

# Multicultural Education: From the Lens of Pre-Service Teachers

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**Muzaffer Pınar Babanoğlu**

Mersin University, Turkey

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8166-974X>

**Reyhan Ağçam**

Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University, Turkey

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5445-9031>

## Abstract

*This study attempts to investigate the attitudes of pre-service teachers towards multicultural education. Senior students studying in three different majors, namely English language teaching, classroom teaching, and Turkish teaching, were administered a questionnaire that comprised of Likert-type statements measuring their attitudes and open-ended questions interrogating the metaphorical conceptualization and description of the concept of multicultural education. The general scores of the participants are positive and high, with female participants have considerably better scores in certain statements. The cognitive conceptualizations of multicultural education by the participants indicate a diversity in language terms, as most were associated, whereas descriptions of the concept display a synonymous sense with ones in the related literature, though participants do not receive formal instructions about the concept.*

**Keywords:** Multicultural Education, Teacher Training, Multiculturalism

## Introduction

Cultural variety has become a prominent factor for ongoing research lately as the world has begun to be accepted as a global village in which people from different cultures come together and coexist in a multicultural setting. Just as globalization has considerable effects on societies, nations and countries in various aspects, the concept of multiculturalism naturally comes to the forefront in societies' differing dimensions. These include areas such as politics, the economy, health and education. "Multiculturalism is a versatile concept that includes race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, disabilities, social class, religious tendencies and other cultural dimensions" (Polat & Kılıç, 2013, p. 353) and entails a philosophy that seeks and fosters the involvement of views and contributions of different members of society, while maintaining the respect for their differences and withholding the demand for their assimilation into the dominant culture (Eagan, 2021). Upon defining a society as multicultural, Özensel (2012) claims not only that societies' members vary regarding their values, customs and traditions, but also there are differences among them in respect to the understandings people hold about beliefs towards justice and issues related to the ethical values of the culture which they feel liable to follow. In such multicultural communities, there is a need for an institutionalized training system that could provide a standardized education on a free, peaceful, respectful and tolerant platform for students from different sexual, racial, ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds. Such an educational form is addressed in multicultural education. Banks (1997) provides a recent description for the term, as "Multicultural education incorporates the

idea that all students—regardless of their gender; sexual orientation; social class, ethnic, racial, or cultural characteristics— should have an equal opportunity to learn in school.” (p.3). In a multicultural society, the diverse nature of the community should be represented in each of the institutionalized learning systems, including students, curricula, values, norms, and staff. These constitute the foundation of multicultural teaching, with the objective that each learner should have similar opportunities for learning regardless of language, gender, race, or social class (Aydın & Tonbuloglu, 2014; Zammit, 2021).

All indispensable facts like immigration and globalization trigger multilayered and multicultural societies, now and in the future. A truly multicultural education will always be a necessity and a way of providing relevant training to students from various cultural backgrounds. Accordingly, in multicultural societies which try to set more multicultural based educational policies, many other related components like schooling opportunities, and curriculum need to be further analyzed. Teachers are positioned as being the ones who will apply, practice, guide and update current policies that satisfy the needs of multicultural education principals. That is, as being the most prominent influencers in the education field, teachers are therefore inevitably involved in the education policies with respect to multicultural teacher training. In this study, the attitudes of pre-service teachers from three departments (primary school teaching, Turkish language teaching and English language teaching) were inquired to reveal their points of view about multicultural education, what they associate with the term ‘multicultural education’, their professional readiness to embrace the differences in, and to provide training for, multiple student groups with different cultural backgrounds. Their attitudes towards multicultural education were exclusively examined to gain an insight into the mental representation of the concept of multicultural education for them. The following research questions were posed in the study:

- What are the pre-service teachers’ attitudes towards multicultural education?
- Do the pre-service teachers significantly differ in their perceptions of multicultural education considering their gender and field of education?
- What are the pre-service teachers’ metaphoric attributions to the term ‘multicultural education’?

## Theoretical Framework

### Multicultural Education and Multicultural Teachers

According to the 2020 statistics of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), there are about 272 million international immigrants around the world. (3.5% of the world population) Their immigration was likely due to many reasons including wars and poverty. (IOM, 2021). Migration might directly influence the social structures of national communities that already have long-term national level multicultural structures. If immigrants are in need of longer residency and equal rights as the formal citizens of a country, they often migrate for the sake of pluralism, which means new policies and regulations are needed for the integration of those migrant populations to meet their health, employment, education and other necessities. As globalization moves forward in regards to pluralism, the related issues and requirements are open to be handled appropriately to achieve the ultimate goals of multiculturalism.

Addressing migration as one background part of multiculturalism, many countries with multicultural mosaics like the USA, Germany and France were once transformed into culturally diverse places after receiving massive migration. Often considered a country of crossroads or a gate for immigration towards Europe, Turkey has lately become a permanent settlement for regular immigration, by receiving numerous refugees from several countries. Despite being a historical hub for ethnically and culturally diverse groups of all ages, changes in the dimension of populations caused by the recent constant immigrations have created new, multilayered and multicultural structures in modern day Turkey. Its social and cultural structures have been influenced by the latest migration wave, which made it the country that has welcomed the most refugees, growing in population by 5% since 2011 (NRC, 2021). By 2021, more than 5.5 million people from 196 countries including Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran migrated to Turkey. The majority of them were Syrian (over 3.5 million) and approximately half of this population were children (UNHCR, 2021; Directorate General of Migration Management, 2021). The immigrants are currently under temporary

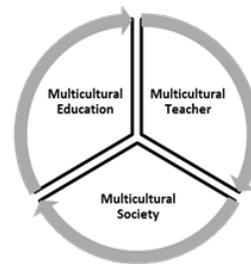
protection in Turkey. Various policies have been developed considering education and schooling of these immigrant children (Acar-Çiftçi, 2019), which made it possible for them to receive formal education at state schools alongside Turkish children. Yet, these developments profoundly affect the education system of the country by raising challenges with the capacity of schools and instructional issues. Teachers are in the foreground to face these challenges since they are expected not only to teach the curriculum subjects to these students, most of whom lack the required proficiency in the medium of instruction, but to integrate these students into the school systems with a multicultural understanding. According to the current statistics of the Turkish MoNE (2021), more than 700K refugee children under temporary protection have access to education (at pre-school, primary and secondary school levels) in Turkey where teachers are the primary figures needed to deliver a formal education to these children from various cultural backgrounds. Hence, gradually expanding multi-culturally rich classroom settings call for future teachers' readiness and preparedness for such blended communities.

Tutkun and Aksoyalp (2010) point out that factors such as the disappearance of personal, social and geographical boundaries, contemporary understandings and a necessity of their implementation, yielded multidimensional and multicultural perceptions of citizenship and made innovations in teacher training and in-service training programs compulsory. They also underline,

A characteristic of the 21st century society is to have a philosophy of life that is differentiating in terms of culture and perceptions and is also gradually acceptant of globalization. Values and issues such as increasing diversity in culture and language, international dialogue, having access to information instantly, socio-economic inequality and the inability of a wide range of people to benefit from democratic rights are becoming more prominent in the 21st century. In this context, since teachers are at the forefront of influencing change, it is essential to prepare teachers for the 21st century and its requirements. Qualified teacher training is therefore fundamental in maintaining teacher participation effectively and voluntarily in reform movements

to be held in education. Teachers are the most essential and significant component of every kind of revolution to be made in education. Teachers should have active participation in every type of educational reforms. (2010, p. 362)

Under these circumstances and newly developing social and educational philosophies and requirements in line with the communities' transformations, teachers are expected to have a multicultural sensitivity, awareness and understanding that influence the success of multicultural education processes (Yıldırım & Tezci, 2020). Figure 1 displays the essential position of teachers for multicultural education in a multicultural setting.



**Figure 1 The Cycle of a Multicultural Approach in Education**

Alongside the current global assumptions, some real life situations provide a clear picture of the conceptualization of multicultural education contextually. Although the starting point of the issue can be attributed to globalization, the reality is more challenging and runs much deeper. Globalized contexts have coined their own terms for various interrelated global-based terms, such as multicultural societies, multicultural education and multicultural teachers. Naturally, the last one is dedicated to 21st century teachers who witness constant and rapid global developments in this era and need to be positioned parallel to these multi-faceted phenomena. Since multiculturalism and its reflection on education require cultural-sensitivity as the basic foundation, teachers are expected to be culturally-sensitive to be qualified as multicultural teachers.

A closer look at the teacher training programs from the multicultural education perspective indicate a considerable negation in Turkey. Polat and Kılınç (2013) emphasize that the nonexistence of a course

or instruction about multicultural education is a huge gap within teacher training programs in Turkey. Thousands of novice teachers are assigned to teaching duties at state schools each year and meet new cultures in their initial workplaces. In a country where cultural richness dominates the regional communities, novice teachers' attitudes towards differences are extremely important as they are the major figures needed to reconstruct the society they are living in. That is to say, pre-service teachers' attitudes towards multicultural education have a special place in teacher training in line with global developments, the formation of their teacher identity, techno-pedagogical knowledge and teaching skills. Upon these references and perspectives, the initial teacher training process will become highly significant in terms of multicultural education. Being multicultural will become an indispensable feature rather than a matter of choice for future teachers as world cultures' intertwine and gradually prevail in many countries. Without certain instructions on multicultural education, pre-service teachers have only an external idea or intuition of multicultural education, which is far from the fully-realized conceptualization of a truly multicultural teacher.

### Related Research

Most of the relevant studies that investigated multicultural education and teachers were based on teachers' views, beliefs or attitudes considering the fact that they are essential components of all educational processes, including multicultural education.

A remarkable study by Forrest et al. (2017) focused on primary and secondary school teachers' views on multicultural education in Australia and reported partial traces of racism against students with Aboriginal origins. Studying state primary, secondary and high school teachers' attitudes toward multicultural education, Karataş (2015) reported positive results in general and found significant difference considering teachers' professional experience and seniority level except for their gender. In a similar study, Tonbuloğlu et al. (2016) investigated primary school teachers' views and pointed to a generally positive perceptions of multicultural education, along with some prejudicial

views. The researchers also claimed that the concept of multicultural education was not adequately emphasized in the school curriculum. Başaran and Başarır (2013) examined pre-service teachers' views on multicultural education in a quantitative study, which revealed positive scores significantly in favour of female participants. In a more recent study, Akçayoğlu and Arsal (2017) concluded that pre-service teachers hadn't received a course on, or any other acknowledgement of, multicultural education by their 3rd year at university and had not encountered the term "culture" in relevant courses.

### Methodology

#### Participants

This quantitative research was conducted with the participation of 160 senior students attending teacher training programs at three state universities in Turkey. Table 1 displays their demographic features.

**Table 1 Demographic Features of the Participants**

Variable	Groups	n	%
Gender	Female	112	70,0
	Male	48	30,0
Major	ELT	75	46,9
	Turkish Teaching	44	27,5
	Classroom Teaching	41	25,6

As indicated in Table 1, 70% of the participants were female and 30% were male pre-service teachers. At the time of data collection, 88% of them were in the 20-25 age group, 9% in the 26-31 age group, and 2% in the 32-36 age group. Approximately 47%, 28% and 26% of the participants were studying ELT, Turkish Teaching and Classroom Teaching, respectively.

#### Data Collection

The research data were gathered through a survey form comprised of two sections. The first section was designed to elicit demographic information of the participant pre-service teachers, such as their gender and age. The second section was devoted to the Teacher Multicultural Attitude Scale developed by Ponterotto et al. (1998) and adapted to Turkish by

Yazıcı et al. (2009). The scale contained 20 Likert-type items, pointed from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Seven items with negative wording were reverse coded (Items 3, 6, 12, 15, 16, 19 & 20). High scores on the scale were the indicators of positive attitudes held towards multicultural education. In this research, the coefficient of the scale was calculated above .70 ( $\alpha=0.73$ ).

The qualitative data of the study were gathered via open-ended questions such as ‘What are the first three words that come to mind when you hear the term ‘multicultural education?’ This question was intended to elicit the participants’ general perception of multicultural education and the concepts they associate it with. Another open-ended question posed required them to define “multicultural education” in one sentence to gain an insight into their general understanding of the concept.

### Data Analysis

The data were quantitatively analysed using SPSS 21.0. Demographic features of the participants were reported in frequencies and percentages while the mean, standard deviation and skewness values of the scale and its sub-dimensions were shown in a table of descriptive statistics (Table 2). The skewness and kurtosis coefficients were used to test the normality of the scale total and item scores. The scores could be interpreted as not showing a significant deviation

from the normal distribution, when the skewness and kurtosis coefficients used in the normal distribution feature of the scores obtained from a continuous variable are within the limits of  $\pm 1$  (Büyüköztürk, 2011). The Mann Whitney U test and the Kruskal Wallis H were used to compare the scores that did not show normal distribution in the scale regarding gender and major, respectively (Items 1, 2, 10, 13, 14, 18 & 20). Subsequently, the independent samples t-test and ANOVA were used to compare the normally distributed items and the scale score in terms of gender and major, respectively. The LSD post hoc test and the Mann Whitney U test were conducted to determine from which group the difference originated when a significant difference was found as a result of the ANOVA test and Kruskal Wallis H test, respectively. The level of significance was determined as 0.05 ( $p<0.05$ ).

The participants’ responses to the open-ended question on their metaphorical perception of the multicultural education were qualitatively analysed. A list of the mostly preferred terms that were associated with the concept was formed to gain a qualitative insight into the research.

### Findings and Discussion

The results obtained from the descriptive analysis of the pre-service teachers’ attitudes towards multicultural education are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of the Scale**

Item	Mean	sd	s	k
I find it significant to teach in culturally diverse classrooms.	4,26	0,80	-1,54	3,84
Teaching methods must be adapted to the needs of culturally diverse classrooms.	4,58	0,69	-2,42	8,73
I sometimes think that the training of teachers on multicultural awareness and multicultural education are overemphasized.	2,86	0,91	0,44	-0,16
Teachers have the responsibility to be aware of the cultural background of their students.	4,02	0,89	-0,89	0,53
I often meet with the family members of my students to get to know their culture better.	3,84	0,96	-0,44	-0,75
It is not a teacher's responsibility to encourage one's pride in one's own culture.	2,78	1,10	0,12	-0,75
As the classrooms become culturally more diverse, teaching becomes more challenging.	3,81	1,10	-0,74	-0,36
I believe that the role of teachers must be redefined in order to be adapted to the needs of students with different cultural backgrounds.	3,82	0,94	-0,74	0,19
When dealing with bilingual children, their communication style is often interpreted as a behavioural problem.	2,98	1,05	0,21	-0,63

As classrooms become culturally more diverse, the teaching profession becomes more satisfying.	3,86	1,11	-1,00	0,36
I can learn many things from students with different cultural backgrounds.	4,43	0,75	-1,61	3,52
The training of teachers about multiculturalism is not necessary.	2,20	1,19	0,98	0,15
In order to be an effective teacher, someone must be aware of the cultural differences of their students.	4,60	0,54	-1,13	1,73
Training about multicultural awareness can help me in order to work more effectively with a culturally diverse audience.	4,26	0,75	-1,29	2,86
Students should learn to communicate in Turkish only.	2,29	1,24	0,84	-0,32
Multiculturalism and differentiation are overemphasized in the current curricula.	2,54	1,02	0,15	-0,42
I am aware of the different cultural backgrounds in my classroom.	4,22	0,68	-0,54	0,23
Irrespective of the composition of my classroom, it is important for all of my students to be aware of multicultural differences.	4,40	0,66	-1,05	1,68
Being aware of multiculturalism is not coherent to the subject I teach.	2,56	1,12	0,51	-0,48
Teaching multiculturalism to the students will only cause classroom conflicts.	1,66	0,78	1,47	3,25
<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	3,91	0,38	0,04	0,36

<sup>1</sup>: Items 3, 6, 12, 15, 16, 19 and 20 were reverse coded. S: skewness K: kurtosis 5-1=4/5=0,80; 1,00-1,80: very low, 1,81-2,60: low; 2,61-3,40: moderate; 3,41-4,20: high; 4,21-5,00: very high

As displayed in Table 2, the pre-service teachers hold highly positive views on multicultural education (3,91±0,38). The following are the statements with the highest scores: 13. In order to be an effective teacher someone must be aware of the cultural differences of their students (4,60±0,54), 2. Teaching methods must be adapted to the needs of culturally diverse classrooms (4,58±0,69) and 18. Irrespective of the composition of my classroom, it is important for all of my students to be aware of multicultural differences (4,43±0,75).

The statements with the lowest scores are as follows: 20. Teaching multiculturalism to the students

will only cause classroom conflicts (1,66±0,78), 12. The training of teachers about multiculturalism is not necessary (2,20±1,19), and 15. Students should learn to communicate in Turkish only (2,29±1,24).

### Pre-service Teachers' Attitudes towards Multicultural Education regarding Gender

The subsequent analysis was conducted to see whether the participants significantly differ in their attitude towards multicultural education with respect to gender. The related results are displayed in Table 3.

**Table 3 Pre-Service Teachers' Attitudes towards Multicultural Education Regarding Gender**

Item*	Gender	N	Mean	Sd	t	p
Item 1.	Female	119	4,35	0,70	-1,931	0,054
	Male	41	4,00	1,02		
Item 2.	Female	119	4,62	0,64	-1,141	0,253
	Male	41	4,46	0,81		
Item 3.	Female	119	2,84	0,87	-0,38	0,708
	Male	41	2,90	1,02		
Item 4.	Female	119	4,09	0,88	1,79	0,075
	Male	41	3,80	0,90		
Item 5.	Female	119	3,92	0,95	1,77	0,079
Item 5.	Male	41	3,61	0,97	1,77	0,079

Item 6.	Female	119	2,71	1,10	-1,35	0,178
	Male	41	2,98	1,11		
Item 7.	Female	119	3,78	1,17	-0,61	0,545
	Male	41	3,90	0,86		
Item 8.	Female	119	3,84	0,97	0,50	0,621
	Male	41	3,76	0,86		
Item 9.	Female	119	2,99	1,07	0,34	0,735
	Male	41	2,93	1,01		
Item 10.	Female	119	3,86	1,17	-0,35 <sup>1</sup>	0,728
	Male	41	3,88	0,95		
Item 11.	Female	119	4,50	0,66	-1,99 <sup>1</sup>	0,047
	Male	41	4,20	0,93		
Item 12.	Female	119	2,10	1,14	-1,81	0,073
	Male	41	2,49	1,31		
Item 13.	Female	119	4,70	0,51	-4,22 <sup>1</sup>	0,000
	Male	41	4,32	0,52		
Item 14.	Female	119	4,36	0,63	-2,28 <sup>1</sup>	0,023
	Male	41	3,98	0,96		
Item 15.	Female	119	2,20	1,20	-1,61	0,110
	Male	41	2,56	1,32		
Item 16.	Female	119	2,56	0,96	0,41	0,685
	Male	41	2,49	1,19		
Item 17.	Female	119	4,29	0,68	2,43	0,016
	Male	41	4,00	0,63		
Item 18.	Female	119	4,50	0,59	-2,99 <sup>1</sup>	0,003
	Male	41	4,12	0,75		
Item 19.	Female	119	2,52	1,14	-0,68	0,499
	Male	41	2,66	1,06		
Item 20.	Female	119	1,57	0,70	-2,15 <sup>1</sup>	0,031
	Male	41	1,93	0,96		
Total <sup>1</sup>	Female	119	3,96	0,36	3,29	0,001
	Male	41	3,75	0,38		

1: Mann Whitney U test Z score \*Items in Table 2.

As seen in Table 3, statistically significant differences were found between the female and male pre-service teachers' attitudes towards multicultural education in the overall scores ( $t=3,29$ ;  $p<0,05$ ) and the following items: 11. I can learn many things from students with different cultural backgrounds ( $Z=1,99$ ;  $p<0,05$ ), 13. In order to be an effective teacher, someone must be aware of the cultural differences of their students ( $Z=-4,22$ ;  $p<0,05$ ), 14. Training about multicultural awareness can help me in order to work more effectively with a culturally diverse audience

( $Z=-2,28$ ;  $p<0,05$ ), 17. I am aware of the different cultural backgrounds in my classroom ( $t=2,43$ ;  $p<0,05$ ), 18. Irrespective of the composition of my classroom, it is important for all of my students to be aware of multicultural differences ( $Z=-2,99$ ;  $p<0,05$ ), and 20. Teaching multiculturalism to the students will only cause classroom conflicts ( $Z=-2,15$ ;  $p<0,05$ ).

Moving from the results displayed in Table 3, the female pre-service teachers significantly differ from their male colleagues in that they are more

prone to believe that they can learn many things from students with different cultural backgrounds, that they should be aware of the cultural differences of their students to be an effective teacher, that training about multicultural awareness can help them in order to work more effectively with a culturally diverse audience and that their students should be aware of the multicultural differences irrespective of the composition of the classroom. They also significantly differ from the male pre-service teachers in the awareness of different cultural backgrounds in classrooms and their attitudes towards multicultural education. All in all, the female pre-service teachers hold more positive attitude towards multicultural education than the male pre-service teachers. This

can be referenced to the existing research (Başarı & Başarı, 2013). The male pre-service teachers' scores on the view that teaching cultural differences will create conflict in the classroom were found to be significantly higher than those of the female pre-service teachers. In other words, their attitudes towards teaching cultural differences was statistically more negative than that of their female colleagues.

**Pre-service Teachers' Attitudes towards Multicultural Education Regarding Major**

The results of the ANOVA / Kruskal Wallis H test for the comparison of the scores of the pre-service teachers' attitudes towards multicultural education regarding major were given in Table 4.:

**Table 4 Pre-service Teachers' Attitudes towards Multicultural Education Regarding Major**

Item*	Major	N	Mean	Sd	F	p	Significance
Item 1.	ELT	75	4,23	0,86	0,181	0,912	
	Turkish	44	4,32	0,60			
	Classroom	41	4,27	0,90			
Item 2.	ELT	75	4,52	0,70	2,201	0,333	
	Turkish	44	4,64	0,57			
	Classroom	41	4,63	0,77			
Item 3.	ELT	75	2,77	0,92	0,86	0,426	
	Turkish	44	3,00	0,96			
	Classroom	41	2,85	0,82			
Item 4.	ELT	75	3,89	0,92	1,56	0,214	
	Turkish	44	4,18	0,90			
	Classroom	41	4,07	0,82			
Item 5.	ELT	75	3,47	0,99	17,14	0,000	C>A,B
	Turkish	44	3,89	0,81			B>A
	Classroom	41	4,46	0,71			
Item 6.	ELT	75	2,97	1,04	5,13	0,007	A,B>C
	Turkish	44	2,86	1,15			
	Classroom	41	2,32	1,06			
Item 7.	ELT	75	3,88	1,05	0,45	0,636	
	Turkish	44	3,68	1,25			
	Classroom	41	3,83	1,02			
Item 8.	ELT	75	3,76	0,96	0,47	0,627	
	Turkish	44	3,93	0,87			
	Classroom	41	3,80	0,98			
Item 9.	ELT	75	2,75	1,01	3,75	0,026	C>A
Item 9.	Turkish	44	3,09	1,10	3,75	0,026	
	Classroom	41	3,27	1,00			

Item 10.	ELT	75	3,67	1,18	4,371	0,112	
	Turkish	44	4,00	1,12			
	Classroom	41	4,07	0,93			
Item 11.	ELT	75	4,24	0,91	5,281	0,072	
	Turkish	44	4,59	0,54			
	Classroom	41	4,59	0,50			
Item 12.	ELT	75	2,39	1,14	1,75	0,177	
	Turkish	44	2,05	1,20			
	Classroom	41	2,02	1,25			
Item 13.	ELT	75	4,52	0,60	2,421	0,298	
	Turkish	44	4,66	0,48			
	Classroom	41	4,68	0,47			
Item 14.	ELT	75	4,15	0,83	2,621	0,269	
	Turkish	44	4,36	0,65			
	Classroom	41	4,37	0,66			
Item 15.	ELT	75	1,97	1,07	5,63	0,004	B,C>A
	Turkish	44	2,43	1,34			
	Classroom	41	2,73	1,30			
Item 16.	ELT	75	2,49	1,10	0,19	0,829	
	Turkish	44	2,57	0,93			
	Classroom	41	2,61	1,00			
Item 17.	ELT	75	4,00	0,75	9,01	0,000	B,C>A
	Turkish	44	4,32	0,52			
	Classroom	41	4,51	0,55			
Item 18.	ELT	75	4,36	0,71	6,901	0,032	C>B
	Turkish	44	4,27	0,62			
	Classroom	41	4,61	0,54			
Item 19.	ELT	75	2,43	1,13	0,99	0,375	
	Turkish	44	2,64	1,14			
	Classroom	41	2,71	1,08			
Item 20.	ELT	75	1,73	0,95	0,151	0,927	
	Turkish	44	1,64	0,65			
	Classroom	41	1,56	0,55			
Total <sup>1</sup>	ELT	75	3,83	0,39	3,47	0,033	C>A
	Turkish	44	3,94	0,34			
	Classroom	41	4,02	0,38			

1: Kruskal Wallis H test X2 score \*Items in Table 2.

Table 4 shows that the pre-service teachers significantly differ in their attitude towards multicultural education regarding major (F=3,47; p<0,05) and the following items: 5. I often meet with the family members of my students to get to know their culture better (F=17,14; p<0,05), 6. It is not

a teacher's responsibility to encourage one's pride in one's own culture (F=5,13; p<0,05), 9. When dealing with bilingual children, their communication style is often interpreted as a behavioural problem (F=3,75; p<0,05), 15. Students should learn to communicate in Turkish only (F=5,63; p<0,05), 17.

I am aware of the different cultural backgrounds in my classroom ( $F=9,01$ ;  $p<0,05$ ), and 18. Irrespective of the composition of my classroom, it is important for all of my students to be aware of multicultural differences ( $X^2=6,90$ ;  $p<0,05$ ).

In order to determine from which group the difference originated, the LSD post hoc test was conducted. The results and possible causes are listed below:

The pre-service classroom teachers displayed a statistically higher tendency to meet with family members to get to know the students' culture better than the Turkish and English pre-service teachers. This might be attributed to the fact that classroom teachers need to spend more time with fewer students than branch teachers in Turkey. Namely, they are supposed to teach a group of 20 or 30 students for a period of four years. It is noteworthy that these teachers educate their students in almost all subjects identified in the primary curriculum, which means they mostly work with the same students an average of 30 hours per week, while the Turkish and English language teachers teach each group only three or four class hours per week. Furthermore, the Turkish and English language teachers may teach each group only for only two semesters, while classroom teachers, as noted above, teach the same students for four years (eight semesters). Therefore, classroom teachers feel the need to get to know their students more closely and to contact their family members more frequently than other teachers. Besides, as the curriculum assigned to classroom teachers offer more activities that require parental involvement (e.g. regular homework assignments that can be done with the active support of their parents) than the English and Turkish course curricula, classroom teachers need school-family collaboration for students' achievement more than the other teachers. That's why, the participant pre-service classroom teachers may want to contact family members of the students in order to know the whole family and the students' social, economic and cultural background as much as possible and plan their teaching effectively. Accordingly, The statistical results also indicated that the Turkish pre-service teachers displayed a higher tendency of such kind than the English pre-service teachers. This could be attributed to different roles

assigned to the English language teachers working in expanding circle countries including Turkey. To be more specific, foreign language teachers are supposed to teach the language and to represent the target culture associated with that particular language. They are also expected to develop and participate in EU projects in collaboration with schools in other countries more than other teachers, considering the nature of the subject they are teaching and their competence in foreign language(s). These factors could increase their workload and responsibilities and make it hard for them to get to know the family members of the students they teach. If they were assigned a lower number of groups, they could seize the opportunity to benefit from parental involvement in the foreign language teaching process, which is almost never the case in Turkey. Turkish language teachers are not, on the other hand, expected to teach a language they are still learning or to represent a culture that is entirely unfamiliar to the students. Neither are they expected to take an active role in the development or organization of EU projects. Due to these differences between the two groups of teachers' roles and responsibilities, the participant pre-service Turkish teachers could display a more positive approach towards contacting students' family members to get to know their culture better.

The pre-service English and Turkish teachers are statistically more convinced that it is not a teacher's responsibility to encourage one's pride in one's own culture than the pre-service classroom teachers. This outcome was a surprising result and has further implications to be explored in later research.

The pre-service classroom teachers displayed a statistically stronger tendency to interpret the communication style of bilingual children they are dealing with as a behavioural problem when compared with the English pre-service teachers. This might be related to the frequent stress on the immediate relationship between language and culture and intercultural differences in the content of the English language teacher training curriculum. Namely, the students studying English language teaching in Turkey take a variety of courses on linguistics and language teaching methodology which cover linguistic and cultural diversity and intercultural communication. Through these courses,

they tend to embrace diversities with more ease and interpret differences in communication styles of people as an outcome of cultural differences rather than a behavioural problem. However, there are no specific courses in the classroom teaching curriculum that enable pre-service teachers to gain awareness of such differences and encourage them to interpret behavioural differences among students as an outcome of cultural diversity.

The pre-service Turkish and classroom teachers displayed statistically higher attitudes towards students' learning to communicate in Turkish only than the English pre-service teachers. This particular result is not surprising since the English course curriculum favours the use of target language as the medium of instruction rather than students' L1 in order to teach it for communicative/real life purposes (MoNE, 2018). In this respect, it is noted that "use of English is emphasized in classroom interactions of all types, supporting learners in becoming language users, rather than students of the language, as they work toward communicative competence (CoE, 2001)" (MoNE, 2018, p. 3). Teaching accurate and fluent use of Turkish is, on the other hand, identified as the priority duty of Turkish and classroom teachers working at primary and middle schools in Turkey. This specific purpose is also declared in the Turkish course curriculum for 1st to 8th grades as the first key competence among the Turkish Qualifications Framework (MoNE, 2019, p. 4). Accordingly, communication in the mother tongue requires the students to have the "ability to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form (listening, speaking, reading and writing); and to interact linguistically in an appropriate and creative way in a full range of societal and cultural contexts; including education and training, the workplace, home and leisure" (Vocational Qualifications Authority, 2015, p. 23). It is predicted that students who are not communicatively competent in their mother tongue will fail other courses, as well in view of the fact that Turkish is the medium of instruction in schools where the medium of instruction is not exclusively specified as a different language in Turkey.

Moreover, at the time of data collection, the pre-service English teachers had already taken a variety of courses that encourage teaching English by using it frequently in the classroom with the

aim of enabling students to attain communicative competence. Quite similarly, the pre-service Turkish teachers had taken many courses that underline the significance of teaching accurate and fluent Turkish to the students. Finally, the pre-service classroom teachers had taken the Turkish Teaching course which required them to analyse the above-mentioned the Turkish curriculum for primary schools as part of their undergraduate curriculum (Council of Higher Education, CoHE, 2018, p. 9). Thereby, the statistical difference between the groups could be interpreted as an outcome of the training they received up until that point.

The pre-school classroom and Turkish teachers' scores on the awareness of the different cultural backgrounds in classroom were statistically higher than those of the pre-service English language teachers. The difference in favour of the pre-service classroom teachers could be justified with the aforementioned fact that classroom teachers teach the same group of students for a much longer period while English language teachers teach different groups a limited number of class hours for a couple of semesters.

The pre-service classroom teachers' scores on the view that students should be aware of multicultural differences irrespective of the classroom composition were statistically higher than those of the pre-service Turkish teachers. This finding could also be justified with classroom teachers' relatively higher desire to get to know their students well, considering the immediate relationship between recognition of the students and their school success. To build an effective teaching and learning environment, they need a completely peaceful classroom where the students respect each other and no conflicts arise due to socio-cultural differences among them. All teachers need these learning environments and are aware of their significance for effective teaching, but seemingly the pre-service classroom teachers who participated in this research attached more significance to that awareness most probably because they will work with a particular group of students for longer periods, unlike the pre-service Turkish teachers who will teach only a couple of hours to various groups for quite short periods.

The pre-service classroom teachers' attitudes towards multicultural education were statistically higher than the pre-service English language teachers.

This could be interpreted as them being more prone to fulfil the requirements of multicultural education and are more aware of the cultural diversity of the places they will be teaching. They could also be more aware of the globalizing world where countries are forced to design their educational policies by taking into consideration the characteristics and needs of students from different socio-cultural backgrounds. This higher awareness might be attributed to the fact that classroom teacher training programs are attended by more foreign students than English teacher training programs. This might have raised consciousness of the pre-service classroom teachers about the significance of knowing the cultural background of their students for effective teaching by offering them a kind of first-hand experience.

### Responses to Open-Ended Question

In order to support the statistical analysis, the participants' conceptual perceptions of 'multicultural education,' were elicited and analysed in a semi-qualitative and frequency-based manner. The pre-service teachers' metaphorical understanding of multicultural education may influence their future teaching activities. In the present study, therefore, a question that required them to report the first three words that come to their mind when they think of the term 'multicultural education,' was added to the questionnaire. Most frequent concepts expressed by the participants matching with the notion of multicultural education were calculated to find out their frequency. A list of the obtained codes was examined to see a general picture of the conceptual expressions by the pre-service teachers.

**Table 5 The Most Frequent Codes for Conceptualizing Multicultural Education in All Groups**

Classroom	%	Turkish	%	ELT	%	Total	%
Diversity	11	Language	9	Language	8	Diversity	25
Respect	8	Diversity	8	Race	8	Language	24
Language	7	Race	5	Diversity	6	Race	13
Tolerance	6	Manners & Customs	5	Life Styles	6	Religion	13
Religion	5	Communication	4	Richness	4	Tolerance	11

As seen in Table 5, the overall results revealed some common words by the participants who reflected their cognitive conceptualisation of multicultural education in and between groups. When each group is considered, diversity and language are the most frequented metaphors used for multicultural education in all groups and the first two in the total group. Race, tolerance and religion are also in the list of the metaphors extensively expressed by the participants to describe multicultural education, which overlaps with the study conducted by Akçayoğlu and Aرسال (2017). When these outcomes are considered from the perspective of teacher cognition and perception of a teaching-related concept (multicultural education), the pre-service teachers have a certain mental conceptualization of multicultural education to some extent. It is not surprising that their use of such metaphors that have no direct conceptual link to education and pedagogy, as indicated in previous research. The pre-service teachers studying different majors associate multicultural education with diversity, language, ethnicity, religion and tolerance,

indicating that they are aware of the reality and the dimensions of multiculturalism, though they did not receive a course on multicultural education during their undergraduate education. The following are some of the participants' responses to the item that required them to define multicultural education in a sentence:

- P8: It is to teach the students about different cultures, ethnicities, languages and religious backgrounds. (Turkish Teaching)
- P33: To present de facto knowledge without discriminating against race, religion and language. (ELT)
- P46: It is a form of education in which all of them can be carried out together with the awareness of the existence and differences of various cultures. (Classroom Teaching)
- P44: A type of education which can turn into chaos if it is not properly managed. (Classroom Teaching)
- P78: To me, it is an education given to students from different cultural characteristics with

tolerance, respect, love and unity. (ELT)

- P56: Being aware of the fact that children have all grown up in different cultures and providing them an appropriate educational setting. (Turkish Teaching)

All in all, most of the responses pointed to the fact that it stimulates diversity-embracing and variety in teaching, while some rare responses called our attention to the problematic side of the concept. It is important for future teachers to consider the inner dynamics of the concept of multicultural education and their practitioner role in this form of education in a multicultural society.

### Conclusion

Caused either by immigration or globalization, the concept of multiculturalism has been on the agenda of many countries as a necessary term to consider due to the existence of global issues, including refugee problems, the climate crisis, and worldwide financial fluctuations that simultaneously influence various societies. While handling the incidents from national or international perspectives, multiculturalism holds its position and forces decision-makers to provide solutions for multicultural communities due to the fact that quality in education for all stands out as one of the global goals (UNESCO, 2021). Even though multicultural education has been a favorite topic in the field of education for researchers and practitioners, concrete results of reflections in teacher training or curriculum studies are still in progress. The growing interest and the increasing need for a multiculturalist perspective in societies and indeed in education, has entailed an opportunity to update teacher training programs content, thus providing a step for future teachers to construct multicultural-based teacher identities.

Three groups of pre-service teachers who would probably work in culturally diverse and integrated classrooms were selected as participants whose general perspectives on multicultural education were considered worthwhile to inquire. Prepared in line with the research objective, the first and second research questions interrogated the attitudes of pre-service teachers towards multicultural education and a possibility of meaningful statistical difference among them regarding the variables of gender and major. The results indicated that they generally

hold positive and promising attitudes towards multicultural education. The female pre-service teachers' relatively better scores could be evaluated as a sign of a need for a more extensive and complete understanding of multicultural education through well-designed instruction. That the classroom teacher candidates obtained significantly better scores than the pre-service English teachers might be attributed to the fact that a higher number of foreign students (especially Syrian students) were studying classroom teaching in Turkey. In addition, the findings elicited from the participants' cognitive conceptualizations of multicultural education showed that they mostly associated it with the concepts of diversity and language, which constitute two dimensions of multicultural education. Furthermore, most of the descriptions they offered for multicultural education comply with the formal description of the concept proposed by Banks (1997) as an equal learning opportunity for all students, regardless of gender, race or other cultural features. That is, the current training they receive provides a motivating and open-to-improvement impression for their future jobs, which is an expected learning outcome for such programs. With more multicultural instruction that meets the need for constructing a more global and humanistic understanding, the pre-service teachers could be supported to become more global and multicultural teachers, or namely, 21st century teachers.

The present study was limited to the investigation of the attitudes of three groups of senior students studying at different teacher training programs in Turkey towards multicultural education. It might be furthered with the participation of a higher number of pre-service teachers studying in other majors such as pre-school education, math teaching and psychological counselling and guidance), through different data collection tools such as interviews.

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#### Author Details

**Muzaffer Pınar Babanoğlu**, Mersin University, Turkey, **Email ID:** [pınarbab@hotmail.com](mailto:pınarbab@hotmail.com)

**Reyhan Ağçam**, Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University, Turkey, **Email ID:** [reyhanagcam@gmail.com](mailto:reyhanagcam@gmail.com)