

**INTEGRATING NATIVE CULTURE INTO
READING SKILL IN TURKISH ELT PREP
CLASSES**

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Abstract

This article is one part of a larger master thesis titled "Increasing Self-Efficacy in Reading Skill through use of Native Culture in Turkish ELT Prep Classes" conducted at Çukurova University. There have been many studies into the teaching of target culture in EFL classes; however, little has been done into the place of native culture in foreign language teaching. It is believed that incorporating the native culture into reading in the target language may provide familiarity with the topic and contribute to foreign language learning. Therefore, the aim of this study is to discover whether reading about the native culture in the target language may affect students' reading skill and their reading marks or not. Reading was significantly chosen because the students are exposed to the target language in EFL classes mostly through reading. The study was carried out for ten weeks with two Level 3 ELT prep classes, one experimental and one control group, at Foreign Languages Centre, Çukurova University, Adana using teacher diary, student minute papers, student oral feedback, and comparison of reading average marks. The qualitative results indicated that the topics about the native culture appealed to the majority of the participants, made vocabulary guessing easier and increased their knowledge about their own culture, permitting them to be able to share it in multicultural contexts.

Key words: *English as a Foreign Language, native culture, reading skill.*

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1. Introduction

Being one of the receptive skills, reading comprehension is defined as an interactive and complex process influenced by many factors such as linguistic and cognitive factors, social and cultural factors and affective and motivational factors (Li& Wang, 2010). Teaching target culture has been of interest for decades in EFL classes. Studies (Çakır, 2006; Peck, 2013) have shown that teaching about the target language culture prevents cultural misunderstandings and misinterpretations and helps language learners to develop empathy and tolerance towards other cultures.

However, little has been studied about the place of native culture in EFL classes. Language may be thought in intercultural contexts, providing the students with information about cultures that they are not familiar with. Brumfit (in Alptekin, 1993) calls this a “strange paradox” (p.139), forcing learners to express a “culture of which they have scarcely any experience” (p.139), which may cause reluctance or resistance to learning.

Lou and Chism (2011), on the other hand, attract our attention to a different aspect of foreign language learning. They state that the learners cannot talk about their own culture in English because “it has almost never been addressed in their instruction” (p. 2). However, it is believed that students may feel better and safer during language learning when they listen to, read, write, and speak about their native culture in the target language as well. Thus, they may have the necessary vocabulary and knowledge to express themselves in a foreign language.

1.1. Incorporating Native Culture into EFL Classes

There have been many researches into acculturation to English for second language learners. ESL learners are encouraged to retain their cultural heritage and integrate by keeping the balance between the two cultures because, as Bandura (in Richardson et al, 2011) says, they will find it easier to acculturate if they find positive attitudes toward both cultures. In this sense, Jiang (2011), for example, suggests that when preparing lessons on cultures, teachers should be careful to keep the balance between target culture and native culture materials.

As Jiang (2011) argues, most EFL materials cause dilemmas in classrooms because of being nationality or culture-bound. In the same way, Alptekin and Alptekin (1984) discuss the two conflicting views on teaching culture in EFL classes: one view supporting to teach the “socio-cultural norms of an English-speaking country”, and the other supporting to teach English “independent of a nationality-bound cultural context”. They finally suggest that contexts that are familiar to students’ lives should be used instead of unfamiliar and irrelevant ones. Alptekin (1993) refers to Widdowson stating that in native language learning, children make use of the already established schematic (social) knowledge when they are learning the syntactic and semantic aspects. As a result, when they are learning a foreign language, they naturally make use of these schemas, interfering with the target language culture. Based on this reason, Alptekin (1993) argues that foreign language teaching materials covering unfamiliar and irrelevant contexts are “actually detrimental to foreign language learning” (p. 136).

Girma (2008) also suggests using students’ native culture as a resource in EFL classes and incorporating it into the curriculum in his thesis dissertation. He conducted a descriptive study among the second year English majors and their teachers in Addis

Ababa University and found out that teachers “sometimes” incorporated students’ native culture due to lack of time, related experience, and course books. Three participant teachers out of four stated that familiarity with the topic of discussion “often” helps a person to understand better, and two of them stated that discussing one’s own culture in English is “often” helpful to express oneself. Fortunately, this result is parallel to the findings that Girma (2008) gathered from the participant students. More than half (58.57%) of the students think familiarity with the topic of discussion helps to understand better and 54.29% think discussing one’s own culture in English is helpful to express oneself. The researcher concludes with recommending incorporating different aspects of students’ native culture in all skills in EFL classes.

McKay (in Jiang, 2011) is also for the idea of using native culture materials in EFL classrooms because one needs not only to understand the message in the target language but also to have the ability to express his /her own culture for the other side to understand. In order to help students do this, McKay (2003b) suggests that educators recognize the value of including topics that deal with the native culture.

Ran’s (2008) study also highlights teaching native culture and learning English. In the study, the English lecturers noted that the EFL students in their class did not know how to introduce their own culture in English. The study results suggest that linguistic competence is definitely necessary, but intercultural competence “can ensure communication between people from different cultural background go on smoothly” (p. 35). To sum up, to be able to gain this intercultural competence, EFL students seem to have to be able to express their own culture in English without difficulty.

1.2. Aim and Scope of the Study

This study aims to explore the reactions of ELT prep students to reading materials in their native culture at Foreign Languages Centre, Çukurova University. Reading skill is significantly chosen because students receive a lot of cultural and contextual knowledge about other cultures through reading.

1.3. Research Questions

The research questions of the study are:

1. What aspects of their own culture would students be interested in reading about in the target language?
2. How do students respond to reading materials about the native culture in ELT prep classes?
3. Does incorporating English reading texts about the native culture into the curriculum affect students’ reading marks in the exams?

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

The aim of the study is to find out whether a significant difference occurs in reading efficacy of prep ELT students who read about their own native culture in the target language. To be able to identify such a difference, an experimental design was prepared. In addition, both qualitative and quantitative research designs were utilized. The data

were collected through pre-test and post-test, written minute papers, student oral feedback, teacher diary and comparison of average reading marks of both the control group and the experimental group.

2.2. Research Context

The study was conducted at the Foreign Languages Center (YADYO), Çukurova University. The center provides an English learning program for preparatory students for approximately thirty-two weeks. The students are divided into three levels of English at the institution: Level 1 (CEFR A1-A2), Level 2 (CEFR A2-B1), and Level 3 (CEFR B1-B2). As the education at YADYO is centralized, each teacher follows the same teaching order and the same course book. Also, the instructors are required to teach not more than twenty hours a week; therefore, piloting was not possible.

2.3. Participants

Two Level 3 classes, whom the researcher was teaching, voluntarily participated in the study after filling in consent forms. They all were students of ELT department. One of the classes was chosen as the control group and the other as the experimental group randomly. The number of the participants in the control group was 22 and the number of participants in the experimental group was 24. The students in the control group and the experimental group had ten hours with the researcher and ten with the partner teacher.

2.4. Data Collection Procedures

The students filled in a consent form to volunteer to participate in the study. The control group studied the course book (First Certificate Expert by Pearson Longman) and did the reading tasks covered by it. They also studied the extra reading tasks prepared and given every week by the Syllabus Team of the Foreign Languages Center. The experimental group was told that they were going to do extra reading in English about Turkish culture. In order to identify their favorite cultural topics, a questionnaire was given to them.

The reading materials were obtained mostly from the Internet sources and adapted and/or shortened by the researcher. In addition, various tasks were prepared, ranging from vocabulary activities to writing activities and group discussions. After each material was completed, students' oral feedback was collected to identify their reactions to the materials and topics. Then the students were asked to fill in minute papers, in which they were asked to include their views on the attractiveness of the topic, vocabulary difficulty, useful and unnecessary things in the texts. Meanwhile, the researcher kept a diary and noted down her observations as well as the oral feedback on the materials provided by the participants. The reading marks that the students got from quizzes and exams were also noted and the reading average marks of both classes were calculated. The marks were compared through t-test.

3. Findings

3.1. Findings from Student Questionnaire on Cultural Topics

First, the student questionnaires on cultural topics were analyzed and according to the frequency, the topics that the students wanted to read about were identified. The participants' favorite topics are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1.

The Most Favorite Cultural Topics

Topic	Frequency (n=24)	%
Turkish Lifestyle	15	62,5
Food	15	62,5
Traditions	14	58,3
History	11	45,8
Religion	11	45,8
Cinema /Theatre	11	45,8

As can be seen, Table 1 displays the five most favorite cultural topics that the students in the experimental group preferred to read about, which were food, Turkish lifestyle, traditions, history, religion and cinema and theatre. There were no suggested topics by the participants.

3.2. Findings from Reading Materials

In this part, the minute papers that were given after studying each reading material were analyzed descriptively and common themes were described. In addition, content analysis of the teacher diary provided clues about how the materials went in the classroom. For space saving reasons, analysis of only three out of ten tasks are given here.

3.2.1. Henna Night

One of the cultural reading texts was about the henna nights (see Appendix 1). Almost all of the students had participated in a henna night, so they were familiar with the event. Since henna nights can be organized in different ways in different regions, they seemed very eager to share how henna nights were organized in their own hometowns. Some of the students could not resist speaking Turkish in these sharing moments.

The analysis of the comments made about the text in the minute papers is given in Table 2.

Table 2.
The Analysis of the Text "Henna Night"

Question	Response	Frequency (n=24)	Percentage (%)
1. Do you like the text? Why / Why not?	Yes, because it's very interesting.	14	58,3
	Yes, because it's about our culture.	9	37,5
	No, because I know it all.	3	12,5
2. Was it easy to read?	Yes, it was.	21	87,5
	Yes, mostly.	3	12,5
3. Was the vocabulary easy to guess and/or understand?	Yes, it was.	20	83,3
	Yes, mostly.	4	16,6
4. Was the topic interesting?	Yes, very interesting.	21	87,5
	Yes, quite interesting.	1	4,1
	No.	3	12,5
	English words describing our culture	16	66,6

5.What did you find useful?	The cultural information in English	6	25
	Nothing. All is familiar.	3	12,5
6.What did you find unnecessary?	Nothing.	20	83,3
	Some vocabulary items.	2	8,3
	The text itself.	2	8,3

As it is clear in Table 2, for the first question, more than half of the students (58,3%) stated that they liked the text because it was interesting and nine out of twenty-four students liked that the text was about their native culture. Three of the students expressed their dislike because they thought they knew it all, which contradicts one student's comment: "As I know the topic, it wasn't boring". 87,5% of the students found the text easy to read and 83,3% found the vocabulary easy to guess and/or understand. One student expressed himself clearly about guessing vocabulary in the class discussion by saying "It's a traditional topic, so we can easily guess the new words." In the fourth question, although the majority (87,5%) found the topic very interesting, 12,5% of the students found it uninteresting. For the fifth question, the majority of the students (66,6%) seem to have found English words describing their native culture useful and 25% of them found it useful to read about the cultural information in the target language.

3.2.2. Noah's Pudding (Ashura)

The cultural material about Noah's pudding was studied in the Muharram month according to the Islamic calendar and people were making ashura in their homes; therefore, it was engrossing for the students to read about a current event. A few students admitted not knowing why we cooked ashura and were amazed by the story. Also, as reported in the diary seeing religious names in English and objective information on the topic seemed to be very useful for the students. After completing the reading task, the students were asked to write whether they had liked the reading material on Noah's pudding or not and were requested to give their reasons. All the students stated that they liked the cultural reading material. Their most frequent reasons for liking it can be read in Table 3.

Table 3.

The Most Frequent Reasons for Liking the Text "Noah's Pudding"

Reason for liking the material	Frequency (n=21)	%
It is informative and educating.	17	80,9
It is enjoyable and interesting.	13	61,9
I learnt new words and phrases.	8	38

It can be read in Table 3 that the majority of the participants (80,9%) liked the text because they found it informative and educating. It can be inferred from this result that the students tend to like the texts which tell more about their native culture besides providing them with the words and phrases describing it in the target language. 61,9% of the participants stated that they liked the text because the topic was enjoyable and interesting and more than a third (38%) noted that the reason was learning new vocabulary.

The following comments made by the students in the oral feedback session seem to support the results given in Table 3:

*"I learnt something regarding our customs and why it's celebrated every year."
 "I'm pleased to hear that it was written by the University of Massachusetts. I appreciate the objectivity."
 "Although I hate Ashura, I love its history and from now on I will eat it."
 "Recipe for Ashura is very good for me. I will try it one day."
 "We could even have an idea if a foreigner asks about it. It's easy to read and understand."
 "I liked it very much! There were some words that I don't know but they were easy to guess. Its history was very interesting."*

3.2.3. A Turkish Wit for all Ages: Nasreddin Hodja

The text was about the famous humourist known in many countries. There were also examples of his anecdotes.. The students were asked to answer the open-ended question of how they liked the text and were asked to write anything they would like to about the text. The responses were mainly positive.

There were some written feedbacks about the cultural aspect of the text:

*"I liked the text because Nasreddin Hodja is one of important traditional wits."
 "Nasreddin Hodja is our cultural heritage so whatever I see about him I read. He is funny and optimistic."*

"It's about our culture. There was lots of vocabulary which is useful and nice. In conclusion, it was worth reading."

Moreover, some of the feedbacks were related to the vocabulary in the text:

"New words were useful."

"The vocabulary was easy to understand. Topic was interesting and enjoyable."

In addition, there were some written feedbacks which revealed that the participants learned from the text:

"I learned some new vocabulary. There are anecdotes which I liked very much too. It was great!"

"I learned that UNESCO declared 1996 International Nasreddin Hodja year. I didn't know it before."

"Writing an anecdote of Nasreddin Hodja in English improves our language."

Furthermore, the following two responses summarize the participants' thoughts about the text:

"It's interesting and impressive, and of course, there's a lot of laughter in this reading. We can enjoy learning. And this side of reading makes me comfortable and self-confident. I believe I can understand this reading and so, I can gain myself a lot of things such as unknown words, phrases, etc. This is very nice and educating."

"This is the best material we read because it's both appealing and entertaining. So, I think books should consist of such Turkish culture and people. The unknown vocabulary given in parenthesis is very useful and understandable."

Interestingly, there was only one negative comment about the reading material about Nasreddin Hodja:

"I could understand what you want to tell about Nasreddin Hodja but I couldn't understand his anecdotes in English. Because an anecdote shows its culture, when translated into another language, it loses its originality."

To sum, 22,2% of the participants stated that they learnt new words from the text and 16,6% of them found the text interesting to read about. It is worth mentioning that as the last reading material was about an amusing historical character, the students seemed to have a high motivation to read about him.

3.3. Summary of the Students' Responses to the Reading Materials

As a summary, the students' responses to all of the English reading texts about their native culture can be summarized in tables. Firstly, whether the students found the texts interesting or not, and their reasons for thinking so is displayed in Table 4. Secondly, how useful the students found the texts is summarized in Table 5. Firstly, Table 4. displays to what extent the students found the English reading texts about Turkish culture interesting.

Table 4.

Summary of Students' Reasons for Their Interest in the Texts

Reading Material	Students' Responses					
	I liked the text because			The topic was		
	it is interesting	it is about our culture	I learnt new words	very interesting	quite interesting	not interesting
	%	%	%	%	%	%
1. The Anatolian Cultures and Food Festival in the USA	45,4	50	4,5	90,9	9	0
2. Henna Night	58,3	37,5	0	87,5	4,1	12,5
3. Kurban Bayram, The Feast of Sacrifice	36,3	59	0	81,8	4,5	13,6
4. Turkish Proverbs	50	27,2	22,7	-	-	-
5. Turkish Dating Culture	46,6	40	0	80	6,6	20
6 Noah's Pudding	61,9	0	38	-	-	-
7 Disappearing Occupations	55,5	33,3	0	77,7	16,6	5,5
8. A Turkish Wit for All Ages: Nasreddin Hodja	16,6	11,1	22,2	-	-	-
Average	51,3	30,4	8,7	84,5	7,5	10,3

It may clearly be seen in Table 4 that on the average, slightly more than a half of the students (51,3%) liked the texts because they found the texts interesting. Nearly a third (30,4%) stated that they liked the texts because they were about their native culture. Less than 10% said they learnt new words from the texts, which is what they liked about the texts. The majority of the students (84,5%) found the texts very interesting, 7,5% of them found the cultural reading materials quite interesting and about 10% did not find them interesting at all. It may be concluded that some of the texts did not appeal to the

participants. Possible reasons may be the text content, the mood of the students and the timing of reading the materials.

Table 5.
The Students' Responses about the Usefulness of all the Texts

Reading Material	Students' Responses					
	What did you find useful?			What did you find unnecessary?		
	The information about our culture in English %	The vocabulary in general %	The English words about our culture %	Nothing %	Some words %	Most of it/everything %
1. The Anatolian Cultures and Food Festival in the USA	50	4,5	40,9	95,4	0	4,5
2. Henna Night	25	0	66,6	83,3	8,3	20,8
3. Kurban Bayram, The Feast of Sacrifice	50	27,2	13,6	100	0	0
4. Football in Turkey	31,5	5,2	10,5	78,9	0	21
5. Turkish Proverbs	-	-	-	-	-	-
6. Turkish Dating Culture	53,3	40	13,3	60	0	6,6
7. Noah's Pudding	-	-	-	-	-	-
8. Military Service and Leaving Home	7,1	50	0	57,1	0	0
9. Disappearing Occupations	44,4	33,3	5,5	61,1	0	0
10. A Turkish Wit for All Ages: Nasreddin Hodja	16,6	27,7	0	0	0	5,5
Average	34,7	23,4	21,4	76,5	1,1	7,3

According to Table 5, the most useful aspect of reading about the native culture in the target language seems to be reading about a familiar cultural topic in a foreign language. It is useful because, as some students stated, the English input about the native culture may help the students perform some output, especially speak about it in foreign contexts.

23,4% of the participants found the texts useful since they learnt some new words, and 21,4% found the English words describing their native culture useful. Here, discrimination between the general vocabulary and the cultural vocabulary was made because the students may have meant to mention that the two categories, even though they may overlap, have different importance to them. The general vocabulary may be important to them in terms of improving their vocabulary and thus, facilitating their reading performance and the cultural vocabulary may be important to them because they need to learn the words necessary to describe their native culture. Nothing was found unnecessary about the texts by the majority of the students (76,5%) whereas 1,1% of the students think some words were unnecessary. Here, it is important to remember that some students stated in their oral feedbacks that the new words were easy to guess as they knew the topic well. However, it seems some students were bored of reading about a familiar and cultural topic in English, 7,3% stating that the text itself was unnecessary to deal with.

3.4. Findings from Reading Average Marks

The reading average marks of both classes were compared statistically through t-test. The results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6.

T-test Results for the Reading Marks of the Control and the Experimental Groups

Reading test	Total Score	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	P
Quiz 1	20	Experimental	25	18,0	1,68	.740
		Control	21	17,9	1,84	
Achievement Exam 1	15	Experimental	25	14,6	1,38	.155
		Control	21	13,7	2,40	
Quiz 2	15	Experimental	25	13,5	1,90	.820
		Control	21	13,6	2,14	
Achievement Exam 2	16	Experimental	25	12,8	3,52	.618
		Control	21	12,2	3,64	

$p > .05$

As can be seen in Table 6, there is no significant difference between the experimental and the control groups in terms of reading exam marks because the p value does not correspond to the acceptable value of significance ($p > .05$). Also, the mean values for each exam mark are very close to each other. Although the average reading marks of the experimental group seem to be slightly higher than those of the control group, this difference can also result from the fact that the experimental group read ten more texts than the others. Therefore, the number of reading texts that each class covered may have had an effect on the students' reading performances. However, the reading averages in the second achievement exam seem to be low because it was the end of the term and all the students wanted to go home. In addition, they had had an oral exam the day before the written exam, so they were very tired. In conclusion, Table 6 suggests that although the average reading marks of the experimental group seem to be a bit higher than that of the control group, the difference is statistically not significant. Therefore, we may not conclude that reading about one's native culture in the target language can contribute to the reading performance in exams.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of the study will be discussed in line with the research questions.

Research Question 1: What aspects of their own culture would students be interested in reading about in the target language?

Student questionnaire on cultural topics showed that the participants were mostly interested in Turkish lifestyle and Turkish food, which are followed by traditions. These three cultural topics were chosen by more than half of the participants (see Table 1). It may be seen that the participants take interest in general cultural topics about their native culture rather than specific ones. The findings in this study about the cultural topics to be studied are similar to those in Ekiz's (2013) study. In her study with English instructors into learning the target language culture, she found out that the teachers preferred to learn about the lifestyle stating that target language is affected by lifestyle, the education system as the society maintains culture through education, and the food. It can be seen that the teachers' choice of topics related to the target language culture and the participants' choice of topics related to the native culture in this study are very similar. Therefore, the current study may also have answered Lessard-Clouston's (1997) question about what cultural topics or points should be included in culture based teaching.

Research Question 2: How do students respond to reading materials about the native culture in ELT prep classes?

The teacher diary reveals that the participants had a lot of fun while doing the cultural reading materials and the tasks. As Tomlinson (in Erten & Razi, 2009, p.70) puts it, "when students see elements of their local culture in classroom materials, they feel much more engaged and identify themselves with the context of the text", which may have increased their motivation to read the text. Also, some participants admitted learning some aspects of the native culture from the texts they read and they loved sharing what they know and had observed in their environment.

The minute papers given after each reading text and class discussions followed by the minute papers suggest that most of the students could easily guess most of the new vocabulary due to the fact that the topic was very familiar. Most students seemed to have made use of their own schemas in order to be able to find the contextual clues. Also, the participants commented on two sides of learning new vocabulary items from the texts: learning new English words and learning English words related to their native culture (see Table 5). This distinction may show that the participants could differentiate between what new words they learnt and what new words they needed to learn to be able to describe their own culture. Most participants commented that after reading the texts and learning the words related to their native culture, they could now talk and write about it in foreign contexts. This is very similar to what Lou and Chism (2011) foresaw in their study on integrating Chinese legends in English reading. They suggested that by reading about their own legends in English, the students "will be better able to share their own native culture with foreigners, and they will be more open to appreciating cultural differences; thus, increasing their cross-cultural learning" (p. 4). Although few of the participants stated that they were bored of studying familiar topics, some participants also admitted learning more or new things about their own culture. Nevertheless, Krashen (1982) warns teachers that when the input is too familiar, or if the message is completely known, students may not attend the classes. Hence, he says, there must be some message "that the student really wants to hear or read about" (p.60). This is parallel

to McKay's (in Jiang, 2011) suggestion that source culture materials should be providing the students with "an opportunity to learn more about their own culture and to learn the language needed to explain these cultural elements in English" (p.695). Overall, the topics were interesting and easy to read for the majority of the participants and most of them they could not find anything unnecessary about the texts (see Table 5).

Research Question 3: Does incorporating English reading texts about the native culture into the curriculum affect students' reading marks in the exams?

When the reading average marks of both the control group and the experimental group are compared, a statistically significant difference cannot be observed (see Table 6). Therefore, the English reading texts about the native culture may not have affected the reading performances of the participants. This result is different from the findings of Ghonsooly and Elahi (2010), Nevill (2008) and Schunk (2003), who discovered that self-efficacy and reading performance was positively related. The current result probably stems from the fact that since there was not a statistically significant increase in the reading self-efficacy of the participants in the experimental group, an increase in their reading performances could not be observed.

5. Implications

Looking at the qualitative results of the study, the first benefit can be for foreign language learners. Incorporating topics related to the native culture in reading skill can contribute to language learners in different ways. To start with, language learners seem to be more motivated to read and get actively involved in the while-reading and post-reading tasks when the topics relate to their schemas. To illustrate, after the study was completed, towards the end of the term, the students were required by the Syllabus Team to make presentations about any topics they would like. It was observed that some of the students chose topics related to our native culture, such as coffee reading and fortunetelling, Mevlana and the love story between Sultan Solomon and Hürrem from Ottoman history. Also, the participants in this study acknowledged that learning English words that describe their native culture would help them speak about their culture in English. This is significant firstly because as Krashen (1982) says "more vocabulary should mean more comprehension of input" (p.71). More importantly, studying such texts can help teachers to lead students into critical thinking by comparing and contrasting native culture with target language culture. Thus, the teachers can find desirable contexts to start speaking and writing as follow ups. Finally, the study can be an asset to the Syllabus Team and the instructors at YADYO (Foreign Languages Centre) as well as the researcher, who all seem to be constantly looking for different and attractive reading topics for classroom study.

6. Limitations and Suggestions

The most important limitation was that a pilot study was not able to be done. Due to administrative reasons, the researcher was given two ELT prep classes and had to teach ten hours each. Therefore, there seemed to be no opportunity for carrying out a pilot study in another class before carrying out the main study.

The study was done with only ten cultural reading materials and the participants read one text in a week. If the number of the materials had been higher and the participants had read these cultural texts for at least one academic term, the results might have been different. As a further suggestion, through texts about the native culture, the level of

reading anxiety in the target language, if there is any, could also be studied. In this way, whether familiar topics decrease reading anxiety or not can be understood. Another suggestion could be looking into students' and teachers' motivation to read about the native culture in the target language. The motivation of student teachers to study the native culture in the target language may be investigated as well. Finally, English Language Teaching pre-service programs at different universities can be examined to learn whether or not they offer any courses on studying the native culture in the target language.

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APPENDIX 1

Henna Night

The ceremony held one day before the wedding in the home of bride and groom is called the henna night. It generally takes place at the girl's home and among women, although either side can elect to host it.

Usually dry henna brought by the **bridegroom's** family is broken to pieces in a silver or copper vessel by a woman whose father and mother alive, not experienced any separation. After preparing the bride, **veil** ornamented with red flake is placed over her head, and she is brought into the middle with **hymn** and folk songs about henna.

Henna that has earlier **kneaded** with water is brought in on a tray surrounded by candles and placed in the middle of the room. In some places, the henna is first put on the hands of the bride and then distributed to the guests; in other areas the henna is first distributed to the guests, and only after everybody has left is it placed on the bride's hands. If the woman so wishes, henna can also be placed on her feet and hair. Considerable attention is paid to charging a woman with a happy marriage, called the "basi bütün" (meaning "whose head is complete", in a sense, this describes her as someone who has a complete family with husband and children and whose marriage is

whole, not separated by divorce) to knead and distribute the henna and apply it to the girl's hand. The woman places the henna on one of the bride's hands, and a young girl places it on the other. Before the henna is applied, coins or gold are also placed in her hands. After woman who came together for **dying** henna leave, close friend of the bride remain with her and enjoy themselves till morning.





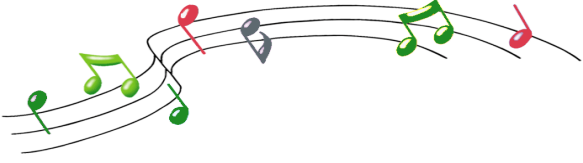
Dying ceremony of henna is different according to regions. The henna so dyed has such names and types as "iplik kinasi" (henna for yarn), "sivama" (smearing) and "kusgözü" (bird eye).

adapted from:<http://www.allaboutturkey.com/marriage.htm>.02.10.2011

A. Answer the questions below.

1. Have you ever observed things at a henna night different from written in the text?
2. What's the purpose of henna night?
3. Have you ever dyed henna? What do you know about it?
4. Would you like to have a henna night? How would you organize it?

B. Match the following words in bold in the text with the images.

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. bridegroom 2. veil 3. hymn 4. knead 5. dye 			
	a.	b.	c.
			
	d.	e.	

APPENDIX 2

SAMPLES FROM TEACHER DIARY

04.01.2012

* We're having presentations this week and some students have chosen cultural topics to present. This made me very happy. The chosen topics were Harem, Farabi, Mevlana, Gaziantep, Adana cuisine, Amazon women (they're believed to have lived in the Black Sea Region). Another student chose to present the lives and culture of the Amish. It included their lifestyle, clothes, food, friendship and marriages. It was nice to see her interested in other people's cultures.

Week 9, Tuesday

* Today we read and talked about disappearing occupations in our culture: milkman, clock repairman, shoeshine man, kurtu weaver, knife sharpener and cotton fluffer. The students liked talking about these occupations, but some of them admitted not hearing about some of the occupations. Still, it seems some small places still have people doing these jobs. One student said she loved doing the material.

Week 8, Fri.

* Today, we did the reading about doing military service. The students couldn't help speaking in Turkish at times, but it seemed they had great fun. I was surprised to see girls so eager to talk about doing military service. They said they want to see more reading texts ab. Turkish culture in course books. The boys suggested that the girls do military service, too. They said the girls could cook and clean. Then they said they could meet their future wives during military service and had a laugh.

APPENDIX 3

SAMPLE MINUTE PAPER

Questions for the Experimental Group

1. Did you like the reading text?

Why? / Why not?

Yes. It was traditional so I liked it.

Kurban
Bayramı,
the Feast of
Sacrifice

2. Was it easy to read?

Yes

3. Was the vocabulary easy to guess and / or understand?

Yes

4. Was the topic interesting?

Yes

5. What did you find useful?

I think the text was useful because I didn't know how I can explain this in English. But now I know it thank to you.

6. What did you find unnecessary?

Nothing.

I liked the story about Ashure. This reading is enjoyable and educating. At least, we learned something regarding about our customs and why it is celebrated every year. What's more, we can see a lot of new phrases in this reading part, we can learn ^{some} new ~~the~~ words. I think this reading part is both educating and appetizing. :)

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