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A STUDY ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERCULTURAL EFFECTIVENESS: INTERCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF EFL LEARNERS

Kültürlerarası Etkinliğin Geliştirilmesine İlişkin Bir Çalışma: Yabancı Dil (İngilizce) Öğrenenlerin Kültürlerarası Bakış Açısı ve Akademik Başarıları

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Abstract

Foreign language teaching is one of the key concepts in swiftly globalized world. The recent identification of language teaching is leaning to develop intercultural communicative competence. So, international exchange opportunities may be utilized to develop intercultural communicative effectiveness, one of the components of intercultural communicative competence. Within this perspective this article use the analysis of the data from a project between Fırat University and Turkish Collaboration and Coordination Agency (TIKA) as base. The participants were the Turkish EFL (English as a foreign language) learners and the Ghanaian teacher candidates (GTC). The aim was to investigate the participants' intercultural effectiveness development and their perceptions of the usefulness of their intercultural interactions on academic achievement in this respect. Data collected from an Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES), and interviews were analyzed to address the research questions. Findings, taken from the quantitative and qualitative analysis, show that students developed their intercultural effectiveness levels and increased their academic achievement to some extent. Based on the results intercultural collaborations are discussed to provide intercultural scope and language learning facilities for students.

Key words: intercultural communicative competence, intercultural effectiveness, English language teaching, English as lingua franca.

Öz

Yabancı dil öğretimi hızla küreselleşen dünyanın vazgeçilmez araştırma alanlarının başında gelmektedir. Bu hızlı küreselleşme geleneksel tanımların da hızlıca değişimine neden olmaktadır. Bu nedenle yabancı dil öğretimi tanımı da -öğrencilerde kültürler arası iletişimsel yetinin kazandırılması- şekline dönüşmüştür. Kültürler arası iletişimin kazandırılması noktasında da eldeki fırsatlar değerlendirilmelidir. Bu bakış açısından yola çıkarak mevcut araştırma Türkiye'deki yabancı dil öğrencilerinin farklı bir kültürle etkileşim sonucu kültürler arası etkinliklerini artırmak ve bu etkileşimin yabancı dil öğrenimlerindeki başarıya katkısını incelemeyi amaçlamıştır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda Türkiye'nin doğu kısmında bulunan bir şehir olan Elazığ'da bulunan Fırat Üniversitesi ile Türk İşbirliği ve Koordinasyon Ajansı (TIKA) arasındaki bir projeden faydalanılmış ve bu yolla Türkiye'ye formasyon eğitimlerini almaya gelen Gana'lı öğretmen adaylarının yabancı dil öğrencilerine kültürler arası etkililik ve akademik başarı açısından etkisi araştırılmıştır. Karma yöntem deseniyle yürütülen araştırmadan elde edilen nitel ve nicel veriler öğrencilerin kültürler arası etkinlik düzeylerinde ve academic başarılarında bir artış olduğunu kanıtlar niteliktedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: kültürler arası iletişimsel yeti, kültürler arası etkinlik, yabancı dil öğretimi, küresel dil

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Introduction

Interculturality is a concept defined as a relation based on mutual understanding and interaction among people who have different cultural backgrounds (Parekh, 2006). In other words it can be defined as tolerance of the other (Gilroy, 2004) in the context of interaction. Intercultural interactions have become an everyday reality in the swiftly globalized world (Almeida, et al., 2016; Portalla and Chen, 2010; Byram, 2006; Lustig and Koester, 2006). In recent years most people need to interact effectively with others from diverse cultural backgrounds. The reasons given by Stone (2006, p.335) for this case are the followings:

- Advent of more globalized economies, markets, and international alliances;
- Rapid development of new information and communication technologies;
- Vastly increased international mobility;
- Growing multicultural profile of most societies across the world; and
- Internationalization of educational programs and institutions.'

As a result of the accelerating globalization, internalization has become a valuable phenomenon rather than a neutral one (Gu, et al., 2010). Thus, intercultural competence is more and more necessary in our multicultural and interconnected world (Perry and Southwell, 2011). Throughout this paper, intercultural (communicative) competence will be used as 'the ability to communicate effectively in cross-cultural situations and to relate appropriately in a variety of cultural contexts' (Bennett and Bennett 2004: 149).

Arasaratnam (2009) stated that, in order to have the intercultural competence people should communicate to the people from other cultures effectively. To be competent in intercultural context one should have the competency in global language as well. English has the global status because it serves both for local and global needs as means of communication (Crystal 2003; Gnutzmann 1999; McKay, 2004) Due to the states of lingua franca (Kramsch, 1998;Crystal, 2003), linguistic capital (Li, 2012) contact language (Seidhofer, 2005), vehicular language (Mauranen, 2012) or the language of the global village, English connects people having different cultures and tongues (Patel and Jain, 2008). Corbett (2003) also stated that intercultural approach of education necessitate language improvement. It is indicated that interculturalism has equal importance in all subjects, not only in medicine and civics, but also in mathematics and language teaching (Coulby, 2006). As a result of having an international mission in education, research, business and industry (Kramsch, 1998) English language teaching has been promoted in many countries including Turkey for years (OECD 2005). English language should be taught with an entirely different perspective because of its international state. The reason of it, the learners use it to communicate with those from other cultures (McKay, 2004) in the global village. So, intercultural dimension of English should be implemented on curriculums to use it as means of communication among different cultures. As Kumaravadivelu (2007) states that intercultural learning is exclusive to language learning.

However several studies so far demonstrated that the intercultural dimension of language teaching is not still highlighted completely (Byram and Risager 1999;Sercu et al. 2005;Lázár, 2007). Byram (1997a) and Savignon (1983) also point out that language learners don't need just knowledge and skills in the grammar of language but instead they need the ability to use the language in social interactions in the context of communicative language learning in authentic circumstances and also the ability to establish relationships with people from different cultures. According to Guilherme (2002) and Byram (2008) intercultural competence is therefore one of the ultimate aims of language teaching. Benett (1997) describes the qualities of interculturally competent language learners as: (1) aiming to have proficiency in English, (2) having an understanding attitude towards different identities and cultures during interactions, (3) being aware of their own identities and how the others perceive them, (4) having relationships with the others accepting their similar and different aspects.

There are several ways to develop intercultural competence in English language. Some of them are exchange trips, mobility and study-abroad programs (Byram, 1997a, Bayram, 1997b, Belz, 2007).

Study-abroad experiences make language acquisition easier (Kinging, 2015), since they provide a more natural input than that in classroom settings (Ryan and Lafford 1992). Krzaklewska and Krupnik (2008) claim that, due to the existence of exchange programs in higher education, students have opportunities to have intercultural dialogues, which give them global identities and make them autonomous and independent learners. Vande Berg (2007) also notes that the advantages of study abroad programs are not only good grades but learners' intercultural effectiveness. Other researchers have shown that being close to people from different cultures increases self-confidence (Rathje, 2007), intercultural awareness, competence, interaction skills (Byram, 1997a) and language skills (Kealey, 1990). Interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds makes learners begin to use the words and expressions more skillfully and authentically so they become interculturally competent learners. The starting point of this study was to investigate the potential level of intercultural competence of Turkish EFL (English as a foreign language) learners and make them utilize the people from a different culture in terms of the students' intercultural effectiveness and academic success in EFL classes. The reason is that Turkey is a country whose people have limited opportunities to have interactions in English with people from different cultures. Thanks to the collaboration between Firat University and Turkish Collaboration and Coordination Agency (TIKA), Ghanaian people graduating from their universities in Ghana but not having the pedagogical formation courses to be competent teachers, came to Education Faculty of Firat State University, Elazığ to have their certificates. By this way Turkish EFL learners had the chance to interact with people from Ghana. Ghanaian teacher candidates (GTC) were not native speakers instead; they use English as their official language. Nevertheless they suited to the study in terms of their level of English. As some researchers claim that native speakers are unrealistic and unattainable for language learners (Conrick, 1999; Cook, 1999). The ultimate target of an intercultural approach to language education is not 'native speaker competence' but rather an 'intercultural communicative competence' (Byram, 1997a, Kramsch, 1998, Risager, 1998, Guilherme, 2002). Byram also states that, a native speaker especially who has not ventured out of his state is not the only authority on the target language. Particularly as for the intercultural dimension of language learning having interactions with other cultures is an important component (1997a, 2002). So people using global language professionally can be utilized to provide intercultural competence and authenticity for EFL learners as well. The present study has suggested an intercultural perspective to EFL classes GTCs both to increase the intercultural competence of students and their academic success in EFL classes accordingly. By the context of language teaching in Turkey, having intercultural competence is believed to make a significant contribution to the field.

In this article the data, obtained from the EFL students, is based on the analysis of it from Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES) and the final exam of the students and the semi structured interview forms. The aim is to explore the intercultural development of students, its influence on their academic achievement and whether there is a difference between traditional learning environment and experimental one in terms of intercultural effectiveness. The findings give insight into the changes of students' intercultural effectiveness level into positive and also positive relationship is identified between their intercultural effectiveness level and academic achievement.

Intercultural Competence or Intercultural Effectiveness

Intercultural communication competence and as regarded one of its dimension; intercultural effectiveness are used interchangeably in the literature, however, in order to prevent confusion both of them should be defined better. It is stated that intercultural competence is the mastery to interact efficaciously, properly and adequately with the representatives of different languages and cultures (Perry and Southwell, 2011; Fantini, 2006; Meyer, 1991) utilizing communication behaviors in a culturally varied environment. It generally has three dimensions: awareness, sensitivity and effectiveness (Chen and Starosta, 1996). Portalla and Chen make the distinction defining intercultural effectiveness as corresponding to verbal and nonverbal communication skills which let people have an effective performance in intercultural interaction. Thus intercultural effectiveness is the

behavioral side of intercultural communicative competence (2010) which is also called as 'intercultural adroitness' by Chen and Sarosta (1996).

Different scholars summarize the characteristics of intercultural effectiveness divergently. In accordance with the IES the characteristics are; message skills, interaction management, behavioral flexibility, identity management, and relationship cultivation (Chen, 1989, 2005; Martin & Hammer, 1989; Ruben, 1977; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009).

Wiseman (2003) defines the message skills as the ability to comprehend the conveyed messages and transform them into acceptable behaviors in intercultural interactions. Rubin (1982) categorizes the components of message skills as; communication codes, oral message evaluation, basic communication skills and human relations.

Interaction management is one of the essential elements of ICC (Koester & Olebe, 1988; Martin & Hammer, 1989; Ruben, 1976). It can be defined as a whole of strategies to organize and govern the interaction from starting to the end (Ruben & Kealey, 1979). Wiemann (1977, p:199) marked components of the interaction management respectively; "(1) interruptions of the speaker are not permitted; (2) one person talks at a time; (3) speaker turns must interchange; (4) frequent and lengthy pauses should be avoided; and (5) an interactant must be perceived as devoting full attention to the encounter".

Behavioral flexibility also is considered to be an important element of intercultural effectiveness (Martin & Hammer, 1989; Ruben, 1977; Wiseman, 2003). It is because; different cultures have different expectations about which behaviors are admitted to be socially appropriate. In the framework of intercultural competence there are some universal standards one of which is to behave effectively and flexibly (Imahori & Lanigan, 1989; Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984). Behavioral flexibility is the ability to adapt one's behaviors to the changing environmental conditions (Ragozzino et al. 1999.) So, people with the ability of behavioral flexibility can adapt the new information accurately and perform properly to achieve communication goals (Chen & Starosta, 1996).

As in the previous characteristics, identity management is identified as an important element of intercultural effectiveness (Chen, 2007). According to identity management theory, how people act towards different ones reflects about their own and counterparts' social identities through verbal and non-verbal interactions (Chen, 2007; Table, 2016). In successful intercultural interactions, mutually acceptable identities are required (Cupach & Imahori, 1993).

The ability to establish interpersonal relationship is the last key element of intercultural effectiveness (Hamer et al, 1978). It can be defined as the relationship between partners to meet one another's' needs and get positive outcomes of interactions (Chen, 2007). In order to establish good relationships people collaborate with others effectively (Bochner & Kelly, 1974) as a result of the interdependent nature of interaction (Imahori and Cupach , 2005).

Developing intercultural competence and in parallel effectiveness are the essentials of educational programs. Stone (2006) noted that by developing of intercultural effectiveness students facilitate positive social interactions and productive relationships. Intercultural competence also provides opportunities for students to become global citizens. Perry and Southwell (2011) discussed intercultural training, learning it at school and visiting abroad as the main solutions for enhancing intercultural competence. Governmental institutions such as aid organizations, international corporations and universities have improved some techniques for intercultural training (Pusch, 2004) and they are demanding the development of intercultural competence (Perry and Southwell, 2011). Thus this research project helping the university students to develop an understanding the behaviors and viewpoints of other cultures and also to interrelate effectively with them using English addressed the research questions below.

Research Questions

The current focused on the effect of being together with culturally diverse people on the EFL learners' intercultural effectiveness level and their academic achievement. In this respect there are six major research questions to be responded in this research.

Research Question 1: Is there any statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results of the two experimental and one control group in terms of IES total scores?

Research Question 2: Is there any statistically significant difference among the post –test results of the experimental groups and the control group in terms of IES total scores?

Research Question 3: Is there any statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results of the two experimental groups and one control group in terms of the six factors of the IES?

Research Question 4: Is there a relationship between the IES totals post-test scores and academic achievement of students belongs to experimental and control groups?

Research Question 5: What are the opinions of GTC about the five weeks intercultural interaction with Turkish university students?

Research Question 6: What are the opinions of the Turkish university students about the five weeks intercultural interaction with GTC?

Research Method and Design

The research questions have been addressed through mixed method. Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods Design was chosen within the mixed method designs, because in exploratory sequential design qualitative results help explaining the quantitative ones (Creswell, Plano Clark et al., 2003). In this research quantitative and qualitative data were collected consecutively. The quantitative data were gathered from pre and post administration of IES and final exam for the academic achievement. Pre-test post-test control group experimental designed was employed so a group of students was controlled as much as possible and the researchers concentrated only the variables that they studied, as Muijs (2004) explains in his book. The study statistically assessed the research questions whether being together with people from different cultures affected the intercultural perspective of EFL learners or not and the relationship between their IES scores and academic achievement. The qualitative data on the other hand were collected through interviews and analyzed through qualitative approach. The researchers used qualitative data obtained both from GTC and Turkish university students to interpret combined results clearly. As Cresswell, Plano Clark et al. (2003) claimed, using a combination of both approaches is believed to ensure more contribution than the use of each approach alone for a better understanding of the research questions.

The Study and the Participants

The study was carried out in the School of Foreign Languages at Firat University, Turkey, where students are instructed in English intensively before they start their education in their respective field of study. All classes in the same module receive the same curriculum and the same instruction. In the modular system, the students are placed in the classes according to the level of language proficiency and they take the same courses with the same duration. This research was implemented in the main stream group of the second module so that all the students could be in the pre-intermediate level and could communicate to the GTC well. The teacher candidates from Ghana who could not receive their teacher training certificate in their country attended the teacher training program conducted in cooperation with Firat University, Faculty of Education and a foundation, TIKA, in Firat University, Turkey. They were sent to the School of Foreign Languages to attend language classes both for observing the instructors and then giving lectures to the students there as a part of internship. Fifteen teacher candidates were from different teaching departments while only 3 of them

were graduated from English Language Teaching department. Why they were sent to the school of foreign languages was in the Faculty of Education the subjects were instructed in Turkish. So for five weeks' internship period they attended the lectures with EFL students at least ten hours per week. They had no difficulty in language education because their official language is English in Ghana and they had had intensive English language lessons since their childhood.

There were two experimental groups and one control group in this research. Groups were determined according to their proficiency exam, the previous module ending exam and the first mid-term scores in the present module. In order to identify suitability of the groups cluster analysis was conducted. The highest number was achieved through triplet assignment. So the first experimental group was consisted of 22; the second was 21 students and the control group was consisted of 22 students. The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov analysis obtained by the statistics clarified that the main assumption of normality was observed in the distribution of the scores. So one way ANOVA was run to investigate any difference among the three groups was statistically significant (Table 1). Considering the p value, it could be claimed that there was no significant difference among the groups ($p=.210 > .05$, $p=.242 > .05$, $p=.226 > .05$). Therefore it could be seen that the groups were comprised objectively and equivalent for the experimental procedures. (See Table1)

As for the qualitative part of the study, the researchers interviewed all the 18 GTC who were volunteers to share their opinions and 10 of the experimental group students chosen randomly.

Data Collection

Identifying the groups, prior to the study a pre-test of Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES) developed by Portalla and Chen (2010) was administered to determine the intercultural state of the participants as a starting point of the research. 20 item scale of which Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient is .85, contains six factors. They are Behavioral Flexibility, Interaction Relaxation, Interactant Respect, Message Skills, Identity Maintenance, and Interaction Management.

The participants of the two experimental groups attended their regular classes with GTC for at least 10 hours a week during five weeks. Throughout the period not only as students but also as teachers, Ghanaian candidates had interactions with the students. During the research the control group on the other hand continued their usual classes. All the groups were instructed according to the same curriculum. However the experimental groups were provided extra opportunities to have interactions with culturally different people in and out of the class. For two weeks' time the candidates observed the instructors and class and then they started to instruct. The GTC also followed the same curriculum as the control group. When they were lecturing the instructors observed and graded them according to their performance. At the end of the five weeks' time IES as a post test, identical to the pre-test, was administered to the students and also module ending exam was utilized to determine the effect of being together with culturally different people and communicating them in English on students' academic success.

The qualitative data were gathered by semi-structured interview forms. The researchers developed the forms making a literature review and consulting the views of the specialists. The interviews were recorded by voice recorder, transcribed and analyzed consecutively.

Data Analysis

In the analysis of data elicited through pre and posttest, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality of variables, a paired sample t-test (if the scores were distributed normally) and Wilcoxon Signed Rank test (if the scores were not distributed normally) were used to detect if there was a difference from pre-test to post-test in each group individually. Revealing the post-test means for each group would give a more explicit idea about the distinction between the control group and the experimental groups. Post tests were examined through the analysis of variance (KWH) to see if the difference between these groups resulted from the treatment. Finding out the relationship between intercultural effectiveness level and language achievement of students Pearson correlation test was performed.

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 21, was used and then the data were organized into tables. The comparisons were made on .05 significance level.

In qualitative stage, the recorded interviews were transcribed in detail into written form by the computer software programs, which were an interpretive process (Bailey, 2008). The written data were analyzed through qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2014). Four main stages were followed as Berg (2001) recommended. The researchers identified the meanings first, included the content, identified codes as homogenous groups and lastly drew realistic conclusions by the help of calculated frequencies.

Findings and Results

In this part of the study, the scores of the IES, the module ending exam and comparison of them were presented as tables in the context of research questions.

Research Question 1: Is there any statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results of the two experimental and one control group in terms of scale total scores. (See Table2.)

When the data were analyzed it could be pointed out that there was significant difference between pre-test ($X=2.55$) and post-test ($X=2.98$) total scores of the first experimental group ($p=.000$).

As seen in Table 3 there was significant difference between the mean scores of the pre-test ($X=2.60$) and post-test ($X=2.92$) of the second experimental group ($p=.000$).

As revealed in Table 4, control group's post-test mean score results ($X=2.56$) also increased comparing to the pre-test results ($X=2.47$). But this rise was not as high as in the experimental groups. From this point, it could be inferred that experimental group students displayed a more positive progress than the control group ones. In the light of these findings it could be stated that the first research question was answered throughout these statistical procedures.

Research Question 2: Is there any significant difference among the post –test results of the experimental groups and the control group.

After finding out the differences between the pre and post test results of the three groups, homogeneity of variances was tested by Levene test to perform a variance analysis for the post-test results of the experimental and control groups.

As can be seen in Table5, the variance was not equal across groups. As a result of this homogeneity test KWH test was chosen to perform.

KWH was employed to analyze the difference of the post-test scores between the control and experimental groups. Table 6 showed the difference among the groups as the mean rank scores of the first experimental group ($X=43.64$) and the second one ($X=39.05$) were higher than the control group ($X=16.59$). A significant difference was found among groups on behalf of the experimental groups. The second research question was also proved. The findings revealed that five weeks with different cultured interlocutors had a particular impact on students' intercultural effectiveness level.

Research Question 3: Is there any statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results of the two experimental groups and one control group in terms of the six factors of the scale. To find out the answer of this research question each factor was examined respectively.

Behavioral Flexibility Factor

As shown in Table 7 that there was significant difference between pre-test ($X=2.72$) and post-test ($X=2.87$) behavioral flexibility factor scores of the first experimental group ($p=.012$) . This

result could be interpreted as first experimental group students answered the questions of this factor more positively in the post-test.

Table 8 presented the results of the pre ($X=2.75$) and post ($X=2.82$) test scores of the second experimental group on the factor of behavioral flexibility ($p=.055$). Comparing the mean scores of two test an increase on behalf of the post test was observed, however it was not significant.

It could be inferred from the table above that there was no significant difference between pre-test and post-test behavioral flexibility factor scores of the traditional control group ($p=.157$) in enabling to develop flexible behaviors towards foreign counterparts.

Interaction Relaxation Factor

As shown in Table 10 a significant difference was found according to the results of the Wilcoxon Signed rank test for the first experimental group ($p=.000$). This table could be interpreted as all of the students in this group answered the post test questions belong to this factor positively comparing to the pre-test.

As regards the results of this test, a significant difference appeared between the scores of pre ($X=2.47$) and post ($X=3.13$) test results of this factor for the second experimental group ($p=.000$). It can therefore be concluded that after five weeks period, the students in the second experimental group changed their opinions positively in the way they interacted to their interlocutors easily.

The result of this test could be interpreted with a significant difference between the groups ($p=.000$). 18 students out of 22 improved their viewpoints positively and only 4 of them remained their opinions the same.

Interactant Respect Factor

As for the results of this test, a significant difference appeared between the scores of pre and post test results of this factor for the first experimental group ($p=.002$). Positive progress in terms of respect for the interactants was found; 12 out of 22 students gave more positive answers to the questions and 10 of them unchanged.

As can be seen in Table 14 a significant difference was found according to the results of the Wilcoxon Signed Rank test for the second experimental group ($p=.007$). The results could be interpreted that after the experimental period 9 students changed positively and 12 ones remained unchanged in terms of respect towards interactants.

As shown in Table 15 a slightly significant difference was found according to the results of the Wilcoxon Signed Rank test for the second experimental group ($p=.023$). The results could be interpreted that 9 students changed positively and 12 ones remained unchanged in terms of respect towards interactants.

Message Skills Factor

As regards the results of this test, a significant difference appeared between the scores of pre ($X=1.90$) and post ($X=2.09$) test results of message skills factor for the first experimental group ($p=.015$). It might be concluded that after five weeks period, the students in the first experimental group changed their minds positively in the way they receive and send messages to their culturally different counterparts. (See Table16)

A statistically significant difference wasn't found according to the results of this test ($p=.317$). As shown in the Table17 none of the students changed positively. While 20 out of 21 remained unchanged; 1 of them answered more negatively in the post-test.

A statistically significant difference wasn't found according to the results of this test ($p=.1.000$). It could be interpreted that all the students remained the same in both of the tests. (See Table18)

Identity Maintenance Factor

As shown in Table19 a significant difference was found according to the results of the Wilcoxon Signed Rank test for the first experimental group ($p=.000$). The results could be interpreted that 15 students changed positively and 7 ones remained unchanged in terms of identity maintenance factor.

As a result of this test, a statistically significant difference was found between the scores of pre ($X=2.41$) and post ($X=2.68$) test results of identity maintenance factor for the first experimental group ($p=.003$). It could be interpreted that after five weeks period, the students in the second experimental group changed their minds positively in this factor. (See Table20)

A statistically significant difference wasn't found according to the results of this test ($p=.1.000$). It could be concluded that all the students remained the same in both of the tests for identity maintenance factor of control group. (See table21)

Interaction Management Factor

A statistically significant difference was found according to the result of the test ($p=.000$). The results could be interpreted that 20 students changed positively and 2 ones remained unchanged in the way they manage their interactions between themselves and their culturally different counterparts.(See Table22)

As shown in Table23 a significant difference was found according to the results of the Wilcoxon Signed Rank test for the second experimental group ($p=.000$). The results could be interpreted that 16 students changed positively and 5 ones remained unchanged in terms of interaction management factor.

A statistically significant difference wasn't found according to the results of this test ($p=.1.000$). It could be concluded that all the students remained the same in both of the tests for interaction management factor of control group. (See table24)

Research Question 4: Is there a relationship between the IES totals post-test scores and academic achievement of students belongs to the experimental and control groups?

To explore the relationship between students' intercultural effectiveness level and the academic achievement in English language classes, Pearson correlation was calculated for all of the groups.

Figure1 illustrates that the variables could be considered strongly positive correlated with a coefficient of .772. ($p=.000 < p=0.05$) In other words when IES total scores increase the total achievement scores also move in the same direction. Intercultural effectiveness and academic achievement were significantly and positively correlated for each of the groups as well. What is more, coefficient of the first experimental group is .913, the second experimental group was .824 and the control group was .681. It could be concluded that the relationship between the variables for the experimental groups were higher and more positive whereas for the control group it was also positive although it was not so high as experimental groups.

Research Question 5: What are the opinions of GTC about the five weeks intercultural interaction with Turkish university students?

In the qualitative phase of the study the GTC were asked 3 basic questions. They were respectively, "What do you think about the intercultural interaction between you and Turkish EFL learners?, If you think there are some problems in interaction what are they and what are the reasons of them?, What should be done to have intercultural effectiveness in language teaching?". As a result of the content analysis 11 codes were obtained. Codes and their frequency values can be seen in Table25.

As seen in the Table25 all of the participants (N=18) stated that they found it easy to get on with Turkish EFL learners. A significant number of the participants (N=15) stated that they were pleased with Turkish hospitality, both the students and the instructors showed them their good intentions and hospitality in the research period. GTC (N=14) were content with the respect the Turkish EFL students paid. They generally thought this respect stemmed from having the same religion in spite of having totally different cultures. Most of the teacher candidates (N=14) asserted that the biggest problem of Turkish EFL students in interaction was their deficiency in English language. They thought the students have some interaction problems because they have limited opportunities to improve their speaking skills. GTC (N=12) had some communication problems with female students, they mentioned their dissatisfaction about female students' not greeting and speaking to them. A number of GTC (N=12) stated that language education system in school of foreign languages based on grammar teaching. They (N=11) also thought that Turkish language was spoken too much in language classrooms and it blocked students' improvement in speaking. In addition to this, GTC (N=10) stated that they observed students' improvement in communication throughout five weeks interaction. Some of the participants (N=8) talked about misunderstandings arising from cultural differences such as sticking the tongue out and some kinds of gestures. They (N=7) made recommendations about how to improve the communication skills of students, (N=7) out of class activities and (N=5) how to comfort shy students in interaction.

Research Question 6: What are the opinions of the Turkish university students about the five weeks intercultural interaction with GTC?

10 of the experimental group students were asked 2 questions: "What do you think about the intercultural interaction between you and GTC?, If you think there are some problems in interaction what are they and what are the reasons of them? As a result of the content analysis 6 codes were obtained. Codes and their frequency values can be seen in Table26.

As Table26 shows, none of the EFL learners (N=10) had problems in getting on with GTC. They (N=8) stated that they had a lot in common such as religion, free time activities, hobbies and friendship. Like GTC Turkish EFL students (N=8) thought the biggest problem for communication was their deficiency in English. They admitted that the language education system in Turkey is based on grammar and for effective interpersonal communication they need to improve their speaking and listening skills. A number of EFL students (N=7) mentioned that they had some kinds of prejudices before GTC arrived. However, they thought they overcame them after having interactions with GTC. Most of the students (N=6) remarked that after being together with GTC they want to improve their English to communicate to people from different cultural backgrounds. And half of the students (N=5) expressed their desire to study abroad after the interaction with GTC.

Conclusion and Discussion

Cultural diversity is a fact rather than a value (Kukathas, 1997) for all the countries in contemporary life. This diversity either stemming from migrations or some other reasons, as prophesied by Marshall Luchan in 1962, has changed our world to a 'global village'. Thus being different should be tolerated in terms of social and educational life. As noted by Grant and Brueck (2011), global education might be viewed as one big classroom with the contribution of global language. So, not only other aspects of social life but also educational policies should be regulated according to the intercultural reality. In this reality global language has an important role to provide communication between people from different countries and cultures.

Turkey is a country with only one official language, Turkish, however due to the changes in the world, English as a lingua franca has been promoted in language teaching, to be involved in international activities. However English language poses a challenge for Turkish students who struggle with daily communication. Hence the present study has suggested an intercultural communication perspective to EFL students both to increase the intercultural effectiveness of them and their academic success in language learning.

The quantitative findings of the study demonstrated that the EFL students being together with GTC for their in-class and out of class activities outperformed those who received only traditional curriculum activities through their instructors in terms of IES. Qualitative findings of the study as supporting the quantitative ones showed that all of the participants believed that intercultural interaction was very useful both for intercultural effectiveness and English language improvement of Turkish EFL learners. Vincenti (2001) claimed that intercultural experiences have plenty of benefits for university students. Five weeks duration may not be sufficient for developing intercultural effectiveness completely; however it contributed students' intercultural development to some extent. A similar five weeks research was conducted by Chieffo and Griffiths (2004) and they reported significantly higher gains in intercultural awareness of students comparing to the control group. They also noted that even the duration was short; the experimental group had growth in intercultural and personal awareness. Hansel and Grove (1986) also studied with students for international exchange experiences and reported that the greatest gains were alongside foreign language appreciation, ability to understand different cultures and intercultural awareness.

As advocated by so many researchers intercultural outlook should be implemented in communicative language teaching (Hymes, 1996, Savignon, 1983, 2001, Morrow and Johnson, 1979 & Littlewood, 1984; Conway et al., 2010). The reason is that, in communicative language teaching, socio-cultural competence has more significant role than grammatical and strategic competences. In socio-cultural side of language teaching the participants, what they convey and the function of the interaction have important places. Indeed, when students interact to non-native speakers of the language they pay more attention to authentic language use (Savignon, 2001). In this study creating an authentic atmosphere with GTC' involvements to the research, EFL students both improved their intercultural perspectives and English to some extent and commented accordingly. GTC also expressed that Turkish EFL students have limited chances to use English language in an authentic atmosphere, however with the five weeks interaction with GTC they began to initiate a conversation and communicate as far as they could. As Corbett (2003) indicated authenticity has been a key quality, however only as it provided reliable models of language in use. By this research project ensuring an authentic atmosphere intercultural communicative competence has been tried to attain.

When examined the difference pre and post test results in can be concluded that communicating foreign people has provided benefit not only for experimental groups' students but also control groups. Even though the difference between the pre and post test scores not as high as the experimental group's test, control group students have improved their views about intercultural relationships. That's because they had social relationship with them being together during the breaks in the corridors or canteen. They also had football matches after classes so they improved their friendship with GTC. It can be said that the students' communication in English with their culturally diverse encounters extended beyond the classroom setting. Thus being with culturally different people, the students of Firat University School of Foreign Languages also improved their "interpersonal skills, behavioral flexibility, openness to new experiences and people, empathy, respect and sense of humor" as indicated by Paige (1996, pp. 155-158) to construct an intercultural approach, as essential elements in relationship with culturally different people. Almeida et al. (2016) also demonstrated that intercultural learning is not happened only in language classrooms but also outside of it. Both of them have equal effects on interculturality. As a result of the present study it can be stated that not only being abroad but also being together at hometown with culturally different peers, contribute the development of students' intercultural vision. It also provides convenient environments for social interactions to improve their language skills. Williams (2005) found that students who studied abroad showed a greater improvement in intercultural communication skills after their semester abroad than students who stayed their own school setting. Williams also investigated changes in skills to show that study abroad programs developed students' intercultural communication skills. As Stern (1992) noted in language teaching social events should not be neglected. Because not only the features of the language but the people who use it, how they live,

what they do, think and dream also have equivalent importance. Corbett (2003) clearly stated that foreign language learners should be in a position to understand the practices and beliefs if they wish fully to comprehend the language. According to the previous statement, language is more than the transfer of information it is the organization of individual and group identities that has led to the development of an intercultural approach to language education (p. 20).

IES used for this study, has six factors. They are respectively; behavioral flexibility, interaction relaxation, interactant respect, message skills, identity maintenance, and interaction management. After examining the total scale scores each factor was assessed statistically in terms of its pre and post test results.

Statistical findings belong to the first factor revealed that only the first experimental group students increased their *behavioral flexibility* scores. Intercultural competence in language learning field is defined as the ability to behave in a flexible way when confronted representatives of different cultures (Meyer 1991). Behavioral flexibility can be achieved by the use of appropriate verbal messages, gestures and mimics in interaction (Wiemann, 1977). GTC noted that some kind of gestures and mimics were misunderstood by Turkish EFL students and female students were not flexible enough to communicate. So, some of the Turkish EFL students attain behavioral flexibility while the others do not. By the context of the present study five weeks' time may not be enough to develop such competence for all the students in experimental groups.

With respect to the *interaction relaxation* factor all the groups increased their scores. The items related to this factor in the scale refer to the openness and comfort they feel during interaction. So it can be concluded by this finding that through in class and out of class activities all the students who have interactions with culturally different peers improved their relaxation level. The qualitative data also revealed that none of the participants have difficulties in interaction because both Turkish EFL students and GTC stated that they got on well with each other easily. The acknowledgement of relaxation of interaction for all the groups connects to Chamberlain-Quinlisk's (2010) finding that language learners' self-perceptions of feeling relaxed and comfortable in social situations, of liking to participate in different social groups, and of enjoying meeting and socializing with new people are higher in multilingual educational settings. So this finding of the study demonstrated that being an intercultural learner and having an intercultural perspective makes it easier to feel as if one can socialize well among diverse groups of people.

The findings about the *Interactant respect* factor also show the increase in the scores of the groups. The experimental groups have more significant differences whereas control group has a slight one. Examining the qualitative data, GTC expressed their satisfaction in terms of respect and hospitality of the Turkish EFL students. Students also noted that they had some prejudices before GTS coming to their classes, but they overcame it and respected them belonging to a different culture. Some researchers claimed that the promotion of respect for difference should be one of the key point of intercultural dimension of education so that students can learn to interact with people of many different origins (Byram, 1997b; Shi-xu and Wilson, 2001). To develop intercultural communication competence, students should learn about their interactant's knowledge and expectations for communication, engage in self-reflection about their own cultural communication practices, and develop skills to respect them (Dai and Chen, 2015; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). Forsman (2010) likewise, focused on the promotion of intercultural competence in the form of awareness of diversity as well as respect for such difference within the EFL classroom with empirical results.

With respect to the *message skills* factor, while the first experimental group increased their scores the second one and the control group remained the same. Their pre-test results also were the lowest among the others. When the items related to the present factor were examined, language use utilizing verbal and non-verbal behaviors were in the forefront. So the students did not find their linguistic competence enough to communicate clearly and received the conveyed message from the culturally diverse peers. Qualitative findings also revealed that both GTC and Turkish EFL students saw English language as the biggest barrier for communication. GTC observed that grammar based

teaching is the main reason of it. They also indicated that communicative activities were not enough for students to improve themselves. In addition to this they noted that students do not have chances to use English out of the school, so they recommended some out of class activities to make a proper environment to communicate in English for students. As Paker (2012) stated, students understanding written texts but not communicating have been the outcome of Turkish language education system. It is because the system is based on grammatical instruction rather than communicating. So including intercultural communication competence to the curriculums and the system, students' communicative competence can be improved. As Kinginger (2015) stated, from the viewpoint of social interaction, study abroad experiences show the greatest benefit in comparison to classroom learning, where the emphasis is generally on grammatical competence and formal accuracy. Some research projects' findings also revealed that communication between international teaching assistants and American college students was blocked by the linguistic boundaries. In other words the international teaching assistants' deficiency in English language use caused some problems in communication. (Li et al., 2011; Yun Chiang and Fu Mi, 2008)

Identity maintenance factor refers to ability of the participants to maintain both identity of their culturally different peers and their own during the interaction (Portalla and Chen, 2010). By this study it is found that at the end of the experimental period both of the experimental groups increased their scores related to the present factor while the control group remained unchanged. As a result of the period, half of the students declared that they changed their perspectives and wanted to study abroad and explore new cultures. Identity adaptation and transformation in terms of sense of self and ways of understanding the world is one of the most significant consequence some studies. In his research Gill (2010) claimed that with new values and worldviews his participants developed their own self-identities as a result of cultural exchanges. Because interacting with people of diverse cultural backgrounds brings new discovering, senses and values, and new feelings of the self (Adler 1987; Amorim 2001; Kim 2008). According to Kim (2008) intercultural experiences transform people into intercultural personhood who immerse themselves in the wealth of another culture through their own identity. Researchers agree that after being abroad with culturally different encounters, people improve the ability to understand the others through one's own and other cultures (Kramsch, 1993; Gill, 2007, 2010).

Interaction management factor refers to the capability of the person to answer questions of the culturally diverse people and express his own ideas clearly (Portalla and Chen, 2010). In other words it is decreasing ambiguity by enhancing attributional reliance about another person (Gudykunst, 2005). As in the previous factor, two experimental groups increased their scores for interaction management whereas the control group did not. They expressed their desire to be clear in communication. So tolerance for ambiguity is not a desirable contribution of the participants to express themselves and respond to the questions effectively. It can be interpreted from the qualitative findings that the most important obstacle for managing the interaction is the English language. Students stated that if they could have spoken English better, they would have more powerful interactions and this situation made them shy and anxious. Miller and Samp (2007) also observed the same result in their research. According to their study higher tolerance for ambiguity in intercultural interactions makes the people more anxious about the communication.

When examined the relationship between intercultural effectiveness and academic success in English language classes, it is asserted that there is a high positive relationship between the two variables. It means the more students turn their opinions about intercultural affairs into positive, the more they achieve in EFL classes. It is an important fact that at the very beginning of the five weeks' period they feared to communicate to GTC due to their poor English language communication competency. As stated before, they have no opportunities to use English out of the school setting. So their initial anxious moods might be approved. However by the time they got accustomed one another and they were not afraid of making mistakes during interaction. Their adaptation also made them positive about their culturally diverse peers. The more they communicated the more they wanted to

learn about English. Thus it resulted with their achievement in module ending exam. Vande Berg (2004) headed a study on study abroad students. His findings also indicated that students being with abroad and different cultured people experienced intercultural development along with second language proficiency. As Gill (2007) presented as one of his findings in his research, English language proficiency created a challenge for Chinese students in daily communication in their intercultural environment. So the English language incompetency made them feel diffident. Gill (2010) also claimed English language competence is one of the most important impacts of intercultural experiences on interlocutors. Jon (2009) conducted a similar research on Korean students in an international summer program in Korea. He reported that according to the Korean participants' intercultural learning related to English. After gaining confidence of English the Korean students changed their minds about it. They began to think that English as a tool would help them to accomplish for further goals.

To conclude, in countries such as Turkey where the opportunities for intercultural experiences are limited, all the chances should be utilized to have intercultural competence in EFL settings. The collaboration between the Firat University and TIKA provided a favorable opportunity for EFL learners to learn about other cultures, gain intercultural competence and practice in English. As Sercu supports the idea that foreign language teaching should be dealt with in an intercultural perspective (2006). Higher education institutions should take advantages of such programs to gain interculturally competent graduates for a global environment. This study made use of the opportunity and clear the way for other researchers in the field.

There are some limitations in this study. First of all, 65 students attending the mainstream pre-intermediate level at the school of foreign languages were involved in the study (43 students were in two experimental groups and 22 students were in the control group). The number of students compelled the researchers to use nonparametric statistics. To reach more accurate results other studies including parametric tests are needed. The second one is the data collection method. In this study, both quantitative and qualitative methods were utilized to achieve objective results. As data collection tools Portalla and Chen's (2010) IES and the module ending exam as the achievement test and semi-structured interview forms were used. Similar studies can be conducted with different sample groups and different research methods. The last one, the instruction both for the experimental and control groups was designed by the researcher based on the course book. Different contents of different instructions should be examined.

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TABLES

Table 1. One Way ANOVA for the Three Groups to Control the Difference

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Significant
Proficiency	Between Groups	78,087	2	39,044	1,649	,201
	Within Groups	1468,374	62	23,683		
	Total	1546,462	64			
Module Ending Exam	Between Groups	132,490	2	66,245	1,454	,242
	Within Groups	2825,264	62	45,569		
	Total	2957,754	64			
Mid-term	Between Groups	195,110	2	97,555	1,525	,226
	Within Groups	3965,136	62	63,954		
	Total	4160,246	64			

Table 2: Paired Sample T Test for Experimental Group 1 on Total IES Scores

Experimental group 1	N	X	SD	DF	t	P
Pre-Test	22	2.55	.236	21	-10.99	.000
Post-Test	22	2.98	.279			

*p<.05

Table 3. Paired Sample T test for Experimental Group 2 on Total IES Scores

Experimental group 2	N	X	SD	DF	t	P
Pre-Test	21	2.60	.278	20	-9.450	.000
Post-Test	21	2.92	.303			

*p<.05

Table 4. Paired Sample T test for Control Group on Total IES Scores

Control Group	n	X	sd	df	t	Sig.
Pre-Test	22	2.47	.157	21	-6.971	.000
Post-Test	22	2.56	.149			

*p<.05

Table5: Levene test for the post-tests of the groups

Post-tests	Levene	df ¹	df ²	p
	3.576	2	62	.034

*p<.05

Table6: KWH Test for the Post-test Results of the Groups

Groups	n	Mean Rank	df	KWH	p
Exp.1	22	43.64			
Exp.2	21	39.05	2	25.796	.000
Control	22	16.59			

Table 7: Paired Sample T Test for Experimental Group 1 on Behavioral Flexibility Factor Scores

Experimental group 1	N	X	SD	DF	t	P
Pre-Test	22	2.72	.611	21	2.751	.012
Post-Test	22	2.87	.635			

Table 8. Paired Sample T test for Experimental Group 2 on Behavioral Flexibility Factor Scores

Experimental group 2	N	X	SD	DF	t	P
Pre-Test	21	2.75	.602	20	-2.034	.055
Post-Test	21	2.82	.642			

*p<.05

Table 9. Wilcoxon Signed Rank test for Control Group on Behavioral Flexibility Factor Scores

Factor	Pre/Post Test	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	P
	Negative ranks	0	.00	.00		
Behavioral Flexibility	Positive ranks	2	1.50	3.00	-1.414	.157
	Ties	20				
	Total	22				

*p<.05

Table 10. Wilcoxon Signed Rank test for Experimental Group 1 on Interaction Relaxation Factor Scores

Factor	Pre/Post Test	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	P
	Negative ranks	0	.00	.00		
Interaction Relaxation	Positive ranks	22	11.50	253.00	-4.124	.000
	Ties	0				
	Total	22				

*p<.05

Table 11. Paired Sample T test for Experimental Group 2 on Interaction Relaxation Factor Scores

Experimental group 2	N	X	SD	DF	t	P
Pre-Test	21	2.47	.435	20	-8.032	.000
Post-Test	21	3.13	.305			

*p<.05

Table 12. Wilcoxon Signed Rank test for Control Group on Interaction Relaxation Factor Scores

Factor	Pre/Post Test	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	P
	Negative ranks	0	.00	.00		
Interaction Relaxation	Positive ranks	18	9.50	171.00	-3.816	.000
	Ties	4				
	Total	22				

*p<.05

Table 13. Wilcoxon Signed Rank test for Experimental Group 1 on Interactant Respect Factor Scores

Factor	Pre/Post Test	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	P
	Negative ranks	0	.00	.00		
Interactant Respect	Positive ranks	12	6.50	78.00	-3.165	.002
	Ties	10				
	Total	22				

*p<.05

Table 14. Wilcoxon Signed Rank test for Experimental Group 2 on Interactant Respect Factor Scores

Factor	Pre/Post Test	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	P
	Negative ranks	0	.00	.00		
Interactant Respect	Positive ranks	9	5.00	45.00	-2.714	.007
	Ties	12				
	Total	21				

*p<.05

Table15. Wilcoxon Signed Rank test for Control Group on Interactant Respect Factor Scores

Factor	Pre/Post Test	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	P
	Negative ranks	0	.00	.00		
Interaction Relaxation	Positive ranks	6	3.50	21.00	-2.271	.023
	Ties	16				
	Total	22				

*p<.05

Table16. Paired Sample T test for Experimental Group 1 on Message Skills Factor Scores

Experimental group 1	N	X	SD	DF	t	P
Pre-Test	22	1.90	.660	21	-2.658	.015
Post-Test	22	2.09	.721			

*p<.05

Table 17. Wilcoxon Signed Rank test for Experimental Group 2 on Message Skills Factor Scores

Factor	Pre/Post Test	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	P
	Negative ranks	1	1.00	1.00		
Message Skills	Positive ranks	0	.00	.00	-1.000	.317
	Ties	20				
	Total	21				

*p<.05

Table18. Wilcoxon Signed Rank test for Control Group on Message Skills Factor Scores

Factor	Pre/Post Test	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	P
	Negative ranks	0	.00	.00		
Message Skills	Positive ranks	0	.00	.00	.000	1.000
	Ties	22				
	Total	22				

*p<.05

Table19. Wilcoxon Signed Rank test for Experimental Group 1 on Identity Maintenance Factor Scores

Factor	Pre/Post Test	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	P
	Negative ranks	0	.00	.00		
Identity Maintenance	Positive ranks	15	8.00	120.00	-3.531	.000
	Ties	7				
	Total	22				

*p<.05

Table20. Paired Sample T test for Experimental Group 2 on Identity Maintenance Factor Scores

Experimental group 1	N	X	SD	DF	t	P
Pre-Test	21	2.412	.631	20	-3.442	.003
Post-Test	21	2.682	.636			

*p<.05

Table21. Wilcoxon Signed Rank test for Control Group on Identity Maintenance Factor Scores

Factor	Pre/Post Test	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	P
	Negative ranks	0	.00	.00		
Identity Maintenance	Positive ranks	0	.00	.00	.000	1.000
	Ties	22				
	Total	22				

*p<.05

Table22. Wilcoxon Signed Rank test for Experimental Group 1 on Interaction Management Factor Scores

Factor	Pre/Post Test	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	P
	Negative ranks	0	.00	.00		
Interaction Management	Positive ranks	20	10.50	210.00	-4.035	.000
	Ties	2				
	Total	22				

*p<.05

Table23. Wilcoxon Signed Rank test for Experimental Group 2 on Interaction Management Factor Scores

Factor	Pre/Post Test	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	P
	Negative ranks	0	.00	.00		
Interaction Management	Positive ranks	16	8.50	136.00	-3.568	.000
	Ties	5				
	Total	21				

*p<.05

Table24. Wilcoxon Signed Rank test for Control Group on Interaction Management Factor Scores

Factor	Pre/Post Test	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	P
	Negative ranks	0	.00	.00		
Interaction Management	Positive ranks	0	.00	.00	.000	1.000
	Ties	22				
	Total	22				

*p<.05

Table25. Codes Derived from the Qualitative Data of GTC

	Codes	N
1	Finding easy to get along with Turkish EFL learners	18
2	Having pleasure with Turkish hospitality	15
3	Interactants' respect towards different cultures	14
4	Language barrier	14
5	Shyness of female students	12
5	Lack of communicative activities in language classes	12
6	Using too much Turkish language in EFL classes	11
7	Observing the improvement of EFL students in terms of English in five weeks period	10
8	Misunderstandings stemming from different cultural backgrounds.	8
9	Recommendations about improving communicative abilities of EFL students	7
10	Recommendations about out of class activities	7
11	Recommendations about shy students	5

Table26. Codes Derived from the Qualitative Data of Turkish EFL Students

	Codes	N
1	Finding easy to get along with GTC	10
2	Having a lot of things in common	8
3	Language barrier	8
4	Overcoming prejudices	7
5	Being disposed to improve communication skills	6
6	Desiring to going and studying abroad	5

Figure 1. Scatterplot Graph for the Relationship between the Scale Post-test Results and Module Ending Exam Results



