EXPLORING THE OPINIONS OF LECTURERS AND PREPARATORY STUDENTS ABOUT CULTURE IN THEIR LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS[1]

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Abstract: Culture teaching in EFL classrooms has been widely investigated by researchers, program developers and teachers. Having been regarded as challenging in terms of both instructional and pedagogical aspects, it still occupies a remarkable place in EFL classrooms. To this end, the primary concern of this study is to discuss culture and culture teaching in general terms through the eyes of English language instructors and preparatory students. Moreover, to capture the great number of potential angles, the contribution of the course book "English File" to culture teaching is also explored. To serve this purpose, a mixed method research design was adopted to reveal whether there was a conscious culture teaching at a preparatory school of a state university in Turkey. Within this scope, 15 English language instructors and 122 learners were randomly selected to respond a questionnaire in addition to semi- structured interviews. Triangulation was achieved through qualitative, quantitative data, and document analysis which provides rich insights on culture in language classrooms. While quantitative data was analyzed via SPPS program, qualitative data was gone through content analysis. Incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data obtained from considerable number of respondents, the study revealed that both instructors and students agreed that culture is to be taught in language classrooms. With the central aim being to cover all relevant ideas with regards to culture, this study highlights that instructors need to develop appropriate methodology in order to make their learners aware of cultural differences which merits serious consideration.

Keywords: Culture, Intercultural Communicative Competence, Teaching Culture.

DİL SINIFLARINDA KÜLTÜR ÖĞRETİMİ HAKKINDA OKUTMAN VE HAZIRLIK SINIFI ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN GÖRÜŞLERİNİN İNCELENMESİ

Öz: Yabancı dil sınıflarında kültür öğretimi araştırmacılar, öğretmenler ve program geliştiriciler tarafından detaylıca

araştırılmıştır. Hem öğretimsel hem pedagojik açıdan zorlayıcı olduğu değerlendirildiği için, yabancı dil sınıflarında önemli bir yeri vardır. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışmanın öncelikli amacı genel olarak kültürü, öncelikli olarak ise yabancı dil sınıflarında kültür öğretimini hem okutmanlar hem de öğrencilerin görüşleri doğrultusunda tartışmaktır. Dahası, bu konuda daha çok açıyı ele almak adına kullanılan ders kitabı "English File" ın kültür öğretimine katkısı araştırılacaktır. Bu amaçla, Türkiye'de bir devlet üniversitesinde bir hazırlık okulunda bilinçli bir kültür öğretiminin olup olmadığını ortaya koymak için karma bir yöntem araştırma tasarımı benimsenmiştir. Bu kapsamda, 6 öğrenciyle yapılan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmelere ek olarak, bir ankete yanıt vermek üzere hazırlık sınıflarında ders veren 15 İngilizce okutmanı ve 122 öğrenci rastgele seçilmiştir. Yabancı dil sınıflarında kültürün tüm olası açıları hakkında bilgi veren belge analizine ek olarak, hem niteliksel hem de nicel verilerle doğrulama sağlanmıştır. Nicel veriler SPPS programı ile analiz edilirken, nitel veriler içerik analizi yoluyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Önemli sayıda katılımcıdan elde edilen hem nicel hem de nitel verileri bir araya getiren çalışma, hem eğitmenlerin hem de öğrencilerin kültürün dil sınıflarında öğretilmesi konusunda hem fikir oldukları gözlenmiştir. Asıl amaç kültürle ilgili tüm fikirleri kapsamakla birlikte, bu çalışma, öğrencilerin kültürel farklılıklardan haberdar olmaları, farkındalık ve duyarlılık seviyelerini artırmaları için okutmanların uygun öğretim metodları kullanmaları gerektiğini vurgulamaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Kültür, Kültürlerarası İletişimsel Yetkinlik, Kültür Öğretimi.

Introduction

In parallel with the growing interest and huge developments in the world in terms of every aspect of life, the world is getting closer each day. Consequently, people from different countries and cultures gather with differing purposes in educational settings which require 'cross-cultural communication' (Türkan & Çelik, 2009, p.1).

In this sense, raising an awareness for different cultures seems worthy of consideration in language classrooms which puts a great responsibility on teachers. However, how to teach culture in language classrooms and to what extent language teachers value culture have been understudied in Turkish context, therefore this current study initially aims to explore the attitudes of English language instructors and learners towards cultural components in their classrooms and further find out the contribution of the course book "English File" to teaching intercultural communicative competence.

Therefore, the literature review of this study is organized around two main points. The first part examines culture and culture teaching in language classrooms along with intercultural communicative competence while the second part reviews a set of empirical studies on culture conducted in various contexts among different groups of participants, particularly emphasizing Turkish context.

1. Literature Review

Hereby, the literature review will serve as a comprehensive overview summarizing and documenting culture, a brief history of culture teaching, intercultural communicative competence and related research studies with their significant findings as well.

1.1. Culture and Culture Teaching

For a comprehensive understanding of teaching culture in language classrooms, some core concepts need to be clarified in the first place. As culture is context-dependent and a sensitive issue, it is not easy to give a clear and comprehensive definition to it. Still, it can be regarded as "a way of life" in general terms (Sapir, 1968 cited in Thu, 2010; Su-chun, 2007). Broadly speaking, it is defined as "integrated pattern of human behaviour that includes thoughts, communications, languages, practices, beliefs, values, customs, courtesies, rituals, manners of interacting and roles, relationships and expected behaviours of a racial, ethnic, religious or social group; and the ability to transmit the above to succeeding generations" by the National Centre for Cultural Competence (Goode et al., 2004).

Culture, as Sowden (2007) highlighted, can also be defined as "body of social, artistic, and intellectual traditions associated historically with a particular social, ethnic or national group" (pp.304-305). In its broader sense, Brown (2007) defined it as "the ideas, customs, skills, arts, and tools that characterize a certain group of people in a given period of time" (cited in Thu, 2010).

Another issue arising in the discussion of culture is undoubtedly its relationship with language. As language is a means of communication across cultures, the two are closely related and accepted as inseparable by many linguists and sociolinguists (Chinh, 2013; Canale &Swain, 1980; Xiao-yan, 2008; Türkan& Çelik,2009; Alptekin, 2002; Tsenk, 2002; Tanrıverdi, 2009). Building on this argument, in Brown's words, "A language is a part of a culture and a culture is a part of a language" (1980, p. 124). Similarly, Kuang (2007, p. 75) noted that "Language is the carrier of culture and culture is the content of language" (cited in Thu, 2010).

In order to reach a better understanding of why culture and language are inevitably related, one needs to cover the historical flow of culture teaching dating back to 1960s in which teaching geography and history was used as part of language learning (Xiao-yan, 2008). In 1980s, Brooks (1984) who emphasized that cultural elements should take place in second language curriculum proposed "big C" culture (art, music, literature, politics) and "small c" which refers to the behavioural patterns and lifestyles of everyday people (cited in Xiao-yan, 2008).

Notably, the biggest challenge is concerned with the methodology of culture teaching and how to integrate culture in language classrooms. Therefore, it is essential to realize the importance of culture-oriented content and cultural syllabuses including culture-specific knowledge (Türkan& Çelik, 2007). Generally "the four Fs" – "foods, fairs, folklore, and statistical facts" reported by Kramsch (1991) are utilized in language classrooms; however, the hidden side of culture including beliefs, values and expected behaviours are not usually addressed (cited in Tanrıverdi & Apak, 2008). Kumaravadivelu (2006) noted that three significant parameters namely particularity, practicality, possibility are also important in terms of teaching a foreign language along with culture. Here, particularity is concerned with the understanding that each teacher, learner and classroom settings are unique. In this respect, situational understanding is essential which helps teachers to adapt the methods to their own local contexts including cultural concerns.

To overcome this issue, Krasner (1999) suggested that observation, mini drama, films, news broadcasts, maps, visiting restaurants, culture capsule (brief information about culture), role play techniques can be employed in language classrooms. Likewise, authentic materials including "films, news broadcasts, television shows, websites, photographs, magazines, newspapers, restaurant menus, travel brochures, and other printed materials" might help learners gain insights into the culture (Thu, 2010, p. 27).

Having been at the centre of debates over the past three decades, teaching culture still holds a prominent place in language teaching mostly in terms of social concerns (Brown, 2007; Brown & Eisterhold, 2004; Tang, 2006; Thu, 2010). However, another issue worth of discussion is the reasons for not teaching culture sufficiently in language classrooms which are deeply rooted in teachers' beliefs, curricula, textbooks and unfamiliarity to suitable methodology (Thu, 2010). In this sense, this study explores both teachers and learners' attitudes towards cultural components, and further provides a brief overview including textbook evaluation.

1.2. Intercultural Communicative Competence

This part provides insights on the intercultural communicative competence which occupies an important place in a growing body of research studies (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013, Morgan & Cain, 2000; Brown, 2007; Wang, 2008). In this sense, up to now there has been culture teaching; nonetheless it would be necessary to consider teaching intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in multi-cultural learning environments nowadays.

It is significant to note that intercultural competence is regarded as "the ability of a person to behave adequately in a flexible manner when confronted with actions, attitudes and expectations of representatives of foreign cultures" (Meyer, 1991, p. 137 cited in Razı, 2012). To put it short, it can be clarified as the "competence in communication between or among interlocutors of different cultural background" (Su-chun, 2007, p. 9). Bennett and Bennett (2004) make a similar definition as the competence to communicate and behave appropriately and effectively across cultures.

Moving the discussion further, a word or a piece of information only makes sense during a conversation if there is a mutual understanding among speakers from different backgrounds or cultures with regards to cultural schema which is related to learners' culture-specific knowledge of the content (Yule, 1996, cited in Erten & Razi, 2009). In the same vein, the main goal of language teaching is not only to master grammatical structures but also acquire communicative competence needed for real-life communication to accomplish communication goals. Remarkably, Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei &Thurrell (1995) reveal that a more serious communication failure is probably caused by social or a cultural blunder than a linguistic error or a missing word.

To achieve intercultural communicative competence, the ability to realize different cultural concerns in terms of linguistic and social aspects is important. Additionally, raising cultural awareness enables learners to value their own culture and welcome the other varieties across cultures with respect and tolerance. As Ho (2009, cited in Razı, 2012) pointed out being aware of one's own culture is the first step to communicate with other cultures.

1.3. Relevant Research Studies on Culture

Research investigating culture in language classrooms vary in many aspects even though the main framework is focused on the integration of culture into language use. Therefore, many studies have been conducted for very differing purposes among which identifying the teachers and learners' attitudes towards culture, examining the relationship between culture and other variables such as gender, and evaluating course books

in terms of cultural concerns are emphasized (Tran-Hoang-Thu, 2010; Etuş, 2008; Chinh, 2009; Dweik & Al-Sayyed, 2015). A review of significant research studies will be discussed below.

 To start, having tried to explore whether a course had an effect on learners' cultural awareness, Genç and Bada reported significant impacts (2005). The next study in Turkish context was done by Tanrıverdi (2005) with an aim to reveal and oppose cultural biases and improve cultural awareness through a 14-week-course by using written media. He emphasized that future teachers need to develop critical thinking abilities and cultural awareness which would enable the participants to value target culture. Similarly, Etuş (2008) conducted a research study in order to examine intercultural awareness among pre-service teachers and found that Anglo-Saxon orientation was emphasized in language education and the contribution was low to home culture.

However, the main focus of Tran-Hoang-Thu 's study (2008) was on the basic tenets related to culture including "enculturation, acculturation, cultural awareness, cross-cultural awareness, cultural identity, culture shock, and culture bump" along with main factors affecting culture teaching including advantages and disadvantages of it.

In a considerable number of studies, teacher beliefs and actual classroom practices regarding to intercultural concerns have been questioned (Corbett, 2003; Sercu, 2005; Young & Sachdev, 2011). Young and Sachdev (2011) highlighted that there is a gap between theory and practice of intercultural approach in classroom settings. Sercu (2005) demonstrated this gap and initiated research studies for exploring learners' opinions as they are one of the most important stakeholders in educational process. Chinh (2009) carried out a study in Vietnam with 10 graduate students, in which reflection journals were used as data collection tool. He revealed positive feelings of participants towards diverse culture, in addition to their support for the need to include home culture.

When it comes to textbook evaluation, it is significant to note the study by Dede and Emre who attempted to explore the "Spotlight on English" textbook in terms of cultural aspect (1988). The results demonstrated that the basic themes are mostly related to Turkish food, history but presented in English by emphasizing one's own culture (cited in Türkan & Çelik, 2000). Kirkgöz and Ağçam (2011) tried to find whether 18 locally published English textbooks used for Turkish primary schools have the cultural components in balance regarding the source (Turkish) culture, the target (British/American) culture and the international target culture. They found that the source and target cultures ranked highest comparing to international target cultural components.

In a more recent study, Dweik and Al-Sayyed (2015) analyzed the cultural content of Action Pack 12 through a 12- itemed cultural checklist including history and politics, religion & religious rituals, food & drinks, first names, education, ecology, economy, leisure time, music and arts, dress, literature and science, social behaviour (etiquette) family and male-female relationship. It showed that the book was heavily Arabic culture-oriented while British culture was given the lowest importance.

As this comprehensive literature review shows, culture is not effectively integrated into language teaching as expected. It may be resulted from some main deficiencies such as lack of pedagogical knowledge of teachers to teach culture, the low quality of in-service training for teachers, attitudes of teachers and learners in addition to textbooks. To this end, English instructors working at a state university in Turkey and the preparatory school learners have been the focus of this research in addition the evaluation of the textbook "English File" they use.

2. Methodology

This paper aims to explore the opinions of English lecturers and learners towards cultural components in their language classrooms. The study, thus, addresses the following research questions:

1. Which component of culture is valued most and least by English language instructors at NKU?

2. Which component of culture is valued most and least by English language preparatory learners at NKU?

3. What is the contribution of the textbook "English File" to culture teaching in language classrooms?

4. How do learners view culture teaching in their language classrooms?

2.1. Participants and Research Setting

The distribution of language instructors were explained in terms of gender, educational degree and teaching experience. 15 instructors teaching English at preparatory classes at NKU in the fall semester of 2015 were selected non-randomly and of these participants, 10 were female participants (n= 10) and male participants in the study were 5 (n= 5). The majority of the lecturers (n= 7) reported to have bachelor degree while 6 of them had master in addition to 2 lecturers having doctorate degree.

Concerning students in the study, the distribution of them were demonstrated in terms of gender, age and their opinions on culture teaching. Out of the 122 participants, 71 were female and 51 were male participants whose ages ranged from 17 to 20. In terms of culture teaching in language classrooms, nearly all of the participants (*N*=114)

agreed that culture is of crucial importance and should be taught in language classrooms.

2.2. Instrument

The data were collected via two-part survey. The first part included some biographical information such as gender, mother and foreign languages, teaching experience and academic degree, the departments of the participants. The second instrument used in this study was "The Inventory of Cultural Components developed by Razı (2012) for determining the subjects' perspectives on cultural components. It is a well-established and highly reliable instrument with a Cronbach's alpha coefficients value of $\alpha = .92$ under 9 main headings, to name intellectual values, lifestyles, behaviours, media, artistic values, family, minor values, major values and formal values. It consists of 45 items for which there are 5 choices ranging from 1: Never; 2: Rarely; 3: Sometimes; 4: Often; and 5: Always.

2.3. Data Collection and Analysis

To obtain the data, both instructors and students were given the questionnaire and the detailed instructions to complete it in class within sufficient time. It was stated that their participation was entirely voluntary and their answers would be used only for academic purposes and kept confidential as anonymous. The obtained data of the research were analysed with the help of the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS, version20). Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, means, and standard deviations were used to explore the demographic data and the mean values of items. In addition, the .05 level of statistical significance was set at all statistical tests.

To analyze qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews with students, content analysis was employed via open coding. As a first step the raw data were read to reach a general sense of the information which was based on the responses to 5 open-ended interview questions. Later on, the data were organized into logical and meaningful categories to identify the similar and common themes emerged from the data. As a result, a set of categories were developed which reflect the underlying ideas of students on the culture in language teaching in general terms.

3. Findings

In this part of the study, the research questions were answered in the light of the findings.

RQ1. & RQ2 : Which component of culture is valued most and least by English language instructors and preparatory learners at NKU?

In order to answer the *RQ1 and RQ2,* descriptive statistics were calculated to identify English instructors' and preparatory students' attitudes towards cultural components.

Table 1: *The Most Reported Items by Instructors and Prep. Students*

Cultural Component Items (reported by students) (N=122)	X	SD	Cultural Component Items (reported by instructors) (N=15)	X	SD
…means of communication	4.29	.909	…people's reactions to particular situations	4.57	.646
…people's relations with each other	4.19	.911	…verbal behaviour patterns	4.50	.760
…cinema	4.18	.868	…people's daily life	4.29	.914
…music	4.17	.930	…people's behavioural patterns	4.21	.802
…people's daily lifes	4.16	1.03	… traditional values	4.21	.699
…people's behavioural patterns	4.14	.994	… thoughts	4.21	.699
…verbal behaviour patterns	4.09	1.04	…literature	4.14	.864

Table 1 demonstrates the mean scores of cultural components by the student participants and instructors in a descending rank with the overall mean score (*M* = 3, 58) and (*M* = 3.68) respectively. The items that "means of communication" and "people's relations with each other"; "cinema" and "music" were rated the most frequently reported by the students with the mean values of 4.29, 4.19, 4.18 and 4.17 respectively. On the contrary, the instructors reported "people's reactions to particular situations", "verbal behaviour patterns" and "people's daily life" mostly with the mean values of 4.57, 4.50 and 4.29. In this regard, it can be inferred that both instructors and students value behavioural patterns in culture.

The least frequently reported cultural components by instructors and students are demonstrated in a descending order ranking the items in the inventory.

Table 2: *The Least Reported Items by Instructors and Prep. Students*

Cultural Component Items (reported by students) (N=122)	X	SD	Cultural Component Items (reported by instructors)(N=15)	X	SD
…people's unique jewellery (9)	2.37	1.18	…people's unique jewellery (9)	2.00	.78
…people's unique dances (8)	2.68	1.16	…people's unique dances (8)	2.57	1.01
…beliefs (item3)	2.69	1.27	…people's unique tools (12)	2.57	.75
…particular skills (11)	2.71	1.15	…politics (44)	2.64	1.27
…advertising (item 24)	2.87	1.10	… legal systems (43)	2.71	1.13
…people's unique tools (12)	2.96	1.24	… economies (45)	2.79	1.18
…politics (44)	3.03	1.16	…advertising (24)	3.00	.78

According to Table 2, "people's unique jewellery", "people's unique dances" and "beliefs" were rated the least frequently reported by students with the mean values of $M = 2.37$, $M = 2.68$ and $M = 2.69$ respectively. Similarly, "people's unique jewellery" and "people's unique dances" were also rated as the least mentioned items by the instructors as well. This might explain that all participants give less importance to lifestyles of people in one culture such as people's hobbies, unique dances, tools, games and so on.

Additionally, descriptive statistics were calculated to identify the descending order of cultural components as a whole reported by English language instructors and preparatory learners in Table 3.

Table 3: *The Mean Values of Instructors and Students for Sub-categories in the Inventory*

Cultural Components	Students' Results		Teachers' Results	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Intellectual Values	3.07	1.07	4.00	.71
Lifestyles	3.01	.80	2.97	.81
Behaviours	4.02	.82	4.25	.67
Media	3.32	.80	3.45	.72
Artistic	3.89	.78	4.00	.84
Family	3.75	.89	4.00	.75
Minor values	3.26	1.08	3.32	.91
Major values	3.55	.99	3.58	1.02
Formal	2.95	.76	2.71	1.13

Table 3 demonstrates the mean values of the components in the inventory which were self-reported by instructors and students. As it illustrates, both instructors and students value "Behaviours" most with the mean values of 4.25 and 4.02 respectively. In this sense, it can be concluded that verbal and non-verbal behaviours in addition to people's reactions under particular conditions were indicated as the most frequently reported cultural elements. However, the least frequently reported component was found as formal values which might indicate that politics, economies and legal systems are not regarded to be included in the curriculum of language teaching with regard to culture.

R.Q 3. What is the contribution of the course book "English File" to culture teaching at N.K.U?

To answer the third research question regarding the course book, three cultures are taken into account while evaluating the book, to name source culture (Turkish culture), target culture (British- American culture) and international culture (critical cultural awareness).

In order to develop intercultural competence, not only the opinions of students and instructors but also the textbook itself is of paramount importance. In this regard, the textbook "English File" has been analyzed in terms of its cultural elements in it bearing source, target and international cultures in mind. "English File Elementary" is formed out of 12 units focusing on various topics ranging from neighbourhood to celebrities. Titles of units such as "What to do in London" (Unit 5C),

"Things I love about Britain" (Unit 3A), "Arriving in London" (Unit 1) suggest that the book is mostly based on target culture.

Unit 3: "Things l love about Britain" a representative sample of all the other units embodies the theme of British people habits in general terms as well as the communicative functions of "ordering coffee, telling time and introducing people". The students are required to learn the structures of "present simple (negative, positive and question forms)"; "jobs", expressions like "Can I have a latte, please?" and "What would you like?" Throughout the unit, students will be engaged in vocabulary, grammar, reading and speaking, listening and writing, consecutively.

However, even a brief overview of the units showed that the texts are merely used for introducing British culture (target culture) which causes a lack of depth in intercultural and source culture. Nevertheless, it is a must to develop intercultural competence and appreciate cultural diversity by presenting elements of target and international cultures as well as respecting one's own values embedded in home culture. The book lacks of presenting international cultures, while the presence of home culture was limited to the use of only the Turkish names (e.g. Mehmet) and places (e.g. Ankara).

The analysis of the book showed that this textbook is heavily loaded with target especially British culture followed by international cultures. However, home culture is totally ignored which is of worth discussion as also supported by Xiao (2010) and Liu's (2013) studies which concluded that EFL textbooks have given a high percentage to the target culture. Unfortunately, English File seemed to fail in fostering intercultural awareness by presenting diversity among cultures and respecting one's own culture and welcoming others.

R.Q 4. How do learners view culture teaching in their language classrooms?

To answer the last research question, qualitative data including responses to the open-ended questions was interpreted via open coding and content analysis**.** Hence, five open- ended questions took place in the interviews as reported below:

1. Do you think culture needs to be taught in language teaching?

2. What are the first three things come to your mind in terms of culture?

3. Which cultural components need to be included in language classrooms?

4. Do you think the course book "English File" places target, source or international cultures in balance?

5. Do you think culture is being taught in your language courses?

Six students who were interviewed are from different classrooms on the basis of their scores who are chosen randomly. The data set obtained from the interviews was analyzed by content analysis method through open coding. During the process, identification and naming the categories were done by putting the similar words, notions and basic ideas into the same category. As a result, a set of categories were developed which reflect the underlying ideas of students. Thematically coded data were demonstrated in the following Table 4.

Table 4: *Summary of themes of interviews*

Category	Themes
Need for culture teaching	Yes
First three things	Food, lifestyles of people, characteristics of people, daily life, art and music.
Cultural components	Daily life communication, behaviours, proverbs, food.
The course book	Mostly British (target) Culture, very limited international and source culture.
During lesson	Mostly grammar- based, a little integrated in language activities

As shown in Table 4, the students who were interviewed agreed that culture needs to be placed in language teaching as noted by one of the students:

> In order not to be unfamiliar to the other cultures, it is important to learn about it (S1).

It can be clearly seen that the first three things come to students' minds are mostly related to daily life of people in the following comment of another student.

> I have personally thought that we learn formal side of English, but daily life, characteristics of people are important (S5).

Other recurrent themes in the data set regarding cultural components were behaviours, daily speech, proverbs. When it is concerned with the course book aspect, all students reported that it was heavily loaded with British culture which is in line with the researcher own critical evaluation of the course book discussed above.

> The book lacks any international issues except famous food from different countries (S1, S2, S3, S5).
>
> The book is totally British in terms of culture, only some Turkish names are included (S1, S2, S3, S4, S5).

All in all, in depth interviews showed that students generally support that culture needs to be included in language teaching in order to achieve familiarity with other cultures. However they have many concerns about the course book as it is basically British-culture oriented and lacks intercultural communicative competence notions. It is important to note that most of them demand daily life of people and daily speeches are to be included as cultural components in language classrooms which indicate that they mostly think language as a tool for communication and building relationship through effective and appropriate language use in real life settings.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of the current paper yielded significant results. To start, the *RQ1* and *RQ2* deal with the opinions of English instructors and preparatory students about cultural components in language classrooms. The findings revealed that a great majority of the participants attribute positive remarks for culture being integrated into language learning which shows that participants are in favour of covering cultural items in their language classrooms.

One of the most crucial findings of this study is that both instructors and students were found to value behaviours as the most significant cultural component which implies that they are in favour of learning about both verbal and non-verbal communication ways among the speakers of the language and their specific actions in their daily lives. On the contrary, Razı (2012) who developed the cultural components inventory used in this current study concluded that behaviours were ranked from the mean values of $M= 3.11$ to $M= 3.96$ while this study reported the mean values of $M= 4.02$ (reported by students) and $M= 4.25$ (reported by instructors) respectively. In Razı's study (2012) unique tools was found the least frequently reported cultural item ($M= 2.12$) while people's unique jewellery was regarded as the least valued item by the participants with the mean value of $M= 2.37$ (reported by students) and $M= 2.00$ (reported by instructors) in this study.

This can be explained to some extent that the students who took place in this study are majoring at different departments from "International Relations" to "Machine Engineering". So, they are not familiar enough to language studies or cultural issues. However in Razı's study, all participants were studying at different language departments, therefore

they were more familiar to cultural components in language learning (2012).

The *RQ3* is primarily concerned with the textbook in terms of cultural elements in it. The textbook was found heavily loaded with target culture and limited source (Turkish) culture as reported by the participants during semi-structured interviews which is in line with Xiao (2010)'s study in which "Contemporary College English for Listening" was examined and found mostly presenting target culture. On the contrary to what this current study presented, Dweik and Al-Sayyed (2015) stated that "Action Pack 12" was heavily Arabic culture-oriented while target culture was very limited. Moreover, Çelik and Erbay (2013) reported that "Spot on 6, Spot on 7 and Spot on 8" have a balance between the local, target and international cultures. However, Kirkgöz and Ağçam (2011) noted that 18 locally-published English textbooks provided both the source and target cultures with a highest importance comparing to international target cultural components.

Therefore, it could be deducted that the textbooks do not pay equal importance towards cultural elements including target, source and international cultures. In this sense, not only target but also source cultures are worth of consideration to be included in textbooks as they contribute to the learners' awareness and familiarity with their own culture in addition to welcoming differences among other cultures as an international cultural awareness. Even though the students demonstrated a positive tendency to culture teaching in their language classes, they also reported the lessons are mostly grammar-based and include limited activities for culture teaching which is similar to Young and Sachdev's study reporting the gap between theory and practice in terms of cultural approach in classroom settings (2011). In this respect, instructors should be provided with in-service training on the methodology of teaching culture in general terms and intercultural communicative competence in particular in order to make the best use of the textbooks as they play a crucial role in turning the materials into a functional tool that facilitates learning.

To conclude, some of the results revealed significant points on cultural components in language classrooms reported by participants. The most intriguing result is even though the participants had strong agreement upon intercultural competence in language classrooms, there is a low level of culture teaching and it is mostly based on target culture. Accordingly, pre-service teacher education programs should provide culture related courses for student teachers with an aim to teach how to integrate culture into language teaching. I anticipate that the findings will help teachers, program developers and policy makers to plan, and

integrate cultural elements into their curriculum with the central aim of raising intercultural awareness.

5. Limitations

As nothing is without deficiencies, this study has also some limitations. First of all, the sample chosen randomly is limited to the only 60 % of Namık Kemal University Preparatory School learners and 15 instructors in 2015-2016 teaching year fall term. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized to a larger group. Furthermore, only one inventory was used to explore the most and least valued cultural components among preparatory students and English language instructors. Notably, the cultural components investigated in the survey were limited to nine categories, thus not all cultural elements were included there.

6. Implications and Suggestions

Concurrent with the findings of the present study, relevant literature and discussions afterwards, the following suggestions for further research studies could be presented.

1. The present study focused on the preparatory school learners and English instructors, therefore further research studies need to be conducted with diverse participants studying different fields of language across various universities including teacher educators and school administrators as well.

2. Teachers' beliefs about the reasons and theoretical considerations underlying their view of teaching culture are prominently important as they apply it according to their beliefs. For this reason, it would be fair to collect more detailed data via semi-structured interviews, observations, diaries, reflection journals, and field notes from teachers and students as it is necessary to explore or identify any concerns.

3. Action research, classroom-based research should be structured to explore the practices within classrooms in terms of intercultural communicative competence teaching.

4. While the findings may still shed light on the current situation in terms of culture in language classrooms at a state university, some other concerns should be paid attention for their role in cultural awareness such as beliefs, gender, attitudes, social background, personality, proficiency level of participants, academic degree, specialization fields etc.

5. Last but not least, a sample curriculum model for teaching intercultural critical competence could be developed by a study with all dimensions clearly defined from objectives to the assessment process.

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