

Chapter 4

OPINIONS OF PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS ON AN INTERCULTURAL TRAINING INTEGRATED ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS COURSE

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Introduction

In recent years, more emphasis has been given to the role of intercultural communication in language learning and teaching. Researchers of the field have been pointing out that not only communicative competence, but also intercultural competence should be the aim in learning a foreign language. In the case of English language learning, this need appears to be even greater as English has become a lingua franca. As a consequence, today, non-native speakers of English outnumber its native speakers. Therefore, English is mostly used between non-native speakers in intercultural settings. Hence, the appropriateness of considering the native speaker as the model in English language teaching has become questionable. In this respect, the implementation of a model of Intercultural Communicative Competence which extends the model of communicative competence in language learning and teaching was suggested. (Byram, 1997).

As Sercu (2005) argues, “The objective of language learning is no longer defined in terms of the acquisition of communicative competence in a foreign language. Teachers are now required to teach intercultural communicative competence” (p. 1). Intercultural competence cannot be assumed to develop naturally with the learning of a foreign language (Meyer, 1991). Methods and materials to develop intercultural competence can be integrated into the language teaching curriculum in different ways. However, there is a lack of studies in this area in Turkey. This study was carried out as an attempt to fill part of this gap in the field. The aim was to find out whether or not integrating intercultural training into an English Oral Communication Skills course can be an effective way for developing pre-service English language teachers’ behavioural skills of intercultural competence.

Aim of the Study

Intercultural training has generally been studied in the context of business studies. Taking place in a context of English language teaching, the present study ex-

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This study is adapted from the Ph.D Dissertation ‘A Study on the Effectiveness of a Program for Improving the Pre-service English Language Teachers’ Intercultural Competence’ (Erdem Mete, D., 2011)

glish language learners are more likely to communicate with non-native speakers of English than its native speakers. English language teachers have the responsibility of enlarging their students' viewpoints towards English rather than exposing them only to the native speaker norms. Language teachers' opinions on appropriate teaching practices, on the other hand, are heavily shaped during their pre-service education. That is why, courses which aim to develop intercultural competence and those which are related to intercultural communication should be integrated into the teacher education curriculum.

The students' overall opinions about the Oral Communication Skills course in which intercultural training was integrated showed that they made progress in terms of the knowledge, attitude and behavioural skills dimensions of their intercultural competence. The interconnectedness of the three main dimensions of intercultural competence was revealed in the findings of the interview. Therefore, it is not possible to deal with one component of intercultural competence without addressing the others in the teaching process. The students also stated that the activities used in the course helped them to develop their oral communication skills. This finding verifies that intercultural training can be integrated into English language learning courses.

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Appendix I

The Behavioural Observation Checklist

A. Interaction Management

- A1. lets the other finish his/her speech before speaking.
- A2. takes the turn with an appropriate phrase.
- A3. invites group members to speak to encourage participation.
- A4. uses nonverbal cues that show interest in the interaction. (e.g. eye-contact, smiling, the way to sit, using hands, etc.)

B. Respect

- B1. uses appropriate tone of voice.
- B2. uses verbal cues to show agreement or understanding (e.g. “yes”, “I see”, etc.)
- B3. shows disagreement with others’ views in a polite manner.
- B4. uses nonverbal cues of agreement or understanding (e.g. eye-contact, nodding, saying ‘hmm’, ‘uh-huh’, etc.)

C. Interaction Posture:

- C1. listens to group members attentively while they are speaking.
- C2. avoids making rigid judgements towards others’ views.
- C3. asks questions about others’ views and experiences to gather further information.
- C4. restates others’ ideas.

D. Relational Role Behaviour

- D1. participates in group discussion by expressing his/her own views adequately.
- D2. shows that he/she has considered each group member’s views before giving a final decision.
- D3. tries to harmonize and mediate conflicts in the group by offering different perspectives of approaching issues.
- D4. shows willingness to compromise own position for the sake of group consensus.

Appendix II

Görüşme Formu (The Interview Form)

Bu görüşme işlediğimiz Sözlü İletişim Becerileri dersi ile ilgili görüşlerinizi öğrenmek için yapılmaktadır. Görüşleriniz yaptığım araştırmaya ve ileride yapıla-

cak çalışmalara ışık tutacaktır. Vereceğiniz kişisel bilgiler gizli kalacaktır. 15 dakika sürmesi beklenen görüşme ses kayıt cihazı ile kaydedilecektir. Bu görüşmeye katıldığınız için teşekkür ederim.

1. Bu derste en çok hangi aktiviteleri sevdiniz?

- Canlandırmalar
- Farklı kültürler hakkında internet araştırması yapma
- İnternet araştırmaları ile ilgili grup sunumları
- Kültürlerarası çatışma örnekleri gösteren videolar hakkında tartışma
- Kültürlerarası çatışma örnekleri veren kısa metinler üzerinde tartışma
- Tayvanlı öğrencilerle e-posta yolu ile iletişim kurma

2. Bu derste yedi hafta boyunca neler öğrendiğinizi düşünüyorsunuz?

- Kültürlerarası farklılıklara bakış açınız değişti mi?
- Kültürlerarası farklılıklarla başa çıkmak için gösterdiğiniz davranışlarınızda olumlu yönde değişme olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz?
- Kendi kültürünüze karşı duyarlılığınızda bir değişim oldu mu?
- İletişim becerilerinin önemi ile ilgili görüşlerinizde değişiklik oldu mu?

3. Bu derste öğrendiğiniz şeylerin ileride size ne şekilde faydalı olabileceğini düşünüyorsunuz?

- Kültürel farklılıktan kaynaklanabilecek çatışmalara ve yanlış anlamalara engel olma
- Kültürel farklılıklara karşı önyargılı tutumlardan kaçınma
- Sadece İngiliz ve Amerikalılarla değil, farklı ülke ve kültürden İngilizce konuşan kişilerle de daha etkili iletişim kurma

4. Bir İngilizce Sözlü İletişim Becerileri dersinin sahip olması gereken içerik konusundaki görüşlerinizde değişiklik oldu mu?

- Sizce İngilizce konuşularak kurulan bir sözlü iletişimde İngiliz ve Amerikan konuşma ve davranış normları hakkında bilgi sahibi olmak başarılı bir iletişim için yeterli midir?
- Kültürel farklılıklar ve bunların davranışa etkisi hakkında bilgi sahibi olmanın önemi
- Kültürel farklılıkların yol açabileceği sorunlar ve yanlış anlamalar hakkında bilgi sahibi olmanın önemi

- İletişim esnasında kültürel farklılıklarla etkili bir şekilde başa çıkabilme bilgisi edinmenin önemi
- İleride bir İngilizce öğretmeni olarak bu dersin içeriğini siz de kullanmak ister misiniz?

5. Genel olarak bu dersin içeriği ile ilgili neler düşünüyorsunuz?

- İçerik ya da aktivitelerle ilgili hoşlanmadığınız bir şey oldu mu?
- Sizce bu içerik başka bir derste de kullanılabilir mi?
- Eklemek istediğiniz başka bir şey var mı?