

Integrating Target Culture in EFL Classrooms

Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Sınıfında Hedef Kültürü Entegre Etme

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions and classroom applications of the Turkish EFL instructors about integrating target culture in their classroom. A sample of eighty (N=80) EFL instructors working at state and private university language preparatory programs in Turkey participated in this study. The quantitative data were obtained through a questionnaire, and the qualitative data were collected from semi-structured interviews and stimulated recalls administered to the two groups of participants. The findings of the study revealed significant implications with respect to integrating target culture in an EFL classroom.

Keywords: Target culture; classroom applications; EFL.

Özet

Bu çalışmanın amacı, dil hazırlık programlarında çalışmakta olan ve İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğreten Türk öğretmenlerin hedef kültürü sınıflarında entegre etme konusunda sınıf içi uygulamalarını ve algılarını araştırmaktır. Çalışmanın örneklemi olarak, araştırmaya Türkiye'deki devlet ve özel üniversitelerinde çalışan seksen (N=80) yabancı dil hazırlık programı öğretmeni katılmıştır. Nicel veriler bir anket aracılığıyla elde edilmiş, nitel veriler iki grup katılımcıya uygulanan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme ve çağrışım tekniğine dayalı görüşmeyle toplanmıştır. Çalışmanın bulguları, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce sınıfında hedef kültürü entegre etmeye ilişkin önemli çıkarımlar ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Hedef kültür; sınıf içi uygulamalar; yabancı dil olarak İngilizce.

Introduction

The definition of culture varies among many researchers. Adaskou et al. (1990) for example, identifies four meanings of culture namely, aesthetic sense, the sociological sense, the semantic sense and the pragmatic (or sociolinguistic) sense. The aesthetic sense is culture with a "capital C" and includes the media, the cinema, music and literature; sociological sense is culture with a "small c" and includes the organization and nature of family, of home life, of interpersonal relations, material conditions, work and leisure, customs and institutions. Semantic sense is the areas culturally distinctive such as food, clothes, and institutions due to the fact that they are relevant to a particular way of life. Finally, pragmatic sense is related to the background knowledge, social skills, and paralinguistic skills that make possible successful communication. According to the Goode et al. (2000) culture is defined by the National Center for Cultural Competence 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." Besides, Larzén-Östermark (2008) state that culture is, "how and in what contexts you use certain expressions and how you talk to

somebody you meet on the street, a stranger, and how you talk to an office clerk or with family and friends. Finally, Ritlyová (2009) defines culture as, "various customs, values, typical behaviour, attitudes and the overall approach regarding the way of life reflected in movies, songs, fashion, literature and numerous products of art, but also in everyday use of the particular language, e.g. recognized proverbs, common idiomatic expressions or phrases which are characteristic for certain members of society and which significantly differentiate these people according to their age, level and specific area of education, as well as their position in the society, etc." Consequently, it is clear that culture and communication are interwoven and it is culture that decides how we communicate.

The Place of Culture in Foreign Language Teaching

The relation between culture and language has evolved with the changes in education and ideas in the field. However, what has not changed is that language and culture cannot be separated and it is not possible to teach a language without its cultural background and features (Çakır, 2006; Ho, 2009; Larzén-Östermark, 2008; Lessard-Clouston, 1997; Önalán, 2005; Peterson & Coltrane, 2003; Sárdi, 2003; Sarıçoban & Çalışkan, 2011; Zhu, 2010).

Lessard-Clouston (1997, p. 136) claims that, "[C]ultural awareness is necessary if students are to develop an understanding of the dynamic nature of the target culture, as well as their own culture." In the same respect, Sárdi (2003) believes that although some of the researchers are concerned for the fact that teaching target language exclusively may cause the students to feel alienated against the target language culture, their own language and culture, students apparently are not aware of these matters and are glad to be involved with both the target and their native culture as well as cross-cultural issues.

Additionally, Peterson and Coltrane (2003) state that it is important to be aware of culturally appropriate ways of addressing people, expressing gratitude, making requests and agreeing or disagreeing with someone and also intonation patterns and behavior are important facts since they might be different in the target language speech community than their own speech community. However, it is seen that in practice, teachers are more likely to teach students about English culture in terms of food/fashion even if they say they will look at it on deeper sociological levels (Önalán, 2005).

According to Çakır (2006, p. 154) knowing and understanding a language does not only mean to acquire the knowledge of grammar and lexis, but also the features and characteristics of the culture on some level. Additionally, he claims that to communicate internationally requires communicating intercultural. It is therefore possible to encounter some cultural differences which happen in every language such as, "the place of silence, tone of voice, appropriate topic of conversation, and expressions as speech act functions (e.g. apologies, suggestions, complaining, refusals, etc.)."

Furthermore, to be efficient in teaching culture, instructors need to have an adequate level of cultural awareness. They have to be aware of the importance of culture in language learning and incorporate their knowledge into their classroom practices. Since textbooks may not be enough for raising the cultural awareness of the students, the teacher needs to look for appropriate, useful, beneficial and suitable extra materials including cultural knowledge (Larzén-Östermark, 2008).

Similarly, Ho (2009, p. 73) claims that having cultural awareness is beneficial for the professional development of instructors and expresses his ideas as:

"A shift from a traditional to intercultural stance in EFL classrooms will contribute to teachers' professional development for a long-term plan for language teaching. It enhances their awareness of the inextricable and interdependent relationship between language and culture and teaching culture as an integral component of language teaching. It also helps to develop teachers' intercultural perspectives that may have an impact on their language teaching methodology and syllabus design. This shift is a

challenge that EFL teachers and students have to deal with to meet the goals of foreign language education in our modern world.”

According to what's been discussed above, it is a fact that students gain the most linguistic knowledge in the classroom, during the lesson. As culture is an important component of language teaching, instructors need to be bicultural or at least have adequate knowledge of the target culture and develop competencies in some intercultural communication skills (Zhu, 2010). Therefore, it is necessary for the instructors to develop their cultural knowledge and incorporate it into their classroom applications. They need to enable students to be aware of their own learning as well as to encourage the learner's autonomy by assessing and questioning more about the target language (Sarıçoban & Çalışkan, 2011).

The Sources of Target Culture

Since culture teaching in the classroom is an essential component of language, and instructors are the providers of cultural knowledge for the students, their sources of target culture: what, how, and how much they know about it are all questions to be investigated and answered (Peterson & Coltrane, 2003; Şen, 2010).

According to Peterson and Coltrane (2003) cultural activities and objectives need to be handled carefully and incorporated into the lesson plans so as to expand and enlighten the teaching content. They also claim that integrating authentic sources from the native speaking community in our teaching aids to engage students in authentic cultural experiences. These sources can be films, new broadcasts, and television shows; websites; and photographs, magazines, newspapers, restaurant menus, travel brochures, and other printed materials. It is possible to adapt the use of authentic materials in accordance with the age and language proficiency level of the students. Additionally, the proverbs, role-plays, culture capsules, students as cultural resources, ethnographic studies, literature and films related to the target culture are a few of the quite effective sources of culture.

When the sources of culture have been considered, the most common ones which come to mind are: internet, realia, music, books, documentaries, photos, pictures, flashcards, television, food, clothes, holidays, festivals, and films, etc. These are the ones found via brainstorming. However, the sources of culture have not been examined much and it is not possible to receive sufficient information. Since the instructor is mostly the only source for the students to obtain cultural knowledge, there is burden on the shoulders of the instructors do so effectively. Therefore, they need some valuable, adequate sources to gain an awareness and knowledge of culture and help students gain sufficient knowledge of culture. In the literature, this issue has not been dealt with much yet; hence sources of culture are an issue to be discussed in the following years.

Classroom Applications of Target Culture

One of the main concerns of today is what the instructors' perceptions of culture teaching are. The debate concerning whether they agree or disagree is not an issue of debate. However, whether they lack sufficient cultural knowledge is a quite trendy research topic nowadays (Atay et al., 2009; Bada, 2000; Lessard-Clouston, 1997; Çakır, 2006; Gönen & Sağlam, 2012; Karabınar & Güler, 2012; Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993).

Tomalin and Stempleski (1993, pp. 7-8) for example, modified Seelye's (1988) 'seven goals of cultural instruction', and according to them, the teaching of culture has the following goals and is of and in itself a means of accomplishing them:

- To help students to develop an understanding of the fact that all people exhibit culturally-conditioned behaviours.
- To help students to develop an understanding that social variables such as age, sex, social class, and place of residence influence the ways in which people speak and behave.
- To help students to become more aware of conventional behaviour in common situations in the target culture.
- To help students to increase their awareness of the cultural connotations of words and phrases in the target language.
- To help students to develop the ability to evaluate and refine generalizations about the target culture, in terms of supporting evidence.
- To help students to develop the necessary skills to locate and organize information about the target culture.
- To stimulate students' intellectual curiosity about the target culture, and to encourage empathy towards its people.

Lessard-Clouston (1997, p. 134) argues that culture teaching should be included in our teaching and curriculum and indicated below:

"First, though culture is implicit is what we teach, to assume that those who are 'learning the language' in our classes are also learning the cultural knowledge and skills required to be competent L2/FL speakers denies the complexity of culture, language learning, and communication. Second, we should include culture in our curriculum in an intentional manner in order to avoid the stereotyping and pitfalls Nemni (1992) has outlined. The third reason for expressly including culture in our L2/FL curriculum is to enable teachers to do a better job teaching culture and to be more accountable to students for the culture learning that takes place in our L2/FL classes."

In the same respect, Bada (2000, p. 101) states that, "Cultural literacy, or awareness, must be given room in any language teaching syllabus not only for its broad contribution to bridging gaps between cultural differences and building an atmosphere of tolerance and confidence among societies, but also for its significance in communicating simple needs and expressing meaning in ideas between individuals."

Lastly, Çakır (2006) answers the question of "Why?" and claims that the reasons we ought to familiarize our students with the cultural components of the language are to:

- develop the communicative skills,
- understand the linguistic and behavioural patterns both of the target and the native culture at a more conscious level,
- develop intercultural and international understanding, adopt a wider perspective in the perception of the reality,
- make teaching sessions more enjoyable to develop an awareness of the potential mistakes that might come up in comprehension, interpretation, and translation and communication.

In brief, it can be stated that both pre- and in-service instructors can be provided with examples of how language and culture teaching can be involved with, and encouraged to discover various other ways of culture teaching and once they have the adequate knowledge of culture teaching and are more proficient, they will eventually be more able to incorporate culture into their teaching (Atay et al., 2009).

Studies on Integrating Target Culture in ESL/EFL Contexts

There have been several studies conducted by numerous researchers which aimed to investigate subjects related to culture teaching, the perceptions of students and instructors on culture teaching, the classroom applications of culture, cultural awareness of students and instructors, teaching culture via language skills in EFL context (Larzén-Östermark, 2008; Sercu, Garcia & Prieto, 2005; Stapleton, 2000).

Stapleton (2000) for example, investigated the native English speaking teachers' views on the role of culture in TEFL. The participants were 28 university-level teachers in Japan and they responded to a questionnaire providing comments about the extent and nature of culture they teach. According to the findings, the teachers thought that while culture should be part of TEFL, they incorporated it into their classes more randomly than other aspects of their teaching. Additionally, they had seriously considered and made an effort to change their teaching style based on the observation of their students' cultural style of learning.

In another study, Sercu, Garcia and Prieto (2005) focused on the perceptions of Spanish foreign language teachers on culture teaching. The study aimed to discover to what extent present-day teaching practice reflects constructivist approaches. The participants were 424 language instructors. The data came from a web-based questionnaire consisting of open and closed questions. The results revealed that teachers were not able to devote more time to culture teaching or intercultural competence due to lack of time, lack of suitable teaching materials and lack of training in this area.

In a similar fashion, Larzén-Östermark (2008) attempted to find out the attitudes of teachers at a Finland-Swedish comprehensive school towards the treatment of culture in English foreign language (EFL) teaching. More specifically, the questions investigated how teachers interpret the concept of culture in English foreign language teaching, how the cultural goals were specified, and what teachers do to achieve these objectives. The data were obtained from interviews with 13 Finland-Swedish teachers of English at grades 7-9. Based on the findings, although most teachers found culture important, they felt that they lacked the appropriate and sufficient knowledge and skills to successfully teach about culture from an intercultural perspective since they had not spent as much time in English-speaking countries

Apart from the studies related to culture teaching in ESL/ELF contexts abroad, there has been an increase in the number of the studies related to integrating culture in EFL classrooms in Turkey as well (Atay et al., 2009; Bayyurt, 2006; Genç & Bada, 2005; Gülден, 2003; Karabınar & Güler, 2012; Sarıçoban & Çalışkan, 2011).

To begin with, Gülден's (2003) study, "Foreign Language Education Today and Intercultural Communication Theory" tried to find out the cultural aspects of foreign language education. The participants of the study were 89 preparatory class students in the prep school of foreign languages. The results suggested that most of the students accepted the importance of culture learning for communicating with foreign people. However, they claimed that they were not satisfied with the amount of foreign culture they received or learned.

Genç and Bada's study (2005) aimed at investigating the effects of the culture class the students of the ELT department at a state university in Turkey. According to the results, there was a significant similarity between the students' views and the theoretical benefits of a culture class as argued by some experts in the field. It was also suggested that a culture class is quite beneficial in terms of improving language skills, raising cultural awareness, changing attitudes towards native and target societies, and contribution to the teaching profession.

In another study, Bayyurt (2006) tried to find out the importance of raising non-native English language teachers' awareness about different dimensions of culture in the teaching of English as an international language. The data were collected via a semi-structured interview from a small group of Turkish teachers of English working in public and private schools in Turkey. The results revealed that there was a general consensus among the participants on the practice of referring to an 'international culture' with

special emphasis on English-speaking Anglo-American cultures, as well as the students' local culture in the English as a Foreign Language classroom. In addition, it was discovered that being a non-native English speaking teacher was an advantage as far as cultural and linguistic issues in the English language classroom are concerned.

Atay et al. (2009) conducted a study to discover the opinions and attitudes of Turkish teachers of English on intercultural competence teaching and to see how and to what extent these opinions and attitudes are reflected in their classroom applications. The participants were 503 EFL teachers and the data was collected via questionnaire. The results indicated that language teachers seemed to be aware of the role of culture in foreign language education though they did not often integrate culture into their teaching in order to develop intercultural competence in their students.

Sarıçoban and Çalışkan (2011) attempted to identify the types of cultural activities students wanted to have during their study of the target language and the level at which students preferred to see those cultural components in a language classroom via questionnaire. The participants of the study were 95 preparatory school intermediate students. The findings indicated that students generally had positive attitudes towards the incorporation of cultural components during their study of the English language. More significantly, it was suggested that teaching culture ought to become an integral part of foreign language instruction.

Finally, Karabınar and Güler (2012) aimed to describe the attitudes of language teachers at Turkish universities toward culture teaching. The data were collected via survey method and the participants were 155 ELT instructors working at language preparatory schools of 17 universities in Turkey. The findings indicated that there was not any significant difference between native and non-native English speaking teachers and between the teachers working at a state or private universities in terms of overall attitude towards teaching culture. The results also revealed that there was a more positive attitude towards the integration of culture among both parties.

Research Questions

It is obviously understood from various studies that culture is a component of language teaching and it is not possible to teach it without referring to the cultural content. To achieve this aim, the instructors need cultural awareness; to be able to incorporate target culture into classroom practices. Additionally, their classroom applications ought to reflect both their own and the students' perceptions about integrating target culture.

This study mainly aims at investigating the perceptions and classroom applications of the Turkish EFL instructors about integrating target culture in their classroom. The following research questions were addressed in the study:

1. What are the perceptions of Turkish EFL instructors about "target culture"?
2. To what extent are the following concepts perceived to be important by Turkish EFL instructors while integrating target culture in their classroom:
 - a. cultural components
 - b. aspects of language
 - c. major sources of knowledge
3. Is there any difference between the perceptions of Turkish EFL instructors at state and private universities about "target culture"?
4. Is there any difference between the perceptions of Turkish EFL instructors about their classroom applications on integrating target culture in their classroom?

Method

Design

This study adopted both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Quantitative research method enables a researcher to look into certain common or specified characteristics of a selected population which, in fact, provides the researcher with the opportunity to generalize the relationship among variables in the study (Hohmann, 2006). For the purposes of this study, quantitative method was employed in order to analyze the data collected from the questionnaire via SPSS 16.0.

As for the qualitative research method for this study, the perceptions of the instructors were revealed much more clearly providing the participants with the opportunity to be free during the data collection process. Taylor (2005, p. 101) stated that qualitative research allows researchers to examine in full context and interact with participants while collecting data mostly face-to-face from them.

Specifically, the randomly selected instructors were provided with a semi-structured interview and the results were interpreted according to Bogdan and Biklen's (1998) framework. As for the stimulated recall, randomly selected instructors were asked to prepare a twenty-minute classroom activity based on integrating target culture while teaching. The activity was recorded by the researcher. As for the next step, after two to three days, the instructors were asked to watch the video together with the researcher. The researcher stopped the video and asked the instructors to clarify certain points regarding integrating culture in an EFL classroom. Data were interpreted based on Gass and Mackey's (2005) framework.

Sample

For the purposes of this study, the data were gathered from eighty instructors working in state and private university language preparatory programs. Specifically, forty (N=40) state university instructors and forty private (N=40) university instructors participated in this study.

According to the data gathered from the questionnaire, the participants were thirty-one males and seventy-two females. Specifically, twenty-nine (N=29) female and eleven (N=11) male State University Language Prep Program Instructors and thirty-one (N=31) female and nine (N=9) male Private University Language Prep Program Instructors participated in the study.

Furthermore, all the participants were Turkish EFL instructors who graduated from different departments. Specifically, twenty-nine (N=29) of the state university language preparatory program instructors graduated from English Language Teaching Department, nine (N=9) from English Language and Literature, and two (N=2) from Linguistics Departments. Besides, the private university language preparatory program instructors graduated from the following departments: English Language Teaching (N=29), English Language and Literature (N=6), American Culture and Literature (N=1), Translations and Interpretation (N=1) and Linguistics (N=3).

As for the participants' degree of education thirty-three (N=33) of state university language preparatory program instructors had a BA degree. As for their graduate education, five (N=5) of the state university language prep program instructors completed their MA or were still a student of an MA program and two (N=2) either completed their PhD or were still a student of a PhD program. As for the private university language preparatory program instructors, twelve (N=12) had a BA degree, sixteen (N=16) completed their MA, and twelve (N=12) completed their PhD degree.

Finally, the two groups of participants had different teaching experiences. The teaching experience of the state university language preparatory program instructors varied from 2 to 11 years and more.

Specifically, seven (N=7) of them had 2-3 years of teaching experience, five (N=5) had 4-5 years, thirteen (N=13) had 6-10 years, and fifteen (N=15) of them had 11 years and more teaching experience.

On the other hand, the teaching experience of the private university language preparatory program instructors varied from 1 year (N=3), 2-3 years (N=1), 4-5 years (N=8), 6-10 years (N=8) and 11 years and more experience (N=20).

Data Collection Instruments

In an attempt to find out the perceptions and classroom applications of the Turkish EFL instructors about integrating target culture in their classroom the data were collected from the following three methods:

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was given both to the private and state university instructors to find out their perceptions on integrating target culture in an EFL classroom. The questionnaire was adapted from Şen's (2010) study which aimed to identify the EFL instructors' definition of target culture, their perceptions of the epistemological sources referring to target culture, and the skills and tasks they integrate while teaching English in their classrooms.

The questionnaire consisted of two parts: Part 1 and Part 2. In Part 1, the demographic information was gathered based on the following criteria: gender, nationality, department of graduation, educational background, age, years of teaching experience, and the presence of the participants' abroad.

As for Part 2, there were two subcategories: A and B. The first subcategory (A) included 34 items in a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' (1) through 'strongly agree' (5). As for the second subcategory (B), there were four basic questions. The first question had four different statements (e.g. the characteristics of home, family nature, and interpersonal relations in a community). Specifically, the two groups of instructors were asked to choose one of the given statements according to the order of importance namely (1) extremely important and (5) useless. The second question aimed to find out which language skills the participants most commonly integrated into target culture while teaching in an EFL classroom. Specifically, they were asked to choose 3 of the language skills (e.g. speaking) and rank them as 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. Finally, the last question investigated the sources of knowledge (e.g. films) the participants had to choose in terms of target culture.

Before the questionnaire was administered to the instructors, it was piloted with seven English prep program instructors. Reliability estimate was $\alpha=0.729$ for the whole questionnaire which indicates a high internal consistency of the items in the scale (Gliem & Gliem, 2003).

Semi-structured Interviews

Another primary source of data for this study were the semi-structured interviews which aimed to find out what the instructors understood of the concept of target culture. By using the semi-structured interviews the researcher tried to gather detailed information about the instructors' knowledge on target culture, and their perceptions about integrating target culture in their classrooms. The interview questions were adopted from Şen's study (2010).

The interview contained four open-ended questions. Question 1 aimed to find out what state and private university language prep program instructors understood of the concept "target culture" while teaching English in their classroom. In question 2, the two groups of participants were asked to comment on the

cultural components provided by the researcher. Question 3 attempted to investigate the aspects of language the two groups perceived important to integrate while teaching target culture. Finally, in question 4, the researcher provided some sources of knowledge about target culture. The instructors were asked to choose which ones they perceive to be important and briefly comment on them.

Stimulated Recall

In an attempt to investigate whether the perceptions of instructors on target culture match with their actual behaviours in an EFL classroom, stimulated recall technique was applied. As suggested by Gass and Mackey (2005, pp. 78-79), the instructors were minimally trained so that they would be able to carry out the procedure, the questions to be asked while watching the video were not shown beforehand to the instructors as they should not be provided with any extra aspects or unnecessary knowledge. It was also done so as to collect natural and instant responses.

To achieve this goal, one state and one private university language prep program instructors were asked to prepare a 20-minute classroom activity by emphasizing some target cultural components. Specifically, while the state university language prep program instructor chose an activity about England, the private university language prep program instructor focused on the sports of the UK and the USA in his lesson. While the two instructors applied the activity, the researcher recorded their videos. After the application, the instructors chose the most suitable day and hour according to their weekly schedule and informed the researcher to observe their classroom.

The researcher prepared the stimulated recall questions immediately after recording the lessons, and the instructors were interviewed two or three days after the event. The researcher asked each instructor to watch the recording together and reflect on their teaching focusing basically on how they integrated target culture into their teaching along with some other aspects of their teaching. Throughout the video watching session, the researcher was in control about where to stop and ask the questions and did not interfere with the answers of the instructors.

Specifically, the data obtained through stimulated recall were interpreted according to Gass and Mackey's (2005) framework. The questions were asked and the answers were recorded. Although the process seemed more like a controlled and guided conversation rather than an informal interview, the attitude of the researcher was quite friendly and achieved to create a positive and comfortable atmosphere. So as to catch all the answers and comments of the instructors during the whole process, two voice recorders were used in case and the instructors were informed about this beforehand for ethical reasons. They were also informed and guaranteed that the recording and their answers were only going to be used for this study and that their names were going to be kept confidential. The whole interview process was conducted in English as it did not require too much time and was not complicated as the questions were quite clear.

Data Analysis

In an attempt to answer the first, second and third research questions, the data gathered from the questionnaire were tabulated and analyzed statistically using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) 16.0 version for Windows. Descriptive statistics (percentages, means and standard deviations) were evaluated in order to identify the perceptions of the state and private university language preparatory program instructors in relation to target culture and to find out whether there were any differences between the two groups.

The data collected from the questionnaire were supported via semi-structured interview carried out with six (N=6) state and six (N=6) private university language prep program instructors. According to Bogdan

and Biklen’s (1998) framework, the recorded answers were first transcribed, and then by reading each participant’s transcripts the conceptual themes, namely: cultural components, aspects of language and major sources of knowledge were identified by the researcher according to the recurring words and ideas. These conceptual categories were used to create a matrix of major themes which were sorted under specific heading.

Finally, the data gathered via stimulated recall were first transcribed, and then by reading each participant’s transcripts, it was attempted to find out whether there was any difference between the state and private university language preparatory program instructors’ perceptions while integrating the following aspects of target culture: cultural components (e.g. the characteristics of home and family), aspects of language (e.g. speaking) and major sources of knowledge (e.g. films). The data gathered via stimulated recall were analyzed according to Gass and Mackey’s (2005) framework.

Results

The Perceptions of Turkish EFL Instructors about Target Culture

In this part, the findings of the questionnaire are reported to reveal the perceptions of Turkish EFL instructors about the concept of “target culture”. Specifically, the percentages of state university language preparatory program instructors (SULPPI) and private university language preparatory program instructors (PULPPI) are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Perceptions of SULPPI and PULPPI about Target Culture

	Strongly Disagree/Disagree		Not Decided		Strongly Agree/Agree	
	SULPPI %	PULPPI %	SULPPI %	PULPPI %	SULLPI %	PULPPI %
Culture and language cannot be separated.	10	7.5	0	0	90	92.5
Teachers should know about target culture.	7.5	0	0	2.5	92.5	97.5
English can be taught without reference to culture.	70	80	5	5	25	15
My students ask questions about target culture.	10	5	2.5	20	87.5	75
The best way to learn something about target culture is to go and live in that country	10	12.5	15	20	75	67.5
I do not teach target culture in my lessons	77.5	82.5	5	7.5	17.5	10
Giving cultural information is boring for my students.	87.5	75	10	22.5	2,5	2.5
I have difficulty in giving cultural information in my lessons.	75	77.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	10

	Strongly Disagree/Disagree		Not Decided		Strongly Agree/Agree	
	SULPPI %	PULPPI %	SULPPI %	PULPPI %	SULLPI %	PULPPI %
I find it useful to compare Turkish and target culture in my lessons.	12.5	15	7.5	10	80	75
I try to learn more about target culture in order to use in my lessons.	12.5	10	5	10	82.5	80
Target culture should focus on the teaching of monumental aspects of culture (i.e. <i>famous people, famous paintings</i>)	17.5	32.5	2.5	30	80	37.5
My students like learning about culture.	7.5	2.5	10	15	82.5	82.5
I feel uncomfortable when a question is asked about target culture.	35	77.5	37.5	15	27.5	7.5
ELT teachers should be equipped with cultural patterns of target language.	5	5	0	2.5	95	92.5
I tell my students what I heard (or read) about target culture.	0	2.5	10	5	90	92.5
Course curriculum should also cover the cultural information in addition to the linguistic information.	2.5	0	5	17.5	92.5	82.5
I make sure that my lesson plans include information about target culture.	12.5	5	12.5	35	75	60
I talk to my students about my own experiences in the foreign country.	15	10	12.5	15	72.5	75
ELT teachers should only teach language, not culture.	85	92.5	10	7.5	5	0

	Strongly Disagree/Disagree		Not Decided		Strongly Agree/Agree	
	SULPPI %	PULPPI %	SULPPI %	SULLPI %	PULPPI %	
I tell my students why I find something fascinating or strange about target culture.	7.5	0	7.5	12.5	85	87.5
It is important for me to include aspects of culture as part of my classroom teaching.	7.5	2.5	15	10	77.5	87.5
Target culture should focus on the teaching of material culture (i.e. <i>food, clothing, etc.</i>).	7.5	12.5	15	10	77.5	77.5
I try to teach the effects of culture on language (i.e. not so common <i>have a good meal</i> versus mandatory <i>afiyet olsun</i>).	7.5	0	2.5	20	90	80
I provide contrasting cultural examples (i.e. <i>In Turkish we say this but in English they say that</i>).	5	5	2.5	20	92.5	75
The course books I use contain a lot of cultural information.	17.5	12.5	12.5	17.5	70	72.5
The term target culture means the culture of everyone who speaks English.	52.5	50	22.5	25	25	25
I find it enjoyable to give cultural information in my lessons.	5	2.5	2.5	2.5	92.5	95
I believe culture is very important in establishing appropriate communication.	0	2.5	5	0	95	97.5
It is impossible to learn target culture without living in that country for a while.	52.5	52.5	20	27.5	27.5	20

	Strongly Disagree/Disagree		Not Decided		Strongly Agree/Agree	
	SULPPI	PULPPI	SULPPI	SULLPI	PULPPI	
	%	%	%	%	%	%
I need to learn more about target culture.	7.5	20	10	7.5	82.5	72.5
Culture changes overtime.	17.5	12.5	12.5	20	70	67.5
I select the cultural elements according to the characteristic (i.e. <i>age, level etc.</i>) of my students.	12.5	5	10	10	77.5	85
Culture is often a part of my lessons.	7.5	5	15	22.5	77.5	72.5
Target culture should focus on the teaching of beliefs (i.e. <i>religion, likes and dislikes etc.</i>).	22.5	22.5	30	32.5	47.5	45

Note: SULPPI=State University Language Prep Program Instructors; PULPPI=Private University Language Prep Program Instructors.

According to this table, the two groups of participants perceived almost all of the items listed below to be crucial to focus on (as a combination of strongly agree and agree) while integrating culture in an EFL classroom. For example, they perceived the items such as *"culture and language cannot be separated"* (SULPPI: M=4.30, SD=0.99 / PULPPI: M=4.42, SD=1.00), *"teachers should know about target culture"* (SULPPI: M=4.35, SD=0.69 / PULPPI: M=4.55, SD=0.55), *"students asking questions about target culture"* (SULPPI: M=3.97, SD=0.80 / PULPPI: M=3.90, SD=0.77), *"the best way to learn something about target culture is to go and live in that country"* (SULPPI: M=3.97, SD=1.02 / PULPPI: M=3.87, SD=1.01) and *"finding it useful to compare Turkish and target culture in their lessons"* (SULPPI: M=3.85, SD=0.86 / PULPPI: M=3.80, SD=1.01) to be important to in relation to teaching culture in English language preparatory programs. Taking these results into consideration, it can be stated that both groups believed that culture plays an effective role in EFL classrooms.

On the other hand, the two groups rated the items as *"English can be taught without reference to culture"* (SULPPI: M=2.42, SD=1.15 / PULPPI: M=1.95, SD=1.10), *"not teaching target culture in their lessons"* (SULPPI: M=2.20, SD=0.96 / PULPPI: M=1.87, SD=0.93), *"giving cultural information is boring for their students"* (SULPPI: M=1.87, SD=0.68 / PULPPI: M=1.85, SD=0.94), *"having difficulty in giving cultural information in their lessons"* (SULPPI: M=2.20, SD=0.88 / PULPPI: M=2.10, SD=0.87), and *"ELT teachers should only teach language, not culture"* (SULPPI: M=1.67, SD=0.94 / PULPPI: M=1.42, SD=0.63) to be unimportant (as a combination of strongly disagree and disagree) which indicated that they had positive attitude towards teaching culture in their classrooms.

Conversely, the instructors perceived the some of the items to be neither important (as a combination of strongly agree and agree) nor unimportant (as a combination of strongly disagree and disagree) (e.g. *"the term target culture means the culture of everyone who speaks English"* (SULPPI: M=2.50, SD=1.08 / PULPPI: M=2.65, SD=1.12)). One possible explanation behind this finding might be the fact that although, English has become a world language, an international language and a "lingua franca", some of the instructors still considered British or American culture as the main focus of culture teaching.

Likewise, they could not decide on the following items either: *"it is impossible to learn target culture without living in that country for a while"* (SULPPI: M=2.70, SD=1.09 / PULPPI: M=2.62, SD=1.03) and *"target culture should focus on the teaching of beliefs"* (SULPPI: M=3.30, SD=1.11 / PULPPI: M=3.27, SD=1.03). Apparently, the instructors were not sure about the necessity or the consequences of living in the country of target culture or the impact of it on learning target culture and also they did not have the adequate knowledge on specific cultural concepts as (e.g. beliefs).

Finally, there were two items on which the instructors did not share the same idea namely, *"target culture should focus on the teaching of monumental aspects of culture"* and *"I feel uncomfortable when a question is asked about target culture"*. While the first item was perceived important only by the instructors working at state universities (SULPPI: M=3.80, SD=1.01), it was rated as neither important nor unimportant (PULPPI: M=3.05, SD=0.93) by the instructors working at private universities. As for the second item, it was perceived neither important nor unimportant by the state university instructors (SULPPI: M=2.57, SD=1.21) whereas it was perceived unimportant by the private university instructors (PULPPI: M=1.95, SD=0.98). A possible reason behind these findings might be the fact that the two groups of participants had different ideas on the importance of the concepts of culture and the cultural concepts of target culture due to the curriculum they have been using in their preparatory program.

The Perceptions of Turkish EFL Instructors about Cultural Components, Aspects of Language and Major Sources of Knowledge

The findings gathered from the questionnaire were also used to report the percentages considering the perceptions of EFL instructors about the importance of emphasizing the cultural components (e.g. the characteristics of home and family), aspects of language (e.g. speaking) and major sources of knowledge (e.g. films) while integrating target culture in an EFL classroom.

To begin with, Table 2. demonstrates the percentages of the perceptions of the two groups of participants in relation to focusing on cultural components (e.g. the characteristics of home and family) while integrating target culture in an EFL classroom.

Table 2. Perceptions of SULPPI and PULPPI about Emphasizing Cultural Components while Integrating Target Culture in an EFL Classroom

	Extremely Important/Important		Not So Important		Not Important At All/Useless	
	SULPPI %	PULPPI %	SULPPI %	PULPPI %	SULPPI %	PULPPI %
The system that is reflected by the media, cinema, music, literature, and art of a community.	87.5	85	10	12.5	2.5	2.5
The customs, traditions, and institutions of a country.	100	87.5	10	2.5	0	0

	Extremely Important/Important		Not So Important		Not Important At All/Useless	
	SULPPI %	PULPPI %	SULPPI %	PULPPI %	SULPPI %	PULPPI %
What people do at work, at home, in their free time and while they entertain.	92.5	87.5	7.5	10	0	2.5
The characteristics of home, family nature, and interpersonal relations in a community.	95	100	2.5	0	2.5	0

Note: SULPPI=State University Prep Program Instructors; PULPPI=Private University English Prep Program Instructors

According to the table above, the two groups of participants perceived all of the listed cultural components (e.g. *"the characteristics of home, family nature, and interpersonal relations in a community"*) (SULPPI: M=1.82, SD=0.71 / PULPPI: M=1.50, SD=0.50) to be important while integrating target culture in their classrooms.

Furthermore, in order to find out which aspect of language should be taken for granted while focusing on target culture in an EFL classroom, both groups of instructors ranked the following concepts as 1st, 2nd, and 3rd according to their priority (See Table 3).

Table 3. Perceptions of SULPPI and PULPPI about the Aspects of Language

	Vocabulary %	Grammar %	Reading %	Speaking %	Listening %	Writing %
SULPPI	82.5	82.5	85	80	80	80
PULPPI	85	80	87.5	85	77.5	78

Note: SULPPI=State University Prep Program Instructors; PULPPI=Private University English Prep Program Instructors

According to the findings the SULPPI and PULPPI perceived all the aspects of language namely: vocabulary, grammar, reading, speaking, listening and writing vocabulary to be important while introducing target culture in an EFL classroom. In other words, culture should be emphasized in all aspects of language.

Finally, the two groups were asked to choose from the sources of knowledge they perceived to be important while integrating target culture in an EFL classroom (See Table 4).

Table 4. Perceptions of SULPPI and PULPPI about the Sources of Knowledge

	SULPPI %	PULPPI %
TV programs (not including films)	72.5	75
Films	92.5	75
Songs	67.5	67.5
Realia-artifacts/ Materials	67.5	65
Websites	80	70
Social networks (i.e. Facebook, MSN, Twitter etc.)	67.5	60
Images/ Photos	72.5	67.5
Native speakers themselves	72.5	75
Visits to foreign countries	75	72.5
Course books	65	75
Books/ Magazines/ Journals/ Newspapers/ Comics	80	67.5
Teachers training sessions/ Conferences/ Workshops	67.5	67.5

Note: SULPPI=State University Prep Program Instructors; PULPPI=Private University English Prep Program Instructors

According to the findings, the all the sources of knowledge were perceived to be important by the EFL instructors working in state and private university language preparatory programs. Only an extra source namely, ePal/eTwinning and Skype was added by one of the participants as a good source of knowledge in relation to integrating target culture in an EFL classroom.

The Results of the Semi-structured Interviews about the Perceptions of Turkish EFL Instructors about Target Culture

When the EFL instructors were asked about what they understood from the concept 'target culture', both groups stated that it is the culture of all English-speaking countries. Specifically, it is the cultural characteristics of a society the language belongs to. In relation to this point, two of the participants made the following comments:

"Although not being able to give a certain frame of target language, I think it is not solely the British, but the culture of all English-speaking countries."

"Target culture refers to the cultural characteristics of a society the language belongs to."

Furthermore, the participating groups related target language with traditions, lifestyles, customs, gestures and values of the English speaking countries as stated in the excerpts below:

"I think of values, understandings, rituals, customs, traditions, lifestyles and elements as a part of daily life that belongs to the culture of those English speaking countries."

"Target culture consists of gestures, customs, traditions, daily life and social values corresponding to the target language."

Lastly, the EFL instructors agreed on the importance and necessity of integrating target culture while teaching in an EFL classroom. They stated that they believed culture and language are intertwined and cannot be separated. Therefore, it was significant and necessary to pay attention not only to the grammatical aspects of the language but also the cultural aspects and components. In relation to this point, both groups stated that:

"Knowing that language and culture are intertwined, an EFL teacher should be fairly equipped with different aspects of the culture and the language he is supposed to teach. She/he should not only teach the grammatical rules but also exemplify gestures, responses and maybe daily situations corresponding to the target culture. "

"In our dynamic, multicultural world it is crucial to teach target culture and raise cultural awareness. Language and culture are so closely linked that any change within culture is reflected in the language and vice versa. Therefore, it is obvious that language teaching or learning can't be achieved without the integration of target culture and cultural components."

Furthermore, the participants were asked which cultural components they perceived important to integrate while teaching English in their classrooms. The results revealed that they emphasized home life, family, nature, interpersonal relations, media, cinema, music, literature, art, customs, traditions, work and free time as reported below:

"While integrating target culture in my teaching, I mostly pay attention to the home life, family nature, interpersonal relations, media, cinema, music, literature and art related to the target culture as I believe that culture and language are interwoven."

"While teaching something related to the target culture or when I need to make reference to home life, family nature, cinema, music and free time. Also, if the subject is related to their traditions or history, I integrate the components related to their customs as well."

Additionally, the two groups were requested to comment on which aspects of language they perceived important to integrate while teaching target culture in EFL classrooms. Parallel to questionnaire, the results revealed that reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary, listening and speaking were all important aspects of language to integrate target culture while teaching English. The participants commented thusly:

"While teaching target culture related vocabulary, I benefit from grammar, reading, listening, writing and speaking skills. As using the vocabulary in the appropriate context is quite significant, I make the students read, hear and write about the target culture elements."

"While teaching the target language and culture, I pay attention to the productive aspects of language which are writing and speaking. Additionally, in order to provide them with the adequate knowledge I prefer integrating target culture in reading, listening and vocabulary aspects of language."

Finally, the EFL instructors were asked which sources of knowledge helped them raise their awareness about teaching target culture in their classrooms. The instructors mentioned TV programs, films, songs etc. as reported below:

"There are many sources I benefit from which are TV programs, films, songs, materials, course books, magazines, journals, newspapers, comics, native speakers and visiting foreign countries. Additionally, I also follow many websites and social networks (SULPPI, Interview)."

"The sources of my knowledge are films, songs, social networks, photos, native speakers, visits to foreign countries, course books, magazines, journals, newspapers and comics. Additionally, I often attend to conferences, workshops and conferences because these are also quite beneficial and efficient sources to extend my knowledge about target culture (PULPPI, Interview)."

The Results of the Independent-samples t-test Results on EFL Instructors Perceptions about Target Culture

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the gain scores of the EFL instructors working in state and private university language preparatory programs about to their perceptions on target culture.

First, as shown in Table 5, there was not a significant difference between the perceptions of SULPPI and PULPPI about target culture. A possible reason that the two groups matched with each other could be due to the course books and the curriculum of the universities. It could also be that culture teaching has gained importance in the recent years, which can be noticed from the course books prepared and pressed by prestigious publishing companies.

On the other hand, there was a significant difference in the perceptions of the two groups of instructors about target culture for two items namely, Item 11: *"target culture should focus on the teaching of monumental aspects of culture (i.e. famous people)"* and Item 13: *"I feel uncomfortable when a question is asked about target culture"*. A possible reason being this finding might be due to the variety of ideas about the aspects of language and sources of knowledge helping them to raise their awareness about target culture in their classrooms.

Table 5. Independent Samples t-test comparing the Perceptions of SULPPI and PULPPI about Target Culture

Gain Scores	SULPPI		PULPPI		t	df	p
	M	SD	M	SD			
item1	4.30	.99	4.42	1.00	-.558	78	.578
item2	4.35	.69	4.55	.55	-1.419	78	.160
item3	2.42	1.15	1.95	1.10	1.879	78	.64
item4	3.97	.80	3.90	.77	.425	78	.672
item5	3.97	1.02	3.87	1.01	.438	78	.663
item6	2.20	.96	1.87	.93	1.526	78	.131
item7	1.87	.68	1.85	.94	.135	78	.893
item8	2.20	.96	1.87	.93	.510	78	.612
item9	3.85	.86	3.80	1.01	.237	78	.813
item10	4.07	.97	3.95	.95	.579	78	.564
item11	3.80	1.01	3.05	.93	3.437	78	.001*
item12	3.95	.87	4.00	.67	-.285	78	.776

Gain Scores	SULPPI		PULPPI		t	df	p
	M	SD	M	SD			
item13	2.57	1.21	1.95	.98	2.524	78	.001*
item14	4.37	.74	4.25	.74	.754	78	.453
item15	4.27	.64	4.17	.63	.701	78	.485
item16	4.40	.70	4.10	.67	1.943	78	.056
item17	3.85	1.00	3.65	.73	1.018	78	.312
item18	3.90	1.10	3.82	1.08	.307	78	.760
item19	1.67	.94	1.42	.63	1.389	78	.169
item20	4.15	.86	4.20	.64	-.293	78	.770
item21	3.92	.82	4.10	.67	-1.038	78	.303
item22	3.75	.77	3.72	.87	.135	78	.893
item23	4.10	.77	3.95	.59	.967	78	.336
item24	4.15	.80	3.87	.85	1.485	78	.141
item25	3.55	1.06	3.30	.99	1.088	78	.280
item26	2.50	1.08	2.65	1.12	-.608	78	.545
item27	4.15	.69	4.17	.59	-.172	78	.864
item28	4.15	.48	4.37	.62	-1.796	78	.076
item29	2.70	1.09	2.62	1.03	.316	78	.753
item30	3.97	.80	3.65	1.16	1.453	78	.150
item31	3.60	.95	3.82	.98	-1.037	78	.303
item32	3.80	.93	4.07	.76	-1.436	78	.155
item33	3.90	.81	3.80	.72	.582	78	.562
item34	3.30	1.11	3.27	1.03	.104	78	.918

Note: SULPPI=State University Language Prep Program Instructors; PULPPI=Private University Language Prep Program Instructors

The Stimulated Recall Results about the Perceptions of SULPPI on integrating Target Culture in an EFL Classroom

As with the warm-up activity, the EFL instructors from the state university asked the students where they lived and where they would like to live. She responded that the main aim of this activity was to introduce England and its culture. The instructor thought the best way to make an introduction was to begin with the students' native country by asking them some questions related to Turkish culture. Then, she reflected a map of England via projector and asked the students to recognize which country it was by pointing to certain cultural elements reflecting British culture. She reflected her opinion about why she chose British culture in the following way as she said:

"Because we are teaching English and our course book is based on British culture and there are lots of cultural elements in it. Generally we focus on some famous historical places like London Eye. That is something they know, something they wish to learn. So, I had to focus on England and the cities they mostly know in England, not the other cities in England. "

She continued her lesson with asking some questions about England, stating that she intended to make some kind of brainstorming session. She wanted to learn what the students knew, what they had in their background about England or London. Additionally, she stated that her aim was to go one step

forward as she believed teaching to be a step by step process. She let the students answer voluntarily and when asked why she reflected her opinion about it in the following way as she said:

"First of all, they may not know all cultural elements of other languages, other people. So, if I make them or ask them to just tell me, they could be ashamed. If I force them, they will feel under pressure. On the contrary, I am here to teach them what they need to communicate well which also, I believe, includes some cultural knowledge regarding the target language. "

As seen from the excerpt above, the participating instructor had certain awareness regarding the fact that her questions were related to target culture and matched with her aims in relation with the integrating target culture into her lesson.

After this brainstorming activity, she used some flashcards about England. When asked to reflect on why and how she chose those specific cultural elements, she reported that the topic was England. So she chose some famous images from London such as monuments, natural beauties and some famous people from London, because by showing pictures the students could understand better. She also added that instead of talking too much, showing pictures to the students helps them understand and visualize the topic.

When asked about her rationale behind choosing the cultural elements, she reported that she chose them easily. In other words, it was assumed that she integrated some basic and well known elements of British culture in her lessons via visual aids.

After teaching the vocabulary related to British culture, the EFL instructor gave a handout to the students containing the newly-learned vocabulary so as to practice what they had learned. In the handout she asked the students to work in pairs and match the words with the related pictures which they would recognize from the flashcards.

When asked about the rationale behind this activity, she reported that she tried to revise the previously learned grammatical structure, passive voice. Additionally, she said that she was happy with the students' performance, found them quite active and thought they built a good relationship. Based on her perceptions, it could be assumed that she would prefer to integrate culture while teaching.

While the students were doing the vocabulary activity, she monitored them and helped the ones who needed guidance. When she was asked to reflect on her monitoring, she stated that her teaching philosophy was based on trust between her and the students. She added that the activity she had prepared was a mixture of easy and difficult questions and knew that some of her students would need help and support. In general, she was happy with the performance of the students as stated below:

"Yes, they were quite active. I enjoyed it and felt that they also like it. It is our general classroom context. I focus on some cultural elements and the students complete the activity. "

Furthermore, when the participating instructor was asked to reflect on the interest of her students on British culture, she stated that her students were used to doing such activities and had fun as reflected below:

"This was my preference. I think our curriculum focuses on teaching British culture. What I mean, our exams are based on British culture and our course book is based on British

culture so I have to make something in accordance with our curriculum and our book. Also there is one more thing I like British culture because I feel like it's kind of widespread around the world."

It can be inferred from the excerpt above that she was aware of the reason why she should integrate cultural elements into her teaching and found this quite important. Due to the curriculum and the course books being based on British culture, the state university language prep program instructor integrated the cultural components while teaching.

Furthermore, when the EFL instructor was asked to comment on whether language and culture cannot be separated, she stated that if there were people, then there was language. She added that people actively gave importance to certain things reflected in the language and responded as follows:

"How can we separate language and culture? They're interwoven. Culture teaching is a component of language teaching. "

At the end of the lesson, she gave the students an assignment in order to make them review what they had learned that day. The following words from the EFL instructor show what she thought about the contribution of the assignment containing target cultural elements in her teaching and her students' learning:

"The assignment is to write a paragraph about England by using the new words they learned. The aim is to make them revise the vocabulary they have newly learned by writing a paragraph including elements of British culture and also they get the chance to revise the grammar points they have learned."

Finally, when asked to add anything regarding her perceptions on integrating target culture in an EFL classroom, she emphasized that teaching a language involves teaching the culture. She said:

"I like teaching language and culture. I feel that while teaching a language you also teach the culture. If you want to learn a language you have to learn about its culture."

Looking at the excerpt above, it can be inferred that the EFL instructor working at the preparatory program at the state university emphasized cultural elements while teaching. She enjoyed teaching target culture in her lesson, and believed if the language originally belonged to a country; it should involve the culture of the people living there.

The Results of the Stimulated Recall about the Perceptions of PULPPI on integrating Target Culture in an EFL Classroom

As with the warm-up activity, the EFL instructor enrolled in the preparatory program offered by the private university asked the students some questions related to soccer and football. When asked the reason behind choosing such a warm-up activity she responded her aim was to show that there were differences in the vocabulary use in the USA and England. She thought it would be a nice topic since all students are generally interested in sports.

However, when she was asked whether she was happy with her choice of pre-vocabulary activity and whether she could think of another pre-vocabulary activity which could be more culturally engaging for the students, she stated that using visual aids such as flashcards or videos focusing on sports in these two countries would have been more appealing and more culturally engaging for the students. She

reflected on her dissatisfaction about the pre-vocabulary teaching activity to her responses in the following way as she said:

"I could have used some visual aids such as flashcards or videos about British and American sports. I think it would be more appealing and stimulating because asking questions without using some visual aids was not so effective."

Furthermore, when the EFL instructor was asked to reflect on the performance of the students while answering the questions, she reported that only a few of the students were aware of the differences between these two concepts namely, soccer and football.

After the pre-vocabulary teaching, she divided the students into groups of four and provided them with a vocabulary game worksheet. She gave a set of dice to each group. The students followed the orders of the game and by using the dice the students had to find the correct word moving from square to square until they reached the final step. When she was asked the reason behind choosing this game, she responded that her main aim was to introduce the topic in an enjoyable way.

Besides, when asked to reflect on the idea why she chose to compare American and British sports, she responded in the following way:

"Because as many of our students love football, I thought, it would be a good tip to show them that there are a lot of different types of football; soccer vs. football. That's why I chose to compare them."

Regarding the way she grouped the students, she said that the students needed some interaction among each other. Additionally, she stated that while working in groups, they could share their cultural backgrounds related to soccer and football as they watch TV, use the internet, read and listen, etc. out of the classroom.

Considering the fact that most of the students like playing games while learning or practicing, she was asked to reflect on the performance of the students while playing the game. She stated that although they liked the game their performance could have been better:

"They liked the game but if we talk about the performance it was not a one hundred performance game. It could have worked better if I had a pre-vocabulary teaching activity and also if I could have added other cultural elements such as the eating, living styles, traditions, etc. of British and American people."

Looking at the excerpt above, it can be inferred that although the EFL instructor had some awareness of culture teaching and thought it should be integrated in her lessons, she thought it could have been better if she had integrated more cultural components while teaching.

Furthermore, when she was asked what came to her mind when she thought of target culture, she stated it is the culture coming from the language we teach. She reflected upon her perceptions of the definition in the following way:

"In fact, the target culture in my mind is the culture that comes from the language that we observed from the people that used the language that we teach."

As for the definition of target culture, it can be inferred that she thought that culture belongs to the target language and should be taught together. In this respect, when she was asked to state which countries target language and target culture involve, she responded that because of their teaching methods or course books, the first two countries were the USA and the UK. In fact, she sometimes loved giving examples from Australia as reported below:

"Because of our teaching methods or let's say books especially, the first two countries are the USA and the UK but in fact I love sometimes giving examples from Australia as well."

Finally, regarding the fact that the participating instructor had certain awareness about target culture, she was asked to respond on whether culture and language can be separated. She stated that language and culture form a society and without teaching the target culture, you cannot teach the language. She remarked on her perception on teaching target culture as follows:

"They can exactly not be separated because culture forms the language. Without the culture you cannot teach the language."

Consequently, it is obvious that EFL instructor had awareness on target culture and thought it was crucial to integrate cultural elements while teaching in an EFL classroom. However, unlike the instructor from the state university, she believed that target culture includes not only British culture but also American and Australian cultures. Lastly, it was also noticed that the EFL instructor from the private university was confident with integrating target culture in her classroom only if she had the adequate knowledge about it.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions and classroom applications of the Turkish EFL instructors about integrating target culture in their classroom.

To begin with, the results obtained from the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews revealed that target culture was perceived as an important component of language teaching by the instructors working at the preparatory programs offered by the state and private universities. To put it simply, they believed that language and culture are intertwined and that they cannot be separated.

As for the definition of target culture, the participating groups perceived the concept as neither British nor American culture. Rather, they referred to it as the culture of all English speaking countries. This may be because the instructors are aware of the developing and globalizing world which requires the students to improve their linguistic and intercultural competence. Additionally, though their course books are based on British culture, it has been noticed in the recent years many course books include other cultures (e.g. Australian). Therefore, both groups were aware of the fact that their students need to be informed about other cultures to interact with people from other cultures.

In addition, the results also indicated that the EFL instructors found the cultural components such as the characteristics of home, family nature and interpersonal relations in a community to be important to focus on in their lessons

In an attempt to find out whether there were any differences between the perceptions of the two groups about target culture, the results of the independent samples t-test revealed that there was no significant

difference. Both groups related target culture with traditions, lifestyles, customs, gestures and values of the English speaking countries. Additionally, they stated that home life, family, nature etc. were also components of target culture. This may be due to the fact that most of the instructors mainly follow the course books and teach the target culture the way it is presented. Besides, this finding might be related to the fact that the sources of knowledge help the instructors to raise their awareness about teaching target culture in their classrooms.

As for the integration of culture while teaching English, the participating instructors believed that it should be emphasized while teaching all aspects of language as vocabulary and reading skills. It can be inferred from these results that cultural components can be introduced to the students while helping them improve their four language skills, and their grammatical and vocabulary knowledge as well.

Lastly, the stimulated recall results indicated that there were some similarities and differences between the classroom applications of the two groups of instructors on integrating target culture in their classroom.

As for the similarities between the two groups of participants, they both perceived target culture as a crucial component while teaching English. In other words, they considered culture and language as intertwined and cannot be separated.

Conversely, there were some differences between the classroom applications of the two groups of instructors. While the EFL instructors from state university considered British culture as the target culture due to the fact that all the course books mainly focused on British culture, the EFL instructors from state university claimed that England, the USA and Australia were also related to the target culture teaching since English is actively used in these countries as well. To put it differently, the first group of participants perceived target culture to be mainly British whereas the second group believed that culture is related to any country where English is spoken,

All in all, the findings of this study revealed target culture was perceived to be crucial while teaching English in language preparatory programs offered by state and private universities in Turkey. Specifically, both groups indicated that they considered the cultural components such as home life, family, nature and interpersonal relations to be important to focus on while teaching in an EFL classroom. Finally, the participating groups stated that target culture could be integrated while teaching all aspects of language through various sources of knowledge.

Implications

The present study has both descriptive and practical implications for integrating target culture in an EFL classroom. To begin, this study provided insights into identifying the EFL instructors' perceptions and classroom applications about integrating target culture in their classrooms. According to the findings obtained through the questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and stimulated recall, EFL instructors should gain information on target culture and have the knowledge adequate to raise the students' awareness on target culture. Specifically, they should integrate target culture while teaching in an EFL classroom by paying attention to the cultural components, aspects of language and different sources of knowledge. In this sense, the results of this study can be taken for granted while designing and evaluating language preparatory programs for EFL students.

Limitations

Although the present study revealed some interesting and significant findings, they should be taken as suggestive rather than definitive due to following limitations. First, the data collection instruments

designed for the purposes of this study simply rely on the perceptions of the EFL instructors about integrating target culture in an EFL classroom. The intercultural or local culture awareness of instructors was not included which might have affected the results of the study. Furthermore, it is possible that the camera might have affected both the instructors and the students, they might have considered it obtrusive and this might have caused them to change their ordinary behaviours. Any modifications or changes in the ordinary behaviours of the instructors might affect and hinder the reliability of this study which is due to the fact that the usual approach of instructors towards integrating target culture while teaching is of crucial importance for this study. Despite these limitations, the present study is significant for the field of integrating target culture while teaching in an EFL classroom since it provides foundation for the further research.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study has several recommendations for further research. First of all, the perceptions of EFL instructors may vary. Therefore, it is recommended to replicate the present study at different language preparatory programs in Turkey. Besides, future research should also investigate students' perceptions on target culture and target culture integrated lessons which would provide insights into whether the objectives of the instructors' and the universities' match with what students actually require.

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