



EFL Teachers' and Learners' Perceptions on ICC

İngilizce Öğretmenleri ve İngilizce'yi Yabancı Dil Olarak Öğrenen Öğrencilerin Kültürlerarası İletişim Yetisine Yönelik Algıları

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İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLERİ VE İNGİLİZCE'Yİ YABANCI DİL OLARAK ÖĞRENEREN ÖĞRENCİLERİN KÜLTÜRLERARASI İLETİŞİM YETİSİNE YÖNELİK ALGILARI

ÖZ:

Bu derleme çalışmasının amacı, 2015 ve 2021 yılları arasında Türkiye'de İngilizce'yi yabancı dil olarak öğreten öğretmenlerin ve öğrencilerin kültürlerarası iletişim yetisine karşı tutum ve algıları üzerine yazılmış olan yüksek lisans ve doktora tezlerini değerlendirmektedir. Çalışmanın verisini Türkiye Ulusal Tezler Veri Tabanında bulunan on iki tezi içermektedir. Tezler önceden belirlenmiş kategoriler (tamamlanma yılları, tez türleri, kullanılan veri, araştırma deseni, hedef katılımcılar, temel bulgular, eğilimler ve tavsiyeler) doğrultusunda incelenmiş, bulgular detaylı bir şekilde tartışılmıştır. İçerik analizinin sonucunda İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenenlerin ve öğretmenlerin kültürlerarası iletişim yetisine yönelik tutum ve algılarına ilişkin mevcut sonuçların bir raporu sunulmaktadır. Ayrıca, çalışma potansiyel boşlukları, araştırma olanaklarını ve kültürlerarası iletişim yetisine ilişkin önerileri belirlemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Kültürlerarası İletişim Yetisi, Öğretmenler, Öğrenciler, Tezler, Algılar.*



EFL TEACHERS' AND LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS ON ICC

ABSTRACT:

This review study evaluates all master's and doctoral theses completed in Turkey between 2015 and 2021 on EFL teachers' and learners' ICC attitudes and perceptions. The data includes twelve theses and dissertations obtained from the Turkish National Theses Database. The thesis and dissertations included in this study were examined based on predetermined categories (years of completion, type of the paper, data type, research model, the participants, findings, and implications). As a result of the content analysis, a report on the attitudes and perceptions of EFL learners and teachers toward ICC is provided. Furthermore, the study identifies potential gaps, research possibilities, and suggestions on ICC.

Keywords: *Intercultural Communicative Competence, Efl, Teachers, Learners, Theses, Perceptions.*

INTRODUCTION

Technology advancements make it simpler to obtain worldwide knowledge and connect people of all cultures. As a result, adding a new term, “communicative competence”, coined by Hymes (1972) has become unavoidable. Following Van Ek’s (1975) emphasis on “intercultural communication capacity”, language, communication, and culture and how they affect language teaching have received increased prominence in the field. According to Eröz (2020), knowing a language’s grammatical structures alone is insufficient and learning a foreign language requires learning about its culture as well. We are all now in a context where we need “the ability to communicate and interact across cultural boundaries” (Byram, 1997, p. 7). Therefore, learning about cultural aspects is a vital part of learning a language.

The phrase “intercultural communicative competence” (ICC, hereafter) was coined by Byram (1997) who stated that an interculturally competent person is motivated to discover the cultural values of others. It is conceivable to define ICC as the set of skills necessary to communicate taking linguistic competence into account. For Fantini and Tirmizi (2006), ICC is the collection of skills needed to communicate when interacting with those with different cultural backgrounds. According to Baker (2016), in line with Byram (1997), successful communication involves both linguistic and communicative proficiency. Thus, ICC is built when cultural awareness is combined with these linguistic and communicative skills. As Deardoff (2016) defines, intercultural competence is the capacity to engage successfully in cross-cultural contexts by the integration of some degree of attitude, perception, and skills.

Wiseman (2002) stated that ICC is not inherent; there are components, such as dispositions, perceptions, skills, comprehension, and awareness that must be present to reach a certain level of ICC. Considering this, Byram (1997)’s model of ICC presents a comprehensive picture of these necessary components. According to Byram (1997), five main components (*savoirs*) represent the various facets of ICC; these are knowledge, attitudes, proficiency, skills, and awareness.

With all these advancements the incorporation of cultural elements into English language teaching and learning at the same time has become inevitable. Cultural competency is crucial for all parties, mainly teachers and learners, and in today’s world (global village) it is more needed than ever to incorporate cultural aspects into the curriculum. According to Ho (2009), since teaching culture is a crucial component of language instruction, teachers need to be culturally competent, and they should embrace an intercultural perspective. They need the skill to acknowledge and know how to adapt to different cultural settings.

It is seen that in many undergraduate programs of language teaching, there are courses related to the integration of cultural issues in language classrooms. Even if these courses are selective, it is still a significant advancement in the field of language teaching and language teacher education. When the aims and goals of these courses are examined, it is found that the goals are geared toward creating awareness of other cultures, being active inquirers of different cultures, being open to differences, showing empathy for differences, and understanding the reasons for prejudices and stereotypes, etc. The integration of ICC into EFL programs seems to continue and it is likely that with the increase in multicultural/multilingual environments the significance of ICC will be more apparent.

Analyzing and evaluating teachers' and learners' attitudes and perceptions regarding ICC is important to better understand how ICC is perceived in different contexts. The purpose of this study is to analyze theses and dissertations written on ICC, gain a better understanding of the ICC and identify areas for further research by uncovering attitudes. The study also aims to investigate how ICC is perceived in an EFL context, Turkey. Another goal of the study is to identify the gaps in the literature and make various proposals to fill them. Thus, the research questions are:

1. What is the distribution of theses published by Turkish scholars in the field of ICC in terms of research design, data collection, and participants?
2. What are the conclusions drawn from these studies?
3. What can be possible further study ideas on ICC?

METHODOLOGY

According to Hart (1998), evaluating available sources and giving pertinent information, data, conclusions, and gaps in previous studies constitute the essence of literature review studies. Following a qualitative approach, this review study aims to examine the theses and dissertations written on the attitudes and perceptions of both EFL learners and teachers on ICC. The study utilizes content analysis to provide an overall picture and to determine the general tendency of these studies conducted on ICC between target years on ICC. The content analysis includes four main stages which are data collection, coding, analysis, and interpretation of coded content.

Data collection and analysis

Every thesis that tackled ICC listed in the Council of Higher Education's National Theses Database of Turkey was digitally scanned between 2015 and 2021. A

keyword search was conducted using the following phrases: “intercultural communicative competence, ICC attitudes of teachers, learners, and perceptions of ICC.” All related theses and dissertations on teachers' and learners' attitudes and perceptions of ICC were incorporated in this study.

A search of publications on ICC written at Turkish universities between 2015 and 2021 yielded all appropriate theses and dissertations. The information was then organized according to the number of participants and the target participants, the research program, the research design, and, lastly, the overall findings were discussed.

RESULTS

The search yielded 12 theses written on ICC in Türkiye. In this part of the paper overall distributions of theses based on the pre-set categories are provided. The results are then discussed in detail.

To begin with, table 1 shows the years that theses were written. It is seen that the distribution of the theses has evolved over time.

Table 1. Distribution of Theses According to Years.

Years	Number of the Theses
2015	1
2016	0
2017	0
2018	2
2019	2
2020	2
2021	5
Total	12

It can be seen that 2021 had the highest number of theses written on the ICC, whereas no studies were conducted in 2016 or 2017.

When the types of these studies were examined, it is found that there is a significant disparity in the number of different types of theses as there is only one dissertation on the topic.

Table 2. Distribution of the Types of Theses.

Types of Theses	Number of Theses
M.A.	11
Ph.D.	1
Total	12

Table 3 below includes information on the participants for each thesis, including the author's name and the year of publication.

Table 3. Distribution of Publication Information and Number of Participants.

Publication Information	Number of Participants
Çırpan (2021)	50
Eröz (2020)	561
Gökberk (2021)	130
Güneş (2018)	20
Güven (2015)	508
Harputluoğlu (2021)	129
Kaya (2021)	113
Markilolo (2021)	151
Özkan (2018)	64
Sezer (2019)	76
Şen (2020)	130
Wujiabudula (2019)	232

It is observed that the number of participants in each research varies from the other depending on the type of research conducted. For example, while there were 20 total participants in Güneş's (2018) thesis, there were 561 total participants in Eröz's (2020) thesis.

Table 4 lists the group that the target participants belong to. These groups are teachers, learners and pre-service teachers.

Table 4. Distribution of the Target Participants.

Target Participants	n
Teachers	6
Learners	4
Pre-Service Teachers	2
Total	12

It is observed that the focus was mainly on EFL teachers' attitudes and perceptions of ICC with a number of eight theses out of twelve (including both pre-service and in-service teachers).

Table 5 demonstrates the distribution of research designs utilized in the theses gathered. The studies were mainly categorized as either quantitative or mixed. There were no studies that were qualitative only.

Table 5. Distribution of Research Designs.

Research Design	n
Quantitative	5
Mixed Method	7
Total	12

The mixed method research design (n=7) was preferred in the chosen theses over the quantitative method (n=5).

All these distributions have aided in revealing and analyzing the answers to research objectives. For research question 1, "*What is the distribution of theses published by Turkish scholars in the field of ICC in terms of participant number, target participant, research program, research designs?*", it is found that there are major differences between each of the theses. ICC has started to grow in popularity since 2015, hitting its peak in recent years in terms of the number of theses in the year 2019. In all the theses, there is just one Ph.D. study, highlighting the fact that ICC is still an emerging subject with much to be explored in Turkey. Each study had a different number of participants, ranging from 20 at the lowest to 561 at the largest. Additionally, the targeted participants varied. The majority of the studies involved teachers (n =8; pre-service teachers included).

For research question 2, "*What can be concluded from the findings on attitudes and perceptions of EFL learners and teachers toward ICC in Turkey?*", the majority of theses focused on teachers' attitudes and perceptions of ICC. Most research found that teachers had good attitudes and favorable opinions of ICC. (Çırpan, 2021; Gökberk, 2021; Harputluoğlu, 2021; Kaya, 2021; Markilolo, 2021; Özkan, 2018; Sezer, 2019). On the other hand, Şen's (2020) study on pre-service teachers' perceptions of ICC revealed that while pre-service teachers' attitudes toward ICC were high, their comprehension of ICC was restricted. The pre-service teachers were conscious of the significance of ICC in teacher education. Still, their understanding was poor due to the deficiency of ICC in the teacher education syllabus and a lack of training on the topic.

DISCUSSION

This review study provides insights into twelve theses on ICC attitudes and perceptions of EFL learners and teachers that were written at various Turkish universities. Furthermore, the distribution of the theses in terms of the years of completion, types of theses, publication information and number of total participants of each study, target participants and their quantity, and finally, distribution of research designs were carefully analyzed and given in the related tables.

Most of the theses highlighted that although EFL teachers had favourable impressions of ICC, they did not consider themselves interculturally competent educators since they did not integrate ICC into their courses. Additionally, they lack a strategy or system for embedding ICC in English classrooms, indicating that ICC training is crucial for them to obtain and implement the necessary plans for their classes. Özkan's (2018) findings also support Kaya's (2021) research. Özkan (2018) argues that although teachers' attitudes toward ICC were positive, they supported adapting new ICC models and that teachers' awareness-building should be a key focus of ICC education training.

The relationship between gender and ICC perceptions has been the focus of some studies to determine whether or not teachers' ICC dispositions are profoundly influenced by their gender. For example, the research of Sezer (2019) showed that teachers' attitudes toward ICC were not strongly affected by their gender. Conversely, Harputluoğlu (2021) reported that participants' gender and age made substantial differences, and both factors have considerable effects on teachers' beliefs about ICC.

The thesis of Sezer (2019) also addressed teachers' ICC-related habits. It has been revealed that teachers primarily use online networks to discover foreign countries. They occasionally go to museums but rarely participate in conferences, workshops, and seminars on culture.

The findings of the studies on the attitudes and perceptions of EFL teachers about ICC showed that most of these teachers had positive perceptions of ICC. They appeared to have ICC in most cases. However, despite some teachers' positive attitudes, they may not see themselves as fully interculturally competent educators. The main causes were a lack of knowledge, training, and practice in their teacher education programs. The inclusion of ICC in the teaching program's agenda appears to be neglected by the curriculums of universities. It has also been discovered that teachers do not adjust or adapt their classes for ICC. Furthermore, they lacked a strategy or system for incorporating ICC into their lesson plans.

Out of the twelve theses, four (in terms of number) focused on the attitudes and perceptions of EFL learners about the ICC. All the research showed that Turkish EFL Learners' attitudes and perceptions of ICC were to a good extent. (Eröz, 2020; Güven, 2015; Markilolo, 2021; Wujiabudula, 2019). According to Eröz (2020) and Markilolo (2021), Turkish and international learners had favorable views of ICC, and there was no statistically substantial disparity between their attitudes towards ICC.

In accordance with the theses by Güven (2015) and Markilolo (2021), ICC dispositions of EFL learners in Turkey were favorable, and they are in favor of combining ICC in their classes through cinema, documentaries, and television shows to gain an understanding of culture-related perspectives and to develop tolerance and self-acceptance of other cultures.

Conversely, Wujiabudula (2019) found that learners at state universities displayed a higher level of ICC attitude than those at private universities. Additionally, he noted that males had higher favourable opinions of the ICC than females. Moreover, people who had travelled to foreign countries or had lived there reported being more competent at navigating different cultures.

Based on the findings of the theses written about the attitudes and beliefs of ICC teachers, the following recommendations could be made:

- The curriculum for teacher education programs should cover ICC.
- Training programs should offer ICC to increase pre-service teachers' awareness level.
- ICC should be considered while designing workshops, conferences, and seminars for in-service teachers.
- ICC-related courses should not be only limited to undergraduate courses but graduate programs should also focus on ICC.
- More graduate students need to be encouraged to carry on studies on ICC.
- More qualitative studies that report cases of how ICC is integrated into language classrooms are needed.
- There is a lack of case studies in the literature. Therefore, case studies that showcase how ICC is applied in different contexts are in need.
- Although a majority of the studies reveal positive attitudes toward ICC, there is still a gap in the literature on the challenges of ICC and the reasons behind negative perceptions.

- More research on learners' ICC dispositions is needed to get a complete and more accurate picture because they are just as important as teachers' dispositions.
- Lesson plans, materials, and various sources should be created to enhance learners' intercultural competence.

CONCLUSION

This study analyzes theses on ICC attitudes and dispositions of EFL teachers and learners in Turkey. This study provides a comprehensive and in-depth view of what has been done in the past by displaying distributions of the number of theses by years, types of theses, publishing information, target participants, and research designs. In addition, this study sheds light on what may be done further by reviewing prior theses' content, data, and findings.

The number of theses written on the topic varies depending on the years, types of theses, number of participants, targeted subjects, and study designs. Overall results indicate that ICC attitudes and perceptions were high and satisfying for both EFL teachers and learners. Conversely, teachers found it more challenging to characterize themselves as completely interculturally competent educators due to the absence of ICC training in teacher education curricula. Designing specialized training, seminars, and conferences about culture and ICC for pre-service and in-service is, therefore, necessary.

Learners' ICC attitudes also demonstrated favorable perceptions. The level of ICC attitudes was the same in both Turkish and international EFL learners. Additionally, they stated that TV episodes, documentaries, and movies should be included in their lessons to help them truly appreciate cultural knowledge. Furthermore, they thought that including ICC in their classes would help them develop tolerance and self-acceptance of other people's cultures. However, it is challenging to generalize and offer sufficient and reliable information due to the paucity of research on ICC dispositions in EFL learners.

The study is crucial because it offers in-depth knowledge regarding ICC attitudes and views of EFL teachers and learners in Turkey. Despite the recent rise in the popularity of ICC in Turkey, there has not been enough research on the topic, especially in regard to learners. Due to its importance in today's world and the necessity for cautious adaptation to teacher education programs, more research on ICC is necessary.

Conflict of Interest

There is no personal or financial conflict of interest between the authors of the article within the scope of the study.

Author Contributions

Contribution Level: Author 1: %60 – Author 2: %40

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, önceki yüksek lisans ve doktora tezlerini inceleyerek ve yorumlayarak Türkiye’de İngilizce’yi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen öğrencilerin ve öğretmenleri arasında kültürlerarası iletişimsel yetilerine yönelik tutum ve algıları ortaya çıkarmaktır. Diğer amaç, kültürlerarası iletişimsel yetinin İngilizce’yi yabancı dil olarak öğretme bağlamındaki önemini belirlemektir. Diğer bir amaç ise literatürdeki boşluğu tespit etmek ve doldurmak için çeşitli önerilerde bulunmaktır. Bu nedenle araştırma soruları şunlardır:

Türk akademisyenler tarafından kültürlerarası iletişimsel yeti alanında yayınlanan tezlerin katılımcı sayısı, hedef katılımcı, araştırma programı ve araştırma tasarımları açısından dağılımı nedir?

Türkiye’de İngilizce’yi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen öğrencilerin ve İngilizce öğretmenlerinin kültürlerarası iletişimsel yetiye yönelik tutum ve algılarına ilişkin bulgulardan ne çıkarılabilir?

Bu derleme çalışmasında 2015-2021 yılları arasında Türk üniversitelerinde yazılan kültürlerarası iletişimsel yeti ile ilgili yayınların araştırılmış ve uygun tüm tezler ortaya çıkarılmıştır. Bilgiler daha sonra katılımcı sayısına ve hedef katılımcıya, araştırma programına, araştırma tasarımına göre düzenlenmiştir ve son olarak genel bulgular tartışılmıştır.

Yükseköğretim Kurulu’nun Türkiye Ulusal Tezler Veri Tabanında yer alan ve kültürlerarası iletişimsel yetiyi ele alan her tez dijital olarak taranmıştır. Aşağıdaki ifadeler kullanılarak bir anahtar kelime araması yapılmıştır: “kültürlerarası iletişimsel yeterlilik, öğretmenlerin, öğrencilerin kültürlerarası iletişimsel yetiye yönelik tutum ve algıları.” Öğretmenlerin ve öğrencilerin kültürlerarası iletişimsel yetiye ilişkin tutum ve algıları ile ilgili tüm tezler bu çalışmaya dahil edilmiştir. Her araştırmaya katılan katılımcı sayısının diğerinden farklı olduğu gözlenmektedir. Ek olarak, katılımcı sayısında önemli bir eşitsizlik vardır. Güneş’in (2018) tezinde toplam 20 katılımcı bulunurken, Eröz’ün (2020) tezinde toplam 561 katılımcı vardır. Ağırlıklı olarak hizmet içi ve hizmet öncesi öğretmenlerin tutum ve algılarına odaklanıldığı ve on iki tezdən sekizinin bu kişilere yönelik olduğu gözlemlenmiştir. İki farklı araştırma tasarım türü (nicel ve karma yöntemler) kullanıldığı tespit

edilmiştir. Seçilen tezlerde karma yöntemli araştırma deseni (n=7) nicel yöntemle (n=5) göre daha fazla tercih edilmiştir.

Çoğu araştırma, öğretmenlerin kültürlerarası iletişimsel yetiye yönelik iyi tutumlara ve olumlu görüşlere sahip oldukları bulunmuştur. (Çırpan, 2021; Gökberk, 2021; Harputluoğlu, 2021; Kaya, 2021; Markilolo, 2021; Özkan, 2018; Sezer, 2019). Öte yandan, Şen (2020)'nin hizmet öncesi öğretmenlerin algıları üzerine yaptığı çalışma, hizmet öncesi öğretmenlerin kültürlerarası iletişimsel yetisine yönelik tutumlarının yüksek olmasına rağmen, anlayışlarının kısıtlı olduğu ortaya konulmuştur. Hizmet öncesi öğretmenler, kültürlerarası iletişimsel yetinin öğretmen eğitimindeki öneminin farkında oldukları, ancak öğretmen eğitimi müfredatındaki eksikliği nedeniyle anlayışları zayıf olduğu gözlemlenmiştir.

On iki tezden dördü öğrencilerin kültürlerarası iletişimsel yeti hakkındaki tutum ve algılarına odaklanmıştır. Tüm araştırmalar, öğrencilerin tutum ve algılarının iyi bir ölçüde olduğunu göstermiştir. (Eröz, 2020; Güven, 2015; Markilolo, 2021; Wujiabudulla, 2019). Eröz (2020) ve Markilolo'ya (2021) göre hem Türk hem de uluslararası öğrenciler olumlu görüşlere sahiptir ve tutumları arasında istatistiksel olarak önemli ölçüde bir eşitsizlik yoktur.

Güven (2015) ve Markilolo'nun (2021) tezlerine uygun olarak, Türkiye'de İngilizce öğrenen öğrencilerin eğilimlerinin olumlu olduğu görülmüştür ve kültürle ilgili bakış açılarını anlamak ve diğer kültürlerle karşı hoşgörü geliştirmek için kültürlerarası iletişimsel yetiyi sinema, belgesel ve televizyon şovları aracılığıyla sınıflarında entegre edilmiş olarak görmek istemişlerdir. Tüm bulgulardan yola çıkılarak aşağıdaki önerilerde bulunulabilir:

- Öğretmen eğitimi programlarının müfredatı kültürlerarası iletişimsel yetiyi kapsamalıdır.
- Hizmet içi öğretmenler için konferanslar ve seminerler tasarlanırken kültür dikkate alınmalıdır.
- Tam ve daha doğru bir resim elde etmek için öğrencilerin konu ile ilgili eğilimleri hakkında daha fazla araştırma yapılmalıdır.
- Özellikle nitel araştırmaların artırılmasıyla ilgili çalışmalar yapılmalıdır. Örneğin yüksek lisans ve doktora derslerinde de bu konuya değinilmelidir.
- Ders planları ve çeşitli materyaller öğrencilerin kültürlerarası yeterliliklerini geliştirmek amacıyla düzenlenmelidir.