

Advantages of Using Translated Stories from Students' Native Language to Teach EFL

Odilea Rocha Erkaya*

Abstract

Comprised of fable, myth, legend, tall tale, and folk tale, traditional literature, defined by Mateo (2008) as coming from the "oral tradition of storytelling before being written down" (para. 1), is read by many people in different countries. Nevertheless, most English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors prefer students to read authentic texts written for native speakers of English. The researcher believes that instructors should choose traditional stories from students' homelands because: 1. students will be motivated to read their own stories in English; 2. beginning students will not worry about getting acquainted with a different culture; 3. intermediate/advanced students will explore cultural aspects of stories without fear of criticizing them openly; and 4. instructors will be able to concentrate on vocabulary already known in the first language (L1) and guide students to learn vocabulary in context. To illustrate how to select stories to accommodate the needs of EFL students at all fluency levels, traditional Turkish literature in the form of stories of Nasreddin Hodja will be used since the researcher's students are Turkish nationals.

Keywords: Traditional Turkish stories, Nasreddin Hodja's stories; motivation to read; cultural awareness; vocabulary in context; vocabulary development

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1. Introduction and Background

Traditional or folk literature, "a genre that deals specifically with stories that were initially oral and were written down at a later date" (Hill, 2003, p. 1), consists of many subgenres. These subgenres include fable, myth, tall tale, and folk tale. In many countries, children start reading fables in L1 as soon as they learn how to read. Among the fables that children read, there may be even ones translated from a foreign

* Eskişehir Osmangazi University, Turkey, orerkaya@ogu.edu.tr

language. Accordingly, some EFL instructors may think that motivating students to read fables can be easily accomplished. Because of their level of maturity, children--who live in a world of fantasy--may understand the fables at face value, without objections. However, the same may not be true of teenagers and young adults, who consider the fables too juvenile for them because, among other reasons, the characters are animals. Nonetheless, traditional literature has other subgenres, such as folk tales, which use human characters. It may not be as hard to motivate teenage and young adult students to read folk tales.

Folk tales can be defined as "fairy, human, or animal. . . [tales] passed down by word of mouth" (Young, 2004, p. 6). Whether these tales are written for native speakers of English and presented to EFL students in their original form, condensed to suit the needs of EFL students, or translated from a foreign to the English language appears irrelevant. What matters is that short stories have what most authentic materials do not, advantages that fit most EFL teaching requirements. One of the advantages of short stories is that they provide opportunities for instructors to teach or improve students' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, grammar, and vocabulary. In addition, instructors can use short stories to encourage students to read, and to teach literary patterns, culture and higher-order thinking.

Some other advantages of using short stories to teach EFL students can be added. Collie and Slater (1990) affirm that short stories are short enough to be read in one or two classes, and their length allows students to read them more than once to fully appreciate them. Elliott (1990) concurs, stating that "students can genuinely engage with its [literature] thoughts and emotions and appreciate its aesthetic qualities" (p. 197). Moreover, with their intricate plots, short stories give intermediate/advanced students a chance to discover new details every time they read them and arrive at new insights.

Concerning their length, some short stories have only a few lines; others have a few pages. Due to their various lengths, instructors can use them with all levels of EFL proficiency. Furthermore, the shorter the story the simpler the vocabulary is, supporting the fact that some of the very short stories are, beyond any doubt, suitable for beginners. Also, very short stories have fewer complications than long stories. Beginning students should not worry about reading between the lines because usually in very short stories, there are few or no hidden messages.

The above mentioned fact may be a source of motivation. As most instructors who have been teaching for decades, the researcher always tries to find new and motivating authentic materials to bring to her courses. Her rationale is that students can learn anything faster and better when they are motivated. Though, what she has observed in the past few years is that students' knowledge of vocabulary has decreased. Hence, reading comprehension and literature appreciation have been affected. As students do not understand what they read, they feel demotivated. To help students to eliminate the frustration caused by lack of vocabulary, instructors should reflect on and realize how many hurdles students must overcome to understand a simple short story.

One of the major obstacles beginning-level students face has to do with culture. Probably, eliminating the unfamiliar culture will be the first step to make students feel more comfortable with the text they must read. Obviously, language and culture go hand in hand; thus, the idea may sound ludicrous. It may be possible for instructors to *disregard the unknown culture*. A better and more feasible approach may be to choose translated short stories from students' native language. In this way, beginning-level students will read stories that depict the culture of their old ancestors, instead of an unknown culture. As for intermediate/advanced students, a comparison between the past and present culture of their country will give them the opportunity to share their perspectives without hesitation.

The second obstacle that beginning-level students must deal with relates to vocabulary. If instructors select short stories from the students' homeland, the vocabulary they have in L1 will guide them because students perhaps have read or heard the stories before. Consequently, students can be introduced to the English vocabulary in a familiar context and may find it easy to understand, recall, and use it later.

Thus, the current paper focuses on advantages of using translated short stories from Turkey, the tales of Nasreddin Hodja, to teach EFL to Turkish students. The advantages will be many, but the major ones discussed in the paper refer to motivating students to read, raising students' cultural awareness, and developing students' vocabulary.

2. Traditional Turkish Short Stories

The most well-known Turkish stories both in and outside Turkey are the tales of Nasreddin Hodja. His tales reflect the society of the time and people's imperfections (Kabacali, 1997; Sullivan, 2002). However, the tales always "end on a happy note, with a lesson to be learned or a moral" (Sullivan, 2002, p. 2). The themes of the stories vary from people asking Nasreddin Hodja for advice as in "To put your baby to sleep" (Birant, 1988, p. 9) to people asking him to settle disputes as in "The sound of money" (p. 79). The Hodja, as he is called in the stories, plays the role of the town's judge, such as in "The sound of money" (p. 79), even though he is not a real judge. In contrast, "Dispute in court between two low women" (Barnham, 1924, pp. 78-79) shows that the Hodja is in reality the town's judge.

As for the length of the stories, Nasreddin Hodja's stories differ in length. Some are very short while others are approximately an entire page or longer. The very short excerpts, "The Hodja horoscope," (Barnham, 1924, pp. 31-32) appear suitable for EFL students at the beginning level of fluency. The longer stories seem more appropriate for intermediate/advanced students. The longer, more complex stories such as "You believed that it gave birth," (Kabacali, 1997, p. 63) or "The pan that died" (Yanova, 2003, pp. 53-54) have the characteristics of short stories containing most literary elements--main character, secondary characters, setting, conflict, complication(s), climax, resolution, and so on (see Appendix).

In reference to literary structures in stories, the main character of the stories is always Nasreddin Hodja (order of the name in the Turkish language) or Hodja Nasreddin (order in English). Other characters frequently reside in the town in which Nasreddin Hodja, the character, lives. Additionally, the stories usually take place in Akşehir, Konya, Turkey. When Akşehir is not mentioned, a flea market, the streets, a mosque, a court house, the Hodja's house, and others are the locations. Also, the time of the stories, as readers can imagine, refers to a time in which people rode horses or walked everywhere they went, to be exact, centuries ago. In regard to conflict in Nasreddin Hodja's stories, every story has a problem waiting for the Hodja to solve. In "To put a baby to sleep" (Birant, 1988, p. 9), the conflict that a mother brings for the Hodja to solve is that her baby sleeps neither during the day nor at night. What the mother has in mind to solve the problem is for the Hodja to recite some verses from the Koran, the Muslims' holy book, to help the baby fall asleep. The Hodja, in contrast, has just learned what puts his students to sleep and eagerly shares the results with the mother of the crying baby. Even when the Hodja solves the conflict his own way, he believes that the conflict has been solved the best way.

As to complication and climax, in "Let me die" (Birant, 1988, p. 84), the complication is that the doctor's visit and medicine will cost the Hodja a large sum of money. Readers may believe that because the Hodja wants to feel better, he will pay for the expenses. However, the Hodja does not solve the conflict that way. He obtains information from the Imam (a prayer leader at mosques) of the town who performs burials how much it will cost to bury someone. Then the Hodja compares the fee for the doctor's visit and medicine with the fee for a burial. He then makes up his mind.

In reference to resolution, in the last few sentences of stories, readers frequently find the resolution. In the resolution, readers can see a change in the main character. The change indicates how the main character feels. In "Let me die" (Birant, 1988, p. 84), the Hodja tells his wife that there is a big difference between paying 200 *akçes* (coins used in Turkey long time ago) for the doctor's visit and medicine, and 10 *akçes* for a burial. The Hodja concludes that a burial costs less. He becomes happy that he does not need to spend too much money on himself, only 10 *akçes*.

3. Nasreddin Hodja

A man by the name of Nasreddin Hodja, “a contemporary of Tamerlane, who invaded Anatolia in 1301” (Schiff, N.D., para. 2), was born in Sivrihisar, Eskişehir, Turkey. According to a tomb in a cemetery in Akşehir, Konya, in Turkey, he died in 1284 (Kapacali, 1997). Nevertheless, some writers say that Nasreddin Hodja, the character in the Turkish tales, was not a real person (Schiff, N.D.). The reason is that “to say that all the stories currently attributed to the Hodja have truly originated from him [Nasreddin Hodja, the man] would be an exaggeration . . . since many of the historical personalities mentioned in various stories . . . are known to have lived centuries apart” (Hikmet, 1986, para. 5).

However, Sullivan (2002) affirms that everyone agreed that Nasreddin Hodja, the man, was both wise and intelligent. The man and the character look similar in their sense of humor. The character always makes clever remarks in the stories. Characters go to Nasreddin Hodja, the character, when they need help solving problems, and the solution is usually a hilarious one. For example, in “To put your baby to sleep” (Birant, 1988, p. 9), readers understand how respectfully society treats the Hodja. Even when a mother cannot help her baby to fall asleep, she thinks that the wise Hodja will find a solution to her baby’s problem. His solution turns out to be amusing.

About the name Nasreddin Hodja, in Turkish, Hodja is spelled *Hoca* and it means master or teacher, someone who is respected, admired. And, that is also the way the Hodja, the character, is in hundreds of his stories.

4. Advantages of Using Translated Stories from Students’ L1

4.1. Motivation to read

“Short stories,” states Erkaya (2005), “help students to learn the four skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—more effectively because of the motivational benefit embedded in the stories” (p. 38). She implies that plots of stories are organized in such a way that they motivate students to continue reading the stories until the end to discover the resolutions for the stories. Additionally, Povey (1972) agrees that “literature will increase all language skills because literature will extend linguistic knowledge by giving evidence of extensive and subtle vocabulary usage, and complex and exact syntax” (quoted in McKay, 2000, p. 191). Likewise, Elliott (1990) confirms that literature is “motivationally effective if students can genuinely engage with its thoughts and emotions and appreciate its aesthetic qualities” (p. 197). Also, Vandrick (1997) justifies the use of literature by saying that students are given a chance “to explore their feelings through experiencing those of others” (p. 1).

Instructors should also consider the motivational benefit literature brings to readers. The writer (author not named) of “Using literature in teaching English as a Foreign / Second Language” (2004) declares, “Literature is motivating. . . . Literature holds high status in many cultures and countries. For this reason, students can feel a real sense of achievement at understanding a piece of highly respected literature” (p. 2), not only that, but also excitement. Take, for example, the tales of Nasreddin Hodja, the most famous character of stories in Turkey. Hikmet (1986) affirms that Turkish people “get ready to laugh” the minute they hear the name Nasreddin Hodja. All tales of Nasreddin Hodja appeal to them (para. 7). Thus, instructors may understand that Turkish students will be tremendously motivated to read the tales of Nasreddin Hodja. Students may have been brought up reading his tales and know how humorous they can be. Even the stories of Nasreddin Hodja that Turkish students have never read before

will be appealing to them due to the fact that the tales portray a culture that Turkish students may know and can discuss without reservations.

Another reason that Turkish students may be motivated to read Nasreddin Hodja's stories may be that the stories have been translated into several languages and are known in different parts of the world: East Turkmenistan, Hungary, Southern Siberia, and North Africa (Schiff, N.D.). In addition, on the Internet, students can find websites from different countries with Nasreddin Hodja's stories. Turkish students may feel that perhaps people outside of Turkey have read more stories than they have, so they should start reading his stories in case they have not read them all.

EFL instructors teaching all over the world will probably understand that translated stories from students' native language offer several advantages when used to teach EFL. For one, translated stories motivate students to read because they are familiar to students. When students read them, students can concentrate on linguistics aspects of the stories. Moreover, they learn about cultural aspects even if the culture looks familiar to them.

4.2. Cultural Awareness

Today when instructors mention the inclusion of culture in the EFL curriculum, some may immediately ask whose culture instructors are referring to, since culture is attributed to values, customs, traditions, beliefs of any society. Depending on what instructors are teaching and where they obtained the texts from, they may be teaching any culture, not necessarily the culture of those who speak English as L1. In the case of using stories to teach EFL students, many instructors may ask students to read stories from a variety of backgrounds to help students to enrich their knowledge of cultures. The reason is that "short stories transmit the culture of the people about whom the stories were written. By learning about the culture, students learn about the past and the present, and about people's customs and traditions" (Erkaya, 2005, p. 44).

Traditional short stories are a good way to teach EFL students about the past of a society along with people's behavior, attitudes, and beliefs. Looking at the traditional stories presented in the current paper, the ones of Nasreddin Hodja, instructors can understand that the Turkish society from the past may differ a great deal from that of the present time. On the other hand, many of the traditions, customs, beliefs, and attitudes from the past may have been left unchanged to this day. As a result, introducing traditional stories from their own country to Turkish students at least at the intermediate level of fluency may generate much discussion about how the culture of the people of those times compares with today's culture. With two completely different cultures, there may be a "possibility of cultural interference . . . misinterpretation." This "occurs when the reader and the writer do not share the same cultural assumptions" (Gajdusek, 1988, p. 232). The misinterpretation will be avoided when comparing the past with the present culture. The comparison may lead intermediate/advanced students to higher-order thinking since they will ponder what they read about the past in relationship to the present culture to understand the past culture better. The comparison may help students to delve deeply into the past and present culture after all.

As far as beginning-level students are concerned, the knowledge that they have of the Turkish culture may result in a very powerful advantage, according to Alptekin (1993) (quoted in Ariffin, 2001): "the meaning of the passage" (p. 75). Students will already have to deal with much--unknown words and syntax. Thus, avoiding unknown cultural aspects of stories will give beginners a chance to concentrate on linguistic aspects. As Lazar (1993) concurs, "a text in English by a writer of a similar cultural background to the group of students studying the text may be more culturally accessible than a text written by an author from a culture far removed from the students' own" (p. 62).

4.3. Vocabulary Development

Instructors understand the importance of vocabulary for students to function well in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking skills. As the “instrumentalist hypothesis” (Anderson & Freebody, 1981) explains, vocabulary knowledge leads to reading comprehension (quoted in Stahl, 1999, p. 4). Hence, vocabulary teaching and learning should be instructors’ and students’ priorities after students acquire some basic EFL knowledge. Meara (1980) considers vocabulary as “a neglected aspect of language learning” (quoted in Carter, 1998, p. 186). Over thirty years have passed since Meara’s article was published, yet there has not been much progress in vocabulary instruction in some countries. After teaching EFL to Electrical/Electronics and Computer Engineering students at a university in Turkey for the past thirteen years, the researcher has concluded that vocabulary has no place in the curricula. She has observed that every fall semester, Turkish students enter the two departments less prepared in terms of vocabulary in spite of the fact that most students have studied English from elementary to high school and at the Preparatory English Program of the University. She believes that students should be at least at the intermediate level of vocabulary knowledge, or as a matter of fact, of EFL proficiency in general. Unfortunately, many students are not. Taking a few English courses helps students to improve not only vocabulary, but also the skills necessary for them to become more fluent in EFL. As a result, for the past few years, the researcher has been teaching a short story course to help students to learn more vocabulary.

Short stories give an array of opportunities for students to learn vocabulary. When explaining why language instructors should use “literary texts with classes,” Collie & Slater (1990) affirm, “One of the main reasons might be that literature offers a bountiful and extremely varied body of written material. . . (p. 3). Having much written material, short stories are written about a variety of topics, too. Consequently, vocabulary found in short stories turns out to be quite rich. EFL instructors know the importance of good knowledge of vocabulary related to different topics for students to move beyond the low level of language proficiency. In the “knowledge hypothesis,” Anderson and Freebody (1981) affirm that for students to comprehend what they read, they must have knowledge of the topic (quoted in Stahl, 1999, p. 5).

Once students have acquired some knowledge of grammar, instructors can focus on vocabulary. Vocabulary builds the foundation for students to advance in the learning process. In this way, the more vocabulary learning strategies instructors teach their students, the easier for students to take responsibility for their own vocabulary learning in the long run. Instructors should understand that the strategies used to teach vocabulary to students at different levels of EFL fluency cannot be the same. The knowledge students accumulate throughout the years will vary according to how much exposure they have had with EFL. Without much knowledge of EFL, students cannot be introduced to a variety of approaches to vocabulary learning. Therefore, beginning-level students cannot be introduced to as many vocabulary learning strategies as intermediate and advanced students.

Before vocabulary learning strategies are discussed, it is vital to emphasize the rationale for using translated short stories from students’ native language to teach EFL to beginning-level students:

1. Students will know the vocabulary in L1;
2. Students will be introduced to the English vocabulary in a familiar context; and
3. Students will have the opportunity to learn related vocabulary with the use of techniques such as synonyms, mapping, and others.

Take for example the short story, “The Hodja horoscope” (Barnham, 1924, pp. 31-32), a very simple short story appropriate for beginning-level students. Turkish students, in general, are familiar with the

zodiac signs. Before reading the story, with the help of the zodiac signs, beginning-level students can review the months of the year and Arabic numerals. Then they can identify the stars/signs people are born under and find their own. After that, instructors can ask students questions:

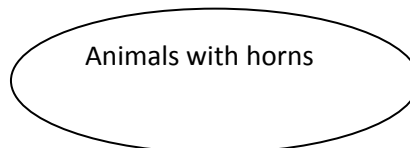
1. When were you born?
2. Under what star were you born?
3. Under what constellation were you born?

Subsequently, instructors can ask:

4. Under what sign were you born?

The third question introduces students to the synonym of the word “star.” The fourth question suggests a different way of asking the two previous questions. Basurto (2004) affirms, “Vocabulary instruction that centers on words read by students exposes them to the potential meanings of a word” (p. 2).

The vocabulary found in the story mentioned above is very concrete. Concrete vocabulary helps students to visualize what they learn better. Therefore), after students read the story, with the help of the zodiac signs, the work on vocabulary can be expanded. Instructors can use “semantic mapping” or “brainstorming,” approach researched by Johnson, Tom-Bronowski, & Pittelman (1982) (quoted in Nagy, 1988, p. 10) to teach related vocabulary. In semantic mapping, instructors can write “animals with horns” inside an oval-shaped box:



With the help of pictures and/or drawings that instructors bring to class, beginning-level students can brainstorm on animals with horns, starting with the ones introduced in the zodiac signs. Students at the intermediate level can find names of animals with horns in a dictionary or in an encyclopedia, and share the information with their peers. Basurto (2004) explains this as, “words are taught in relation to other words or within the context of concept development” (p. 2).

Another activity that can be given to students but looks more suitable for young learners at beginning/intermediate level of fluency is the drawing of animals with horns that they have learned. After they finish drawing, students write the name of each animal next to the animal. Furthermore, students can write sentences about the animals to practice using the vocabulary learned before and the new vocabulary. Students can use colors, size, habitats, foods animals eat, and the like. Once students finish the activity, instructors can point out that the Hodja said that the lamb had grown into a ram. They can ask students what the Hodja meant by that. If students do not know, instructors can explain that most animals have different names when they are young. For example, a ram was a lamb. Instructors can show pictures of young and old animals with which students should familiarize themselves, such as puppy/dog, kitten/cat, foal/horse, foal/donkey, cub/bear, cub/lion cub/fox, and others. After that instructors can ask students to draw or find pictures of young and old animals. Next, students can write the name next to each animal to connect the animal to its name. In addition, instructors can introduce

male and female animals, which oftentimes have different names, as long as the activity does not overwhelm students.

The activities above include the three properties of vocabulary instruction suggested by Nagy (1988): “integration [integrating the new word with things/words that students already know], repetition, and meaningful use” (p. 31).

If intermediate students read the same story, instructors can also ask them to read characteristics of people born under each sign. Afterwards, students can confirm whether the explanation given by their sign is correct. If not, students can describe their own characteristics. One of the advantages of this activity is that students will learn many adjectives from the descriptions. To make sure students remember the adjectives later on, they should write sentences using the adjectives in such a way that when they read the sentences, they will recall the meaning of the adjectives. For example, suppose one of the signs says that a person born under the sign is “hard working.” One student born under the specific sign believes he/she is truly “hard working.” To make sure he/she will not forget the meaning of the adjective “hard working,” he/she can write sentences such as, “I know I’m ‘hard working.’ Every day after school I spend 3 hours reading the notes from my classes. Besides, I spend 3 more hours doing homework or preparing for classes.”

Who said that formal vocabulary instruction should be boring? According to Basurto (2004), “. . . Direct vocabulary instruction can be creative, exciting, and enjoyable for . . . [instructors] as well as for the students . . . [they] teach” (p. 3).

Conclusion

This article set out to encourage instructors from different countries to use translated short stories from students’ native language to teach EFL. The rationale is that students’ native stories offer advantages that other stories do not:

1. Students’ motivation to read will be enhanced due to the familiarity with the culture;
2. Beginning-level students will not worry about learning about a new culture;
3. Intermediate/advanced-level students will compare the past with the present culture without vacillation;
4. Beginning-level students will concentrate on linguistic aspects of the stories;
5. Students at all levels of fluency will be acquainted with the vocabulary in L1; and
6. Students at all levels of proficiency will learn vocabulary in a familiar context.

The selection of short stories from students’ traditional literature should be done in accordance with students’ level of EFL fluency. In other words, for beginning-level students, stories should be very short in length because most very short stories do not have any hidden messages. As students’ level of proficiency increases, they can read longer stories. The longer the stories, the more complex they are in terms of plot and vocabulary. Since the researcher’s students are from Turkey and the most famous short stories in Turkey are the tales of Nasreddin Hodja, the stories used for illustration come from hundreds of Nasreddin Hodja’s stories. Found in different lengths, Nasreddin Hodja’s stories can be used with Turkish students at all levels of EFL competency.

In addition, familiarity with the stories can be considered another advantage. Familiarity with the stories will motivate students to read the stories that they have read before or those that they have never read but are well known not only in Turkey but also in other parts of the world. Given that the stories emphasize students’ own culture, while beginning-level students will not have to worry about being

acquainted with a new culture, intermediate/advanced students will have the opportunity to compare and contrast the past with the present culture to find similarities and differences. This reflection will lead students to critical thinking. Notwithstanding, the most remarkable advantage of using Nasreddin Hodja's stories to teach EFL to Turkish students has to do with the fact that the vocabulary will be known in L1. Accordingly, instructors will guide students to learn vocabulary in a known context.

The recommendation that the researcher makes is that instructors take advantage of what short stories from students' native countries have to offer to teach EFL to these students. Additionally to all the advantages discussed in the present paper, instructors may find other advantages to be true. If so, the researcher hopes that instructors share their findings with other researchers and instructors.

Biostatement: Dr. Odilea Rocha Erkaya has been Assistant Professor of EFL at Eskişehir Osmangazi University for 16 years. Before teaching in Turkey, she taught EFL in Brazil and ESL in the USA. Among her many areas of interest, reading and vocabulary are on top of the list.

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Appendix

A pan of baklava

One day a foreign scholar came to Akşehir and asked to talk to the wisest man in town. The villagers took him to the Hodja. When they met, the foreigner took a stick and drew a large circle on the ground. The Hodja looked at the circle and took the stick, and drew a line across the middle of the circle. The foreigner drew another perpendicular line, dividing the circle into quarters. The Hodja gestured as though he were taking three of the sections and leaving the fourth. The foreigner then put his fingers together, faced them toward the ground, and shook them. The Hodja raised his hand to the sky and stretched out his fingers.

When the meeting was over, the foreign scholar explained,

“Your Hodja is very smart. When I indicated that the Earth was round, he responded that an equator divides it. When I divided the Earth into four sections, he said that three quarters of it is water. When I asked him what causes rain, he told me that water evaporates, vapor rises, and then clouds form and turn into rain.”

The villagers asked the Hodja what had happened during the meeting. He answered,

“That glutton! He told me he had a pan of baklava. I said that he couldn’t eat it alone and that I would eat half of it. Then he asked me what I would do if he divided it into four pieces. I told him that I would take three of them. Then he said, ‘Let’s sprinkle nuts on it.’ I said, ‘Fine, but you can’t bake baklava on a weak fire; it has to be strong.’ He felt defeated and went away.”

Adapted from Kabacali, 1997, p. 17

- Main character – the Hodja
- Secondary characters -- a foreign scholar and the villagers
- Setting
 - Place – Akşehir
 - Time – A story written a long time ago because a foreign scholar would not go to a town to talk to the wisest man and communicate without words, not knowing exactly what the wise man was saying.
 - Atmosphere – A naive type of story from the point of view that both men thought they had communicated with each other. In fact, they completely misunderstood one another.
- Conflict – Miscommunication between the Hodja and the foreign scholar from the beginning of the story until the end
- Resolution – Both characters were happy at the end of the story because they thought they had communicated their ideas very well. The foreign scholar believed that the Hodja was an intelligent man, but the Hodja believed that the foreign scholar was a “glutton” and loser. The Hodja, in contrast, thought he himself was very smart.