THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN A YOUNG LEARNER'S EFL CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN A YOUNG LEARNER'S EFL CONTEXT

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The overall purpose of this research is to investigate how the global cultures as well as the cultures of English speaking countries were integrated into the 3rd grade as a Foreign Language curriculum in a private school. In addition, to understand the role of culture in language teaching in this particular setting, perceptions of teachers, parents, students and administrators towards intercultural competence were investigated. The research is qualitative in nature and built on data collected by means of observation, document analysis, questionnaires and interviews. The interviews were conducted with administrative staff and students, and a survey was distributed among the teachers and parents.

The results showed that this particular school setting gave high emphasis on integration of global culture in their English curriculum. The data collected from the teachers and the administration staff showed understanding of the importance of intercultural competence teaching. Parents' questionnaires revealed that the majority of parents consider culture to be an important part of foreign language learning. Students' interviews also showed their positive perceptions towards learning about foreign language culture. The triangulation of the data revealed that the participants of the study were in favor of cultural elements being included in the language studying process and the students and parents were satisfied with the current school curriculum.

Keywords: ELT, Culture, Intercultural Competence, Cultural Elements, Cultural Self-Awareness, Young Learners

ÖZ

KÜÇÜK ÇOCUKLARA İNGİLİZCE'NİN YABANCI DİL OLARAK

ÖĞRETİLDİĞİ ORTAMDA KÜLTÜRÜN ROLÜ

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Bu araştırmanın genel amacı, özel bir okulda 3. sınıfların İngilizce Yabancı Dil Öğretimi müfredatında global kültürün ve İngilizce konuşulan ülkelerin kültürlerinin nasıl entegre edildiğini araştırmaktır. Buna ek olarak, bu okul ortamında dil öğretiminde kültürün rolünü anlamak için, öğretmenlerin, velilerin, öğrencilerin ve yöneticilerin hedef kültüre olan tutumları incelenmiştir. Bu çalışma nitel bir araştırma olup, gözlem, doküman analizi, anket ve görüşmelerden toplanan verilerle yapılmıştır. Röportajlar idari kadro ile yapılmıştır öğretmenlere ve velilere de bir anket yapılmıştır.

Sonuçlar bu özel okulun İngilizce müfredatında küresel kültürün entegrasyonuna büyük önem verdiğini göstermiştir. Yönetim ve öğretmen kadrosundan toplanan bilgi, dil öğretiminde kültürel elementleri de dahil etmeye yönelik olacak şekilde olumlu tavır sergilemiştir. Veli anketleri ebeveynlerin çoğunun kültürü yabancı dil öğrenmenin önemli bir parçası olarak kabul ettiklerini ortaya koymuştur. Öğrencilerle yapılan görüşmeler, öğrencilerin de yabancı dil kültürü öğrenmeye karşı olumlu algıları olduklarını gösterdi. Veri çeşitlemesi çalışmanın katılımcılarının dil eğitimi sürecine kültürel unsurların dahil olması gerektiğini ve öğrencilerin ve velilerin mevcut olan eğitim müfredatından memnun olduklarını ortaya çıkarmıştır.

Anahtar kelimeler: İngiliz Dili Eğitimi, Kültür, Kültürlerarası Yeterlilik, Kültür Unsurları, Kültürel Öz- Farkındalık, Küçük Yaş Grubu

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In recent years, including cultural aspects into English Language Teaching (ELT) has been accepted by many teachers and educators. Language teachers understand that teaching only grammar and core skills, isolated from the culture of the target language (L2), is not enough for students to be competent language speakers (Canale & Swain, 1980; Önalan, Paige, Kramsch, 2009). The world, which is getting more and more globalized requires people to have cultural literacy. Educators, need to introduce their students to the knowledge of many cultural elements in their foreign language lessons. More and more speakers of English that have to communicate with each other for business or educational purposes come across the fact that their interlocutor is not the native English speaker. Therefore, it is even more important that the L2 speaker has the background knowledge of not only L2 culture but also the so called global cultures. For example, when an English speaking German professor is communicating with an English speaking Russian colleague, they both need to be aware of their cultural backgrounds and of the cultural norms that are accepted in the English speaking community.

Even though the importance of cultural elements in the ELT curriculum is widely recognized (Bada, 2000; Baker, 2011; Önalan, 2005; Paige, Jostad, Siaya, Klein & Colby, 2003; Saluveer, 2004), we still come across many issues that are being discussed and argued about. Several educators differ in terms of their arguments in that some are in favor of teaching only native culture while others focus only on the global culture.

One recent research (Iriskulova, 2012) on presence of cultural elements in course books states that very few cultural elements have been found in the course books, written by the Turkish Ministry of Education for use in public schools.

This chapter introduces the main terms such as culture and cultural elements in ELT to the reader to facilitate the understanding of thesis work. Further it explains and the purpose of this study.

1.1 Definitions of Culture

It is not easy to define culture because it is quite a broad term that comprises of many aspects of our lives. Therefore, there are many definitions which have been offered by different authors, so in order to get a full picture we shall look at a few of them.

One of the definitions was given by Spencer-Oatey (2008, p.52). He states that "Culture is a fuzzy set of attitudes, beliefs, behavioral conventions, and basic assumptions and values that are shared by a group of people, and that influence each member's behavior and each member's interpretations of the meanings of other people's behavior". It has many aspects that have a great effect on communication between people. As Spencer-Oatey (2008) states, the components of culture are 'fuzzy' which means it is hard to determine each aspect. According to Chamberlain (2005), culture represents "the values, norms, and traditions that affect how individuals of a particular group perceive, think, interact, behave, and make judgments about their world" (p. 197).

There are 2 types of culture that the scholars distinguish in ELT: C1 (native culture) and C2 (L2 culture, that is the one of the language that is being learned). By introducing C2 in the classroom teachers should not try to impose it or substitute C1 with C2, rather they should help the students to embrace both cultures and thus, broaden their knowledge of the world and become more culturally aware. Some scholars talk about C3 which is the result of knowledge of C1 and C2 and the differences and connection between them. We can see the following opinion in The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (2001):

> Knowledge, awareness and understanding of the relation between the 'world of origin' and the 'world of the target community' produce an intercultural awareness… intercultural awareness includes an awareness of regional and social diversity in both worlds. It is also enriched by awareness of a wider range of cultures than those carried by the learner's L1 and L2. This wider awareness helps to place both in context.

In general it is accepted that culture is inseparable from a certain group of people and in its turn each group of people share some common culture. Language

and culture are a part of each other and do not exist without each other (Baker, 2011). This connection gave rise to the cultural awareness and its implications in the field of ELT, and it has been the interest of many scholars.

1.1.1. Cultural elements in ELT. In recent years there has been a lot of debate on connection between culture and learning a language and on its implications for ELT. Many scholars (Canale & Swain, 1980; Chambers & Trudgill, 2010; Hirsch, 1987) agree that sociolinguistic awareness is essential to a successful communication between the representatives of different cultures. Some researchers even speak of cultural literacy, the term was first introduced by Hirsch (1987) and refers to the knowledge that a person has that enables him/her to understand the given culture.

Bada (2000, p. 101), for instance, mentions that "the need for cultural literacy in ELT arises mainly from the fact that most language learners, not exposed to cultural elements of the society in question, seem to encounter significant hardship in communicating meaning to native speakers".

The aim of foreign language teachers is to provide knowledge for successful communication between people of different cultures and backgrounds, and it is highly important to pay attention not only to the linguistic aspect of these communications but also to its cultural aspects.

It is not often that the language teacher is at the same time the native 'bearer' of the culture of the language that he or she teaches, that is why they rely a great deal on textbooks. Since this is the case, the question of presence of cultural elements in textbooks is quite important. Rajabi (2012) states that "the positive implications of including cultural associations of the target language into instructional materials are largely known and accepted. This inclusion will nurture positive attitudes towards the target language, hence facilitating its acquisition" (p. 705).

The interest in cultural elements and their implementation in the curriculum is not new. Several researchers investigated this topic. Research shows that there is an increasing tendency towards including global cultural elements into EFL teaching. It is an accepted fact that native culture is acquired at the same time as the mother tongue and that these two are inseparable elements that shape the individual's world perception and

values. Since this acquisition happens at the early years of child's development, the main source for cultural input is the family, i.e. the parents that are the carriers of the culture. As Arnberg (1987) states, the role of parents is crucial in a child's language acquisition process. Therefore, it is important to ask parents about their understanding of global cultural elements in their children's language curriculum. Kurtkan (1982, p. 121), argues that "Values, philosophies and traditional belonging to the society are transmitted to the individuals by their families".

Kılıçkaya (2004) states that the role that a teacher plays in the child's cultural awareness process is highly critical. He mentions that teachers should encourage the learners to see the existence of different cultures, but not to build prejudices that one culture is superior to another or completely adopt another culture's identity. Other than family and teachers there are other factors that contribute to cultural awareness. Among them are: course books, mass media (TV, newspapers, magazines and the Internet), video games, songs and films as well as interpersonal interactions at school or between families or during vacations in foreign countries. Traditional holiday celebrations (such as Halloween, Christmas, Easter, etc) also bear significant cultural information that helps learners to understand the global culture better.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

There have been research studies carried out on the topic of cultural elements in ELT in Turkey (Çakıt, 2006; Gülcü, 2010; Önalan, 2004). There is research on cultural elements in ELT course books and teachers' and learners' perceptions towards cultural content in the curriculum, such as İlter and Güzeller (2013), Karabinar and Guler (2012). However, to gain a complete picture on this matter, it is important to take into consideration not only the learners' and teachers' perceptions, but also the learners' parents' and the school administration's beliefs. Even though the research on cultural elements is present there is no evidence of research conducted to examine its place in a primary school context. Therefore, we do not know the young learners' perceptions and motivation towards learning global culture.

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Therefore, this research is conducted in order to investigate the role of culture that was being taught, and how cultural elements in ELT are viewed in a different angle, taking into consideration the perceptions of all parties that are involved in the teaching-learning process (teachers, parents, students and the school administration).

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this research is to examine the role of L2 culture in English Language Teaching in a primary school in Turkey. It also aims to provide an overall and broad understanding of this issue with an in-depth analysis of both teachers' and administrators' as well as learners' and their parents' views toward culture. This research will provide the understanding of the given context. It might also have implications on students' motivation and teachers' awareness of the cultural teaching problems.

1.4 Research Questions

This study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the role of global culture in a young learners' English as a foreign language setting?
2. What are the students' perceptions of learning about the cultures of English speaking countries?
3. What are the parents' perceptions of the role of culture in language curriculum?
4. What are the school administration's perceptions of culture in English language curriculum?
5. What are the English teachers' perceptions of culture in their curriculum?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it sheds light on the role of culture in young learners' curriculum which has not been studied much in Turkey. It provides valuable data for

implications which can be used by curriculum developers, textbook publishers, and language teachers. It is also theoretically significant because it provides attitudinal data towards global culture in young learners' context which has not been previously investigated in Turkey.

1.6. Operational Definitions

The present research will be referring to the following terms. In order to escape ambiguity in their understanding the researcher has chosen the following definitions to the main terms of this study.

Culture: According to Chamberlain (2005), culture represents "the values, norms, and traditions that affect how individuals of a particular group perceive, think, interact, behave, and make judgments about their world" (p. 197). In this thesis the term global culture is understood as for transmission of ideas, meanings and values around the world in such a way as to extend and intensify social relations. This process involves the overlapping of cultures spread by the Internet, popular culture media, and international travel.

Cultural Elements: By cultural elements we understand different aspects of culture such as course books, mass media (TV, newspapers, magazines and the Internet), video games, songs and films as well as interpersonal interactions at school or between families or during vacations in foreign countries as well as traditional holiday celebrations.

Communicative Competence: According to Canale and Swaine (1980) comprises of grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence.

Intercultural Competence: As defined by Sercu (2005) "elements of intercultural communication – that is, where knowledge of another language and culture enables a learner to interact effectively with people from that culture, and negotiate between that culture and his/her own" (p.10).

Intercultural Language Learning Theory: It postulates that all language is a cultural act (Kramsh, 1993). The theory suggests that the form of the language and the message implied in it are a piece of cultural knowledge.

Cultural Self-Awareness: Cultural awareness is an awareness of "how each community appears from the perspective of the other, often in the form of national stereotypes" (Council of Europe, 2001, p.103).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Culture and Language

The interest on the topic of integrating intercultural competence in the Foreign Language Teaching is not new. As it was mentioned before, researchers distinguish between two types of culture. The Big 'C' culture ensures the understanding of the target cultures and is primarily used at the higher educational levels, the little 'c' culture helps learners in socio-cultural interactions and increases their pragmatic competence.

According to another type of classification of culture, that was mentioned previously, we differentiate C1 and C2, C1 being the native culture and C2, being the L2 culture (American and British in our case). However, there is an opinion that there also exists a C3 which is international culture. Zohrabi and Shah expressed the view that "the English language has acquired a new cultural role", meaning that for many people English has become a means of communication alongside their native language (2009, p. 277). Therefore, many English speakers are not necessarily the bearers of the English/American culture, but share the so-called international culture.

It is logical to conclude that, since language and culture are inseparable and English belongs to many cultures (or international cultures), we as teachers should be introducing international cultural elements in our classrooms. It is not enough for our students to know the history, geography, literature, etc of Great Britain/USA, we should also bring their attention to such international cultural aspects as various celebrations (eg. Chinese New Year, Carnavals, Easter, etc), traditional costumes, rituals, food and conversational norms (including body language) that can provide the foundation for the learners' successful communication in English.

Another term differentiated in respect with culture in language learning is - Intercultural Competence. Sercu (2005) defined it as "elements of intercultural communication – that is, where knowledge of another language and culture enables a learner to interact effectively with people from that culture, and negotiate between that culture and his/her own" (p.10). She also singled out three characteristics of intercultural competence:

* being a purposeful user of language with correct contextual use;

* being able to reflect on relationships between learner's cultures, being knowledgeable about target culture, being able to reflect on different interactions with culture, and developing an intermediate place in ownership of an independent identity;

* having metalinguistic skill and linguistic transfer skills (p. 10).

Intercultural competence is also considered to be a part of communicative competence. To have a successful communication a person must act in a linguistically, soico-linguistically and pragmatically appropriate way. Intercultural competence builds up on it and enlarges it to include the intercultural communicative competence.

In his book Cultural Globalization and Language Education (2008) Kumaravadivelu points out that even though there are some programs that address the issue of raising cultural awareness among learners, such as American Standards and European Framework, their vision of teaching culture is "limited and limiting" (p. 47). As can be seen in Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (2001) interculturality is given an important role. Promoting intercultural awareness, it advises the learners to consider (p. 105, italics as in original):

- *What cultural intermediary roles and functions the learner will need/be equipped/be required to fulfill;*
- *What features of the home and target culture the learner will need/be enabled/ required to distinguish;*
- *What provision is expected to be made for the learner to experience the target culture;*
- *What opportunities the learner will have of acting as a cultural intermediary.*

This is evidence of the fact that cultural self-awareness is recognized and considered an inseparable part of language learning. The question of what approach should be used to raise such cultural awareness is discussed in Moloney's thesis (2007). She focused on Intercultural Competence in Young Language Learners. The participants

of her study were 46 students of grade 6 who were observed and asked to reflect on their multiple linguistic and cultural memberships and four teachers who provided to be a model of interculturality for their students. Moloney implemented the following data collection strategies: student focus groups, structured teacher interviews and natural-setting classroom observation of students and teacher with the researcher as non-participant observer. Through her teacher interviews she used Curtain and Dahlberg's strategies that teachers use while presenting intercultural material:

1. The use of contextual clues, such as gestures, facial expressions, use of visual props to facilitate comprehension and meaning

2. The provision of purposeful hands-on learning experiences for students

3. The use of linguistic modification, in spoken interaction, to make the target language more comprehensible for students. (Moloney, 2007. p. 44)

The thorough investigation of the setting of her case study showed that the immersion teaching methods used by the teachers facilitated for some students the understanding of relationship between language and culture. Some students were able to display metalinguistic skills and were able to make comparisons between L1/target language and were aware of the intercultural change in themselves.

A very important point investigated by Moloney in respect of teachers' interculturality is that: "the teachers' own dual linguistic and cultural memberships are however immediately evident to students, resulting in an implicit student understanding of teacher interculturality." She came to the conclusion that teacher interculturality is explicitly present in everything they do, the way they teach and their relationships with the students.

Analyzing the setting of the case study, Moloney, concludes that one of the most prominent factors was immersion program itself, where the students considered themselves at least partially successful non-native speakers and were not afraid of taking risks and making mistakes in the process of their learning. She also mentions that although the program of immersion has many positive sides (bilingual and bicultural

teachers, daily exposure and purposeful tasks) it may be updated in terms of raising the role of learners' L1 discussions and providing more opportunities for intercultural comparison.

Moloney's (2007) study also concludes that "the intercultural theorists' claim that this critical perception needs to be explicitly taught is valid" (p. 142).

2.1.1 Second language acquisition and culture. Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is a field which studies how the second language is learned or acquired. Although the field of SLA is related to applied linguistics, it is also of great interest to other disciplines like education and psychology. One of the prominent linguists, Stephen Krashen (1981), distinguishes two different processes: language learning and language acquisition. According to him, acquisition takes place subconsciously, while learning is a process in which a learner is aware of learning a new language. The above theories and hypothesis all deal with how the L1 or L2 are acquired. Some researchers argue that second language acquisition is second culture acquisition (Spackman, 2008). Spackman argues that culture is an ongoing process, experienced by those who make up culture by means of language. Spackman stresses that "culture and language are bound together so tightly that learning a new language requires learning a new culture and thus a new way of viewing the world" 2008, p. 3). The process of adjusting to the new culture is called acculturation. Another definition, given by Diaz-Rico and Weed (2007): "to acculturate is to adapt to a second culture without necessarily giving up one's first culture" (p. 246). Adjusting to culture can also manifest itself in two different ways: assimilation – when the native culture is substituted by the new culture; and accommodation – when the two cultures continue to coexist.

As it was mentioned above, according to the critical period theory, there is a natural age limit for second language acquisition. However, Brown (1980; 2007) suggested the Optimal Distance Model which divides acculturation into 4 stages. Brown argues that L2 learners are better suited for learning the language when they are in the 3rd stage of acculturation when they alienate themselves from both cultures.

The four stages of acculturation are: first, the honeymoon period (when everything about the new culture seems interesting and exciting), second, the culture shock, followed by third, the slow recovery and slowly entering the fourth stage. In the third stage, Brown (1980) singles out a "feeling of anomie" which is a feeling of being between two cultures but not a member of either. He also associates this stage with one's mastery of the second language. "Stage three may provide not only the optimal distance but the optimal cognitive and affective tension to produce the necessary pressure to acquire the language" (Brown, 1980, p. 161). He also argues that the third stage may be critical and if learners fail to master the language at this point they may never be able to do it in the future. One of the reasons for this failure may be failure to synchronize acculturation and language learning. He suggests that acculturation should be included in the curriculums.

Schumann (1986) defined culture as "the social and psychological integration of the learner with the target language (TL) group" (p.379). He argues that "the degree to which a learner acculturates to the TL group will control the degree to which he acquires the second language" (p.385). Therefore, he claimed that culture studying should be supported at school, which would help the learners to master the new language.

As it can be seen from the above, SLA theories are supporting the view that acculturation is an important part of learning or acquiring the second language. They suggest that culture studying be included in the curriculum and used as a support to help the learners achieve a high level of mastery of a new language. Therefore, the present study attempts to analyze the role of the global culture in the context of young EFL learners in a private school.

2.2 Understanding of Cultural Elements

Considerable amount of research has been done on attitudes towards different cultures. Attitude, according to mentalists, is a mental response to a given situation. As mentioned above culture can be defined as a set of attitudes and behaviors. They can be negative or positive and can refer to one's own culture or the culture of another community. Jabeen (2011) talks about how culture and language being inseparable is

affected by the attitudes towards the global culture, in other words people with certain attitude towards C2 will transfer their attitude towards the L2 learning, which is the learner's attitude towards the global culture affects attitudes towards target language learning. The more the learner is interested in C2, the more he/she wants to know about it, the more motivated they are to learn the target language and the easier it is for them to accept and internalize some of the global culture elements (Ammon, 2004; Khuwaileh, 2000; Thanasoulas, 2001).

Bennett (1993) talks about someone who can speak a language but cannot "understand the social or philosophical content of that language", meaning that one can be fluent in the language but would not know how to behave in a sociocultural situation. He even refers to such speaker as a 'fluent fool' which emphasizes his point of view that culture is inseparable from language (1993, p. 9). The learners of the language are influenced by the values of the global culture (Işık, 2003; Işık, 2004). It is not only a part of the foreign language learning, but can also cause some changes in the learner's way of thinking.

However, the opposite point of view should be considered as well. Even though there is evidence in recent research papers that culture is almost always a part of a language class and has positive effect on the target language learning, there have been supporters of the different opinion. For example, Dueñas (2002), proposes to 'de-culture' language teaching, saying that both target and local culture should be excluded. Another similar opinion is voiced by Abed al Haq and Smadi (1996) who claim that English language has become 'culturally neutral'.

To support this point of view, Alptekin (1993) talks about the difficulties that Muslim students come across when studying a text about pets. He claims that Muslim students find it hard to internalize such cultural concept because it is foreign to their own culture. Another point of view that speaks of de-culturation is voiced in Mohammad Aliakbari's (2004) work called The Place of Culture in Iranian ELT Textbooks. He reports that following the Islamic revolution there was a movement of 'book purging' which was aimed at purifying the coursebooks of cultural elements, replacing them by 'proper or neutral ones. In his work he examines 4 English coursebooks provided by the

Ministry of Education in Iran for high schools. In conclusion, Aliakbari states that the cultural content presented in the ELT coursebooks is insufficient. He found that the presentation of culture is shallow and the reading passages were artificial. He expressed an opinion that such situation may lead to reinforcement of inaccurate stereotypes. To avoid this, he suggests that some changes should be made to prepare the students to communicate in the multicultural world of English; however, he does not specify what those changes might be.

2.3 Culture and ELT in Turkey

One of the recent research on teachers' attitudes towards the place of culture in foreign language teaching by Önalan (2005) shows that for the teachers of several universities in Turkey culture was perceived as the 'traditions, customs, family and home life, and institutions of a community as well as a social relations in it' (p. 227). At the same time teachers singled out such components as art, music and literature. Önalan observes that teachers preferred to focus on concrete and observable aspects of culture (food, clothing, body language), supposedly because it was more practical for the teachers. He came to a surprising result that even though the respondents agreed that the role of culture is great in English language learning, when asked to prioritize the subject matter of ELT, culture, in general, took only the 9th place in their preferences list.

There has been debate about how to balance the culture and linguistic content. Since the relationship between teaching a language and cultural knowledge can be viewed from different angles, there may be a challenge of 'avoiding creating fluent fools' on the one hand, and promoting 'linguistic imperialism' on the other (Phillipson, 1992, p. 58).

It is interesting to see that according to Önalan's findings the teachers referred to their students' attitude towards culture as positive. He mentions that 'their students are keen on analyzing the target cultural knowledge and comparing it with their native culture' (2005, p. 229). However, when asked whether the cultural information should be assessed, most of the teachers said that it should not be assessed; some even said that it could not be. Önalan (2005) observes that:

Teachers tend to incorporate cultural knowledge for personal development of students and for improved motivation to learn. Teachers do not aim at any change in the students' behavior in respect to the target language culture, but they intend to increase learners' awareness of other cultures for intellectual development. (p. 231)

Not all the teachers in Önalan's research were in favor of including cultural elements. Some were concerned that 'too much culture' may make the students 'overly sympathetic to US/UK culture'. They even expressed that such elements may be boring to the students, thus demotivating them.

According to this study, the teachers were observing students' general interest in analyzing the global culture and comparing it to their native culture. This suggests that the students are not ethnocentric, according to Önalan. It may also prove that the students have high 'self-awareness and confidence in their own culture' (2005, p. 229). However, these conclusions are not empirically proved, they are only based on the participants' opinions.

The reason why the teachers that participated in the research have expressed such opinions may be that they do separate culture from language learning and prefer to teach it implicitly. They may see it as 'supplemental or incidental' compared to 'the real task'. Önalan suggests that the teachers see culture as an additional motivational tool and not a separate goal. At this point the researcher comes to a surprising conclusion that the 'EFL teachers' positive attitudes towards culture did not necessarily bring about the prioritization in their instruction' (2005, p. 229). It seems that the foreign language education is perceived as a part of students' development as human beings.

Another Turkish researcher, Çakır (2006), shares the view that culture and language are interconnected and are part of each other. He shares the concern that Turkish learners of English have scarce opportunity to meet foreigners in Turkey, therefore they 'cannot appreciate the importance of learning the cultural aspects of communication unless they visit a foreign country and experience the difficulties'. He argues that the most important question that the EFL teachers are facing is not whether

culture should be taught, but how it should be done. He also argues that in some cases learning C2 can be considered a 'threat' to native values. In his view C2 must be analyzed along with C1 during the learning experience. The learners should also understand the importance of hand gestures, hand-signals, mimics and postures which is sometimes neglected.

Çakır stresses the importance of learners' reflection on the C2 and the differences in behaviours of representatives of C1 and C2. However, it is even more significant to analyze the way the learners native culture is influencing their own behavior when they are speaking L2. The teachers' role, on the other hand, is to help learners become aware of such differences without judging them.

Another concern that Çakır (2006) expresses is that the learners are fragile in the sense that they may feel alienated from the global culture and in some cases they may even have psychological blocks that would prevent them from acquiring the C2. In such situations the teacher should be sensitive while choosing the techniques in which to promote C2. These techniques include: role-play, reading, films, games, simulation, and culture capsules (Çakır, 2006)

Furthermore, he talks about the attitudes and understandings that the students should have in order to gain communicative competence and of pragmatic aspects of the speech act. He suggests that the way the students will choose to apologize or request something in L2 will depend on their sex, social status, age and other social factors of which the speaker should be aware of. It is the teacher's job, according to Çakır (2006), to help the learners overcome possible barriers and become receptive towards the global culture. As a way to do so, he suggests that the teacher starts with discussing the similarities within a group of people, followed by a discussion of how people can be different on the family level, class level and cultural levels.

A very strong point that is significant to this study is researcher's statement that cultural elements should be presented to the learner at every level. Further he gives suggestion as to which topics have to be discussed (starting with family and friends, followed by leisure time, and marriage customs, etc). However, the study does not

mention anything about introducing cultural elements at the beginner level to the young learners. In the conclusion, the study stresses that the learners should not lose their own identity or their family or moral values, but rather learns to see the difference between C1 and C2, and "student's ethnic, religious, and political backgrounds should remain the same" (Çakıl, 2006, p. 160).

Another researcher from Turkey, Iriskulova (2012), analyzed ELT coursebooks, namely Spot On 8 that are provided by the Turkish Ministry of Education. She found that:

> The percentage of the cultural elements included in the reading passages and dialogue is significantly low, and the most frequent items are Names and Geographical Items. In addition, the textbook texts themselves appeared to be sterile in terms of the content. The information presented in the reading passages, although containing certain cultural elements, did not present any real-life situation from which students could learn behavior or traditions of a country (p.100).

Since there is a big diversity between the ELT materials used in private colleges and public schools, the question of materials selection is very important (Iriskulova, 2012). Therefore, the administrators and educators have the responsibility of choosing either from a variety of foreign publishers or the materials written and printed in Turkey. On the one hand, private colleges have some freedom in this choice, but on the other hand, the final exam requirements imply some limitations as well. For example, along with the authentic coursebooks the private college is using the locally published test book approved by the Turkish Ministry of Education, in order to help their students prepare for the national examination at the end of 8th grade. Therefore, the attitude of the management staff towards the ELT resources (and the cultural elements included in them) plays a great role in the curriculum. These attitudes may or may not agree with the point of view of the teachers, parents and students. Therefore, this research aims to investigate attitudes of the administration, parents, students and the teachers towards cultural elements in the ELT curriculum of the primary school and find out whether the expectations of each party are in parallel.

After analyzing the research that has been done in Turkey in the field of teaching culture in ELT classrooms, I have found that the recent studies show that the ELT materials could be more efficient and that there is controversy in how teachers perceive the role of culture in ELT.

It also appears that there has been no research on whether the young learners should start acquiring C2 early. The studies that have been analyzed do not focus on primary/secondary school learners. Therefore, the present study aims to bridge this gap and provide some data collected from young children, their parents and teachers to understand their attitude towards culture teaching at this age.

<center>**Chapter 3: Methodology**</center>

Introduction

The interest in culture teaching comes from my multicultural background. Being a foreigner and non-native English speaker in a Muslim country makes it possible for me to observe the different aspects of cultures and the way they interact. Since I was also a learner of English and went through a process of discovering and exploring the differences between Russian and British or American cultures I can relate to how important cultural awareness is for an English speaker. On the other hand, being a teacher of English in Turkey gave me an opportunity to compare and contrast the ways that this matter is treated in the context of a private college in one of the biggest and multicultural cities in Turkey. I became interested in how the school administration and the parents selected which cultural aspects should be present in the curriculum and which should be avoided. I was and still am trying to process the role of culture teaching for young learners in Turkey. However, I realize that this is a case study which limits the results of my findings to a particular social group, with certain social status.

The literature review helped to investigate whether similar research has been made; particularly taking into consideration the young learners and I found that most of the research conducted in Turkey was focusing on young adults or adults.

This chapter will explain the methods that were implemented in this research, the data collection process and the analysis procedures.

3.1 Research design

The nature of the research questions and purpose required a qualitative research design. As Walliman (2011) states qualitative type of research deals with data in the form of words, expressions, descriptions and opinions. In this study the data is collected from the people (parents, students, teachers and the school management) which is also typical of qualitative research. Walliman (2011) suggests that during the data collection the researcher repeatedly analyses the data and collects new data, because in the beginning it is hard to determine which data would be sufficient and relevant and only

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after having analyzed the first data set it is possible to see whether the research is going in the right direction.

Creswell (2007, p. 74) suggests the following classification: there are three variations of case studies: the single instrumental case study, the collective instrumental case study and the intrinsic case study. The single case study illustrates a question or concern with the help of one case study, while collective instrumental case enables the researcher to deal with the research question with several cases. The latter case study is used when a researcher wants to show different approaches to one and the same study. The last, intrinsic case study, is built around itself because the case presents a unique situation.

On the other hand, according to Tesch's Graphic Overview of Qualitative Research Types (1990) from the point of view of purposes the current research is a case study, interpreting perceptions.

As it was mentioned above, the data comes in the form of words. "Most analysis is done with words. The words can be assembled, subclustered, broken into semiotic segments. They can be organized to permit the researcher to contrast, compare, analyze, and bestow patterns upon them" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 7).

This type of research is the result of a prolonged contact with the 'field' or situation. The researcher collects and interprets data. The main task is to account for people's behavior in their day-to-day situations. The instruments of qualitative research are not standardized which means that it crucially depends on the way the data will be presented, collected and analyzed. The researcher is the 'measurement device'.

Another reason for choosing to conduct a qualitative research is that it focuses mainly on the "real life" experiences and "naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings" thus providing data that was taken in "the close proximity to a specific situation" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 8).

Such data is also usually rich and appealing to the reader because it provides descriptions in real context where they have been collected over a period of time.

Lastly, qualitative research allows the researcher to be flexible when choosing the methods as the study unfolds. The data collection and methods may evolve as the study goes on which proves that the researcher has really understood the situation and taken necessary adaptations.

One of the research approaches is case study. Creswell (2007) suggests, first of all, in order to decide whether case study is the most suitable form of research for the chosen investigation. According to him case study is defined as a:

> qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection, involving multiple sources of information (e.g. observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports) and reports a case description and case-based themes. (Creswell, 2007; Hanson, Plano & Morales, 2007)

Current research fits the definition of a case study since it focuses on a certain set of participants at a certain place (primary private school) and investigating their attitudes towards a phenomenon.

This study is intrinsic in the meaning that it focuses on the particular phenomenon and tries to analyze its uniqueness and particularly interesting for me as a teacher. It is also instrumental because describing this case also gives an insight into similar situations in similar private schools which means that the suggestions outlined in this research can be applicable and may provide positive changes for other schools as well.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What is the role of global culture in a young learners' English as a foreign language setting?

2. What are the students' perceptions of learning about the cultures of English speaking countries?

3. What are the parents' perceptions of the role of culture in the language curriculum?

4. What are the school administration's perceptions of culture in the English language curriculum?

5. What are the English teachers' perceptions of culture in their curriculum?

Data collection instruments were the next step to consider according to Creswell (2007). Interviews, questionnaires, and observations recorded in Teacher's Journal were used in data collection.

At the data analysis stage there are two types: holistic analysis and embedded analysis (Creswell, 2007, p. 75). The latter is more suitable for this study since it takes into consideration different aspects of the study and different data sets.

The final step in the process of writing a case study is the interpretation stage at which the researcher presents the facts that were learned from the issue of the case.

3.2 Participants

For the purposes of this case study purposive sampling was used in order to get different perspectives on the situation. I chose the participants that were easily accessible and that would represent the majority of the group. Parents of the learners were also involved to investigate their expectations.

Six teachers, 93 parents, 96 learners and 2 administration staff participated in this research. The teachers that were interviewed were both of Turkish and foreign origin. Since every class is taught by a Turkish teacher and an English native speaker, it was important to get opinions of both. The parents and learners are randomly chosen among the 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades. The principal of the school and the head of the Foreign Languages Department were interviewed as well.

3.2.1 Learners. The learners that this study focuses on are 3rd grade students. They were the oldest students that I was teaching and they had more awareness about

culture compared to 1st and 2nd grades. Six of the learners from the 3rd grades were interviewed in order to answer the research question: What are the students' perceptions of learning about the cultures of English speaking countries? They were chosen randomly and the interviews took place during the break-time. The learners also freely expressed their opinions on cultural matters throughout the year which I had registered in my Teacher's Journal.

3.2.2 Teachers. Out of the twelve ELT teachers at school six agreed to participate in the research. They were told that their answers would be confidential and would not be shared intentionally or accidentally with other parties. Because the teachers refused to have the interviews recorded, to ensure that they would feel relaxed I transformed interview questions into an anonymous questionnaire, which all 6 of them took. To provide credibility, I also interviewed the voluntary 3 teachers as a group.

Out of 6 teachers, 3 were Turkish and 3 were native English speakers from the USA and England. Two of them were male and four of them were female. Half of the participants were experienced with over 12 years in teaching but 3 teachers had less than 3 years of teaching experience. Some of them had worked in the school for more than 3 years but 4 of them were new. I was planning to include more Turkish teachers but they seemed reluctant to participate either referring to their busy schedule or not very interested in the subject.

3.2.3 Administration. On behalf of the school administration I interviewed the Head of the Foreign Languages Department and the Principal of the school. The principal agreed to record the interview. To ensure that there was complete understanding during the interview, one of the teachers translated the questions and answers. The Principal of the school had more than 20 years of experience and had been in her position for 6 years at the time of the interview. Before becoming a principal she had many years of teaching experience as well. She was able to provide elaborate information on the questions asked both from her own point of view as a teacher and the school administrator.

The Head of the Foreign Languages Department agreed to fill out the questionnaire instead of the interview due to the lack of time when this interview could be conducted.

3.2.4 Parents. The opinion of the parents was as important for the study as the parents have a great influence on their children' attitudes. Therefore, it was decided to involve as many parents from 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades. Since the parents were rarely at school, it was convenient to ask them to fill out the questionnaire when they'd come for the parents meeting. Ninety-three parents agreed to fill in the questionnaire. Each questionnaire was filled by one parent, either the father or the mother of the child. Such questions as age, educational background and travelling abroad were included to see how diverse the parent profile is and to contrast them with their attitudes towards culture related questions.

In addition, one mother offered to give me an interview (when she found out about the research) during which I had taken notes. She was very keen to express her opinion on the matter and even said that she believed that my study would have positive implications in the future of teaching culture at this school.

3.2.5 Setting. The setting was a private K-8 school in one of the prestigious regions of Istanbul. The parents in general had middle or high income.

The layout of the school is composed of several buildings with only 1 floor, one 3 storey building and a swimming pool inside the school's playground. The school also has a farm with animals and a garden where the children and specially assigned personnel grow vegetables, trees and herbs.

The school employs foreign English language teachers. Every class has 2 English teachers (1 Turkish and 1 native) beginning from the 1st grade. The school values experienced staff that is why most of the teachers have considerable work experience. However, the foreign teachers tend to change more often, probably due to the fact that they do not live in Turkey permanently.

The school positions itself as a 'Dünya Okulu' which translates as 'Global School'.

There are a few foreign students from such countries as: Japan, Russia, USA, China, Korea and Indonesia. Some of the students are bilingual, because one of the parents is a foreigner married to a Turkish citizen. The average number of students in a class is 21-23.

Technology is also very important in this school. Every class has a smartboard and the learners use iPads in class. The teachers are given seminars on how to use current technology. Some of the homework is based on online resources as well.

3.3 Procedures

3.3.1 Sources of data. According to Marshall and Rossman (2011, p.105) "well-developed sampling decisions are crucial for any study's soundness." It is often the case that the researcher chooses the sampling type in the course of investigating the site and after having read some theoretical material. Denzin (1989, p. 73) says, "All sampling activities are theoretically informed". Among the different approaches to sampling, that Miles and Huberman suggested, purposive sampling was the most appropriate to get as much data as possible and in the limited time to do so.

After the questions were edited and after consulting my advisor and Head of the Department, we agreed that the best way would be to personally give out the questionnaires during the parents meetings asking the parents to fill them out. As it was predicted not all parents wanted to participate, so I decided to send the copies of the questionnaires home, clearly stating the purpose of this study and by whom it was being conducted. The parents were chosen purposively from grades 1, 2 and 3.

For the purpose of this study, data was collected from various sources which would be mentioned in detail below.

3.3.1.1 Interviews with the learners. This study aims at investigating the attitudes of young learners towards culture learning.

To ensure trustworthiness of the data, it was decided to conduct short interviews with the learners. Again, the choice of the learners was opportunistic sampling. I chose six learners who could understand and answer my questions in English. These questions were aimed to learn about students attitudes towards foreign cultures and to make them reflect on their learning:

- What cultural elements have you learned so far (food, traditions, everyday life of other countries)? Can you give a recent example?
- Do you think you should learn about different cultures? Do you think when you learn about American or English culture you also learn English better? Can you give examples?
- Is it important to celebrate foreign holidays like Halloween, Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas? Or any others? How does it affect you, your learning, and foreign language?
- Please describe a foreign holiday that you celebrated at school and how you felt.

3.3.1.2 Questionnaire for the parents. Parents' questionnaire (see Appendix A) was designed and revised. The second variant of the questionnaire was approved by the administration of the school and given to the parents to fill during the parents meetings.

3.3.1.3 Questionnaire for the teachers. The purpose of collecting data from my colleagues was to get an insight into my fellow teacher's perspective on the role of culture in their teaching. The questionnaire also included the years of experience of the teacher and was anonymous to ensure that the teachers could be honest in expressing their opinion about the school that they were working for. The Teacher Questionnaire can be found in the Appendix C.

3.3.1.4 Administration interview. Taking into consideration the fact that the administration and the teachers' perspectives may be different, it was decided to include similar questions to this interview as the Teacher's questionnaire. At the same time a few more questions were added that considered the management of the school.

The interview took place in the School Principal's office with a teacher that was translating the questions and answers to ensure that there were no misunderstandings. The interview was recorded with a voice recording application on the iPad and later transcribed. The principal was very cooperative and gave elaborate answers with examples on the topic of our discussion.

3.3.1.5 Classroom observations. In this study one of the main sources of data was my own observations in the classroom. The research started during my 2nd year of teaching in this private school so I had previous knowledge of the students and the curriculum. I observed four 3rd grade classrooms throughout the year and recorded my observations in a Teacher's journal on a weekly basis. Since I was able to establish a good relationship with the learners, they were quite open with me whenever I asked them how they felt about some cultural material that they were learning. The only limitation that should be mentioned would be that some students' L2 fluency wasn't enough for them to explain their feelings in full. In this case other students were helpful, translating the questions in their L1.

3.3.2 Data collection procedures. After researching the literature on the topic of culture teaching in EFL classrooms and reflecting upon my teaching cultural elements in my class, I formulated the topic for my research paper. In February 2013 I decided on the procedures and instruments for this study.

I chose young learners as my participants because not only was I intrinsically motivated to understand their beliefs towards culture teaching but also there is scarcity of research on young learners. Therefore, my target learners were 3rd graders. To ensure that the study was trustworthy, data collection was triangulated via tools - questionnaires, interviews, observations and participants: learners, the parents of these learners, the teachers and the administration of the school.

On February 26, 2013 the questionnaire for the Teachers was given to 6 of my colleagues and they returned them to me shortly afterwards. At the same time questionnaire for the parents was handed out to 200 parents, 93 out of whom returned it in the following week.

In the next step I organized a meeting with the Head of the Department and she answered my questions that I noted down and later transcribed.

On March, 6, I recorded an interview with the school Principal and transcribed it. The parts in Turkish were translated.

3.3.3 Data analysis procedures. Data analysis was an ongoing process. Due to the nature of the study, being the qualitative research, in the process of data collection preliminary analysis was being done in order to check in what direction the study was going. During the data analysis the generic steps described by Creswell were followed:

Step 1. I organized and prepared the data for analysis. I transcribed interviews, typed up Teacher notes, sorted and arranged the data into different types depending on the sources of information.

Step 2. I read through all the data. A first general step was to obtain a general sense of all the information and to reflect on its overall meaning. I wrote notes in the margins or started recording general thoughts about the data at this stage.

Step 3. I began detailed analysis with coding process.

Coding is the process of organizing that material into "chunks" before bringing meaning to those "chunks" (Rossman & Rallis, 1998, p. 171). It involves taking text data or pictures, segmenting sentences (or paragraphs) or images into categories, and labeling those categories with a term, often a term based in the actual language of the participant (called an in vivaterm) (Cresswell, 2009, p. 187).

During the coding process I followed the guidelines provided by Tesch (1990). I read through the interviews to get the general idea and wrote down the ideas on the margins. After having done so for several respondents, I could see general ideas

expressed by the participants. Then I started the process of coding. The ideas that I singled out were abbreviated and written in the tables. After that, these ideas were grouped into different categories. For example, parents that were in favour of culture teaching, and parents that thought it was not necessary and the ones that left out the question. I also used different color coding to facilitate categorizing process.

Step 4. In this step I used the coded data to make a detailed description of the setting. These themes were then singled out to be major findings of this study. Each of them displays multiple perspectives from individuals and is supported by quotations.

Step 5. I used a narrative passage approach to discuss the findings through the analysis of the themes. I used graphs and tables as adjuncts to the discussion.

Step 6. The final step included interpretation of the data. It was my personal interpretation based on my individual understanding through the lens of my own cultural background and my experience as a teacher. To finish the analysis I used a questioning approach and call for action.

The analysis of data was an ongoing process of asking questions, analyzing and writing memos throughout the study. This included: "generating categories of information (open coding), selecting one of the categories and positioning story from the interconnection of these categories (selective coding). Case study and ethnographic research involve a detailed description of the setting or intervals, followed by analysis of the data for themes or issues (See Stake, 1995; Wolcott, 1994).

3.4 Trustworthiness

Since the publication of Naturalistic Inquiry by Lincoln and Guba (1985) trustworthiness has been treated by many researchers as a very important issue. As Marshall and Rossman (2011) explain, each researcher must prove that the claims and the grounds for the research are reliable and credible. To ensure that there are standards to be met, Lincoln and Guba differentiated the following concerns: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Along with these concerns they

offered some strategies. For example, they offer researchers to stay in the setting for a long period of time (prolonged engagement), sharing the data with participants (member check), and discussions with colleagues (peer debriefing).

Creswell and Miller (2000) have used the original ideas of Lincoln and Guba and added their own:

- Triangulation
- Searching for disconfirming evidence
- Engaging in reflexivity
- Member checking
- Prolonged engagement in the field
- Collaboration
- Developing an audit trial
- Peer debriefing

Among other researchers that were concerned with triangulation, Tuchman (1981) offered the following definition:

> Bias in a primary source is to be expected. One allows for it and corrects it by reading another version… Even if an event is not controversial, it will have been seen and remembered from different angles of view by different observers… As the Lion in Aesop said to the Man, "There are many statues of men slaying lions, but if only the lions were sculptors there might be quite a different set of statues." (p. 19)

Researchers distinguish the following types of triangulation, as explained by Denzin (1978, p. 182): "by data source (which can include persons, times, places, etc.), by method (observation, interview document, etc.), by researcher (investigator A, B, etc.), by theory and by data type (qualitative text, readings, quantitative)."

For the purpose of this research, method triangulation (interviews, classroom observations and questionnaires) and data source triangulation (parents, teachers,

learners and school administration staff) was used. Since the aim of this study is to find out what perceptions the participants have towards cultural elements being taught in a private school, it was important to gather data from different types of participants. Hence, not only learners and teachers were questioned and interviewed, but the other parties as well, namely, the parents and the school administration. Therefore, the collected data reflects the ideas of all parties interested directly or not in the culture teaching in this private school.

In order to gather more detailed and trustworthy data, different instruments were used. Thus, I was also able to interview four of them to get a deeper insight into their opinions. These methods combined with my observations throughout the year, made it possible to ensure that this study's trustworthiness is justified.

Another strategy – prolonged engagement in the field – proved to be helpful as well. I was teaching the 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade students for over a year. During this time I was able to establish good relationship with my students, to observe them.

Collaboration and peer debriefing were also used for the purposes of this study. Being able to discuss my observations, preliminary results and guesses with my colleagues ensured that my understanding of the data that I shared with them was more objective.

3.5. Limitations

Since this is a case study, it focuses mainly on a small group of participants and gives a perspective on this particular case. This case may be unique or typical of other schools in Turkey. Only further research or similar case studies may provide a better perspective on culture teaching to the young learners in Turkey.

The research started in spring 2013 and the researcher collected data from the students by means of questionnaires. However, there were some delays during approval procedures and due to timing constrictions, the researcher had to prolong the study which continued during the next academic year. Therefore, the data collected from the

students was taken earlier than the data taken from the parents, the teachers and the administration.

Another limitation that this research has is that this is not a whole school study. It focused only on the 3rd grade students' perceptions and opinions which does not reflect the phenomenon in full. Further studies may provide more broad data. The reason why the researcher chose the 3rd grade students was because she was teaching them and could observe the classrooms as well as collect data through the questionnaires easily.

Since this research takes into consideration only teachers' and students' self-report, it is also limited.

This research has a de-limitation point as well. The teacher-researcher observed only her own classroom teaching and reflected her own thoughts. It would have been more beneficial for this study to have more teacher observations and the participants could be the whole school. However, the researcher understands that this is not doable.

On the whole the limitations of this research can be summarized as the following: timing, opportunistic approach to participants choice and limiting them to only 3rd grade students and using self-reports as a data collection tool. However, in spite of these, this study will serve a starting point in further investigations of the cultural teaching in the context of a primary school in Turkey.

Chapter 4: Results

To answer the first question of the study, the curriculum and the teaching materials were analyzed. The question aimed at investigating the role of global culture in a young learners' English as a foreign language setting.

4.1 Curriculum and Materials Evaluation.

To better understand the setting in which young learners study English as a foreign language the curriculum and the materials should be analyzed.

The curriculum was using the following coursebooks: Our Discovery Island 3; Winnie Flies Again; Wallace and Gromit (A Grand Day Out) Activity Book and DVD; Fun for Starters; Primary Dictionary. The total number of hours of English instruction designed was 8 (by Turkish teacher) and 2 (by the native teacher). The main teacher was considered the Turkish teacher, focusing mainly on the grammar, vocabulary building, writing skills and preparation for the international exams. The native teacher's role was to develop speaking and listening skills with the help of readers and DVD with an activity book.

The curriculum provides weekly plans as to what materials and activities should be covered by the teachers. The graph includes: number of hours spent on the material, the topic, grammatical constructions, vocabulary to be revised/learned, activities (games, songs, chants, etc.) and materials to be used (CDs, DVDs, course book numbers, flashcards, posters). The curriculum does not give very detailed information as to how certain information should be covered. For example, in the activity column for week 1 there are: "ice breakers, warmers, getting to know each other TPR (Total Physical Response) games and activities, songs and chants". There are no direct instructions as to what ice breakers or songs should be used which on one hand, may discourage an incompetent teacher who would need more guidance, but on the other hand, may give freedom to a more experienced teacher who then would choose the activity that he/she is familiar with and that suits best for their learners.

The curriculum in this private school was oriented on preparing the learners for the Cambridge Starters examination at the end of the year. Therefore, starting with week 2 the Turkish teacher had to use Fun for Starters and Primary Dictionary books that aimed at developing the four skills: reading, listening, writing and speaking. The native teacher helped with the speaking part of that book. Since these course materials are aimed at preparing for an international examination, in terms of cultural content, it is neutral. There are no cultural elements found in the curriculum.

The main course book for the 3rd grade students was - **Our Discovery Island 3** that was taught by the Turkish teacher. The book consists of a welcome unit, 8 units covering various grammar structures, vocabulary, pronunciation, cross-curricular focus and values, and 2 extra units called "Festivals" focusing on special day celebrations (Christmas and Mother's Day). Each unit is divided into 8 sections (each of them on 1 page and is allocated to 1 hour of instruction). The sections have the same order throughout the book:

Figure1. Our Discovery Island 3

1. Presentation of the new vocabulary
2. Chant
3. Song (vocabulary reinforcement)
4. Skills (practicing all 4 skills), Phonics section and a game
5. Story (a comic strip)
6. CLIL page followed by a project
7. Round up (consolidation and practice)
8. A review or a Wider World section (real-life topic from an international perspective)

In terms of cultural elements, Our Discovery Island 3, covers a number of cultural aspects. Since this book is printed in England, the cultural aspects reflect the norms of the British culture. First of all, the presence of such focus point as Values should be mentioned. Here is the list of values covered in the book:

Unit 1. Sharing time with friends and family.

Unit 2. Respecting animal life.

Unit 3. Eating to help the environment.

Unit 4. Making sacrifices to study and valuing the importance of education.

Unit 5. The importance of discipline to achieve aims in life.

Unit 6. Protecting the rainforest and the animals and plants in it.

Unit 7. Being sensitive to other people's feelings.

Unit 8. Protecting the seas and sea life.

These values aim at raising awareness of international values and help the learners to internalize the covered material. However, the parts that contain the main cultural focus are the Wider World pages. As stated in the Teacher's book the aims of these sections are: "to learn about other cultures and respect cultural differences; to learn about free time activities in other countries; to learn about animals in different countries and their habits (See Appendix E); to learn about famous people; to learn about festivals" (ODI 3 Teachers book, 2011, p. 52, p. 84, p. 116, p. 148). These sections represent mini texts in the form of notes, in which a narrator presents his/her name, says where they are from and then depending on the general topic describes an event. These notes are very short and since they are personalized (the author says their name, there is a picture of the author) it may help the learners internalize the cultural content better. In unit 3 the production part of the section is: Write about the wild animals in your country, which may encourage and motivate the learners not only to learn about some aspects of C2 but also reflect on their C1.

Another cultural element to be mentioned is in the section Festivals (See Appendix F). The Teacher's book gives short information about the holiday (when it is celebrated and how, about the traditions) and suggestions on how to help the learners personalize

the material (for example, singing a Christmas song, and making a Mother's Day card). These activities are included in the curriculum.

On the whole, Our Discovery Island 3, is very rich with cultural content and activities that cover the international culture and present an opportunity for the learners to reflect on their own culture.

According to the curriculum design, the above mentioned course books had to be covered by the Turkish teacher, leaving the readers (Wallace and Gromit and Winnie Flies Again) to be covered by the native teacher.

Wallace & Gromit in A Grand Day Out is an English Language teaching adaption of a famous adventure of Wallace and Gromit. The book is a supplementary material to a DVD which is also an adapted version of Wallace and Gromit adventures. The course book was designed by a well-known publishing house: the Oxford University Press and aimed at beginner level students. The first edition of this material was printed in 2003 and reprinted in 2012. The designer of the adaptation is Stephen Strong and the illustrations are made by Bill Kerwin.
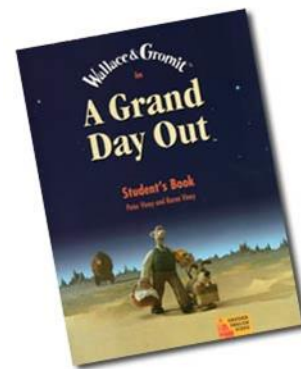

Figure 2. A Grand Day out

The Student's book has a very clear structure which makes it easy for the teacher and the students to follow. It is divided into 6 episodes (following the video material) each of them 7 pages. Each episode is clearly divided into: Watching the Video (1 page), Section 1 (1 page) and Section 2 (2 pages), Practice section (2 pages) and the Transcript (1 page) of the Episode. The contents page bears the names of the episodes and introduces the main characters of the book. It is mainly aimed at the students because it does not provide clear information about the grammar/skills/vocabulary focus for the teachers. The last 3 pages of the book represent a picture dictionary with the vocabulary used in the book.

The illustrations are in the form of cartoon drawings and photographs of the scenes of the movie. They appeal to the learners because they are colorful, organized in the form of a comic book and portray characters in comic situations.

The internal evaluation of the *Wallace & Gromit in A Grand Day Out* course book revealed the following. The material organization and quality of illustrations and tasks are highly engaging for the students. The layout is clear both for the students and for the teacher. Colorful pages, different sized fonts, as well as usage of speech bubbles and good quality photographs and cartoons is very motivating. The video material is based on the clay animation which is famous all around the world and appealing to the young learners.

It was already mentioned that the book is divided into 6 episodes and each episode, in its turn, consists of 7 pages with the following sections.

Watching the Video section introduces the main vocabulary and asks students to predict what will happen next. Section 1 is aimed at eliciting information during the 'Before You Watch' phase and checking for correct answers after watching it. It also focuses on such language points as: prepositions, word order, action verbs, numbers and yes/no questions. Section two is also divided into Before You Watch and After You Watch parts. It has similar function to Section 1: to recycle vocabulary, to check understanding and elicit background information and understanding of the material. The Practice pages are aimed at practicing the new vocabulary and include many dialogues and pair activities and chants. The last part of an Episode is a Transcript which is aimed at practicing reading skills and pronunciation.

The book is aimed at young learners and contains various topics that may interest them. In terms of culture, since the main characters are iconic representatives of the British culture (the eccentric inventor Wallace and his anthropomorphic dog Gromit) the main cultural focus is on lifestyle of the British people (traditional tea with crackers and cheese), typical clothes and activities (playing football, making a house of cards, playing noughts and crosses and going on picnics). The cultural setting of the book is young and trendy and the methods used in the book are mostly relevant to the target age group.

The materials in the book present many opportunities for learner autonomy. There are puzzles, fill in the gap activities and matching activities. It has also a good variety of dialogue tasks and each episode contains at least one chant which provides good oral practice for the shy students. The constant recycling of the material is a great opportunity for the young learners to internalize the material and feel more confident at using it during the multiple oral exercises.

The picture dictionary at the back of the book provides quick good quality reference material both for the teacher and the students.

The Teachers book compliments the course book and the video by providing guidance for the teacher and the answers to all of the activities.

Culturally this book does not only present material about the English culture, but also takes into account general culture. In episode 1 for example, the students are encouraged to remember the names of different European countries. However, the main focus is on the British culture which is portrayed through the lifestyle of Wallace, who, according to BBC was called an icon of British culture. His clothes (a shirt, vest and a tie), furniture (big armchairs, flowery wall paper) in the house, habits (drinking tea with crackers and cheese, reading a newspaper, playing cards and going on a picnic) give students a chance to have a glimpse of a life of a British person. Wallace also uses such words as 'chap' and 'lad' which are typically British. On the whole, the authentic dialogues presented here give students an opportunity to learn about the conversational norms of the British culture.

Grammar sections in The Grand Day Out follow inductive approach. The learners are asked to deduce the rule from a few examples. However, grammar is not the main skill of this book. There are a few grammar points which are integrated in the dialogues, but they are scarce and not reinforced by the exercises.

Listening, however, has a more important role. Listening tasks include: listening for specific information, understanding the general idea, fill in the gap exercises, tick the correct answer. The variety and the way these exercises are displayed (colorful and

funny pictures) makes them very interesting and motivating for the students. Many of the listening activities are aimed at teaching and recycling the vocabulary, which is later reinforced in the practice part by means of chants and dialogues. Listening texts mainly include standard British English and regional British accents. However, the text is adapted, so the students can understand it easily.

Reading is not the main focus of this reader. At the end of each episode, the Transcript section gives the students opportunity to consolidate what they have learned and practice pronunciation through dramatization of the dialogues.

The writing skill is limited to fill in the gap and matching activities. There are no exercises that require students to write a sentence or a paragraph. However, the few activities that help students to recycle the new vocabulary are very well structured. The writing skill is also reinforced in the spelling section. In episode 4, for example, in the Practice section the students practice spelling some difficult words with silent letters.

As it was already mentioned, speaking is one of the main focuses of this reader. There are dialogues, chants, transcripts of the episode that allow role play and questions that help students to reflect on their own experiences. The usage of cartoon characters and speech bubbles makes it comprehensible and entertaining for the learners. There are also many opportunities for practice in pairs which allows students to speak in their comfort zone – with their classmate.

Vocabulary practice is another main focus of this book. As it was mentioned, the back of the book has a picture dictionary with all the main vocabulary items. Throughout the book entertaining colorful pictures also ensure the memorization of the key vocabulary. It is reinforced through word searches; fill in the gap activities, matching, and repetitive chants.

To sum it up, the overall analysis of Wallace & Gromit in A Grand Day Out book shows that it is very motivating and appealing to the students. This is achieved with colorful and good quality pictures, authentic material (the film that was made in England), well thought structure of the book and engaging exercises. The book is aimed at practicing listening and speaking skills and expanding the vocabulary. It also exposes the learners to typical British culture through an iconic character Wallace whose lifestyle can be attributed to an average British man. However, the book lacks engaging cultural activities that could have helped the learners to reflect on their own culture or make more research on other cultures.

Other than Wallace and Gromit in a Grand Day Out, the curriculum had another reader – **Winnie Flies Again**. Which coincided with the beginning of the year, namely (one week in September and the whole of October).

Figure 3. Winnie Flies Again

Winnie Flies Again reader is an adapted version of the book about a witch that travels on a broomstick with her cat Wilbur. It is written by Valerie Thomas, who has worked for many years in education, teaching in schools in Australia and the UK and illustrated by Korky Paul, an award-winning illustrator of children's books.

The original illustrations in full colour are very appealing to the learners. A Picture Dictionary presents key vocabulary from the story. A write-in Activity Booklet contains simple, fun activities, songs, and chants based on the story.

In addition, there is a CD that offers a thoroughly enjoyable recording of the story, songs, and chants.

This reader is aimed at developing reading skills and studying new vocabulary, that is why, there are no cultural elements present. However, since it is being studied at the beginning of the year, the teacher can be encouraged to recycle the vocabulary from the book (related to witchcraft) to celebrate and introduce Halloween.

As it is seen from the Teacher's journal, the researcher/teacher used the vocabulary from the book in her Halloween celebration activities (the Halloween cards).

The school also participates in international projects. It has a partner school with one of the Japanese schools. The children from that school come to observe the ceremonies in this private school and sometimes they even perform their traditional dance with drums. This is a great opportunity for students to learn about the Japanese culture. It also encourages teachers to find partner schools from abroad. One of the 3rd grade teachers established a cultural partnership with a school in Russia, so a mail correspondence between each school started. This triggered interest in Russian culture and motivation to use English language for real life communication.

Table 1. *Context of the Study*

Grades	Hours per week	Materials (books, online resources, supplementary resources)	Cultural topics covered
3rd	10 hours (8 by the Turkish teacher and 2 by the foreign teacher)	Our Discovery Island 3 Winnie Flies Again Wallace and Gromit (A Grand Day Out) Fun for Starters Primary Dictionary	Traditional Lifestyle Christmas Mother's Day

In conclusion, the curriculum and the materials that it uses provide some intercultural references (especially in Our Discovery Island 3) that raise learners

awareness of the international culture, introduces some points of C2 and gives opportunities for the students to reflect on their native culture.

4.2 Analysis of the Teacher's Journal. During the course of the research, the researcher was observing her own lessons and experiences in the classroom and recording them in her Teacher's Journal. These entries were made during a period of five months, namely between October and March. There are 14 entries with different time intervals.

In the first entry that dates October 24, the researcher reports excitedly about the coming Halloween celebration, and was disappointed that her colleagues seemed to be reluctant to help or participate in any preparations. The only teacher who was eager to help was an American colleague. The observer concludes that:

> I think it is connected to the fact that Turkish people are not exposed to these cultural events and have no memories of celebrating Halloween when they were little. Thus, they don't want to do something that they feel neutral about.

The researcher also mentioned that a few days before Halloween there was another important holiday (Republic Day) for Turkish people, which was considered much more important.

However, the head of the department gave permission to decorate the hall with bats and a poster and to have a little celebration in the garden carving a Jack-o-lantern.

Figure 4. Carving Jack-o-Lantern in the School Garden

The next entry was made 10 days later after the celebration. The teacher reported that the children enjoyed wearing costumes, writing ghost stories and drawing spooky pictures that were later displayed on the wall in the corridor of the school. The principal of the school asked the gardener to choose a pumpkin from the ecological house of the school especially for the occasion. It was then carved to make a Jack-o-lantern by the teacher and the students. The researcher also distributed candies to the children and reported that students were excited and happy and their classroom teachers were supportive and helpful. The researcher mentioned that "I'm glad that Halloween turned into a whole school event that not only promoted intercultural exchange, but also made the children curious about it and triggered their creativity (through pictures or writing a story)."

The third journal entry was recorded 2 weeks later (November, 15). The researcher reported that the fact that Halloween was celebrated at the school was unique and that very few other schools get permission to do that.

She shared her idea of celebrating Thanksgiving with the administration and it was accepted. The teacher said: "since it was not connected with religion and carried a positive meaning of sharing and being grateful" the head of the department supported it. After explaining the main idea of giving thanks, she asked the learners if there was a Turkish holiday that was similar. They answered that there was Şükran bayram (şükran means 'gratitude', 'thankfulness'). Thus the teacher was able to link the cultures. This is how I - the teacher/researcher felt about other schools not being allowed to celebrate Halloween:

> This is the reality of this country. Although I respect the traditions and the rules of Turkey it is sad to see that when the whole world is aiming at diversity in cultures and more tolerance towards different beliefs, we still have such schools that try to "protect" their children from the influences outside their culture.

The fifth and sixth journal entries report that the teacher organized some Thanksgiving activities and made decorations for the classroom walls. I spent 2 class hours on this culture oriented topic. The objective of the lesson was to raise cultural awareness about this holiday and to introduce new vocabulary. Such vocabulary as: turkey, family dinner, thanksgiving, Mayflower, pilgrims, the Indians, harvest. The focus of the lesson was primarily on speaking (discussing the holiday and its origins) and writing (producing a Thanksgiving card).

Figure 5. Thanksgiving Posters

These activities were warmly welcomed by the children. Some students related Thanksgiving with Şükran bayramı which is also related with thanking. However, some of the students were confused as to what they should be grateful for. The researcher reported that if the tradition of celebrating Thanksgiving was happening every year the learners would be more aware of its meaning.

Entry number seven is recorded on December, 18. During that time the researcher taught a new song to the children combined with making a peanut butter sandwich. The song was called: "Peanut butter sandwich" and had a repetitive movements and chant like words. In order to consolidate the material, I asked for permission to make such sandwiches together with the students in the Ecological house which is situated on the premises of the school and is used for such purposes. I could observe that the students enjoyed it and were really excited about it. I also mentioned that the class that had 2

native children (whose mothers were American and Canadian) had a chance to learn more about the American culture from their peers.

The researcher stated that the curriculum had been updated and the first grade students had a new objective: each month they would learn about a different country. This decision was made by the Head office of all Foreign language departments. It started in December and would continue until the end of the academic year. Such change was said to go in line with the intensive language learning program. The elements to be covered included: flag of that country, traditional food, symbol of that country and famous people and\or songs characteristic of that country.

The eighth journal entry reported that the researcher interviewed one of the parents about teaching culture and received positive feedback (discussed in parents section). The teacher also expressed her positive emotions about including such cultural elements as teaching about the Beatles and Queen Elizabeth. While learning about the Queen of England the children were shown her picture and asked to design a crown for her. They also listened to a Beatles song (Here comes the sun) and a song by Pancake Manor about flying over London that introduced the main sightseeing in London (Big Ben, Buckingham Palace, Tower of London, London Eye, etc). The focus vocabulary was: queen, royal guard, Tower of London, London Eye, Big Ben, capital. The teacher used flashcards and other visuals. The objective of these 3 lessons was to raise cultural awareness. The students were very motivated during the class and some of them that had been to London shared their experiences.

Teacher journal entries number nine and ten talk about the researcher's experience in teaching the learners about Holland and Australia:

> We are studying about Holland this month and we have talked about what Dutch people like to do and eat. We watched a video and imitated Van Gogh's sunflowers. The children were excited and some even brought realia to school. For example, one boy brought postcards, museum tickets and Dutch shoes and we looked at them in class. They were very eager to learn about other cultures. The same was observed when we were studying Australia and the aboriginal art

and music, we listened to the sounds of the didgeridoo and imitated the rain dance. We also talked about myths of how panda lost its tail and about kangaroo and the wombat. It would be also nice for us to meet people from these countries but at this stage it is great that they get to know that the world is so big and exciting. Hopefully later they will learn more and want to visit these places. I also emphasized that people in these countries speak English, so if they go there they will be able to talk to them because they are learning English too.

The next Teacher's journal entry reports that the researcher had an interview with the principal of the school. More detailed information about it is given in Chapter 4.2.2.

Entry number twelve, made on March 16, described how I – teacher/researcher was excited about incorporating exotic musical instruments (karimba) into storytelling and teaching the learners about African tales. For example, the story of Why the Elephant has a long Trunk. First the learners listened to the story with the musical instrument, then they made masks of different animals and acted out a drama of the same story.

It is obvious that the new program of studying one country during a month has encouraged the teacher to prepare extra materials and by doing so motivated her. She researched more about the countries that they were focusing on and tried to incorporate various cultural elements in her teaching.

The same can be observed in the following journal entry, number thirteen, which was recorded on St Patrick's day. The teacher decided to do activities about this holiday. Even though she was not familiar with it herself, she asked her American and British colleagues to describe what activities children in their countries usually do and prepared some materials for the students. The activities included a short video about the holiday (a cartoon) and a discussion to activate their prior knowledge about it. She reported that only a few students recognized the symbols of the holiday, namely the leprecorn and the rainbow. However, some students did state that they heard something about this holiday before. The researcher reported "I was glad to see that they do pay attention to such details, be it from their visits abroad or from the films that they watch at home."

The last journal entry which was recorded at the end of March was about the researcher's observations during her Sewing club. A Sewing Club is an after school social activity club, that the children are free to choose to attend. Due to the nature of this club there were only girls from 3rd and 4th grades. It was focused on teaching the children how to sew, knit, crochet and design things. This was a task-based teaching approach where language was not the focus but a tool that served an objective of creating a project or a product. The students were highly motivated to learn to do these crafts that we later displayed around the school. I got a lot of positive feedback from the parents and the administration of the school. I was even asked to write a curriculum for the Club so that it can be opened in other schools.

One of such activities was doll-making. During the month of March, the girls from the club finished making their cloth dolls and presented them to the class.

Figure 6. Handmade dolls by students of the Do-It-Yourself Club

Figure 7. A student with her handmade doll

I asked them to choose the name and make up a story for the doll. While choosing their names and country of origin the learners preferred to use international names and different countries other than Turkey. The researcher believed that the learners were able to integrate their interest in international countries in their creative process.

In conclusion, the researcher/teacher's journal sheds light on how an English teacher was teaching, aiming at second language culture acquisition in young learners classes at a private school and how she was encouraged by the administration and supported by her colleagues to broaden her own knowledge of international holidays and some cultural elements from different countries. By doing so, she was motivated to find and prepare extra materials for children to be used in her lessons. The observations also show that the learners were very curious and motivated to learn about the global culture.

4.3. Teachers' Perceptions

In order to investigate the teachers' perceptions towards the inclusion of target cultural elements in language teaching, a questionnaire was implemented. It consisted of

12 questions which is analyzed below. There were 5 teachers who answered the survey. They were asked to fill in a questionnaire that contained 13 questions. Of these 5 teachers, one was male and the rest were female. Teacher 1 (T1) and T3 both had 12 years of experience, T2 is new and only had 1,5 years of teaching experience at the time that the survey took place. T4 had 3 years of experience and T5 had 2,5 years of experience. The average years of experience is 6,2 years.

While the 1st question was addressing the number of years of experience, in order to analyze the teacher's profile; the 2nd question asked the teachers to define the word culture.

The following statements were used by the teachers to define the term culture and its connection to language:

- Language is an integral part of culture;
- Culture is a system of beliefs, traditions, values and behavior;
- C is customs, traditions and a certain way of life in a particular group of individuals from a particular geographic area;
- C determines our behavior, relationships and the way we see the world;
- C is the symbol of people who live in the same place/country. C and language are connected to each other.

It is obvious that the language teachers were aware of what culture is and of its role in language teaching. They used such common terms as "system", "traditions", "group of people", from the "same area". They also agree that culture and language are closely connected.

The next question asked them to reflect on their own experiences while learning L2. They were asked to give examples and determine whether it was helpful in acquiring L2.

T1 wrote that she had an Australian teacher who taught them a lot about Australian culture, which helped her learn L2. T2 answered that she was mainly exposed to grammar based course books and, her experiences abroad (in the UK and US) exposed

her to the global culture. T3 left the question unanswered. T4 agreed that learning about the culture helped her learn L2, especially learning about the lifestyle and holidays. T5 answered that she has not been taught the culture of L2. One of the teachers did not answer the question. Summarizing their responses, we can see that the teachers who were exposed to culture in the process of acquiring L2 believe that it was beneficial for them.

The next question was the following: "As a teacher what do you think about the role of global culture in language learning?" All of the teachers responded that it is, indeed, important and one of them even used the word "essential". T2 also expressed the following: "culture teaching should be in every step of L2 teaching". T4 admitted that it facilitates acquisition. T3 response goes in line with the other teachers:

> I think that it is important for two reasons. Firstly, it exposes students to authentic situations in which native speakers use certain phrases and vocabulary. Secondly, it provides an interesting comparison to engage students and broaden their minds.

The fifth question asked the respondents to reflect on their teaching materials and answer the following: "Does your curriculum include pragmatics?" Four out of six teachers agreed that pragmatics is incorporated in the curriculum and one respondent said that the use of pragmatics is not so deep. The teachers said that the books provide some listening and reading materials which had some useful vocabulary and expressions. T2 reported that some materials have idiomatic phrases, which are very useful.

In order to get an insight into how the respondents see themselves teaching culture, the 6th question was asked. T1 said that she uses technology and asks students to interview their parents or neighbours to compare their own culture with the global culture. T2 said that teaching global culture is individual and should be "tailored according to the students' interests". This can include sports, music, films, and art. T3 reported that she reads traditional tales and songs, as well as introducing famous historical characters and organizing "British Tea" parties. T4 and T6 share similar ideas:

they introduce global culture by means of culinary traditions, art, and holidays that they later ask the students to present or write about. T5 said she uses flashcards, authentic materials, and prepared dialogues. The above responses show that all of the teachers have individual approach to teaching C2 and they use extra materials to supplement the curriculum.

Question 7 again asks the participants to reflect on their own learning experience. The question being: "When you yourself were a student did you participate in a cultural exchange or celebrate the national holidays of that country?" Two of the participants answered in the negative, the remaining 4 said that they did go abroad and celebrate some traditional holidays. The examples that they gave include: celebrating Christmas and Thanksgiving as well as observing some traditions and lifestyle of that country.

The year that this study was conducted, the school started using an intensive English education model. The following question asked the teachers to reflect on how effective was culture teaching in this program. Two of the participants did not answer the question, because they were teaching in the upper grades and they were not familiar with the new program that was only in the primary school. The other 4 teachers said that it was effective, and that the role of culture is very important and "goes hand in hand" and "helps to develop inquiry skills and facilitates learning".

The next question asked the teachers' opinion on whether teachers should raise students' awareness of the global culture's traditions and holidays. Almost all of the respondents agreed – four of them said that it is important because it gives them, "a sense of belonging to the global culture." However, one of the teachers expressed that the primary school students should not study culture in too much detail. Her argument was that it was too early for them to learn different cultures and that they will be able to do it in the future if they have the interest: "For primary, I think it is not obligatory, because if they want to learn about the global culture in the future, they will learn it. But it would be too early to teach them deeply. We might talk about it a little bit but not the whole lesson/term." She suggested that it should be very general because they will study them later anyway.

The purpose of the next question was to get more information on teachers' perceptions on which aspects (culinary traditions, national holidays, famous people, literature and artwork, geographical places) of the global culture they consider the most important. All of the teachers agree that these aspects (depend on the level and age of the students. One of the teachers thinks that it also depends on the personal interests of the students. Regarding the student age, the respondents believe that primary students should be taught: culinary traditions, national holidays, and geography. For secondary school teachers think that the focus should be on films, literature, art, and geography.

All of the respondents indicated that religion as a subject is unnecessary to include in the curriculum and two of them mentioned that politics is not important either. T3 stated "I think religion and politics are best avoided, especially in countries with a very different culture. If they are introduced, it should be done impartially and with no judgment of values."

In order to get a general view of the teachers on the current curriculum, they were asked whether it satisfies the students' needs in terms of cultural awareness. Four out of six respondents answered in a positive way. One of them gave the example of teaching students about 19th century London through Sherlock Holmes stories. Another teacher said that it surely applicable for young learners that have a bilingual education system, and the third teacher said that even though it does satisfy students' needs, it is limited due to the fact that some parents may not approve of some activities. Two of the respondents disagreed and said that the curriculum focuses more on grammar rather than cultural awareness.

Question 13 asked the teachers to add anything else that they consider relevant to the study. Two participants did not reply. One of the teachers believes that there should be more art, literature and geography added to the curriculum. A second teacher agreed that there should be more cultural exposure; a third responded that "lessons should be more like a social study of the global culture rather than English grammar lessons".

In conclusion, it was evident that the teachers expressed their positive perception towards culture learning and teaching. They admitted incorporating some cultural

elements in the curriculum. Four out of 6 respondents were satisfied with the current role of cultural materials in the curriculum while the other two expressed that the curriculum was not efficient in terms of second culture acquisition.

4.4 Administration's Perceptions. In order to collect the data from the administrative staff, the head of the foreign languages department and the principal of the school were interviewed with the help of an interpreter. The interviews were then transcribed and analyzed. The questionnaire is in Appendix D.

The first question of the interview aimed to get the Head teacher's opinion on the importance of global culture learning in ELT. Her answer was positive, she said that "Language and culture must be considered as one unit".

When asked about the curriculum and the teaching materials at this school, she responded that they met the needs of the students in acquiring the global culture. She also added that the "books provide sufficient reading and listening materials about the global culture".

As it was previously discussed, there are 3 types of cultures (See Chapter 2.1) that are considered in this study. The next question was addressing C1 which in this context is the Turkish language culture. The researcher asked whether C1 teaching was acceptable in ELT lessons. Answering this question, the Head of the Department pointed out that not only global culture but also native culture is important and they are compared in the classrooms.

The following question aimed at gathering her perspectives to holiday celebrations of the global culture. She emphasized that such exposure is necessary. Her belief was that "By celebrating these days we can make our students aware of all these cultural components".

The next question's aim was to find out what kind of international projects the school was involved in. According to the interview data, the school took part in different intercultural projects, such as "e-twining project about bullying". There was also a

cooperative project with a school in China. This data again mirrors the Principal's statement.

The final question of the interview dealt with the international teachers. The Head of the Department was asked to report on how the school benefits from having native and international teachers. She said that one of the teachers (the researcher) is "eager to celebrate these days at our school. She prepares some activities and visuals for the kids. She also decorates our bulletin boards to attract students' attention". Other English teachers were less enthusiastic about such activities, however they helped too. These statement shows that the native teachers were encouraged to prepare extra materials and activities that are connected with C2 teaching.

The interview with the principal of the school took place on the 6th of March 2014 and was recorded on an iPad. One of the teachers helped to translate. The following questions were discussed:

1. Do you think that teaching global culture is an important aspect of ELT?

2. Do you think the curriculum in a private ollege satisfies the students' needs in acquiring knowledge about the global culture?

3. What about C1? Should there be elements of native culture in the English lessons?

4. Do you think the textbooks provide sufficient materials on the global culture?

5. What is your position towards celebrations of such holidays as Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter and Valentine's day?

6. Is your personal opinion on this matter different from the school policy?

7. Do you feel pressure from parents and administration on this matter?

8. Do you support international projects? How many of these projects have been completed?

9. There are native and international teachers in our school. How do you make use of them in terms of culture in ELT?

First question of the interview was aimed to get general information about the role of culture in ELT. The principal conceded that it is essential to integrate culture, because "language without culture does not mean anything". She also added that:

> Our aim is not only to have one culture to explain to the kids but to teach the cultural heritage of the whole world. I believe that children are getting different cultures from their teachers and also by reading books.

Next question dealt with whether native culture should be included in ELT. The principal of the school stressed that the students in her school were from different cultural backgrounds, therefore it was important to help them learn about these differences and learn to live in harmony with each other. She said that:

> We are using the term "comparative education". In this comparative education it is important to show the children that they actually belong to different ethnical backgrounds and they need to understand those differences. For example, being honest, being ethical, is a point that every culture has....We are passing on the culture to the children because I do believe that we are world citizens. Children will respect the culture when they know it. If they don't know the culture they will not respect it and there will be no community. One of the most important problems to deal with is to teach them how to live in harmony with each other. In order to learn how to live together they have to learn about the culture. If they know it they can understand each other, if they can understand each other they can live together in harmony.

The next question dealt with the curriculum and how sufficient the cultural components are. The principal expressed her view that teachers should have more freedom to create their own lessons and integrate their own elements in them in order to encourage students' creativity. She said: "I think that schools should make their own curriculum. Because the teacher should use her creativity if you don't let that person use

their creativity and you are stuck with the set topics the child will not have a chance to use his/her creativity either." This statement correlates with the data observed by the researcher and with the information given by the teachers from the questionnaires. Many teachers give positive response to having to prepare their own materials and including extra-curricular activities.

Question number 5 addressed cultural holidays like Halloween, Christmas, Thanksgiving. The principal was asked whether in her opinion these special days should be celebrated at school. The answer was that the school has many international students and that is why such celebrations are important. However, she mentioned that, it requires some explanation to the Turkish parents. If is done properly, she claims, there would be no problem with such celebrations. She also mentioned that the school has foreign teachers that try to integrate their personal cultural knowledge and that the school supports them: "The foreign teachers try their best to make it happen. We support them. Teaching culture is important, yes."

The following question was asked in order to see if the Principal's personal belief is different from the school's perspective. According to the principal, it coincides with that of the school. She mentioned that she was raised in a multicultural environment and it makes her happy to work with people of different nationalities.

The 7th question referred to the parents and whether they expressed any concerns in terms of some cultural celebrations. The head of the school answered that the parents in the area where the school is located are mostly tolerant towards culture teaching. However, sometimes there may be a need to explain why the curriculum contains this or that element. She said the following:

> Our school has a different structure, families living around this area have respect to other cultures. But of course, there are some negative reactions among them. We just need to explain it in a proper way. Then they believe us and continue to work with us. Everybody has to accept that these children will be world citizens. They have to know the culture so that they can respect the others and coexist. If

you don't know something, you get scared, you don't understand and you react in a negative way.

The next question was about the international projects that the school participates in. The head of the school agreed that they are extremely important and gave examples of a few projects that were taking place in the school. She also acknowledged that such projects are a necessity in order to raise a "global citizen". Some of the examples that she mentioned were Green Peace organization. They focused on illegal hunting and polluting the sea. The idea behind these projects was to make children understand better what such organizations do and participate actively. The principal of the school also mentioned that the school is partners with a Japanese school and through this collaboration students can learn, for example, the reading culture of the Japanese, who read a lot. She also mentioned that from South Koreans we can learn about mathematics and science through such projects. "That is why they are important for me" she added.

The last question of the interview was: How do you make use of the foreign teachers in your school? The Principal of the school shared that one of the native teachers was teaching children about maps and different countries, which she really appreciated. She also expressed a wish that all teachers have a chance to "teach their native culture to the children". The way to ensure that, she added, would be by ensuring that the teachers stay at the same school and make a bond with the students throughout the years.

> As long as it is continuous, it gives better results: they will know the children, the children will know the teacher. My biggest wish is that the teachers stay longer at our school. There will be a bond between the teacher and the students. It is important to have that bond and this gives me great pleasure as the head of this school.

Summing up the information taken from these interviews, it was observed that the interviews with the principal of the school and the head of the department show the positive perceptions of school administration towards second culture teaching, specifically including cultural elements in the curriculum. Although the school's

administration was in favour of reinforcing C1 along with C2, native culture was not covered in the curriculum that much. Both the Head of the Department and the Principal shared their view that holiday celebrations promote C2 learning. The administration heads also mentioned that they considered the school's participation in international projects that promote intercultural exchange very important.

4.5 Perspectives of Parents

With the purpose of getting parents perceptions about the subject of this study, 93 parents were asked to take a survey. The parents of the first, second and third grade students were chosen randomly. The initial questions of the survey aimed at gaining demographic information. The age, sex, educational background, and profession information were summed up in the following way:

The following graph shows that 34 of the parents are male and 59 of the parents are female.

Demographics

■ Female ■ Male

34
37%
63%
59
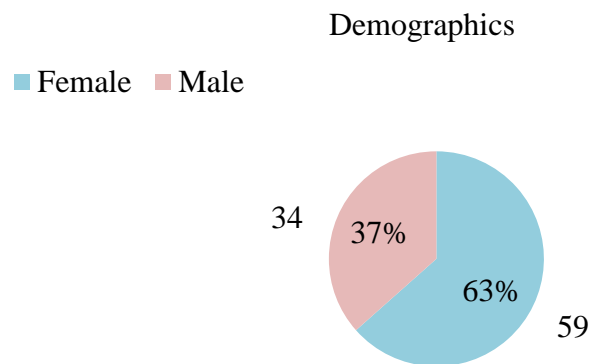
Figure 8. Demographics of the Parents

Among them there were 6 foreign parents, whose nationalities are: British, American, Bulgarian, Japanese, Spanish and Korean. The average age of participants was 40. In order to get an insight into the educational background of the parents a question about the degree was included. The following figure shows that most of the parents possess a university degree (56 parents), 25 parents have an MA degree and 10 have a PhD. This shows that the educational level of the respondents is quite high.
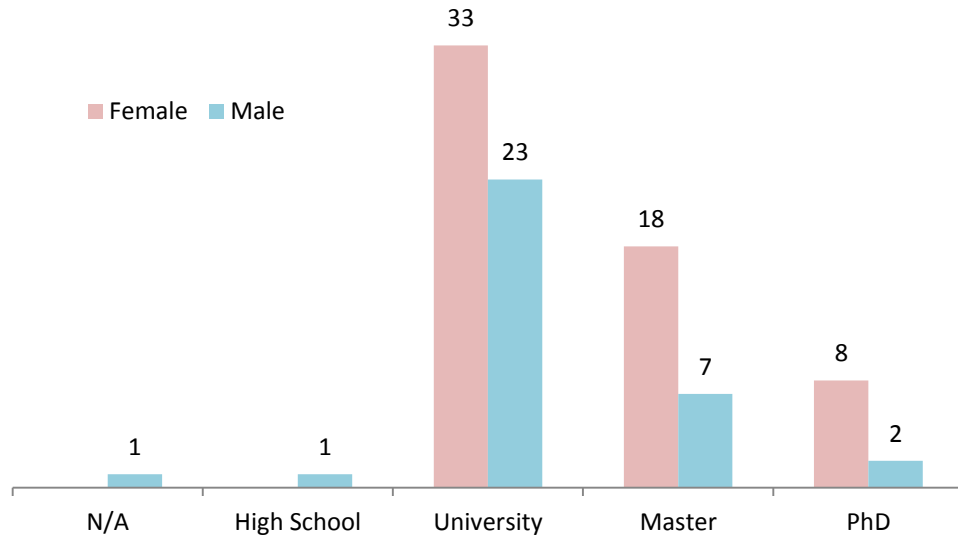
Figure 9. Educational Background of the Parents

Question 5 focused on the parents' current occupation. Three parents stated that they were stay at home parents. The rest of the parents (90) have various job titles, among which 16 are teachers, or professors at university.

The first 5 questions were focusing only on the demographic data of the respondents, while questions 6 to 13 aimed at collecting data on perspectives of culture and foreign language teaching.

Based on questions 6 and 7, 94% of the parents indicate that the role of culture in language is significant. One of the parents wrote: "To learn a foreign language actually means to learn that country's culture". Another parent explained: "I believe, it's one of the most enjoyable aspects of acquiring a new language and it helps to keep you motivated". Another parent added: "Culture gives life and meaning to learning a language". The similar view is shared by one more parent: "Language and culture are completing each other".

The rest 6% of the respondents expressed their view on this issue in these terms:

"I don't think there is a strong connection between language and culture".

"I don't think they are linked (language and culture)".

One of the parents wrote that he cannot give a straight answer to the question.

Question 9 asked the participants whether it was possible to use a foreign language effectively without the knowledge of culture. Only two parents answered negatively, saying that culture is not important in using the foreign language. The rest of the participants agree that to use a foreign language effectively one must know the culture of that language as well.

The answers of the parents

Everyday lifestyle of C2 should be in…	37
Food, art, music are important	32
Greetings and goodbyes need to be taught	14
Religion should be avoided	8
Celebrations are important	7
Proverbs need to be taught	4
Left the question unanswered	3
No need for cultural elements	3
Ethical values are important	2
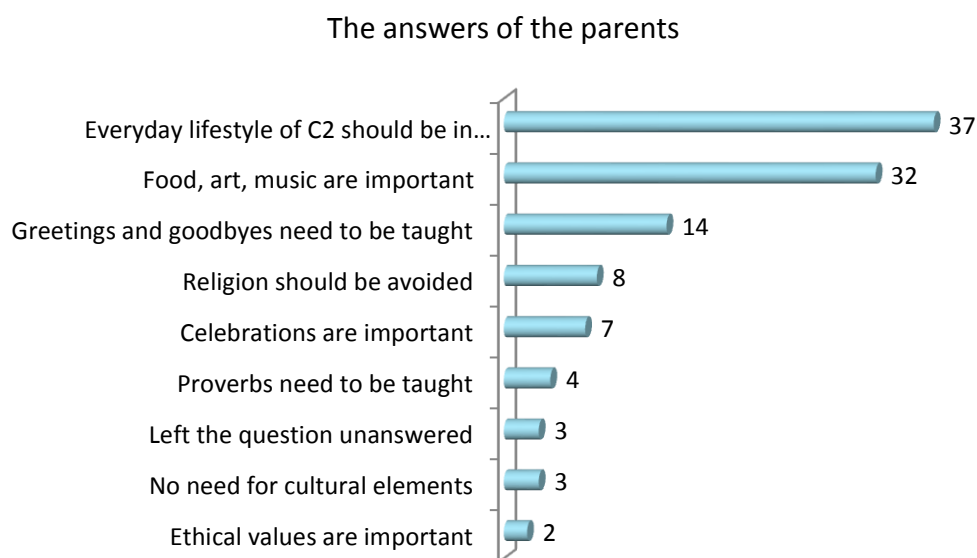
Figure 10. Which Cultural Elements Should be Taught?

When asked to write about their beliefs in terms of using cultural elements in language teaching, 3 of the parents left the question unanswered, and 3 other parents said that they do not think that cultural elements should be included. The rest of the parents (87) agree that such elements should be included. Among these answers 14 respondents said that such topics as greetings and goodbyes and introductions should be taught; 32 parents singled out such elements as food, art, music. Seven parents mentioned that celebrations such as birthdays, Halloween, Christmas and New Year are important. 4 parents wrote that set expressions and proverbs should be taught at school. 37 parents suggested that everyday lifestyle of the global culture is important and should be in the school curriculum. 2 parents mentioned ethical values. 8 of the parents stressed that such subjects as religion should be either avoided or not taught at all.

Question number 11 aimed at learning which celebrations the parents considered important. Two of the participants left no comment. The other answers included: 77 parents singled out birthdays and national and religious holidays, 3 parents wrote that all holidays are important, 1 parent (Japanese) answered that New Year and Bon (Japanese Buddhist custom to honor the spirits of one's ancestors) were important, 3 of the foreign parents mentioned Christmas and New Year, and 1 parent said that it depends on the culture and family.

The final question of the survey represented a chart of cultural elements that the participants were asked to rank from the most important (value 13) to the least important cultural element (value 1). The following figure shows the average of the rank obtained by each of the cultural elements:
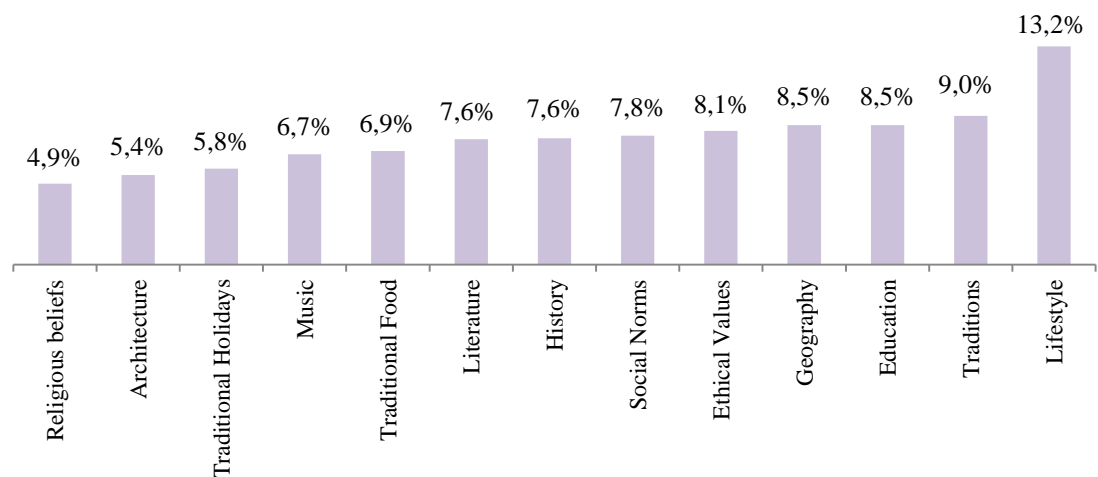
Figure 11. Ranking of Cultural Elements

We can see that the most significant cultural element, as stated by the respondents, is lifestyle. Among other important ones that are in the top 5 priorities are: traditions, education, geography, and ethical values. The elements that are considered least important are: traditional holidays, architecture and religious beliefs.

Overall, parents' perceptions regarding teaching cultural elements during language classes reveal that parents are in favor of including cultural elements in the school curriculum. Most of the parents agree that culture and language teaching are inseparable

and, therefore, in order to be able to communicate successfully in the foreign language one has to possess some cultural knowledge. According to the analysis of the participants' answers, such topics as lifestyle and traditions are considered the most important.

4.6. Learners' Perceptions. For the purpose of this study 6 third grade students were interviewed. The children that participated in the interviews were randomly chosen. Out of 6 students one is a boy, the rest are girls. Two of the girls have foreign mothers. Their ages are 10 and 11. They were asked the following questions:

    1. What cultural elements have you learned so far?

    2. Do you think you should learn about different cultures? Do you think it helps you learn English better? Can you give examples?

    3. What do you think about learning about foreign holidays like Easter, Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas? Or any others? How does it affect you and your learning?

    4. Please describe a foreign holiday that you celebrated at school and how you felt.

The first question of the questionnaire was asking the students to remember what cultural elements they learned. Most of them mentioned that they have learned about the holidays of the global culture. Among them these were mentioned: Halloween (mentioned by 5 students), Thanksgiving (mentioned by 3 students), Christmas (mentioned by 3 students), and Easter and New Year were mentioned by only one student. One of the students also mentioned Ramadan which is a Turkish holiday. Other responses include the food and clothes in different countries.

The second question asked students to reflect on whether learning about different cultures is necessary and if it helped them in learning the English language. All 6 respondents answered positively; 4 out of them agreed that it helped them to learn English; 3 of them said that they enjoyed learning about the culture; and 1 student expressed her desire to learn as much as possible about the American culture.

The third question was the following: "What do you think about learning about foreign holidays and how does it affect you and your learning and foreign language?" All of the respondents agreed that learning about foreign holidays is helpful, 3 of them said that it was also fun to learn English that way. One student said that it facilitates the learning and another student gave an example of learning grammar with the help of cultural content. Four out of six students said that they enjoyed learning about the holidays.

The fourth question was asking the students to describe a holiday that they celebrated at school and describe their emotions and feelings about it. The feedback to this question was very positive all the students remembered some holidays, such as, Halloween (4 students). Among the comments they mentioned that making masks, eating candies, singing songs and playing games was fun. Three of the respondents mentioned Christmas and they remembered making cards for their families and singing songs. One student mentioned Thanksgiving and making a card and writing what they were grateful for. One more student described New Year activities as a lot of fun. When the students described how they felt about these activities they used such adjectives as: fun, good, enjoyable, and happy.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

This research was done in Turkey, which is a monolingual country and many language learners have little opportunity to be exposed to the cultural elements of the language that they are learning. Bada (2000, p. 101), states that "the need for cultural literacy in ELT arises mainly from the fact that most language learners, not exposed to cultural elements of the society in question, seem to encounter significant hardship in communicating meaning to native speakers". Therefore, this study's purpose was to examine the role of global culture in a young learners' English as a foreign language setting; perceptions of teachers, school administration, learners and their parents on the role and importance of teaching the culture of the target language.

This chapter will discuss the findings in relation to the literature reviewed. In addition, the significance of the findings and further implications will be explained. In the end, further research points will be highlighted.

5.1. Discussion of Findings for Research Questions. The purpose of this study was to answer the following questions:

1. What is the role of global culture in a young learners' English as a foreign language setting?
2. What are the students' perceptions of learning about the cultures of English speaking countries?
3. What are the parents' perceptions of the role of culture in the language curriculum?
4. What are the school administration's perceptions of culture in the English language curriculum?
5. What are the English teachers' perceptions of culture in their curriculum?

In order to answer the first question of the research, I analyzed the curriculum and the teaching materials that were used by the teachers in this private school. The school used the authentic course books published in the UK, that provide various intercultural material. The learners have an opportunity to learn about the international culture (famous literary characters, countries and cities, holidays) and contrast it with their own

culture. There are writing tasks that require students to reflect on some C1 cultural issues (animals and festivals in their own country).

Although different celebrations of special days are not included in the curriculum, some celebrations take place in this private school. The teachers are encouraged to prepare additional cultural activities that are related with holidays (New Year, Halloween, and Thanksgiving) as well as posters and thematic bulletin boards. It would probably be more beneficial for the less experienced teachers to include such activities in the curriculum and describe all the steps in more detail. The analyzed curriculum, used very general terms that could be interpreted by the teachers very differently, the instructions on how this or that activity should be done were very vague. Since the school administration was supporting the teachers' initiative to celebrate some foreign holidays with their students, it could have been also reflected in the curriculum.

This private school participated in some international projects, however, they included only the upper grade students. It would have been more engaging and would foster better understanding of foreign cultures and language learning if there were more projects which involved younger learners as well. It can also be suggested that the curriculum includes more task-based learning. Young learners already have an opportunity to attend an English speaking DIY club, but only a few. There could be more task-based learning with cultural elements involved.

This private school is a prestigious one in an elite neighbourhood, with some of the foreign parents with mostly university degree and higher; it was expected to find that the parents' perceptions towards culture teaching in the young learners setting would be positive.

According to the results, the learners remember the celebrations of holidays and songs that happened at school. The interviews also show that students have positive expectations of learning about the global culture. They report feeling happy and having fun when learning about traditional songs and holidays.

During the time when the study was conducted, the researcher observed that learners were very enthusiastic about learning the global culture. She also observed that the teachers were not very enthusiastic about some traditional celebrations and including extra cultural elements in their teaching. This does not agree with the data that was

obtained from the questionnaires that they filled. In the beginning of the research some cultural elements were restricted (celebration of Christmas and Halloween and the related songs). However, at the time of data collection the school's administration, as well as the teachers reported their positive beliefs on teaching cultural competence to the students. As the study progressed that perception changed and the Principal of the school supported such events. This may have happened due to the fact that the program coordinator responsible for writing the curriculum has changed.

The results of the parents' perceptions analysis show that they have positive expectations towards teaching intercultural competence. Large number of parents (97.8 %) advocate the view that language and culture are inseparable, and that cultural knowledge is necessary for successful communication. They also share a view that some cultural elements should be included in the school curriculum. The results reveal such elements as, greetings, goodbyes, everyday expressions and proverbs, as well as some general knowledge of traditional holidays and events, such as Christmas, New Year, Birthday celebrations. We can see that the most significant cultural element, as stated by the respondents, is lifestyle. Among other important ones that are in the top 5 priorities are: traditions, education, geography, and ethical values. The elements that are considered least important are: traditional holidays, architecture and religious beliefs. Some parents also shared the view that not only the global culture should be discussed in the lessons, but that it should be compared with the learners' native culture as well.

It was significant for the purpose of this study to find out how the parents prioritize given cultural elements to understand their perceptions on culture teaching. The results show that the most significant cultural element is the lifestyle of the global culture and the least important element is the religious beliefs. This data is significant because the role of religion is very big in Turkey. Very few other schools are allowed to celebrate non-Turkish holidays. This data goes in line with the predictions that the researcher had at the beginning of the research. It was obvious that topics of religion and politics are very sensitive and should better be avoided. It may be because parents might believe that religion is a private matter between God and the individual.

Analysis of the English teachers' perceptions towards teaching culture shows that all of the teachers agree that culture teaching is a necessary component of language

learning. Most of them agree that the teaching materials that are used in the school curriculum contain some cultural elements. However, some teachers report that they are not sufficient. Three teachers suggest that culture teaching should start as early as primary school. The teachers shared their experience with the way they include cultural elements in their teaching. Their answers include: asking students to interview others to get new information about a cultural element, reading traditional tales and singing traditional songs, organizing English Tea parties, using authentic materials and flashcards, talking about culinary traditions and artworks.

The fourth question of this study focused on administrations' perceptions of culture in English language curriculum. Two of the school administrative staff were interviewed. The Head of the Foreign Languages Department and the Principal of the School both expressed their understanding of the importance of intercultural awareness teaching. They both agree that culture teaching should be included in language learning and is included in the school's curriculum. The Principal also shared her view that it is the school's goal to raise 'global citizens' that are culturally literate. She stressed that the students should learn about their own culture along with the culture of the target language and it is the teachers' job to transfer their knowledge to their students. The Principal emphasized that in order to develop learners' cultural awareness it was the school's policy to hire foreign teachers. Along with that the school initiated several culture exchange projects with schools in Japan and Korea. Both administrative staff report that the learning materials provide sufficient cultural content. Overall, it is obvious that the school administration is in favor of expanding students' cultural knowledge.

The final research question aimed at investigating the English teachers' perceptions towards integrating intercultural competence in their teaching. All the participants of the study showed great interest and support towards integrating cultural elements in the curriculum. They shared their beliefs that cultural self-awareness is an important part of language learning and gave examples of their own strategies on teaching it in their classrooms.

This study is in line with the statement of Rajabi (2012), who articulates that "the positive implications of including cultural associations of the target language into

instructional materials are largely known and accepted. This inclusion will nurture positive attitudes towards the target language, hence facilitating its acquisition" (p. 705). According to the results of this study teachers and parents agree that inclusion of cultural elements in language teaching is necessary and motivating for the learners. During the interviews, learners as well expressed their positive beliefs towards intercultural language learning.

5.2. Theoretical and Pedagogical Implications. The findings of this study revealed that the school's administration is in favor of not only C2 (British and American culture) teaching but also developing intercultural awareness. By hiring foreign teachers with different cultural background, the administration of the school hopes to 'raise global citizens' that possess the knowledge of all three types of culture: their native one and the global culture. This position goes in line with Zohrabi and Shah study where they voiced a view that "the English language has acquired a new cultural role" (2009, p. 277).

As previously discussed, the SLA theory is tightly connected with ELT. Spackman stresses that "culture and language are bound together so tightly that learning a new language requires learning a new culture and thus a new way of viewing the world" (2008, p. 3). This goes in line with the perceptions of the teachers and the school administration, who agree that cultural elements are vital in teaching a foreign language. The acculturation process as it was mentioned in the previous chapters, is a complex one and consists of several stages. It is important that a learner goes through at least three stages to be able to acquire the foreign language. As Brown says, "Stage three may provide not only the optimal distance, but the optimal cognitive and affective tension to produce the necessary pressure to acquire the language" (1980, p. 161). That is why this study focused on the role of culture in the *young* learners setting.

Diaz-Rico and Weed (2007): "to acculturate is to adapt to a second culture without necessarily giving up one's first culture" (p. 246). The results go in line with this statement, the learners are encouraged to make comparisons between C1 and C2.

Since this study investigated the context of a private school in Turkey, it is worth mentioning that it agrees with Önalan's research (2005). He reported that teachers and students at a university in Turkey expressed positive expectations of teaching culture.

Considering the data gathered, not only university students and teachers agree on that, but also the participants of this study share the same view. However, Önalan states, that even though teachers report that culture is an important element, it only got to number 9 in their ranking. This goes in line with the data found in the teacher's journal data. The researcher observed that the teachers seemed to be reluctant to use more cultural materials then what was provided in the curriculum. Moreover, Önalan suggests that the teachers see culture as an additional motivational tool and not a separate goal. He reports that the 'EFL teachers' positive attitudes towards culture did not necessarily bring about the prioritization in their instruction' (2005, p. 229).

To promote more culture related activities in the classroom, some changes in the school's curriculum should be made. The results show that the administration and the teachers are eager to include celebrations and extra activities that would enable the young learners to acquire C2; therefore, the curriculum should reflect that and should provide teachers with guidance on how to do it, and allocate the time when it should be done. The present curriculum leaves no space for any extracurricular activities. The Do It Yourself Club that implements task-based teaching could be enlarged to provide opportunities for more learners to enter it. Some seminars focused on teaching culture to the young learners could be organized. It would especially be helpful for the teachers with little experience, and could be a great platform for the more experienced teachers to share their knowledge and ideas based on previous practices.

The research revealed that the school is participating in some international projects, but very few children can participate in them. Finding more ways to carry out intercultural exchange may foster more positive understanding of cultural practices.

The administration of the school mentioned that the teachers are encouraged to prepare materials that foster cultural awareness and require students compare different cultures. The following activities could be used to promote this: making drama with characters from different countries, accenting the differences in behavior that may be present; preparing posters about everyday activities (for example, Breakfast In Turkey vs Breakfast In England); inviting foreign guests and ask the learners to interview their guests with the task of finding 5 differences between their cultures; connecting to

classrooms in other parts of the world via Skype or other platforms to encourage communication with other English language learners.

Due to the scarcity of research on young learners' perceptions towards culture teaching, the current study may provide valuable data for future investigation on teaching young learners in Turkey. There are many online sources that provide valuable information on culture teaching. Some of them are:

http://busyteacher.org/7080-top-10-ways-to-teach-culture.html - a website that offers ideas on how to integrate cultural topics in classroom environment.

https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/making-culture-happen-english-language-classroom - an article by Barry Tomalin on issues of teaching culture and some discussions by other English teachers around the world.

As a researcher, during the study, I was reflecting my thoughts and ideas in my blog: http://marinascorners.weebly.com/ The photos with descriptions of some of the activities that we did with my students could be used as an example for preparing some culture themed activities.

5.3. Conclusions. This interview and questionnaire data show that teachers, parents, learners and school's administration had positive perspectives on intercultural competence teaching. The teachers are encouraged to include cultural elements in their lessons and share their cultural background with the students. The school promotes not only C2 but also C1 and C3; that is, the L2 culture along with the native culture and the global culture. It is the school's policy to raise the 'global citizens'. The teachers display positive perspectives towards integration of intercultural competence in ELT. Most of the teachers suggest that culture teaching should start as early as primary school. The parents share a similar view. They claim that culture plays a crucial role in language teaching and most of them responded that effective communication is not possible without the knowledge of the global culture. The most important cultural elements according to the survey are lifestyle and traditions. The analysis of the teacher's journal also showed that culture teaching plays a great role in motivating the students and the

teachers. The learners reported that learning traditional songs and participating in traditional holidays was engaging and motivating.

5.4. Recommendations. The results of this study reflect only one single study case in the setting of a private school in an elite neighbourhood. Replication of this study in similar schools should be conducted to get a fuller perspective on how culture teaching is being approached in the context of young learners. It would be interesting to compare the perceptions of teachers/parents of government schools and private schools in order to understand whether the government is affecting the way cultural elements are being taught in this country.

In further research, a longitudinal study can be conducted to collect more data on the role of culture in ELT. In further research, more learners could be interviewed. It would also be useful to observe culture themed lessons prepared by other English teachers. The native and the Turkish teachers may have a different perspective on how culture should be taught, which could be observed through their lessons.

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APPENDICES

A: Questionnaire for the Parents

Research on Cultural Elements That Affect Language Learning

All information below will be used for research purpose only. Personal information will be held confidential

1. Name: _____

2. Age: _____

3. Sex: _____   Country of origin: _____

4. Education:_____

5. Occupation: _____

6. Have you been abroad? If yes, where?   _____
_____

7. What do you think is the connection between language and culture?
_____
_____
_____

8. What's the role of culture in learning a language?
_____
_____
_____

9. Is it possible to use a foreign language effectively without the knowledge of culture?

_____
_____
_____

10. Should there be cultural elements in foreign language teaching? If yes, which ones? Why?

_____

_____

_____

_____

11.   Which   celebrations   are   important   for   you?   Why?

_____

_____

_____

12. Please number the following cultural elements in order of significance in language learning classrooms.

Topic	1 being the most significant 13 being the least significant
Geography	
Traditional food	
Traditional holidays	
Ethical Values	
History	

Social norms	
Literature	
Traditions	
Lifestyle	
Education	
Music	
Religious beliefs	
Architecture	

Thank you for your contribution to my research!

B: Questionnaire for the Teachers

1.   How long have you been teaching?

2.   Please define culture. How does it relate to language?

3.   When you were learning English (as a foreign language) were you taught the global culture? What specifically? If yes, how did it help you learn the English language?

4.   As a teacher what do you think about the role of global culture in language teaching?

5.   Does your curriculum include pragmatics.

6.   How do you teach global culture?

7.   When you were a student yourself did you participate in a cultural exchange or celebrate national holidays of that country? If yes which ones?

8.   In the view of the new bilingual program, what is the role of culture from your point of view?

9.   Do you think Teachers should raise students' awareness of the gloabl culture's traditions and holidays?

10.   Which aspects of the global culture would you name as the most important? (culinary traditions, national holidays, famous people or films, literature and art works, geographical places)

11.   Which aspects of the culture would you think are unnecessary for the students? (religious holidays, food, literature)

12.   Do you think that the current curriculum satisfies students' needs in terms of cultural awareness?

13. Would you like to add anything? Is there anything that you would have liked to change in the present curriculum in connection with what we have been talking about?

C: Questionnaire for the Administrative Staff

Questions for the Head of the Foreign Languages Department and the Principal

Date:_____2014

1.   Do you think that teaching global culture is an important aspect of ELT?

2.   Do you think the curriculum in BJK College satisfies the students' needs in acquiring knowledge about the global culture?

3.   What about C1? Should there be elements of native culture in the English lessons?

4.   Do you think the textbooks provide sufficient materials on the global culture?

5.   What is your position towards celebrations of such holidays as Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter and Valentine's day?

6.   Is your personal opinion on this matter different from the school policy?

7.   Do you feel pressure from parents and administration on this matter?

8.   Do you support international projects? How many of these projects have been completed?

9.   There are native and international teachers in our school. How do you make use of them in terms of culture in ELT?

D: Extracts from Our Discovery Island 3 (Teacher's book)

E: Extracts from the Our Discovery Island 3 (Teacher's book)

ABBREVIATIONS

L1: First language of the learner

L2: Second language or target language (English language in this case)

C1: Native culture (Turkish)

C2: L2 Culture (British, American)

T: Teacher

S: Student

TPR: Total Physical Response

CLIL: Content and Language Integrated Learning