

Students' Perceived Cultural Styles, Second Language Communication, and Confidence in Communication

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Abstract A common challenge for most students in intercultural contexts both in their academic studies and future careers is balancing speaking opportunities for talkative and less talkative students. The differences in individuals' communication styles due to their backgrounds may lead to some concerns about intercultural competencies. In this respect, this study intends to explore the possible relationship between students' confidence in communication levels, their self-perception of English proficiency levels, and cultural styles. For this purpose, three questionnaires were carried out by the participation of 106 students at a state university. The obtained data were analyzed by conducting ANOVA tests. The findings indicated that participants have low to medium levels of English proficiency and as their language levels increase, their cultural self-awareness and cross-cultural communication levels increase as well. In addition, there is a significant relationship between their levels of confidence in communication and having outgoing personalities.

Keywords: Confidence in communication , Intercultural communication, Second language communication, Personality, Language learning

1. Introduction

As a massive commercial sector involving the mobility of people, money, and semiotic resources at a global scale, tourism has recently turned out to be a growing field of research for applied linguistics (Heller et al., 2014; Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes, 2013). Since it is widely used among hotel staff and tourists from overseas countries, English has long been regarded as a medium of communication in tourism. Studies in intercultural communication have been well-documented and disseminated due to the growing interest of scholars in the multidisciplinary fields of hotel and tourism, applied linguistics, and communication studies (Deardoff, 2006; Gibson & Zhong, 2005).

The tourism sector is one of the fastest-growing sectors in the world, which today constitutes an important part of the world's gross product. The increase in the share of tourism and vacation from disposable personal income and the

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rapid development in transportation and communication technology have increased the tendency of people to visit new regions that they have not seen before and are curious about. More and more people are traveling across the globe either for business or for pleasure, which ultimately leads to the interaction of languages and cultures and creates certain challenges for intercultural communication (Thurlow & Jarwoski, 2011).

Turkey is home to many ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic groups that have managed to live together. Hence, Turkey can be a multicultural society because there are many other aspects of diversity, such as race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, age, disability, religious orientation, and especially linguistic variation. Meanwhile, the tourism industry is one of the biggest income-generating sectors of the Turkish economy, and it constitutes a significant consideration for the development of the economy. It appeals to a sizeable number of international visitors who are kindly welcomed and impressed by the service the sector offers them. This, in turn, significantly increases the need for students who plan to pursue a career in the tourism field to improve their intercultural abilities throughout their pre-service education.

Tourism students in Turkey can usually be enrolled in various types of schools, such as vocational colleges or universities and vocational high schools. Due to the requirements of their future career, tourism students in colleges or universities are expected to achieve higher levels of language proficiency, especially in communication competencies. In her study on the intercultural efficiencies of tourist guides, Şahin (2012) concludes that tourist guides need to improve intercultural communication competencies, increase their knowledge about their own cultures and learn about cultural differences, and show understanding and open-minded attitudes.

While enabling the visitors to be closely familiar with the language, history, culture, and nature of the places they visit, tourism similarly boosts the local community's understanding of travelers' language and culture. Therefore, those involved in the sector take on important responsibilities to act as a representative of their country. They need to have not only the knowledge and skills to introduce the tourists to their countries capably but also have the competence in communication skills to convey this knowledge. However, despite the significant role of communication skills in improving the outcomes of the tourism sector in the country, very few studies have been conducted on tourism students in Turkey. To the best knowledge of the researchers, no research has ever focused on cultural styles, perceived language proficiency, and confidence in the communication of tourism students in Turkey. Hence, this study aimed to fill this gap. The two variables of students' cultural styles and perceived language ability are assumed to influence their confidence in communication. In this respect, this study aimed to investigate:

- the perceptions of the learners on their cultural styles,
- the relationship between learners' cultural styles and their levels of perceived language proficiency,
- the relationship between learners' cultural styles and their levels of confidence in communication.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Language and Culture

Language and culture are inseparably linked, and cultural competence is among the sociocultural aspects of language as well as basic components such as vocabulary, grammar, idioms, dialects, and many more. Cultural competence in language refers to “knowing what to say, how to say it, when and where to say it, and why it is being said”, as Wintergerst and McVeigh (2011, p. 20) point out. Though people might have an assumption that they grasp the words of others correctly, they tend to misunderstand due to misinterpretation of nonverbal communication, prejudices and stereotypes, immediate evaluation, and high anxiety and/or stress. It is difficult to overcome these misconceptions for several reasons: first, most nonverbal communication is culturally oriented; second, prejudices and stereotypes are not based on objective judgment; they are firmly comprised of rooted myths or truths in individuals' own culture and rationalized by biases; and third, emotions and stress influence the approval or disapproval the actions and assertions of others. In a similar line, second language learners

may be negatively influenced when they fail to properly understand the cultures of target language speakers (Al Hamdany & Picard, 2022). In developing second language communication skills, Kakar and Sarwari (2022) state that learners frequently face the challenge of inconsistent transformation of present habits to the new ones they obtain in learning a new language.

Culture, by its nature, is a broad, vigorous, and continuously changing phenomenon that is depicted diversely by various scholars. According to Decapua and Wintergerst (2016), culture is the sum of shared beliefs, norms, and attitudes that help describe the living style and behaviors of a group of people. In a similar line, it is defined by Ting-Toomey (1999, p.10), a communication scholar, as “a complex frame of reference that consists of a pattern of traditions, beliefs, values, norms, symbols, and meanings that are shared to varying degrees by interacting members of a society”. Damen (1987, pp. 88-89) suggests six noticeable traits of culture which indicate that culture can be learned, it is a universal fact of human life, culture and its patterns can change, it offers a set of values, beliefs, and blueprints for living, that language and culture are closely related, and it functions as a filter between the individual and the environment. In this respect, Wintergerst and McVeigh (2011) conclude that any culture holds such fundamental elements as beliefs, values, norms, and attitudes, and these can influence human behavior and daily life. People’s cultural background can instinctively shape their expectations, and generally, they are unaware that their perceptions of others are formed based on attribution rather than objective facts. On the other hand, de Hei et al. (2020) claim that individuals learn to appreciate one another and show tolerance, respect, and understanding towards others as they have closer interactions.

2.2. Cultural Style and Confidence in Communication

Individuals have difficulties adapting to a new cultural setting due to the cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and worldviews they own and carry with them. They hold a cultural style and communication style which respectively define the acceptable manners in one’s domestic culture and help them decide what to say to someone and how to say it. Regarding communication style, Peterson (2004) asserts a range of cultural variations, namely direct/indirect, level of formality, vocal indicators, conversation flow, nonverbal communication, eye contact, and physical distance. He further points out that acknowledging the cultural style we possess means acknowledging the interconnected strength and weaknesses. When learners use a second language (L2), their perceptions of their language skills can influence the way they get into social interactions (Lou & Noels, 2020).

In dealing with people from different cultures, Peterson (2004) suggests eleven essential competencies: cultural self-awareness, cultural awareness of others, cultural sensitivity, cross-cultural communication skills, tolerance for ambiguity, flexibility, open-mindedness, humility, empathy, outgoing personality, and self-reliance. For the manifestation of responsive intercultural communication, individuals need to realize the cultural background they hold and construct explicit knowledge and experience about other cultures that might lead to behavioral changes. Individuals can demonstrate intercultural communication skills by showing respect, tolerance, and realization of other cultures, by the ability to deal with uncertainty and adjust to the practices of new cultures, and by considering intercultural contexts from different perspectives. Second language learners, especially, tend to become more involved in interactions and understand reality when they become more familiar with their senses and background knowledge (Adilbayeva, et al., 2022). It is also obvious in the hospitality sector that awareness, respect, and acknowledgment of cultural differences should be regarded as basic components of intercultural communication and should be developed as a competence among tourism and hospitality students to communicate effectively.

2.3. Tourism and Competence in Communication

With regards to human relations, Kartarı (2014) states that the only way for an individual to show proper behavior in a context different from their own cultural scope is to know the different aspects of the culture they live in from their own culture; otherwise, the unknown, different, and unexperienced will remain as the ones that cause problems. In a similar line, Gudyunst (1995) asserted that individuals’ ability to communicate effectively in intercultural communication contexts is relatively related to their ability to manage uncertainty and anxiety. Studies have shown that individuals who are self-confident and willing to communicate have low levels of anxiety in the intercultural communication process and

are highly satisfied with the communication established (McCroskey & Richmond, 1989). It has been observed that individuals with high intercultural communication anxiety feel themselves in an uncertain situation when they encounter people from other cultures or ethnic groups, and this uncertainty increases the anxiety levels of individuals even more (Bozkaya & Erdem Aydın, 2010).

In the study conducted by Bozkaya and Erdem Aydın (2010) with European and Asian students who came to Anadolu University (Turkey) through the Erasmus Program and with Turkish students who went to Europe through the same program, data were collected from 177 participants. The Turkish students were found to experience communication anxiety the least, and Asian students had the most. The study also indicated that students with high academic success showed low communication anxiety. In another study, Çakıcı et al. (2017) indicated that those working in the tourism industry should show an understanding of serving their guests based on respect and generosity during their stay. In this process, in their communication with the guests, knowing the fact that they are from different cultures will eliminate the communication anxiety and shyness that may arise and help to reflect their professional experience and knowledge accurately. For this purpose, besides vocational tourism education in hotel enterprises, it will be useful to provide training and practices for communication skills.

Huang (2011) points out the implications for both language teaching and tourism education by concluding that there is a need to beyond training to education to face the growth of tourism and globalization. The study further underpins the importance of both long-term and short-term training to meet the demands of service industries in terms of competence and skills. However, competence and skill-based training are not sufficient for well-established intercultural communication as students should not only be equipped with an understanding of the nature of their profession but also recognize visitors as human beings.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

This study was conducted with the participation of a group of students from a state university, and a convenience sampling method was used. Totally 107 participants responded to the questionnaire, which was conducted online. Nine out of these students attended a bachelor's degree program, whereas the other 98 were in an associate degree program. When the departments of participating students were examined, four students were from Tourism and Travel Services, two were from Tourism Management, one was from Hospitality, and 99 of them were students of the Tourism and Hotel Management departments. Most of the participants were between 18 and 24 ($N = 98$), and a small group of students was between 25 and 37 years old ($N = 8$). To understand the language background of the participants, they were asked to state the number of foreign languages they studied during the time of the study. It was seen that 76 (71.03%) of the participants studied only English as their foreign language at varying degrees, while 25 (23.36%) of them studied two languages. Only six out of 107 participants (5.61%) studied three languages. Table 1 provides information about the number of languages that participants studied.

Table 1
Number of Foreign Languages Studied by Participants

Number of Foreign Languages studied	Frequency	Percent
1	76	71.0
2	25	23.4
3	6	5.6
Total	107	100.0

In the scope of the academic studies in their departments, participants were only attending general and vocational English classes. Participants in four-year programs were taking 10 hours of face-to-face English classes, whereas the ones in associate programs were taking only two hours of asynchronous general English online classes. To figure out students' self-perceptions of their own English language proficiency levels, they were asked to indicate what they thought about their current English language proficiency levels. Accordingly, 53 (49.53%) out of 107 students indicated that they perceived their

English proficiency levels as low, which meant they felt that they were at somewhere between A1-A2 levels. While 48 (44.86%) stated that their English proficiency levels were at the medium level (B1-B1+), only six students (5.60%) perceived theirs as high at the B2-C1 level. Table 2 provides information about participants' perceived levels of English proficiency.

Table 2
Participants' Perceived Levels of English Proficiency

Perceived Levels	Frequency	Percent
Low (A1-A2)	53	49.5
Medium (B1-B1+)	48	44.9
High (B2-C1)	6	5.6
Total	107	100.0

3.2. Instruments

In the scope of the study, two questionnaires adapted from Wintergerst and McVeigh (2011) were used to collect data. Wintergerst and McVeigh provide many tools in their book, which they design to help teachers interested in intercultural studies in classroom environments and give their consent in the preface part of the book for classroom use.

The first tool aims at identifying participants' cultural styles and was originally developed by Peterson (2004) and adapted by Wintergerst and McVeigh (2011). It consists of 11 items with a 5-point Likert style (1 = Not at all, 5 = A lot). Participants were expected to indicate how well the traits, namely cultural self-awareness, cultural awareness of others, cultural sensitivity, cross-cultural communication skills, tolerance for ambiguity, flexibility, open-mindedness, humility, empathy, an outgoing personality, and self-awareness, describe them.

The next questionnaire aimed at revealing the levels of confidence in the communication of participants both in their first language and English as their foreign language in the classroom. The instrument was provided by Wintergerst and McVeigh (2011) in their book and consisted of 10 items investigating the frequencies (100% Always – 0% never). Participants were asked to indicate the self-evaluation of their confidence in communication not only in their first language but also in English.

The items in both questionnaires were translated into Turkish by an expert who had a Ph.D. in intercultural language teaching, and the translated items were cross-checked by two other experts in English Language Teaching Department. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient values of the questionnaires utilized in the scope of the current study were .765 for the Confidence in Communication questionnaire and .923 for the My Cultural Styles questionnaire. Based on these findings, it could be argued that it is plausible to apply the questionnaires.

3.3. Procedure

3.3.1. Data Collection

Data were collected in the spring term of the 2021-2022 academic year at a state university. An online form including both questionnaires and a part for collecting demographic data was created, and this online form was sent to the lecturers in Tourism Faculty and Tourism Department to share the link with their students. In this way, students from these departments were invited to fill in the form. The form was left open for completion for two weeks.

As participants' levels of English proficiency were at varying degrees and there were many students who would have expressed their thoughts in their first language better, the form was offered in Turkish.

3.3.2. Data Analysis

The data collection phase of this quantitative study was administered online in the spring term of the 2021-2022 academic year. Upon completion of the data collection period, the online dataset was transferred into a spreadsheet. Preliminary analyses were conducted to get a clear set of data. Then all

the data were transferred into IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences Version 21 (SPSS 21) to perform the statistical analyses.

A data screening process was applied (Hair et al., 2013). At the first step of the data screening process, missing values were controlled, as suggested by Tabachnick and Fidell (2013). Since all the data were collected online, the only missing value was one participant's age, who had not preferred, which did not have any potential impact on the aimed analyses. Therefore, no action was taken regarding the missing values. In the next step, the existence of unengaged responses by the participants was controlled. In this respect, standard deviations for all cases were calculated. Gaskin (2018) states that if the standard deviation of a single case is equal to zero or too close to zero, it is possible to assume that that participant responded the same for all items. When the dataset was investigated, they were not any values too close to zero, which meant that it was possible to proceed with further analyses.

4. Results

The first research question aimed at figuring out participants' perceptions of their cultural styles. Table 3 shows the mean scores and standard deviations for each cultural style for 107 participants.

Table 3
Means Scores for Each Cultural Style

	N	Mean	Std
Cultural self-awareness	107	4.12	.640
Cultural awareness of others	107	4.13	.741
Cultural sensitivity	107	4.28	.595
Cross-cultural communication skills	107	3.93	.850
Tolerance for ambiguity	107	4.45	.676
Flexibility	107	4.26	.731
Open-mindedness	107	4.45	.676
Humility	107	4.26	.769
Empathy	107	4.37	.783
An outgoing personality	107	4.32	.735
Self-awareness	107	4.30	.755

When Table 3 is investigated, it could be seen that participants have high levels of perceptions regarding their cultural styles. Only one cross-cultural communication skill (3.93) out of the eleven cultural styles proposed by Wintergerts and McVeigh (2011), is below the mean score of 4. On the other hand, tolerance for ambiguity (4.45) and open-mindedness have the highest mean scores when compared to others. As to other styles, they are at high levels with varying mean scores between 4.12 and 4.37. It could be claimed that participants acknowledged that their ability to cope with uncertainty in language learning environments was very high. Likewise, they assume that there might be more than one right way of doing something in language classrooms when cultural aspects are taken into consideration. In addition, participants have the perception that their cultural self-awareness is highly developed; they respect and accept the existence of others, they can change their way of doing something in circumstances when they meet people from other cultures, pay attention to their speech styles and take care of what they say in multicultural settings and have the confidence to act in such contexts. One interesting point is that although participants have high perceptions of their cultural styles about interacting with people from other cultures, they feel a little bit uncomfortable with their verbal and nonverbal behaviors in multicultural contexts.

To find answers to the second research question, first, participants' perceptions about their English language proficiency levels were examined. In this respect, they were asked to indicate their perception as low (A1-A2), medium (B1-B1+), or high (B2-C1). To avoid misunderstandings, terminological terms were not used, and participants were given only three categories. However, they were also provided with the CEFR counterparts of the given categories in further detail.

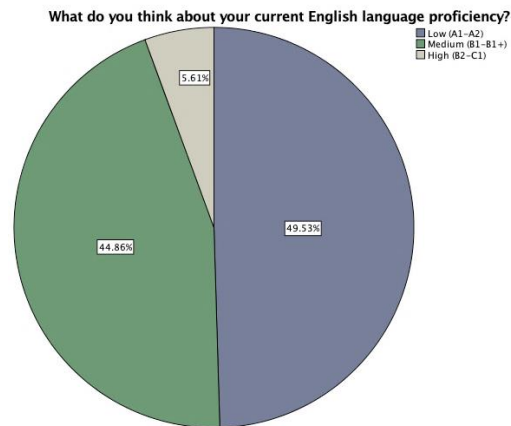


Figure 1
Participants' Self-Perceptions about their English Language Proficiency Levels

As can be seen in Figure 1, almost half of the participants ($N = 53$) perceived themselves at the beginner level in terms of proficiency in English, whereas 44.86% ($N = 48$) were at the medium level. Only six of the participants indicated that they were competent enough and perceived their English language proficiency levels as a high group, which was B2-C1 level according to CEFR. To investigate any potential relationship between levels of perceived English and cultural styles, a one-way analysis of variance test was utilized. In this case, participants' perceptions of language levels were the three levels of the independent variable (IV), whereas their means scores for each cultural style were the dependent variables (DV). This test was supposed to tell whether there are significant differences between the IV and DV.

Before proceeding with ANOVA tests, the similarities of variances were checked for each group by using Levene's test for homogeneity variances. The significance value for almost all cultural styles was above .05, which indicated there was no violation of the assumption of homogeneity of variation. Only one cultural style, which was self-awareness, was found to be significant at the .01 level. Therefore, it was excluded from further analyses. Then, a one-way between-groups analysis of variance was carried out to explore the impact of perceived English language proficiency levels on cultural styles. In this respect, participants were divided into three groups, namely Group 1: Low (A1-A2), Group 2: Medium (B1-B1+), and Group 3: High (B2-C1), according to their statements regarding how they perceived their language proficiency levels. There was a statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level in cultural self-awareness for the three groups: $F(2, 104) = 4.122$, $p = .019$. Although obtaining a statistically significant result, for practical purposes, the actual difference in the mean scores of the groups was controlled by calculating the effect size. The effect size calculated using eta squared was .07, which was classified as a medium effect size (Cohen, 1988; p. 284-7). Post-hoc comparisons using the HSD test indicated that the mean score for the Low group ($M = 3.98$, $SD = .537$) was significantly different from the High group ($M = 4.67$, $SD = .516$). The Medium group did not significantly differ from the Low and High groups.

The means plot provided in Figure 2 supports the finding. As the perceived English language proficiency levels of the participants increase, their level of cultural self-awareness also increases.

Another significant result was found in cross-cultural communication skills at the $p < .05$ level for the three groups: $F(2, 104) = 3.193$, $p = .045$. The effect size using eta squared was .06, which indicated a medium effect (Cohen, 1988). Although the ANOVA test indicated a significant difference between the three groups with medium effect size, posthoc comparisons using the HSD test did not indicate any significant difference between groups.

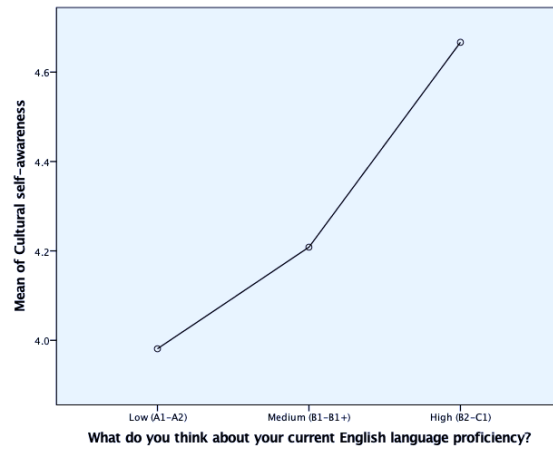


Figure 2
Means Plot for Cultural Self-Awareness

Despite insignificant differences between groups, when the means plot was investigated, it could be seen that there was a pattern regarding the development of cross-cultural communication skills as participants' English language proficiency levels increased. Therefore, it may be possible to assume that further analyses would be needed by the involvement of a larger group of participants to make more precise assumptions. Apart from these two cultural styles, there were no significant differences between groups in terms of other style dimensions.

The third research question seeks answers to whether there are any significant relationships between participants' cultural styles and their levels of confidence in communication. In this respect, participants' responses to the Confidence in Communication Questionnaire were added up, and total scores were calculated: confidence in communication in their first language and confidence in communication in English (as a foreign language). Then, they were grouped into three categories as low, medium, and high groups for each language (L1 and L2) according to the scores that each participant obtained. These data consisted of the independent variables. Scores of cultural styles were used as dependent variables, and ANOVA tests were run. Levene's test for homogeneity of variances indicated that there was no violation of the assumption of homogeneity of variance as all the scores were higher than $p > .05$. When the ANOVA table illustrating the interaction effects between groups yielded no significant results apart from an outgoing personality.

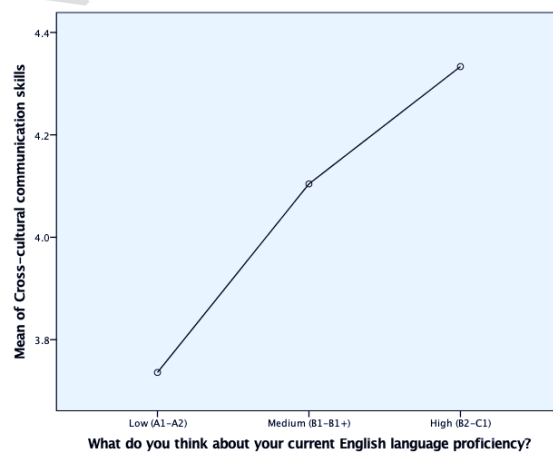


Figure 3
Mean Plot for Cross-Cultural Communication Skills

The findings showed that there was a statistically significant difference at $p < .05$ level in the mean score of cultural style and outgoing personality for the three groups of confidence in communication in L1 $F(2, 104) = 3.344, p = .039$. The effect size calculated using eta squared was .06, which indicated a medium effect (Cohen, 1988; p. 284-7). For posthoc comparison, the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for the high confidence group ($M = 4.55, SD = .749$) was significantly different from the mean scores for medium ($M = 4.19, SD = .675$) and low ($M = 4.15, SD = .801$) confidence in communication in L1 groups. Figure 4 illustrates the situation.

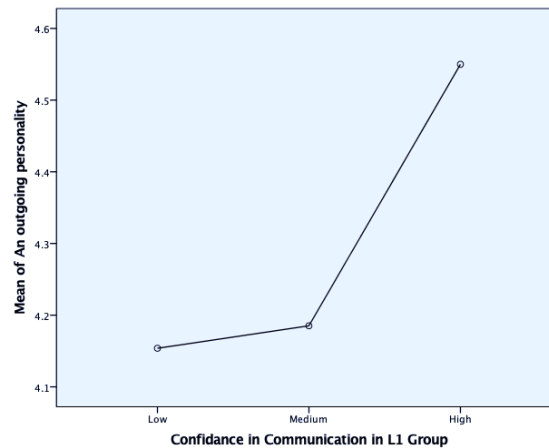


Figure 4

Mean Plot for Outgoing Personality and Confidence in Communication in L1

As can be seen in Figure 4, it could be stated that as participants' confidence levels in their first language increase, so does their levels of outgoing personalities. Although for other cultural styles, no significant relationship between groups of confidence in communication in L1 was observed, when the means plots were examined, similar patterns could be seen for the cultural styles of outgoing personality and open-mindedness, as can be seen in Figure 5. Based on these means plots, it could be argued that as participants' confidence levels in their first language increase, their levels of having outgoing personalities and being open-minded also increase. Therefore, although significant results were obtained, it would be worth running further analyses with the participation of more students.

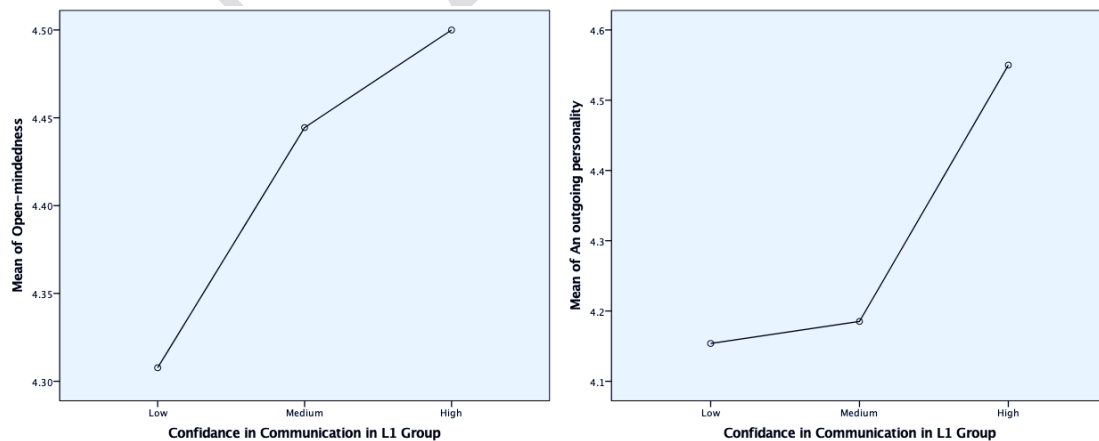


Figure 1

Mean Plots for Open-mindedness and Outgoing Personality in terms of Confidence in Communication in L1

In the following step, a similar procedure was carried out for the confidence in communication in L2, which was English in the current study. Participants were grouped into three according to their levels of confidence in English, namely low, medium, and high. Then the effects of their confidence levels on

their perceptions of cultural styles were examined. Findings suggested no violation of the assumption of homogeneity of variance as all the scores were higher than $p > .05$ according to Levene's test for homogeneity of variances. When ANOVA tests exploring the impact of participants' confidence in communication levels in L2 on their cultural styles were examined, it was seen that there was a statistically significant difference at $p > .05$ level in cultural style scores for *an outgoing personality*: $F(2, 104) = 5.810, p = .004$. The effect size calculated using eta square was .1, which was a large effect size. Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for the High group ($M = 4.87, SD = .352$) was significantly higher than the Medium ($M = 4.18, SD = .820$) and Low ($M = 4.33, SD = .547$) groups. There was no significant difference between the Low and Medium groups. Figure 6 illustrates the differences between the three groups in terms of their mean scores in confidence in communication in L2.

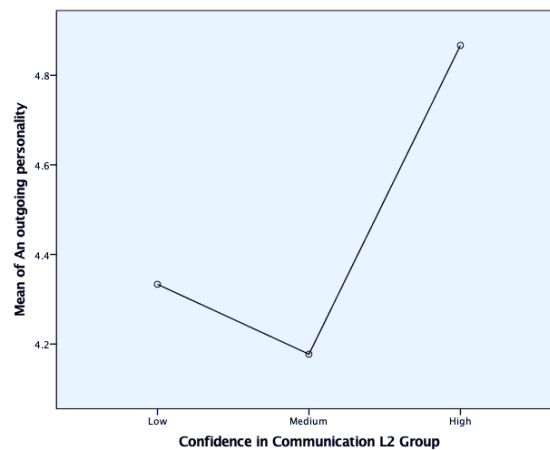


Figure 6

Mean Plot for Outgoing Personality in terms of Confidence in Communication in L2

Based on the findings, it could be argued that as participants' levels of communication in confidence in L2 (English) increase, their levels of outgoing personality increase. In other words, when people feel confident enough to communicate in L2, they become more outgoing in terms of their personality. Although there were no significant findings for other cultural styles, by investigating the means plots for the effect of confidence in communication in L2 on cultural styles, similar patterns could be seen for the cultural styles of self-awareness, awareness for others, cultural sensitivity, cross-cultural communication skills, tolerance for ambiguity, flexibility, humility, and empathy (the means for these cultural styles is not provided for space considerations). It could be stated that there is a significant relationship between participants' perceptions of their confidence levels in L2 and their cultural styles, as the more they become confident in L2, the more outgoing they become. In addition, their levels of confidence in their perceptions of communicating in L2 might have potential influences on their other cultural styles, which is also worth further investigation.

5. Discussion

The aim of this article was to report on tourism students' perceptions of their cultural styles and English language proficiency and to investigate the relationships between participants' cultural styles and their levels of confidence in communication. The review of literature emphasized the importance of realizing the aspects and values of individuals' own cultures. For instance, Peterson (2004) points out that for successful intercultural communication to occur, it is necessary to realize self-cultural background and raise knowledge of others. Similarly, Katari (2014) underpins the significance of knowing the aspects of individuals' own cultures in showing proper behaviors in different contexts. In this respect, the present study has revealed that the participants have a high level of awareness about their cultural styles, which can also lead to behavioral changes toward uncertainty and help them adjust to the practices of new cultures. In this way, the individuals are expected to acknowledge the intercultural environments

they experience from different perspectives. They are expected to show respect, tolerance, and realization of other cultures in their interactions with people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

A further implication of the article concerns the ability to cope with uncertainty in communication. According to Gudyunst (1995), those who can manage uncertainty and anxiety in the context of intercultural communication are able to communicate effectively. The article has shown that tourism students who participated in the study recognize their ability to cope with uncertainty in language learning environments with tolerance for ambiguity and open-mindedness. When meeting people from other cultures or ethnic groups, individuals with high intercultural communication anxiety are more concerned, and this leads to the rise of anxiety (Bozkaya & Erdem Aydın, 2010), which hinders effective communication. To tackle anxiety and sustain effective communication, Çakıcı and colleagues (2017) suggest providing learners with training and practices for communication skills in addition to vocational tourism education in hotel enterprises. Long-term and short-term training is also recommended to meet the competence and skills demands of service industries (Huang, 2011).

A third implication of the study is related to confidence in L1 and L2 and cultural awareness. According to Şahin (2012), it is essential for tourist guides to develop skills in cross-cultural communication, construct knowledge about self and other cultures, learn about differences, and show tolerance and open-minded attitudes to perform their professions successfully. In this respect, the study concludes that the more confident individuals feel in their mother and/or target languages, the more increase their level of cultural awareness, sociable personalities, and open-mindedness. It has been disclosed that there is a pattern regarding the development of cross-cultural communication skills as participants' English language proficiency levels increased.

Although the present study was conducted at a state university with a limited number of participants, a pattern has emerged regarding the development of cross-cultural communication skills and language proficiency. Hence, further analyses might be carried out with the involvement of a larger group of participants from various contexts. A second limitation of the study is related to the analysis of quantitative data only. Future studies can be enhanced by conducting a mixed-method research design to validate the collected data by triangulation.

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Appendices

Scale-1: My cultural styles (Sample items)						
Check (✓) the answer that shows how well you think this trait describes your cultural styles.						
		Not at all	Low	Neutral	High	Very high
1	Cultural self-awareness					
2	Cultural awareness of others					
3	Cross-cultural communication skills					
4	Tolerance for ambiguity					
5	Open-mindedness					
Scale-2: Confidence in Communication (Sample items)						
Check (✓) the answer that best describes your communication skills.						

			Always	Usually	Half time	Sometimes	Never
1	I feel tense when I am participating in a group discussion.	My first language					
		English					
2	I am nervous when I have to ask a question.	My first language					
		English					
3	I try to avoid speaking in front of others.	My first language					
		English					
4	I feel nervous when I have to talk to others.	My first language					
		English					
5	I feel tense when I am participating in a group discussion.	My first language					
		English					