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The Impact of a Course in Turkic Cultures on Lithuanian University Students' Cultural Awareness and Intercultural Skills

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Abstract. With the growing recognition that intercultural skills are a key factor in promoting social justice on a global scale, developing intercultural competence has become an important educational aim. Various approaches to supporting learners in acquiring this skill have been devised; among these are university courses aimed at providing students with information on the history, worldviews and languages of specific cultural groups. In order to ensure that such courses are achieving their aims, it is necessary to understand what motivates students to enroll in them and whether they perceive that their level of intercultural competence has been enhanced by the course content. The researchers designed this study as a means to investigate these issues in the context of an undergraduate course in Turkic cultures offered at a prominent Lithuanian university, using a scalar survey to elicit the views of the participants. The results showed that, although the participants felt that the course had increased their awareness of Turkic cultures, as well as increasing their intercultural competence, they expressed only a moderate ability to relate to people of the target culture. This indicates a possible limitation concerning the course content and/or how the material was taught. To address this issue, recommendations for modifying the instructional approach and course materials are provided. These may assist instructors in similar courses in planning content that can effectively enhance students' intercultural competence.

Keywords: *culture, intercultural awareness, Lithuania, multicultural, multiculturalism, Turkey.*

Introduction

Supporting Multiculturalism through Cultural Awareness and Intercultural Skills

The current sociopolitical environment in Europe is characterized by a strong focus on the preservation of its cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity, which are frequently considered as threatened by the ongoing process of globalization (Lönz, 2013). This emphasis represents a significant departure from the push toward integration and homogenization that characterized the early decades of the 20th century amid waves of immigration into Western and Northern Europe (Heckmann, 1993; UNESCO, 2010). As a result of this shift, the discourse surrounding the concept of multiculturalism has gained increasing prominence as a matter of social, political and educational concern. According to Rosado (1996), *multiculturalism* refers to:

> A system of beliefs and behaviors that recognizes and respects the presence of all diverse groups in an organization or society, acknowledges and values their socio-cultural differences, and encourages and enables their continued contribution within an inclusive cultural context [that] empowers all within the organization or society (p. 2).

In this sense, supporters have argued that multiculturalism entails not only an acknowledgement of the changing ethnic composition of a community, but also an attitude of tolerance toward others; a belief that minority cultures have the capacity to enrich the dominant culture; and a moral imperative to uphold diversity and prevent the deterioration of minority cultures in the face of globalization (Ameny-Dixon, 2006; Banks, 2004, 2010; Bastardas-Boada, 2014; Heckmann, 1993; Rosado, 1996; UNESCO, 2010).As such, promoting multiculturalism in a sustainable manner is vital to eliminating the marginalization of disadvantaged populations and preventing loss of the cultural and linguistic diversity that is a vital part of our world heritage (Banks, 2010, as cited in Çelik, 2014).

Furthermore, as the conflicts in Syria and elsewhere in the Middle East have forced millions to flee their homelands over the past several years (European Commission, 2016; OCHA, UNDP, & UNHCR, 2014), the resulting refugee crisis in Europe has led alarmists to stoke public fears about immigrant populations (Erlanger, 2016), and grave concerns about the humane treatment of refugees, as well as minorities in general, have been raised (European Commission, 2016; OCHA, UNDP, & UNHCR, 2014). Amid the recent political upheaval precipitated by this issue, it becomes even more urgent to focus on promoting social justice, fairness, and dignity for the displaced, and therefore, support for multicultural awareness is of immediate and critical import.

A widespread evolution of the attitudes of openness and tolerance that are necessary to achieve a true multicultural society begins with the individual and entails a "developmental process of acquiring self-awareness, cultural knowledge, and skills" (Fowers

& Davidoff, 2006, p. 581).The result, ideally, is a community of individuals who are "intellectually and emotionally committed to the basic unity of all human beings, while at the same time recognizing, legitimizing, accepting, and appreciating the differences that exist between people of different cultures" (Adler, 1977, p. 2). However, except in instances where individuals are exposed to other cultures in their daily lives, these skills are not likely to be acquired unless they are taught; therefore, education plays an important role in the development of a multicultural society.

To develop learners' skills with regard to the *self-awareness* aspect of multiculturalism referenced by Fowers and Davidoff (2006), Krishnamurthi (2003) notes that they may be supported in the course of education through: (1) pedagogy, by approaching the teaching process in a culturally sensitive manner that supports respect and appreciation for differing points of view; (2) content, by providing materials that promote awareness of and appreciation for diverse worldviews; (3) faculty; by promoting the hiring of teaching staff from various cultures and encouraging them to share their experiences, customs and beliefs with students; and (4) students, by expanding accessibility and enrolling students from a wide range of ethnic, linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and by emphasizing the benefits of a multicultural educational setting (pp. 264-265).

On the other hand, the *cultural knowledge and skills* aspect of multiculturalism (Fowers & Davidoff, 2006) refers to intercultural competence, which Meyer (1991) defines as "the ability of a person to behave adequately in a flexible manner when confronted with actions, attitudes and expectations of representatives of foreign cultures." This ability is developed through knowledge about a given culture, including such features as its history, values, beliefs, attitudes, styles of communication, and so on (Byram, 1997; Çelik, 2014; Kramsch, 1993, 2003; Liu, 2016). Courses that include an exploration of foreign cultures may assist learners in acquiring this knowledge.

In the educational process, intercultural competence is most often addressed within the context of foreign language education. As Atay, Kurt, Çamlibel, Ersin and Kaslıoğlu (2009) and Demircioğlu and Çakır (2015) point out, students of foreign languages – and those studying to become foreign language teachers, in particular – generally receive at least some instruction in the related culture, due to the integral nature of languages and the culture of their native speakers (Byram, 1997; Bayyurt, 2006; Gelūnas, 2015; Kramsch, 1993, 2003; Liu, 2016; Polat & Ogay Barka, 2014). Students who engage in study abroad programs may also have a valuable opportunity to develop cross-cultural communicative skills, both through preparatory programs and through cultural immersion (Kural & Bayyurt, 2016; Sahin, 2008).

However, for learners who are not involved in foreign language study, or those who do not intend to spend substantial time abroad, there may be little opportunity to encounter foreign cultures, and thus, the ability to develop intercultural competence may be limited. Therefore, in an effort to provide access to culture-related content for *all* learners, elective courses on world cultures may be offered to students from all fields of study – a measure which is typically undertaken at the university level.

Challenges to Developing Intercultural Competence

Addressing intercultural competence in the course of education is important to students' growth as socially responsible individuals. However, there are a number of potential obstacles that may arise in the process. The first challenge relates to course instructors; in order to provide learners with multicultural skills, teachers themselves must possess these skills, as well as knowledge of a foreign cultures and the pedagogical aspects of teaching about culture (Çelik, 2014; Dema & Moeller, 2012; Author and Colleague, 2007). Yet, particularly in countries with homogeneous cultures, it is not unusual to encounter course instructors who lack multicultural awareness in general, and in-depth knowledge about foreign cultures in particular (Atay, Kurt, Çamlibel, Ersin, & Kaslıoğlu, 2009; Demircioğlu & Çakır, 2015; Polat & Ogay Barka, 2014).Furthermore, Halverson (1997) contends that course instructors may tend to focus on the aspects of a culture with which they are most familiar, or those that most suit their interests, thus promoting an incomplete view of the target culture.

Highlighting a second issue, Halverson (1997) also notes that learning materials designed for instruction about culture may not always be appropriate.For one thing, due to their nature, course books, videos, realia and even online sources can only offer isolated glimpses of the vast complexity of a foreign culture, and as such, they inherently lack continuity; and for another, the manner in which cultures are portrayed in textbooks may be flawed and/or biased (Çelik & Erbay, 2013).Third, pre-existing attitudes toward other cultures can also be seen as an inhibiting factor in terms of students' motivation to learn about other cultures (Ismailov, 2010; Pennycook, 1994; Raw, 2011). As Ismailov (2010) explains, negative beliefs about a particular cultural group often contribute to a closed-minded attitude that may prevent learners from engaging fully with the material, especially when the target culture is significantly different from learners' home culture and/or negative stereotypes about the target culture are frequently promulgated in the learners' native country (Raw, 2011).

Purpose of the Study& Research Questions

In designing elective courses on foreign cultures, it is important to ensure that they are truly capable of supporting individuals in becoming culturally aware and able to relate to individuals from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. Therefore, it is necessary to understand, first of all, what motivates students to enroll in such courses, so that the material may be presented in a manner that appeals to a wide range of learners. Afterward, it is important to determine whether learners' expectations have been met; and whether their level of intercultural competence has been enhanced by the course content.

To address these concerns, this study was designed within the context of an elective undergraduate course in Turkic cultures offered at a Lithuanian university. The purpose

of the investigation was to solicit the reactions of students in terms of their motivation and reasons for taking the course; whether the materials and approach to instruction met their expectations; and whether they believed that they had become more culturally aware as a result of the course. Accordingly, the following research questions were applied:

1. What reasons did students give for enrolling in a course on Turkic cultures?
2. What were their views of the quality of the course, the material and the instructor?
3. Did they believe that the course had any impact on their intercultural skills?

Through answering these questions, the researchers hope to provide useful information about what attracts students to such courses, what they hope to learn from them, and what types of content they would prefer to encounter. This information may assist instructors of similar courses in choosing appropriate content and effective approaches to instruction, thereby promoting the efficacy of courses on foreign cultures and encouraging ongoing enrollment.

Methodology

Because the researchers were concerned with the perspectives and experiences of the participants, a qualitative study design was employed (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). A Likert-type survey was used in order to obtain the participants' scaled responses to items relating to specific aspects of the course, as well as their motivation for taking the course and its impact on their level of intercultural awareness (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2008).

Setting

The study was carried out in the context of a course on Turkic Cultures that was held during the Spring 2015 academic semester at a prominent research university in Lithuania. The aim of the course, which has been offered yearly since 2004, was to present the historical, political and economic structure of Turkic states in Asia Minor, the Caucasus region and Central Asia and to raise students' awareness of the origin and cultures of the Turkic people. The course was taught by the second author of this study, who is an expert in Oriental studies. Instruction was provided in a lecture format; materials for the course included extracts from books on the history of Turkic countries, particularly Turkey, as well as various visual aids.

Participants

The participants in the study were undergraduate students, aged 19 to 24 years old, who were enrolled in the course. Before the research instrument was distributed, all of the students in the class were informed of the purpose of the study and invited to participate

on a voluntary basis, with no penalties attached if they elected not to take part. Of 130 students who were invited to participate, fifty returned a completed survey.

According to information they provided, all of the participants spoke Lithuanian as their native language, with varying levels of proficiency in other foreign languages, mainly English and Russian. Most of them had travelled outside of Lithuania at least once; their primary reason for engaging in foreign travel was for sightseeing/touristic purposes, with some students traveling for education, work or competition in international sporting events. Overall, the students expressed an interest in future international travel and in getting to know people from other cultures.

Data collection and analysis

The data were collected via a 5-pt. scalar survey that was designed by the researchers to elicit the participants' views in terms of (1) their motivation for taking the course; (2) whether the course affected their views of Turkic cultures, and in what way; (3) whether they found the material covered in the course to be useful; and (4) how they perceived the impact of the course on their level of intercultural competence. After preparing the questions, the survey was reviewed by an experienced researcher who was not involved with the project. The object of this review was to verify that survey items were consistent, comprehensible, and appropriate to the aims of the study. Minor revisions were made based on the feedback received from the outside researcher (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2008).

The finalized survey consisted of five sections. In the first section, the participants were asked to respond to a number of questions about their area of study, native language, any foreign languages spoken, time spent in foreign countries, and existing knowledge of Turkic cultures. Each of the remaining four sections consisted of a series of five-point scaled items; the participants were asked to rate the importance of each item according to their views (e.g., not important, of little importance, neutral, important, very important). The surveys were administered at the conclusion of the course.The resulting data were analyzed using SPSS, and descriptive statistics were determined for each of the survey items (Fraenkel, Wallen,& Hyun, 2008).

Results& Discussion

The results of the survey, which were originally presented by the authors (see Çelik, Ismailov, & Çaylak, 2015) at the Conference on Sustainable Multilingualism: Language, Culture and Society, in Kaunas, Lithuania, are described below. The descriptive statistics are provided for each of the survey sections,accompanied by a discussion of the data.

Motivatıon for Taking a Course in Turkic Cultures

Table 1. **Descriptive Statistics for Survey Section B**

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean
Understanding what is going on in the world.	49	3.00	5.00	4.55
Broadening my horizons.	49	2.00	5.00	4.43
Contributing as a multicultural and culturally aware citizen.	50	1.00	5.00	3.94
Building my cultural awareness.	50	1.00	5.00	3.80
Getting to know people from other cultures.	50	1.00	5.00	3.74
Developing a better understanding of people from Turkic cultures.	50	1.00	5.00	3.62
Building my self-confidence.	50	1.00	5.00	3.40
Learning to appreciate people from Turkic cultures.	50	1.00	5.00	3.32
Challenging myself.	50	1.00	5.00	3.32
Deepening my appreciation for my own culture.	48	1.00	5.00	3.19
Having fun.	50	1.00	5.00	3.10
Improving my ability to relate to others.	50	1.00	5.00	3.10
Developing friendships/relationships with people from Turkic cultures.	50	1.00	5.00	2.68
Pleasing a family member/friend.	49	1.00	4.00	1.82

The items in Section B of the survey related to students' motivation for taking a course in Turkic cultures. According to the descriptive statistics for Section B, shown here in Table 1, the participants rated personal skills such as "Understanding what is going on in the world" (*M* = 4.55) and "Broadening my horizons" (*M* = 4.43) as the greatest motivating factors for enrolling in the course. On the other hand, the specific focus of the course – Turkic cultures – received a more moderate response. For instance, "Developing an understanding of people from Turkic cultures" was given some degree of importance (*M* = 3.62), as was "Learning to appreciate people from Turkic cultures". Furthermore, "Developing friendships/relationships with people from Turkic cultures" was not given much importance by the participants (*M* = 2.68). Finally, "pleasing a family member or friend (*M* = 1.82) was given the least amount of importance of all the responses.

In light of these findings, it may be inferred that the participants' main motivation for enrolling in the course involved a desire to learn more about the world and to improve their general cultural awareness. A specific interest in Turkic culture does not appear to have been as strong an incentive; and social factors such as developing friendships with members of Turkic cultures and pleasing another person did not have much impact on the decision to enroll in the course.

Survey Section C: Impact of the Course on Participants' Knowledge and Views Of Turkic Cultures

Table 2. **Descriptive Statistics for Survey Section C**

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean
The course has increased my awareness of Turkic cultures.	50	3.00	5.00	4.18
I have a better understanding of the values and worldviews of people from Turkic cultures.	50	2.00	5.00	3.96
I have a better understanding of the customs of Turkic cultures.	48	1.00	5.00	3.69
My views of Turkic cultures are more positive after taking the course.	50	2.00	5.00	3.66
I have a better understanding of the behaviors of people from Turkic backgrounds.	50	1.00	5.00	3.50
I have a deeper appreciation for people from Turkic cultures.	49	2.00	5.00	3.37
I have a more negative view of Turkic cultures.	50	1.00	5.00	1.66

According to the statistics reported in Table 2, most of the participants felt that the course had increased their awareness of Turkic cultures ($M = 4.18$), and that they had gained a better understanding of the values and worldviews of Turkic people. While many of the participants expressed that the course had deepened their appreciation for Turkic culture, as well as for the people of Turkic cultures, their appreciation was ranked at a moderate level ($M = 3.66$ and $M = 3.37$ respectively). Furthermore, developing a greater understanding of the behaviors of Turkic peoples was rated at a slightly lesser degree ($M = 3.50$). The participants overall expressed that their new level of awareness of Turkic culture had not resulted in a more negative view of Turks ($M = 1.66$). In this respect, it can be asserted that while the course achieved its aim of increasing students' awareness of Turkic cultures, there was room for improvement in terms of enhancing their understanding of and appreciation for Turkic peoples and their culture.

Survey Section D: Overall Usefulness and Quality of the Course

Table 3. **Descriptive Statistics for Survey Section D**

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean
The course instructor was knowledgeable about Turkic cultures.	49	2.00	5.00	4.57
This course was beneficial in increasing my awareness of Turkic cultures.	50	2.00	5.00	4.12
I would recommend this course to other students.	50	2.00	5.00	4.06
I enjoyed the course.	50	2.00	5.00	4.06
Based on this experience, I would choose to take another course in Turkic or other foreign cultures.	49	1.00	5.00	3.69
What I learned in this course will benefit me in the future.	50	1.00	5.00	3.66
I want to know more about Turkic cultures.	49	1.00	5.00	3.63
The course materials were well-designed and appropriate.	50	2.00	5.00	3.60
As a result of this course, I believe I can relate to people of Turkic cultures.	50	2.00	5.00	3.46

In terms of the quality of the course, the participants agreed strongly that the instructor was knowledgeable about Turks and Turkic culture ($M = 4.57$) and that the course had increased their awareness of Turkic cultures ($M = 4.12$). The students gave somewhat less emphasis to the idea that the knowledge they had developed in the course would benefit them in the future ($M = 3.66$), with a similar response in terms of wanting to learn more about Turkic culture ($M = 3.63$). Furthermore, their ratings in terms of the appropriateness of the design of the course materials were more moderate ($M = 3.60$).

According to these results, it can be argued that the students appreciated the instructor's level of knowledge and felt that their awareness of Turkic cultures has increased as a result of the course (in support of the findings from sections B and C). However, they were only interested in learning more about Turkic cultures to some degree, and their evaluation of the course materials suggests that these were adequate, but could have been more effectively planned.

Survey Section E: Impact of the Course on Students' Level of Intercultural Competence

Table 4. **Descriptive Statistics for Survey Section E**

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean
My level of intercultural awareness has increased because of this course.	50	2.00	5.00	3.90
I have a greater understanding of what is going on in the world because of this course.	50	2.00	5.00	3.86
This course has increased my curiosity about other cultures.	50	1.00	5.00	3.82
This course has helped me to develop as a multicultural citizen.	50	1.00	5.00	3.68
I have a deeper appreciation for diversity because of this course.	50	2.00	5.00	3.62
I believe I can relate to people of other cultures more effectively as a result of this course.	50	2.00	5.00	3.60
My understanding of my own culture has increased as a result of this course.	49	1.00	5.00	3.06
I believe I can educate others about other cultures as a result of this course.	49	2.00	5.00	3.06

According to the survey results, the participants generally believed that their level of intercultural awareness had increased ($M = 3.90$) and that they had a greater understanding of what is going on in the world ($M = 3.86$).Furthermore, they felt that the course had increased their desire to learn more about other cultures in addition to Turkic culture ($M = 3.82$). On the other hand, they expressed to a lesser degree that the course had helped them to develop as multicultural citizens ($M = 3.68$) and that they had gained the ability to relate to members of other cultures ($M = 3.60$). Furthermore, skills such as the ability to understand their own culture and to educate others about foreign cultures were reported at a limited level ($M = 3.06$ in each case).

Conclusions

In light of the questionnaire results discussed in the previous section, a number of interpretations can be made concerning the research questions, as outlined below:

Question 1: What Reasons Did Students Give for Enrolling in a Course on Turkic Cultures?

To address the first research question, which involved students' motivation and reasons for taking the course, it is evident that a desire to learn more about the world and expand their horizons was the primary motivating factor. In this respect, the participants exhibited not only receptiveness to learning about other cultures, but also the willingness to engage them on their own initiative, as the course was offered as an elective. On the other hand, because the participants did not express a great deal of interest in Turkic cultures specifically, it may be inferred that they chose this course mainly because it was available to them; and thus, their interest in culture may be of a general nature. However, this curiosity to know more about the world may also indicate that such students, with appropriate guidance, have the capacity to develop the self-awareness, cultural knowledge and skills cited by Fowers and Davidoff (2006) as critical to forming a multicultural society.

Question 2: What were the students' views of the quality of the course, the material and the instructor?

Concerning the second research question, which addressed the participants' views of the content, the material, and the instructor, the students reported that they found the instructor to be knowledgeable about Turkic cultures and that their awareness of Turkic cultures had been increased through participation in the course (Çelik, 2014; Dema & Moeller, 2012; Author and Colleague, 2007). Therefore, although Author and Colleague (2007) pointed to insufficient knowledge of course instructors as a challenge to developing culture-related skills in the context of education, that was not the case in this instance. On the other hand, the participants expressed only moderate enthusiasm for the materials that were provided. This echoes the concerns of Çelik and Erbay (2013) and Halverson (1997) that the limitations of teaching materials may create an obstacle in developing cultural awareness; and in this case, the materials used in the course could have been more effective in presenting Turkic people in such a manner as to create empathy.

Question 3: Did the Students Believe That the Course Had Any Impact on Their Intercultural Skills?

Finally, with respect to the impact of the course on students' level of intercultural awareness, the results show that the participants believed their intercultural skills had been enhanced by the course, that it would benefit them in their future lives, and that it had helped them to develop as multicultural citizens. Thus, in this sense, it can be argued that the course had a positive effect on the students' level of multiculturalism, thereby addressing the need to support the development of individuals who are committed to cultural awareness, social justice, and the avoidance of marginalizing minority cultures (Ameny-Dixon, 2006; Banks, 2004, 2010; Bastardas-Boada, 2014; Çelik, 2014; Heckmann, 1993; Lönz, 2013; Rosado, 1996)

However, while the participants felt that they had a better understanding of the values of Turkic cultures, their belief that they could relate to people of Turkic backgrounds was increased to a somewhat lesser degree. This may be attributed to two different factors. First is the substantial difference between Lithuanian and Turkic cultures; Lithuania is an Eastern European country that is predominantly Roman Catholic; whereas Turkey and other Turkic countries are primarily in Asia and the Middle East, and predominantly Muslim. Furthermore, as Raw (2011) explains, negative views of Turkey, in particular, are often expressed in Europe, particularly with reference to its Muslim culture and nationalistic stance; and Ismailov (2010) likewise asserts that Muslims are in some instances portrayed negatively in the Lithuanian media. Therefore, it is a possibility that pre-existing notions of the Lithuanian students toward members of Turkic cultures may have colored their perceptions. In this respect, while they did experience some increase in their ability to relate to members of Turkic cultures, this issue may have prevented them from fully experiencing a sense of relatedness. In light of this, it can be stated that while the students believed they had developed greater intercultural awareness, the characteristics of intercultural competence described by researchers such as Banks (2004, 2010), Bayyurt (2006), Byram (1997), Kural and Bayyurt (2016), Meyer (1991), and Sahin (2008) – namely, the ability to relate to members of other cultures who have differing worldviews – were not as well developed as their cultural knowledge.

Limitations of the Study

Although the study was conducted on a small scale, with a limited number of participants, the majority of the students who enroll in this course on a yearly basis come from similar backgrounds and experiences; thus, it is likely that they may express similar views. However, the present study was mainly concerned with students' beliefs about the course and its impact on their intercultural competence; therefore, a quantitative measure of their actual levels of intercultural competence before and after the course may provide additional insight about the efficacy of the course in developing intercultural skills.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, the researchers recommend that, in order to serve students' curiosity to learn more about the world, universities should continue to offer courses encompassing a wide range of world cultures. As part of this effort, cultures that are significantly different from students' home culture in a given institution should be emphasized, in order to broaden students' horizons and open them to worldviews that do not closely reflect their own experiences.

Furthermore, as a means to personalize members of the target culture and support students in feeling that they can relate to them, a student-centered approach, rather than a lecture-type instructional format, may be implemented; and dynamic materials such as videos portraying life in the target culture, Internet sources, projects, guest speakers from the culture being studied, and other measures that draw students into the learning process may be provided. In doing so, students may come to understand the worldviews, values and experiences of members of foreign cultures on a deeper level and to recognize that despite differing perspectives, individuals from many different cultures can connect, relate and communicate in a meaningful way.

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Turkų kultūros studijų poveikis Lietuvos universitetų studentų kultūriniam sąmoningumui ir tarpkultūriniams gebėjimams

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Santrauka

Edukologijoje daug dėmesio skiriama tarpkultūriniams gebėjimams ir kultūriniam sąmoningumui ugdyti. Universitetuose laikomasi požiūrio, kad tai pasiekiama studijuojant svetimas kultūras, tačiau pasigendama tyrimų, ar tokie kursai tikrai ugdo tarpkultūrinius gebėjimus. Manydami, kad kultūros studijas pasirinkę besimokantieji gali turėti tam tikrų žinių apie kultūrą, šio tyrimo autoriai siekė ištirti studentų motyvaciją studijuoti kultūros dalykus ir ar studijų medžiaga padeda ugdyti studentų kultūrinį sąmoningumą. Tyrimas vykdytas viename Lietuvos universitetų pasitelkus turkų kultūros studijas; tyrimui pasirinkta paskaitos, skaitymas ir vaizdinės priemonės. Tyrimu siekta ištirti priežastis, kodėl studentai rinkosi šį kursą; jų požiūrį į kurso reikšmingumą; ir ar šis kursas praplėtė studentų tarpkultūrinius gebėjimus. Tyrime dalyvavo 50 studentų. Gauti duomenys atskleidė, kad kultūrinis sąmoningumas buvo viena iš svarbiausių priežasčių, lėmusių šio kurso pasirinkimą; susidomėjimas turkų kultūra buvo mažiau reikšmingas. Vertindami kurso reikšmingumą, studentai teigė, kad dėstytojas gerai išmanė savo dalyką ir tai padėjo plėsti jų kultūrinį sąmoningumą; tačiau jų entuziazmas domėtis studijų medžiaga buvo ribotas; respondentų nuomone, ji mažai siejosi su turkų tautos pažinimu. Vertindami kursą respondentai teigė, kad kursas praplėtė jų kultūrines žinias, o tarpkultūriniai gebėjimai buvo mažiau ugdomi. Todėl rekomenduojama, kad universitetai, organizuodami kultūros kursus, siektų juos personalizuoti, kviestų studijuojamos kultūros gimtąją kalbą vartojančius lektorius, naudotų vaizdo ir internetinių šaltinių studijų medžiagą, taip siekdami padėti studentams giliau suprasti studijuojamos kultūros pasaulėžiūrą ir įgyti daugiau patirties bendraujant su užsienio kultūros atstovais.

Esminiai žodžiai: *kultūra, tarpkultūris sąmoningumas, Lietuva, daugiakultūris, Turkija.*