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The impact of culturally enriched classes on young learners

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Abstract

The main purpose of this research is to examine the impact of culturally enriched classes on young learners in terms of motivation, knowledge, attitude, and awareness through the administration of two-week culturally enriched revision classes for 5th and 7th grade students of a Turkish middle school. The experimental groups had culturally enriched revision classes for two weeks. The topics chosen for the revision classes were food and festivals. These cultural elements were integrated to the ordinary syllabi to review the structures and vocabulary they had already learned. Data were collected before, during and after the experimental activities via three different instruments: an attitude and motivation questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and field notes taken by the researcher during the culturally enriched revision classes. The results of the questionnaire were analysed using SPSS 20.0 software and the interview protocols were analysed under five categories: experience (with other cultures), interest (in other cultures), attitude (towards learning English and other cultures), knowledge (about other cultures), and awareness (of their own and other cultures) taking into account factors such as gender and age. The results showed that the students were generally highly motivated; with the younger learners being the most motivated. To some extent, their levels of motivation showed meaningful difference according to gender. The field notes and interview results showed that most of the students were not biased against other cultures.

Keywords: Attitude, culture, motivation, young learners.

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Introduction

For years, many theories have been put forward to explain how people acquire their first language. It has been accepted that there is a critical age for first language acquisition which is deemed to be the ideal time to acquire the language properly. However, for second language acquisition, it is still debatable whether or not there is such a period, although, it is generally accepted the earlier the better. With developments in the areas of politics, economics and technology, today's world is shrinking, and people are more likely to be in contact with those in other countries. In order to do this, they need to use a medium language which is the most widely accepted and today- that is English. For these very reasons, teaching English in Turkish schools was changed during the educational reforms of 2012-2013 in order to start teaching English as a foreign language at the 2nd grade.

Up until now, various approaches and methods have been introduced to teach and learn a second language. There has been a continuum starting with the Grammar Translation Method and ending with Communicative Language Teaching. As teachers try to train communicatively competent learners, they should pay attention to all the components of communicative competence; but, sociolinguistic competence is more abstract than the communicative competence for both learners and teachers as it requires experiencing rather than just learning.

Hymes (1972) introduced the term 'communicative competence', encompassing all types of language knowledge that are employed to interact successfully and effectively. Canale and Swain (1980) defined four components of communicative competence. The first one is 'grammatical competence'; the knowledge of lexical morphological, syntactical and phonological features of language, providing the linguistic basis for the rules of usage which normally result in accuracy of performance. The second one is 'strategic competence' that includes communication strategies, which we may call into action to compensate for communication break-downs due to performance variables or insufficient competence. The third one is called 'discourse competence', which includes the ability to deal with the extended use of language in context with keeping the cohesion and coherence of the communication. The last one is 'sociolinguistic competence', which deals with the social rules of language use. Using the appropriate language according to such factors as the role of the participants in a given interaction, their social status, the information they share, and the function of the interaction are important (Alptekin, 2002, pp. 57-58). As teachers try to train communicatively competent learners, they should pay attention to all components; but, sociolinguistic competence is more abstract than the others for both learners and teachers as it requires experiencing rather than just learning.

For sociolinguistic competence, we need to make a distinction between "*cultural knowledge*" and "*cultural awareness*". Tomlinson and Masuhara (2004) provide an explanation about their concept of *cultural awareness* as distinct from *cultural knowledge*. Cultural knowledge (that is, information about the target culture, its typical patterns of behaviour and its attitudes) is likely to be 'external', 'static', 'stereotypical' and 'reduced'; that is, it tends to be knowledge that is passed on to a learner from someone else, rather than

arising from the learner's own experience; it reflects broad generalisations often based on a narrow selection of evidence. Whereas cultural awareness is an approach to culture which emphasises not information about a culture but skills in exploring, observing and understanding difference and sameness, and perhaps most centrally, "suspension of judgement, i.e. not being instantly critical of other people's apparently deviant behaviour" (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2004, p. 7). Therefore, as teachers, we should promote our students' cultural awareness. While teachers are increasing their students' cultural awareness they should distinguish between the three distinct views put forward by Chambers (2004). The first one is 'monocultural perspective', which refers to the target culture as homogeneous, static and monolingual by neglecting the diversity of the cultures. Secondly, 'multicultural perspective' compensates for the one dimensional bias of the monocultural perspective but doesn't fully recognise the dynamic features of the cultures. The last perspective is the intercultural one, which takes into account both the dynamic process of change and the diversity of the cultures (as cited in Rantz & Horan, 2005).

Rantz and Horan (2005) claim that "cultures can only be defined in relation to each other" and define intercultural awareness as it "implies both a 'window' on the culture/cultures of the target countries and a 'mirror', where we discover ourselves in the process of discovering the other culture" (p. 210). Also it implies a shift from '*ethnocentrism*' to '*ethnorelativism*' which is the ability to decentre, to see things from someone else's perspective, to develop 'empathy' as well as an awareness of the intercultural process of change of both individuals and societies arising out of the dynamics of encounters between them (Rantz & Horan, 2005, p. 211). Rantz and Horan (2005) also explain 'intercultural communicative competence', or 'intercultural competence' in short, as a combination of 'intercultural awareness' with 'communicative competence' (p. 211).

Alptekin (2002) argues that "communicative competence, with its standardised native speaker norms, fails to reflect the lingua franca status of English" (p. 60). He explains that "given the lingua franca status of English, it is clear that much of the world needs and uses English for instrumental reasons such as professional contact, academic study, and commercial pursuit. In this context, much communication in English involves (and will increasingly involve) non-native speaker/non-native speaker interactions" (p. 61). Following this point it is impossible to talk about target culture from a monocultural perspective. Culture is not static or homogeneous. Therefore teachers of English may seek ways of opening new windows for their students by making them aware that other cultures exist; all of which bring variety to our world. In this study the term *target culture* refers to the cultures apart from the speaker's own culture. As the English language does not represent a singular culture, due to its current function and worldwide usage, its cultural aspect cannot be taught in the same way that other components of the language are taught.

In Turkey, most teachers neglect the communicative function of English and teach it just to make the students pass such exams as TEOG, which is the exam taken by the 8th graders compulsorily in Turkey and it consists of six lessons: Turkish, maths, science, social sciences, religious, culture and morality, and English, and YDS, which is a language proficiency test administered in different languages. However, the neglect of the

communicative function of English makes students biased against both English and cultures that are different from theirs. Therefore, it seems worthwhile to conduct studies of the cultural awareness and motivation of young learners via culturally enriched English language classes of the 5th and 7th grades as our participants were primary school students.

What is Culture?

Culture has been defined in different ways by different people. Kramsch (1996) mentions two definitions of the term ‘culture’. The first comprises the representations of a social group itself and others through their works of art, literature, social institutions, or artefacts of everyday life, and the mechanisms for their reproduction and preservation through history. The second has been defined by Brislin (1990, p. 11) as referring “to widely shared ideals, values, formation and uses of categories, assumptions about life, and goal-directed activities that become unconsciously or subconsciously accepted as ‘right’ and ‘correct’ by people who identify themselves as members of a society”.

Culture is a way of life and our collective identity (Brown, 1994, p. 176). Brown (1994) also makes the simile that culture is like the glue binding a group of people together. It shapes the way we behave as a group, gives us expectations of other group members and our sensitivity towards certain matters (Larson & Smalley, 1972). Brown (1994) explains that culture is our template and despite the increases of interaction between people around the world, they are still inclined to perceive that their own reality is in fact correct. However, perception is subjective and it has the traces of someone’s own culture. So, whilst you may perceive something as being correct, it may in fact be unpleasant for someone from a different culture. Therefore, misunderstandings between people from different cultures stem from these differences in their perceptions (Brown, 1994).

If we think of a person as being like a piece of dough, we consider that ‘culture’ in which they were born as being the baker who shapes the dough, and the oven that cooks it.

Language and Culture

Language is the medium for both oral and written communication. When people exchange information, they not only speak, but also observe each other’s social or cultural identities. Therefore, they adjust the way in which they communicate according to these identities. Communicative competence deals with this aspect by assuming that language learners need sociolinguistic competence as well as grammatical competence.

As stated by Byram (1997), the concept of communicative competence is developed by Hymes (1972). However, Hymes analyses the social interaction of a group using one language. Communicative competence is interpreted independently by Canale and Swain (1980) in North America, and by van Ek (1986) in Europe. Canale and Swain based their study on the work of Hymes and others; however, van Ek introduces his work as a Council of Europe project (Byram, 1997). Both studies have a lot in common: van Ek (1986) claims that foreign language teaching is concerned with the personal and social development of the learner, as well as training in communication skills. It includes references to ‘social

competence’, ‘the promotion of autonomy’ and ‘the development of social responsibility’ (as cited in Byram, 1997).

Byram (1997) also provides details of van Ek’s six competencies for ‘communicative ability’. The first is ‘linguistic competence’, which is the capability to produce meaningful utterances according to the rules of the language. The second is ‘sociolinguistic competence’; that is, the awareness of the appropriate language forms for setting, communicative intention etc. The next is ‘discourse competence’, which relates to using appropriate strategies to interpret the texts. Another competence is ‘strategic competence’, which is necessary to comprehend meaning by using strategies such as asking for clarification. ‘Socio-cultural competence’ requires the foreign language learner to be familiar with the context to which that language belongs. The last competence is ‘social competence’, involving “both the will and the skill to interact with others, involving motivation, attitude, self-confidence, empathy and the ability to handle social situations” (van Ek, 1986, p. 65, cited in Byram, 1997, p. 10).

In terms of linguistic and sociolinguistic competence, Byram (1997) claims that van Ek points to the native speaker as an implicit definition of the model. However, this native speaker model is criticised for two reasons. Firstly, it ignores the conditions under which a native speaker acquires the language. Secondly, even if it were possible to be as competent as a native speaker, it would create a form of linguistic schizophrenia, as it requires abandoning their own language and culture in order to be accepted as a native speaker by other native speakers. Byram (1997) also suggests that rather than imitating a native speaker, the learner should be able to understand the differences and similarities between their own and other systems.

By considering all the aspects discussed above, teachers of the English language should aim to raise their students’ intercultural awareness; which implies a shift from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism. Intercultural awareness means developing knowledge, attitudes, skills, and education; so not just a matter of knowledge acquisition.

Cultural approaches to foreign language teaching

Risager (1998) describes four approaches to foreign language teaching inspired by the concepts of culture from philosophical aspects described by Welsch (1995). The first approach is the *foreign-cultural approach*. It widely focuses on the target countries in which the language is spoken by neglecting the learners’ own country and the relationships between the target country and the learners’ country, or other countries. Murphy (1988 as cited in Risager, 1998) calls this approach monocultural. It considers the variations such as geographic social or subcultural within one culture.

The second approach is the *intercultural approach*. Like the foreign-cultural approach, the main focus is on the target country, or countries, in the intercultural approach, but it also takes into consideration the learners’ own country, and relations between the target countries and the learners’ and the other countries. Both in the foreign-cultural approach and in the intercultural approach, target language is taught as though it were a first language. However the aim is to develop a competence that a learner functions as a mediator between

the two cultures, and to use the target language to communicate with the native speakers. Ammon (1991 as cited in Risager, 1998, pp. 244-245) called this choice as asymmetrically dominant in which a native speaker of the target language and a speaker of as a foreign language take part. This approach considers each culture to be homogeneous and disregards geographical and social variations. However, most countries have a multicultural and multilingual character.

Another approach is the *multicultural approach*. The multicultural approach assumes that the culture of a country actually embodies many cultures within the same borders; where the national language is the first language for some, and a second or foreign language to others. Like the intercultural approach, the multicultural approach aims to develop intercultural and communicative competence of the mediator. However, the mediator can use the target language as a lingua franca while communicating with speakers of the target language as their first language and also with those from a different cultural background for whom the target language is also not their first language (Risager, 1998).

The last approach is the *transcultural approach*. The departure point of the transcultural approach is cultures intertwined by migration, tourism, communication systems, and economic relations by using a number of lingua francas. The teaching considers the target language as first, second and international language. The approach still aims to develop intercultural and communicative language, but it takes into account the use of the contact language in different situations characterised by different cultural complexity and also as a lingua franca in international and interethnic communication (Risager, 1998).

To conclude, teachers of languages should be aware of the characteristics of their students and seek ways to help them to set goals, and to initiate and sustain their efforts to reach these goals. Also they should keep in mind the function of language as a bridge between different cultures; therefore they should encourage students to gain increased insights into different cultures.

Method

The data of the study were collected via both qualitative and quantitative research methods in order to address these research questions:

1. How does age factor affect students' motivation to learn English and their attitudes towards other cultures?
2. How does gender factor affect their motivation to learn English and their attitudes towards other cultures?
3. What kind of difference occurs between students who have two-week culturally enriched classes and those who do not?

The purpose for using a mixed method was to validate the quantitative findings with research of a qualitative method. We worked with young learners, whose personal world view

have not reached a certain maturity, thus, they are more susceptible to be affected by their peers; i.e., they can be sometimes reluctant to advocate an opposing view, and instead opt to behave in the same way as their peers. As a quantitative method, questionnaires were employed. As a qualitative method, student interviews were conducted and field notes were taken during the activities in order to deepen and validate the results of the questionnaires administered, both before and after the two weeks of culturally-focused lessons.

In this study, the transcultural approach was adopted as it considers lingua franca status of English and uses it in international and interethnic communication. Therefore, eight countries (Japan, China, Russia, Egypt, Turkey, UK, USA, and Spain) were selected from different parts of the world to represent several cultures to which students could be introduced. The topic of the first week was 'food'. This topic was introduced to review countries, food and expressing likes and dislikes (5th graders), expressing preferences (7th graders) and learning new related vocabulary through activities such as short dialogues. In the second week, the topic was 'festivals'. This topic was introduced to review months of the year, countries, food and drinks (5th graders), making suggestions and using conjunctions and/but/because (7th graders). The main purpose for choosing these topics was to help students gain insight into other cultures. For this purpose, throughout the research intervention, while experimental groups were having those culturally enriched revision classes, control groups had revision classes that were supported by their syllabi and course books.

Sampling

The participants of the study were 56 students in their 5th grade (aged 11), and 66 students in their 7th grade (aged 13) who were studying at the Selimiye Primary School, Turkey, during the 2011-2012 education year. All the students had started learning English at the 4th grade, and were generally from a similar social background. All the students were learning English as a foreign language, with Turkish being their first language. The participant groups were mixed, with both female and male learners, attending two different levels and eight different classes. Classes 5/A, 5/B, 7/A, and 7/B were the experimental groups who had culturally enriched revision classes during a two-week period, whilst classes 5/C, 5/D, 7/C, and 7/D were the control groups.

Instruments

The data required for the research were collected via three different instruments; an attitude and motivation questionnaire, semi-structured interview and field notes recorded by the researcher throughout the culturally enriched revision classes.

The Attitude and Motivation Questionnaire

The attitude questionnaire (see Appendix A) developed by Kara (2003) was administered both before and after revision classes. The questionnaire is a five-point Likert-scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". The reliability of the measuring instrument was found to be high (Cronbach Alpha .94). The questionnaire has 54 items

related to four categories: love of English, interest in learning English, desire for and expectations from learning English and concerns about learning English. The questionnaire consists of 25 negative and 29 positive questions. The lowest possible score of the questionnaire is 54, while the highest score is 270.

In order to prevent any possible misunderstanding the attitude questionnaire was administered in Turkish, which is the mother tongue of all the students. The questionnaires were administered to the students by the researcher on different days. Since the attitude questionnaire has 54 items, which is considered too long for young learners, the researcher helped them out by explaining each item. Participants were informed about the aim and scope of the study and reassured that the results and their answers would not affect their grades, in order to prevent the recording of unreliable data. The students were not given a time limit for answering.

Semi-Structured Interviews

The interview (see Appendix B) has 52 main questions most of which were adapted from the study of Byram (1991b). The questions are related to five main categories: experience (*with the target culture*), interest (*in other cultures*), attitude (*towards other cultures*), knowledge (*about other cultures*), and awareness (*of their own and other cultures and the target language*). There are two questions to assess their experience with other cultures. To assess their interests in different cultures or learning English, seven questions were asked. The participants were then asked 16 questions to figure out their attitudes towards other cultures, and 18 to identify their knowledge about other cultures. Lastly, to understand their awareness of their own culture, and the role of English, nine questions were asked.

Interviews were conducted in Turkish, the mother tongue of the participants, as they are not proficient enough to understand and answer in English. The interviews were carried out after the pre-test was applied via the attitude questionnaire, so as to support the results of the questionnaire. After the post-test, further interviews were applied in order to validate both the field notes taken during the activities and the results of the questionnaire.

Interview participants were chosen according to results of the questionnaire. Those, who scored 220 or lower, were considered as the 'low motivation' group. Those, who scored 260 or higher, were considered as the 'high motivation' group. 15 participants were interviewed, chosen at random according to their classes. Namely, both for the low and high motivation group, one participant was chosen from each class. For the high motivation group in the 7th grade there were no students from class 7/D as none scored higher than 260.

Field notes

Field notes are used frequently during the observation process. They could be either short written notes or recorded ones by cameras and audio recorders. Yıldırım and Şimşek (2008) put forward that the researcher tries to take notes by making use of abbreviations and symbols learned before the observation. It is impossible to take long and detailed notes during the observation otherwise some events are likely to be missed. Thus, the researcher should

balance note taking and observation, recording short points that can be expanded and completed in detail after the observation.

For observation video cameras and recorders can also be used. If we consider that we conduct a research with young learners, their attention span can be an issue, field notes were decided upon as the preferred method for this study. One of the researchers was the teacher of the experimental groups so she both taught the topic and took the notes by focusing on some key factors such as different opinions varied according to the age and gender of the participants and biased opinions against other cultures.

Data Analysis

The data of the study were analysed through both quantitative and qualitative methods. The data collected via the motivation and attitude questionnaire were analysed through (Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 20.0 software.

Firstly, the total scores of the students after administering the questionnaire by Kara (2003) at the beginning and end of the process were entered into SPSS 20.0. The mean and standard deviation of their scores, and the minimum and maximum scores for the students were also calculated. The analyses include both the overall results and the results of each group. The same process was applied for the post-test results. Afterwards, the pre-test and post-test results of learners were compared in order to detect possible changes in the motivation levels and attitudes of the students. Besides, Independent Samples T-test was used to identify whether there was any significant relationship between age, gender and the attitudes and motivations of the students.

Secondly, the participants were interviewed and their responses were recorded before and after the revision classes took place. The results were analysed under five categories and for each question, their responses were analysed and compared to previous results.

Lastly, field notes were used to verify and support the data collected via the questionnaire and interviews.

Findings and Discussions

The results of the study will be discussed in accordance with variables of age, gender, and experience.

The effects of age on the motivation and attitudes of the students

People from different age groups have different cognitive development levels, needs and motivation for learning. Because of this, the relationship between age and motivation is investigated by this study. Table 1 below shows the pre- and post-test scores of the students at 5th and 7th grades.

Table 1
Results of the independent *t* test between 5th and 7th graders

Tests	Groups	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Pre-test	5 th Grade	56	246.2	25.14	3.722	0.00
	7 th Grade	66	227.1	30.64		
Post-test	5 th Grade	56	239.5	32.94	2.274	0.025
	7 th Grade	66	225.2	35.73		

Table 1 shows that the 5th grade students are more motivated than those in the 7th grade. Sig. 2-tailed values illustrate that there is a strong relationship between the age and motivation levels of the students. When all these data are considered, their post-test motivation scores are seen to be lower than the pre-test; as mentioned before, there are many factors affecting the motivation of learners. However, it can be concluded that age affects the motivation of learners. According to their post-test results, the participants scored higher than the pre-test; this may be the reason why the scores of the experimental groups of the 7th graders are, higher while both the 5th and 7th graders of the control groups are lower. The reason for this difference may be derived from the fact that the English language teacher of the control groups resigned at the end of the first term and they had a different teacher for the second term. This was noted from responses to Question 9, with “I love my English teacher very much” being the results of the control groups for both the 5th and 7th graders for this item.

Table 2
Pre and post-test results of control groups for question item 9

Test	Grade	Score	Frequency	Percent
Pre-test	5 th Grade	2,00	1	3,6
		5,00	27	96,4
		Total	28	100,00
	7 th Grade	4,00	2	7,4
		5,00	25	92,6
		Total	27	100,00
Post-test	5 th Grade	1,00	4	14,3
		2,00	1	3,6
		3,00	4	14,3
		4,00	5	17,9
		5,00	14	50,00
		Total	28	100,00
	7 th Grade	1,00	5	18,5
		3,00	5	18,5
		4,00	8	29,6
		5,00	9	33,3
		Total	27	100,00

In the light of those data, it is obvious that the replacement of another teacher has an effect on the motivation of the students in control groups.

In terms of attitudes of the learners, it could be said that the students are not biased against target cultures in general. When their responses to the interview question items in the category of *attitude* (e.g. *Question 4 and 10: "Question4: Have you ever imagined living abroad? If you imagine living abroad as a Turkish person, where would you most and least like it to be? Why, Question10: Would you like to live with a foreign family in another country for a few weeks? Why?"*) were considered, it was found that only two students responded with negative attitudes. Most of them wanted to live in or see any foreign country.

Student4: "I do not want to live in Greece. Because they conquered the Aegean Region and also there is a Greek football player, I do not like him, either".

Student1: "I do not want to live in Syria because they burned a Turkish flag, I saw this on TV".

Those two students had low motivation to learn English and were both 5th graders. Student1 was in the experimental group, after the research intervention his reply to Question 4 was as follows:

Student1: "Yes. I would like to live in Paris most as it is a beautiful city. I can live in all countries".

As these interview results show, the 5th graders had some negative attitudes towards other cultures, but this case changed after experiencing the culturally enriched classes. Attitude and motivation are so complex that they cannot be generalised from this data, but the data points out that the 5th graders have higher motivation levels and more positive attitudes towards learning English. However, according to the interview results, some participants were found to be biased against some countries, and it could be said that their attitudes decreased slightly after the culturally enriched classes when the excerpts above are considered.

In this study, the students' ages were between 11 and 13. The 5th graders are still young learners, whereas the 7th graders are considered early adolescents (Pinter, 2011). It can be inferred from the results of the motivation and attitude questionnaire that the 5th graders are more motivated. There have been many studies on second language or foreign language learning motivation and age, and most of their results show that the level of learners' motivation decreases as they are getting older. The result of this study is supported by the study of Ghenghesh (2010) who investigated the motivation of a heterogeneous group of foreign language learners. The result of the study showed that the motivation of learners at lower grades is higher, with the majority of learners' motivation decreased in the higher grades. In addition, according to the study of Williams, Burden, and Lanvers (2002), 7th graders have higher scores for motivation than 9th graders. Furthermore, similar results are presented by Sung and Padilla (1998) who claim that the motivation levels of primary school students are higher than those at secondary school.

In terms of their attitudes towards English language, learning English and other cultures, this study found no conclusive finding justifying the relationship between age and attitudes. However, there were two 5th grade students, who stated that they did not want to live in Greece or Syria as they considered them as enemies of Turkey. Also, one of the 7th grade students stated that learning English negatively affected their Turkish language. Therefore, a firm conclusion about the relationship between age and attitudes cannot be drawn. This is also supported by the study of Byram et al. (1991a), which suggests that younger learners show generally more negative attitudes and adds that the relationships between age, school class and gender are very complex.

The effects of gender on motivation and attitudes of the students

Numerous studies have been conducted to seek relations between gender and motivation. Mainly, female students mostly have higher motivation levels than their male counterparts. Table 3 illustrates the results from this study in terms of gender.

Table 3

Results of the independent t test between female and male students

Tests	Groups	N	Mean	SD	T	p
Pre-test	Female	68	238.4	30.09	1.069	0.287
	Male	54	232.6	29.20		
Post-test	Female	68	237.9	32.22	2.200	0.030
	Male	54	224.1	37.25		

As seen in Table 3, according to the mean scores of the pre-test, female students score higher than male students. t value is 1.069 and Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.287. According to these values there is no significant difference between their scores.

When the results of the post-test were analysed, the mean score of the female students' motivation levels are almost the same as the results of the pre-test. The standard deviation shows that the difference between the students' scores is higher than the results of the pre-test. The motivation levels of male students became lower according to the post-test results and there is a quite high difference between their scores. Unlike the results of the pre-test, these values show a significant difference between the scores of female and male students in terms of their motivation to learn English.

When it comes to their attitudes, the results of the interviews illustrate that female students have no specific negative attitude towards other cultures. The answers of the students to the question item 10 "*Would you like to live with a foreign family in another country for a few weeks? Why?*" are presented below:

Student 1: "*No, I would not as we do not speak the same language*".

Student 4: *“Our country is better, even if I can speak English I would not like to. They are different and it is not a safe place”.*

Student 10: *“I have never thought about it, I would not like to, as I do not know their lives and what they will do”.*

Those were all responses by male students, from both the experimental and control groups of the 5th and 7th grades. Following are the replies of female participants:

Student 6: *“Yes, because I wonder their lives”.*

Student 9: *“Absolutely. I would like to learn their culture (Japan). The more knowledge and experience is better”.*

Student 12: *“If I can speak, why not? In order to learn their cultures and see how those places are”.*

As seen, almost all the male participants show negative attitudes towards another culture, whilst the females are positive about visiting other countries to stay with a foreign family. Field notes taken by the researcher also support this.

Week 1: *“...When I stated to show the pictures of food dishes from other countries they found eating pork quite strange and they were strict about not eating pork or bacon, especially the 5th graders. One 7th grade student stated s/he could eat it as s/he wondered about the taste of it. Until that student stated his/her opinion, all the students agreed not to eat it, but after his/her explanation, the number of students who would like to taste it increased.”*

It could be concluded from all the data presented that female learners were more positive towards other cultures. According to the pre-test results of the attitude and motivation questionnaire, there was no significant difference between gender and the students' motivation. However, the results of the post-test illustrate a significant difference with respect to gender. Acat and Demiral (2002) investigated problems of those learning English and how these factors differ according to age, gender, and occupation. They found that female learners were more motivated and interested in learning languages. Also, in their study to investigate the motivation of secondary school students in South-western England to learn foreign languages, Williams et al. (2002) found that female students had a higher level of motivation than male students.

On the other hand, it is noticeable from the results of the interviews that none of the female students had negative attitudes towards other cultures, though some of them stated that they did not want to live in another country, they explained this in terms of emotional reasons, such as missing their parents. Yet, significantly, three male students interviewed from both the 5th and 7th grade experimental and control groups, were clearly negative about other cultures or languages stating Greece and Syria as their enemies, and that English harms their Turkish language. This result is supported by the findings of Byram et al. (1991a) who state that at both primary and secondary schools female students have more positive attitudes towards French than boys.

What kind of difference occurred between students who had culturally enriched classes and those who do not?

In terms of student motivation levels, although 5th graders were more motivated, the mean score of the post-test decreased slightly from 244.03 to 240.60. There is no precise information about what affects their motivation levels. Nevertheless, the mean scores for motivation levels of the 7th grade students in experimental groups increased to 234.38 from 229.02 after two weeks of culturally enriched classes.

Also investigated throughout this study were their attitudes towards other cultures. Female students were found to be more positive towards other countries, which is supported by the results of the semi-structured interviews and field notes above.

Their knowledge about festivals held in other countries and their food also increased after two-week culturally enriched classes. After the research intervention, the same interview questions were asked to the same students of both experimental and control groups. The students of the experimental groups gave more specific and varied answers to the interview question items such as *“What do you think about the food dishes of other countries”, “What do they eat or drink?” “Do you think they eat these every day? What about special days like birthdays or Christmas?”, “What do they have for breakfast, lunch and dinner?”, “Do you think there are such festivals in other countries, too? What are they? How are they celebrated?”* An interview question item that aimed at revealing their knowledge about other cultures is presented below in order to clarify the impact of revision classes on their level of knowledge:

Question 26: “Do you think there are such festivals in other countries, too? What are they? How are they celebrated?”

Student6: *“Maybe, but I have not heard about it”* (First interview).
“There are Halloween, Easter and St. Patrick’s Day. On St. Patrick’s Day, they wear green and dye the rivers green. On Halloween they say ‘trick or treat’ and collect candies like we do. At Easter, they dye eggs and there is an Easter Bunny” (Second interview).

Student3: *“There may be, but I do not know”* (First interview)
“On St. Patrick’s Day, they wear green; on Christmas the day on which Jesus was born, they hang stockings and decorate the Christmas tree” (Second interview).

Student5: *“There may be, but I have not heard”* (First interview).
“Emperor’s Birthday, Easter eggs, dragon dance, and cooking turkey” (Second interview).

Considering all these findings, culturally enriched classes may help our students’ levels of motivation and knowledge about other cultures.

Conclusion

The first reason for investigating this topic is to contribute to the literature on the relationship between cultural bias against other cultures, and motivation to learn English – cultural studies that focus on bias are not yet common in Turkey, although they are trending worldwide. The starting point of this study was the continuous questions of students of the researchers about why English is taught compulsorily in Turkey, whilst Turkish is not learnt by other nationalities like English. This leads the researchers to question whether the students have any bias against other cultures and if so, whether it affects their motivation level or not. The study concludes that culturally enriched themes can be very effective on students' knowledge levels about other cultures. It may also affect their motivation to learn English and help them cope with bias against other cultures.

After two weeks of culturally enriched English classes, there were some changes, both positive and negative in many aspects such as motivations, attitudes, and knowledge about other cultures.

Firstly, the motivation levels of the students are presented. If the teacher replacement (between first and second term) of the control groups is ignored, it could be inferred that the motivation levels of the 5th grade students decreased. There were no obvious data about why this decrease occurred, however, it is known that the motivation of students can be affected by many factors. Oxford and Shearin (1994) identify some factors affecting language learning motivation: attitudes towards target language or culture, beliefs like anxiety and self-efficacy, goals; environmental support like teacher and peer support; involvement in the language learning process; and lastly, personal attributes like age, gender, and aptitude. But the motivation levels of the 7th graders in the experimental groups were higher when compared to the results of the pre-test. Therefore, no firm conclusion could be drawn that either culturally enriched lessons have a positive or negative effect on the motivation of young learners.

Secondly, their attitudes were observed to find out whether there was a change or not after taking culturally enriched English classes. Generally, the students were not found to have bias against other cultures, or strong negative attitudes towards learning English. However, according to the field notes taken by the researcher, they suggested the students were strict about eating pork or bacon: a 7th grader stated that s/he could eat it as s/he wondered about its taste. Until s/he stated his/her opinion, every student agreed not to eat it. However, after his/her explanation, the number of students who would like to taste it increased. It could be inferred that, as claimed by Harmer (2001), peer approval for adolescents is more important than that of the teacher. Yet, the 5th graders were strict about pork and bacon. Though this is supported by the study of Byram et al. (1991a) by suggesting that younger learners show generally more negative attitudes, the relationship between age and attitudes is too complex to make a firm conclusion.

Another difference was in their levels of knowledge about other cultures. As mentioned before, there were some differences between their first and last interview results in terms of their knowledge about other cultures. For instance, the 5th graders only knew about Christmas and Halloween before the culturally enriched classes, however, their replies varied

after just two weeks. The students also did not understand much about the food dishes of other cultures, except for Sushi; but after the revision classes, it was observed that they gave more varied examples, like pancakes and rice. It could be concluded that culturally enriched lessons may improve students' knowledge.

There are some limitations of this study. Field notes were taken by the researcher; if they were taken by another observer they would be more objective. Besides this, the questionnaire was quite long for especially 5th graders when their attention span is considered but this was eliminated by not setting a time limit and explaining each item to them. Additionally, a two-week intervention could be accepted as insufficient to gather the needed data; however the researcher was also the teacher of the experimental groups for two years, she had adequate information about the students.

Further studies could be administered over a longer period of time in order to obtain more detailed and distinct data in this field, or from different schools or different regions of Turkey, whose students are from different socioeconomic backgrounds. In addition, other studies could be conducted to consider the role of multi-media and television in the motivation or bias against target culture of young learners.

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APPENDIX A

İNGİLİZCE DERSİ İLE İLGİLİ TUTUM ÖLÇEĞİ

Aşağıda İngilizce dersiyle ilgili çeşitli ifadeler verilmiştir. Bir ifadeye hangi oranda katılıyorsanız, lütfen onun altındaki sütunu "X" ile işaretleyiniz. Verdiğiniz bilgiler İngilizce dersiyle ilgili istek, beklenti, sevgi, ilgi, merak ve kaygılarınızı belirlemede kullanılmakla birlikte bilimsel amaç taşımaktadır.

Katılımınız için teşekkürler.

Adı-Soyadı: Sınıfı: Numarası:	Tamamen katılıyorum	Kısmen katılıyorum	Karasızım	Çoğunlukla katılmıyorum	Hiç katılmıyorum
1. İngilizce çalışmaktan hoşlanırım					
2. Arkadaşlarımla İngilizce çalışmayı severim					
3. Boş zamanlarımda İngilizce çalışırım					
4. İngilizce dersini severim					
5. Arkadaşlarımla İngilizce konuşmayı severim					
6. İngilizce öğrenmek gereklidir					
7. Mümkün olsa her gün İngilizce çalışırım					
8. İngilizce öğrenmek çok zevklidir					
9. İngilizce öğretmenimi çok seviyorum					
10. İngilizce öğrenmek heyecan dolu bir maceradır					
11. İngilizce dersine ilgi duyuyorum					
12. İngilizce öğrenmek gereksiz ve anlamsızdır					
13. Zayıf not alsam bile İngilizce dersine devam etmek isterim					
14. İngilizce dersi önemli ve gerekli bir derstir.					
15. İngilizce dersi zamanımı harcamaktan başka bir işe yaram					
16. İngilizce konuşulan bir ülkede bir süre yaşamak isterim					
17. İngilizce dersi zamanımı harcamaktadır					
18. İngilizce dersine girmekten hoşlanmam					
19. İngiliz yaşam biçimini merak ediyorum					

20. İngilizce dersi zaman kaybından başka bir işe yaramıyor					
21. Turistlerle İngilizce konuşmayı çok istiyorum					
22. İngilizce dersine çalışmak hoşuma gidiyor					
23. Hiçbir şey beni İngilizce öğrenmekten vazgeçiremez					
24. Ne kadar zor olursa olsun İngilizce öğretilmelidir					
25. İngilizce dersinde çaba göstermek gerekir					
26. Boş zamanlarımda İngilizce çalışmaktan hoşlanırım					
27. İş hayatımda İngilizce'nin faydası büyük olacaktır					
28. İngilizce'yi öğrenmek hayatımı kazanmada bana katkıda bulunacaktır					
29. İleriki çalışmalarımda İngilizce'ye ihtiyaç duyacağım					
30. İngilizce öğrenmeyi çok istiyorum					
31. İngilizce öğrenerek İngiliz arkadaşlar edinmek istiyorum					
32. Gün geçtikçe İngilizce'nin önemi artmaktadır.					
33. Geleceğim için İngilizce önemlidir					
34. Yetişkin olduğumda İngilizce'yi birçok yerde kullanacağım					
35. Ödevlerimi yaparken İngilizce dersi bende bunalıma sebep oluyor					
36. Ne zaman İngilizce çalışsam içimde bir rahatsızlık hissediyorum					
37. Öğretmenimiz İngilizce'yi öğretmiyor					
38. Ezberim zayıf olduğundan İngilizce öğrenemiyorum					
39. İngilizce dersinde dikkatimi toplayamıyorum					
40. İngilizce'yi bir türlü öğrenemiyorum					
41. İngilizce dersinde okuma zorluğu çekiyorum					
42. İngilizce dersinde başarısızım					
43. İngilizce dersinde başarılı olamıyorum					
44. İngilizce dersleri çok zordur					
45. İngilizce konuşmaktan kaçınıyorum					
46. Dil öğrenmeye yetenekli değilim					
47. İngilizce ödevlerimi tek başıma yapamıyorum					

48. İngilizce dersleri çok sıkıcı geçiyor					
49. İngilizce dersinde başarılı olmak imkânsızdır					
50. İngilizce dersi beynimi yoruyor					
51. İngilizce dersi bana beceriksiz olduğumu gösterdi					
52. İngilizce dersine başladığımızda başım ağrır					
53. İngilizce sorulara cevap vermekten korkuyorum					
54. İngilizce dersinin olduğu günler okula gitmek istemiyorum					

APPENDIX B

Görüşme formu

Giriş bölümü

Daha önce doldurduğunuz anketlerden de bildiğiniz gibi ben sadece sizin diğer ülkeler ve kültürleri hakkındaki görüşlerinizi merak ediyorum, bu görüşmede sorulacak soruların doğru ya da yanlış bir cevabı yok. Ben gerçekten sizin ne düşündüğünüzü bilmek istiyorum. Daha önceki anketlere vermiş olduğunuz cevaplar gibi söylediğiniz her şey de gizli kalacak, sizi dinleyen sadece ben olacağım. Ancak görüşmeyi söylediğiniz her şeyi not almak zor olacağından kaydedeceğim. Görüşmenin sonunda değiştirmek istediğin herhangi bir şey olursa bunu yapabiliriz.

1. Daha önce hiç yurtdışında bulundun mu?
 - a. Daha önce başka ülkeden biriyle tanıştın mı?
2. Hangi ülke/ler?
 - a. Hangi ülke/lerden?
3. Çok paran olsa gitmek istediğin ülke ya da ülkeler var mı?
 - a. Hangisi/Hangileri?
 - b. Neden?
4. Hiç yurtdışında yaşamayı hayal ettin mi?
 - a. Eğer bir Türk olarak başka bir ülkede yaşamayı hayal etsen bu en çok hangisi olsun istersin? Neden? (birden fazla söyleyebilirsin)
 - b. En az hangisi olsun istersin? Neden?
5. Kültür denilince aklına neler geliyor?
6. Başka ülkelerde yaşayan insanların hayatlarını merak ediyor musun? -
 - a. Hangisi/Hangileri?
 - b. En çok hangi yönünü merak ediyorsun?
 - c. Neden?
7. Başka ülkelerde yaşayan insanların hayatları hakkında bilgin var mı?
 - a. Bunu/bunları nerelerden öğrendin?
8. Sence aynı ne demektir, farklı ne demektir?
 - a. Sana göre Türklere hangi millet daha çok benziyor?
 - b. Hangisi daha az benziyor?

9. Ben başka bir ülkeye gidip orada bir ailenin yanında kalacağım. Onların günlük hayatlarını bozmadan, nasıl bir şey olur? Onların hayatları ve bizimkiler arasında hangi benzerlikler ve farklılıklar olur?
10. Sen başka bir ülkede yabancı bir ailenin yanında birkaç hafta yaşamak ister misin?
 - a. Neden?
11. Başka ülkelerde yaşayan insanların yemekleri hakkında ne düşünüyorsun, onlar neler yiyorlar ve içiyorlar?
12. Sence her gün yemekte bunları mı yiyorlar?
 - a. (Cevap evet ise) Doğum günleri, Noel gibi günlerde yemekleri nasıldır?
 - b. (cevap hayır ise) Senin bahsettiğin türlerdeki yemekleri ne zaman yiyorlardır? Günlük hayatlarında neler yiyor olabilirler?
13. Kahvaltıda ne yiyorlar?
14. Öğle yemeğinde ne yiyorlar?
15. Akşam yemeğinde ne yiyorlar?
16. Sence onlar Türk yemeklerini beğeniyorlar mıdır?
17. Bizim kahvaltılarımızda neler var?
18. Bizim yemeklerimizden birkaç tane söyleyebilir misin?
19. Bizim içeceklerimiz neler?
20. (Farklı ülkelerin yemeklerinin fotoğrafları gösterilip) Sence bu hangi ülkenin yemeği olabilir?
21. Sen tadına bakmak ister misin?
 - a. Neden?
 - b. Tadı sence nasıldır?
22. Bayram nedir?
23. Nasıl bir gündür?
24. Neler yapılır?
25. Bizim ülkemizde hangi bayramlar var?
26. Başka ülkelerin de böyle bayramları var mıdır?
 - a. Neler?
 - b. Nasıl kutlanır?
 - c. Sen onların bayramları hakkında ne düşünüyorsun?
 - d. Sen de bu bayramları kutlamak ister miydin?
27. İngilizce öğreniyor olmak senin başka ülkelerin kültürlerine ilgini artırıyor mu?
28. İngilizce derslerinde başka ülkelerin kültürlerini öğreniyor musun?

29. İngilizce hangi ülke ya da ülkelerin anadili?
30. İngilizce bilirsek hangi ülke vatandaşlarıyla iletişim kurabiliriz?
31. İngilizce öğrenmek okullarımızda zorunludur. Sen bu konu hakkında ne düşünüyorsun?
32. Sence İngilizce bilmek ve öğrenmek gerekli mi?
 - a. Neden?
 - b. Kimler için?
33. İngilizce öğrenmekten hoşlanıyor musun?
 - a. Her zaman seviyor/sevmiyor muydun? Niçin?
34. İngilizce yerine neden başka bir dil öğrenmiyoruz?
35. İngilizce yerine başka bir dil öğrenmek ister miydin?
 - a. Hangisi? Neden?
36. Ailen İngilizce öğrenmen konusunda ne düşünüyor?
 - a. Senin İngilizce konuştuğunu duysalar ne derler?
 - b. Arkadaşların ya da akrabalarının ne düşünürler?
 - c. Ailen başka milletler hakkında ne düşünüyor?
37. Başka ülkelerde de İngilizce yabancı dil olarak öğretilir mi?
38. Başka ülkelerde çocuklar ne zaman İngilizce öğrenmeye başlar?
39. İngilizce öğrenmek ülkemizi, dilimizi ve kültürümüzü etkiler mi? Nasıl?
40. İngilizce yerine başka bir dil öğrenseydik o zaman bu konularda ne düşünürdün?
41. İngilizce ya da başka bir dil öğrenmek bizi geleneklerimizden ve dilimizden koparır mı?
42. İngilizce öğrenmek Türkçe derslerimizi kötü etkiler mi?
43. İngilizcesi iyi olanlar kendi kültürünü unuttur mu?
44. Türkçeye İngilizceden geçen sözcükler olduğunu biliyor musun? Birkaç örnek verebilir misin?
45. Sen bu sözcüklerin Türkçede kullanılmasını doğru buluyor musun?
46. Sen hiç yabancı yazarların kitaplarını Türkçe olarak okudun mu?
47. Televizyonda ya da sinemada hiç yabancı film izledin mi?
48. Bildiğin ya da gördüğün dünyaca ünlü binalar, anıtlar vb. yapılar var mı?
49. Ünlü yabancı bir bilim adamı biliyor musun?
50. Ünlü yabancı bir şarkıcı, film yıldızı,....?
51. Eğer yabancı bir ailenin yanında kalman gerekse ve birisinin sana söylediği bir şeyi anlamasan nasıl hissedersin?
52. Sence başka bir ülkede yabancı olmak nasıl bir duygu olur?