a while," and from 2 to 3 meaning from "once in a while" to "never." As Bandura and Sercu (2005) have done in their study, I have interpreted the results in two aspects. Firstly, it has been taken into account to which approach these activities belong: teacher-centered or student-centered activities (see Table 2). According to Bandura and Sercu (2005: 76), these approaches are related to the fact of who decides on the content of the activities. However, certain these activities have been labelled as both. The reason for this is that it depends how a teacher makes use of it (Bandura & Sercu 2005: 77).

Table 2. Culture Teaching Activities (Bandura & Sercu 2005: 77–78)

No.	Activity	Type & Approach	Mean Score
1.	I ask my students to compare an aspect of their own culture with that aspect in the foreign culture.	skills, teacher-centered or student-centered	1,18
2.	I tell my students what I heard (or read) about the foreign country or culture.	cognitive, teacher-centered	1,21
3.	I tell my students why I find something fascinating or strange about the foreign culture(s).	cognitive, attitudinal, teacher-centered	1,21
4.	I ask my students to describe an aspect of their own culture in the foreign language.	cognitive, skills, student-centered or teacher-centered	1,24
5.	I use videos, CD-ROMs or the Internet to illustrate an aspect of the foreign culture.	cognitive, teacher-centered	1,26
6.	I ask my students about their experiences in the foreign country.	cognitive, attitudinal, student-centered	1,42
7.	I ask my students to think about what it would be like to live in the foreign culture.	cognitive, attitudinal, skills, student-centered	1,45
8.	I ask my students to independently explore an aspect of the foreign culture.	skills, student-centered or teacher-centered	1,45
9.	I talk to my students about my own experiences in the foreign country.	cognitive, attitudinal, teacher-centered	1,53
10.	I talk with my students about stereotypes regarding particular cultures and countries or regarding the inhabitants of particular countries.	cognitive, attitudinal, teacher-centered or student-centered	1,61
11.	I comment on the way in which the foreign culture is represented in the foreign language materials I amusing in a particular class.	cognitive, teacher-centered	1,66
12.	I ask my students to think about the image which the media promote of the foreign country.	cognitive, skills, teacher-centered or student-centered	1,74
13.	I ask my students to participate in role-play situations in which people from different cultures meet.	attitudinal, skills, teacher-centered or student-centered	1,84
14.	I touch upon an aspect of the foreign culture regarding which I feel negatively disposed.	attitudinal, teacher-centered	2,05
15.	I bring objects originating from the foreign culture to my classroom.	cognitive, attitudinal, teacher-centered	2,37
16.	I decorate my classroom with posters illustrating particular aspects of the foreign culture.	cognitive, attitudinal, teacher-centered	2,50
17.	I invite a person originating from the foreign country to my classroom.	cognitive, attitudinal, teacher-centered	2,89

It can be seen that the instructors working at X University mainly prefer activities that can be considered part of the teacher-centered approach in which they control the content of the teaching. This can be seen among the activities listed as the top five on the table, except for activity no. 4. However, the following three activities ranked 6th, 7th and 8th are considered student-centered. More interestingly, when the differences of the mean scores of these activities are compared, such a big difference cannot be seen. In this regard, it can be said that there is a balanced distribution of these activities in the classes although the teacher-centered activities take place slightly more frequently.

Another aim in this section is to determine what kind of objectives these activities have and how often instructors practice them in their classes. The objectives can be cognitive, attitudinal or skills-related. While cognitive objectives focus on the acquisition of knowledge, the objectives related to attitudes or skills concentrate on improving students' ability to cope with cultural situations independently. Although certain activities can be part of the cognitive dimension of culture teaching, there can be still some attitudinal and skills based aspects in them.

It is very interesting to find out that the most frequent activity that the instructors prefer is the comparison of cultures, which is a skills-related activity. With such an activity, the instructors' objective could be to contribute to a greater awareness of the differences between their culture and the target cultures such that it can be a skill from which they can benefit in future contexts, too. Then, apart from this, the instructors mainly put emphasis on cognitive activities related to dealing with knowledge. In other words, they work with the acquisition of a number of specific pieces of information related to intercultural issues. Next, although it is less frequent, it can be seen that there is also a substantial emphasis on attitudinal activities, ranking 3rd, 6th, 7th and 9th among the top ten activities. Similarly, these activities target the development of positive attitudes (Bandura & Sercu 2005: 78).

5.1.3   Intercultural Foreign Language Teaching

The final part of the survey aims to obtain the instructors' opinions about intercultural foreign language teaching. The items are listed in an order ranging the instructors' completely agreeing to the instructors' completely disagreeing (see Table 3). Before making a detailed presentation about the findings, I define how to interpret the mean scores:

- 1: agree completely
- 2: agree to a certain extent
- 3: undecided
- 4: disagree to a certain extent
- 5: disagree completely

Table 3: The Instructors' Opinions about Intercultural Foreign Language Teaching

No.	Intercultural Foreign Language Teaching	Mean Score
1.	The more students know about the foreign culture, the more tolerant they are.	1,61
2.	Intercultural education has somewhat effect whatsoever on students' attitudes.	1,63
3.	It is possible to teach the foreign language and the foreign culture in an integrated way.	1,68
4.	Foreign language teaching should enhance students' understanding of their own cultural identity.	1,84
5.	I would like to promote the acquisition of intercultural skills through my teaching.	1,87
6.	In a foreign language classroom, teaching culture is as important as teaching the foreign language.	1,87
7.	A foreign language teacher should present a positive image of the foreign culture and society.	1,97
8.	Intercultural education is best undertaken cross-culturally.	2,03
9.	Intercultural skills can be acquired at school.	2,21
10.	In intercultural contacts, misunderstandings arise equally often from linguistic as from cultural differences.	2,24
11.	Before you can teach culture of do anything about the intercultural dimension of foreign language teaching, students have to possess a sufficiently high level of proficiency in the foreign language.	3,21

When the items are interpreted, there are four aspects to be discussed. First of all, "tolerance," "attitude" and "teaching foreign language and foreign culture in an integrated way" are those items that the instructors hold to a stronger agreement on than the others. While "tolerance" and "attitude" can be considered as basic qualities in intercultural foreign language education, the other item is related to how to cope with foreign language teaching and culture teaching. In other words, it is thought that they are not separable from each other. Secondly, items ranking from 4th to 8th are, to a certain extent, are agreed on by the instructors. Among these, the most interesting is that foreign language instructors' responsibility is not only related to the target cultures but also to the students' culture. Similarly, intercultural foreign education starts with the understanding of the students' culture.

Thirdly, the instructors are in agreement to a certain extent about the items which are related to "the acquisition of intercultural skills at school" and "whether misunderstandings are due to linguistic or cultural differences in intercultural settings." Lastly, apart from the other items, the instructors remain quite undecided about whether it is necessary to have a certain level of linguistic proficiency before dealing with the intercultural dimension of foreign language teaching. From this finding, I can interpret that the instructors may believe that it may not be compulsory to have a certain level of proficiency in English to discuss the intercultural dimension. In addition, it can be assumed that at each level of linguistic proficiency, there may be a number of aspects being taught about the intercultural dimension.

5.2 Qualitative Findings

In order to gather qualitative data, a semi-structured, in-depth interview has been conducted. Five of the instructors participating in the quantitative aspect of this research have been selected. Below, the findings are presented in the manner that they respond to the research questions. The identities of the interviewees have been hidden in order to protect their privacy.

5.2.1   Perception of Culture, Intercultural Communication and Intercultural Competence

Kramsch (2006: 12) points out that according to teachers, culture is related to the language that is lived and spoken by the natives belonging to a homogenous national community with similar customs and way of life. Apart from this classical explanation, instructors have produced certain interesting aspects of culture. Firstly, Instructor 1 has mentioned the aspect of sustainability of culture, which is directly related to transferring it to the next generations. Then, culture is defined as the combination of norms, meaning standard ways of doing certain things by Instructor 2. Moreover, these norms are identified as standards of judgement, including the written and unwritten rules by Instructor 5. Next, Instructor 4 has used the term "collective memory" while talking about culture. Here, what the instructor means is that the collective aspect may be used in such a manner that it involves a large number of people in a society accumulating this "memory."

According to the instructors interviewed, the key aspects of culture include sustainability, standardization, and collectivity. Firstly, the sustainability aspect indicates that culture is something living. That is to say it is not only related to today but also connected to the past and linked to the future. Moreover, culture aims to be standardized, meaning that certain aspects should work in a manner that most of the people living in a society or in a group interpret them similarly. Thus, common standards are created for the sake of the society or the group. Lastly, collectivity refers to the idea that culture is not something "created out of nowhere;" it is accumulated thanks to the contributions of individuals. In this respect, culture can be considered as "joint property" of a group or society. In brief, it could be summed up that culture is "of the people, by the people, for the people."

As for intercultural communication, the instructors interviewed have all pointed out that it is related to the communication between one's own culture and target cultures. Here, it is crucial to underline that it is not a communication between one culture and another; many other cultures are also involved in this process. It can be understood that as instructors teach English, they think it is a global language; similarly, it is in a lingua franca position as identified by Instructor 2. In such a communication where many

cultures are included, global values (Instructor 2), openness and tolerance (Instructor 3) are considered to be the key aspects so as to succeed in it.

Global values, openness and tolerance can be regarded as attitudes and skills that contribute to intercultural communication. There is also parallelism between these opinions and the findings presented in the sections of understanding of culture in FLT and intercultural foreign language teaching in the quantitative findings. This is due to the fact that in both sections, the findings reveal that the instructors think that attitudes and skills are the most important dimensions of culture teaching objectives and intercultural foreign language teaching. However, Günthner and Luckmann (2001: 59) point out that in communication, it is necessary to have a certain amount of shared knowledge which in intercultural communication comes from different (and in some areas possibly similar) social stocks of knowledge. This aspect of shared knowledge in intercultural communication seems not to be mentioned explicitly by the instructors. This might be due to the fact that the instructors may believe it is unavoidable to have asymmetries in knowledge in intercultural communication. In this respect, if students develop attitudes and skills, they can easily overcome any asymmetry in knowledge. Thus, the instructors put emphasis on the aspects related to attitudes and skills.

Intercultural competence is thought to be the ability to build links between one's own culture and other cultures. For instance, Instructor 4 has stated that "students should first value their local culture before trying to understand the intercultural context and communicate in an intercultural setting." In this regard, Instructor 2 has pointed out that "such an ability meaning intercultural competence can also raise an awareness about any similarities and differences between cultures, so it also contributes to the students' self-enhancement." Thus, students with such a competency can communicate in intercultural contexts. In addition, Instructor 4 has put forward that "people with these abilities and qualities can also be figured as world citizens." In short, it is crucial to have equilibrium between the local culture and the target culture to develop awareness; otherwise, it may be just considered as mere admiration to other cultures.

When looking at the section of culture teaching activities in the quantitative findings, the most frequent activity preferred by the instructors is the comparison of one aspect in students' own culture with that aspect in the foreign culture. In the same manner, in the interviews, the instructors emphasize the importance of understanding local culture, meaning their own culture and the target cultures. Moreover, it is crucial to be aware of the similarities and differences between these cultures when discussing intercultural competence. In this regard, it can be understood that these ideas of the instructors that are presented above in addition to certain activities that they integrate into the classroom setting seem to be in harmony.

5.2.2   Culture Teaching and English Language Teaching

One of the aims of the interviews was to learn the instructors' opinions about the relationship between culture teaching and English language teaching. In this regard, the instructors were asked to comment on the following topics:

- What is the importance of teaching culture in English language teaching?
- Which culture should be thought of while teaching English?
- Should students have a certain level of proficiency in English to talk about culture in the classroom?
- Are cultural aspects directly indicated in the objectives?

According to Instructor 1, language and culture are integrated in an inseparable way. Therefore, it is not possible to avoid the cultural aspect of language teaching. Moreover, Instructor 4 has stated that "teaching a foreign language is teaching another culture." Thus, teaching a language without its culture is not considered functional; likewise, it is superficial (Instructor 4). Here, the instructor implies that as the main aim of teaching a language is to communicate, without culture it is not supposed to reach the level at which the communication function is achieved. Furthermore, Instructor 2 has claimed that "the purpose of learning English, which is a global language, is to communicate with other cultures." As the last point, including cultural aspects should not always be considered an

objective; however, these aspects can be a tool to teach a language more effectively (Instructor 4).

The ideas mentioned above shows parallelism with the findings in the section of intercultural foreign language teaching in quantitative findings. In that section of the quantitative findings, the instructors have presented a high level of agreement in the aspects of integrating culture into foreign language teaching and the equal importance of foreign language teaching and culture teaching in a foreign language classroom. Thus, the instructors have emphasized the relationship between culture and foreign language teaching not only in the survey but also in the interviews.

Every instructor interviewed has emphasized that regarding which culture should be taken for granted, it is not necessarily the cultures of English-speaking countries. As English is regarded as a global language, it should be taken as a global culture. Here, I present two contradicting ideas of the instructors interviewed. According to Instructor 1, it should be the harmony of many other cultures from a wider perspective, meaning certain aspects of many cultures can create a global culture that may be touched upon in English language teaching. In this manner, students will raise an awareness about other cultures. On the other hand, in certain cases, the global culture may be too broad, so Instructor 5 has thought that the focus may be somewhat limited based on the geography to which these students belong or the cultures with which the country of these students has political and economic relations. Both ideas can be considered beneficial in certain aspects. However, focusing on certain cultures may cause the overlooking of other cultures. In this respect, it may be better to consider culture from a broader perspective, meaning global culture.

The instructors participating in the interviews indicated that culture can be included in FLT at all proficiency levels, meaning from the lower levels to the higher levels. Firstly and most importantly, at the lower levels, the inclusion of the cultural aspect in FLT is related to raising awareness, whereas at the higher levels, it is linked to widening perspectives. Next, Instructor 1 has stated that the teaching of culture is restricted to what is included in the materials with students lower language proficiency; however, as their language skills improve, more authentic materials are involved, so more specific

intercultural aspects can be dealt with. In this way, integrating culture into FLT should occur from the more general to the more specific at different levels (Instructor 2). That is to say, while more general aspects can be included in the lower levels, these aspects may become more specific and sophisticated in the higher levels. It can be understood that while students improve their language ability, they also have the possibility to reveal their intellectual capacity to a greater extent with the help of the aspects included in order to talk about culture in FLT. Here, it can be understood as to why the instructors remained "undecided" with item no. 11, which is "Before you can teach culture or do anything about the intercultural dimension of foreign language teaching, students have to possess a sufficiently high level of proficiency in the foreign language" in the section of intercultural foreign language teaching in quantitative findings. This seems to be due to the fact that the instructors feel culture could be included in all levels of proficiency.

It is interesting to discover that in the objectives, there is no direct link to the teaching of culture as expressed by all the instructors. They believe that it is embedded in other objectives. For example, while the students are improving their critical thinking and analysis skills, they also develop their intercultural competence or awareness about culture (Instructor 2). According to Instructor 5, there is no clear objective to the teaching of culture; it is at the discretion of the instructor's ability and creativity to integrate it into lessons. More interestingly, Instructor 3 believes that culture, intercultural competence and intercultural communication are not to be considered as objectives as students are merely expected to develop natural attitudes and awareness. However, according to Byram et al. (2001: 4), teaching the intercultural dimension of a foreign language is sometimes related to taking advantage of the opportunities and developing a systematic understanding and use for them. Therefore, it can be said that integrating culture into foreign language teaching is not related to its emphasis in the objectives, but rather making use of the opportunities and raising awareness about them.

6   CONCLUSION

In Turkey, students learn English not only to communicate in a foreign language but also to study in it. Furthermore, the medium of instruction in certain universities in Turkey is English. In other words, the language of the courses, their assignments and exams are in English. However, if students who are placed to study at these universities lack the minimum level of proficiency in English, they are required to attend for one year at an English preparatory school for an intensive study. Thus, students are expected to achieve a certain level of proficiency in English. At these English language preparatory schools, English language teaching practices are performed mainly by Turkish EFL (English as Foreign Language) instructors.

In English language teaching, there are linguistic aspects as well as cultural aspects. For this reason, in this study, I have researched what Turkish EFL instructors' perception of culture and intercultural competence is and what kind of activities they perform in their classes. At the same time, I have conducted this research as a case study, I only take X University's English Preparatory School into consideration in my study. For this purpose, I have gathered data in qualitative and quantitative forms. In order to collect the quantitative data, I have used certain parts of the survey prepared and conducted by Sercu (2005). The instructors working at X University English Preparatory School have participated in it. Next, for the qualitative data, I have conducted five interviews. Two basic criteria guided the selection of these interviewees: their gender and their years of experience. Based on the proportion of these aspects among the participants, I have selected the interviewees.

In the quantitative data, the instructors' understanding of culture, the kind of activities perform in their classes and how often they perform these activities have been interpreted based on the mean scores calculated on SPSS. This has been carried out in a similar manner to that of Sercu (2005) in her study. Moreover, in the qualitative data, the instructors' opinions about culture, intercultural communication, intercultural competence, the place of these aspects in the overall objectives of language teaching and

how the instructors make use of books and materials to mention these aspects have been analyzed thanks to content analysis.

The findings reveal that there is a high level of awareness of integrating cultural aspects into English language teaching. However, as these cultural aspects are not mentioned in the objectives, there is no standard approach to deal with them. In other words, it is at the instructor's discretion as to how and how much culture and intercultural competences should occur in the class. Another interesting finding is that although English is taught, these instructors do not take English-speaking countries as target cultures; they consider them from a global perspective. In other words, as English is a global language, the culture to be dealt with is also a global culture.

All in all, this study together with its findings gives researchers an idea about this issue in a specific institution. Further studies may also take other universities into account so that the big picture of this issue can be seen on a greater scale. Moreover, research on different levels of education (primary, secondary and high school) may present the opportunity to compare the issue of language teaching and culture between these levels of education. As a consequence, this topic presents more possibilities for further research.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1. Survey

SECTION I

I. Personal Information

1. Are you a male or female?

a. __ Male

b. __ Female

2. What is your BA degree?

a. __ English Language Teaching

b. __ English Language and Literature

c. __ English Linguistics

d. __ English Translation and Interpretation

e. __ American Culture and Language

f. __ Other

3. How long have you been teaching?

a. __ 1-8 years

b. __ 9 years or more

SECTION II

I. Understanding of Culture in Foreign Language Teaching

What do you understand by culture teaching in foreign language teaching?

Below five possible objectives have been listed. Please rank them in order or importance through assigning each objective a number between 1 and 5. (1 meaning the most important; 5 meaning the least important)

1. Provide information about the history, geography and political conditions of the foreign cultures.

    1   2   3   4   5

2. Provide information about daily life and routines.

    1   2   3   4   5

3. Provide information about shared values and beliefs.

    1   2   3   4   5

4. Provide information with a rich cultural variety of expressions (literature, music, theatre, film etc.)

    1   2   3   4   5

5. Develop attitudes of openness and tolerance towards other people and cultures.

    1   2   3   4   5

6. Promote reflection on cultural differences.

    1   2   3   4   5

7. Promote increased understanding of the students' own culture.

    1   2   3   4   5

8. Promote the ability to emphatize with people living in other cultures.

    1   2   3   4   5

9. Promote the ability to handle intercultural contact situations.

    1   2   3   4   5

II. Culture in Foreign Language Teaching

What kind of cultural activities do you practice during classroom teaching time?

1. I ask my students to think about the image which the media promote of the foreign country.

         Often   Once in a while   Never

2. I tell my students what I heard (or read) about the foreign country or culture.

         Often   Once in a while   Never

3. I tell my students why I find something fascinating or strange about the foreign culture(s).

   Often   Once in a while   Never

4. I ask my students to independently explore an aspect of the foreign culture.

         Often   Once in a while   Never

5. I use videos, CD-ROMs or the internet to illustrate an aspect of the foreign culture.

         Often   Once in a while   Never

6. I ask my students to think about what it would be like to live in the foreign culture.

         Often   Once in a while   Never

7. I talk to my students about my own experiences in the foreign culture.

         Often   Once in a while   Never

8. I ask my students about their experiences in the foreign culture.

         Often   Once in a while   Never

9. I invite a person originating from the foreign country to my classroom.

         Often   Once in a while   Never

10. I ask my students to describe an aspect of their own culture in the foreign language.

         Often   Once in a while   Never

11. I bring objects originating from the foreign culture to my classroom.

         Often   Once in a while   Never

12. I ask my students to participate in role-play situations in which people from different cultures meet.

         Often   Once in a while   Never

13. I decorate my classroom with posters illustrating particular aspects of the foreign culture.

<div style="text-align: center;">Often   Once in a while   Never</div>

14. I comment on the way in which the foreign culture is represented in the foreign language materials I am using in a particular class.

<div style="text-align: center;">Often   Once in a while   Never</div>

15. I ask my students to compare an aspect of their own culture with that aspect in the foreign culture.

<div style="text-align: center;">Often   Once in a while   Never</div>

16. I touch upon an aspect of the foreign language regarding which I feel negatively disposed.

<div style="text-align: center;">Often   Once in a while   Never</div>

17. I talk with my students about stereotypes regarding particular cultures and countries or regarding the inhabitants of particular countries.

<div style="text-align: center;">Often   Once in a while   Never</div>

III. Intercultural Foreign Language Teaching

1: Agree completely

2: Agree to a certain extent

3: Undecided

4: Disagree to a certain extent

5: Disagree completely

1. In a foreign language classroom, teaching culture is as important as teaching the foreign language.

<div style="text-align: center;">1   2   3   4   5</div>

2. Intercultural education is best undertaken cross-culturally.

<div style="text-align: center;">1   2   3   4   5</div>

3. A foreign language teacher should present a positive image of the foreign culture and society.

<div style="text-align: center;">1   2   3   4   5</div>

4. Before you can teach culture of do anything about the intercultural dimension of foreign language teaching, students have to possess a sufficiently high level of proficiency in the foreign language.

           1   2   3   4   5

5. Intercultural skills cannot be acquired at school.

           1   2   3   4   5

6. It is impossible to teach the foreign language and the foreign culture in an integrated way.

           1   2   3   4   5

7. I would like to promote the acquisition of intercultural skills through my teaching.

           1   2   3   4   5

8. Intercultural education has no effect whatsoever on students' attitudes.

           1   2   3   4   5

9. The more students know about the foreign culture, the more tolerant they are.

           1   2   3   4   5

10. In intercultural contacts, misunderstandings arise equally often from linguistic as from cultural differences.

           1   2   3   4   5

11. Foreign language teaching should enhance students' understanding of their own cultural identity.

           1   2   3   4   5