

Teaching A Foreign Language and Foreign Culture to Young Learners

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Abstract

The study focuses on the teaching of foreign culture (mostly English) to young learners in Turkey. After reviewing the relevant literature, the study investigates how Turkish children can be introduced to foreign culture in and out of the class and can be made to learn it at home (by their parents, siblings and etc.), in certain social occasions (e.g. birthday parties, other celebrations), through media and technology (e.g., television, computer, computer games etc.), in social and educational institutions such as kindergartens (through friends and teachers, and by using the teaching-learning materials) and schools (through their teacher and class-mates, through the teaching material, etc.). The research is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. The participants of the study consisted of young learners. A questionnaire designed by the researchers was used for collecting the study data, which was subsequently analysed. The analysis helped in identifying possible ways of teaching foreign culture to young learners is discussed by the help of clear and efficient examples and explanations. The study presents and discusses real life situations and applications. Since culture teaching is a field in its infancy, the findings of the study should benefit researchers and teachers alike, while paving the way for additional future research.

Key words: Foreign culture, foreign culture teaching, young learners

Introduction

Culture, transmitted from one generation to another, defines the identity of a society and distinguishes it from other societies. Nostrand (1989:51) defines culture as the "ground of meaning", the codes of behavior and characteristics of a society. Brooks (1964: 83) defines culture as "the sum of all the learned and shared elements that characterize a societal group."

"Language is a vital constituent of culture" (Trivedi, 1978: 92). Robinett (1980) concurs with the view that culture and language cannot be separated. The culture of a society is significantly reflected through its language. Only with a language are societies able to transmit their own cultures, beliefs and ways of life to others and shape their own lives with different cultures to which they are exposed. Brooks (1964) argues that language is the most advanced element of culture.

The use of culture in foreign and second language education is not new. Porto (2009) states that Morain used some techniques such as Culture Cluster, the Cultoon, and the Audio-Motor Unit, to integrate culture and language teaching between 1972 and 1979. Moreover, Byram suggested the same idea more than 25 years ago and since then, he and his colleagues have worked on the integration of culture and language teaching. Ritlyová (2009) states that students improve their perception of a foreign culture and their own culture by gaining awareness of a foreign language. In the same manner, Tomalin (1995) claims that cultural awareness and tolerance should be created in students because it enables students to express their cultural opinions. According to Tomalin and Stempleski's (1996:11) views on teaching culture, culture is taught for two reasons: "to increase cultural awareness, and to promote cross-cultural interaction". The teaching of culture can raise awareness, appreciation and acceptance of other cultures. Culture learning is the process of acquiring the culture-specific as well as culture-general knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for effective communication and interaction with individuals from other cultures. It is a dynamic, developmental, and ongoing process that engages the learner cognitively, behaviourally, and affectively" (Paige et al., 1999).

Culture has an important place in children's cognitive and social development. In her study, Nieto (2010) concluded that students' knowledge of their native culture has a positive effect on their learning and teachers should regard the cultural differences as valuable resources to promote learning and act as facilitators in terms of teaching culture. Michalczyk (1976) notes that for the beginning language students, culture teaching should be engaging and interesting and when they develop their language skills to some extent, more detailed culture teaching, including cultural values and behavior patterns of a specific culture, can be taught.

Tomalin & Stempleski (1993:7-8), modified Seelye's (1988) 'seven goals of cultural instruction', and listed the goals of teaching culture as follows:

1. To help students to develop an understanding of the fact that all people exhibit culturally-conditioned behaviors.
2. 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.
3. To help students to become more aware of conventional behavior in common situations in the target culture.
4. To help students to increase their awareness of the cultural connotations of words and phrases in the target language.
5. To help students to develop the ability to evaluate and refine generalizations about the target culture, in terms of supporting evidence.
6. To help students to develop the necessary skills to locate and organize information about the target culture.
7. To stimulate students' intellectual curiosity about the target culture, and to encourage empathy towards its people.

With the rapid increase in foreign language learning recently, intercultural communication has gained significance. However, culture teaching is a field that is in its infancy and thus is starting to evolve. Through a rather limited amount of reported research work, a few important observations have been made, which are explained here. Chastain (1976) claims that in order for the learner to be engaged in communication and cooperation tolerantly, he needs to figure out the contrasts between different cultures. In their study on English Language Teaching (ELT) students, Byram and Morgan (1994) mention that students can notably benefit from culture classes in order to develop their language skills, cultural awareness and views towards native and target nations. Similarly, Abolghasem (2010) points out that cultural awareness and understanding of a second language is enhanced through culture teaching in foreign language classes.

According to Cullen (2000), there is a variety of possible sources of information for teaching culture: Video, CDs, TV, readings, internet, stories, songs, newspapers, realia, literature etc. Virtual Realia is another means of teaching/ learning culture. Smith (1997) defines Virtual Realia as "(in language teaching) digitized objects and items from the target culture which are brought into the classroom as examples or aids and are used to stimulate spoken or written language production" (p.1). In a study carried out on teaching and learning Spanish language and culture by Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth (2004), it was suggested that students analyze and exchange ideas on cultural perspectives, compose songs, stories, short plays, poems and designs that can serve the purpose of portraying multicultural aspects of the same topic. It was also suggested that students retell stories or experiences in Spanish, write editorials, letters and articles to Spanish schools, newspapers and magazines.

In his article on German culture teaching, Brockmann (2009) argues that the distinction of language and culture may be harmful and culture teaching should not be an in-depth analysis of subjects like history and geography but instead, the goal of culture teaching should be to familiarize students with the target culture. He suggests that this attempt to familiarize students with the target culture should be implemented from the first semester in order to ensure that students go through the cultural information again each year. To Brockmann, cultural information provided in a classroom should consist of various content related to the target culture, such as newspapers, electronic media, magazines, political speeches, literature and advertisements. Finally, he states that a language curriculum should be organized "around the notion of cultural literacy" so that students can learn structures with the aim of placing them in the cultural context.

Mastalerz (2004) claims that in foreign language classes, culture teaching should be integrated into language teaching and she presents a lesson plan on St. George of England with the aims of both teaching about the mentioned saint and improving reading comprehension and vocabulary skills. In order to conduct the lesson, materials such as "a flag of England / do NOT confuse it with Union Jack /, a map of The British Isles, a red rose, a cassette with "God, save the Queen",

British currency, a tape-recorder, a picture of Queen Elisabeth II, a picture of St. George fighting with a dragon, photocopies of a story about St. George, photocopies of exercises, dictionaries” are used (2004:39). The lesson was carried out with activities focusing on listening, speaking and reading skills. For instance, students were shown pictures of the flag of England, a red rose and the Queen of England, and asked to link them with a country. At the end of the lesson, the students were given a research question “What Polish legend is similar to the story about St. George and why?” (2004: 44) as homework.

There can be numerous ways of teaching culture in second language. Films, television, drama, media, technology, literature, songs, games, friends and parents are important tools which support culture teaching. Obergfell (1983) argues that fairy tales should be a part of French culture teaching in a foreign language classroom in order to familiarize the students with the inherent and national values which have remained unchanged. Thus, all of these techniques facilitate students’ development. According to Obergfell, fairy tales are essential resources since they provide students with real literary works and genuine culture. Lee (2000:1) asserts, “Film is a cultural text produced in society” and “provides the audience with images of the society in which they live”. Robert Rosenstone in Gerster (2006) highlights that visual media has the ability to carry the historical messages of a culture. Peck (1998) emphasizes the importance of showing foreign films to students for teaching of gestures. Sato (2007) suggests that “traditional” Japanese toys and objects are means of teaching Japanese culture to children. Hackett (1996) emphasizes that the use of the Internet “provides a direct, immediate link to the target culture” (p.3).

Bacon (1995) states that process oriented teaching and evaluation, in relation to culture, is enabled by technological improvements. Moore *et al.* (1998) claim that teachers have started to use technology more effectively in culture and language teaching. Gale (1989) says that CD-ROMs and videodiscs can create virtual cultural contexts which provide genuine interaction. Nostrand (1989) indicates that with the help of technology, foreign cultures can be accessed easily and quickly. Another factor shaping culture learning and teaching is family members. Since families provide the first communication and education of a child, not only do they give the first cultural education, but also shape the perception of a foreign culture by the child. According to Kurtkan (1982), families have an important function in the adaptation of an individual to the society. Values, philosophies and traditions belonging to the society are transmitted to individuals by their families. Kurtkan adds that conceptions like “right” and “wrong” or “good” and “evil” take their places in an individual’s mind through their families. Therefore, one could say that family is a social institution that performs the first and foremost function in the socialization process of a child. Finally, Kaya and Tuna (2010) concur that families have a crucial role to play in the process of the socialization of an individual, and can transmit the culture and social heritage of a society to the next generation.

Coursebooks are other tools that aid culture teaching. Kılıçkaya (2004) states that teachers’ role is to teach learners the cultures and the reasons why particular events take place in different cultures. The aim is not to make the learners adopt the habit of thinking or acting like a foreigner or think that one culture is superior to the other. The main object is to make them understand that there exist different cultures. Textbooks are important resources which students can easily and frequently access. Risager in Cunningsworth (1995) points out:

Foreign language teaching textbooks no longer just develop concurrently with the development of foreign language pedagogy in a narrow sense, but they increasingly participate in the general cultural transmission with the educational system and in the rest of society (p. 90).

Music is also crucial in terms of reflecting culture and this quality of music can serve pedagogical purposes. For instance, Putnam (2006) claims that hip-hop has recently gained global popularity, and it can be integrated into lessons since ideas mentioned in song lyrics bear educational and cultural messages in them. Another example of culture teaching with music is that children learn about the cultural values such as Christmas, Santa Clause and Easter through children’s songs as Jingle Bells, Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, Christmas songs, and Easter songs. To conclude, culture is first transmitted by families and later, the cultural awareness of an individual is raised by educational institutions. Moreover, culture is an indispensable part of any language class since language learning also involves foreign culture learning, in order to communicate with target language speakers effectively and efficiently. In order to teach foreign cultures, teachers of foreign languages can use a number of techniques and materials such as stories, pictures, films and songs. Without the knowledge of the target language’s culture, one cannot fully make use of that particular language for communicative purposes.

Methodology

The aim of this research is to determine the foreign culture knowledge of Turkish primary school students, how they acquire it and the cultural elements which are used in the English coursebooks of primary schools.

Research questions were as follows: 1. To what extent do the children know about foreign cultures? 2. How do the students learn about foreign cultures in and out of classrooms? 3. Do the coursebooks which primary schools use include adequate cultural elements? 4. Is there any difference between state schools' and private schools' coursebooks in terms of culture teaching? 5. What are the teachers' opinions about culture teaching?

The participants of the study consist of a hundred primary school students of different language levels enrolled in state and private primary schools in Edirne – Turkey. The age of the students, who are randomly selected, ranges from 7 to 11.

This study was carried out by applying a descriptive design. The core of this type of research is to find out frequencies, averages and other statistical calculations. A questionnaire prepared by the researchers (see Appendix A), and coursebook analysis were used as data collection instruments of the study. The questionnaire in the present study consists of six parts, each of which is divided into two sub-parts- “cultural objects” and “how the participants have learnt them”. In the questionnaire, the knowledge of the participants on foreign cartoons, songs, stories, animated films, foods, beverages, restaurants, cafes, festivals, important days, sports, country flags, traditional clothes, famous buildings, currencies, dances, celebrities and religions were checked. In order to ensure the clarity of the questionnaire, it had been translated into Turkish by two instructors from the English Language Teaching (ELT) department of Trakya University before it was applied. After the pilot study of the questionnaire which was carried out on 50 students, the questions which were found unclear by the students were either revised or taken out of the questionnaire. Subsequently, it was conducted on the participants in classroom environment after the questionnaire application permission had been granted by the Directorate of National Education in Edirne.

After the students were informed about the questionnaire, they were given one class hour to answer all the questions. They were asked to answer the questions honestly as a part of the study. The questionnaire results were recorded in Microsoft Office Excel 2010. After the statistical analysis had been made, the frequency and the percentages of the answers were calculated and shown in graphs. As the last data collection instrument, some of the teaching materials (primary school English coursebooks) were analyzed. The textbooks, written for EFL students in Primary 1 to 5, aged from 7 to 11, were chosen for analysis because they are the main teaching material in Turkish schools. The aim of this analysis was to examine how these coursebooks represented foreign cultures and how often they were used. The coursebook *Fairyland 1- 3*, *Access Grammar Book 1*, *Skills Builder Flyers 1*, *Happy House 1- 2*, *Family and Friends 2 and 4*, and *Family and Friends 3* were analyzed to identify the cultural elements in them. In the study, coursebook analysis is restricted to the coursebooks used in private primary schools because little or no cultural knowledge was provided in the coursebook of public primary schools which is suggested by the Ministry of National Education in Turkey.

Data Analysis

The results of the 6-item questionnaire which was conducted on 100 students are shown in the graphs including their interpretations below.

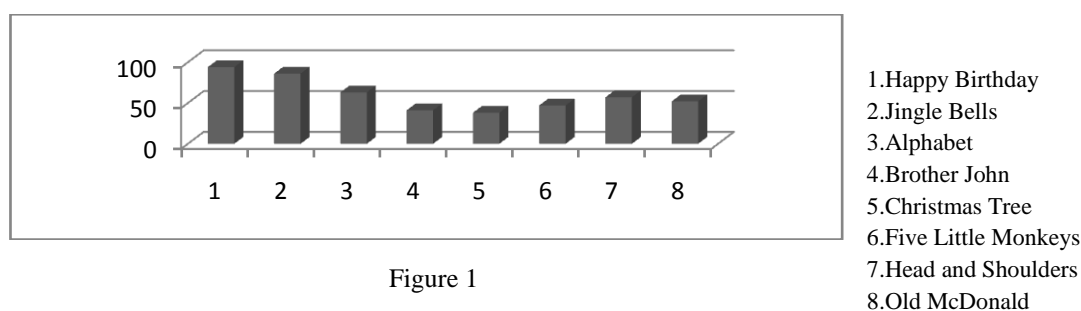


Figure 1

Results showed that more than a half of the participants (52-94%) knew about the children's songs “Happy Birthday”, “Jingle Bells”, “Alphabet”, “Old McDonald” and “Head and Shoulders”. The rest of the participants (38% - 47%) indicated that they knew about the songs “Brother John”, “Christmas Tree”, and “Five Little Monkeys”. Moreover, school was the place where 62% of the participants had learnt the songs. Therest mentioned that that they knew about the songs from television and computers, as well as their family members and friends, real life, books, newspapers, magazines and games.

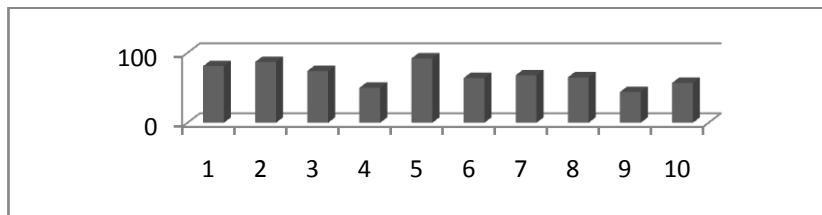


Figure 2

1. Batman
2. Harry Potter
3. Superman
4. X-man
5. Shrek
6. Tinker Bell
7. Ninja Turtles
8. Madagascar
9. Simpsons
10. Charlie and Chocolate Factory

While finding out the animated feature films which the participants knew, the majority of the participants (81% - 92%) claimed that they knew about “Batman”, “Harry Potter” and “Shrek”. On the other hand, “Superman”, “X-Man”, “Tinker Bell”, “Ninja Turtles”, “Madagascar” and “Charlie and The Chocolate Factory” were ticked by more than half of the participants (50% - 74%). Less than half of them (44%) pointed out that they knew about “The Simpsons”. A considerable number of the participants (89%) pointed out that they knew about these foreign animated feature films on television. Less than half of the participants (40% and less) expressed that they knew about them from various culture-related information sources such as the internet, friends, family members, school, books, real life experience, newspapers, magazines, games and songs.

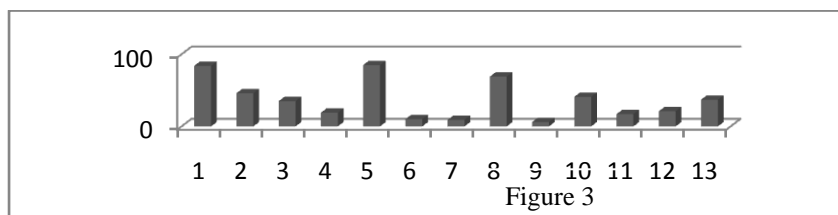


Figure 3

1. Hamburger
2. Nugget
3. Hot Dogs
4. Finger Fish
5. Pizza
6. Croissant
7. Sushi
8. Spaghetti
9. Curry
10. Milkshake
11. Espresso
12. Lazagna
13. CheeseCake

According to the answers provided by the students to the question, “Which of the following foods and beverages do you know?” We observed that the majority (69%-85%) reported that they knew about “Hamburger”, “Pizza” and “Spaghetti”. Furthermore, those who marked “Nugget”, “Hot Dog”, “Finger Fish”, “Croissant”, “Sushi”, “Curry”, “Milkshake”, “Espresso”, “Lasagna” and “Cheese Cake” were less than 50%. Slightly more than a half (57%) of the participants claimed that they had tasted these foods and beverages and a few of them (3%) stated that they had only heard of their names. The rest of the participants expressed that they had learnt these foods and beverages from various culture-related information sources mentioned above.

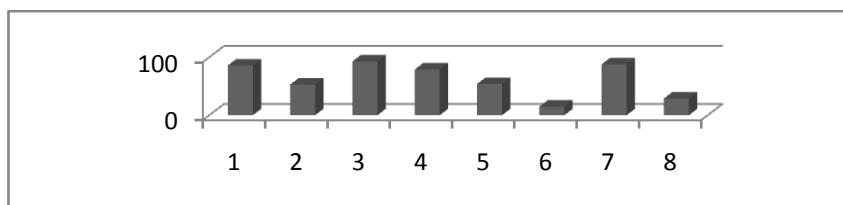
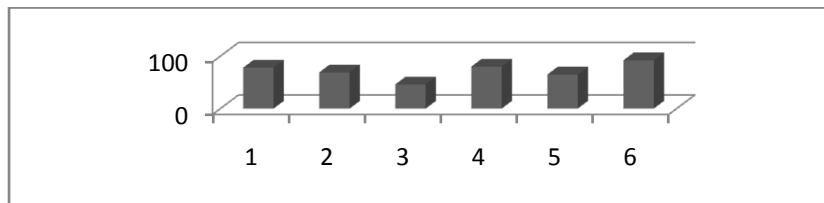


Figure 4

1. Christmas
2. Thanksgiving Day
3. Valentine's Day
4. Halloween
5. Easter
6. Potluck Party
7. April Fool's Day
8. Tomatina Festival

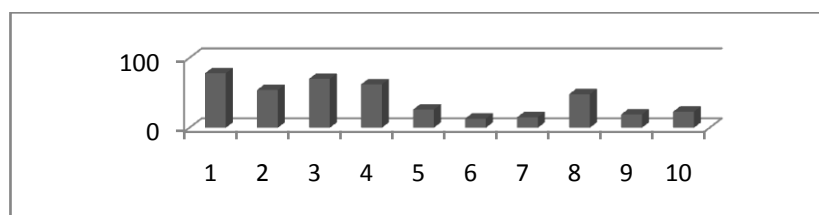
Figure 3 reveals that almost all of the participants (86% - 93%) knew about the festivals and important days “Christmas”, “Valentine’s Day” and “April Fool’s Day”, and more than a half of them (53% - 79%) have some information about “Thanksgiving Day”, “Halloween” and “Easter”. Apart from these, only one-third of the participants (33%) indicated that they knew about the “Tomatino Festival”. When asked how they learnt about these festivals and important days, most of the participants (61%) claimed that they learnt the festivals from television. Moreover, 54% indicated they learnt about the festivals from their family members and less than half of the participants said they learnt from various culture-related information sources mentioned above



- 1.Scottish Traditional Clothes
- 2.Chinese Traditional Clothes
- 3.Indian Traditional Clothes
- 4.Eskimo Traditional Clothes
- 5.Saudi Traditional Clothes
- 6.Egyptian Traditional Clothes

Figure 5

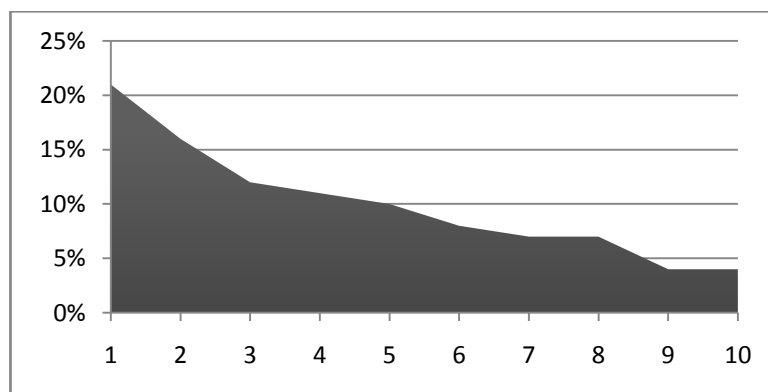
As depicted in the figure above, more than half of the students knew about the Scottish traditional clothes such as “Tartan Kilt”, Chinese Kimono, Indian Sharara, Saudi Ghutra, Eskimo Annuraaq and Egyptian Galabya and Jewellery. 46% of the participants stated that they knew about traditional Indian clothing named *Sharara*. Furthermore, more than half of the participants (51% - 72%) expressed that they had learnt these traditional clothes from television, and from their family members and computers. 48% of them indicated that they had learnt these from their schools and a small number of the students said that they had learnt about these clothes from various culture-related information sources.



- 1.The Pyramids
- 2.The Leaning Tower of Pisa
- 3.The Eiffel Tower
- 4.The Statue of Liberty
- 5.The Kaaba
- 6.Taj Mahal
- 7.The CN Tower
- 8.The Great Wall of China
- 9.The Hanging Gardens of Babylon
- 10.The Colosseum

Figure 6

As Figure 6 illustrates, the majority of the participants (54% - 78%) knew about “The Pyramids”, “The Leaning Tower of Pisa”, “The Eiffel Tower” and “The Statue of Liberty”. 48% of them indicated that they knew about “The Great Wall of China”, and “The Kaaba”, “The Taj Mahal”, “The CN Tower”, “The Hanging Gardens of Babel” and “The Coliseum” were pointed out to be known by very few participants. More than half (50% - 63%) of the participants claimed that they had learnt these famous places from their family members and from television, 38% said they learnt these from computers. Among 35% who said that they knew them from real life experiences, only 6% stated that they had actually visited some of these places. The remaining 29% expressed that they had only heard of the names of these places. Minority of the participants stated that they knew about these places from various culture-related information sources.



1. Parents, family members, relatives
2. Television
3. Computer
4. Friends
5. School
6. Real life experience
7. Books
8. Newspapers and magazines
9. Games
10. Songs

Figure 7

As illustrated in Figure 7, television seems to be the most influential teaching instrument which was ticked by 21% of the participants. With a percentage of 16%, parents, family and relatives are important sources to provide children with information about foreign culture. Computer has proven to be an important instrument to teach foreign culture with a percentage of 12%, followed by real life experience with a percentage of 11%, and also followed by school with 10%. The results show that books were also an effective instrument for teaching foreign culture (8%). Newspapers, magazines and friends have proven to have an active role in teaching foreign culture for a percentage of 7%. Both games and songs were revealed to be the least effective instruments for teaching foreign culture among the participants (4%). To sum up, Shrek and Harry Potter were found to be the most commonly known animated feature films.

Happy Birthday, Jingle Bells, Valentine's Day, Christmas and Easter were the most commonly known songs and important days. Among the traditional clothes, the Egyptian and Eskimo clothes are the most known among the participants. Pizza and hamburger were the most extensively recognized foods. The Pyramids, The Eiffel Tower and The Statue of Liberty were the most known famous buildings by the participants. It was also found that the children learnt this cultural information mostly from television, their parents and relatives, and computers.

Material Analysis

For this study, teaching materials (coursebooks used in English lessons) were analyzed to determine what elements of foreign culture were introduced by specific linguistic items at primary schools in Turkey. Coursebooks used in Turkish private primary schools such as *Fairyland 1-3* by Jenny Dooley and Virginia Evans (Express Publishing), *Access Grammar Book 1* by Virginia Evans and Jenny Dooley (Express Publishing), *Skills Builder Flyers 1* by Elizabeth Gray (Express Publishing), *Happy House 1-2* by Stella Maidman and Lorena Roberts (Express Publishing), *Family and Friends 2 and 4* by Naomi Simmons (Oxford University Press), and *Family and Friends 3* by Tamzin Thompson and Naomi Simmons (Oxford University Press) were analyzed in terms of the cultural concepts they present. These books contain cultural elements from foreign culture, such as flags, countries, cities, animals, sports, foreign dishes, famous people and places, holidays, festivals and items belonging to these festivals, stories, fairytales, cartoon characters, comics, transportation means, local ornaments, songs, musical instruments and attitudes.

In the coursebooks, countries are presented with their flags. Therefore, children learn about countries, their flags and famous cities as well as telling where they are from, and understanding where other people come from. In addition, colors were taught through the pictures of different flags. For instance, Dooley and Evans present a reading and matching activity in *Fairyland 3*, where children are expected to do a reading and matching activity. In this activity on page 20, chapter 2, learners have to read 3 children introducing themselves and then match their names to their ages as well as to the flags of their countries. Culture-specific foods are presented with their names and the countries they belong to. For instance, in *Family and Friends 3*, page 73, Bulgarian dish "sarma" and Peruvian dish "ceviche" are presented with their pictures and with the flags of the countries they belong to. Furthermore, other names of "sarma" in different countries are also mentioned (Dolmades – Greece, Mahshi – Egypt...). These dishes and their preparations are introduced in the present simple tense in the form of a recipe. Therefore, the activities also serve the purpose of providing the learners with typical words that are frequently used in recipes (mix, put, serve, add, use...) and the names of different ingredients to be used (meat, onion, garlic, hot peppers...).

In these books, sports and musical instruments are also given in connection with the cultures they belong to. Together with vocabulary items, various grammatical structures such as "can", "present simple tense" or "past simple tense" are presented. Reading passages also contain cultural items about sports and musical instruments like basketball (USA), American football (USA), violin (Italy) and bagpipe (Scotland). One example of this can be seen in *Family and Friends 4* by Naomi Simmons, on page 117. The reading passage "American Football" on the mentioned page presents cultural information about American Football including its history, rules and two famous footballers (Tyson Jackson and Matthew Stafford) followed by Wh-questions for comprehension. Typical animals of different countries are mentioned in the coursebooks, too. While the books provide the names of typical animals residing in specific foreign countries as vocabulary items, they reflect the cultures which these animals belong to through Wh- and true/false questions (i.e.: Where do African lions live? They live in grasslands in Africa.). The dominant grammatical structure in those exercises was "The present simple tense" in positive and question forms.

Toys such as British Teddy Bear and Russian Matryoshkas are taught as vocabulary items in *Fairyland 1* by Dooley and Evans. An "Odd One Out" exercise follows these. Among 4 teddy bears and 4 matryoshkas, the odd ones are distinguished by their colors while the last part consists of 4 planes among which the odd one is distinguished by the number of windows it has. This way, different colors and numbers are revised. Thus, cultural elements and teaching points are integrated. Another cultural aspect that is frequently taught in the course-books is national holidays. Christmas and Easter themes are frequently presented, accompanied with some specific songs and pictures of the objects related to these holidays. The activities mostly involve crafting (i.e. making an Easter basket), singing or describing pictures. Stories of famous authors and fairy tales also play an important role in culture teaching. Simplified versions of famous literary works such as "White Fang" by Jack London, "The Prince and the Pauper" by Mark Twain, the Irish legend "A Pot of Gold at the End of the Rainbow" or "King Midas and the Golden Touch" by Aesop are presented in the form of extensive reading activities with Wh- or true/false questions accompanied with some linguistic structures like the Simple Past Tense or Time Expressions.

Apart from the fictional characters from various stories and fairy tales, cartoon characters which frequently appear on television or magazines are also presented. Cartoon characters belonging to American British and Italian cultures- Pocahontas, Snow white, Jack and the Beanstalk, Hansel and Gretel- are presented in a matching activity in which students are instructed to match the characters to their houses and Mickey Mouse, Cars, Gremlin, Pinocchio, Buggs Bunny, Simpsons, Tasmanian Monster, Daisy are shown in description activities in which the language item “have/has got” in positive, negative and question forms are focused. The course-books also benefit from famous people and places in terms of culture teaching. Culture teaching is conducted through famous tourist attractions in various parts of the world: The Big Ben, the Eiffel Tower, the Coliseum, Disneyland, the Sydney Opera House, the Richmond Park and the Egyptian Pyramids are introduced in description, drawing and matching activities to improve listening or speaking skills. Apart from the cultural concepts, structures like “can+verb”, “have/has got”, “The Simple Present Tense” or “The Simple Past Tense” are taught through such activities. Besides, celebrities such as Britney Spears, Justin Timberlake, Ronaldinho, Salvador Dali, Marilyn Monroe, Thomas Edison, Agatha Christie, Neil Armstrong, Nadia Comaneci, Usain Bolt and “The Beatles” are presented in similar activities.

Historical facts mentioned in these books are also useful. In the form of reading passages, Vikings, ancient Egyptians and Papyrus, which was a widely used material by the ancient Egyptians, are introduced to learners in these passages. While the books provide cultural information about the communities mentioned, adjectives and prepositions are aimed to be taught with the assistance of some pictures related to the topic.

Local clothes and attitudes of people belonging to various cultures like British, American, Mexican and Egyptian are also mentioned in many sections. Local clothes such as a Mexican Vest, a Sombrero (typical Mexican hat) , and a Baseball Hat or ancient Egyptian, Indian or Scandinavian clothes are dealt with as vocabulary, reading, listening and speaking activities. Furthermore, tea cultures of England, China and Turkey including the specific teapots, spoons and types of tea are introduced as a part of culture teaching. Typical houses (e.g., British, French) and restaurants (e.g., Chinese) are also described. One can observe that the course-books that are used in Turkish private schools contain a wide range of objects belonging to various foreign cultures, with the British and American cultures being the most frequent ones. Different cultural elements are presented in a variety of activities such as reading, listening, speaking and writing, and exercises like fill in the blanks, true/false questions, yes/no questions, comprehension questions; drawing and singing are repeatedly used. With the aid of such activities, familiarizing the student with different foreign cultures is aimed. The cultural themes covered in the course-books are illustrated in Appendix B.

Suggestions and Recommendations

The culture issue in language teaching has caught several researchers’ attention and numerous research works have been carried out on this issue. In the present study, the cultural knowledge of young learners and how they acquired this knowledge were studied. The findings showed that the students learn foreign culture through their parents, family members and relatives, television programs, computers, friends, school, real life experiences, books, newspapers, magazines, games and songs. Consistent with many studies, our study confirmed that television, family and computers were the most effective factors in children’s foreign culture acquisition. Family takes up a crucial part of a child’s learning process since the first practice of actual education of the child comes from parents. Likewise, in primary school education, the significance of parental support should not be underestimated. Parents can play a crucial role in their children’s education at all levels (Lloyd-Smith and Baron, 2010). Moreover, their experience contributes to the learning processes of their children (Conteh and Kawashima, 2008). Cultural knowledge, also a part of education, can be transmitted to children continuously, depending on their cognitive capacities.

Furthermore, the first culture that they are exposed to is that of their family. The knowledge gained from the family can be useful in their subsequent exposure to other cultures. Our study indicates that the students learn quickly about foreign currencies, religions and Christmas themes mainly from their families. This suggests that parents should be involved in children’s culture education in a more systematic way. Games and the computer technology can also be important in learning culture. Zielke *et al.* (2009) claim that video games can provide people with a better understanding of different cultures. Their article points out that most of the serious games involve cultural models accompanied by cultural behaviors. They also add that the goal of many serious games is to teach culture in a realistic environment, including non-verbal cultural clues such as facial expressions, mimics and gestures. Taking these into account, computer games such as “Age of Mythology” and “Age of Empires” by Microsoft Games, which contain a great amount of cultural and historical information, may be adapted for pedagogical aims. Our study suggests that such video games have enough potential to teach foreign cultures to children and they are motivating enough, considering the children’s tendency to play video games.

Berwald (1986) points out that the use of mass-media in classroom environment is advantageous in terms of creating cultural awareness and a wide range of available topics and vocabulary.

One of the studies carried out by Blosser (1983) asserts that children receive cultural information through educational television programs. In their study, Tanrıverdi and Apak (2008) state that media sources have an important effect on students in terms of their attitudes towards different cultures. In their study, they discussed the positive effects that media has on students and integrated culture into their ESL curriculum and claimed that cultural biases are reduced with the aid of the cultural content of their curriculum. Another study shows that children should be encouraged to use technology such as videogames, computers and television actively rather than passively so that they become comfortable while using these technological aids (Kelly and Singer, 1984). Thus, these technologies, while providing a great deal of cultural knowledge to children according to our research, can be used as a means of cultural education. Public schools' cultural education may not be sufficient in terms of language teaching. When the English coursebooks of public and private schools are compared, it has been found that there are few or no cultural themes in the coursebook of the public schools. As culture teaching is an important part of foreign language teaching, additional cultural elements should be included in the curriculum of public schools.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT STUDENTS:

NAME:

GENDER :

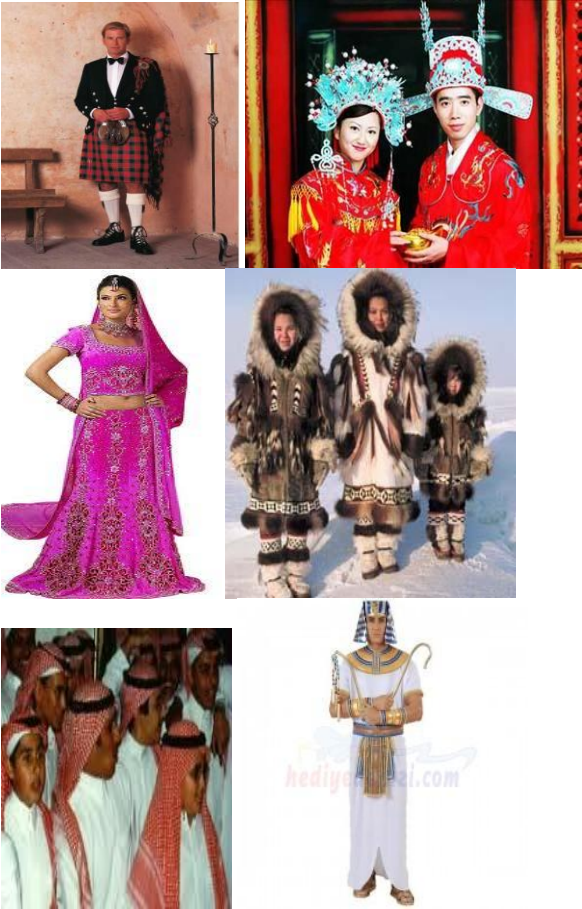
SURNAME:

EDUCATION LEVEL :

AGE:

Dear students, your survey responses are going to be used in a scientific study. Please mark the statements which are the truest for you. Thank you. Assist. Prof. Dr. Selma Deneme

<p>1. Which of the following children’s songs do you know?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Happy Birthday <input type="radio"/> Jingle Bells <input type="radio"/> Alphabet <input type="radio"/> Brother John <input type="radio"/> Christmas Tree <input type="radio"/> Five Little Monkeys <input type="radio"/> Head and Shoulders <input type="radio"/> Old McDonald 	<p>How did you find out about the children’s songs on the left?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Parents <input type="radio"/> Television <input type="radio"/> Computer <input type="radio"/> Friends <input type="radio"/> School - Nursery <input type="radio"/> Real life <input type="radio"/> Books <input type="radio"/> Newspapers and magazines <input type="radio"/> Games <input type="radio"/> Songs
<p>2. Which of the following foreign animated feature films do you know?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Batman <input type="radio"/> Harry Potter <input type="radio"/> Superman <input type="radio"/> X-man <input type="radio"/> Shrek <input type="radio"/> Tinker Bell <input type="radio"/> Ninja Turtles <input type="radio"/> Madagaskar <input type="radio"/> Simpsons <input type="radio"/> Charlie and Chocolate Factory 	<p>How did you find out about the foreign animated feature films on the left?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Parents <input type="radio"/> Television <input type="radio"/> Computer <input type="radio"/> Friends <input type="radio"/> School - Nursery <input type="radio"/> Real life <input type="radio"/> Books <input type="radio"/> Newspapers and magazines <input type="radio"/> Games <input type="radio"/> Songs
<p>3. Which of the following foods and beverages do you like the most?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Hamburger <input type="radio"/> Nugget <input type="radio"/> Hot Dogs <input type="radio"/> Finger Fish <input type="radio"/> Pizza <input type="radio"/> Croissant <input type="radio"/> Sushi <input type="radio"/> Spagetti <input type="radio"/> Curry <input type="radio"/> Milkshake <input type="radio"/> Espresso <input type="radio"/> Lazagna <input type="radio"/> Cheese Cake 	<p>How did you find out about the foods and beverages on the left?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Parents <input type="radio"/> Television <input type="radio"/> Computer <input type="radio"/> Friends <input type="radio"/> School - Nursery <input type="radio"/> Real Life <p>I have eaten/drunk them before. I have only heard of their names.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Books <input type="radio"/> Newspapers and Magazines <input type="radio"/> Games <input type="radio"/> Songs
<p>4. Which of the following foreign festivals do you know?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Christmas <input type="radio"/> Thanksgiving Day <input type="radio"/> Valentine’s Day <input type="radio"/> Halloween <input type="radio"/> Easter <input type="radio"/> Potluck Party <input type="radio"/> April Fool’s Day 	<p>How did you find out about the foreign festivals on the left?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Parents <input type="radio"/> Television <input type="radio"/> Computer <input type="radio"/> Friends <input type="radio"/> School - Nursery <input type="radio"/> Real Life <input type="radio"/> Books <input type="radio"/> Newspapers and Magazines

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tomatina Festival 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Games ○ Songs
<p>5. Which of the following traditional costumes do you know?</p> 	<p>How did you find out about the traditional costumes on the left?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Parents ○ Television ○ Computer ○ Friends ○ School - Nursery ○ Real Life ○ Books ○ Newspapers and Magazines ○ Games ○ Songs
<p>6. Which of the following famous buildings do you know?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pyramids ○ The Leaning Tower of Pisa ○ Eiffel Tower ○ The Statue of Liberty ○ The Kaaba ○ Taj Mahal ○ CN Tower ○ The Great Wall of China ○ Hanging Gardens of Babylon ○ The Colosseum 	<p>How did you find out about the famous buildings on the left?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Parents ○ Television ○ Computer ○ Friends ○ School - Nursery ○ Real Life <p>I have visited them before. I have only heard of their names.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Books ○ Newspapers and Magazines ○ Games ○ Songs

Appendix B

Flags/Country/City/History	Foreign Food	Cultural Holidays	Attitude	Fairy Tales / Stories	Cartoon Characters	Famous People	Famous Places	Others
Russian, Russia	Fish&Chips	May Day, May Pole	Mexican Vest	A pot of gold at the end of the rainbow	Pocahontas	Rachel Atherton	Big Ben	Basketball
Union Jack, UK, London	Pizza	Christmas, Santa Clause,	Sombrero	The Selfish Giant (Oscar Wilde)	Snowwhite	Ronaldinho	Colosseum	American Football
Chinese, China	Sarma	Gifts, Christmas Tree, Deer, Christmas Socks, Christmas Song, Twinkle Twinkle Little Star	Tea Culture : Teapots, spoons...	Swiss Family Robinson (Johann David Wyss)	Jack and the Beanstalk	Vikings	Disneyland	London Bus
Turkish, Turkey	Hamburger	Sports Day	Typial Houses (British, French)	The Lion and the Mouse (Aesop)	Hansel and Gretel	Justin Timberlake	Richmond Park	Berlin Tram
Italian, Italy, Rome	Milkshake	Tomatina Festival	Ancient Egyptian Clothes	White Fang (Jack London)	Little Red Riding Hood	Britney Spears	Sydney Ope (Placeholder1)ra	Russian Matryoshka
Canadian, Canada	Expresso	Easter, Eggs, Easter Rabbit, Easter Song	Baseball Hat	Stone Soup	Mickey Mouse	Thomas Edison	Eiffel Tower	British Teddy Bear
German, Germany	Hot Dog	Halloween, Pumpkin	Shadow Puppets	Gingerbread Man	Cars	Marilyn Monroe	Pyramids	Bagpipe
Egyptian, Egypt,	French Fries		Chinese Restaurant (The Red Lion)	Vikings	Gremlin	Neil Armstrong		Violin
Papyrus, Ancient Egyptians	English Tea			The Prince and the Pauper (Mark Twain)	Pinnocchio	Nadia Comaneci		Mexican Iguana
Australian, Australia, Sydney	English Sunday			The Story of Mary Anning	Tasmanian Monster	Agatha Christie		Koala Bear
Peruvian, Peru	Lunch							Lama
American, USA, New York	Ceviche			Gulliver Travels	Daisy	Salvador Dali		Panda Bear
Japanese, Japan	Dolmades			King Midas and the Golden Touch (Aesop)	Bugs Bunny	The Beatles		Tiger
Spanish, Spain, Barcelona	Mahshi				Shrek	Usain Bolt		Zebra
EU					Scrat	Gerald Durrell		Kangaroo
New Zealandian, New Zealand					Monty the Mouse			Wolf
Irish, Ireland					Vikings			African Lion
					Tod's Motorcar			Camel
					The Ant and the Cricket			