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## **MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION AND ITS IMPACT ON LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF MILITARY CADETS AT TMA**

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# MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION AND ITS IMPACT ON LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF MILITARY CADETS AT TMA

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## Abstract

The purpose of the study was three-fold: First, to determine the perspectives of the international and Turkish military cadets at Turkish Military Academy (TMA) towards multicultural learning environment and cultural diversity. Second, to analyze to what extent the multicultural learning environment affects the language development of both international and Turkish cadets. Third, to identify the observations and suggestions of language instructors about the best practices that should be applied in multicultural learning setting. A questionnaire and two proficiency tests were conducted on 80 cadets for quantitative data. Qualitative data was gathered from 13 language instructors studying at TMA. It was found that the perspectives of the cadets towards multicultural learning setting were positive. Moreover, the international cadets' language proficiency developed more than the Turkish cadets. Analysis of the interviews with the language instructors provided important insights into the issue.

*Keywords:* cultural diversity, international student, multicultural learning, TMA.

## 1. Introduction

Culture, embracing both concrete and abstract aspects of the norms, values, attitudes and point of views of people living in a certain society has a mutual relationship with the language which transforms the culture and at the same time is shaped by culture. Culture is defined by Manning and Baruth (2009, p. 25) as “people’s values, language, religion, ideals, artistic expressions, patterns of social and interpersonal relationships, and ways of perceiving, behaving and thinking”.

Cultural awareness, intercultural competence, cross-cultural competence and multi-cultural competence are the terms used to describe the ability to develop an understanding of culture as an important domain of communication. Among several scholars’ definitions, Dearnorff (2006) defines intercultural competence as the ability to interact effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations, based on specific attitudes, intercultural knowledge, skills and perceptions.

Moreover, as it is stated by Krajewski (2011), internationalization and intercultural or multicultural competence are key issues especially in higher education institutions all around the world. In times of the enlargement of globalization, a high level intercultural competence emerges as one of the most desired skills for people who tend to work or study in international areas. With the enlargement of colonialism and the top position of economic situations, there has been an important scale of directions of the steer of international education and this situation attracted most of the students into European schools until the First World War. Later, multicultural communication has begun to draw attentions of people all around the world after the World War II. It’s stated by American Council on Education that United States is on the top of the list enrolling the most international students in the

world. From 1954-1955 to 2006-2007 years the number of international students increased from 34,232 to 582,984 (Institute of International Education, 2007). Besides, in the universities all over the world the number of the capacity of undergraduate and graduate students has been raised with the aim of presenting more quality educational standards to more students (Institute of International Education, 2005). Asia is the first region sending most international students to other countries. According to the data of Institute of International Education (2007) in this region, India is on top of the list, China is the second and The Republic of Korea stays in the third place. Japan, Taiwan, Canada, Mexico, Turkey, Thailand, Germany follow the others on the list of sending international students to other countries. Turkey, the setting of the present study, as a promising destination for international students, tends to attract students from ethnic, linguistic and cultural neighbors. In 2010-11, there were 31,170 foreign students in the Turkish education system, according to data from the country's Student Selection and Placement Center (OSYM). This represents a more than 100 percent increase since 2005-06 when there were 15,481 foreign students at Turkish universities and colleges. Particularly, Turkish Military Academy (TMA) accepts international students to educate them both in academic and military fields. In the first year of their education, international military cadets should learn a foreign language besides Turkish in mixed classes with their international and Turkish peers. However, there is a lack of research data about the language achievements of the cadets and their perceptions towards multicultural learning environment.

The problem tried to be handled in this study was three-fold. The first part dealt with the perspectives of Turkish and foreign cadets at TMA towards multicultural learning environment and the second focuses on the question of to what extent the multicultural learning environment affects learners' language development. Finally, it was goaled to investigate how instructors should acknowledge and accommodate these differences and how they should run the process over a course of study program. In a more specific way the study aimed at finding the answers for the following research questions:

1. What are the perspectives of international and Turkish cadets at TMA towards multicultural learning environment?
2. To what extent multicultural learning environment effects cadets' language development? Are there any significant differences between language development of the international and Turkish cadets after a year long language education process?
3. What are the observations and recommended practices and applications of the instructors for teaching a culturally diverse group of learners?

## 2. Review of Literature

### 1.1. The concept of multiculturalism and multicultural education

Multiculturalism emphasizes the importance of acknowledging the existence of ethnic diversity, ensuring the rights of individuals to retain their culture, and coexist in a society (UNESCO, 2007). The issues such as globalization, international migration, and ethnic diversification promote the importance of multiculturalism as a remarkable phenomenon (Trebing, 2004). Longman (1991, p. 791) defines multiculturalism as "melting pot" where "there is a mixing of people of different races and nations". This can be interpreted in such a way that multiculturalism not only promises considerable gains for the minority but provides benefits for the majority as well (Chesler, 2004). Multiculturalism has been acknowledged by many scholars that it will be a benchmark in most of the modern societies. However, the topics related to multicultural diversity and how to deal with them is a controversial issue (Breinig, Gebhardt, & Losch, 2004 as cited by Trebing, 2004).

As for Yamazaki (2002) traveling with different purposes such as education or migration across countries expedites multiculturalism in most of the contemporary societies regardless of individuals' race, nationality and ethnic identity. Particularly, the educational purposes among the others have become popular for several pedagogical studies. It is argued by Fullinwider (1993) that constituting the idea of multicultural education is needed as a vital necessity of the period so as to enable teaching settings to ensure academic process for culturally diverse students. He claims that the concept of multiculturalism began to exist in 60s at the same period with Civil Rights and Women's movements and it lasted to affect other groups of people like Asians and Hispanics in the following decade. Later it began to spread into other countries like United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and south east parts of Asia.

Richards (1993) claims that "multicultural education is a process that honors the multicultural nature of the society in which we live and as an agent of change, examines the connections between power and knowledge" (p. 48). He deals with the nature of the community in which cultural diversity exists and sees the concept as a progression. Similarly, Yakışır (2009) defines the multicultural education as the project of living together of the people having different religion, language, nation, and cultural background.

According to Sleeter and Grant (2009), so as to be able to integrate the multicultural education in classroom environment, five different approaches can be suggested. The first approach deals with the assimilation into general cultural perception as the suitable way for citizens and values of a society. The second approach considers the acceptance of the basic humanity values and it tries to eradicate the stereotypes while learning about different cultures and cultural components. The third approach supports constituting necessary conditions which allow minor groups to represent themselves in a suitable manner. The fourth approach advocates the pluralism of cultures. It deals with the claim that there should be equal valuing for all ethnic and culturally diverse groups regardless of their race, class or other diverse characteristics. The fifth and the last approach is called as multicultural social justice education by Sleeter and Grant (2009).

Several studies were conducted among university students in Michigan University with the aim of searching out the effects of multicultural setting on students. The survey concluded that dialogue activities among different groups decrease the prejudicial attitudes among students (Zuniga, 1995). The more interaction they get with one another the less prejudiced or biased thoughts they have towards others. Communication reduces the unknown points in the minds of people and makes them familiar to each other.

Another research was applied on the university students with the goal of finding out the influences of the culturally diverse groups to the cognitive development by Lopez (1993). Students' cognitive competences were enhanced thanks to the various aspects and practices of intercultural contexts.

To sum up, most of the studies reported in the literature of multicultural education put an emphasis on two basic elements. One of these main elements is the enhancement of the perspective and cultural understanding. The other one is respect and appreciation of others' points of views. In addition, positive relationships among the cultures and academic success of the students are also attached importance.

#### 1.1.1. International Students

Throughout the history of human being, people have got out of their homelands, folks, and cultures so as to follow the path of knowledge. The starting point of the journey for educational objectives goes to beyond the second century (Giroux, 1992). Later in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries the popular goals of international education turned into travelling, observing and studying at the same time. Intercultural education has been

widely studied by several scholars. These studies have outnumbered during last decades with the increasing number of international students all over the world.

Among these studies, Biddle (2002) clarifies about the ways of benefiting from international students and multicultural learning environment in universities and colleges in the United States. She noted that “Universities must internationalize in order to educate their citizens for global citizenship, to keep pace with other peers, to better serve the national and international community, and to remain as great universities” (Biddle, 2002, p. 7). It promotes cultural exchanges between nations

Besides the benefits of internationalized education people travelling abroad have difficulties about language distinctions and inadequate knowledge or experience about cross-cultural interactions. Several studies on international students focus on cultural adaptation, economical and academic difficulties they face and their psychological and mental outcomes in their lives afterwards. It’s asserted that international students are subjected to the difficulties of adapting to new lifestyles, different cultural values, feelings, behaviors, and problematic issues in terms of communication (Chaskes, 1996 and Mori, 2000).

According to Badur (2003), most of the challenges facing intercultural students during their study period in other countries are due to academic, legal, financial, mental, cultural, and psychological concerns. If such kinds of problematic issues are not dealt with and handled out in favor of students, they not only will be unsuccessful in studying and contributing to the process of learning but also may become burden on the country or society they live in.

As another issue, prejudice towards people through racial or ethnic plane may be discussed. International students may encounter various kinds of discrimination at school, their daily jobs, restaurants, hotels, airports and other social and educational settings. The results taken from the research conducted by Gonzalez-Castro et al. (2009, p. 1707) point that people have the belief that the native culture are risked and harmed by the culture of immigrants or international students. Tomich, Mc Whirter, & King (2000) also assert that “the degree to which one’s home culture overlaps with that of the host culture impacts the depth and rapidity of adaptation to the new environment”

In essence as a general point of view, it’s claimed that such kinds of problems arising from different situations existing in all societies can be handled out by collaboration of all countries working together (Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1998). It’s implied that only the efforts and attempts of a country or its university or college cannot be enough for the solution of such problems arising from the situations in various countries. Every unit or section should conduct the necessary process or meet the needs of the students to be able to help the program go on a smooth route.

As a final issue it’s pointed by researchers that the time period spent in a country or society plays a vital role in the process of adjustment. The longer the time spent in target culture the better the process of adjustment of international students (Senyshyn, Warford & Zhan, 2000). It’s suggested by Njumbwa (2001) that higher education should always be enhanced and academic programs of good quality and some basic and secondary services are to be provided and supported for international students. He adds that countries should really pay great attention for discovering needs and expectations of students and meeting them. Therefore, more research is needed to handle the positive and negative aspects of multicultural education and its effect on intercultural students.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1. Setting and Participants**

The survey is conducted at Turkish Military Academy (TMA), which is a 4-year undergraduate level school, hosting cadets from sixteen different countries. The school has



several academic branches in addition to the fact that it is a military academy and its main goal is to educate officers or soldiers for national defense. In the academy, several different foreign languages are taught such as English, German, French, Arabic, Greek, Chinese, Spanish, Persian, and Russian. It is located in Ankara and it is regarded as one of the most strategic educational institutions in Turkey because of its important mission such as training the officers who will manage the Turkish Army. The cadets studying at the academy have to learn at least one foreign language and succeed their academic courses and physical trainings at the same time. Approximately three thousand cadets study in the school.

A total of 80 first year undergraduate level cadets studying in (TMA) participated in the study. The fifty percent of the cadets were from Turkey and they came from different cities from eastern regions to the western part of Turkey. The other fifty percent consisting of forty cadets were coming from 16 different countries. The countries the cadets came from were Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, Bosnia Herzegovina, Albania, Korea, Georgia, Jordan, Lebanon, Kosovo, Macedonia, Gambia, Somalia, and Croatia (Table 1). The international students follow the path of military education from their countries to Turkey for a four-year education process to be able to graduate from the military academy as an officer. 6 International participants of the research were female and 34 of them were male; in the other group 9 participants of Turkish cadets were female and 31 of them were male. They were voluntarily participated in the study. Previously, written consent of the institution was taken.

Table 1. *Cadets' Nationalities*

Azerbaijan	8	Korea	2
Turkmenistan	2	Georgia	5
Kazakhstan	1	Jordan	2
Kyrgyzstan	1	Lebanon	1
Afghanistan	3	Kosovo	2
Bosnia Herzegovina	4	Macedonia	3
Albania	3	Gambia	2
Somalia	1	Turkish	40

As for the interviews 13 language instructors participated in the study in order to determine their opinions and suggestions about multicultural language learning setting through their experiences and observations as the main actors of the teaching process. They were informed about the study and they were all volunteers.

#### 2.1.1. Instruments for Data Collection

The instruments used in the study were the questionnaire, the structured interview and the proficiency test. The questionnaire which was conducted on the Turkish and international students in order to take their perspectives towards multicultural educational setting was developed by the researchers. There were 14 items which were rated on a 5 point likert scale (1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree). The items of the questionnaire aimed to search the perspectives of the cadets about i) the effects of multicultural setting on their language learning process, ii) the effects of culturally diverse setting on their language learning motivation iii) the social and psychological effects of the multicultural language learning setting on the cadets.

English Proficiency Test, involving four skills question types, was used at the beginning and at the end of the year in order to compare the cadets' level of language development throughout the first year. This test is specifically used at TMA in the beginning of every educational year for determining the levels of the cadets. In the test there were 43 grammar questions, 16 reading questions, and 20 listening questions. There was also a writing section in the test. The maximum scaled score of the test was 100.

Finally, the structured interview was applied on the language instructors at the academy so as to take their opinions and recommendations about the practices or types of applications in multicultural classroom setting.

### 2.1.2. Data collection and analysis

Before the main study, so as to check the reliability of the survey, a piloting study of the questionnaire was applied on 50 participants 25 of whom were Turkish and the other 25 were international cadets. The cadets were randomly selected from both international and Turkish cadets in other grades at TMA. In order to conduct the reliability (Cronbach's coefficient alpha) of the survey, the statistical program named as SPSS, version 17.0 was used.

The reliability analysis yielded a score of .787 Cronbach's coefficient alpha which estimates an acceptable reliability. Additionally the Alpha Co-efficiency Values illustrated that the smallest item total point correlation value was .59.

The data of the research study were analyzed by using SPSS (Statistics Program for Social Scientists) for Windows 17.0 version. Frequencies and descriptive statistics were used to assess the outcomes of each item of the research instrument. The variables taken into consideration depending on the demographic information were nationality, gender and period of inhabitation in Turkey. Independent T Test was applied to analyze whether there were any statistically significant differences between the perceptions and the demographic variables of the participants. The results of the interview were analyzed through the main topics which were also surveyed in the questionnaire and which may put light for the outcomes of the questionnaire as a support.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Analysis of the questionnaire

R.Q. 1. What are the perspectives of international and Turkish cadets at TMA towards multicultural learning environment?

To be able to have a general look at the perspectives of the cadets towards culturally diverse setting in the educational environment, the statistical values were presented in Table 2.

Table 2. *The Average and Standard Deviation of Perspectives of Cadets towards Culturally Diverse Setting*

Mean	29.9375
Std, Error of Mean	.20619
Std, Deviation	1.84421
Variance	3.401

While examining Table 2 it was seen that the maximum average point to be taken from one subgroup was 35., the average point taken from the sub group in the questionnaire was 29.9375 which could be regarded as a high average. Hence, it could be asserted that the perspectives of the cadets towards culturally diverse setting were generally positive and favorable. The most favored item in the questionnaire was "Cultural diversity in the classroom setting triggers me for learning more about other cultures and languages" while the least favored ones were "Being aware of other cultures has no positive effects on me to learn a foreign language" and "Interacting with people from other cultures affects me negatively in terms of communication". Both the Turkish and International cadets stated that multicultural learning setting motivated them to study and communicate with their peers. Additionally they reported that cultural differences triggered them to learn about different cultures and languages.

Furthermore, the analysis of the T Test results between the perceptions and the variables such as nationality ( $p>.05$ ), gender ( $p>.05$ ), period of inhabitation of the cadets in Turkey ( $p>.05$ ) indicated statistically insignificant differences. It could be claimed that these variables do not affect the perceptions of the two groups (national and international cadets) towards multicultural learning environment.

R.Q.2. To what extent multicultural learning environment effects cadets' language development? Are there any significant differences between language development of the international and Turkish cadets after a year long language education process?

The results of the proficiency test they had just after attending the academy and the results of the proficiency test they had at the end of their first year in the academy were compared within and between groups (Table 3).

Turkish and international cadets' scores at the pre-test were between 10 to 25 points generally. In the pre-test the average point of Turkish cadets was 16.28 and the average point of international cadets was 16.80 out of 100 (Table 3). On the other hand, according to the results of the post-test international cadets' scores were better than those of Turkish cadets. In the post test while the average point of Turkish cadets was 61.78, the average point of the international cadets was 71.00.

Table 3. *Proficiency Pre/Post-Test Results of International and Turkish Cadets*

	Pre-test	Post-test
International Cadets' Average Pre/Post-Test Results	16.8	71.0
Turkish Cadets' Average Pre/Post-Test Results	16.2	61.7

While analyzing the results in Table 4 it could be seen that there was a meaningful relationship between the results of the pre-test and post-test. According to the results both groups had significant differences between their pre and post-tests ( $p<.05$ ). However, as it was expected, there was not a significant difference between the two groups' pre-test scores which could be claimed that the language proficiency levels of the cadets were almost the same at the beginning of the academic year ( $p>.05$ ). Though both of the groups developed their language proficiency level, surprisingly, international cadets raised their language proficiency more than the Turkish cadets at the end of the year. It could be asserted that international cadets benefited the multicultural learning environment more than their Turkish peers in terms of academic achievement.

Table 4. *Paired Samples Correlations of the Pre and Post Test Results of Turkish and International Cadets*

### Paired Samples Correlations

	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1 International Cadets Pre- Post Test	40	.662	.000
Pair 2 Turkish Cadets Pre- Post Test	40	.494	.001

### 3.2. Analysis of the interviews with the instructors

R.Q.3. What are the observations and recommended practices and applications of the instructors for teaching a culturally diverse group of learners?

As to the structured interview, instructors' opinions and suggestions about the practices and applications experienced and offered in culturally diverse classroom settings were taken. The first interview question of the research study was 'How do you (as instructors) experience the influence of cultural diversities in the multicultural learning setting? What are



the possible challenges and advantages associated with cultural diversity while teaching language at TMA?

The results of the interview showed that language instructors at TMA reported that the multicultural learning environment in which they teach English had favorable effects on students' academic and social competences. According to the instructors the cadets were facilitated from the cultural diverse setting rather than they were challenged.

“It is like a colorful garden full of various flowers. They motivate each other and us (lecturers) also.”

“I try to get benefit of this setting in my teaching process. It is possible to reveal and take the advantage of the differences instead of ignoring them”

Second question asked to the instructors is ‘How do cadets experience the influence of cultural diversities in the multicultural learning environment? What are the possible challenges and advantages associated with cultural diversity while learning a language at TMA?’ The language instructors explained that depending on their observations about the cadets' attitudes towards culturally diverse classroom setting can be regarded as positive and advantageous. Some of them also discussed about some minor challenges the students may encounter during their education process at TMA. They mentioned that particularly at the beginning of the year the international cadets had some adaptation problems both academically and socially. They emphasized that not only international but also Turkish cadets had difficulty while interacting in and out of the classroom. However, they also stated that tolerance and equal attitudes of the instructors supported by the administrators were helpful to handle the process.

“At the very beginning they sometimes feel themselves embarrassed and do not participate the activities but after they get used to the environment they actively take part in class activities.”

“Though adaptation period may cause some social and individual problems later on they get on well with their peers.”

“If it is not handled carefully with a positive motivation it could challenge the teaching and learning process rather than facilitate.”

Finally, the questions to clarify their observations and suggestions about the applications in the multicultural setting were asked to the language instructors. Some of them were ‘What do you think about the best practices or applications to teach culturally diverse group of cadets?; What are your opinions about classroom activities appropriate for multicultural environment?; ‘How can the culturally diverse group members be integrated in classroom activities?; ‘What can be done for cadets coming from different countries in terms of testing applications to enable them to do better in the examinations?’ ‘How new lecturers at TMA could be better prepared to teach in a multicultural environment? What advices can be given to new lecturers at TMA for warning them in terms of considering cultural diversities?’ and ‘How could learners be motivated to handle the culturally diverse setting?’

The instructors at TMA suggested various kinds of activities to be applied in the classroom settings to be able to help all cadets favor from the learning process. They pointed several general and specific activities and characteristics of the activities to be handled by the lecturers. They clarified the items noted in the following statements: “Applying culture-general activities rather than culture-specific activities”; “making students from different backgrounds seated together”; “making all students feel themselves comfortable”; “activities suitable for multicultural issues and involving international cadets' cultural components can be applied”. They also suggested to use authentic materials such as audio and video materials and to introduce new items in contexts. Moreover, they mentioned that international students

should be encouraged to participate actively during the classes. All cadets should be given the equal chance to present themselves; discussions and clarifications on similarities and differences among the cultures might be created; games which are familiar to all cadets might be facilitated etc. Some of the instructors also underlined the necessity of an orientation process for the international cadets before or after they come to Turkey, particularly at the beginning of the education at TMA. By suggesting various types of activities or applications and offering some practices, language instructors presented useful and effective solutions to make the multicultural learning environment more fruitful both for students and lecturers.

To sum up, the instructors emphasized that the classroom setting involving various university students from different nations and cultures is advantageous and facilitating for students in terms of academic, individual, social, and intercultural aspects. The instructors thought that multicultural learning classroom settings should be encouraged and the number of such settings should be increased in order for the fact that both students and the society or country hosting them favor from this situation to maximum extent.

#### **4. Discussion and Conclusion**

This study attempted to determine the outcomes of multicultural education on the cadets at TMA in terms of both academically and socially. The results indicated that both of the cadets (international and Turkish) and the language instructors at TMA regarded the culturally diverse language classrooms as fruitful and favorable for development of academic and social competences. This is parallel with the studies conducted by Biddle (2002) and Obst & Forster (2005) who also supported the idea that the universities and colleges should facilitate the culturally diverse teaching environment as much as possible in order to better serve the national and international community and to remain great universities.

The results of the present study concerning the academic success, particularly the language development of the participants, should be interpreted cautiously. The surprisingly significant growth in the language development of international cadets when compared with Turkish cadets support the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy on academic development which was also asserted by (Ladson-Billings, 2009; Richards et al., 2007 and Rogers, 2008). They claimed that the students who were given chance to represent their own cultural background had a natural tendency for academic excellence. Since one of the concerns of this study was the effect of multicultural setting on the learners' language development it could be concluded that it mostly influences the international cadets who significantly developed their level of language proficiency. This finding supports Sercu (2002) who claimed that learning a foreign language means something different much or less in terms of cultural world from one's own.

The cadets and the instructors in this research attached great importance to the interaction among the students for handling the minor problematic issues in the educational setting. It was analyzed from the outcomes of the questionnaire that the multicultural learning setting in which culturally diverse cadets were always in contact while learning a language was favorable and useful. Most of the participants agreed that they could learn much from each other and multicultural learning environment motivated them to learn more.

Additionally, the concerns related to the instructors' beliefs about multiculturalism were also expressed in the study. They stated that especially at the beginning of the process there can be some disagreements or disputes among the students because of the diversity and intolerant acts towards diverse environment. In this same regard, Multicultural Education Consensus Panel sponsored by the Center of Multicultural Education at the University of Washington and the Common Destiny Alliance at the University of Maryland (Banks, et al.2001) reached similar result that culturally diverse classroom settings in the state schools are both an opportunity and a challenge. It was pointed that whenever diverse groups interact,

intergroup tension, stereotypes, and institutionalized discrimination may develop. However, the instructors interviewed in the present study also pointed out that after a short while those minor problems were eliminated by the help of the cooperation between administrative levels and teaching staff.

Finally, both the qualitative and quantitative data results revealed that the instructors and cadets agreed on the necessity of respecting to the differences such as various cultural and national backgrounds. Particularly, the instructors highlighted the tolerance towards others in multicultural environment parallel to Humphreys (2000) who assumed that eliminating the uncommon features and focusing on tolerating behaviors and differences is the starting point of culturally responsive education.

## 5. Pedagogical Implications

The results of the current research gave insights for promoting and encouraging the multicultural learning settings. As Chesler (2004) claimed most of the efforts to advance diversity and multiculturalism fail to deal with real and pressing problems in institutional analysis and action planning (Chesler, 2004). Concerning the findings of the present study, taking the university context as an example, it is important for the faculties and departments to have a vision of a multicultural academic organization. They should be aware of the reality and possible problems, and should design systematic planning and programs that better suit the complex higher education institutions (Chesler, 2004).

For instance, many researchers agreed with the idea that the efforts to decrease the prejudicial behaviors and to increase tolerance to the diversity play vital role in creating a generally successful environment for students, staff, and teachers (Humphreys, 2000). This matter had better be considered by the instructors and curriculum designers of multicultural classrooms while designing their lesson plans and materials to be used during the classes. In this regard culturally responsive educators should have the qualities summarized by Le Roux (2002) as “having an awareness of one’s own cultural limitations, an openness, respect and appreciation for cultural differences, regard for intercultural diversity as a source of learning opportunities, the ability to use cultural resources in interventions, and an acknowledgement of the integrity and value of all cultures” (p:42)

Hence, not only instructors but also executives should also cooperate to be able to promote such kinds of classrooms in order for the fact that more students can favor culturally diverse classrooms in terms of the academic, cultural, individual, and social aspects. It can be claimed that the role educators play in the classroom for preparing students in a more suitable setting in terms of cultural and academic points should be considered, planned, organized and applied in an attentive manner. For example, orientation programs for the international students before or just after arrival to the host country may be helpful for them to decrease the adaptation and integration period.

As for the academic development, particularly language education, different types of activities inside and outside the classrooms should be applied in order to make students active participators both inside and outside the classrooms (Badur, 2003). Those formal or educational and flexible or free programs or activities may contribute a lot to the adaptation and integration period of the students. Another suggestion on the issue is to design and choose course books suitable for multicultural components such as proverbs, sayings and idiomatic expressions of other cultures. The most comprehensive methods should be used in order to coach the students to handle the culturally diverse setting and to learn without much difficulty.

Finally, the main question that should be focused on is “What can be done to make multicultural education central to developmental education?” Though the participants and setting of this study was limited with the cadets at TMA and the variables such as gender,

nationality and native language could not be controlled due to the limited numbers of the international participants, the findings should be interpreted in a broader concept. Further research which would consider these variables in different civil or military institutions, colleges and universities is necessary to redefine higher education in Turkey and other Asian countries with a new perspective and an institutional transformation which will be inclusive, process oriented, and continuous in order to compete with American and European institutions that were more experienced in culturally responsive education.

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## **Appendix**

### Questionnaire for Cadets

Dear Cadets;

“Since your answers to the survey will constitute the base of the study conducted on the thesis called ‘Perspectives of International Cadets towards Cross-Cultural Diversity and Its Impact on Language Learning; Case of Military Students in Turkish Military Academy’, they are of great importance for the study. It is deeply appreciated if you could complete the questionnaire by evaluating ten personal questions and fourteen statements below as a Turkish or international cadet at Turkish Military Academy. This survey will be used in a Master study. Thank you so much for your support to complete the questionnaire by taking your time and effort.

### **CULTURAL DIVERSITY QUESTIONNAIRE**

#### **1. What is your current age?**

- a) 18 or younger
- b) 19-21
- c) 22-25
- d) 26 or older

#### **2. What is your education level?**

- a) No formal education
- b) Elementary School
- c) Secondary School
- d) 2- year college
- e) College/University (4 years)
- f) Masters
- g) Doctorate

#### **3. What is your current classification status at Turkish Military Academy?**

- a) Freshman
- b) Sophomore
- c) Junior
- d) Senior
- e) Graduate
- f) Other

#### **4. What is your gender?**

- a) Male
- b) Female

#### **5. What is your nationality?**

#### **6. What is your native language?**

#### **7. If you were not born in Turkey, how long have you been here?**



- a) Less than 1 year
- b) Between 1 and 5 years
- c) Between 5 and 10 years
- d) More than 10 years

**8. Prior to your multicultural experience at TMA, did you have any significant multicultural experience outside of your country?**

- A) Yes
- b) No

**9. If yes, where and for how long? (please specify)**

**10. On the whole, would you say this is a positive experience?**

- A) Yes
- b) No

This cultural diversity perspective form is for international and Turkish cadets at TMA. Please read each statement and mark the response (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) that tells HOW MUCH DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE STATEMENT.

- 1 – Strongly agree
- 2 – Agree
- 3 – Neither
- 4 – Disagree
- 5 – Strongly disagree

Answer the statements in terms of how well the statements describe you. Do not answer how you think you should be, or what other people do. **There are not right or wrong answers to these statements.**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Learning English in the same classroom /school with people from different cultural backgrounds helps me improve my English.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Having interaction with my culturally diverse classmates motivates me to use English for communication.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Cultural diversity in the classroom setting triggers me for learning more about other cultures and languages.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I am not on the point of view that I develop my English by discussing various sorts of issues with my culturally diverse classmates.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I do not enjoy living in a neighborhood consisting of a culturally diverse population.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I do not think that I can improve my English by having contact with people from different countries.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Being aware of other cultures has					

no positive effects on me to learn a foreign language.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
8. Having interaction with others from different countries does not motivate me to use English language for communication.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
9. Learning in a multicultural environment helps me develop a positive perspective towards using English.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
10. Studying with people from different cultures minimizes the linguistic errors stemming from the differences or resemblances in my mother tongue.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
11. Interacting with people from other cultures affects me negatively in terms of communication.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
12. Being in a culturally diverse environment motivates me to learn a language.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
13. Being with others from different cultures does not reduce my linguistic mistakes.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
14. Living with others from different cultures affects me negatively in terms of using English for handling daily issues.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

\*If you'd like to add any other relevant information into the survey you could share your opinions conveniently, without any hesitation.