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Comenius School Partnerships Projects Student Evaluation Scale¹

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to develop a valid student evaluation scale for European Union Comenius School Partnerships Projects (CSPP). For this purpose, a scale is developed to determine the contribution of the projects to which issues and in which levels are. In developing the scale the implemented steps are as follows: collecting the students and teachers views and writing the items; reviewing the items to check whether they are clear and understandable, and collecting the expert views whether the items are suitable or not; preparing pre-draft form and implementing into pre-group; developing the draft-form according to the results derived from the pre-group implementation, and implementing into study group; and preparing the scale instrument after the results of validation and reliability (exploratory and confirmatory analysis; item-total correlation) studies. After these studies, student evaluation scale for CSPP which consist of 19 items and four factors which are active citizenship, interestmotivation to lessons. ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) and language skills emerged. The results of this study have been considerable in terms of determining what the level of contribution of the projects is and in terms of caring out a reliable monitoring-evaluation process in the schools participated in Comenius

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project.

Key words: European Union, Comenius scale, project, school, student.

Introduction

The Comenius programme taking part in the EU's Lifelong Learning Programmes and basing on the Lisbon objectives aims to: build knowledge and understanding among students and educators on European cultural and linguistic diversity and values; empower cooperation; support the activities in the intercultural education and in-service education needs of employees in education; and enable students to gain basic skills and competencies for their personnel growth through becoming an active European citizen. The Comenius programme covers preschool, primary and secondary education levels (Ulusal Ajans 2011a; Gordon & Caille 2000, 213).

Comenius programme appeals to wide range of audience including both vocational and technical schools from pre-schools to secondary education, in-service training institutions for teachers, school principals, inspectors, the staff taking part in the activities aiming to enhance the educational quality, teacher unions, and parents (Gordon & Caille 2000, 213).

The partner countries have a chance to understand each other very well through learning their life-style and way of thinking by means of collaboration projects covering 27 EU members, Norway, Liechtenstein, Iceland, Turkey, and Croatia (Education and Culture DG 2011; European Commission 2008, 12-13). In this regard, the partner schools work together on a related common issue through bilateral or multilateral partnership projects.

The aim of Comenius School Partnership Projects (CSPP) is to develop European dimension in education, and is conducted bilaterally or multilaterally through supporting the cooperation among the schools, pre-primary, primary, and secondary (Ulusal Ajans 2011b, 2; Gordon & Caille 2000, 213).

Multilateral projects entail partnership of at least three countries with minimum one EU member. Bilateral projects aim to enhance students' motivation and foreign language skills on the basis of cooperation between two partner schools including minumum one EU member. Additionally, covering at least 10 days exchange, the bilateral projects entail that students participate actively in the planning, monitoring, and evaluation activities as well as class exchange (European Commission 2008, 17).

The sample activities, which can be conducted in the context of CSPP, are as follows (European Commission 2011a; European Commission 2011b):

- Project meetings among the institutions taking part in the partnership,
- Staff and student exchange such as teacher and student exchange, study visits in accordance to the project activities,
- Sharing good implementations and experience with partner schools,
- Field study, project research,
- Preparing, publishing and disseminating the documents related cooperation activities,
- Producing technical materials, drafts, and artwork,
- Performances such as plays, musicals,
- Organizing exhibitions, production and dissemination of information and document,
- Activities to enable teachers and students to have required competencies in the language(s) used in the partnership
- Self-evaluation activities
- Dissemination of project experience and results

The productions preparing in context of CSPP vary excessively

such as booklet, brochure, poster, DVD/CD or other tangible materials. Additionally, exhibitions, website, manuals, performances, video and etc. are regarded as productions. Since the Comenius projects focus on cooperation process, all experiences derived from this processes can be regarded also as productions (European Commission 2008, 14).

Recent studies show that CSPP has contributed to learning foreign language, developing Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). and increasing intercultural awareness. Also such projects help to students for learning, and help to teachers to develop positive attitude towards new and collaborative teaching methods (European Commission, 2010). Some basic indicators of CSSP influencing on students are as follows: skills for learning, foreign language skills/awareness, methodological skills, motivation, social skills, ICT skills, management skills, European citizenship, equality of opportunity (Inari Course 2009, 2009, 3-8).

International projects such as CSPP provide schools with opportunity for establishing new connections with local communities. For that, schools should play an active role, be entrepreneur, and convince the potential partners about the gains deriving from the cooperation (European Commission 2008, 30).

CSPP bring opportunity to developing an international approach to the main aim determined for partnership, and to developing a cross-curriculum. In this regard, in terms of achieving the aim, school administration, teachers, and other staff at the school should work as a team. All students should be supported with opportunity to participate in the projects focusing on the issues related them. Ideally, it requires to enable students for participating actively in the all the steps including planning, organizing, and evaluating the activities (European Commission 2008, 29).

Stakeholders and policy makers need the data reflect the achievement of polices robustly. In turn, related questions such

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as "*what is the effect of project*" *How to measure*?" are investigated. If the project has an effect, it can be said that main aim is achieved (Grun 2006, 18).

Monitoring and evaluation is critical for achieving the aim of project. Thus, through continues monitoring and evaluation it is possible to determine the needs, adapt to partnership's goals, to enable processes of project to contribute to considerably the school (European Commission 2008, 32). Also within this process it can be ensured that schools become accountable to external authorities or society, and increase their quality levels (Barzano 2002, 84).

Additionally, monitoring a project means acquiring sufficient information about it, and is important in terms of ensuring to take required steps when deviations from the plan occur. That meaning also includes development of production, obtainment of information about the team performance and potential risks (Taylor 2003, 2). Another important issue is the recording results, outcomes, data, achievements, and other related things to evaluate properly the projects, and to report the processes of progress (European Commission 2008, 28).

A list covering the actions along the process of project should be prepared during the first project meeting by partners taking part in CSPP. One of them is that *how to collect data*, *how to monitor the processes*, and *how to disseminate the partnership* (European Commission, 2008, p. 23). Nevertheless, some data sources utilized during the evaluating the project are as follows (Grun 2006, 18):

- Ready or secondary quantitative data
- Primary quantitative data, data collected for a question regarding the project, monitoring data etc.
- Primary qualitative data, data collected from an action research or focus-group.

Even though a wide range of tools and techniques are used in evaluating the project activities, the followings are well known among them: questionnaire, interview, observation, measuring participation level, document analysis, focus group discussions with students, focus group discussions with teachers, student reports, animation, oral presentation, diary, Delphi method, developing scenery (Inari Course 2009, 8-12). Some important issues in terms of questionnaires are shown in Table 1.

One of the important data collection tools evaluating project process is questionnaires prepared for students, parents, and teachers. In parallel, the qualification of students presenting their project and works to others (i.e. youths or adults) can be considered as a meaningful proof for their achievement (Inari Course 2009, 2009, p. 2).

Many of the measures in social sciences are nominal and ordinal; and are limited in terms of usability, interpretation, and statistical analyses. However, because they include equal units, interval scales indicate more near to the reality considered in the real life. Also the properties measured through interval scales can be matched with real numbers, be possible to make many arithmetic operations (Turgut & Baykal 1992, 28).

What?	list of questions asking facts or opinions. 'here are different types of questions: open questions, closed uestions, tick boxes, scales from 1 to 5				
Who?	Teachers, project coordinator, person in charge of evaluation				
Advantages	• quantifiable data, easy to use as a common tool, examples are available				
Risks and limits	• too many questions, too time-consuming to process, difficult to phrase the questions, no opportunities for additional questions				
Recommendations	Target group: students, teachers, parents				
	 Recommendations: students can be asked to process the outcomes, limit the amount of questions to the aspects you want to improve (don't ask always how good the project was) 				

Table 1 Questionnares (Inari Course 2009, 2009, p. 8)

Table 2 shows the data collection tools used in the wide literature. When investigating those tools it seems that number of items range from 9 to 50; factor or dimensions generally cover *foreign language, school, attitudes towards teacher and lessons, communication, creativity, culture, project* EUROPEAN ACADEMIC RESEARCH - Vol. II. Issue 1/April 2014

process, personal development, quality of education, participation, EU dimension, and competency.

Researcher	Sample /	Data collection	Factors/dimensions	Number
	Study group	tool		of items
Aydogan & Sahin (2006)	84 students (primary- secondary)	Scale of Impact of Comenius School Partnership Projects on Education	 Attitudes towards school and teachers Attitudes towards lessons Communication and creativity Learning foreign language Cultural attitudes 	34
Haspolatli (2006)	46 project coordinators	Questionnaire of project coordinators' views about CSPP	 Project preparation process Project implementation process Progress of projects 	28
Bahadir (2007)	2008 teachers 178 students	Questionnaire measuring school administrators and teachers' views about the project preparation according to Comenius programme among EU education programmes	 Data collection tool for teachers Data collection tool for administrators 	24
Acir (2008)	140 teachers	Questionnaire/scale for determining views about the progress of Comenius projects at schools	 implementation process, planning implementation results 	26
Tumen (2008)	30 teachers	Scale of determining views on the effect of Comenius projects	Teachers' views about the completed projects	50
Dilekli (2008)	78 students; 52 teachers; 15 administrators	- Teacher – Administrator question form - student question form	 Impact on lessons and schools Personal development	21
Kulaksiz	762 student	Student evaluation	- Quality in education	44

(2010)		scale of CSPP	- Language learning - Intercultural communication - Participation	
Akpinar (2006)	168 student	Questionnaire determining student's image on EU	Image on EU	11
Turkoglu & Turkoglu (2006)	6 school administrator; 10 coordinator teacher	Interview form of administrator and coordinator	Projects' recognition; impact on student, teacher, and institution	9
DG Education and Culture (2007)	7903 Comenius school leaders (coordinator)	Questionnaire determining effect of Comenius School Partnership Projects	 communication in foreign language understanding/knowing behaviors and attitudes self efficiency social competency specialization and methodology competency 	30

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Table 2. The data collection tools in the content of CSPP

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to develop a valid student evaluation scale instrument for European Union Comenius School Partnerships Projects (CSPP). For this purpose, a scale is developed to determine the contribution of the projects to which issues and in which levels are.

Significance

The monitoring and evaluation is an important part of Comenius School Partnership Projects; and during the project application process, the questions regarding how the monitoring and evaluation would be performed are being asked on the application form. In addition, it requires that the schools should collect available data for their evaluations for the progress and final reports. In turn, it is clear that available

data collecting tools are required for the Comenius School Partnership Projects.

Method

Participants

Study group included 225 upper primary covering 6th, 7th and 8th classes students in the academic year 2011-2012 in Polatli in Ankara in Turkey.

Procedure

The data collecting tools were prepared in Turkish and used in the study as followed: The four point Likert scale to collect the expert views; pre-draft form for pre-group; and draft-form for study group. Using these tools, the following steps were performed to develop scale in accordance to principles of scale development: preparation of item pool based on collecting the students and teachers views and writing the items; reviewing the items to check whether they are clear and understandable. and collecting the expert views whether the items are suitable or not; preparing pre-draft form and implementing into pregroup; developing the draft-form according to the results derived from the pre-group implementation, and implementing into study group; and preparing the scale instrument after the validation results of and reliability (exploratory and confirmatory analysis; item-total correlation) studies.

The first step in developing scale was the preparation of item pool reflecting main dimensions of CSPP. Through this process, when writing the items the following dimensions were considered: language skills, interest to lessons, motivation, cooperation and team skills, problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, art, music/hand craft skills, ICT, intercultural interaction, cultural awareness, cultural heritage, basic skills (math, science, and reading, social skills, active citizenship, selftrust, interaction with individuals with special learning needs,

ethical values, EU citizenship and EU dimension. In accordance to those dimensions, 66 items in total were consisted of item pool through investigating literature, and views of students and teachers.

Specialist review

Five specialists' views on whether the items are suitable or not were collected through a review form scaling from 1 to 4 (1available; 2-slightly review; 3-seriously review; 4- not available). The responses were used to create index of content validity to check the content validity of scale. Index of content validity was derived from dividing response categories of available or slightly review dividing by seriously review or not available. After investigating index values the items having below 0,80 were excluded from the form. By this way 28 items were excluded.

Preparing pre-draft form and implementing into pregroup

After excluding 28 items on basis of specialists' review, *predraft form* was prepared with the rest 38 items. Pre-draft form was applied into pre-group for the purpose of checking clarity. After completed this process, 17 items were excluded, and 21 items were remained.

Deriving the draft-form and implementing it into study group

Draft-form was derived with remained 21 items on the basis of four point Likert scale range from 1="strongly disagree" to 4="strongly agree" and was applied into study group consisting of 225 students. Among 225 student draft-forms, 18 were rejected due to filling incompletely, coding same response for all items or making patterns etc. Consequently, statistical analyses for validity and reliability were performed with 207 draft-forms.

derived from draft-forms were The data analvzed and LISREL® software. students' through SPSS® 207responses upon the 21 items were implemented into Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) with method of principal component analysis to determine the structure of scale. Factor loads were ensured at least .30 in terms of distinctiveness (Buvukozturk 2007, 171). Moreover, it fulfilled that there was at least 0,10 difference among the factor loads to prevent that the items taking part in more than one factor coincided with another one. In parallel, the related items not meeting this condition were excluded from scale.

Results

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

To investigate the structure underlying variables, and to reach a constant and simple structure, EFA was performed. The appropriateness of data for factor analysis was investigated through *Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin* (KMO) coeffcient and *Barlett Sphericity* test given on Table 3. Since the KMO was higher than 0.60, and Barlett test was significant, the data were found to be appropriate for factor analysis (Buyukozturk 2007, 126).

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity			
Adequacy.	Approx. Chi-Square	df	Sig.	
,897	1161,976	231	,000	

Table 3 The results of KMO and Bartlett's Test

Two inappropriate items from draft-form were excluded on the consequence of factor analysis. After this operation, the factor analysis was repeated, and its results were summarized in Table 4. The results of repeated and rotated factor analysis given in Table 4 indicate that the structure validity was supported by factor loadings having higher than .50 and at least 0.10 differences between factor loadings for the items loaded strongly on the more than one factor.

Table 4 indicates factor loadings for each variable on the consequence of rotated component matrix .The nine items loaded strongly on Factor 1, which was titled as *active citizenship*; three items loaded strongly on Factor 2, which was titled as *interest and motivation towards lessons*; four items loaded strongly on Factor 3 which was titled as *ICT*; three items loaded strongly on Factor 4 which was titled as *language skills*.

Items		Fac	tors	
	Active citizenship	Interest and motivation towards lessons	ICT	Language Skills
s52	,741			
s54	,694			
s51	,582			
s38	,581			
s37	,562			
s44	,544			
s17	,540			
s39	,523			
s41	,509			
$\mathbf{s8}$,730		
s7		,706		
s9		,573		
s25			,690	
s26			,674	
s28			,576	
s27			,562	
s1				,709
s 3				,612
s5				,535

Table 4 Factor loadings

Table 5 shows that the actual factors that were extracted and total variance explained with eigenvalues. Results of factor analysis display that the student evaluation scale for CSPP revealed four strong factors with eigenvalue of above 1.0, accounting for 52 percent of the variance in the items. In sum up, after the analyses intended for validity and reliability, student evaluation scale for CSPP consisting of 19 items with

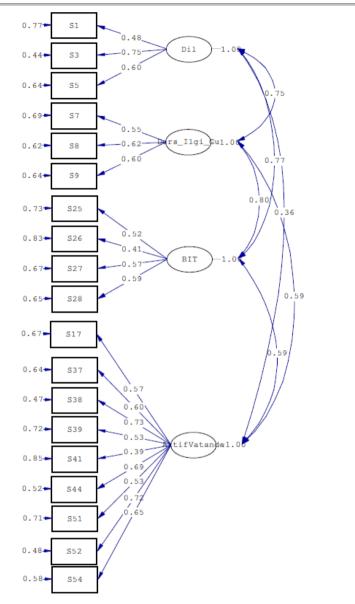
Component		Initial Eigenva	lues
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6,461	34,007	34,007
2	1,393	7,331	41,338
3	1,176	6,189	47,527
4	1,101	5,795	53,323
5	,979	5,153	58,476
6	,867	4,563	63,039
7	,801	4,218	67,257
8	,778	4,093	71,350
9	,695	3,655	75,006
10	,668	3,517	78,522
11	,594	3,126	81,649
12	,577	3,036	84,685
13	,547	2,880	87,565
14	,485	2,553	90,119
15	,441	2,321	92,439
16	,413	2,176	94,616
17	,384	2,023	96,639
18	,347	1,824	98,464
19	,292	1,536	100,000

four factors was derived.

Table 5 Results of factor analysis of total variance explainedConfirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

CFA was performed, and confirmed four-factor structure. As indicated the standardized results of it in Figure 1, $x^2/df =$ 357/146, RMSEA=0.08 suggested that adequate confirmatory indexes were obtained.

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Chi-Square=356.73, df=146, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.084

Figure 2. Standardized results

Factors	Items	Standardized Loadings	t-value	\mathbb{R}^2
	17	.57	8.32	0.33
	37	.60	8.88	0.36
	38	.73	11.40	0.53
Active eitigenship	39	.53	7.55	0.28
Active citizenship (Aktifvatanda)	41	.39	5.45	0.15
(Aktiivatanua)	44	.69	10.58	0.48
	51	.53	7.65	0.29
	52	.72	11.08	0.52
	54	.65	9.78	0.42
Interest and	7	.55	7.35	0.31
motivation towards	8	.62	8.31	0.38
lessons (Ders_Ilgi_Gu)	9	.60	7.99	0.36
	25	.52	6.86	0.27
ICT	26	.41	5.34	0.17
(BIT)	27	.57	7.65	0.33
	28	.59	7.87	0.35
I	1	.48	6.29	0.23
Language skills	3	.75	10.20	0.56
(Dil)	5	.60	8.17	0.36

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Table 6. CFA - standardized factor loadings

Also Table 6 shows that factor loadings were statistically significant when investigated the t values.

Reliability Analysis

Table 7 indicates the results of item analysis. Item-total correlation coefficients ranged from .35 to .63. The items also have high Chronbach's Alpha coefficients with above 0.88. When considered the results, the items in the scale had good internal consistency.

Items	Scale mean If item deleted	Scale variance if item deleted	Corrected item-total correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted
s51	52,81	114,191	,532	,884
s52	52,88	113,339	,554	,884
s54	52,85	115,481	,491	,886
s37	52,78	116,005	,474	,886
s38	52,98	112,928	,599	,882
s44	52,79	116,226	,503	,885

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s17	52,73	114,664	,558	,884	
s41	52,83	114,786	,543	,884	
s39	52,87	114,031	,542	,884	
s9	52,82	112,172	,638	,881	
s8	52,86	118,111	,352	,890	
s7	52,85	114,151	,558	,883	
s25	52,68	117,583	,436	,887	
s26	52,75	116,249	,500	,885	
s27	52,93	114,756	,521	,885	
s28	52,90	113,105	,584	,883	
s1	52,89	114,647	,518	,885	
s3	52,71	116,074	,477	,886	
s5	52,88	117,267	,404	,888	

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Table 7. Item-Total Statistics

Limitations

This study was applied in upper primary students in public schools. It is noteworthy that further studies with larger samples should be implemented to determine the factor structure across different age, group, and cultures. On the other hand the present study was conducted in Turkish. In turn, the validity and reliability analyses were made on Turkish forms. Further international analyses which would be in different languages on the basis of English version suggested by author in Appendix II improve the validity and reliability of findings of present study.

Conclusion

It is clear that appropriate measure tools are needed to investigate the impacts of Comenius School Partnership Projects (CSPP) as a part of education programme of European Union which is one of the most popular international education programmes. To address this issue, the present study aimed to develop a validity and reliable a student evaluation scale for CSPP. In the present study, applying scale development processes, student evaluation scale for CSPP with 19 items and four factors entitling *active citizenship, interest-motivation to*

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lessons, ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) and *language skills* emerged. These four factors explain 52.32 percent of total variance.

The results of this study have been considerable in terms of determining what the level of contribution of the projects is and in terms of caring out a reliable monitoringevaluation process in the schools participated in Comenius project. And also this developed scale in terms of the items and factors can make significant contribution to other collecting tools.

APPENDIX II. Turkish Version of student evaluation scale for CSPP with dimensions

(COMENIUS OKUL ORTAKLIKLARI PROJESI OGRENCI DEGERLENDIRME OLCEGI)

	Bu okulda yürütülen Comenius projesi, öğrencilerin	Hiç	Az	Orta derece	Çok
		Katıl-	Katılı-	Katılı-	Katılı-
		miyorum	yorum	yorum	yorum
	Aktif Vatandaşlık				
	- bir sorunun çok fazla çözümünün olabileceğini düşünmelerini sağlamıştır.				
37	 bilinçli bir insan olmanın topluma yapacağı etkiyi anlamalarını sağlamıştır. 			_ 3	
38	 okul dışındaki kurum ve kuruluşlarla (Ör. Belediye, dernek, vakıf, şirket, gibi) işbirliği yapmanın önemini kavramışlardır. 			□,	
	- toplumu bilinçlendirmenin önemini anlamalarını sağlamıştır			_ 3	
41	- doğayı korumak ve geliştirmek için insanlara düşen görevleri daha fazla önemsemelerini sağlamıştır.			□,	
44	- sorumlu bir insan olmanın gereğini anlamalarını sağlamıştır.				□_₄
51	- başarısızlık karşısında vazgeçmemeyi öğrenmelerini sağlamıştır.				□_4
	- engelli insanları daha iyi anlamalarını sağlamıştır.			□ ₃	□₄
54	- engelli insanlara yardım etmenin önemini daha iyi anlamalarını sağlamıştır.			□,	
	Derslere olan ilgi, güdülenme				
7	- ders çalışırken yeni yöntemler kullanmalarını sağlamıştır.			 3	□_4
8	- derslere karşı olan olumsuz tutumlarını azaltmıştır.			□ ₃	
9	- derslerde daha istekli olmalarını sağlamıştır.				
	BIT (Bilgi ve İletişim Teknolojiler	i)			
25	 projede yer alan ülkelerdeki öğrencilerle internetten haberleşme becerilerini geliştirmiştir 			□,	□₄
26	- projede yer alan ülkeler hakkında bilgi edinirken bilgi teknolojilerini (ör. Bilgisayar, internet gibi) kullanma becerilerini geliştirmiştir.			□,	□_ ₄
	 Comenius projesinin web sitesindeki araçları (ör; forum, blog, mesajlaşma, animasyon, video gibi) kullanmalarını sağlamıştır. 	· 🗆 1		□,	□_ ₄
28	 Comenius projesinin web sitesinde yer alan bilgilere ulaşma becerilerini geliştirmiştir 			□ ₃	
	Dil Becerileri				
1	- projenin uygulandığı dildeki (Ör. İngilizce) seviyelerini geliştirmiştir.		\Box ,	\Box ,	
3	- ana dilini güzel bir şekilde kullanmalarını sağlaşmıştır.			,	
5	- projede yer alan ülkelerin dillerini öğrenme fırsatı bulmalarını sağlamıştır			_ 3	□₄

APPENDIX II. The English Version of student evaluation scale for CSPP with dimensions * (Suggested by Author)

	Comenius school partnership Project carried out at this school makes students	Strongly disagree		Strongly agree	
m					
	Active Citizenship				
17	- think about that a problem has more than one solution			□,	
37	- understand the impact of being conscious on the society	\square_1		□,	
	 grasp the importance of the collaboration with relevant institutions and organizations at the out-of-schools (e.g. city hall, associations, foundations, companies etc.) 			□,	□₄
39	- understand the importance of raising the awareness of public			Ω,	
41	- pay attention more to the tasks of people on protecting and developing nature			□,	
44	- understand well necessity of becoming responsible person			□,	
51	- learn to not give up when failure			□,	□_4
52	- understand more people with disabilities			□,	
54	- understand more the importance of helping to people with disabilities			□ ₃	□_4
	Interest-Motivation to Lessons				
7	- use new methods while studying lesson			□,	
8	- have less negative attitudes towards lessons			□,	□ ₄
9	- become more enthusiastic towards lessons			□,	
	ICT (Information and Communication Technolo	ogies)			
25	 develop communication skills on internet other students in partner schools participated in project 			□,	
26	- develop ICT (e.g. computer, internet) skills for accessing information about the countries in the projects			□,	
27	- use the tools on the web site of Comenius project (e.g. forum, blog, chatting, animation, video etc.)			□,	
28	develop skills for accession the information on the Companius project			Ω,	
	Language Skills				
1	- develop the skills of project's language (e.g. English)			□,	\square_4
3	- use mother language efficiently			□,	\Box_4
5	- find possibility to learn the partner countries' languages		\Box_2	\Box ,	

* **Important Note**: The validity and reliability of scale developed in the present study was performed in Turkish given its final form in Appendix I. For that, the English version is suggested by author, and does require further validation and reliability analysis.

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