

**T.C.
ERCIYES ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI
ANABİLİM DALI**

**İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI BÖLÜMÜNDE ÖĞRENİM
GÖREN ÖĞRENCİLERİN HEDEF KÜLTÜR VE
ÖĞRETİMİNE DAİR ALGILARI**

**Hazırlayan
Asiye DOĞAN UÇAR**

**Danışman
Yrd. Doç. Dr. Seniye VURAL**

Yüksek Lisans Tezi

**Haziran 2016
KAYSERİ**

**T.C.
ERCIYES UNIVERSITY
SOCIAL SCIENCES INSTITUTE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
DEPARTMENT**

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE STUDENTS'
PERCEPTIONS OF TARGET CULTURE AND ITS
TEACHING**

**By
Asiye DOĞAN UÇAR**

**Supervisor
Assist. Prof. Dr. Seniye VURAL**

A Master's Thesis

**June 2016
KAYSERİ**

**T.C.
ERCIYES UNIVERSITY
SOCIAL SCIENCES INSTITUTE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
DEPARTMENT**

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE STUDENTS'
PERCEPTIONS OF TARGET CULTURE AND ITS
TEACHING**

(A Master's Thesis)

**By
Asiye DOĞAN UÇAR**

**Supervisor
Assist. Prof. Dr. Seniye VURAL**

**JUNE 2016
KAYSERİ**

BİLİMSEL ETİĞE UYGUNLUK

Bu çalışmadaki tüm bilgilerin, akademik ve etik kurallara uygun bir şekilde elde edildiğini beyan ederim. Aynı zamanda bu kural ve davranışların gerektirdiği gibi, bu çalışmanın özünde olmayan tüm materyal ve sonuçları tam olarak aktardığımı ve referans gösterdiğimi belirtirim.

Asiye DOĞAN UÇAR



YÖNERGEYE UYGUNLUK SAYFASI

“English Language and Literature Students’ Perceptions of Target Culture and Its Teaching” adlı Yüksek Lisans tezi, Erciyes Üniversitesi Lisansüstü Tez Önerisi ve Tez Yazma Yönergesi’ne uygun olarak hazırlanmıştır.

Hazırlayan

Asiye DOĞAN UÇAR

Danışman

Yrd.Doç. Dr. Seniye VURAL

İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı A.B.D. Başkanı

Doç. Dr. Melih KARAKUZU

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Seniye VURAL danışmanlığında Asiye DOĞAN UÇAR tarafından hazırlanan “English Language and Literature Students’ Perceptions of Target Culture and Its Teaching” adlı bu çalışma jürimiz tarafından Erciyes Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü **İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı** Anabilim Dalı’nda yüksek lisans tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

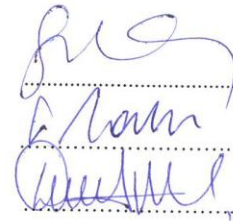
20/06/2016

JÜRİ

Danışman : Yrd. Doç. Dr. Seniye VURAL

Üye : Doç. Dr. İsmail ÇAKIR

Üye : Yrd. Doç. Dr. Davut AKTAŞ



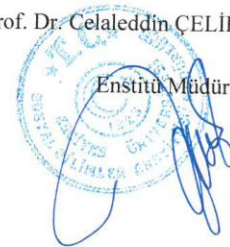
ONAY:

Bu tezin kabulü Enstitü Yönetim Kurulunun 14/7/2016 tarih ve 15 sayılı kararı ile onaylanmıştır.

14.7.2016

Prof. Dr. Celaleddin CELİK

Enstitü Müdürü



*To my mother and daughter,
With love and gratitude*



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing a thesis is a time-consuming task for many people, but it took a lot longer in my case. I am so glad that it is finally ready and I want to take this opportunity to thank the people who have made it possible with their contributions.

First of all, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my thesis supervisor, Asst. Prof. Dr. Seniye Vural for her much appreciated guidance and support. She has been more than an academic consultant for me. I would also like to thank Assoc. Prof. Dr. Doğan Bulut and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Adem Sultan Turanlı, who have always been a source of inspiration and advice during my studies and career.

I should also thank my committee members, Assoc. Prof. Dr. İsmail Çakır and Asst. Prof. Dr. Davut Aktaş, for their time and valuable feedback. I would also like to acknowledge my debt to Res. Asst. Emre Toprak for his invaluable assistance with the statistical analysis of this thesis. My thanks also go to Asst. Prof. Dr. Hatice Eşberk, Ins. Ahmet İpşirli, Ins. Pelin İrgin and Ins. Nilgün Karsan, who helped with the administration of the research instrument, and all 1st and 4th year students of Erciyes University, Department of English Language and Literature, who completed it.

I owe additional thanks to my dearest friends, colleagues and MA classmates, Işıl Özpoyraz, Yasemin Sağlık Okur and Zübeyde Savaş, who witnessed and brightened every single minute of this journey. I am also grateful to my beloved friends and colleagues, Erhan Tan, Fevziye K. Aslan, Gülşah G. Akkaş, Gülşah Demir, Mehtap Akpınar, Merve Ertaştan and Mustafa Torun, who have always been there whenever I needed their support.

Last but not least, I would like express my deepest gratitude to my parents, Sahibe and Hasan Doğan; my brothers, İhsan and Niyazi Doğan; my husband, Emre Uçar and my little daughter, yet biggest joy, Zeynep Dila Uçar, for their patience and encouragement.

İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI BÖLÜMÜNDE ÖĞRENİM GÖREN ÖĞRENCİLERİN HEDEF KÜLTÜR VE ÖĞRETİMİNE DAİR ALGILARI

Asiye Doğan Uçar

Erciyes Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü
Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Haziran 2016
Danışman: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Seniye VURAL

ÖZET

Günümüz dil öğrencilerinin etkili kültürler arası iletişim becerilerine sahip olmaları beklendiğinden, kültürel öğelerin yabancı dil sınıflarına daha çok dâhil edilmesinin faydaları artık genel kabul görmüştür. Dolayısıyla, bu bütünleşmenin farklı boyutlarını inceleyen araştırmalar yaygınlaşmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın alana temel katkısı, az çalışılmış bir grup öğrencinin, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı (İDE) öğrencilerinin kültür algıları üzerine olmasıdır. Özelleştirmek gerekirse, bu çalışma Erciyes Üniversitesi İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı bölümünde okuyan öğrencilerin hedef kültür ve öğretimine dair algılarını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Veriler 81 birinci sınıf ve 82 dördüncü sınıf öğrencisi tarafından doldurulan bir anket ve her gruptan beşer öğrenciyle yapılan yarı yapılandırılmış mülakatlar yoluyla toplanmıştır. Anketlerden elde edilen nicel veriler SPSS 22.0 kullanılarak, mülakatlardan elde edilen nitel veriler ise içerik analizi yoluyla analiz edilmiştir.

Sonuç olarak her iki grup öğrencinin de İngiliz/Amerikan kültürü olarak belirledikleri hedef kültüre ve bu kültürle ait öğelerin dil derslerine dahil edilmesine dair tutumlarının olumlu olduğu bulunmuştur. Bununla birlikte, dördüncü sınıf öğrencilerinin birinci sınıf öğrencilerine göre daha kültürlerarası bir duruş sergiledikleri ve daha yüksek özyeterlik algılarına sahip oldukları görülmüştür. Ayrıca, her iki grubun en çok önemi hedef kültüre ait ‘değerler, inanışlar ve tutumlar’ a atfettiği ve kendilerini en çok bu konuda bilgili gördükleri ortaya çıkmıştır. Bölümlerinin kültürel bilgilerine katkısı hususunda olumlu algılara sahip olan her iki grup öğrencisinde daha fazlasını talep ederek, pek çok önerilerde buldukları görülmüştür. Bu öneriler ve çalışmanın diğer bulguları göz önüne alınarak, bazı pedagojik çıkarımlar yapılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dil öğretiminde kültür, hedef kültüre dair öğrenci algıları, kültürel farkındalık, kültürlerarası yeterlik, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümü

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF TARGET CULTURE AND ITS TEACHING

Doğan Uçar, Asiye

Erciyes University, Institute of Social Sciences

Master's Thesis, June, 2016

Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. Seniye Vural

ABSTRACT

It is now widely accepted that incorporation of more cultural elements into foreign language classes bring considerable benefits since today's language learners are expected to have effective intercultural communication skills. Therefore, there is a growing body of research attempting to explore various aspects related to this envisioned integration. The major contribution of this study lies in its examination of culture perceptions of a less-studied group of students, English Language and Literature (ELL) students. More specifically, the present study aimed at investigating how students studying at the Department of English Language and Literature, Erciyes University, perceive target culture and its teaching in their departments. Data were collected via a questionnaire completed by 81 first year and 82 fourth year students and semi structured interviews carried out with five participants from each group. The quantitative data from the questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS 22.0, (Statistical Package of Social Sciences), and the qualitative data from the interviews were analysed through content analysis.

The findings revealed that both groups had positive attitudes towards the target culture, which they identified as British/American culture, and the incorporation of it into language education. On the other hand, fourth year students were also found to maintain a more intercultural stance and have higher self-efficacy beliefs regarding their knowledge about the target culture. It was also found that both groups attributed the greatest importance to 'values, beliefs and attitudes' of the target culture, and they also thought they knew about this aspect more than the others. Both groups had positive perceptions of the contribution their departments made to their cultural knowledge, but still requested more and made many suggestions. Based on these suggestions, and other findings of the study, several pedagogical implications were drawn concerning culture instruction in ELL departments and language teaching.

Key Words: Culture in language teaching, students' perceptions of target culture, cultural awareness, intercultural competence, Department of English Language and Literature

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BİLİMSEL ETİĞE UYGUNLUK	i
YÖNERGEYE UYGUNLUK SAYFASI	ii
ONAY	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
ÖZET	vi
ABSTRACT	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xii
LIST OF TABLES	xiii
LIST OF FIGURES	xv

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction	1
1.2. Background to the Study	2
1.3. Statement of the Problem	5
1.4. Purpose of the Study	6
1.5. Research Questions	7
1.6. Significance of the Study	8
1.7. Conclusion	8

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction	9
2.2. The Definition of Culture.....	9

2.3. Culture and Language	10
2.4. Culture in Language Teaching and Learning.....	14
2.5. Culture in ELL Departments	24
2.6. Studies on Students' Attitudes and Perceptions on Culture and Language Learning in the Turkish Context.....	27
2.7. Studies on Teachers' Attitudes and Perceptions	34
2.8. Studies on Integration of Culture into Language Classes	39
2.9. Conclusion	43

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction	44
3.2. Participants and Setting.....	45
3.3. Research Design.....	48
3.4. Instruments.....	48
3.4.1. Target Culture Perception Questionnaire.....	48
3.4.1.1. Piloting of the Questionnaire	49
3.4.2. Semi-structured Interviews	50
3.4.2.1. Piloting the Interviews	51
3.5. Data Collection Procedure	51
3.6. Data Analysis	51
3.7. Conclusion	53

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

4.1. Introduction	54
4.2. ELL Students' Perceptions of Incorporating Cultural Elements into Language Learning/Teaching	55
4.3. Culture/Cultures to Be Incorporated into Language Learning/Teaching.....	61
4.4. ELL Students' Perceptions of the Target Culture	64
4.4.1. ELL Students' Attitude towards the Target Culture	65
4.4.2. Perceptions of the Importance ELL Students Attribute to Certain Aspects of the Target Culture	76
4.4.3. Perceptions of the Information ELL Students Have About Certain Aspects of the Target Culture	80
4.4.4. ELL Students' Perceptions of Target Culture Teaching Practices in Their Departments	85
4.4.5. ELL Students' Perceptions of Their Own Practices Related to the Target Culture	93
4.5. Differences between the Perceptions of 1 st Year and 4 th Year Students	98
4.6. Conclusion	102

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1. Introduction	103
5.2. ELL Students' Perceptions of Incorporating Cultural Elements in Language Learning/Teaching	103
5.3. Cultures to Be Incorporated into Language Learning/Teaching.....	105
5.4. ELL Students' Perceptions of the Target Culture	107
5.4.1. ELL Students' Attitude towards the Target Culture	107
5.4.2. Perceptions of the Importance ELL Students Attribute to Certain Aspects of the Target Culture	112

5.4.3. Perceptions of the Information ELL Students Have about Certain Aspects of the Target Culture	113
5.4.4. ELL Students' Perceptions of Target Culture Teaching Practices in Their Departments	114
5.4.5. ELL Students' Perceptions of Their Own Practices Related to the Target Culture	119
5.5. Pedagogical Implications of the Study.....	120
5.6. Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Further Studies	123
REFERENCES.....	124
APPENDIX A: TARGET CULTURE PERCEPTION QUESTIONNAIRE	133
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....	139
APPENDIX C: CURRICULUM VITAE.....	140

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACTFL	: American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
CEFR	: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment
CLT	: Communicative Language Teaching
C1	: Native Culture
C2	: Second Culture
EFL	: English as a Foreign Language
ELL	: English Language and Literature
ELT	: English Language Teaching
EU	: The European Union
LCE	: Language and culture exchange
L1	: First Language
L2	: Second Language
L3	: Third Language
MIT	: Massachusetts Institute of Technology
SPSS	: Statistical Package of Social Sciences

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.	Age distribution of the participants	45
Table 2.	Gender distribution of the participants	45
Table 3.	The time the participants spent learning English.....	46
Table 4.	The participants' experience abroad.....	46
Table 5.	General characteristics of the interviewees	47
Table 6.	Incorporating cultural elements in language learning/teaching.....	55
Table 7.	Main reactions when provided with cultural information	57
Table 8.	The main aim of presenting cultural information	58
Table 9.	Perceptions of advantages of learning cultural information	59
Table 10.	Advantages of learning cultural information	60
Table 11.	Target culture perceptions	62
Table 12.	Cultures to be incorporated.....	63
Table 13.	Willingness to learn more about British/American culture	65
Table 14.	Reasons to learn more about British/American culture	66
Table 15.	Cultural information as background information	67
Table 16.	Reasons not to learn more about British/American culture.....	68
Table 17.	Perceptions of the disadvantages of learning about British/ American culture.....	69
Table 18.	Disadvantages of learning about British/ American culture.....	70
Table 19.	Perceptions of a more positive attitude compared to other learners of English.....	71
Table 20.	Perceptions of interest and enjoyment during culture teaching.....	73
Table 21.	Perceptions of negative ideas about the target culture.....	74
Table 22.	Perceptions of instructors' attitudes towards the target culture.....	75
Table 23.	The importance ELL students attribute to certain aspects of the target culture	77

Table 24.	Rank order of importance attributed to certain aspects of the target culture	79
Table 25.	Perceptions of knowledge on certain aspects of the target culture	80
Table 26.	Rank Order of Knowledge on Certain Aspects of the Target Culture	82
Table 27.	Perceptions of needs, challenges and cultural competence	83
Table 28.	Perceptions of a bigger need compared to other learners of English.....	84
Table 29.	The most significant source of knowledge about British/American culture	85
Table 30.	Teaching about British/American culture.....	87
Table 31.	Perceptions of the contribution of the department.....	89
Table 32.	1 st year students' suggestions.....	90
Table 33.	4 th year students' suggestions	91
Table 34.	1 st year students' perceptions on classes with cultural content.....	93
Table 35.	4 th year students' perceptions on classes with cultural content	93
Table 36.	1 st year students' perceptions of activities outside school	94
Table 37.	4 th year students' perceptions of activities outside school.....	96
Table 38.	Perceptions of personal practices.....	97
Table 39.	Differences between 1 st and 4 th year students' perceptions of advantages of learning cultural information	98
Table 40.	Differences between 1 st and 4 th year students' perceptions of target culture	99
Table 41.	Differences between 1 st and 4 th year students' perceptions of reasons to learn more about British/American culture	99
Table 42.	Differences between 1 st and 4 th year students' perceptions of disadvantages of learning about British/American culture.....	99
Table 43.	Differences between 1 st and 4 th year students' perceptions of the importance they attribute to certain aspects of the target culture	100
Table 44.	Differences between 1 st and 4 th year students' perceptions of their knowledge on certain aspects of the target culture	100
Table 45.	Likert items yielding significant differences	101

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Factors in intercultural communication 18



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Those who know many languages live as many lives as the languages they know
Czech Proverb

1. 1. Introduction

Today, an increasing number of people need to interact with speakers of other languages, and English seems to be their common language. According to a recent report by the British Council, *The English Effect* (2013), English is spoken by 1.75 billion people worldwide, which is almost equal to a quarter of the world's population, and the people who speak English as a second or foreign language outnumbered its native speakers long ago. This widespread use of English as the *lingua franca* of international communication has considerably increased the importance placed upon teaching English over the years. With more opportunities for travel and interaction with people of other cultures, there is a growing need for improving language learners' communicative competence. In this respect, the role of culture, an unchanging component of language teaching, has become more important than it ever was.

Language and culture are, without a doubt, inseparable. In his highly quoted words, Brown (1994) describes the strong bond between language and culture as follows: "A language is a part of a culture and a culture is a part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture. The acquisition of a second language, except for specialized, instrumental acquisition, is also the acquisition of a second culture" (p. 165). Therefore, it is no surprise that in various fields studying human culture, such as sociology, anthropology or cultural studies, language has been a key area of research, and likewise fields of language education, linguistics or literature have always taken a deep interest in cultural issues.

The present study is also based on the complex intersection of language and culture and attempts to shed light on target culture perceptions of a group of English Language and Literature students in Turkey, an “expanding circle” country in Kachru’s (1985) terms, where English is spoken as a foreign language. This chapter aims to provide a brief background to the study focusing mainly on the current perspectives on the issue. The purpose of the study leading to the research questions, and the significance of the study will also be presented.

1.2. Background to the Study

As Kramsch (2006) puts it, culture has always been a part of language teaching. Until World War II, it was seen “as the literate or humanities component of language study” and later, especially with the communicative theory becoming prominent, “it became synonymous with the way of life and everyday behaviors of members of speech communities, bound together by common experiences, memories and aspirations” (p. 11). Therefore, it became more inclusive and pragmatic. With a new emphasis on successful communication, research started to focus more and more on what is needed to develop learners’ communicative competence in the target language and the target language culture proved to be a major source. Lately, more specific terms such as cultural awareness, cultural competence, and intercultural competence have emerged, responding to the dramatic increase in the possibilities of interaction and travel among people of various nations in our globalizing world. In this sense, it is obvious that the place of culture in language education has been questioned by various researchers around the world for more than half a century (e.g., Brown, 1994; Byram, 1997, 2012; Chastain, 1971; Kramsch, 1998, 2002, 2006; Nostrand, 1967; Risager, 2006; Seelye, 1968) and more recently in Turkey (e.g., Alptekin, 2002, 2006; Arıkan, 2011, Atay, 2005; Atay et al, 2009a, 2009b; Bayyurt, 2006, 2013; Bektaş-Çetinkaya, 2013, 2014; Çakır, 2006, 2011; Hismanoğlu, 2011).

A general consensus on the benefits of incorporation of culture has emerged thanks to this growing body of research, and this has been reflected in language teaching materials, as well as the curricula and national standards of many countries. ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) first published their document *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century* in 1996 and later revised their standards and published *World-Readiness Standards for*

Learning Languages (The National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). On the official ACTFL website, the rationale behind the addition of the term “world-readiness” is explained as “learners who add another language and culture to their preparation are not only college- and career-ready, but are also world-ready”. This sentence clearly illustrates the new role of language instruction as preparing our students for the challenges of our globalized world, not only by teaching them a language but also its culture. The term culture is also frequently used in the five goals of language instruction and their descriptors provided on the website, as listed below:

- Communication: Communicate effectively in more than one language in order to function in a variety of situations and for multiple purposes.
- Cultures: Interact with cultural competence and understanding.
- Connections: Connect with other disciplines and acquire information and diverse perspectives in order to use the language to function in academic and career related situations.
- Comparisons: Develop insight into the nature of language and culture in order to interact with cultural competence.
- Communities: Communicate and interact with cultural competence in order to participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world.

(<http://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/World-ReadinessStandardsforLearningLanguages.pdf>)

Another language policy document which uses the word ‘culture’ frequently with the word ‘language’ is *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (the CEFR) put together by The Council of Europe, an organization funded by The European Union (the EU). In this widely adopted document, a language learner is referred as “the learner of a second or foreign language and culture” (p.43), just like in the previously mentioned *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages*. In line with the EU’s ideals of creating a European identity and citizenship, the importance of plurilingualism in the context of pluriculturalism is stressed throughout the CEFR, and these concepts are defined as follows:

Plurilingual and pluricultural competence refers to the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent, has

proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures. This is not seen as the superposition or juxtaposition of distinct competences, but rather as the existence of a complex or even composite competence on which the user may draw (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 168).

The envisioned European citizen is, then, a person who is developing his/her plurilingual and pluricultural repertoire in order to be able to deal with the communicative challenges of a multilingual and multicultural Europe. The process of building up this repertoire and the anticipated benefits are explained as such:

The learner of a second or foreign language and culture does not cease to be competent in his or her mother tongue and the associated culture. Nor is the new competence kept entirely separate from the old. The learner does not simply acquire two distinct, unrelated ways of acting and communicating. The language learner becomes plurilingual and develops interculturality. The linguistic and cultural competences in respect of each language are modified by knowledge of the other and contribute to intercultural awareness, skills and know-how. They enable the individual to develop an enriched, more complex personality and an enhanced capacity for further language learning and greater openness to new cultural experiences (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 43).

To produce these desired outcomes, it is obviously crucial to be aware of this new role given to instruction of language and culture and attach more importance to it. Bringing a more comprehensive and systematic approach, the CEFR clearly aims to increase this awareness.

Already a member of the Council of Europe and a candidate member of the EU, Turkey has also made many changes to its foreign language policy in order to achieve standardization with the norms of the EU. The collaboration between the Ministry of National Education and The Council of Europe for this purpose started in as early as 1968 and has so far continued (Demirel, 2005). A major curriculum reform was implemented in 1997 to improve Turkey's ELT practice, and English was introduced to Grade 4 and Grade 5 primary school curriculum. The Act officially and explicitly stated that "Turkey's political and economic ambitions and the nation's desire to keep up its

relations with foreign countries using English, particularly with countries of the European Union, are the major motivating forces underlying the decision to introduce English to young learners” (MEB, 1997, p. 606, as cited in Kırkgöz, 2009, p.674). Clearly, the role of English as a means of communication with the rest of the world is stressed in accordance with the aim of foreign language policy -“enabling students to read academic texts and follow technological developments in the global world and communicate with people from different countries” (İnceçay, 2012, p. 55). However, in both statements, the emphasis seems to be on the instrumental value of the English language as a communication tool, and cultural aspects of language learning and teaching are not mentioned.

With the adoption of the CEFR after it was published in 2001, the word ‘culture’ and such terms as cultural awareness, intercultural competence and multiculturalism started to appear on foreign language policy documents in Turkey, yet not much seems to have changed in practice as a result of this theoretical embrace. Atay (2005) draws attention on the subject stating that “the overall picture reveals a serious inconsistency between the objectives specified in the national curriculum and practice both at the primary and secondary level” (p. 226). She further stresses that “although the cultural dimension of language is as important as its linguistic dimension, language education in Turkey mainly focuses on the latter” (p. 222). In conclusion, it is hard to claim that Turkey has been able to conform to the established norms of the EU.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

If Turkey is to bridge the above mentioned gap between its written aims and actual practices in the process of European integration and globalization, it is clear that existing practices need to be questioned and reshaped in the light of empirical research. It is evident that the burden of responsibility for developing cultural awareness and enhancing students’ intercultural communicative competence is mainly put on language teachers by leading language policy documents such as ACTFL’s *Standards* and the EU’s CEFR. Therefore, the changing role of language teaching in the new era poses some challenging questions to Turkish foreign language professionals, such as whether they should prioritize cultural aspects of language teaching and learning more in the curricula of teacher-training institutions, English Language and Literature (ELL) and English Language Teaching (ELT) departments, and if so, how.

Hager (2011) claims that “these two, the target language and the target culture, should be seen as one, as in real life” since language and culture cannot be separated (p. 55). He uses the term “C2” for the target culture, and believes “in order to properly prepare a language learner to communicate in the second language (L2), the student must have the proper background and training in the C2” (p. 34). Therefore, it is essential that C2 is a part of any language instruction. To him, culture teaching is not of less importance as he clearly points out “we need to provide language learners with an equal amount of culture instruction (to language instruction) in language learning” (p. 34).

However, in Broady’s (2004) words, “it is not always easy to define what culture is, let alone how we should integrate culture in our teaching” (p.68). As widely acknowledged and will be presented in the next chapter, culture is a complex phenomenon with various aspects to be taken into consideration. This is one of the reasons why there is a strong need for ongoing research on the issue, and the underlying assumption behind this study is that it is vitally important to get insights into learner perceptions of these various aspects. The researcher is of the opinion that without contemplating on these perceptions and acting on them, it does not make much sense to expect a change in language teaching practices in Turkey, which seem to be inconsistent with the theory adopted.

1.4. Purpose of the Study

The present study attempts to examine various aspects of the role of culture in language learning and teaching in a setting where the participants are studying to be English teachers because it underlines the fact that learning about cultural perceptions of future English teachers is essential. More specifically, the study aims to investigate the target culture perceptions of the first and final year students studying ELL at a state university in Turkey, namely, Erciyes University.

It firstly focuses on ELL students’ perceptions of incorporating cultural elements into language learning/teaching, and secondly seeks to find out about their preferences on the cultures to be incorporated: whether materials from the target culture (culture of the countries where English is spoken as a first language), the source culture (learners’ own culture), or international culture (a great variety of cultures all around the world) should be integrated into language classes (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999). The study is also designed to explore the participants’ perceptions of the target culture, including their attitudes

towards it, the importance they attribute to it and the knowledge they have about it. The term ‘target culture’ in this part of the study refers to British/American culture. Previous studies in the Turkish context such as Yılmaz’s (2006), Devrim and Bayyurt’s (2010) and Güven’s (2015) reveal that it is mostly the British and American cultures that come to students’ minds when they think about the culture(s) of the English language. Besides, some other studies take it for granted and directly refer to British/American culture as the target culture of English. (Atay, 2005; Aydemir & Mede, 2014; Genç & Bada, 2005; Sarıçoban & Çalışkan, 2011). Taking both bodies of research into account, the present study aims to shed light on firstly its participants’ perceived target culture(s), and secondly their perceptions of the British/American culture. In addition, it aims to collect data about the participants’ perceptions of target culture teaching practices in their departments as well as their own practices. Finally, it intends to compare and contrast 1st year and 4th year students’ perceptions on the issues above, tracking any similarities and differences between them.

In this respect, the present study aims to add to the existing body of literature by presenting the profile of first and final year ELL students on the basis of following research questions.

1.5. Research Questions

This study attempts to address the following research questions:

1. What are ELL students’ perceptions of incorporating cultural elements into language learning/teaching?
2. Which culture/cultures should be incorporated into language learning/teaching ?
3. What are ELL students’ perceptions of the target culture?
 - 3.1. What is ELL students’ attitude towards the target culture?
 - 3.2. How much importance do ELL students attribute to certain aspects of the target culture?
 - 3.3. How much do ELL students think they know about these aspects?
 - 3.4. How do ELL students perceive
 - a. target culture teaching practices in their departments?
 - b. their own practices related to the target culture?
4. To what extent do the responses of 1st and 4th year ELL students relate to each other?

1.6. Significance of the Study

Studies that investigate the target culture in language learning/teaching have so far dealt with learners of English from different backgrounds, the majority being university students of various departments. A large number of the studies carried out in Turkey has also investigated target culture perceptions and attitudes of university students, but the participants have mainly been preparatory level students who spend their first year studying English before starting their departments such as Engineering, Economics, or Administrative Sciences. The participants of this study, ELL students, have a relatively higher level of language competence and, supposedly, a deeper interest in the target culture, compared to prep students of other departments, who may or may not be users of the English language throughout their career. Considering the fact that the participants of the present study will not only be users of English, but also the teachers of it, shaping our future generations' attitudes and abilities, it is clear that they deserve to receive more attention.

In Turkey, there are also several studies on culture in language learning and teaching which have chosen prospective English teachers as their participants, but these studies were exclusively conducted with ELT students (Arıkan, 2011; Atay, 2005; Atay & Ece, 2009; Bektaş-Çetinkaya, 2013, 2014; Hismanoğlu, 2011). Only one small-scale study (Kahraman, 2008) has been done on target culture perceptions of ELL students, who are also very commonly employed as English teachers and instructors. To fill this gap, the present study works with first and fourth year ELL students and thus focuses on a group of students who have been seriously neglected by researchers, compared to their counterparts in ELT departments and other learners of English.

Finally, the researcher is in the hope that the findings of the study will contribute to the discussion on whether culture is the missing component responsible for the failure in foreign language education in Turkey. As Citron (1995) puts it, “[o]ur nation may rank poorly in second language proficiency because our people have little experience negotiating meaning across cultural boundaries” (p. 113).

1.7. Conclusion

This chapter introduces the study presenting the background, purpose and the significance of the study as well as the research questions it aims to answer. The next chapter provides a comprehensive review of the relevant literature.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter starts with different definitions of culture and discusses the relationship between language and culture. The role that culture has played throughout the history of ELT is also presented. In addition, previous research on various aspects of incorporation of culture into language learning and teaching, such as student and teacher perceptions and different ways of integrating it into language classes, is reviewed.

2.2. The Definition of Culture

The word *culture* is an undeniably complex word. One can say that it is both very easy and difficult to define because of the very same reason- it is extremely broad and includes almost everything in human life. According to Hinkel (1999), “it may not be an exaggeration to say there are nearly as many definitions of culture as there are fields of inquiry into human societies, groups, systems, behaviours, and activities” (p. 1).

Kramsch (1998) defines culture as “membership in a discourse community that shares a common space and history, and common imaginings” and adds that its members may retain this common system even after they have left their community (p. 10). Oyserman and Lee (2008) also see culture as “set and fluid or situated and mobile” (as cited in Hager, 2011, p. 85). It is set because it can be transmitted to future generations but fluid at the same time because it is constantly changing as times change. Certain aspects of it are situated as when we use the term, we usually refer to a group of people in one region, but without it being mobile, immigrants would not be able to take their culture to different countries (Hager, 2011, p. 85).

In addition, Liddicoat, Papademetre, Scarino, and Kohler (2003) provide a comprehensive definition of culture as “a complex system of concepts, attitudes, values, beliefs, conventions, behaviors, practices, rituals and lifestyles of the people who make up a cultural group, as well as the artifacts they produce and the institutions they create” (p. 45). Moerman’s (1988) similar but simpler definition is quoted in Cortazzi and Jin

(1999) as “a set -perhaps a system- of principles of interpretation, together with the products of that system (p. 197). Another definition is Byram’s (2012) shorthand phrase: “beliefs, values and behaviors shared by a social group, whether permanent or transitory” (p. 12). To Kramersch (2006), culture can also be seen either as a humanistic or sociolinguistic concept, and defined accordingly. In the humanistic sense, culture is “synonymous with a general knowledge of literature and the arts”, and this type of culture is usually referred as ‘big C’ culture; on the other hand, as a sociolinguistic concept, it is the culture of everyday life, referred as ‘little c’ culture (p. 13).

In his dictionary of cultural studies, Barker (2004) defines culture as “a mobile signifier that enables distinct and divergent ways of talking about human activity for a variety of purposes” (p. 44). However, Barker (2004) also describes it simply as “a whole and distinctive way of life” and goes on to claim that no matter how many different definitions exist, “none of the definitions of culture is erroneous in the sense of mis-describing an object [and] they do achieve different purposes and may be more or less applicable in different times and places” (p. 44).

2.3. Culture and Language

Utley (2004) provides a comprehensive explanation of not only what culture is, but also the relationship between culture and language with specific reference to different skills and competences:

Perhaps the best way to understand culture is by analogy with children learning their first language- instinctively, unconsciously, contingent upon their environment. Besides linguistic competence, children are also acquiring communicative competence, i.e., learning to use the appropriate speed and volume of speech,...etc. to communicate a highly nuanced range of emotions. Beyond these so called paralinguistic features, children are also learning extra-linguistic communication: gestures, how and when to make eye contact, ... etc. As children continue to grow and learn, they in time acquire cultural competence: a vast web of interconnected knowledge which includes, among other things, ... which behaviours are acceptable for men and which for women, which foods one may eat, what is funny and what is not. In short, children become fully socialized members of a community, and the

constellation of values, norms and behaviours they have learned can be summed up with the word ‘culture’ (p. 7).

The examples that Utley (2004) gives clearly illustrate that children acquire language and culture at the same time, and language, especially with its paralinguistic and extra-linguistic features, is culture-specific. Hence is the strong bond between language and culture. Jiang (2000) provides metaphors to demonstrate how they complement each other:

According to a philosophical perspective, language and culture create a living organism in which language is flesh and culture is blood. According to a communicative perspective, communication is swimming in which language is swimming skill and culture is water. According to a pragmatic perspective, communication is transportation in which language is the vehicle and culture is traffic light (p. 328-329).

The field of linguistic anthropology studies these “relations that exist between language on the one hand and society and culture on the other”, as Salzmann, Stanlaw and Adachi (2014, p. 11) put it, and indeed, linguistic anthropologist Michael Agar (1994) uses the term “languaculture” to avoid using two separate words implying two separate entities (Tannen, 2014, p. 366). Risager (2006) also finds this term useful and adopts it as it implies that “all languages have specific cultural (meaning) dimensions” (p. 35). It is often the case that speakers of a language take these for granted, and do not think that other paradigms exist until they are confronted with other ways of looking at things. For example, Furstenberg et al. (2001) describe how American and French students working on the *Cultura* project were surprised by the opposite connotations they brought to the same word, ‘individualism’. For Americans, the connotations, ‘freedom’, ‘creativity’ and ‘personal expression’, were highly positive; on the other hand, their French counterparts came up with negative connotations of ‘egoism’, ‘egocentrism’ and ‘solitude’.

In one of his most important books, *Language, Mind and Culture*, Kövecses (2006) gives illustrative examples of cultural dimensions of languages by contrasting the adjectives used to describe certain vocabulary items in two noun classifying languages, German and Spanish. In Spanish, the word ‘bridge’ is a masculine word, ‘el Puente’, and adjectives such as ‘big, dangerous, long, strong and sturdy’ are used to describe it.

On the other hand, in German, commonly used adjectives for the feminine word ‘die Brücke’ (bridge) are ‘beautiful, elegant, fragile, peaceful, pretty and slender’ (p. 85). Based on this and several other examples, Kövecses (2006) concludes “language has an effect on how we think about things in the world” (p. 85).

It is clear that Kövecses’s (2006) conclusion echoes the underlying principle of Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis. Indeed, Edward Sapir and his student Benjamin Lee Whorf were among the first to write about language in relation to culture, and their hypothesis has been discussed extensively by scholars, usually making a distinction between the strong and weak form of it (Tannen, 2014, p. 367). The strong form, linguistic determinism, claims that language shapes and determines thinking, and according to the weak form, linguistic relativity, it only influences thinking (Tannen, 2014, p. 367). Few linguists believe in the theory of linguistic determinism, but the theory of linguistic relativity has more supporters who believe that we see the world as we do because of our language, and that is why learning a new language makes one realize that “there are other ways of conceptualizing the world” (Tannen, 2014, p. 367).

Culture gives people certain norms to apply to everything they do, and communicating with others -either in L1 or L2- is not an exception. However, these cultural norms governing one’s L1 use may cause inappropriate or partially appropriate L2 use. Chang’s study (2009) indicates that when certain L2 speech acts, such as thanking or apologizing, are realized based on L1 norms, this may lead to intercultural misunderstanding. According to Thomas (1983), this type of sociopragmatic failure is much more critical than linguistic mistakes since linguistic mistakes will only make the L2 speaker less proficient, while pragmatic failure may result in “misjudgment of the individual as being unfriendly, dishonest or rude” (as cited in Hager, 2011, p. 62).

Tannen (2014) also gives several examples of this kind of occasions, such as how Gumperz (1982) found the reason behind the friction between South Asian food servers and workers at a British airport by investigating their tape-recorded interactions. The servers were criticized as being surly and uncooperative while they felt that they were being discriminated against. Gumperz (1982) noticed that they said the word ‘gravy’, not with a rising intonation which would imply a question like “Would you like gravy?”, but with a falling intonation which would imply a statement like “This is gravy. Take it or leave it” (Tannen, 2014, p. 349-350). Non-verbal messages, which are

almost always culture-based, may also be a reason for miscommunication and misinterpretation (Çakır, 2006). Direct eye contact, for example, might be a signal showing your interest in Western cultures, while it might be considered as a disrespectful act in some others.

In addition, Tannen (2014) believes conversation styles of different cultures may result in problems as in the case of an Italian-American school boy, in Shultz, Florio and Erickson's (1982) study, who was identified as a "problem child" because he did not need to wait his turn to speak at home but was supposed to do so at school (p. 351) or in the case of Finns and Belgians in Lehtonen and Sajavaara's (1985) study who were negatively stereotyped as "dull" by their faster speaking neighbours, Swedes and the French, most probably just because they tend to speak slowly (p. 362). Since such stereotyping might even influence big decisions such as the ones in education and employment, we cannot and should not ignore sociocultural aspects of languages for successful intercultural communication to take place.

In his paper, James Archibald (2008) looks into an even more serious decision making process, the translation of sensitive documents by intelligence services in times of conflict. Archibald (2008) provides an example of how it was concluded by the Iraq Study Group that Americans mishandled their war on terror in Iraq because of their "lack of language and cultural understanding" (p. 23) and stresses the role of the translator as an intercultural communicator who possesses intercultural knowledge and skills to avoid misunderstanding of a certain text, which is indeed a sociocultural artifact, especially in the strategic decision making process when national security is at stake.

Therefore, a language learner needs to "establish an association between his/her language and his/her cultural experience, and this task has to be accomplished on the basis of a growing understanding of some of the associations common among native speakers" of the additional language that s/he has been learning (Risager, 2006, p. 38). Through comparison, the learner is expected to raise an awareness of both his/ her own languaculture and the target languaculture. In this respect, Kramsch (1993, 1997) proposes the concept of *third culture* or *third place* as a "metaphor for eschewing other dualities on which language education is based: L1/L2, C1/C2, Us vs Them, Self vs Other" (Kramsch, 2009, p. 238). She adds that it does not require the elimination of

these dichotomies, but “suggests focusing on the relation itself and on the heteroglossia within each of the poles” (Kramersch, 2009, p. 238). It is seen as a place of contact where these separate entities mingle and form a new being, therefore, as the ideal place where intercultural communication is likely to be most successful. It is neither the first place (speaker’s L1/C1) nor the *second place* (speaker’s L2/C2) where the speaker would operate best to negotiate meaning and avoid miscommunication, but the *third place*, a truly intercultural space.

2.4. Culture in Language Teaching and Learning

During the Grammar Translation Method era, when it was common practice to read and translate literary works of the target language community, culture received little direct attention in language classrooms. It was there, indirectly, in the texts read by the learners. The culture taught in those days was mainly “Culture with a big C”, which is “synonymous with a general knowledge of literature and the arts” (Kramersch, 2006, p. 13). With the introduction of the Direct Method at the end of 19th century, more importance was attributed to it, and factual information about the history, geography and the important figures of the target language country was added to language classes to provide general culture and cultivate the mind. Nevertheless, it still did not play a significant role (Kitao, 1991). It was only after the World War II, when the Audiolingual Method came along, that it was aimed to prepare students to “enter the target culture” and “deal with the daily task of living in the target culture” (Byrd et al., 2011, p. 6). To this end, students were trained to react appropriately to culture-specific situations using drills for habit formation, yet the method failed to achieve its intended aims. (Byrd et al., 2011). In the late 60s and 70s, the place of culture in language teaching started to be seriously questioned in the light of a new conception of language as a sociocultural practice. During that period, , moving on the road paved by Sapir and Whorf, scholars such as Brooks (1968), Rivers (1968), Nostrand (1974) and Seelye (1974) argued for incorporation of culture into language teaching, and elaborated on objectives, techniques and topics for culture teaching (Kitao, 1991; Stern, 1983). According to Jenks (1975, p. 106), among these, the most problematic area of research was topics:

We are not experiencing a short of techniques and rationales for teaching culture. We have plenty of “why’s”, “how’s”, “where’s” and “when’s”. We lack “what’s”. The actual information, the findings of current sociological research and the information concerning the various cultures is and will continue to be a soft spot in the teaching of culture. This places the foreign language teacher in an unenviable position-the delivery systems are here but we have not located much that we need to deliver (as cited in Çankaya Tümer, 2010, p. 27).

It can be argued that although it was not easy to agree on what to teach, by the 1980s, a general consensus on the strong bond between language and culture and benefits of incorporation of culture into language teaching had already been reached, as marked by the works of linguists and cultural anthropologists mentioned above. With the revolutionary introduction of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the 1980s, the importance of teaching about the daily life in the target culture reached its climax in order to be able to improve one’s communicative competence, and there was a deep interest in cultural pragmatics and the sociolinguistic appropriateness of language use in its authentic cultural context (Kramsch, 2006). It was thought that grammatical competence on its own was not adequate, and L2 speakers also needed sociolinguistic and strategic competence (Canale & Swain, 1980). When explaining the guiding principles of the communicative approach, Canale and Swain (1980) suggested that “students should be taught about the second language culture primarily (though not exclusively) ... in order to provide them with the sociocultural knowledge of the second language group that is necessary in drawing inferences about the social meanings and values of utterances” (p. 28). In other words, the fact that learners needed “the ability to use the language in socially and culturally appropriate ways” was the major tenet of CLT (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002, p. 7). In line with the principles of CLT, Tomalin and Stempleski (1993, p.7-8) provided a list of seven goals of cultural instruction, adapted from Seelye’s (1988) goals, in their book aiming to give teachers practical guidance on how culture can be incorporated into language instruction through different classroom activities:

- to help students to develop an understanding of the fact that all people exhibit culturally-conditioned behaviors;

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

To achieve these aims, Tomalin and Stempleski (1993) aimed to help language teachers familiarize students with (1) popular images and symbols in the target culture, (2) the lifestyles of current in English-speaking cultures, (3) culturally appropriate behavior-what native speakers of English say and do in specific social situations, and (4) cultural products of the target culture. By doing so, they hoped students would develop an understanding of the differences in communication styles, values and attitudes, and finally discuss and draw conclusions from their own experience of the target culture. The proponents of CLT believed in the usefulness and necessity of providing information about life in the target culture in order to develop a cultural understanding that would contribute to students' communicative competence. In this sense, the native speaker was considered to be the expert and the model both linguistically and culturally.

However, this notion was later challenged by some scholars, some of whom are listed as Kramsch (1995), Paikeday (1985), and Rajagopalan (1999) in Alptekin (2002), who himself severely criticizes it: "It is perhaps time to rid the ELT field of its educational vision and practices based on a utopian notion of communicative competence involving idealized native speaker norms in both language and culture" (p. 60). For him, native speaker-based notion of communicative competence is utopian because it "portrays a monolithic perception of the native speaker's language and culture, by referring chiefly to mainstream ways of thinking and behaving" (2002, p. 57). Secondly, Alptekin (2002)

adds that such an approach is “constraining in that it circumscribes both teacher and learner autonomy by associating the concept of authenticity with the social milieu of the native speaker”, since one’s own culture and various other cultures of other non-native speakers of English are ignored (p. 57). In other words, the *lingua franca* status of English is not reflected through such an approach, as Alptekin (2002) questions: “How relevant, then, are the conventions of British politeness and American informality to the Japanese and Turks, say, when doing business in English?” (p. 61). Another problem voiced by Byram (1997) and Cook (1999) was that the native speaker model was a nearly impossible target to attain (as cited in Aguilar, 2002). According to Aguilar (2010), all these criticisms that native speaker based communicative competence approach received has led to the revision of the concept and the terms ‘intercultural speaker’ instead of ‘native speaker’ and ‘intercultural communicative competence’ instead of ‘communicative competence’ were introduced (p. 90). The replacements were first proposed by Byram and Zarate (1994), with the intention of making it clear that the intercultural speaker could not be the same as the native speaker both linguistically and culturally, as his native language and culture would always be a part of himself (Aguilar, 2002).

In order to understand what is meant by these terms better, one should first have a look at the two related concepts, *language awareness* and *cultural awareness*. Association of Language Awareness defines language awareness as “explicit knowledge about language and conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, language teaching and language use” (Byram, 2012, p. 6). Another important term very commonly used with language awareness is cultural awareness, which is defined as “an ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in our own and other cultures and countries” (Byram, 1997, p. 53). For Byram (2012), these two, language awareness and cultural awareness, complement each other as language and culture do. Conscious attention to and engagement with language and culture involves learning about them and analyzing them -in terms of both social analysis and self analysis. In other words, cultural awareness, as important as it is, does not involve performance and real interaction. To refer to the ability of functioning cross-culturally, the term intercultural communicative competence is used.

According to Meyer (1991), intercultural competence refers to “the ability of a person to behave adequately and in a flexible manner when confronted with actions, attitudes and expectations of representatives of foreign cultures” (p.137). Byram (2012) quotes Guilherme’s (2000) definition of intercultural competence as “the ability to interact effectively with people from cultures that we recognize as being different from our own” (p. 6). Both Meyer (1991) and Byram (2012) see cultural awareness at the very core of intercultural communicative competence. Byram (2012) asserts that he puts critical cultural awareness “symbolically in the centre” (p. 7) in his widely acknowledged model of intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997).

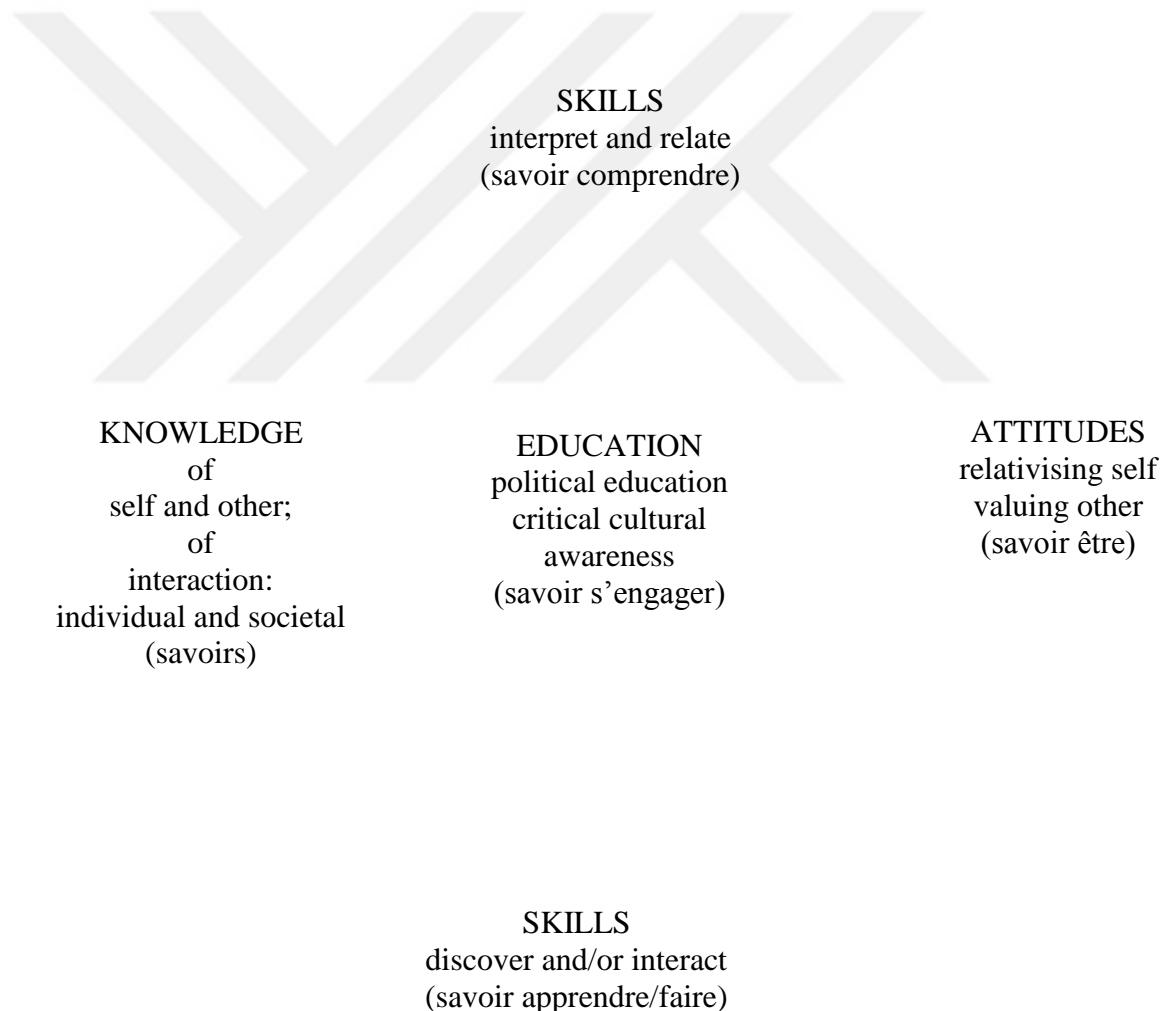


Figure 1. Factors in intercultural communication (Byram, 2012, p. 7)

Byram (1997) further explains this set of key competences as follows:

Knowledge (*savoir*): “the knowledge of social groups and their products and practices in one’s own and one’s interlocutor’s country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction” (p. 58)

Attitudes (*savoir être*): “curiosity and openness, and readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one’s own” (p. 57)

Skills of interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*): “the ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one’s own” (p. 61)

Skills of discovery and interaction (*savoir apprendre/faire*): “the ability to acquire new knowledge under the constraints of real time communication and interaction” (p. 61)

Critical cultural awareness / political education (*savoir s’engager*): “the ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in our own and other cultures and countries” (p. 63).

It is clear that this model of intercultural competence is more based on skills, abilities, values and attitudes, and less on the transmission of linguistic and cultural knowledge from the teacher to the student (Aguilar, 2010). However, this is not to say that language teaching with an intercultural dimension does not aim to assist learners acquire linguistic competence and cultural knowledge (Byram et al., 2002). It still helps them learn to use the target language in correct and appropriate ways and provides them information on the cultures, but with an additional agenda. In Aguilar’s (2010) words, “it goes beyond the concept of language learning just as acquiring skills in a language accompanied by some factual information about the country where the language is spoken” (p. 92). Byram et al. (2002) list the aims of developing the intercultural dimension in language teaching as follows:

- to give learners intercultural competence as well as linguistic competence;
- to prepare them for interaction with people of other cultures;
- to enable them to understand and accept people from other cultures as individuals with other distinctive perspectives, values and behaviours;
- to help them to see that such interaction is an enriching experience (p.10)

It is obvious that in order to achieve these aims, certain changes need to be made in the common practices of the language classroom. Meyer (1991) rightfully argues that “intercultural competence is not a ‘natural’ or ‘automatic’ result of foreign language teaching (p. 157).

First of all, adding an intercultural dimension changes the role of the language teacher, which Byram et al. (2002) go on to summarize as “to develop skills, attitudes and awareness of values just as much as to develop a knowledge of a particular culture or country” (p. 13). In this sense, the best teacher is not the native speaker anymore since s/he cannot and is not expected to know everything about the target culture or all the other cultures that his/her students are likely to interact with, and s/he is not supposed to be the only source of information. The best teacher is the one “who can help learners see relationships between their own and other cultures, can help them acquire interest in and curiosity about ‘otherness’, and an awareness of themselves and their own cultures seen from other people’s perspectives” (Byram et al, 2002, p. 10). The language teacher might, of course, provide factual information about the target culture or the other cultures, but when s/he does that, it is important to give priority to comparative analysis so that students can use this information as ‘food for thought’. The CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) provides a comprehensive list of seven categories related to the features of a society or culture which can be used in language classes:

1. Everyday living, e.g.,
 - food and drink, meal times, table manners;
 - public holidays;
 - working hours and practices;
 - leisure activities (hobbies, sports, reading habits, media).
2. Living conditions, e.g.,
 - living standards (with regional, class and ethnic variations);
 - housing conditions;
 - welfare arrangements.
3. Interpersonal relations (including relations of power and solidarity) e.g., with respect to:
 - class structure of society and relations between classes;
 - relations between sexes (gender, intimacy);

- family structures and relations;
- relations between generations;
- relations in work situations;
- relations between public and police, officials, etc.;
- race and community relations;
- relations among political and religious groupings.

4. Values, beliefs and attitudes in relation to such factors as:

- social class;
- occupational groups (academic, management, public service, skilled and manual workforces);
- wealth (income and inherited);
- regional cultures;
- security;
- institutions;
- tradition and social change;
- history, especially iconic historical personages and events;
- minorities (ethnic, religious);
- national identity;
- foreign countries, states, peoples;
- politics;
- arts (music, visual arts, literature, drama, popular music and song).
- religion;
- humour.

5. Body language

- knowledge of the conventions governing such behaviour

6. Social conventions, e.g. with regard to giving and receiving hospitality, such as:

- punctuality;
- presents;
- dress;
- refreshments, drinks, meals;
- behavioural and conversational conventions and taboos;
- length of stay;
- leave-taking.

7. Ritual behaviour in such areas as:

- religious observances and rites;
- birth, marriage, death;
- audience and spectator behaviour at public performances and ceremonies;
- celebrations, festivals, dances, discos, etc. (p. 102-103).

Learning about these aspects of a culture improves language learners' sociocultural knowledge, and contributes to students' intercultural competence under 'knowledge (savoir)' domain of Byram's (1997) model of intercultural competence. However, the development of new attitudes, skills and critical awareness is considered more important than the amount of the knowledge to be acquired, so these aspects of a culture should serve as topics used to promote those.

To sum up, it can be argued that a deep interest in intercultural communication has grown due to globalization and computer revolution (Kramsch, 2002). Therefore, a new dimension, the intercultural dimension, has been added to the concept of communicative competence, making it intercultural communicative competence, which emphasizes effective cross-cultural communication. It is acknowledged that one needs something more than linguistic and communicative competence, not only to face the challenges of today's world, but also to seize the opportunities it offers. There is now strong conviction that culture should be a part of language instruction, and language learners should be encouraged to become competent intercultural speakers, both in the academia and leading language policy documents such as ACTFL's *Standards* and the CEFR. However, according to Sercu et al. (2005), "[i]n spite of the intercultural turnaround in foreign language education, culture teaching continues to be its most neglected component" (p. 494). As a matter of fact, it can be argued that there is little evidence, if any at all, that actual practices in language classrooms reflect this shift in the emphasis. There seems to be many practical obstacles in the path of integration of culture into language instruction. Ryan-Scheutz and Nuessel (2010, p. 43-44) summarize the school or teacher-related problems as:

- finding time in an already full curriculum
- saving culture for a 'later' time that never comes
- teachers' fears that they do not know enough about the target culture

- teachers' preference to not get involved with students' attitudes about difference and diversity in behavior, thinking, and feeling.

They also add that “cultural concepts are often elusive and evolving, making it hard to quantify or qualify a learner’s awareness of, understanding of, feelings about, or ability to operate in the context of a given cultural topic or situation” (p. 44). In other words, another factor problematizing the integration of culture is the fact that culture itself is a complex, dynamic and multifaceted concept. Byram and Kramsch (2008, p. 31-33) also provide a similar list of concerns voiced by language teachers:

- Fear of stereotypes
- Teacher’s lack of cultural knowledge
- Communicative imperatives in current language pedagogy

They also believe that language teachers feel challenged as they are given the responsibility of fostering understanding among different cultures but “they are not historians, nor sociologists, nor anthropologists” (p. 21). A similar view is expressed by Furstenberg (2010), who believes language teachers cannot easily embrace culture, which anthropologists deal with, and tend to leave it “in the periphery” (p. 329).

In brief, there are still a lot of issues to be handled and resolved regarding the place of culture in language teaching and learning although there has been a general consensus on its importance for some time now. It is acknowledged that “without the study of culture, teaching L2 is inaccurate and incomplete” (Genç & Bada, 2005, p. 73). It can also be argued that there is an additional aspect highlighting the severity of this inaccuracy and incompleteness in ELL departments. Students in these departments are required to read the literature of the target culture. Knowing about the culture is obviously of great significance when trying to understand its literature, and the following section aims to explore this issue.

2.5. Culture in ELL Departments

It can be argued that reading is the most significant language skill in literature departments, and it is critical that students have effective reading skills. Goodman (1971) describes reading as a “psycholinguistic guessing game” in which the player, namely the reader, “reconstructs, as best as he can, a message which has been encoded by a writer” (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983, p. 554). Unfortunately, students seem to have

problems trying to interpret the texts they read because they lack a great deal of cultural knowledge about the target culture. Risager (2006) explains this process as:

When a text is produced, languacultural intentions are laid down in the text, i.e., intentions concerning how this text is going to function semantically and pragmatically in that specific communicative activity: What speech acts are intended? What references are given? What representations of the world are created? These languacultural intentions are restricted or expanded in the course of reception of the text. The addressees or the readers interpret the text according to their personal languacultures and their knowledge of the world (p. 36).

In other words, different languacultures of the writer and the reader may cause problems in the pragmatic comprehension as well as semantic comprehension. Pragmatics is about some aspects of meaning that cannot be predicted by only linguistic knowledge, and that is why, exposure to target culture plays a key role in developing pragmatic competence.

In their study, Rafieyan, Majid and Eng (2013) attempted to find out the relationship between cultural instruction and increase in pragmatic comprehension. First, they applied a pragmatic comprehension test as a pre-test and gave a 12-week period classroom instruction on cultural features of the USA using videos and supplementary materials downloaded from the Internet. Then, the post-test was applied, and the results showed a significant increase in the participants' level of pragmatic competence, which may be interpreted as evidence supporting that cultural instruction contributed to pragmatic interpretation. The study suggested that incorporating target culture into language instruction might result in better pragmatic competence. To put it another way, if the students are not exposed to the target culture, they might experience difficulty in "stepping out of their own 'culture cages' and understanding both that languages are not direct translations of each other and that languages reflect the cultures of their speakers" (Citron, 1995, p. 105). Without this kind of cultural awareness, readers are likely to attach wrong meanings or no possible meanings at all to what they read.

According to Alptekin (2006), reading may be viewed "as an interaction of the reader's text-based and knowledge-based processes" (p. 494). For literal comprehension, the text-based processes such as lexical access and syntactic parsing, and for inferential

comprehension, knowledge-based processes such as synthesizing, summarizing and generalizing take place. In other words, in literal comprehension, the reader relies on linguistic sources, whereas in inferential comprehension, the reader goes beyond the literal meaning of the text (Alptekin, 2006). According to schema theory, in order to be able to do so, the reader needs to resort to his/her existing background information, in other words, “comprehension rests on readers’ activation of their prior knowledge to create meaning” (Alptekin, 2006, p. 495). In an attempt to investigate role of culturally familiar background knowledge in literal and inferential comprehension in L2 reading, Alptekin (2006) used an originally American short story which went through a “Turkification” process, in researcher’s own words, in which the text was nativized textually and contextually. “Nativization refers to the sociological, semantic, and pragmatic adaptation of the textual and contextual cues of the original story into the language learner’s own culture, while keeping its linguistic and rhetorical content essentially intact” (p. 499). The textual changes made included the names and some features of locations and characters, for example, Istanbul instead of New York or İsmet İnönü instead of William Howard Taft. The contextual changes included a ‘Bayram’ meal instead of Sunday dinner, or an engaged couple instead of a dating couple. While a group of students read the original story, the other group read the nativized version and both took the same comprehension test under same conditions. T-test results showed that the experiment group who read the nativized version performed slightly better on the literal comprehension questions, but significantly better on the inferential comprehension questions, suggesting that “readers’ culturally bound background knowledge plays a facilitative role essentially in their inferential comprehension” (Alptekin, 2006, p.502).

In a similar study following Alptekin’s (2006) approach to nativize an original short story, Gürkan (2012) examined the extent to which cultural knowledge and additional reading activities were important in reading comprehension. There were four groups of participants with equal language proficiency in his study: the first treatment group who read the original text without the use of reading activities, the second treatment group who read the original text accompanied by pre-reading, while reading and post reading activities, the third treatment group who read the nativized version of the text without the use of reading activities, and finally the fourth treatment group who read the nativized version of the text with reading activities. After the participants finished

reading, they were not allowed to refer back to the texts and their comprehension was checked with a number True/False/Not Given items, and open-ended comprehension items and they were also asked to order the events in the story. The analysis of the data supported the hypothesis that cultural familiarity played a significant role in reading comprehension since the participants who read the nativized short story with reading activities outscored all the other groups, and the participants who read the nativized short story without reading activities were more successful than those who read the original short story both with and without reading activities. Thus, the findings also suggested additional reading activities could not compensate for the lack of cultural familiarity.

To conclude, there is one another reason for the significance of culture instruction in ELL departments: the role of culture in reading literature. According to Carrell and Eisterhold (1983), “every culture-specific interference problem dealt with in the classroom presents an opportunity to build new culture-specific schemata that will be available to the student outside the classroom” (p. 569). Undoubtedly, ELL students should be equipped with cultural knowledge, awareness and competence, not only because of this reason, but also because of the reasons reviewed in the previous section, culture in language teaching, considering the fact that graduates of ELL departments are commonly employed as English teachers and instructors. The present study is on the culture perceptions of ELL students, but its participants are prospective ELT teachers. Hence, the significance of the study is twofold, and a thorough review of studies on both student and teacher perceptions will be provided below to establish a wider framework before introducing the current study.

2.6. Studies on Students’ Attitudes and Perceptions on Culture and Language Learning in the Turkish Context

As Bartram (2010) puts it, “while attitudes towards learning in any field may rightfully be seen as important, their centrality in language learning elevates their significance, given the unique nature of language acquisition” (p. 5). In other words, learner attitudes seem to be an important motivational factor in language education, and it is of great significance to take them into consideration, since “students' attitudes towards the foreign language taught will either facilitate or complicate their language learning”

(Bayyurt, 2013, p. 72). Therefore, studies conducted on learner attitudes and perceptions benefit language professionals greatly.

In one of these studies, Devrim and Bayyurt (2010) collected data from 385 senior high school students from East, West and Central Turkey through a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews in order to investigate their understanding and preferences on the role of culture in foreign language classrooms. The findings revealed that for the participants of the study, 'the target language culture' was mostly regarded as the British culture, followed by the American culture. They also reported that they wanted British culture to be included in the language textbooks in the first place, American and Turkish cultures in the second and third places, respectively. It was also revealed that they found it most interesting to learn about the similarities and differences between English speaking countries and Turkey; therefore, it can be said that the findings supported McKay's (2003) ideas on the necessity of inclusion of students' own cultures along with the target culture in language instruction. The participants' reasons for the teaching of culture were summarized by the researchers as follows:

- language and culture cannot be separated from each other
- learning about target language culture is essential to have enough information about native English speaking countries and compare it with cultures in Turkey
- interest and motivation towards learning English might increase by learning about the target language culture.

Although more than a quarter of the students partially agreed or disagreed with the teaching of the target culture, fearing cultural imperialism as a potential threat to their own culture and identity, the remaining majority of the participants seemed to be aware of the benefits of inclusion of target culture in language classes.

Üzüm (2007) conducted a mixed method study to investigate learners' attitudes towards English language and English speaking societies with 219 preparatory level students from 5 different universities. The results of the questionnaire and interviews demonstrated that the participants were aware of the instrumental value of the English language. In addition, they also showed signs of integrative motivation, such as positive attitudes towards the cultural products like songs and movies, and the people of the target societies. Nevertheless, some of the participants expressed negative ideas about Britain because of its historical relationships with Turkey, and disapproving ideas on the

state policies of the USA, which assigned itself 'the world's policeman' role. The researcher stressed that these unfavorable attitudes were directed to the governments due to political reasons, not the language, culture or the individuals, and suggested that there should be more intercultural contact between Turkish people and peoples of English-speaking countries.

In another study carried out with 508 Turkish preparatory level students of 7 different universities, Güven (2015) aimed at exploring the attitudes towards intercultural communicative competence and the possible relationship between the attitudes of students and their gender, reasons for learning English, English proficiency levels, their majors or the medium of instruction in their departments. The part of the questionnaire adapted from Üzüm's (2007) study produced similar results and revealed that the participants' main motivation to learn English was instrumental. Also in line with Yılmaz's (2006) study, it was found out that the participants associated English mostly with the British culture and secondly American culture. They also demonstrated full awareness of English as an international language and positive attitudes towards communicative value of English and learning intercultural communicative competence. The analysis of the findings revealed that gender, proficiency levels and medium of instruction do not play a significant role in students' attitudes towards learning intercultural communicative competence, whereas their majors and motivation types had an effect on their attitudes. Students from the departments of social sciences and students with higher integrative and personal motivation tended to have more positive attitudes towards learning intercultural communicative competence.

Çalışkan (2009) also collected data about culture perceptions of 95 preparatory students of Çankaya University through a questionnaire. It was aimed to explore whether gender, age, type of high school graduated and having been in the USA or England had an effect on their perceptions. The participants in general revealed positive attitudes towards learning cultural elements in language learning process. They thought they should learn about British/American culture, and mostly the aspects related to the characteristics of daily life, nature of family and interpersonal relations. Language skills such as reading, speaking and grammar were ranked as more important than culture, but during culture instruction, they reported that they felt interested, and analytical, comparing the target culture to their own culture. Besides, the majority of the stated their teachers should

present the similarities and differences between the target culture and their own culture to increase their cultural awareness. However, videos/documentaries, posters/pictures and magazines/newspapers were the top three most commonly preferred materials through which they thought cultural content should be presented, and not the course books. Finally, nearly 40% of the participants thought there might be some disadvantages of cultural instruction such as cultural assimilation and linguistic and cultural imperialism was the two options they feared most. These results also revealed that only two of these factors, gender and age played an important role on their attitudes towards culture learning. Female students and younger students were found to be keener on learning culture in language classrooms. Interestingly, students with international experience did not have more positive attitudes, as would have been expected.

In a different study carried out with 65 fourth year ELT students, Atay (2005) sought to explore the ideas and reflections of Turkish prospective teachers of English on the cultural dimension of language teaching by means of a questionnaire, practice teaching classroom observations and interviews following the observations. She found that the participants were aware of the importance of culture in language learning, but they were also aware of their own lack of knowledge related to the target language cultures. Indeed, none of the participants had ever been to a target language country and one student mentioned this as a reason for not being able to provide much cultural information in his/her class. They mainly got information about the target cultures from Turkish media, which they found unsatisfactory, and did not frequently read about culture related issues, which they indicated as the second and third most important purpose of foreign language learning. Another surprising inconsistency is that they preferred to have special training on oral and written proficiency and mixed ability teaching over special training on knowledge of societal issues, teaching cultural awareness and knowledge of daily life although they were highly conscious of the need for the latter group of issues. The majority of the participants reported a mismatch between what they would like to teach and what they can teach and asserted that this was because of their (lack of) opportunities for residence/visit abroad, (lack of) opportunities to improve language skills and cultural awareness, their (lack of) knowledge of foreign countries and teaching materials respectively and not by pupils' lack of knowledge, interest or opportunities. Thus, the researcher calls for action to

solve these identified sources of the problem and make valuable suggestions to the teacher education programmes.

Turkish students' being not knowledgeable about the target culture appears in another Turkish researcher and teacher educator, Arıkan's (2011) study as the major impetus for it. After reading some of his students' reflection papers, Arıkan (2011) was inspired to investigate prospective English language teachers' perceptions of the target language and culture in relation to a factor which he believed might play a big role on this formation: their socioeconomic status. 736 fourth-year prospective teachers were given a questionnaire developed by the researcher and 412 of the participants, who were found to be either holding a positive or a negative attitude, were included in the study, and the ones with neutral attitudes were excluded. The results confirmed a strong correlation between the target language and culture perceptions of the participants and their socioeconomic status, particularly under subheadings of family income and father's job. The participants whose fathers were farmers/workers/ unemployed and who belonged to the lowest income group had the least positive perceptions towards both the target language and culture. Arıkan (2011) also explored the relationship between their present knowledge of the target language and culture and their perceptions of them. 92.5% of the prospective teachers found themselves knowledgeable in the target language but nearly the half of them, 46.6 %, claimed to be knowledgeable in the target culture. The participants in the latter group also held the most positive attitudes towards the target culture. Parental use of the target language and early starting age to learn the language were also found to be predictors of higher appreciation for the target culture. Therefore, Arıkan (2011) stresses that in order to ensure more positive attitudes to the target culture, teacher education programmes need curricular changes to offer more information on the target culture, especially considering students of lower socioeconomic status. He is of the opinion that "without well-qualified teachers knowledgeable in many aspects the target culture, foreign language classrooms can hardly be considered as learning spaces where language is learned in social context" (p. 236).

Hismanoğlu (2011) investigated whether linguistic proficiency, overseas experience and formal education are important factors in acquiring intercultural communicative competence. Among 35 ELT students who participated in the study, ten students had

formal education; they took a 3-credit compulsory course entitled ELT 377 Cultural Studies, during which the teacher focused on how communication is carried out differently in the native and target culture while performing some tasks such as asking for money from a family member or ordering breakfast in a restaurant. The students were also divided into two groups according to their overseas experience and proficiency levels. All the participants were given a questionnaire, which included eight communicative situations from daily life and asked students to write what they would say in these situations. The acceptability of the students' responses was evaluated by five native speakers, and later a series of t-tests were employed to calculate the differences. The findings showed that students with overseas experience performed better compared to those without; students who got formal education gave more acceptable answers compared to those who did not; and students who were in the higher proficiency group also scored higher than the students in the lower proficiency group. The researcher concluded that all these activities which clearly aided students' intercultural communicative competence should be promoted.

Bektaş-Çetinkaya's (2014) study focused on first year ELT students and aimed to test her hypothesis that cultural content instruction in a conversation class would significantly increase the cultural knowledge, attitude, intercultural skills, and intercultural awareness of the participants in the treatment group, compared to the ones in the control group, who received traditional instruction. While the students in the control group gave presentations on topics of their choice, led classroom discussions and provided with feedback from the teacher on their performance, the students in the treatment group followed a specially designed program, involving readings on the basic concepts of intercultural competence and examples of intercultural misunderstandings (Lustig & Koester, 2006; Gill & Cankova, 2010, respectively), movies featuring intercultural misunderstandings (*My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, *Anna and the King*, *Bride and the Prejudice*), and history and geography textbooks (DeBlij & Muller, 1991; Thompson & Combee, 2002) to illustrate ethnocentric perspectives. All throughout the course, the 44 participants of the study were asked to discuss and reflect on cultural issues, and they were also required to give a presentation on one aspect of the British or American culture as a course requirement, not only because they would improve their cultural knowledge, but also awareness through comparisons. The data were collected through a questionnaire, used as a pre and post-test, and intercultural tasks, both

completed by all participants, as well as the weekly written reflections and a post study open-ended questionnaire, both completed only by the participants in the treatment group. The quantitative findings revealed that the students in the treatment group performed significantly better than the control group in terms of gaining cultural knowledge, intercultural skills, and intercultural awareness, yet there was not a significant difference in their attitudes. The researcher believed that this might be because their attitudes were already highly positive, and because a one-semester long course might not be long enough to cause attitudinal change. The quantitative findings also supported the conclusion that cultural content programs could bring real benefit for students. The study is of considerable significance as it provides evidence that a certain level of cultural awareness and intercultural competence can be achieved even in a classroom context, without actually interacting with foreigners.

Bektaş-Çetinkaya (2013) also studied pre-service English teachers' perceptions of English language, target and self culture(s) through semi-structured interviews of approximately one-hour with 15 senior students of an ELT department at a university in Turkey. The students demonstrated a full awareness of the importance of English as an international language and felt privileged to be able to speak it. However, in terms of culture, only one student, who had lived abroad as an ERASMUS student, could show signs of cultural awareness, accepting people as they were. The rest of the participants revealed positive attitudes to their own culture, but stereotypical images towards the others, which they tended to treat as one single entity, the Western Culture. These cultures were perceived as polar opposites, in the sense of individualism versus collectivism. The researcher concluded that pre-service teachers participating in the study were not equipped with cultural awareness or intercultural competence that would make them ready to teach English for international communication, and suggested that "teacher training programs need to raise the awareness of pre-service teachers regarding culture, and its role in language teaching, the cultural diversity within a community, and provide more specific information regarding the self and target cultures" (Bektaş-Çetinkaya, 2013, p. 1529).

On the other hand, in Atay and Ece's (2009) the pre-service teachers were found to be showing signs of cultural awareness. The researchers explored whether learning English influenced the construction of sociocultural identities, and asked 34 third year students

of the ELT department of a public university in Istanbul to reflect on their multiple identities. As a result, they were found to be very conscious of their identities. Although the majority of the participants believed that their Turkish and Islamic identities were dominant, some thought their Western identity -either sometimes or at all times- outweighed their Turkish and Islamic identities, since they had been learning English language and culture for so long. However, Western identity was not seen as a threat to their native identities, rather seen as a means to broaden their perspectives. According to the researchers, their participants as prospective teachers of English, “seem to have acquired a degree of what is called ‘cultural literacy’, an awareness that one’s language or culture is not the sole way of looking at the world and that other paradigms exist” (p. 31).

The only study exploring the culture perceptions of the ELL students was carried out by Kahraman (2008). Twenty-two students from the ELL Department of Dumlupınar University participated in the study, and completed a 12-item Likert type questionnaire. The participants were found to be learning English mainly because they would get a good job, and it was a global need. Learning about a different culture took the third place. Nevertheless, nearly all of the participants believed that language and culture were inseparable, and the majority thought cultural aspects were necessary in language teaching. The participants were not sure about their own proficiency, 40.9% of the participants found their knowledge sufficient while 40.95% of them found it insufficient, especially regarding the daily life of the target culture, and they wanted to learn more about the target culture. The researcher concluded that the participants were aware of the close tie between language and culture, and their own need for more cultural information. In this respect, they could be considered to be ready for incorporation of more cultural content into their classes.

2.7. Studies on Teachers’ Attitudes and Perceptions

Sercu, Garcia and Prieto (2005) state in relation to the target culture that “teachers’ perceptions will, undoubtedly, permeate their lessons, determining the way the foreign culture/s is/are dealt with” (p. 489). Indeed, research has shown that teachers are also “influential agents in the forming of learners’ attitudes” (Bartram, 2010, p. 43). Therefore, it is a worthwhile endeavor to carry out research on teacher attitudes and perceptions and this section aims to review the relevant literature.

Castro, Sercu and Garcia (2004) explored 35 Spanish teachers' perceptions of objectives of foreign languages, and to what extent they supported these objectives. The researchers found out that linguistic objectives were ranked higher than cultural ones revealing pragmatic concerns. Culture teaching was also perceived pragmatically as they believed providing information about the daily life in the target culture to be the most important culture objective, while promoting the ability to handle international contact situations appeared very low in the ranking. The majority of the teachers devoted around 20% of their class time on culture teaching, due to lack of time and suitable materials as well as their own lack of preparation and confidence, as they themselves had limited contact with the target culture. On the other hand, they also showed willingness to spare more time on culture teaching and to teach intercultural competence. In this respect, the researchers suggested that teachers' confidence in teaching it should be supported by giving appropriate training.

Sercu et al. (2005) carried out a study with 35 language teachers from Spain in order to find out Spanish teachers' perceptions of culture teaching, especially in relation to constructivist approaches, which see learning as a self-directed process of constructing meaning. The teachers in the study thought their learners were unfamiliar with the target culture and they had in general negative attitudes towards British and American cultures, though the latter seemed more positive, due to media and film industry depicting American culture more positively. The cultural topics addressed most frequently in classes were daily life and routines and youth culture, taking their students' preferences into account. However, issues like values and beliefs, different ethnic and social groups, and international relations were neglected by the teachers, presumably because they themselves were unfamiliar with these aspects or they wanted to focus on neutral topics, avoiding sensitive issues. The participants were also asked to rank a list of teachers' classroom practices in terms of frequency, and it was concluded that these activities could only be considered partly in line with constructivist approaches. Therefore, Sercu et al. (2005) suggested that teachers needed to "learn to perceive their teaching in a new, constructivist way" (p. 494).

Using a very similar questionnaire developed by Sercu et al. (2005), Atay et al. (2009a) conducted another study with a bigger sample size, 503 Turkish teachers of English. In line with the results of the previous study, teachers in this study chose 'building good

relationships with students' and 'helping students gain knowledge and skills they need for life' as their main priorities in teaching English and 'to help students use English for practical reasons' followed by 'motivating students to learn' and 'helping students understand their own culture and identity better' as the most important aims of foreign language teaching. In other words, they showed a clear preference for general learning skills and linguistic skills, similar to the teachers in Sercu et al.'s study (2005). However, one interesting difference is that the teachers in Sercu et al.'s study, (2005) who "seemed to consider this a responsibility of mother tongue and other teachers rather than of foreign language teachers" (p. 132), did not share Turkish EFL teachers' ideas emphasizing native culture and identity. Turkish EFL teachers prioritized native culture awareness and the items such as 'helping students learn about foreign cultures' and 'helping students be open and positive to foreign cultures' were ranked lowest. Although they showed a more positive attitude when they were asked whether they agreed with certain statements on the role of culture in foreign language learning, such as 'there must be more focus on culture in foreign language education' or 'European or global citizenship should be emphasized in foreign language classes', their limited classroom practices still showed inconsistency. The researchers believed that this could be caused by insufficient training on how to integrate culture into language teaching and insufficient classroom resources such as computers and the internet, and they suggested that language teachers should be provided with such resources.

Atay et al. (2009b) also collected data from 200 Turkish teachers of English, working in primary, secondary and tertiary levels, from all over Turkey to investigate their opinions and attitudes on teaching intercultural competence and their classroom applications. The results of the questionnaire revealed that neither the attitudes nor the current teaching practices of sampled teachers can be characterized as directed towards the attainment of intercultural competence. Their main aim in teaching the foreign language culture was to help the students understand their own culture better, rather than getting to know the target or foreign cultures better. The researchers attributed this finding to the other findings they derived from their questionnaire: "The teachers were not too familiar with the English speaking countries, did not have much contact with English speaking people, and did not feel fully knowledgeable about the target culture" and that's why "they felt more comfortable focusing on the students' and their own native culture" (p. 1615). The researchers concluded that if the foreign language teacher was supposed to

act like a “cultural mediator”, pre-service language teachers should be provided with opportunities to gain insights into intercultural communication and target language cultures.

Turkish EFL teachers were also found to display tendency towards native culture in Inceçay and Akyel’s study (2014) which explored Turkish EFL teachers’ perceptions of English as a *lingua franca*. More than the half of their participants favoured integration of Turkish culture into language classes and mentioned the following reasons in their interviews: “students participate more if they are familiar with the topics, when the subject is related to their culture, familiarity with that culture facilitates language learning, and it increases motivation and confidence” (p. 5). However, the participants did not totally deny the importance of target culture instruction, enabling learners to make comparisons and understand the materials better.

Another study was conducted on 80 Turkish EFL teachers’ perceptions and classroom applications of integrating target culture into their classrooms by Aydemir and Mede (2014). In order to be able to see whether the data about teachers’ perceptions, which were collected through a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, matched their actual classroom practices, two teachers were asked to prepare lessons on some aspects of the target culture. These lessons were recorded, and stimulated recall sessions were carried out right after the videotaped classes. Based on the results of the questionnaire and interviews, the participants were found to have positive perceptions towards teaching culture in their classrooms, and attribute great importance to incorporation of culture into language learning. The teachers whose classes were observed were also found to be reflecting their attitudes in their classes, the only difference between them being their perceptions of the target culture. The first instructor prepared her lesson only about the British culture, and the other included elements related to American and Australian cultures as well, considering that the culture of English was the culture of all English speaking countries. Classroom applications of both participants stressed the importance of cultural elements. However, whether similar results would have been reached if the participants had not been informed about the focus of the observations, and they had been observed in one of their usual classes, is still a question to be answered.

Şen (2010) aimed at presenting a profile of 89 Turkish instructors of English working at preparatory school of Başkent University regarding their knowledge about and practices related to the target culture. The participants believed that English could not be taught without culture, and teaching culture was important and useful, disagreeing that it had harmful effects on Turkish culture. One third of the participants believed that it belonged to everyone who spoke it, demonstrating a more international attitude. They revealed that culture, especially the daily life aspect of it, was a part of their classes; they enjoyed teaching about the target culture, and compared it frequently with the Turkish culture. However, less than half reported that they made sure that it was a part of lesson plans, thus attributing less importance to it during planning. The majority believed they did not have difficulty teaching it, and did not feel uncomfortable when asked a question about the target culture. Therefore, it can be argued that they had rather high self-efficacy beliefs. However, they also claimed that they needed more information, and more than half of the participants did not think their 4-year university education prepared them well for culture instruction. Thus, they still tried to learn more. They also claimed that the best way to learn about the target culture was to go and live in the target culture community. In addition to their own positive attitudes, these instructors believed that their students also had positive attitudes towards culture teaching in language classes.

Önalın's (2005) study focused on culture perceptions and related practices of instructors of English from preparatory schools of four universities in Turkey. 98 participants completed a questionnaire and 32 of them were also interviewed. According to the participants, the target cultures which should be included in English classes were British and American cultures. The findings also revealed that similar to Spanish participants in Castro et al.'s (2004) and Sercu et al.'s (2005) studies, the participants of Önalın's (2005) study mostly incorporated aspects from the daily life into their classes, such as food and clothing. Although they thought they themselves had positive attitudes towards incorporation of culture just like their students, their primary concerns were linguistic aspects of the language during classes. Indeed, the majority of participants ranked culture in the ninth place of the top ten most frequent components of their classes, which clearly showed a discrepancy between their beliefs and practices. In this sense, the researcher believed his research raised more questions than it answered. One question was particularly important: "If the goal [of teaching for intercultural

awareness] is perceived to be so important, why isn't there more effort put into helping teachers learn ways to achieve it?" (p. 232).

In general, teachers do not deny the significance of culture in language teaching. Nevertheless, what Önalán (2005) concludes seems to be relevant in many other contexts, too: EFL teachers' positive attitudes towards incorporation of culture in language classes do not necessarily lead to its prioritization in their classes. There might be various reasons behind it. In addition to practical and institutional constraints, their training which does not reflect the changing emphasis in language teaching methodology may be blamed. Therefore, it is clear that the curricula of teacher education institutions should be revised and practicing teachers should be supported with professional development practices on why and how culture should be given the place it deserves. Below is a review of studies exemplifying some recent methods of integrating culture into language classes, which could give language teaching professionals some ideas.

2.8. Studies on Integration of Culture into Language Classes

The review of literature in the previous section makes it clear that teachers are well aware of the need to teach culture, and willing to do it, but not truly guided about how to do it. On the other hand, there have been attempts in designing more effective ways to make incorporation of culture into language classes possible.

In such an attempt, Byon (2007) set up a culture portfolio project to investigate ways of enhancing cross-cultural awareness in a Korean Culture class at an American university. He stressed that many learners were unaware of the role that their L1 culture schema played when they tried to learn about and understand the target culture, and that is why they formed certain biased cultural viewpoints and stereotypes. In this respect, culture curricula should primarily focus on promoting positive attitudes towards the target culture by eliminating stereotypes, and earlier research (e.g. Abrams, 2002; Allen, 2004; Barro et al., 1993; Jogan et al., 2001; Wright, 2000) proved culture portfolios to be effective tools in doing so (as cited in Byon, 2007). Following the seven steps of Allen's (2004) study, Byon (2007) asked students to form a hypothesis on an aspect of Korean culture, test it through research and compare it to their L1 culture. Analyzing students' portfolios, pre-post questionnaires and presentations, he concluded that through culture portfolios, students gained not only factual information about the target culture but also

insights into culture learning by modifying stereotypes and developing an open and positive attitude.

In her study, Su (2008) also sought to find out effective methods of incorporating culture into EFL education and carried out a project on the use of ethnographic interviews as one of the class requirements of English Listening Course for students majoring in international business in Taiwan. As a result of the data collected through pre and post questionnaires, oral and written reports, classroom observation and interviews, she concluded that the interviews with the members of the target language cultures helped students experience culture through the process of creating meaning by interaction and proved to be more useful than presentation of cultural facts. She provided plenty of striking quotations from the students to support her further conclusion that ethnographic interviews facilitated students' understanding of target cultures, awareness of cultural similarities and differences between their home country and target language countries as well as their global awareness. Besides, in addition to their confidence in using English to communicate and willingness for future cross-cultural communication opportunities, their listening and speaking abilities were improved.

Lockley and Yashida (2014) also believed that face to face interaction with members of other cultures contributed to participants in affective (i.e., increase in proficiency, motivation, and willingness to communicate) cultural (i.e., intercultural communication experience) and social (i.e., diminishing feelings of otherness and alienation) domains. One way of doing this was making overseas students who were learning the local language and culture meet local students who were learning English. The participants of the study, 25 Japanese EFL students and students of different nationalities learning Japanese, participated in language and culture exchange (LCE) events organized by their instructors at a Japanese university. The first of three thirty-minute sessions was all about self-introductions in groups of four and unplanned conversation in any language. The second session was carried out in Japanese by learners of Japanese about their home countries, and the third session was carried out in English by Japanese learners of English. The researchers were of the opinion that the fact that everybody spoke in their L2 or even L3 (third language) put no one at advantage and created equality. The data were obtained via post LCE reflections of the students and findings were categorized

under two headings: a) language learning benefits such as increase in motivation and communication confidence and reflection on one's own language use and conversational issues, b) sociocultural benefits such as cultural exchange, friendship and reflections on one's own culture. The researchers also proposed a framework of ten guidelines for LCE type classes based on previous literature and their research and argued strongly that language educators should take this opportunity to make LCE or similar activities a part of their curriculum.

Keranen and Bayyurt (2006) designed an intercultural telecollaboration project between Mexican in-service and Turkish pre-service EFL teachers. They obtained data from the participants' online exchanges, their final reports and usage statistics to explore how they communicated their cultures and whether they thought they gained any cultural understanding. Online exchanges included explanations of cultural features of their own cultures, asking for information and clarification, and expressions of interest, surprise, personal feelings and opinions about other posts. In their final reports, participants asserted that they liked being a part of this process and that they even learned about their own culture along with other culture. Many Turkish participants also expressed surprise at the similarities between the cultures. Except for one participant, who reported being offended by a post, all participants had positive reactions about the project, and believed that they achieved some degree of cultural understanding.

A bigger project, *Cultura*, was developed in Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1997 by a team from Foreign Languages and Literatures, Sabina Levet, Shoggy Waryn and Gilberte Fursternberg with the ultimate goal of promoting intercultural competence (Fursternberg, 2010; Fursternberg et al., 2001) The students, who were low-intermediate MIT students taking French and students of a French university taking English, interacted via a common website by analyzing a variety of textual and visual materials and sharing their perspectives on them. Online discussion forums enabled them to exchange ideas, make assumptions, and collaboratively gain a gradual and better understanding of the other culture. However, one interesting fact about the project was that students expressed themselves in their mother tongue, so the language practice was only through the authentic texts they read. According to Fursternberg (2010), the project was not about 'teaching language followed by culture',

but ‘teaching language within culture’, and it should inspire such courses in the future because it showed:

- Making intercultural understanding the main focus of even a low intermediate class is indeed possible.
- It highlights the central role played by technology.
- The use of technology in turn generates a new methodology, where students themselves, by virtue of being involved in a dynamic, interactive process with their foreign friends gradually construct their knowledge and understanding of the other culture.
- Taking such an approach clearly implies a new role for the teacher is no longer the sole purveyor or transmitter of information or the only voice of authority.
- Such an approach to culture reverses the usual equation between language and culture, raising a new question- the very opposite, in fact, of the traditional one, namely: “What is the place of language in such a culture-based course?” (p.331).

Indeed, these features of the *Cultura* project might be found to be employing many of the basic assets of the methodology for developing intercultural communicative competence, proposed by Byram et al. (2002). Fursternberg et al. (2001) showed their strong belief in their project in 2001, and Fursternberg (2010) proudly indicated the project had been adapted to some other languages in the USA, such as Chinese, German, Italian, Japanese, Mexican, Russian and Spanish since then.

Genç and Bada (2005) sought to explore about the effects of a culture class incorporated into the curriculum of the ELT department of Çukurova University. Thirty eight third year students took a 28-hour class, during which lecture-type sessions and research project presentations were held. At the end of the term, they completed a questionnaire designed to explore the effects of the class on four areas, language skills, cultural awareness, attitude towards the target culture, and contribution to the prospective teaching profession. The findings revealed that all the participants believed that the class contributed to their language skills, especially speaking. The majority believed that it also helped them raise cultural awareness and change their attitudes towards the target culture. In the final open-ended section, the participants were asked about how the culture class might contribute to their future teaching profession, and their answers were grouped under six headings (p.78-80).

- Teaching language is also teaching culture.
- Familiarization with the target culture
- Assistance in teaching grammar
- Enhancing communicative competence in L2
- Expanding vocabulary
- Providing information prior to a visit to the UK or the USA

The researchers suggested that culture classes should be incorporated in the curriculum of ELT departments for the benefits above and noted that their study provided evidence justifying the views of language teaching professional in favour of a language class.

Rafieyan, Eng and Mohamed (2013) investigated the attitude of Iranian language learners towards the incorporation of cultural components of the United States into their classroom instruction. During a two-month-long semester, the rich cultural content of the course book used at the language institute was further supplemented with articles and videos which gave detailed information about landmarks, traditional activities for holidays and festivals, as well as various aspects of cultural behaviors such as greetings, apologizing and thanking. The findings of the questionnaire implemented at the end of the semester revealed positive attitudes towards the cultural elements in the affective, behavioral, and more significantly cognitive domains. The participants enjoyed learning about the target language community, wanted to learn more and found the experience useful.

To sum up, there are many things that can be done to make culture an element at the very core of language teaching. Even a few supplements to usual classes make a difference, yet it is worth the effort to go for bigger changes, and design the whole content of the classes accordingly.

2.9. Conclusion

In this chapter, the relevant literature on the definitions of culture, the relationship between language and culture, culture in language teaching, culture in ELL departments, and various studies on student and teacher perceptions as well as how to incorporate culture into the classroom is reviewed. The next chapter will focus on the methodology of the present study, including the participants, setting, data collection methods and data analysis.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The overall aim of the present study is to explore various aspects of ELL students' perceptions of the target culture and its teaching. To this end, 81 participants from the 1st year and 82 participants from the 4th year ELL students of Erciyes University, a state university in Turkey, participated in the study. Data were collected via two different instruments, a questionnaire, the Target Culture Perception Questionnaire, (see Appendix A) and semi- structured interviews (for interview questions, see Appendix B). The questionnaire was administered in English, but the interview sessions were carried out in Turkish and they were later translated into English by the researcher. The data from the questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively, while the data gathered from semi-structured interviews were analyzed qualitatively, following coding procedures.

In this respect, this study addresses the following research questions:

1. What are ELL students' perceptions of incorporating cultural elements into language learning/teaching?
2. Which culture/cultures should be incorporated into language learning/teaching?
3. What are ELL students' perceptions of the target culture?
 - 3.1. What is ELL students' attitude towards the target culture?
 - 3.2. How much importance do ELL students attribute to certain aspects of the target culture?
 - 3.3. How much do ELL students think they know about these aspects?
 - 3.4. How do ELL students perceive
 - a. target culture teaching practices in their departments?
 - b. their own practices related to the target culture?
4. To what extent do the responses of 1st and 4th year ELL students relate to each other?

This chapter aims to present information about the methodology of the research under five subheadings. First, the participants and the setting of the study will be introduced, and secondly, the research design applied in the study will be explained briefly. In the third section, data collection instruments will be presented, followed by the research procedure, including piloting the instruments and the data collection process. In the fifth section, the general procedure for data analysis will be introduced.

3.2. Participants and Setting

The participants of the study consisted of 81 first year and 82 fourth year ELL students studying at Erciyes University, a state university in Kayseri, Turkey. Five participants from each group were also interviewed. All participants were selected randomly and they all voluntarily participated in the questionnaire and interview sessions. The first four items of the questionnaire were designed to collect data about the participants, and the tables below show the demographic information of the participants.

Table 1. Age distribution of the participants

Year		Up to 19	20-22	23-25	26 and more	
Age	1 st Year	N	16	63	1	1
		%	19.8	77.8	1.2	1.2
	4 th Year	N	0	28	37	17
		%	0	34.1	45.1	20.8

Table 2. Gender distribution of the participants

Year		Female	Male	
Gender	1 st Year	N	65	16
		%	80.2	19.8
	4 th Year	N	56	26
		%	68.3	31.7

Table 3. The time the participants spent learning English

		Year	Up to 8 Years	9-12	13-16	17 and more
How long have you been learning English?	1 st Year	N	13	50	17	1
		%	16	61.7	21	1.2
	4 th Year	N	16	33	23	10
		%	19.5	40.2	28	12.2

Table 1 displays that the majority of the 1st year students (77.8%) are 20-22 years old and the majority of the 4th year students (45.1%) are 23-25 years old. However, there are also 16 participants (19.8%) in the 1st year group who are 19 or younger and 17 participants (20.8%) in the 4th year group who are 26 or older. Secondly, most of the participants in both 1st year and 4th year groups are females (80.2% and 68.3% respectively) though there are more males in the 4th year group (31.7% compared to 19.8%). Table 3 provides information about how long the participants have been learning English; more than half of the 1st year students (61.7%) and nearly half of the 4th year students (40.2%) have been learning English for 9-12 years.

Table 4. The participants' experience abroad

		Year	Yes	No	Chi Square
Have you ever been abroad?	1 st Year	N	9	72	X²=12.323; p<.05
		%	11.1	88.9	
	4 th Year	N	28	54	
		%	34.1	65.9	

As shown in Table 4, the participants were also asked to specify whether they had ever been abroad, and a chi-square test was conducted to see whether 1st year students and 4th year students differed in their experience abroad. The result ($X^2=12.323$; $p<.05$) revealed a statistically significant difference between 1st and 4th year students. In the 1st year group, 11.1% of the participants reported that they had been abroad before; however, the rate was 34.1% in the 4th year group. It is clear that 4th year students have more international experience compared to 1st year students. In addition, the respondents who gave a positive answer to this item were also asked to specify which country/countries they had been to and how long they had stayed there. The findings

revealed that 1st year students had mainly visited European countries such as Belgium, Holland, Czech Republic, Italy, Austria, Germany, Slovakia and Hungary for periods ranging from 5 days to 2 months. One student reported that she lived in Germany for ten years and only one student mentioned a non-European country, Saudi Arabia, where he stayed for one month. On the other hand, among fourth year students, there were 10 students who lived in various countries such as Austria, Australia, Germany, Holland, England and Scotland for 5-20 years. In addition to European countries such as Germany, Poland, Sweden and Lithuania, three of the 4th year students reported that they had been to Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi and Iraq for 1-3 months; another three of them told that they had been to the USA for 1-3 months, and one participant expressed that he had been to Japan for 3 months. To sum up, it can also be concluded that 4th year students' international experience is a lot more varied than their 1st year counterparts'.

Additionally, five participants from each of the 1st year and 4th year groups were interviewed. The interviewees can be characterized as shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5. General characteristics of the interviewees

Interviewee	Year	Gender	Age	Learning English For	Been Abroad	Where
Interviewee 1	1 st year	Female	21	12	Yes	Holland
Interviewee 2	1 st year	Female	21	9	No	
Interviewee 3	1 st year	Female	20	10	Yes	Austria/Hungary
Interviewee 4	1 st year	Male	21	9	Yes	England/Egypt Spain/Germany
Interviewee 5	1 st year	Female	21	11	No	
Interviewee 6	4 th year	Female	22	12	No	
Interviewee 7	4 th year	Male	23	9	No	
Interviewee 8	4 th year	Female	24	14	Yes	Grew up in Holland
Interviewee 9	4 th year	Male	22	12	No	
Interviewee 10	4 th year	Female	23	13	Yes	Grew up in Germany

As Table 5 demonstrates, the majority of the participants were females and their ages ranged from 20 to 24. They had been learning English for 9-14 years. Three of them had been abroad and two of them had been living abroad before they came to Turkey for their university education.

3.3. Research Design

In this study, a mixed-methods research design was applied. A mixed-methods study requires the combination of both quantitative and qualitative approaches in a single research, “as complementary means of investigating the complex phenomena at work” (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 164). While “quantitative research generally starts with an experimental design in which a hypothesis is followed by the quantification of data and some sort of numerical analysis is carried out, in qualitative research, the analysis is interpretive rather than statistical” (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 2). According to Mackey and Gass (2005), it might be a good idea to adopt a mixed research design since “when included in a primarily quantitative report, qualitative data may provide unique insights that would escape both the researcher and the reader if statistical counts and analyses were used in isolation” (p. 307). In the present study, quantitative and qualitative data obtained via a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were integrated in order to be able to provide more comprehensive answers to the research questions.

3.4. Instruments

This section aims to introduce the instruments used to collect data; namely, the Target Culture Perception Questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Detailed information on both instruments will be provided below under separate headings.

3.4.1. Target Culture Perception Questionnaire

To examine the participant students’ perceptions of the target culture, a questionnaire was designed by the researcher by adapting the data collection instruments of several researchers (Çalışkan, 2009; Şen, 2010; Yılmaz, 2006) and by adding various other items to comply with the purpose of the study (Appendix A). The questionnaire had three main parts.

Part I included four items to elicit demographic information providing insights into the characteristics of the participants as explained above (Items 1, 2, 3 and 4). Item 5 was

inspired by Yılmaz (2006), and two other items, 6 and 9 were written by the researcher. The remaining items in this part were either directly taken or modified from Çalışkan's (2009) questionnaire according to the purpose of the current study. Each item except for Item 9 had the option of 'other' to enable further comments on the part of the students.

Part II had two items which were included to investigate the participants' perceptions related to certain aspects of the target culture. After a thorough examination of previously used lists of topics/aspects usually addressed in language classes, it was decided to use the aspects provided in the CEFR by The Council of Europe (2001, p. 102-103). Seven aspects are listed under the heading of 'sociocultural knowledge' in the CEFR as the areas which distinctive characteristics of a community may relate to and several examples are provided. Using these aspects and some of their examples, an importance scale of 5, ranging from 'Very Important' (4), 'Important' (3), 'Somewhat Important' (2), 'Not Very Important' (1) to 'Not Important At All' (0) was designed by the researcher (Item 13). For Item 14, the same aspects were used to design a knowledge scale of 5, ranging from 'A lot' (4), 'Quite a Lot' (3), 'Some' (2), 'Little' (1) to 'No' (0).

Part III consisted of 21 items in the form of a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. Items 1, 2, 3, 14, 16 and 17 were either taken or adapted from Şen's (2010) study. Furthermore, items 9, 10, 11 and 12 were adapted from Yılmaz's (2006) study, and the remaining items (4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 13, 15, 18, 19, 20 and 21) were added by the researcher. The reliability coefficient assessed through Cronbach's Alpha was .82, .83 and .81 for Part 1, Part 2, and Part 3, respectively.

3.4.1.1. Piloting of the questionnaire

In order to be able to overcome any unforeseen problems before the actual implementation of the research instrument, a number of measures were taken. First, the research supervisor, who is an expert in language teaching, made comments on the content, length and wording of the questionnaire and some changes were made. Later, it was also shown to a group of English instructors working in the same school as the researcher's to get feedback on the language used. In accordance with their feedback, some items were paraphrased so that the participants could understand the intended meaning more easily. Additionally, an expert on statistics was consulted about the data analysis process, and the questionnaire was finalized for pilot-testing after another

session with the research supervisor. According to Mackey and Gass (2005), a pilot test is “an important means of assessing the feasibility and usefulness of the data collection methods and making any necessary revisions before they are used with the research participants” (p. 43). To this end, the questionnaire was piloted with a group of 50 ELL students. The researcher was present during pilot-testing to respond to any inquiries made by the participants. For example, although the word ‘most’ in Part I- Item 5 and 6, and the word ‘main’ in Part I- Item 7 and 8 had been used to guide the participants to choose only one option, the researcher was frequently asked whether they could choose more than one. Therefore, the sentence “Choose only one” was added to the instructions of the above mentioned four items. It was also observed that several students did not know that England and Scotland was a part of the UK. They did not choose the option ‘the UK’, but rather chose the option ‘Other’ and then wrote England or Scotland for Part I- Item 5 and 6. Thus, England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland were added in brackets next to the option ‘the UK’ after piloting.

3.4.2. Semi-structured interviews

As the main qualitative data collection instrument, semi-structured interviews consisting of a total of 7 questions prepared by the researcher were designed (Appendix B). Mackey & Gass (2005) point out that “interviews can allow researchers to investigate phenomena that are not directly observable, such as learners’ self-reported perceptions or attitudes” (p. 173). Since the aim of the present study was to find out about the participants’ perceptions of the target culture, interviews were considered invaluable tools providing insights into them.

The interviews were conducted with five 1st year and five 4th year students. They took approximately 10-15 minutes each. The amount of the time each interview took and the number of the questions each interviewee received varied because of the semi-structured nature of the interviews. The interviewees gave consent to having their voices recorded during the interviews for transcription and data analysis. The interviews were carried out in Turkish, the interviewees’ mother tongue, in order to enable them focus more on the content, rather than the language, and to “remove the concerns about the proficiency of the learner impacting the quality and quantity of the data provided” (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 174). The real names of the respondents were anonymous, and numbers were used to identify each interviewee.

3.4.2.1. Piloting the Interviews

The interviews were also piloted with 3 students in order to be able to ensure the understandability and clarity of the interview questions. Based on the researcher's observations and feedback and suggestions from the interviewees, two of the questions were paraphrased and shortened.

3.5. Data Collection Procedure

The finalized version of the Target Culture Perception Questionnaire was administered to first and fourth year ELL students during their class time in April, 2015. The researcher was present during the administration of the questionnaire to be able to answer any possible questions from the participants. After the questionnaires were analyzed, the interview questions were revised based on the results from the questionnaire and finalized. The interviews were conducted in June, 2015. They were recorded and later transcribed by the researcher.

3.6. Data Analysis

The data collected for the present study were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative analysis of the data gathered from the questionnaire was carried out using SPSS 22.0 and included descriptive statistics, chi-square measures and t-tests. The first four items in Part I, which provided demographic information about the participants, were analysed through descriptive statistics. On the other hand, the rest of the items in this part were analysed through inferential statistics. For these items, chi-square tests were carried out in order to see whether there were statistically significant differences between the responses of 1st year and 4th year students. According to Larson-Hall (2009), a chi-square test is used to explore if there is a relationship between two variables which are categorical; for example, to investigate if males and females choose different foreign languages to study among alternatives such as Japanese, Spanish, and French. The variable of gender has two groups (i.e., male and female) and there are three groups of languages to choose from. In the present study, there were also two categories (1st year and 4th year students) and it was aimed to see whether they differed in their choices of the categories provided in the various items of the questionnaire.

In Part II, independent-samples t-tests were conducted to make inferences about the differences between 1st year and 4th year students in terms of the importance they attribute to certain aspects of the target culture and their perceived level of knowledge on these aspects. To do this, mean scores were calculated according to the choices the participants make in these sections, and independent-samples t-tests were run to investigate the differences in their scores, as “T-tests answer a very simple question—are two scores the same or different?” (Larson-Hall, 2009, p. 241).

Finally, 5-point Likert type items in Part III were also analyzed through chi-square tests. Furthermore, the data obtained from the second data collection instrument, semi-structured interviews, were analyzed through content analysis, following coding procedures. When coding qualitative data, the researcher looked for recurring patterns and themes and formed the categories, as “the schemes for qualitative coding generally emerge from the data rather than being decided on and pre-imposed prior to the data being collected or coded” (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 241). For example, in the present study, interview questions 1, 2 and 4 were yes/no questions starting with ‘Do you think’. The answers the interviewees gave fell into three groups, depending on whether they agreed, partially agreed or disagreed with the statement: ‘Yes’, ‘Not sure/It Depends’, and ‘No’. Similarly, for the 3rd interview question asking whether they had any negative ideas, the responses were grouped into three categories: ‘Yes’, ‘Not so many’, and ‘No’. Another group of three categories, -‘Improved a lot’, ‘Improved a bit’ and ‘Did not improve’- emerged when the responses to the 5th question (In what ways do you think your knowledge and understanding of the target culture has changed over the months/ years you have spent studying at this department?) were analyzed. Besides, the additional information given by the interviewees were further coded considering the recurring expressions. For example, in this item, the participants were found to be mainly stating two aspects of the contribution that their departments made; firstly to their knowledge and secondly to their personal interest about the target culture. Finally, in the 6th and 7th questions, the interviewees were asked ‘what’ questions, and their various answers were listed in relevant tables. These categories presented in tables were further clarified and supported by paraphrases and quotations from students.

3.7. Conclusion

In this chapter, the methodology of the present research was described in detail, giving information about the participants and setting, research design, instruments, data collection procedure and data analysis. The relevant findings gained from the data analysis procedures will be presented in reference to the research questions in the next chapter.



CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

4.1. Introduction

This study aimed to investigate the target culture perceptions of the first and final year students studying ELL at a state university in Turkey, namely, Erciyes University. It was also designed to examine various aspects of the role of culture in language learning and teaching and further attempted to explore the participants' perceptions of target culture teaching practices in their departments as well as their attempts to enrich their cultural competence. In this respect, a questionnaire, the Target Culture Perception Questionnaire, and semi-structured interviews were implemented. Data gathered through the questionnaire were analyzed through chi-square tests and t-tests, using SPSS 22.0. Furthermore, the data obtained from the interviews were analyzed through content analysis following coding procedures.

In this chapter, the relevant findings gained from the data analysis procedures will be presented in reference to the research questions. The research questions this study attempts to address are as follows:

1. What are ELL students' perceptions of incorporating cultural elements into language learning/teaching?
2. Which culture/cultures should be incorporated into language learning/teaching?
3. What are ELL students' perceptions of the target culture?
 - 3.1. What is ELL students' attitude towards the target culture?
 - 3.2. How much importance do ELL students attribute to certain aspects of the target culture?
 - 3.3. How much do ELL students think they know about these aspects?
 - 3.4. How do ELL students perceive
 - a. target culture teaching practices in their departments?
 - b. their own practices related to the target culture?

4. To what extent do the responses of 1st and 4th year ELL students relate to each other?

First, second and third research questions will be addressed under relevant headings and the fourth research question exploring whether there is a significant difference between the responses of first and final year students will be discussed under each of these headings. In addition, the questionnaire items whose findings yielded significant differences between the two groups will be presented again under a new heading.

4.2. ELL Students' Perceptions of Incorporating Cultural Elements into Language Learning/ Teaching

The first research question the present study aimed to answer focused on ELL students' perceptions of incorporating cultural elements into language learning/ teaching. To this end, the participants were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with certain statements related to the issue. They were also asked about their reactions when provided with cultural information, the main aim of presenting cultural information in language learning, and advantages of learning cultural information. The findings in Tables 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 show the chi-square results for the questionnaire items designed to explore the participants' perceptions regarding the matters listed above.

Table 6. Incorporating cultural elements in language learning/teaching

Part III Items 1-13-15	Year						X ²	
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree		
English can be taught without any links to culture	1 st year	N	39	27	7	7	1	X ² =3.723; p>.05
		%	48.1	33.3	8.6	8.6	1.2	
	4 th year	N	31	29	6	14	2	
		%	37.8	35.4	7.3	17.1	2.4	
Cultural information given during instruction should be assessed in exams	1 st year	N	8	16	27	27	3	X ² =2.257; p>.05
		%	9.9	19.8	33.3	33.3	3.7	
	4 th year	N	7	19	23	26	7	
		%	8.5	23.2	28	31.7	8.5	
I would try to give cultural information to my students if I were a teacher of English	1 st year	N	3	3	2	35	38	X ² =9.557; p<.05
		%	3.7	3.7	2.5	43.2	46.9	
	4 th year	N	3	1	11	38	29	
		%	3.7	1.2	13.4	46.3	35.4	

Table 6 demonstrates that totally 81.4% of the 1st year and 73.2% of the 4th year students disagreed that English can be taught without any links to culture, while 9.8% of the 1st year and 19.5% of the 4th year students (in total) believed that this is possible. A chi-square test was administered to identify to what extent the participants' answers differed from each other, and the test result was $X^2=3.723$; $p>.05$, suggesting a statistically insignificant difference. Table 6 also shows that 37% of the 1st year students and 40.2% of the 4th year students reported that cultural information given during instruction should be assessed in exams. The percentage of the students who disagreed with the idea was 29.7% in the 1st year group and 31.7% in the 4th year group. There was no statistically significant difference ($X^2=2.257$; $p>.05$) between the perceptions of these two student groups. Finally, 90.1% of the 1st year students pointed out that they would try to give cultural information to their students if they were teachers of English, and 81.7% of the 4th year students also agreed with this statement. Only 7.4% disagreed and 2.5% remained undecided in the 1st year group. On the other hand, there were fewer students who disagreed (4.9%), but more students who were undecided (13.4%) in the 4th year group. Considering these findings, a chi-square test was administered to identify to what extent the participants' answers differed from each other, and the test result was $X^2=9.557$; $p<.05$, suggesting a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of these groups. This meant that 1st year students reported to have a higher level of enthusiasm to give cultural information when working as a teacher.

Table 7 below displays how the participants reacted to cultural information presented in class and whether 1st year and 4th year students differed in this respect.

Table 7. Main reactions when provided with cultural information

Part 1 Item 7	Year								X ²
		Interested (positive reactions)	Analytical (analyzing, comparing with my own culture)	Skeptical (questioning, doubting whether it is true or useful)	Rejected (negative reactions)	No reaction at all	Other		
What is your main reaction when you are provided with cultural information?	1 st Year	N	40	33	8	0	0	0	X ² =3.801; p>.05
		%	49.4	40.7	9.9	0	0	0	
	4 th Year	N	35	33	11	0	2	1	
		%	42.7	40.2	13.4	0	2.4	1.2	

As shown in Table 7, there was not a statistically significant difference ($X^2=3.801$; $p>.05$) between the responses of 1st and 4th year students regarding their main reaction when provided with cultural information. The majority of both 1st year and 4th year groups reported that they felt interested (49.4% and 42.7% respectively). However, the number of the participants who reported analytical reactions was also very close to these, especially in the 4th year group with a percentage of 40.2%. The fact that nobody chose negative reactions was also another factor highlighting the positive reactions of the students.

As another important aspect, the participants' perceptions of why cultural information should be included in language classes were explored in the questionnaire, and the findings are presented in the table below.

Table 8. The main aim of presenting cultural information

Part I Item 8	Year		Developing an awareness of other cultures and people	Insight into one's own culture	More successful communication	Comparison between own and other cultures	Intellectual development	Familiarization with other cultures	Other	X ²
What should be the main aim of presenting cultural information in language learning?	1 st Year	N	38	3	27	1	7	5	0	X ² =8.456; p>.05
		%	46.9	3.7	33.3	1.2	8.6	6.2	0	
	4 th Year	N	29	5	23	4	16	4	1	
		%	35.4	6.1	28.0	4.9	19.5	4.9	1.2	

The findings shown in Table 8 revealed that 38 (46.9%) of the 1st year and 29 (35.4%) of the 4th year students thought the main aim of presenting cultural information in language learning should be ‘developing an awareness of other people and cultures’. For both 1st year and 4th year groups, ‘more successful communication’ was the second most important aim (33.3% and 28.0% respectively), followed by intellectual development in the third place (8.6% and 19.5% respectively). ‘Familiarization with other cultures’ ranked fourth for 1st year students, with 6.2% of the participants identifying it as the main aim of presenting cultural information, and ‘insight into one’s own culture’ was chosen by the fewest participants (3.7%). On the other hand, in the fourth year group, ‘insight into one’s own culture’ was chosen by more participants (6.1%), making ‘familiarization with other cultures’ one of the least preferred aims of presenting cultural information in language classes (4.9%). However, there was not a statistically significant difference ($X^2=8.456$; $p>.05$) between the responses of these groups.

The participants were also asked whether they thought there were some advantages of learning cultural information in language classes, and Table 9 illustrates the findings.

Table 9. Perceptions of advantages of learning cultural information

Part I	Year		No	Yes	X²
Item 11					
Are there any advantages of learning cultural information in language classes?	1 st Year	N	2	79	X ² =0.000; p>.05
		%	2.5	97.5	
	4 th Year	N	2	80	
		%	2.4	97.6	

Table 9 shows that only 2 participants in each group thought that there were no advantages of learning cultural information in language classes, as opposed to 79 participants (97.5%) in the 1st year group and 80 participants (97.6%) in the 4th year group. According to the results of the chi-square test ($X^2=0.000$; $p>.05$) there was not a difference between the responses of the two groups. The participants were also asked to specify the advantages of learning cultural information. Table 10 below shows the frequency distributions and chi-square test results of the reasons chosen by the participants who wish to learn more.

Table 10. Advantages of learning cultural information

Part I	Year	No	Yes	X²		
Item 11		N	30	51		
	Attaining a global understanding of culture	1 st Year	%	37	63	X²=5.221; p<.05
		4 th Year	N	45	37	
			%	54.9	45.1	
Respecting different cultures	1 st Year	N	41	40	X²=5.280; p<.05	
		%	50.6	49.4		
	4 th Year	N	53	29		
		%	64.6	35.4		
Improving general background knowledge	1 st Year	N	18	63	X²=5.410; p<.05	
		%	22.2	77.8		
	4 th Year	N	32	50		
		%	39	61		
Better communicative competence	1 st Year	N	32	49	X²=0.526; p>.05	
		%	39.5	60.5		
	4 th Year	N	37	45		
		%	45.1	54.9		
Adds interest to teaching and learning the language	1 st Year	N	41	40	X²=0.297; p>.05	
		%	50.6	49.4		
	4 th Year	N	45	37		
		%	54.9	45.1		
Other	1 st Year	N	81	0	X²=0.000; p>.05	
		%	100	0		
	4 th Year	N	82	0		
		%	100	0		

Table 10 displays that for 1st year students, ‘attaining a global understanding of culture’ was indeed a very important reason to learn more cultural information, as it was chosen by 63% of the group. On the other hand, a smaller number of the 4th year students (45.1%) considered this reason important, yielding a statistically significant difference ($X^2=5.221$; $p<.05$). Another advantage which resulted in a statistically significant difference ($X^2=5.280$; $p<.05$) was ‘respecting different cultures’. Nearly half of the 1st year students (49.4%) regarded it as a motive to get more cultural information; however,

the rate was only 35.4% when it comes to 4th year students. Similarly, ‘improving general background knowledge’ was chosen by more participants in the 1st year group (77.8%) than in the 4th year group (61%), and there was a statistically significant difference of $X^2=5.410$; $p<.05$. ‘Better communicative competence’ was considered as an advantage of learning more cultural information by 60.5% of the 1st year students and 54.9% of the 4th year students. There was not a statistically significant difference between their responses ($X^2=0.526$; $p>.05$). In addition, the chi-square test result of $X^2=0.297$; $p>.05$ did not reveal a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of these groups in terms of adding interest to teaching and learning the language, either. Nearly half of the 1st year and 4th year students (49.4% and 45.1%, respectively) agreed that cultural information makes language learning and teaching a more interesting experience. No participants in both groups suggested any other possible reasons.

4.3. Culture/Cultures to Be Incorporated into Language Learning/Teaching

The second research question of the present study aims to explore ELL students’ perceptions of culture/cultures to be incorporated into language learning/teaching. To this end, the participants were asked about the culture they associated most with the English language and the one they most wanted to learn about. Their suggestions on which cultures should be integrated into language classes were also inquired. In this respect, the findings in Table 11 and 12 show the chi-square results for the questionnaire items designed to explore the participants’ perceptions of culture/cultures to be incorporated into language learning/teaching.

Table 11. Target culture perceptions

Part I Item 5-6	Year		The UK	The USA	Australia	Canada	Republic of Ireland	New Zealand	Other	X²
Which country's culture do you associate most with the English language?	1 st Year	N	52	25	3	1	0	0	0	X²=5.234; p>.05
		%	64.2	30.8	3.7	1.2	0	0	0	
	4 th Year	N	44	34	2	0	2	0	0	
		%	53.6	41.5	2.4	0	2.4	0	0	
Which country's culture do you most want to learn about?	1 st Year	N	46	20	4	4	0	2	5	X²=14.663; p<.05
		%	56.8	24.7	4.9	4.9	0	2.5	6.2	
	4 th Year	N	31	22	3	2	6	5	13	
		%	37.8	26.8	3.7	2.4	7.3	6.1	15.9	

As shown in Table 11, 64.2% of the 1st year students associated the English language most with British culture and less than half of this percentage, 30.8%, related English to American culture. However, a smaller percentage (53.6%) of the 4th year students showed preference for British culture and a bigger percentage (41.5%) of them chose American culture. Nevertheless, a statistically significant difference ($X^2=5.234$; $p>.05$) was not found. It is also worth mentioning that in the 1st year group, Republic of Ireland and New Zealand, and in the 4th year group, Canada and New Zealand were not chosen by anybody although they are also countries where English is an/the official language.

Additionally, it was aimed to see whether ELL students wanted to learn most about the culture of the country that they associated most with the English language. More than half of the students in the first year group (56.8%) chose the UK and nearly a quarter of them (24.7%) chose the USA. Although the UK and the USA were still the most commonly chosen counties, there was a clear decrease in the percentages of these two countries compared to their percentages in the previous question because more participants preferred to learn about Australia (4.9%), Canada (4.9%), New Zealand (2.5%) and other counties (6.2%). One participant who chose the option 'other' reported that he wanted to learn most about Japanese culture, the other two of them chose India, and the remaining two did not specify any countries. As for 4th year participants, the UK and the USA were also the most favourite countries chosen by 37.8% and 26.8% respectively; however, the percentages were a lot lower than those of the 1st year students. This was because in the 4th year group, even more participants showed

preference for alternatives such as Republic of Ireland (7.3%), New Zealand (6.1%) and other countries (15.9%). The other countries named were China (1 participant), Egypt (1 participant), Italy (1 participant), Korea (2 participants), Spain (1 participant), and Japan (3 participants). These findings resulted in a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of 1st year and 4th year students ($X^2=14.663$; $p<.05$).

In Part III of the questionnaire, 5 more items were designed to gather more information on ELL students' perceptions of whose culture should be incorporated into language classes and the findings are presented in the table below.

Table 12. Cultures to be incorporated

Part III								
Items 9-10-11-12-21	Year	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	X²	
In our classes there should be more references to elements related to Turkish culture	1 st year	N	9	22	27	15	8	X²=11.431; p<.05
		%	11.1	27.2	33.3	18.5	9.9	
	4 th year	N	3	15	25	33	6	
		%	3.7	18.3	30.5	40.2	7.3	
In our classes there should be more references to elements related to British culture	1 st year	N	5	7	10	35	24	X²=4.759; p>.05
		%	6.2	8.6	12.3	43.2	29.6	
	4 th year	N	2	4	11	47	18	
		%	2.4	4.9	13.4	57.3	22	
In our classes there should be more references to elements related to American culture	1 st year	N	7	10	15	31	18	X²=3.634; p>.05
		%	8.6	12.3	18.5	38.3	22.2	
	4 th year	N	3	9	19	38	13	
		%	3.7	11	23.2	46.3	15.9	
In our classes there should be more references to elements related to other cultures. (e.g. Indian, Chinese, etc.)	1 st year	N	14	23	25	16	3	X²=12.430; p<.05
		%	17.3	28.4	30.9	19.8	3.7	
	4 th year	N	11	9	25	30	7	
		%	13.4	11	30.5	36.6	8.5	
I would be willing to take a separate course on British/American culture	1 st year	N	3	11	19	30	18	X²=1.278; p>.05
		%	3.7	13.6	23.5	37	22.2	
	4 th year	N	4	10	25	27	16	
		%	4.9	12.2	30.5	32.9	19.5	

While only 28.4% of the 1st year students reported that there should be more references to elements related to Turkish culture, nearly half of (47.5% in total) of the 4th year students thought that Turkish culture should be included in language classes. The findings also revealed that the majority of the 1st year students (38.3%) were against this idea. Therefore, the chi-square test result ($X^2=11.431$; $p<.05$) revealed a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of these groups. In addition, a high percentage of both groups agreed that there should be more references to elements related to British culture (72.8% in the 1st year group and 79.3% in the 4th year group). Hence, the chi-square test result ($X^2=4.759$; $p>.05$) did not reveal a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of these groups. Table 12 also shows that students in both groups have a positive attitude towards the inclusion of more elements related to American culture. Totally 60.5% of the 1st year students agreed that there should be more references to American culture and a slightly higher percentage of the 4th year students (62.2%) agreed with the statement. Perceptions of these groups were not significantly different as the chi-square test result was $X^2=3.634$; $p>.05$. However, when it comes to other cultures from all over the world, there was a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of 1st and 4th year students ($X^2=12.430$; $p<.05$). Only 23.5% of the 1st year students thought that there should be more references to elements related to other cultures (e.g., Indian, Chinese, etc.) in their classes, but nearly twice as many students in the 4th year group (45.1% in total) agreed that various cultures should be included in language classes. Another remarkable finding was that in the 1st year group, nearly half of the students (45.7% in total) opposed the idea. The rate was only 24.4% in the 4th year group. Finally, more than half of the participants in each group agreed that they would be willing to take a separate course on British/American culture. The percentage was slightly higher in the 1st year group (59.2%), and it was 52.4% in the 4th year group. 23.5% of the 1st year students and 30.5% of the 4th year students could not decide, and the remaining 17.3% and 17.1% showed unwillingness. The chi-square test result ($X^2=1.278$; $p>.05$) did not reveal a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of these groups.

4.4. ELL Students' Perceptions of the Target Culture

The third research question of the study sought information about ELL students' perceptions of the target culture, namely British/American culture, with its several sub-

questions. First of all, their attitudes towards the target culture were explored. Besides, the importance they attributed to having information about certain aspects of the target culture and the information they thought they had about these aspects were investigated. Additionally, the study aimed to shed light on the participants' perceptions of target culture teaching practices in their departments as well as their own practices to enhance their cultural knowledge and awareness. The data collected for each of these sub-questions are presented under separate headings below.

4.4.1. ELL Students' Attitude towards the Target Culture

ELL students' attitudes towards the British/American culture were explored by various items in the questionnaire and interview questions. The findings in Tables 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 show the chi square results for the questionnaire items designed to explore the participants' attitudes to the target culture. In addition, Tables 19, 20, 21 and 22 display the findings of the interview questions addressing the same research question.

Table 13. Willingness to learn more about British/American culture

Part I Item 10	Year		No	Yes	X ²
Do you want to learn more about British/American culture?	1 st Year	N	2	79	X ² =0.000; p>.05
		%	2.5	97.5	
	4 th Year	N	2	80	
		%	2.4	97.6	

According to the chi-square test result ($X^2=0.000$; $p>.05$), there was not a statistically significant difference between the attitudes of 1st year and 4th year students. As seen in Table 13, only two students in each group did not want to learn more about British/American culture. The vast majority of the students in both 1st year and 4th year groups wanted to learn more, revealing very positive attitudes (97.5% and 97.6% respectively). The participants were also asked to specify the reasons for their willingness or unwillingness to acquire more information on the target culture. Table 14 below shows the frequency distributions and chi- square test results of the reasons of the participants who wish to learn more.

Table 14. Reasons to learn more about British/American culture

Item 10	Year		No	Yes	X ²
I hope to live in the UK/US	1 st Year	N	49	32	X ² =0.526; p>.05
		%	60.5	39.5	
	4 th Year	N	45	37	
		%	54.9	45.1	
I will need it when I become a teacher of English	1 st Year	N	47	34	X ² =0.761; p>.05
		%	58	42	
	4 th Year	N	42	40	
		%	51.2	48.8	
I need it for a better understanding of English literature	1 st Year	N	29	52	X ² =0.809; p>.05
		%	35.8	64.2	
	4 th Year	N	35	47	
		%	42.7	57.3	
It is useful when engaged in communication with native speakers	1 st Year	N	21	60	X ² =10.994; p<.05
		%	25.9	74.1	
	4 th Year	N	42	40	
		%	51.2	48.8	
Other	1 st Year	N	79	2	X ² =0.194; p>.05
		%	97.5	2.5	
	4 th Year	N	79	3	
		%	96.3	3.7	

The first part of Table 14 displays that 39.5% of the 1st year students and 45.1% of the 4th year students wanted to learn more about British/American culture because they hoped to live in the UK or the USA, which did not result in a statistically significant difference ($X^2=0.526$; $p>.05$). Secondly, a higher percentage of both 1st year (42%) and 4th year (48.8%) groups reported that they would need information on British/American culture when they became teachers of English. There was not a statistically significant difference between the responses of the groups in this respect, either. Thirdly, more than half of the 1st year students (64.2%) and 4th year students (57.3%) pointed out that they needed more information for a better understanding of English literature, and no statistically significant difference was found. However, there was a statistically significant difference between 1st year and 4th year students in terms of their demand for

more information on British/American culture because of its usefulness when engaged in communication with native speakers ($X^2=10.994$; $p<.05$). 74.1% of the 1st year students indicated this as a reason for their wish to learn more, yet only 48.8% of the 4th year students found this reason relevant. There were two participants in the 1st year group who also chose the option ‘other’ and added another reason. One student stated that she would need it for her academic career and the other student wrote “just for pleasure”. In the 4th year group, the ‘other’ reasons were “American culture is a point of interest for me” and “I will go abroad”.

The statement “I need it for a better understanding of English literature”, which was one of the most commonly chosen reasons to learn more cultural information in the previous section, was rephrased and another item was designed to gather data about it. The findings are displayed below.

Table 15. Cultural information as background information

Part III Item 8	Year		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	X^2
More cultural background information would help our reading and appreciating British/American literature.	1 st Year	N	1	4	10	34	32	$X^2=1.872$; $p>.05$
		%	1.2	4.9	12.3	42	39.5	
	4 th Year	N	1	2	8	42	29	
		%	1.2	2.4	9.8	51.2	35.4	

As displayed in the table, a very high percentage of both groups agreed that more cultural background information would help their reading and appreciating British/American literature (81.5% in the 1st year group and 86.6% in the 4th year group). Therefore, the chi-square test result ($X^2=1.872$; $p>.05$) did not reveal a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of these groups.

While the vast majority of the students in both groups expressed positive attitudes, stating that they wanted to learn more, only 2 participants in each of the 1st year and 4th year groups stated that they did not want to learn more about British/American culture (see Table 13) and the reasons they chose are shown in the table below:

Table 16. Reasons not to learn more about British/American culture

Part 1 Item 10	Year	No	Yes	X ²	
Some issues may have negative effects on Turkish culture	1 st Year	N	79	2	X ² =0.352; p>.05
		%	97.5	2.5	
	4 th Year	N	81	1	
		%	98.8	1.2	
I find some culture-specific information inappropriate to the classroom environment	1 st Year	N	81	0	X ² =0.000; p>.05
		%	100	0	
	4 th Year	N	82	0	
		%	100	0	
Personally, I do not feel comfortable with some specific culture-based topics	1 st Year	N	81	0	X ² =0.994; p>.05
		%	100	0	
	4 th Year	N	81	1	
		%	98.8	1.2	
Some cultural information is not suitable to my language level	1 st Year	N	81	0	X ² =0.000; p>.05
		%	100	0	
	4 th Year	N	82	0	
		%	100	0	
Particular cultural subjects have sensitive/controversial nature in Turkish culture	1 st Year	N	81	0	X ² =2.000; p>.05
		%	100	0	
	4 th Year	N	80	2	
		%	97.6	2.4	
I already know a great deal about British/American culture	1 st Year	N	81	0	X ² =0.994; p>.05
		%	100	0	
	4 th Year	N	81	1	
		%	98.8	1.2	
Other	1 st Year	N	81	0	X ² =0.000; p>.05
		%	100	0	
	4 th Year	N	82	0	
		%	100	0	

It is clear from Table 16 that the students who did not want to learn more about the British/American culture were concerned about the negative effects on Turkish culture and cultural subjects that had sensitive/controversial nature in Turkish culture. One of the 4th year students remarked that s/he did not feel comfortable with some specific

culture-based topics. No statistically significant differences were found between 1st year and 4th year students.

In a different item, the participants were asked about any possible disadvantages of learning about British/American culture in language classes.

Table 17. Perceptions of the disadvantages of learning about British/ American culture

Part I	Year	No	Yes	X²
Item 12				
Are there any disadvantages of learning about British/American culture in language classes?	1 st Year	N	57	24
		%	70.4	29.6
	4 th Year	N	53	29
		%	64.6	35.4

As Table 17 displays, 57 (70.4%) participants in the 1st year group asserted that there were not any disadvantages of learning cultural information in language classes, whereas the remaining 24 (29.6%) believed that there were some drawbacks. In the 4th year group, a slightly bigger percentage of participants (35.4%) reported that there were some disadvantages, but according to the chi-square test result ($X^2=0.611$; $p>.05$), there was not a statistically significant difference between the responses of the both groups. The participants were also asked to tick the possible disadvantages, and Table 18 below shows the frequency distributions and chi-square test results of the disadvantages chosen by the participants.

Table 18. Disadvantages of learning about British/ American culture

Part I						
Item 12	Year	No	Yes			X²
Indifference to my own culture	1 st Year	N	77			X ² =0.162; p>.05
		%	95.1	4.9		
	4 th Year	N	79			
		%	96.3	3.7		
Over-sympathy to British/ American culture	1 st Year	N	74			X ² =0.945; p>.05
		%	91.4	8.6		
	4 th Year	N	71			
		%	86.6	13.4		
Linguistic and cultural imperialism	1 st Year	N	75			X ² =6.865; p<.05
		%	92.6	7.4		
	4 th Year	N	64			
		%	78	22		
Cultural assimilation	1 st Year	N	63			X ² =0.390; p>.05
		%	77.8	22.2		
	4 th Year	N	67			
		%	81.7	18.3		
Inclusion of too much cultural information creates a boring atmosphere	1 st Year	N	75			X ² =0.071; p>.05
		%	92.6	7.4		
	4 th Year	N	75			
		%	91.5	8.5		
Other	1 st Year	N	81			X ² =0.000; p>.05
		%	100	0		
	4 th Year	N	82			
		%	100	0		

As seen in Table 18, 4 (4.9%) participants in the 1st year group and 3 (3.7%) participants in the 4th year group thought learning cultural information in language classes might lead to ‘indifference to one’s own culture’. ‘Over-sympathy to other cultures’ was also seen as a possible disadvantage by 8.6% of the 1st year students and 13.4% of the 4th year students. ‘Linguistic and cultural imperialism’ was the only disadvantage which reflected a statistically significant difference between the responses of the two groups (X²=6.865; p<.05). 7.4% of the 1st year students regarded it as a

disadvantage but the rate was 22% in the 4th year group. The next item in the list, ‘cultural assimilation’ was considered a disadvantage by 22.2% of the 1st year students and 18.3% of the 4th year students, getting the highest total percentage. The number of the students who thought inclusion of too much cultural information created a boring atmosphere was 6 (7.4%) in the 1st year and 7 (8.5%) in the 4th year group, and there was not a statistically significant difference between their responses. Finally, the participants did not state any other possible disadvantages of learning cultural information in language classes.

The interview questions exploring ELL students’ attitudes also revealed highly positive perceptions in both groups as displayed in Table 19, 20, 21 and 22.

Table 19. Perceptions of a more positive attitude compared to other learners of English

Interview Item 1	Year	Yes	Not sure	No	
Do you think students studying at the Department of ELL have a more positive attitude towards the target culture than other learners of English?	1 st year	N	4	1	0
		%	80	20	0
	4 th year	N	4	1	0
		%	80	20	0

When asked whether they think students studying at the Department of ELL have a more positive attitude towards the target culture than other learners of English, 4 interviewees in the 1st year group (80%) reported that they had a more positive attitude, and they all thought that this was because of their interest in the culture. Interviewee 1, 3, and 5 also added that other learners of English were usually only interested in the language and being able to speak it, but ELL students were interested in both the language and culture. For Interviewee 3, this interest in the culture/s was even one of the most important reasons why she chose her department, and Interviewee 4 believed that the majority of the students in their department were there because they had interest in British/ American culture. On the other hand, Interviewee 5 reported that her interest in the target culture was sparked after she started studying at her department. It was Interviewee 2 who expressed a different opinion, saying she was not very sure whether ELL students had a more positive attitude:

They might just have a more positive attitude than ours because they must know a lot less than us. Maybe from the films they saw, they might think they are cool people, but we learn more and question more. (Interviewee 2)

In the 4th year group, the same number of participants (Interviewee 6, 8, 9 and 10) agreed that they had a more positive attitude and again 1 participant (Interviewee 7) was not sure. According to Interviewee 6, “studying English literature means adopting a more universal attitude, without barriers or restrictions, and having a more open worldview”. That is why she thought they need to have a more positive attitude. Interviewee 8 had a different reason to explain their more positive attitude, very much contradictory to what Interviewee 2 from the 1st year group said above:

I used to have prejudice against British people but now studying at this department I have more knowledge and a more positive attitude. When you get to know about a group of people, you start to feel closer. (Interviewee 8)

For Interviewee 8, the fact that ELL students knew more about the target culture was a reason to have a more positive attitude, whereas Interviewee 2 thought that ELL students might have a less positive attitude because of the very same reason. As quoted above, she thought that the more they learned, the more they questioned. Similar to Interviewee 2, Interviewee 7 was not sure whether ELL students had a more positive attitude, but due to a different reason. He thought it all depended on the person, since some people might just as well have a bigger interest and a more positive attitude than ELL students. Nevertheless, the majority in both groups (80%) believed that their reactions were indeed more positive compared to other learners of English.

As another indicator of positive attitudes, the interviewees were asked whether they enjoyed learning about the target culture and Table 20 illustrates the findings.

Table 20. Perceptions of interest and enjoyment during culture teaching

Interview Item 2	Year				
		Yes	It Depends	No	
Do you think it is interesting and enjoyable to learn about the target culture in addition to being useful?	1 st year	N	4	1	0
		%	80	20	0
	4 th year	N	5	0	0
		%	100	0	0

Table 20 demonstrates that 80% of the 1st year students stated that they found it interesting and enjoyable to learn about the target culture in addition to being useful (Interviewee 1, 2, 3 and 5). Interviewee 3 pointed out that when her instructors started to give cultural information, it immediately attracted her attention: “I compare it to my culture in my head and find these kinds of comparisons very interesting”. Another participant who talked about comparisons to one’s own culture was Interviewee 1. According to her, English history was the most interesting aspect of the target culture. She especially found events such as killing people for religious reasons or fights for the crown interesting because she compared them to Turkish history and seeing similar things, she felt happy that she gained a different perspective. Interviewee 2 also expressed her interest in English history, adding that she especially enjoyed learning about the lives of kings and queens. The only different idea was put forward by Interviewee 4, who said it all depended on the topic. For example, he revealed that he found it very interesting if his instructors talked about songs and daily life, but some other things did not just appeal to him.

On the other hand, all the participants in the 4th year group agreed that information about the target culture really attracted their attention and they enjoyed learning about various aspects of the target culture. Interviewee 6 stated that she especially enjoyed learning about British food and dressing culture and Interviewee 10 found American way of life and the idea of ‘American dream’ very interesting. Interviewee 8 explained her reason to enjoy learning about the target culture as follows: “Learning about a community whose language you like is enjoyable because in a way you learn how to interact with them.” Interviewee 9 also had a similar reason. He said he felt happy, knowing that he would be able to understand them better, both in speech and writing.

Whether the participants had any negative ideas in addition to these self-reported positive perceptions was sought in the next interview question, and the table below shows that they indeed had some, though not many.

Table 21. Perceptions of negative ideas about the target culture

Interview Item 3	Year		Yes	Not so many	No
Do you have any negative ideas about certain aspects of the target culture?	1 st year	N	2	2	1
		%	40	40	20
	4 th year	N	0	3	2
		%	0	60	40

As displayed in Table 21, only one 1st year participant (Interviewee 1) indicated that she did not have any negative ideas about the target culture. She just thought they, having a different religion, and having grown up in different places, were simply different from Turkish people. Interviewee 3 and 5 first asserted that they did not have many negative ideas in general, but then added some criticism. For example, Interviewee 3 said “I just sometimes think British people are cold and reserved because of the films I have seen. They look less friendly compared to Turkish people”. Interviewee 5 reported that she was sad to learn that Shakespeare used the word ‘barbarians’ for Turks and her only negative idea about British/American people was the fact that they themselves had negative ideas about Turks. To Interviewee 2 and 4, who asserted that they indeed had some negative ideas, additional questions of what those negative ideas were and where and how they got them were asked. Interviewee 2 criticized their being easy-going and nonreligious compared to Turkish people:

Sometimes I find them too easy-going, and I think they do not care much about religion. I think I have formed these ideas from the films I have watched and some of my friends who have been to America have told me similar things. (Interviewee 2)

Interviewee 4 objected to cultural imperialism:

I do have negative ideas about these cultures because of some political reasons. I don’t like people who try to live or behave as if they are British

or American, rejecting their own culture. We might have interest in their culture but we are not them. We should never forget about our own culture. There are a few people like this in my department. Learning about the culture and assimilating into the culture are two different things. (Interviewee 4)

In the 4th year group, Interviewee 9 also had political concerns, but from a different perspective. He asserted that British people still had the same mentality about colonialism and their problems with Ireland, but they should change it. He first heard about these things in his history classes in high school and also on the news, but then he searched about them and tried to form his own ideas. However, he added that the British public should not be held responsible for these kinds of things and that he had some positive ideas thanks to his personal contacts, too:

Two of my mother's uncles are married to English women and they are really very good people. They have rules and care about their children. They organize their lives and lives of other people around them. I like the fact that they are very tidy and organized. (Interviewee 9)

Two other participants also indicated that they had some negative ideas. For Interviewee 6, there were some issues in their lifestyles due to sociocultural differences, and Interviewee 8 thought they were unfriendly and snobbish, similarly to Interviewee 3. On the other hand, Interviewee 7 and 10 asserted that they did not have any negative ideas.

As an additional question to the third interview question, the participants were asked about their instructors' attitudes towards the target culture. Table 22 illustrates the findings.

Table 22. Perceptions of instructors' attitudes towards the target culture

Interview Item 3	Year	Too positive	Neutral	Too Negative	
Do you think only positive aspects are focused on during classes?	1 st year	N	0	5	0
		%	0	100	0
	4 th year	N	0	5	0
		%	0	100	0

When asked whether only positive aspects of the target culture were focused on during classes, all interviewees in both groups asserted that their instructors had been neutral so far, neither too positive nor too negative. Three interviewees (Interviewee 1,2 and 4) in the first year group and four interviewees (Interviewee 7, 8, 9, 10) in the 4th year group referred to one of their instructors, who is British, when answering this question and gave very similar answers. Interviewee 1 pointed out that he sometimes criticized his people and they liked the fact that he was objective and he was not taking sides, giving them a chance to build their own ideas. Interviewee 3 also thought that being informed about both the good sides and the bad sides enables them to form their own ideas. She also added that “he sometimes mocks them a little bit and we have a laugh”. Interviewee 7 also mentioned a positive aspect of their instructor’s attitude, claiming that they all felt closer to him because of his neutral, even sometimes critical, attitude towards his own culture.

4.4.2. Perceptions of the Importance ELL Students Attribute to Certain Aspects of the Target Culture

The importance ELL students attribute to having information about certain aspects of the target culture was the second sub-question of the third research question, which focused on ELL students’ perceptions of the target culture. In order to collect data to answer the research question and find out whether there were any differences between the perceptions of 1st year and 4th year students in terms of the importance they attribute to having information about certain aspects of the target culture, an independent samples t-test was conducted. The t-test analysis of the differences is shown in the table below:

Table 23. The importance ELL students attribute to certain aspects of the target culture

Part II Item 13	Year	N	X	Sd	t	p
Everyday living, e.g. food and drink, table manners, public holidays, work hours, leisure (hobbies, sports, media)	1 st year	81	2.88	1.088	-.148	.882
	4 th year	82	2.91	1.140		
Living conditions, e.g. living standards, housing conditions;	1 st year	81	2.73	.975	-1.146	.253
	4 th year	82	2.90	.964		
Interpersonal relations e.g. relations between sexes, family structures and relations, relations in work situations	1 st year	81	3.00	.880	.491	.624
	4 th year	82	2.93	1.016		
Values, beliefs and attitudes in relation to such factors as: social class, institutions, politics, religion, history, tradition and social change, arts (music, visual arts, literature)	1 st year	81	3.35	.824	1.243	.216
	4 th year	82	3.21	.966		
Body language, e.g. gesture, facial expression, posture, eye contact, body contact	1 st year	81	2.86	1.058	.285	.776
	4 th year	82	2.82	1.056		
Social conventions, e.g. punctuality, presents, dress, length of stay, behavioural and conversational conventions and taboos	1 st year	81	2.77	.912	.795	.428
	4 th year	82	2.65	.998		
Ritual behaviour in such areas as: religious observances, birth, marriage, death, celebrations, festivals	1 st year	81	2.96	.843	2.499	.013
	4 th year	82	2.60	1.017		
Total score	1 st year	81	20.54	3.78	.891	.374
	4 th year	82	19.96	4.48		

According to the first set of findings presented in Table 23, the mean score of 1st year students showing the importance they attribute to everyday life aspect of the target culture was 2.88, and it was 2.91 in the 4th year group. The t-test results showed that there was no significant difference between the mean scores of 1st year students and 4th year students ($t=-.148$, $p>.05$). Secondly, the t-value of -1.146 reveals that 1st year students and 4th year students were not different with respect to the importance they attributed to the living conditions of the target culture (with mean scores of 2.73 and 2.90 respectively). In addition, the mean score of 1st year students with regard to the interpersonal relations aspect of the target culture was 3.00, while the mean score of 4th year students was 2.93. These results revealed no statistically significant difference between the two groups ($t=-.491$, $p>.05$). The next aspect, values, beliefs and attitudes, received the highest mean scores in both 1st year and 4th year students (3.35 and 3.21 respectively) and the t-test did not yield any statistically significant differences ($t=1.243$, $p>.05$). Similarly, the mean score of 1st year students (2.86) and 4th year students (2.82) with respect to body language did not result in a statistically significant difference ($t=.285$, $p>.05$). In terms of social conventions, the t-value of $.795$ revealed that 1st year students ($X=2.77$) and 4th year students ($X=2.65$) were not different, either. However, according to the last set of findings, the mean score of 1st year students with regard to the ritual behavior aspect of the target culture is 2.96, while the mean score of 4th year students is 2.60. These results revealed the only statistically significant difference between the two groups ($t=2.499$, $p<.05$) and suggested that 1st year students attributed more importance to having information on ritual behavior in such areas as religious observances, celebrations and festivals, etc. than 4th year students.

Finally, the total mean score of 1st year students was 20.54, and it was 19.96 for 4th year students. The t-value of $.891$ revealed that 1st year students and 4th year students were not different with respect to the importance they attribute to all these aspects of the target culture. This finding suggested that both groups of students held similar perceptions and on a scale of five, from 'not important at all' to 'very important', they found it 'important' to have information about these aspects of British/American culture. For clarity purposes, another table which shows the ranking of the importance attributed to these aspects of the target culture was designed. The table below shows the results.

Table 24. Rank order of importance attributed to certain aspects of the target culture

Rank (In terms of mean)	1st Year	4th Year
1.	Values, beliefs and attitudes in relation to such factors as: social class, institutions, politics, religion, history, arts (music, visual arts, literature), tradition and social change (Mean=3.35)	Values, beliefs and attitudes in relation to such factors as: social class, institutions, politics, religion, history, arts (music, visual arts, literature), tradition and social change (Mean=3.21)
2.	Interpersonal relations e.g. relations between sexes, family structures and relations, relations in work situations (Mean=3.00)	Interpersonal relations e.g. relations between sexes, family structures and relations, relations in work situations (Mean=2.93)
3.	Ritual behaviour in such areas as: religious observances, birth, marriage, death, celebrations, festivals (Mean=2.96)	Everyday living, e.g. food and drink, table manners, public holidays, work hours, leisure (hobbies, sports, media) (Mean=2.91)
4.	Everyday living, e.g. food and drink, table manners, public holidays, work hours, leisure (hobbies, sports, media) (Mean=2.88)	Living conditions, e.g. living standards, housing conditions; (Mean=2.90)
5.	Body language, e.g. gesture, facial expression, posture, eye contact, body contact (Mean=2.86)	Body language, e.g. gesture, facial expression, posture, eye contact, body contact (Mean=2.82)
6.	Social conventions, e.g. punctuality, presents, dress, length of stay, behavioural and conversational conventions and taboos (Mean=2.77)	Social conventions, e.g. punctuality, presents, dress, length of stay, behavioural and conversational conventions and taboos (Mean=2.65)
7.	Living conditions, e.g. living standards, housing conditions; (Mean=2.73)	Ritual behaviour in such areas as: religious observances, birth, marriage, death, celebrations, festivals (Mean=2.60)

Firstly, both 1st year and 4th year students found it ‘very important’ to have information about values, beliefs and attitudes, and this aspect was ranked as the first in both groups, as the Table 24 shows. The other aspects were all considered to be ‘important’ to have information about, though with changing means as listed above in the table.

4.4.3. Perceptions of ELL Students' Knowledge about Certain Aspects of the Target Culture

The third sub-question of the third research question focusing on ELL students' perceptions of the British/American culture aimed to investigate their perceived level of information about certain aspects of the target culture. An independent-samples t-test was conducted to gather data about it and to see if 1st year students and 4th year students differed on how much they think they know about these aspects of the target culture. The results are shown in Table 25.

Table 25. Perceptions of knowledge on certain aspects of the target culture

Part II Item 14	Year	N	X	Sd	t	p
Everyday living, e.g. food and drink, table manners, public holidays, work hours, leisure (hobbies, sports, media)	1 st year	81	2.40	.960	-1.379	.170
	4 th year	82	2.62	.911		
Living conditions, e.g. living standards, housing conditions;	1 st year	81	2.64	.951	.893	.373
	4 th year	82	2.52	.906		
Interpersonal relations e.g. relations between sexes, family structures and relations, relations in work situations	1 st year	81	2.48	1.001	-1.879	.042
	4 th year	82	2.77	.947		
Values, beliefs and attitudes in relation to such factors as: social class, institutions, politics, religion, history, tradition and social change, arts (music, visual arts, literature)	1 st year	81	2.65	1.063	-1.887	.041
	4 th year	82	2.94	.851		
Body language, e.g. gesture, facial expression, posture, eye contact, body contact	1 st year	81	2.14	1.126	-2.637	.009
	4 th year	82	2.60	1.110		
Social conventions, e.g. punctuality, presents, dress, length of stay, behavioural and conversational conventions and taboos	1 st year	81	2.22	.962	-.524	.601
	4 th year	82	2.30	1.050		
Ritual behaviour in such areas as: religious observances, birth, marriage, death, celebrations, festivals	1 st year	81	2.26	1.070	-1.009	.314
	4 th year	82	2.41	.888		
Total score	1 st year	81	16.82	4.98	-1.819	.049
	4 th year	82	18.17	4.43		

Table 25 demonstrates that the mean score of 1st year students showing the amount of information they thought they had about everyday living aspect of the target culture was 2.40, and it was 2.62 for the 4th year students. The t-test results showed that there was no significant difference between the mean scores of 1st year students and 4th year students ($t=-1.379$, $p>.05$). Similarly, the t-value of .893 revealed that 1st year students and 4th year students were not different with respect to their knowledge on the living conditions of the target culture (with mean scores of 2.64 and 2.52 respectively). However, the mean score of 1st year students with regard to the interpersonal relations aspect of the target culture was 2.48, while the mean score of 4th year students was 2.77. These results revealed a statistically significant difference between the two groups ($t=-1.879$, $p<.05$). The next aspect, values, beliefs and attitudes, received the highest mean scores from both 1st year and 4th year students (2.65 and 2.94 respectively) and the t-test yielded a statistically significant difference ($t=-1.887$, $p<.05$). In addition, the mean score of 1st year students ($X=2.14$) and 4th year students ($X=2.60$) with respect to body language also resulted in a statistically significant difference ($t=-2.637$, $p<.05$). In these above-mentioned three aspects with statistically significant differences, 4th year students had higher mean scores, which suggested that the amount of information 4th year students thought they had was more than the amount of information 1st year students thought they had. In terms of social conventions, the t-value of .524 revealed that 1st year students ($X=2.22$) and 4th year students ($X=2.30$) were not different. According to the last set of findings, the mean score of 1st year students with regard to the ritual behavior aspect of the target culture was 2.26, while the mean score of 4th year students was 2.41. These results did not reveal a statistically significant difference between the two groups ($t=-1.009$, $p>.05$).

Finally, the total mean score was 16.82 for 1st year students and 18.17 for 4th year students. The t-value of -1.819 revealed that the 1st year students and 4th year students felt differently with respect to the amount of knowledge they thought they had. While 1st year students thought they had ‘some’ information on these aspects of British/American culture, 4th year students thought they had ‘quite a lot’ of information. For clarity purposes, another table which shows the ranking of the perceptions of knowledge on certain aspects of the target culture was designed. Table 26 below shows the results.

Table 26. Rank Order of Knowledge on Certain Aspects of the Target Culture

Rank (In terms of mean)	1st Year	4th Year
1.	Values, beliefs and attitudes in relation to such factors as: social class, institutions, politics, religion, history, arts (music, visual arts, literature), tradition and social change (Mean=2.65)	Values, beliefs and attitudes in relation to such factors as: social class, institutions, politics, religion, history, arts (music, visual arts, literature), tradition and social change (Mean=2.94)
2.	Living conditions, e.g. living standards, housing conditions; (Mean=2.64)	Interpersonal relations e.g. relations between sexes, family structures and relations, relations in work situations (Mean=2.77)
3.	Interpersonal relations e.g. relations between sexes, family structures and relations, relations in work situations (Mean=2.48)	Everyday living, e.g. food and drink, table manners, public holidays, work hours, leisure (hobbies, sports, media) (Mean=2.62)
4.	Everyday living, e.g. food and drink, table manners, public holidays, work hours, leisure (hobbies, sports, media) (Mean=2.40)	Body language, e.g. gesture, facial expression, posture, eye contact, body contact (Mean=2.60)
5.	Ritual behaviour in such areas as: religious observances, birth, marriage, death, celebrations, festivals (Mean=2.26)	Living conditions, e.g. living standards, housing conditions; (Mean=2.52)
6.	Social conventions, e.g. punctuality, presents, dress, length of stay, behavioural and conversational conventions and taboos (Mean=2.22)	Ritual behaviour in such areas as: religious observances, birth, marriage, death, celebrations, festivals (Mean=2.41)
7.	Body language, e.g. gesture, facial expression, posture, eye contact, body contact (Mean=2.14)	Social conventions, e.g. punctuality, presents, dress, length of stay, behavioural and conversational conventions and taboos (Mean=2.30)

On a scale of five, from 'no' (0) to 'a lot' (4), 1st year students believed that they had 'quite a lot' (3) of information on the first three aspects of the Table 26 above: 'values, beliefs and attitudes', 'living conditions', and 'interpersonal relations'. However, they only had 'some' (2) information on the remaining four aspects, as also shown in Table 26. 4th year students reported to have 'quite a lot' (3) of information on all of the aspects, except the last aspect, social conventions. In general, 4th year students were found to have higher self efficacy beliefs regarding their knowledge about these aspects of the target culture.

The questionnaire also included Likert type items on the participants' perceptions of the information they had about the target culture and the findings are shown in Table 27 below:

Table 27. Perceptions of needs, challenges and cultural competence

Part III	Year	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	X²	
Item 14-17-20	1 st year	N	2	3	5	32	39	
		%	2.5	3.7	6.2	39.5	48.1	X ² =4.178; p>.05
	4 th year	N	3	3	8	41	27	
		%	3.7	3.7	9.8	50	32.9	
I have difficulty understanding the cultural information given in our classes	1 st year	N	17	35	18	9	2	
		%	21	43.2	22.2	11.1	2.5	X ² =0.487; p>.05
	4 th year	N	18	36	18	7	3	
		%	22	43.9	22	8.5	3.7	
I believe I can communicate and function well in multicultural settings	1 st year	N	2	6	27	33	13	
		%	2.5	7.4	33.3	40.7	16	X ² =11.859; p<.05
	4 th year	N	3	4	10	44	21	
		%	3.7	4.9	12.2	53.7	25.6	

As shown in Table 27, a high percentage of both groups agreed that they needed to learn more about British/American culture, (87.6% in the 1st year group and 82.9% in the 4th year group). Therefore, the chi-square test result (X²=4.178; p>.05) did not reveal a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of these groups. The table also demonstrates that 64.2% of the 1st year students and 65.9% of the 4th year students disagreed that they had difficulty understanding the cultural information given in their classes. The same number of students in both groups was undecided and a small percentage of the 1st year and 4th year students admitted having difficulty (13.6% and 12.2%, respectively). According to the chi-square test results (X²=0.487; p>.05), there was not a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of these groups. However, there was a statistically significant difference in the responses of 1st year and 4th year students to the last item in the table (X²=11.859; p<.05). Compared to 56.7% of the 1st year students who thought that they could communicate and function well in

multicultural settings, a remarkably higher percentage of the 4th year students (79.3%) believed that they could function as proficient language users in multicultural settings.

Furthermore, in an interview question, whether students studying at the Department of ELL need more information on the target culture than other learners of English was explored, and the participant students were asked to elaborate on the reasons.

Table 28. Perceptions of a bigger need compared to other learners of English

Interview Item 4	Year		Yes	Not sure	No
Do you think students studying at the Department of ELL need more information on the target culture than other learners of English?	1 st year	N	5	0	0
		%	100	0	0
	4 th year	N	5	0	0
		%	100	0	0

All the participants in both groups gave a positive answer to this question, showing their positive reactions, and shared their reasons. The most common reason was the fact that they were studying the literature of the target culture (Interviewee 4, 8, 9 and 10). Interviewee 4 and 9 believed without knowing about the target culture, it would not make sense to try to understand its literature:

To be able to analyze literature, we should try to understand their lives and mentality. If not, we cannot really feel it. (Interviewee 9).

The more we know, the easier it would be for us to understand why a certain author said what he said. We need more background information. (Interviewee 4)

Interviewee 8 also added that she felt bad if she did not know something other people knew about the target culture or if she could not answer their questions about the target culture. She felt that she needed to learn almost everything about the target culture. Besides literature, Interviewee 10 thought they make use of their knowledge of the target culture when they are translating something: “Your translation might really be meaningless. Without knowing about their culture, we cannot give the correct meaning”. Furthermore, Interviewee 2 and Interviewee 7 had some other pragmatic reasons to learn more information on the target culture:

We might go and live in their countries or might need to communicate with them, so without having information about their culture, we might have problems. When I become a teacher, I want to give as much cultural information as possible to my students, thinking that they will enjoy it as I enjoy it myself. (Interviewee 2).

We might go abroad or work as English teachers so we might make use of more information, especially on current lifestyles of people. (Interviewee 7).

For Interviewees 1 and 6, the most important reason was the fact that they really liked learning about the target culture, and Interviewee 3 believed that it contributed to their understanding of language because they are not two separate entities: “Language and culture are intertwined. The more we know about their culture, the more we know about their language”.

4.4.4. ELL Students’ Perceptions of Target Culture Teaching Practices in Their Departments

The fourth sub-question of the third research question aimed to find out about ELL students’ perceptions of target culture teaching practices in their departments. In this respect, the most significant source of their knowledge about British/American culture was investigated. The participants were given two alternatives, academic life (i.e., course books, textbooks, literature books, instructors -native and non-native-, research for assignments or exams, etc.) and personal life (i.e., visits to foreign countries, native speakers, websites, social networks such as Facebook and Twitter, films, songs, TV programmes). The participants who chose academic life over personal life were thought to have a more positive perception of the contribution their department made to their cultural competence.

Table 29. The most significant source of knowledge about British/American culture

Part I Item 9	Year		Academic life	Personal life	X ²
Which one is the most significant source of your knowledge about British/American culture?	1 st Year	N	24	57	X²=16.152; p<.05
		%	29.6	70.4	
	4 th Year	N	50	32	
		%	61	39	

According to the chi-square test results ($X^2=16.152$; $p<.05$) of item 9, there was a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of 1st year and 4th year students. For the majority of the 1st year students (70.4%) their personal life was their most significant source of knowledge about British/American culture. However, 61% of the 4th year students reported that academic life was the most significant source of their knowledge. Based on the findings, it can be said that 4th year students thought they benefited more from the culture teaching practices in their departments, which made sense as they spent four years at the department, whereas the others spent only one year. Some further aspects of these practices were explored through six more Likert-type items and findings are presented below:

Table 30. Teaching about British/American culture

Part III		Year	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	X²
Item 2-3-4-5-6-7	The best way to learn about British/American culture is to go and live in that country	1 st Year	N 3	8	5	19	46	X²=2.994; p>.05
			% 3.7	9.9	6.2	23.5	56.8	
		4 th Year	N 3	4	10	19	46	
			% 3.7	4.9	12.2	23.2	56.1	
The textbooks/ texts we study provide a great deal of information on British/American culture	1 st Year	N 4	17	25	33	2	X²=9.592; p<.05	
		% 4.9	21	30.9	40.7	2.5		
	4 th Year	N 5	10	15	44	8		
		% 6.1	12.2	18.3	53.7	9.8		
British/American culture is usually idealized and its positive aspects are emphasized during classes	1 st Year	N 0	13	29	34	5	X²=19.031; p<.05	
		% 0	16	35.8	42	6.2		
	4 th Year	N 2	14	33	28	5		
		% 2.4	17.1	40.2	34.1	6.1		
Our instructors seem to have adequate knowledge of British/American culture	1 st Year	N 2	7	20	45	7	X²=12.944; p<.05	
		% 2.5	8.6	24.7	55.6	8.6		
	4 th Year	N 2	12	38	25	5		
		% 2.4	14.6	46.3	30.5	6.1		
We do not learn about British/American culture much in our classes	1 st Year	N 12	24	18	20	7	X²=2.119; p>.05	
		% 14.8	29.6	22.2	24.7	8.6		
	4 th Year	N 8	32	18	18	6		
		% 9.8	39	22	22	7.3		
Some of the assignments given require research on British/American culture	1 st Year	N 2	11	28	32	8	X²=9.260; p<.05	
		% 2.5	13.6	34.6	39.5	9.9		
	4 th Year	N 2	5	20	51	4		
		% 2.4	6.1	24.4	62.2	4.9		

As shown in Table 30, the majority of the 1st year students (totally 80.3%) and 4th year students (totally 79.3%) reported that the best way to learn about British/American culture was to live in that country. There was no statistically significant difference ($X^2=2.994$; $p>.05$) between the perceptions of these two student groups. The findings in Table 30 also showed that while less than half (43.2% in total) of the 1st year students thought that the textbooks/texts they study provided a great deal of information on British/American culture, and totally 63,5% of the 4th year students agreed with the statement. According to the chi-square test results ($X^2=9.592$; $p<.05$) there was a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of these groups. In addition, a bigger percentage of 1st year students, 48.2% in total, disagreed that British/American culture is usually idealized and its positive aspects are emphasized during classes. The total percentage of the participants who disagreed with this statement was 40.2% in the 4th year group and there was also another 40.2% in the same group who remained undecided. There was a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of these groups ($X^2=19.031$; $p<.05$).

As also seen in Table 30, while 64.2% of the 1st year students reported that their instructors seemed to have adequate knowledge about British/American culture, only 36.6% of the 4th year students considered their instructors knowledgeable enough. The majority of the 4th year students (46.3%) were undecided. The chi-square test result ($X^2=12.944$; $p<.05$) revealed a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of these groups. Furthermore, totally 44.4% of the 1st year students disagreed that they did not learn about British/American culture much in their classes and a slightly bigger percentage of the 4th year students (48.8%) disagreed with the statement. A very similar percentage of both groups (22.2% of the 1st year students and 22% of the 4th year students) remained undecided. The perceptions of these groups were not significantly different as the chi-square test result was $X^2=2.119$; $p>.05$. Finally, nearly half of the 1st year students (49.4% in total) reported that some of the assignments they were given require research on British/American culture. On the other hand, in the 4th year group, the percentage was a lot higher (totally 67.1%). A chi-square test was administered to identify to what extent the participants' answers differed from each other and the test result was $X^2=9.260$; $p<.05$, suggesting a statistically significant difference.

In addition, students' perceptions of the contribution of their department to their knowledge and understanding of the target culture were investigated via two more interview questions.

Table 31. Perceptions of the contribution of the department

Interview Item 5	Year		Improved a lot	Improved a bit	Did not Improve
In what ways do you think your knowledge and understanding of the target culture has changed over the months/ years you have spent studying at this department?	1 st year	N	4	1	0
		%	80	20	0
	4 th year	N	2	3	0
		%	40	60	0

As displayed in Table 31, a bigger number of the 1st year students thought their knowledge and understanding of the target culture changed considerably since they started their department. Interviewee 1, 2, 3 and 5 all admitted that they did not know almost anything about the target culture when they finished high school, and it was their department which made the biggest contribution to their knowledge and understanding of it. In addition to all the information they got during classes, they all thought that they developed a personal interest in the target culture after starting to learn about it in their departments. For example, Interviewee 1 thought that if she had not started her department, she would have never been interested in British culture, and Interviewee 3 believed that her department sparked her interest in films and television series, from which she also learned a lot. The only participant who thought his department's contribution was not significant was Interviewee 4. He indicated that he had been to England before and he had so many English friends. He also added that he talked to them and knew about their way of thinking and lifestyles. The only contribution his department made was that he learned some details about their past and developed an interest to inquire more.

In the fourth year group, the number of the participants who thought they did not improve much after they started their department (3) was bigger than that of the participants who thought they did (2). However, two of these three participants were born and raised in Holland (Interviewee 8) and Germany (Interviewee 10). Both

believed that they had better chances of learning about the target culture in these countries before they started their departments in Turkey:

In Holland, there was more exposure to cultural elements, especially on American culture. It was everywhere, so we could not help but learn about them. (Interviewee 8)

I did not know much about their literature and I learned about it, but not much about culture. I think I already knew a lot because when I was in Germany, we used to learn a lot of details about their culture. During classes we used to have discussions about them, and we did not have as many here. (Interviewee 10)

The other participant in this group (Interviewee 7) believed that his knowledge about the 18th and 19th century culture improved a lot because they usually learned about culture when analyzing novels, but his department did not contribute much to his knowledge about today's culture. The remaining two participants in the 4th year group (Interviewee 6 and 9) asserted that when they started their department, they realized they did not know anything about the target language culture and literature. They both believed that their department made an incredible difference, and they improved a lot.

In the form of an additional question, the researcher also aimed to explore the participants' suggestions on what else their department should do to assist their growing understanding and knowledge about the target culture further.

Table 32. 1st year students' suggestions

What else can be done?	N	F
Talks by British Speakers	1	20%
Culture Clubs	1	20%
Culture Days	4	80%
More Exchange Programs	1	20%
Trips to England	1	20%
British Culture Class	1	20%
Raising Cultural Awareness	1	20%

Table 33. 4th year students' suggestions

What else can be done?	N	F
Talks / Conferences	1	20%
Culture Clubs	1	20%
Culture Days	2	40%
More Exchange Programs	1	20%
Trips to England	1	20%
British Culture Class	2	40%
Films	2	40%

As shown in Table 32 and 33, the most common suggestion that 1st year interviewees made and one of the most common among 4th year interviewees was organizing culture days. Three of the five interviewees who thought culture days would be a good idea (Interviewee 2, 3 and 9) indicated that Departments of Japanese Language and Literature and Korean Language and Literature have culture days every year, and sharing the same building, they always see and admire them. These interviewees also described what they saw very vividly and expressed their enthusiasm:

Students wear traditional Korean clothes, put together a dance show, prepare Korean food and have stalls displaying items from Korea. They 'experience' the culture in a way, but we don't have such things. (Interviewee 2)

Also my friends and I wish that we had culture days like students in the Japanese or Korean department. I would definitely volunteer to do something like this in our department, and I am sure most of my friends would also like to participate in such activities. (Interviewee 3)

I have friends in both Japanese and Korean Language and Literature Departments and they are in love with the culture and language. They have culture days and on those days, they serve sushi, eat with sticks, and wear kimonos. A couple of years ago, they even invited Japanese archers and dancers. Unfortunately, we do not have such things in our department. They have decorations on their notice boards and corridors. We do not even have that. (Interviewee 9)

The interviewees also had suggestions concerning more exchange programs and trips to England.

There should be more opportunities for international contact for the students in our department. If more students participated in exchange programs, that would be great. In our department, it is unfortunately very limited. (Interviewee 3)

If we had trips abroad as a class, for example, to England, some of my classmates who had not developed an interest even after they had taken a class would get interested. If we went there and saw things with our own eyes, that would definitely arouse interest. (Interviewee 8)

Another interviewee (Interviewee 9) thought that their instructors should tell them about scholarships and exchange opportunities, and there should be more cultural content in their classes. In addition, three interviewees (Interviewee 5, 6 and 9) showed willingness for separate culture classes. Culture clubs were also suggested by one interviewee from the 1st year group (Interviewee 2) and one interviewee from the 4th year group (Interviewee 6). Interviewee 2 believed that a club would be more educational than classes because they could discuss certain themes in groups. During classes, she thought, they were just listeners but if there was a club, they could make comments and also learn from each other. Interviewee 6 suggested that students could come together every month and share ideas on the cultural content of the book they read that month. Films and talks/conferences by British speakers were also considered important by Interviewees 1, 6 and 9. Additionally, Interviewee 4 believed that these kinds of encounters served a very important purpose, and his department should aim to raise cultural awareness in its students:

First of all, people's point of view should be changed. Universities should raise an awareness of a more universal point of view. There are some people here who grew up in really conservative families and they are not curious about other people. First of all, some curiosity into the lives of people who are different from us should be aroused. For example some people from a different culture could be invited to our classes. (Interviewee 4)

A further question to the interviewees explored what the classes during which they got the most information on the target culture were, and the findings are shown in the tables below.

Table 34. 1st year students' perceptions on classes with cultural content

What are the classes during which you get the most information on the target culture?	N	F
Introduction to Literature	4	80%
Introduction to Drama	3	60%
Speaking	1	20%

The majority of the 1st year interviewees explained that Introduction to Literature and Introduction to Drama classes had the biggest amount of cultural content. One of the interviewees also added that in speaking classes they touched upon cultural issues and learned new things.

Table 35. 4th year students' perceptions on classes with cultural content

What are the classes during which you get the most information on the target culture?	N	F
20 th Century Drama	4	80%
20 th Century Novel	4	80%
20 th Century English Literature	3	60%

All the interviewees asserted that during their literature classes such as 20th Century Drama, 20th Century Novel and 20th Century English Literature, cultural issues were frequently discussed. They added that their instructors first provided insights into the life of the author and the time the literary work was written in the form of background information, and then they started to analyze it. They also added that they referred to various aspects of the target culture during character analysis.

4.4.5. ELL Students' Perceptions of Their Own Practices Related to the Target Culture

This study also aimed to explore its participants' perceptions of their own practices to learn more about the target culture, as the last sub-question of the third research question. Whether what they do in their personal life enrich their cultural repertoire or not was sought in a questionnaire item, and the findings are presented below:

Table 27. The most significant source of knowledge about British/American culture

Part I Item 9	Year		Academic life	Personal life	X ²
Which one is the most significant source of your knowledge about British/American culture?	1 st Year	N	24	57	X²=16.152; p<.05
		%	29.6	70.4	
	4 th Year	N	50	32	
		%	61	39	

According to the chi-square test result ($X^2=16.152$; $p<.05$), there was a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of 1st year and 4th year students. In the 4th year group, 61% of the participants reported that academic life (i.e., course books, textbooks, literature books, instructors -native and non-native-, research for exams or exams, etc.) was the most significant source of their knowledge. However, for the majority of the 1st year students (70.4%), their personal life (i.e., visits to foreign countries, native speakers, websites, social networks such as Facebook and Twitter, films, songs, TV programmes, etc.) was their most significant source of knowledge about British/American culture. The findings suggested that 1st year students believed that target culture played a bigger role in their personal life than their academic life. In order to be able to gather more specific data about what they did to learn about the target culture in their personal life, the following interview question was designed and the activities they mentioned are listed below:

Table 36. 1st year students' perceptions of activities outside school

What do you do to learn more about the target culture other than schoolwork?	N	F
Internet Search	5	100%
Online Chats with Friends from the UK/USA	2	40%
Talking to Friends Who Have Been to the UK/USA	1	20%
Following Certain Pages on Social Networking Sites	2	40%
Watching Films/TV series/ TV shows	1	20%

As illustrated in the table, all the interviewees did internet search in their free time outside school, but what they searched and why they searched it varied. For Interviewee 1, the research was usually sparked by her instructors and classes:

Our instructors mention some things in class and I am usually curious about these things. I find them interesting and search about them later. For example, I have done research about women in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries on the internet. I have also searched about their educational and judicial systems, thinking about the similarities and differences between their systems and our systems. (Interviewee 1)

Interviewee 5 indicated that her research on the internet is usually about her own interests and what she saw on social networking sites:

I am interested in folk metal from Ireland, so I usually search about folk tales and myths inspiring these songs, and whether these tales affect their culture today and if yes how. I also follow some Facebook pages and very often there are expressions or jokes that I don't understand. So I search about them on the internet and even one joke may tell me a lot about their culture. (Interviewee 5)

Interviewee 4 explained that he usually searched about the topics which emerged during his talks to friends he met while playing online games:

I play online games with my foreign friends and we spend so much time together and chat during the game. We usually talk about current issues and comment on them, sometimes on political issues, almost about everything. They also ask me questions as they are also curious. I sometimes search about the things we talked about on the Internet. (Interviewee 4)

Interviewee 2 complained that in Kayseri they did not have a chance to meet native speakers and talk to them. However, she had some online friends, and they exchanged e-mails and messages. She got information from them, and she also got information from her friends who had been abroad, usually about places to see and things to do there. Finally, Interviewee 3 reported to watch films, television series and quiz shows.

Table 37. 4th year students' perceptions of activities outside school

What do you do to learn more about the target culture other than schoolwork?	N	F
Doing Internet Search	3	60%
Talking to the British People	2	40%
Watching Films	2	40%
Reading Books/Magazines	2	40%

In the 4th year group, doing internet research was again the most common activity, though not as common as it was in the 1st year group. Interviewee 6 explained that she recently searched about English food, for example their tradition of afternoon tea, and also clothing because she was thinking about dressing like an English lady for her graduation ceremony. Interviewee 7 indicated that he sometimes searched about their festivals, religious days, and free time activities. Interviewee 9 claimed that he did not find internet sources very reliable, and although he used them, he usually needed to check what he found using books he got from the library. In addition, Interviewee 6 noted that she often visited their British instructor and asked him questions. In her last visit, for example, they compared life in Turkey and life in London. Interviewee 9 was the second participant who had personal contact with British people. He also claimed that their conversations with the wives of two of his uncles mainly centered on comparisons of life in Turkey and England. For Interviewees 8 and 10, watching films and reading books and magazines were good ways of getting more information about the target culture.

The questionnaire also included three more items designed to gather data about whether the participants talked to their instructors, classmates and people from other cultures. The findings are presented below.

Table 38. Perceptions of personal practices

Part III Items 16-17-18	Year		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	X ²
I ask my instructors questions about British/American culture	1 st year	N	8	19	18	29	7	X ² =1.370; p>.05
		%	9.9	23.5	22.2	35.8	8.6	
	4 th year	N	6	21	20	31	4	
		%	7.3	25.6	24.4	37.8	4.9	
My classmates and I talk about what we have learned about British/American culture after class	1 st year	N	14	24	17	23	3	X ² =0.779; p>.05
		%	17.3	29.6	21	28.4	3.7	
	4 th year	N	16	21	15	26	4	
		%	19.5	25.6	18.3	31.7	4.9	
I communicate with people of different cultures and need to make use of intercultural communicative skills	1 st year	N	4	17	6	34	20	X ² =3.109; p>.05
		%	4.9	21	7.4	42	24.7	
	4 th year	N	3	12	12	33	22	
		%	3.7	14.6	14.6	40.2	26.8	

Table 38 demonstrates that totally 44.4% of the 1st year and 42.7% of the 4th year students asserted that they asked their instructors questions about British/American culture, while 32.5% of the 1st year and 32.9% of the 4th year students (in total) reported that they did not. A chi-square test was administered to identify to what extent the participants' answers differed from each other and the test result was $X^2=1.370$; $p>.05$, suggesting a statistically insignificant difference. Table 38 also shows that 46.9% of the 1st year students and 45.1% of the 4th year students expressed that they did not talk about what they had learned about British/American culture with their classmates. The percentage of the students who agreed with the statement was 32.1% in the 1st year group and 36.6% in the 4th year group. There was no statistically significant difference ($X^2=.779$; $p>.05$) between the perceptions of these two student groups. Finally, 66.7% of the 1st year students pointed out that they communicated with people of different cultures and needed to make use of intercultural communicative skills and 67% of the 4th year students also reported that this was a part of their lives. In the 1st year group, 25.9% disagreed and 7.4% remained undecided. On the other hand, there were fewer students who disagreed (18.3%) but more students who were undecided (14.6%) in the 4th year group. A chi-square test was administered to identify to what extent the

participants' answers differed from each other, and the test result was $X^2=3.109$; $p>.05$, suggesting a statistically insignificant difference between the perceptions of these groups.

4.5. Differences between the Perceptions of 1st Year and 4th Year Students

The results related to the fourth research question, exploring whether there was a significant difference between the responses of first and final year students, were discussed for each of the previous research questions in this chapter. To show the differences more clearly, the questionnaire items whose findings yielded significant differences will shortly be presented again in this section.

First of all, significant differences were found between ELL students' perceptions of some of the advantages of learning cultural information. Significantly more 1st year participants regarded the below listed alternatives as advantages.

Table 39. Differences between 1st and 4th year students' perceptions of advantages of learning cultural information

Part I		Year	No	Yes	X^2
Item 11					
Attaining a global understanding of culture	1 st Year	N	30	51	$X^2=5.221$; $p<.05$
		%	37	63	
	4 th Year	N	45	37	
		%	54.9	45.1	
Respecting different cultures	1 st Year	N	41	40	$X^2=5.280$; $p<.05$
		%	50.6	49.4	
	4 th Year	N	53	29	
		%	64.6	35.4	
Improving general background knowledge	1 st Year	N	18	63	$X^2=5.410$; $p<.05$
		%	22.2	77.8	
	4 th Year	N	32	50	
		%	39	61	

Another significant difference was found in the choice of the culture that the participants most wanted to learn about. Fewer 4th year participants chose the British culture, and more of them preferred other cultures, compared to 1st year participants.

Table 40. Differences between 1st and 4th year students' perceptions of target culture

Part I Item 6	Year		The UK	The USA	Australia	Canada	Republic of Ireland	New Zealand	Other	X ²
Which country's culture do you most want to learn about?	1 st Year	N	46	20	4	4	0	2	5	X²=14.663; p<.05
		%	56.8	24.7	4.9	4.9	0	2.5	6.2	
	4 th Year	N	31	22	3	2	6	5	13	
		%	37.8	26.8	3.7	2.4	7.3	6.1	15.9	

In addition, the study revealed that there was a difference in ELL students' perception of one of the listed reasons of learning more about British/American culture. More 1st year participants regarded the alternative in Table 41 as a reason.

Table 41. Differences between 1st and 4th year students' perceptions of reasons to learn more about British/American culture

Part I Item 10	Year		No	Yes	X ²
It is useful when engaged in communication with native speakers	1 st Year	N	21	60	X²=10.994; p<.05
		%	25.9	74.1	
	4 th Year	N	42	40	
		%	51.2	48.8	

Additionally, among the listed possible disadvantages of learning about British/American culture, 'linguistic and cultural imperialism' was considered as a disadvantage by more 4th year participants, as shown in Table 42.

Table 42. Differences between 1st and 4th year students' perceptions of disadvantages of learning about British/American culture

Part I Item 12	Year		No	Yes	X ²
Linguistic and cultural imperialism	1 st Year	N	75	6	X²=6.865; p<.05
		%	92.6	7.4	
	4 th Year	N	64	18	
		%	78	22	

Besides, it was also found that 1st year students attributed significantly more importance to ritual behaviour aspect of the target culture.

Table 43. Differences between 1st and 4th year students' perceptions of the importance they attribute to certain aspects of the target culture

Part II Item 13	Year	N	X	Sd	t	p
Ritual behaviour in such areas as religious observances, birth, marriage, death, celebrations, festivals	1 st year	81	2.96	.843	2.499	.013
	4 th year	82	2.60	1.017		

Furthermore, 1st year students and 4th year students differed in their perceptions of their knowledge on the following aspects of the target culture. Fourth year participants were found to have a more positive perception of their knowledge, and thus, higher self efficacy beliefs.

Table 44. Differences between 1st and 4th year students' perceptions of their knowledge on certain aspects of the target culture

Part II Item 14	Year	N	X	Sd	t	p
Interpersonal relations e.g. relations between sexes, family structures and relations, relations in work situations	1 st year	81	2.48	1.001	-1.879	.042
	4 th year	82	2.77	.947		
Values, beliefs and attitudes in relation to such factors as: social class, institutions, politics, religion, history, tradition and social change, arts (music, visual arts, literature)	1 st year	81	2.65	1.063	-1.887	.041
	4 th year	82	2.94	.851		
Body language, e.g. gesture, facial expression, posture, eye contact, body contact	1 st year	81	2.14	1.126	-2.637	.009
	4 th year	82	2.60	1.110		
Total score	1 st year	81	16.82	4.98	-1.819	.049
	4 th year	82	18.17	4.43		

Finally, the numbers of the 1st year and 4th year students who agreed or disagreed with the statements below caused some other significant differences, as shown in Table 39.

Table 45. Likert items yielding significant differences

Part III Items 3-4-5-7-9-12-15-20	Year		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	X²
The textbooks/ texts we study provide a great deal of information on British/American culture	1 st year	N	4	17	25	33	2	X²=9.592; p<.05
		%	4.9	21	30.9	40.7	2.5	
	4 th year	N	5	10	15	44	8	
		%	6.1	12.2	18.3	53.7	9.8	
British/American culture is usually idealized and its positive aspects are emphasized during classes	1 st year	N	0	13	29	34	5	X²=19.031; p<.05
		%	0	16	35.8	42	6.2	
	4 th year	N	2	14	33	28	5	
		%	2.4	17.1	40.2	34.1	6.1	
Our instructors seem to have adequate knowledge of British/American culture	1 st year	N	2	7	20	45	7	X²=12.944; p<.05
		%	2.5	8.6	24.7	55.6	8.6	
	4 th year	N	2	12	38	25	5	
		%	2.4	14.6	46.3	30.5	6.1	
Some of the assignments given require research on British/American culture	1 st year	N	2	11	28	32	8	X²=9.260; p<.05
		%	2.5	13.6	34.6	39.5	9.9	
	4 th year	N	2	5	20	51	4	
		%	2.4	6.1	24.4	62.2	4.9	
In our classes there should be more references to elements related to Turkish culture	1 st year	N	9	22	27	15	8	X²=11.431; p<.05
		%	11.1	27.2	33.3	18.5	9.9	
	4 th year	N	3	15	25	33	6	
		%	3.7	18.3	30.5	40.2	7.3	
In our classes there should be more references to elements related to other cultures. (e.g. Indian, Chinese, etc.)	1 st year	N	14	23	25	16	3	X²=12.430; p<.05
		%	17.3	28.4	30.9	19.8	3.7	
	4 th year	N	11	9	25	30	7	
		%	13.4	11	30.5	36.6	8.5	
I would try to give cultural information to my students if I were a teacher of English	1 st year	N	3	3	2	35	38	X²=9.557; p<.05
		%	3.7	3.7	2.5	43.2	46.9	
	4 th year	N	3	1	11	38	29	
		%	3.7	1.2	13.4	46.3	35.4	
I believe I can communicate and function well in multicultural settings	1 st year	N	2	6	27	33	13	X²=11.859; p<.05
		%	2.5	7.4	33.3	40.7	16	
	4 th year	N	3	4	10	44	21	
		%	3.7	4.9	12.2	53.7	25.6	

4.6. Conclusion

This chapter introduced the findings of the quantitative data collected via the Target Culture Perception Questionnaire and the qualitative data gathered from semi-structured interviews. The data revealed that both 1st year and 4th year groups favoured the integration of culture into language instruction. They also considered British/American culture as the target culture of the English language, and mostly wanted to learn about these cultures. However, 4th year students were also found to be embracing their native culture and other cultures from around the world, thus maintaining a more intercultural stance compared to 1st year students. Both groups revealed positive attitudes towards the target culture and attributed importance to having information about it. On the other hand, 4th year participants reported higher self-efficacy beliefs about their knowledge on the target culture. Nevertheless, both groups asserted that they needed more cultural content although they acknowledged that their departments contributed a lot to their cultural competence. In their personal lives, they mostly took advantage of the opportunities the internet offered in order to learn more about the target culture. In the next chapter, these findings will be discussed in more detail in relation to previous research.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the study in relation to the research questions. It also presents pedagogical implications of the study and limitations of the study along with suggestions for further research.

5.2. ELL Students' Perceptions of Incorporating Cultural Elements in Language Learning/Teaching

The first research question of the present study addressed ELL students' perceptions of incorporating cultural elements in language learning/teaching. According to the findings of the questionnaire, it can be said that the participants of the study favoured cultural elements being incorporated into language instruction, in line with other studies conducted on students' perceptions of the issue (Atay, 2005; Atay & Ece, 2009; Çalışkan, 2009; Devrim & Bayyurt, 2010; Kahraman, 2008; Rafieyan, Eng & Mohamed, 2013; Üzüm, 2007). The majority of both groups agreed that English cannot be taught without any links to culture, and even a higher percentage of them asserted that they would try to give cultural information to their students if they were English teachers. This means even among the participants who thought it would be possible to teach English without cultural references, there was a group who would not prefer to do so. Their positive attitude is compatible with findings of the studies on EFL teachers' perceptions (Atay et al., 2009a; Aydemir & Mede, 2014; Şen, 2010).

On a more interesting note, 1st year students showed a significantly higher enthusiasm to give cultural information to their students if they were teachers of English. This might be due to the fact that in their first year in their department, they might themselves be more enthusiastic learners of English literature and culture compared to 4th year students. This tendency is slightly evident in another questionnaire item which is about their main reaction when provided with cultural information. In this item, more 1st year students identified themselves as 'interested'. Nevertheless, when the number of

the students who considered themselves ‘analytical (analyzing, comparing with my own culture)’, which is also a desirable reaction, is added to that of the ‘interested’ ones, it can be said that almost all participants in both groups give positive reactions to cultural information, similar to the participants in Çalışkan’s (2009) study. According to Byram et al. (2002), comparative analysis with the learners’ own culture is indeed very important in order to be able to develop cultural awareness. Hence, an ‘analytical’ reaction should be regarded as a positive reaction. In addition, more than one third of the participants in both groups, which is a higher percentage than the one in Çalışkan’s (2009) study, even believe that cultural information given during instruction should be tested in exams. Therefore, it can be concluded that the participants of the present study believe culture is more than just something supplementary. About one third of the participants remained undecided on the issue, and it could be argued that they might have reservations about how to assess cultural content, which is a rather complex matter.

It is also worth noting that the participants of the present study attribute great importance to cultural awareness, even if they may not be very much familiar with the term or its significance. When asked “What should be the main aim of presenting cultural information in language learning?”, the most common answer given by both groups was ‘developing an awareness of other people and cultures’, and later came ‘more successful communication’. However, for the majority of the participants in Çalışkan’s (2009) study, ‘more successful communication’ should be the main aim of giving cultural information, followed by ‘developing an awareness of other people and cultures’, chosen by less than half of the participants who preferred more successful communication. The preparatory level students can be observed to be mainly motivated towards a more pragmatic and instrumental benefit, whereas the ELL students in the study seem to prioritize cultural awareness over it.

The most common advantage of learning cultural information in language classes chosen by both groups was ‘improving general background knowledge’, although this advantage seemed to be significantly more important for 1st year participants. The participants seem to be aware of the fact that it is usually the content schema that causes problems for readers, and one of the reasons behind this is that the content is ‘culturally specific and is not part of a particular reader's cultural background’ (Carrell &

Eisterhold, 1983, p. 560). The second and third most commonly chosen advantages were ‘attaining a global understanding of culture’, which might be considered close to the concept of cultural awareness, and the third biggest advantage was ‘better communicative competence’, which might be considered close to ‘more successful communication’ in the previous item. These findings are roughly in line with the findings from Çalışkan’s (2009) study, the biggest majority of whose participants also chose ‘improving general background knowledge’, followed by ‘better communicative competence’ and ‘attaining a global understanding of culture’ both in the second place.

To sum up, it is clear that a big majority of the participants in both 1st year and 4th year groups favour the integration of culture in language instruction, and their perceptions are not very different. One difference identified was about 1st year students’ greater willingness to give cultural information if they were English teachers, and secondly, significantly more students in the 1st year group chose ‘improving general background knowledge’, ‘attaining a global understanding of culture’ and ‘respecting different cultures’ as advantages of culturally enriched language instruction. Nevertheless, both groups find cultural instructions a useful experience besides expressing interest in the cultural components of their classes.

5.3. Culture /Cultures to Be Incorporated into Language Learning/Teaching

In order to shed light on ELL students’ perceptions of cultures to be incorporated in language learning/teaching, the participants were firstly asked which country’s culture they associated most with the English language. For the majority of both 1st year and 4th year students, this country is the UK, and the USA is the second most commonly chosen country. The findings are consistent with the findings from three other studies from Turkey, Yılmaz’s (2006), Devrim and Bayyurt’s (2010) and Güven’s (2015) studies, all of which suggest that when students think of the culture of English language, what comes to their minds first is British culture, and American culture takes the second place.

Additionally, the participants were asked about which countries’ culture they would most like to learn about in order to see if they would choose the culture of the country that they associated most with the English language. As expected, the findings revealed that British culture again takes the first place, and American culture follows in both groups. However, the percentages seem to be lower compared to the previous item,

suggesting that some of the participants who link the English language to British or American culture do not prefer to learn about them. Compared to the previous item, other countries and the option 'other' have higher percentages in this item, especially in the 4th year group. While 1st year students still mainly center around British and American culture, more than a third of the 4th year students tend to adopt a more international approach, causing a statistically significant difference. The cultures they would like to learn about vary from some other European cultures such as Italian and Spanish to Far Eastern cultures such as Chinese, Korean and Japanese. The reason behind this might be the fact that 4th year students have more international experience compared to 1st year students, and 4th year students' international experience is a lot more varied than their 1st year counterparts', as revealed by the demographic information collected about the participants.

Fourth year students' significantly more intercultural approach is also evident in the findings of the next set of Likert items. They believe there should be more elements related to their own culture, Turkish culture, in their classes, while the majority of the 1st year students disagree. Besides, 4th year students also believe that other cultures (e.g., Indian, Chinese, etc.) should be included in their classes, whereas 1st year students are mostly undecided on this issue. In this regard, 4th year students might be considered to be sharing Alptekin (2002, 2005), Byram et al., (2002), and Nault's (2008) view that the cultural content of English classes should not be restricted to societies whose native language is English, and given the international status of English as a *lingua franca*, students' local culture and other countries' cultures must be included in language instruction. What should not be misunderstood here, however, is that 4th year participants of the present study do not favour incorporation of Turkish culture or other cultures over incorporation of British or American culture, since a greater number of the 1st and 4th year students agree that there should be more references to British and American cultures. As a matter of fact, British and American cultures still get the first and second highest percentages respectively in both groups. Rather, they are of the opinion that other cultures should be given a bigger place in language instruction, while British and American cultures still dominate it. Such a stance could be considered to be reflecting the theoretical move from the concept of communicative competence, solely focusing on the target culture, to the concept of intercultural competence, embracing all cultures.

In sum, it is clear that it is the British/American culture that the participants of the present study consider as the target cultures of the English language as they mostly associate the language to these cultures, in contrast to the views of English not belonging to one single culture or country, put forward by various scholars (Crystal, 2001; Jenkins, 2003; McKay, 2003, as cited in Nault, 2008). The study reveals that more than half of the 1st year students and nearly half of the 4th year students would also like to take a separate course on British/American culture, further stressing their need and willingness to be exposed to more cultural content. However, considering the fact that these students study at the Department of English Language and Literature and study British/American literature, it is hardly surprising that they see them as target cultures. Another major finding related to comparison of 1st and 4th year students is that 4th year students have a more open attitude towards incorporation of other cultures, including their own, into language instruction. In this respect, their attitudes might be considered in agreement with Byram et al.'s (2002) vision of a language teacher who can promote intercultural competence. As for 1st year students, it may be hoped that as their understanding and awareness of British and American cultures improve in the following years of their education, they might as well develop a higher level of cultural awareness towards all other cultures and adopt a more intercultural approach including various other cultures of the whole world. The findings can also be interpreted as further indicators of the participants' clear conviction that culture should play a greater role in language instruction, as reviewed in the previous section under the first research question.

5.4. ELL Students' Perceptions of the Target Culture

The third research question of the present study aimed to explore ELL students' perceptions of the target culture with its five sub-questions. The discussion of each sub-question will be presented under separate headings.

5.4.1. ELL Students' Attitude towards the Target Culture

As an important part of the participants' perceptions of the target culture, it was aimed to investigate their attitudes towards it. In an interview question, the participants were asked whether they had more positive attitudes compared to other learners of English studying at different departments. Almost all interviewees gave a positive answer to this general question, and all of them, without exceptions, expressed their own personal

positive attitudes. When three of them compared themselves to the other learners, they thought it was their interest in the target culture that made the whole difference. Although other learners are usually interested in developing their language skills for instrumental reasons, they believe, the majority of the students in the department are there because of their interest in the culture. What they believe to be true about other learners are indeed supported by research by Çalışkan (2009), Güven (2015) and Üzüm (2007) in the sense that they mainly learn English for instrumental reasons, yet this does not necessarily mean that they do not have any integrative motivation. Research shows that students of various departments or even high school students also have positive attitudes to the target culture and cultural content in language instruction (Çalışkan, 2009; Devrim & Bayyurt, 2010; Güven, 2015; Üzüm, 2007). Nonetheless, the participants' assumptions about other learners might be due to some personal contact with individuals who hold negative attitudes and could be interpreted as an example to highlight their own supposedly more positive attitudes.

Contrary to the above mentioned participants who consider their interest as the reason why they chose their department, two participants admitted that their true interest in the target culture was sparked after they started their department and got to know more about it. Another interviewee even mentioned a universally positive attitude to all the cultures in the world, not only to the target culture, and a more open worldview as a requirement of studying ELL. Thus, she can be considered to be showing signs of intercultural awareness, something the CEFR envisions as one of the ultimate goals of language instruction: “develop[ing] an enriched, more complex personality and an enhanced capacity for further language learning and greater openness to new cultural experiences (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 43).

Considering the fact that positive attitudes form an essential part of motivation to learn anything, it is important that none of the participants of the present study expressed negative attitudes. Almost all participants who completed the questionnaire also showed willingness to learn more about British/ American for a variety of reasons. According to 1st year students, firstly, it is useful when communicating with native speakers, and secondly, they need it for a better understanding of English literature. On the other hand, 4th year participants want to learn about the target culture more due to its usefulness for a better understanding of literature than for a better communication with

native speakers. The fact that 1st year students gave more importance to oral skills than literary skills and 4th year students did just the other way round might be explained with their academic programs. 1st year students take mainly language skills classes such as speaking, and this is a rather newly emerging skill which they do not feel competent in. However, 4th year students mainly have literature classes in their program, and this might be the reason behind their first choices. Nevertheless, both reasons were chosen by more students compared to the other reasons provided, such as “I will need it when I become a teacher of English” and “I hope to live in the UK/USA”, both of which were also chosen by nearly half of the participants in each group. Thus, it is obvious that the participants find it useful to learn about British/American culture.

In addition to these benefits, one interview question aimed to explore students' perceptions of another benefit in the affective domain, the interest and enjoyment it might provide. Nearly all interviewees in the 1st year group (except for one interviewee who claimed that it all depended on the cultural topic) and all interviewees in the 4th year group reported that they enjoyed learning about various aspects of the target culture. Two interviewees talked about its usefulness both in communication and literature, supporting the findings of the questionnaire, but also elaborating on the sense of fulfillment and enjoyment it provides by making one feel happy that s/he will understand them better. In a way, the findings support Tomalin and Stempleski's (1993) idea that “when students have understood the language being used in a situation and then go on to gain an understanding of the cultural factors at work, this is for them one of the most absorbing and exciting parts of any language lesson” (p. 9). In addition to history, British food and dressing culture, music and daily life, American way of life and the concept of ‘American Dream’ were also mentioned as the topics the participants enjoyed learning about. The findings are compatible with Oxford's (1995) ideas: “Culture is an excellent theme for any language class. Students are boundlessly interested in their own culture and other cultures if given the necessary exposure” (p. 30). Furthermore, two other interviewees expressed that they found it interesting and enjoyable to compare British/American culture to Turkish culture. According to Kramsch and McConnell-Ginet (1992), intercultural approach still puts the main emphasis on the target cultures, but it encourages comparisons between the learners' own country and target country (Atay et al., 2009a). Byram et al. (2002, p. 12) also believe that the skills of comparison, of interpreting and relating are crucial.

On the other hand, it was also aimed to gather data about the students' perceptions of disadvantages of learning about British/American culture, and the students' negative ideas about certain aspects of the target culture. Nearly a third of the 1st year students and slightly more than a third of the 4th year participants of the questionnaire agreed that there were indeed some disadvantages of learning about the target culture, showing consistency with the perceptions of the participants in Çalışkan's (2009) study. Cultural and linguistic imperialism was the most commonly chosen drawback of learning about the target cultures in the 4th year group. Interviewee 9 also expressed similar concerns on the issue during the interviews: "Some of my friends have negative attitudes because of British imperialism and colonialism. Some of them even say: "They don't learn Turkish, why should I learn English?". Although he found this idea of not learning the language ridiculous, he himself had some negative ideas about British politics, such as colonialism and problems with Ireland. Yet, he thought that British public should not be held responsible for these kinds of things, and he asserted that politics or politicians should be considered separately from the people of that country. Similar ideas were also expressed by the interviewees in Üzüm's study (2007), which revealed that students' negative attitudes were directed to government policies, not to the cultures or the individuals from these cultures. In brief, nearly a quarter of 4th year participants considered linguistic and cultural imperialism a disadvantage, supporting the findings of Devrim and Bayyurt's (2010) study. Surprisingly, however, a very small percentage of 1st year participants of the present study shared such worries on linguistic and cultural imperialism, which caused the only significant difference between the perceptions of 1st and 4th year students.

For 1st year students, cultural assimilation was a bigger threat, as revealed by the findings of the questionnaire. Interviewee 4 from the 1st year group expressed his concerns on cultural assimilation as follows:

I do have negative ideas about these cultures because of some political reasons. I don't like people who try to live or behave as if they are British or American, rejecting their own culture. We might have interest in their culture but we are not them. We should never forget about our own culture. There are a few people like this in my department. Learning about the

culture and assimilating into the culture are two different things.

(Interviewee 4)

In Atay and Ece's (2009) study, for example, some 3rd year ELT students claim that their Western identity has become more dominant than their Turkish and Muslim identities, as a result of years of learning English and its culture. Interviewee 4 points out that there are also such people in his department, and he does not approve this. However, the participants of Atay and Ece's (2009) study, including the ones who still prioritize their Turkish and Muslim identities, do not regard Western identity as a threat to their own identities. In this respect, it can be argued that the participants of the present study seem to be more sensitive to identity issues.

As for the other negative ideas expressed by the interviewees, it can be said that they usually centered around stereotypical images of personality traits as compared to those of Turkish people, similar to those of the participants of Atay and Ece's (2009) and Bektaş-Çetinkaya's (2013) study. According to Drewelow (2011), it is common among students sharing a common native culture to share common stereotypes towards the people of the target culture. It is also worth mentioning that the negative ideas expressed all have their origins outside the classroom.

I just sometimes think British people are cold and reserved because of the films I have seen. They look less friendly compared to Turkish people.

(Interviewee 3)

Sometimes I find Americans too easy-going, and I think they do not care much about religion. I think I have formed these ideas from the films I have watched and some of my friends who have been to America have told me similar things. (Interviewee 2)

They are very cold, not friendly at all, although they [his mother's uncles' wives] have been living in Turkey for very long, they still cannot fully grasp what family means to us. (Interviewee 9)

It must be stressed, though, that most of the participants who express certain negative ideas also add some other positive things to balance the equation and assert that they do not judge them, but rather accept them as they are. Thus, their attitudes can be

considered to be more favourable than those of ELT students in Bektaş-Çetinkaya's (2013) study, who seemed to perceive Turkish culture superior to the target culture.

In conclusion, although a small group of them have some reservations about cultural instruction on British/ American cultures, and certain negative ideas about these cultures, the participants of the study show a considerable degree of cultural awareness. The study also revealed that its participants in general have highly positive attitudes towards British/American cultures, and want to learn more about them for a number of reasons.

5.4.2. Perceptions of the Importance ELL Students Attribute to Certain Aspects of the Target Culture

The second sub-question addressed ELL students' perceptions of the importance they attribute to certain aspects of the target culture, and aimed to identify any differences between 1st and 4th year participants. According to the findings of the questionnaire, it can be concluded that, in general, 1st year students and 4th year students are not different with respect to the importance they attribute to certain aspects of the target culture. On a scale of 5, from 'not important at all' (0) to 'very important' (4), the majority in both groups find it 'important' (3) to have information about all these aspects, when the total mean scores are considered. However, there still are some findings which provide useful insights.

Firstly, it is a significant finding that values, beliefs and attitudes are given the most importance by both groups. They give priority, not to the more visible aspects of the target culture, but to the underlying value and belief systems forming their attitudes. Secondly, 4th year students seem to be attributing more importance 'everyday living' and 'living conditions' aspects. As they are about to graduate, 4th year students might be contemplating more on their future life possibilities and opportunities, both in their native country and countries abroad. This might be the reason why they show more tendencies towards these aspects of the target culture. On all other aspects, though, the mean scores of 1st year students are slightly higher than those of 4th year students.

In general, both groups of the participants attribute importance to learning about the target culture. They find it important to incorporate various aspects of the target culture in their classes. Whether they think they know about these aspects or not will be discussed in the next section.

5.4.3. Perceptions of the Information ELL Students Have about Certain Aspects of the Target Culture

ELL students' perceptions of the information they have about certain aspects of the target culture and any differences between 1st and 4th year participants regarding this sub-question were sought via various questionnaire items and an interview question. According to the first set of findings from the questionnaire, 1st year students and 4th year students are different with respect to the amount of knowledge they think they have. When the total mean score of each group is considered, it is seen that while 1st year students think they have 'some' information on these aspects of British/American culture, 4th year students think they have 'quite a lot' of information. Given the fact that 4th year students have had three more years of education, their higher level of knowledge is something expected.

In the first year group, when the ranking of the aspects about which they believe they have more information and the ranking of the aspects to which they attribute more importance are compared, it can be seen that 'values, beliefs and attitudes' comes 1st in both rankings. However, it can also be seen that 'living conditions', which is ranked last in terms of importance, is now the second aspect they feel most knowledgeable about. Hence, findings reveal that 1st year students give the most importance to and know the most about the same aspect, 'values, beliefs and attitudes', yet they think it is not that much important to know about the 'living conditions' of the target culture, although they indeed do know quite a lot about it. When it comes to 4th year students, the top three aspects on the importance ranking are the same as the ones in the information ranking, and there are not any radical changes about other aspects, as well. They think they know 'a lot' about one aspect, 'values, beliefs and attitudes', 'quite a lot' about five aspects, 'interpersonal relations', 'everyday living', 'body language', 'living conditions', 'ritual behaviour', and only 'some' about one aspect, 'social conventions'. In this respect, except for 'living conditions', whose mean score is slightly higher in the 1st year group, 4th year students claim to have a higher level of knowledge about all the remaining aspects. It can be concluded that 4th year students reported to have higher self-efficacy beliefs regarding their knowledge about the target culture.

Considering the discussion above, it is no surprise that on a different questionnaire item, a great number of 1st year students agree that they need more information on

British/American cultures. They are indeed very much aware of the fact that their information is insufficient. These findings are consistent with the findings obtained by Kahraman (2008), who concludes that his participants have some information but request more. Nevertheless, a very similar percentage of 4th year students also believe that they need more information about these cultures, although they seem to be more knowledgeable than 1st year students, and also have a significantly higher opinion of themselves in terms of their intercultural competence. In other words, 4th year students are still as enthusiastic about more opportunities for cultural input as 1st year students, similar to instructors of English in Şen's (2010) study who also assert that they need more in spite of their high efficacy beliefs. In a similar vein, all the participants from both groups think that they also need more cultural content in their classes compared to other learners of English from different departments for a number of reasons. Whatever their reason might be, it is obvious that they believe the language instruction in their department should be different than the language instruction in other departments.

5.4.4. ELL Students' Perceptions of Target Culture Teaching Practices in Their Departments

The present study also explores the participants' perceptions of target culture teaching practices in their departments. The findings reveal that 4th year students have a higher opinion of the contribution their department make to their knowledge about the British/American culture. On the other hand, for the majority of 1st year students, their personal life is their most significant source of knowledge about the target culture. Therefore, 1st year students could be considered to be learning more from their personal practices such as visits to foreign countries, conversations with native speakers, websites, films, songs and social networks such as Facebook and Twitter, while 4th year students benefit more from school-related practices such as textbooks, literature books, instructors –native and non-native-, research for assignments or exams. The difference might have been caused by the fact that having had more years of education at their department, 4th year students had more of these school-related practices. However, the interviewees from the 1st year group are found out to be more thankful of the contribution that their department has made, claiming their knowledge and understanding of the target culture has changed considerably since they started their department. Four interviewees assert that they did not know almost anything about the

target culture when they finished high school and it is their department which made the whole difference in terms of knowledge and attitude. They stress that when they started their department, they only knew about the language rules and had stereotypical images of the people from the target culture. What these students say about their earlier education once again highlights the fact that in Turkey, culture is far from being a crucial part of language classes in schools. Therefore, the responsibility of ELL and ELT departments is rather heavy in the sense that their students have one piece of luggage with them when they arrive, their linguistic baggage.

Mentioning similar reasons, two interviewees in the 4th year group note that their department has contributed them a lot, and made an incredible difference in their life. However, the rest of the interviewees do not think of their department's contribution as highly. They believe they have improved, but not much. Two of them, who grew up and had schooling abroad (Interviewee 8 and 10), found their previous language classes richer in terms of culture. The fact that they had comparatively better cultural content in their schools abroad may be the reason why they feel that not much is being done in their departments now. This may also explain why 1st year interviewees, who all grew up and went to school in Turkey, seem to be appreciating culture teaching practices in their departments more deeply than 4th year participants. Nevertheless, the comparisons that Interviewee 8 and 10 make once again call attention to the fact that there are many things to be done in terms of teaching culture in Turkey. In this respect, the participants' suggestions on what else can be done in their departments to enhance their cultural understanding should be considered to be of great importance. Firstly, the most common suggestion is having culture days. The participants are very enthusiastic about this because they report that they see the other language and literature departments, which they share the same building, such as Japanese or Korean Language and Literature, prepare and organize a variety of events, and wish they had such culture days.

The interviewees express their admiration of these types of activities, and disappointment in the lack of them in their department. Indeed, organizing culture days would not be an innovation. They are mostly associated with practices of CLT, and the new intercultural dimension puts less importance on tangible products and practices. Yet, motivational benefits, as expressed by the interviewees, should not be overlooked.

Another thing they wish they had is more exchange programs, and some interviewees also believe trips to England, which would give them first-hand experience of the target culture, would be a good idea. According to Byram et al. (2002), such activities are very useful:

The visit or exchange is much more than an opportunity to 'practice' the language learnt in the classroom. It is a holistic learning experience which provides the means of using intercultural skills and acquiring new attitudes and values. Language practice may be limited, especially on a visit rather than an exchange, and the acquisition of knowledge about another country may be minimal, but this does not matter. ... [L]earners can profit from a visit or exchange in ways which are scarcely possible in the classroom (p. 20).

Empirical evidence may be found in the study by Kitsantas and Meyers (2001), who investigated whether study abroad programs enhanced students' cross cultural awareness via an inventory applied before and after the study abroad period and found out that they indeed made a significant contribution. Malczewska-Webb's (2014) study also supports the findings of the previous studies that suggest students benefit from their international experience by building cultural awareness, sensitivity and competence. Significantly higher levels of intercultural competence were also found in students with international experience in Hismanoğlu's (2011) study.

Films and talks/conferences by British speakers are also considered beneficial in terms of more exposure to target culture. Separate culture classes, which around half of the participants of the questionnaire express willingness to take, are also suggested by three interviewees. Genç and Bada (2005) note that culture classes make significant contributions to ELT students' language skills, cultural awareness, attitudes towards native and target culture, and future teaching. However, another interviewee believes that culture clubs are a better idea than more classes because instead of being just listeners in the class, they could discuss certain themes in groups and learn from each other. Without students being active agents in the process, it is quite difficult to claim that the presentation of information will be enough for its internalization by the students. Çakır (2006) notes that "pure information is useful, but does not necessarily lead learners' insight; whereas the development of people's cultural awareness leads

them to more critical thinking” (p. 1). A suggestion made by another interviewee attracts attention to this matter, as what should be done in the first place:

First of all, people’s point of view should be changed. Universities should raise an awareness of a more universal point of view. There are some people here who grew up in really conservative families and they are not curious about other people. First of all, some curiosity into the lives of people who are different from us should be aroused (Interviewee 4)

These ideas could be thought as parallel to the ‘attitudes’ *savoir être* dimension of Byram’s (1997) intercultural model, which is explained as “curiosity and openness, and readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one’s own” (p. 57). It is indeed an important objective in itself, acquisition of which will also foster learners’ intercultural competence.

Another finding of the study reveal that the majority of the participants disagree that they do not learn much about the target culture, so they are mainly pleased with the amount of the cultural content. Their perceptions seem to be more positive than those of the participants of Kahraman’s (2008) study, who complained about lack of cultural aspects in their courses, and those of Şen’s (2010) study, who disagreed that their 4-year university education prepared them well in terms of cultural aspects of language teaching. It is also found out that cultural information is mostly presented during various literature classes in the participants’ academic program. They explain that their instructors first provide insights into the life of the author and the time the literary work was written in the form of background information, and then they start to analyze it. They also add that they refer to various aspects of the target culture during character analysis. This is important in the sense that, as Furstenberg (2010) claims, a conceptual change “in which culture is no longer viewed simply as pieces of factual information to be presented or explained but as a process that will allow language learners to develop not just knowledge about the other culture but a close understanding of how culture permeates and shapes the behaviours and interactions of people” is needed (p. 329). Insights into cultural orientations of individuals’ behavior are of great importance to enhance cultural awareness. Shanahan (1997) echoes this belief, saying “the cultural features of literature represent a powerful merging of language, affect, and intercultural encounters and often provide the exposure to living language that a foreign language

student lacks” (p. 168). Therefore, cultural knowledge and awareness foster understanding of literature, which in return enhances cultural knowledge and awareness. However, the information is presented by the teacher, and there is no mentioning of discussions or student participation, as Interviewee 10 mentions when comparing the systems in Holland and Turkey, and Interviewee 4 points out looking at the problem from a different angle:

Our instructors usually just give the cultural information as facts, and don't ask our opinion so there are not any discussions but this is mostly because the students in class don't have enough knowledge to participate in a discussion. We have a British instructor and he frequently says “for God's sake! Don't you know this?” and I guess he gives up after some time and goes back to the topic. I can see he is very disappointed. (Interviewee 4)

According to him, students are also to be blamed for the lack of discussions in the classroom, as they are not knowledgeable enough to carry out discussions and share ideas. Therefore, in a way, instructors are forced to initiate and present the cultural content of the class, or even give up the idea totally.

In spite of this common practice of teacher dominant presentation of cultural information, about one third of the 4th year students believe that their instructors seem to have adequate knowledge about British/American culture. More than half of 1st year students consider their instructors knowledgeable enough, so they have a higher opinion of their instructors' cultural information, unlike the ELL students in Kahraman's (2008) study, who find their teachers insufficient.

The participants of the present study were also found to have different perceptions of their instructors' attitudes. According to the results of the questionnaire, nearly half of the 1st year students think British/American culture is usually idealized and its positive aspects are emphasized during classes, although significantly fewer participants in the 4th year group think so. Yet, the findings of the interview are contradictory to the findings of the questionnaire, since all interviewees in both groups assert that their instructors have a neutral and objective attitude towards the target culture. This might be due to some kind of misunderstanding on the part of the participants of the questionnaire, or the interviewees are all from the disagreeing group of the questionnaire by coincidence. The majority of the interviewees give one of their

instructors, a British professor, as an example. They report that they like his attitude because he does not take sides and even criticizes his people at times.

On the other hand, 1st year and 4th year participants are different in their perceptions about the assignments given and texts/textbooks studied. Significantly more 4th year students think their assignments require research on British/American culture, and the texts/textbooks they study provide a great deal of information on British/American culture. This might be caused by the fact that they have had more years of education in their departments. However, there is no difference in their perceptions when it comes to the best way to learn about British/American culture. A big majority of the both groups believe that it is best to go and live in that country, supporting the findings of Şen's (2010) study.

5.4.5. ELL Students' Perceptions of Their Own Practices Related to the Target Culture

Finally, the participants' perceptions of their own practices to learn more about the target culture are investigated by the present study. According to the majority of the 1st year students, their personal practices, such as visits to foreign countries, conversations with native speakers, websites, films, songs and social networks, make a more significant contribution to their cultural repertoire than their school work, unlike the majority of 4th year students. Therefore, 1st year students are found to have a more positive perception of their own practices. The findings of the interview question designed in order to be able to gather more specific data about these practices suggest that the most of the activities in both groups are one way or another related to the internet. The majority of the participants mention internet search, which is sparked by the instructors and discussions in class, their own interests, something they see on social networking sites, or a question from their online friends. Some interviewees also watch films, television series or quiz shows on the internet, or play online games. As Nault (2006) puts it, "[i]nternet technology is helping make the study of global cultures more feasible than ever" (p. 324), and the participants of the study seem to put this technology into good use in their personal lives. As most of them do not have many chances to meet native speakers, or people from other countries to talk to, it is assumed the majority of students in both groups, who report that they communicate with people

of different cultures and need to make use of intercultural communicative skills, must still be referring to their online friends and online chats.

The other activities which are not related to the internet are very limited. Only two participants state that they talk to British people in person, and only one student mention that she talks to her friends who have been abroad. Indeed, the majority of the students do not even talk to their classmates about the cultural information they have learned after classes, and less than half of the participants in both groups ask questions to their instructors about British/American culture. Considering the fact that they also mainly remain silent during classes, it is hard to claim that the participants exchange ideas or share their reflections on cultural issues with other people around. As Chui and Leung (2014) state, “unlike the passive consumption of cross-border knowledge through the print media and the Internet, the ideas cultivated and explored in actual encounters occur in a dialogical manner and force young people to challenge their own viewpoints and confront those of others (p.120). However, it is unfortunate that the participants do not seem to seize this useful opportunity to broaden their perspectives.

5.5. Pedagogical Implications of the Study

Language teaching today is supposed to go beyond teaching linguistic and lexical rules and practicing four skills, but be a bridge binding differences. Language learners must be aware of their own culture guiding their behaviour, and at the same time, other cultures as different ways of perceiving the world. Paige et al. (2003) rightfully argue that “separation of culture from language cannot help prepare students for the real world, where people from different backgrounds use language in different ways” (as cited in Su, p. 3779). It can be argued that in Turkey, nobody, whether it be academicians, politicians, teachers or students, would object to that. It is crystal clear that culture should be given a greater place in language classes. The participants of the study, who will be teaching our language classes in the future, demonstrate favourable attitudes and interest in cultural elements in their classes in addition to awareness of their need for more. Undoubtedly, more cultural content would make their education at their department more satisfying. In cognitive and affective domains, they are all ready for a greater role of culture in language teaching. However, the problem lies in the behavioral domain. It is obvious that there are many things to be done in practical terms.

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher offers the following pedagogical implications:

1. As Nault (2006) rightfully points out, it is the globalization of the English language which poses new challenges to culture teaching, and the question of ‘whose’ culture is still highly debated. This research suggests that in ELL departments, two different cultural programs should be carried out:

a. First of all, there should be classes on British/American culture, and more cultural content on these target cultures should be added to the syllabi of already existing classes on their academic program. Because they mainly study their literature, and associate English mostly to these cultures, it is vital that they are exposed to various aspects of these cultures. Besides, considering the fact that British/American publishing companies still dominate the market for ELT books, it would not be wrong to say that they will also need it when they become teachers of English.

b. Secondly, there should be classes on cultural awareness and intercultural competence along with examples and elements from different cultures of the world. Besides, more content of this type should be added to the syllabi of already existing classes on their academic program. Bektaş-Çetinkaya’s (2014) study proves significant gains in students’ cultural awareness and intercultural competence can be achieved in classroom contexts by enriching the cultural content of traditional speaking classes. Her model could be used to modify speaking classes, and the same logic could be applied to reading and writing classes. Taking the acknowledged role of English as an international language and higher possibilities of intercultural encounters into account, students should be prepared for a fast-globalizing world, and graduate world-ready.

2. In addition, both these programs should constantly include comparisons with the students’ own culture, Turkish culture, which are crucial for the development of cultural awareness, and thus, intercultural competence. While doing this, instructors should demonstrate a neutral and objective attitude to the target culture. Care must be taken not to present any cultures as superior to another, and relegate Turkish culture to a lower status.

3. Culture teaching should not be viewed as presentation of information by instructors, but rather as discussion carried out by both parties in the classroom. Student involvement in these discussions on cultural issues must be maximized. Without being

an active participant sharing his/her ideas, students cannot benefit from them fully, and develop cultural awareness.

4. Language teaching should be viewed as a contact zone of different cultures and more effort should be put in creating more chances. Lack of enough opportunities for multicultural encounters seems to be a serious obstacle to these students' intercultural communicative competence. More exchange programs and trips abroad would be the best in the sense that they would give real life challenges and experience. Larger numbers of students should be given this opportunity.

5. Events to which international speakers are invited or culture clubs with participation from international students studying at the university could also be organized. On-campus cross-cultural experience is an effective and cheaper method of increasing cultural awareness. As part of club activities or assignments for courses, ethnographic interviews with international students should be utilized.

6. Online cultural projects such as *Cultura* (Fursterberg et al., 2001), which produce significant gains in students' intercultural competence, could be carried out between Turkish students and those from other nationalities, with English serving as lingua franca. The internet, providing access even to the most distant cultures, should be an indispensable part of language and culture studies.

7. Culture days during which students are given an active role presenting and experiencing the culture of the language they study could be organized.

In conclusion, as Wilson (1993) puts it, "in order to prepare their students to be citizens of a global as well as a national society, prospective teachers themselves need to become comfortable as citizens of the world" (p. 21). However, research conducted in the Turkish EFL context suggest that neither pre-service and nor practicing English teachers are adequately trained to address cultural issues (Arıkan, 2011; Atay, 2005; Bayyurt, 2006; Bektaş-Çetinkaya & Börkan, 2012; Bektaş-Çetinkaya & Çelik, 2013, as cited in Bektaş-Çetinkaya, 2014). This means the objectives specified by the Turkish national curriculum for foreign language education as well as the ultimate goal of standardization with the CEFR do not seem to be achieved in the near future unless immediate changes in the academic programs of teacher-training institutions are made. Undeniably, "[w]ithout a strong contingent of professionally competent and well-trained teachers, there will always be a gap between policy rhetoric and classroom reality, as revealed by research findings" (Kırkgöz, 2009, p. 679). It is high time more

effort was put in to bridge this gap. Making our future teachers ready to face the demands of a global world by having better communication skills thanks to their higher levels of cultural awareness and intercultural competence is a hard task, but not impossible.

5.6. Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Further Studies

The study has several limitations. Firstly, the present study was conducted in one state university in Turkey; therefore, the results may only be generalized to its specific participants, and cannot be generalized to other contexts. Considering the number of the students studying at the department, another limitation of the study might be found in the limited number of the participants in both groups. Nevertheless, the present study aimed at investigating 1st and 4th year ELL students' perceptions of target culture and its teaching, and reaching descriptive findings of these perceptions in order to form basis for further studies in this area.

It is recommended that future studies sample participants from ELL departments of various universities, which would enable comparisons. It may also be considered to compare the perceptions of ELL and ELT students to gain insights into similarities and differences between these two groups. It would also be better if instructors working at these departments were included in the future studies to see whether the perceptions of the students match with those of the instructors. It is also of great importance to carry out research projects on actual contents and practices of ideal language and culture classes.

REFERENCES

- Aguilar, M. J. C. (2002). Intercultural communicative competence: A step beyond communicative competence. *Elia: Estudios de lingüística inglesa aplicada*, (3), 85-102.
- Aguilar, M. J. C. (2010). Intercultural communicative competence as a tool for autonomous learning. *Revista canaria de estudios ingleses*, (61), 87-98.
- Alptekin, C. (2002). Towards intercultural communicative competence. In *ELT Journal*, 56(1), 57-64.
- Alptekin, C. (2005). Dual language instruction: Multiculturalism through a lingua franca. In *TESOL symposium on dual language education: Teaching and learning two languages in the EFL setting*. (pp.5-11). İstanbul: Boğaziçi University
- Alptekin, C. (2006). Cultural familiarity in inferential and literal comprehension in L2 reading. *System*, 34(4), 494-508.
- Andersen, H. L., Lund, K., & Risager, K. (2006). *Culture in language learning*. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press.
- Archibald, J. (2008). Translation analysis as a tool for strategic decision-making. In Usluata, A. (Ed.). *Communication: Spanning Cultures, Change and Challenges*. (pp.21-40) Yeditepe University.
- Arıkan, A. (2011). Prospective English Language Teachers' Perceptions of the Target Language and Culture in Relation to their Socioeconomic Status. *English Language Teaching*, 4(3), 232.
- Atay, D. (2005). Reflections on the Cultural Dimension of Language Teaching, *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 5:3-4, 222-236.
- Atay, D., & Ece, A. (2009). Multiple identities as reflected in English-language education: The Turkish perspective. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, 8(1), 21-34.
- Atay, D., Kurt, G., Çamlıbel, Z., Ersin, P., & Kaşlıoğlu, Ö. (2009a). The role of intercultural competence in foreign language teaching. *Inonu University Journal of the Faculty of Education*, 10(3), 123-135.
- Atay, D., Çamlıbel, Z., Ersin, P., Kaşlıoğlu, Ö., & Kurt, G. (2009b). Turkish EFL teachers' opinions on intercultural approach in foreign language education. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 1(1), 1611-1616.

- Aydemir, E., & Mede, E. (2014). Integrating Target Culture in EFL Classrooms. *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry*, 5(1), 20-33.
- Barker, C. (2004). *The Sage dictionary of cultural studies*. London: Sage Publications.
- Bartram, B. (2010). *Attitudes to modern foreign language learning: Insights from comparative education*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Bayyurt, Y. (2006). Non-native English language teachers' perspective on culture in English as a Foreign Language classrooms. *Teacher Development*, 10(2), 233-247.
- Bayyurt, Y. (2013). Current perspectives on sociolinguistics and English language education. *The Journal of Language Teaching and Learning*, 3(1), 69-78.
- Bektaş-Çetinkaya, Y. (2013). Pre-service English Teachers' Perception of English Language, Target and Self Culture(s). *Procedia -Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 70, 1525-1530.
- Bektaş-Çetinkaya, Y. (2014). Extension Of Teacher Knowledge: Developing The Intercultural Competence Of Pre-Service Foreign-Language Teachers In Turkey. *Novitas-ROYAL (Research on Youth and Language)*, 8(2), 153-168.
- British Council (2013). *The English Effect*. Retrieved November 29, 2015, from <https://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/policy-insight-research/research/the-english-effect>
- Broady, E. (2004). Sameness and difference: the challenge of culture in language teaching. *Language Learning Journal*, 29(1), 68-72.
- Brown, H. D. (1994). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching* (3rd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents.
- Byon, A. S. (2007). The use of culture portfolio project in a Korean culture classroom: Evaluating stereotypes and enhancing cross-cultural awareness. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 20(1), 1-19.
- Byram, K., & Kramsch, C. (2008). Why is it so difficult to teach language as culture?. *The German Quarterly*, 81(1), 20-34.
- Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Byram, M. (2012). Language awareness and (critical) cultural awareness–relationships, comparisons and contrasts. *Language awareness*, 21(1-2), 5-13.

- Byram, M., & Zarate, G. (1994). *Definitions, Objectives and Assessment of Socio-Cultural Competence*. Council of Europe.
- Byram, M., Gribkova, B., & Starkey, H. (2002). Developing the intercultural dimension in language teaching. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Byrd, D. R., Hlas, A. C., Watzke, J., & Valencia, M. F. M. (2011). An examination of culture knowledge: A Study of L2 teachers' and teacher educators' beliefs and practices. *Foreign Language Annals*, 49(1), 4-39.
- Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied linguistics*, 1(1), 1-47.
- Carrell, P. L., & Eisterhold, J. C. (1983). Schema theory and ESL reading pedagogy. *TESOL quarterly*, 17(4), 553-573.
- Castro, P., Sercu, L., & Méndez García, M. D. C. (2004). Integrating language-and-culture teaching: an investigation of Spanish teachers' perceptions of the objectives of foreign language education. *Intercultural Education*, 15(1), 91-104.
- Chambers, G. N. (1999). *Motivating Language Learners*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Chang, Y. F. (2009). How to say no: An analysis of cross-cultural difference and pragmatic transfer. *Language Sciences*, 31(4), 477-493.
- Chastain, K. (1971). *The development of modern language skills: Theory to practice*. Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Chui, W. H., & Leung, E. W. (2014). Youth in a global world: attitudes towards globalization and global citizenship among university students in Hong Kong. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 34(1), 107-124.
- Citron, J. L. (1995). Can cross-cultural understanding aid second language acquisition? Toward a theory of ethno-lingual relativity. *Hispania*, 105-113.
- Cortazzi, M., & Jin, L. (1999). Cultural mirrors materials & method in EFL classroom, in E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Culture in Second language teaching and learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Council of Europe. (2001). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Çakır, İ. (2006). Developing Cultural Awareness in Foreign Language Teaching. *Turkish online journal of distance education-TOJDE*.7(3),154-161.

- Çakır, İ. (2011) Yabancı Dil Öğrenme Ortamlarında Kültürün Rolü. Milli Eğitim. Sayı 190. 248-255.
- Çalışkan, G. (2009). *Creating Cultural Awareness in Language Classrooms*. Unpublished MA Thesis. Hacettepe University.
- Çankaya Tümer, T. (2010). *Using Literature to Enhance Language/Cultural Awareness*. Unpublished MA Thesis. Middle East Technical University.
- Demirel, Ö. (2005). Avrupa Konseyi Dil Projesi ve Türkiye Uygulaması. *Milli Eğitim Dergisi*, 33(167), 71-82.
- Devrim, D. Y. & Bayyurt, Y. (2010). Students' understandings and preferences of the role and place of "culture" in English Language Teaching: A Focus in an EFL context. *TESOL Journal*, 2(1), 4-23.
- Doğançay-Aktuna, S. (1998) .The Spread of English in Turkey and its Current Sociolinguistic Profile, *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 19:1, 24-39.
- Drewelow, I. (2011). Learners' selective perceptions of information during instructed learning in French: Consequences. *The Modern Language Journal*, 95(s1), 27-41.
- Erten, E. (2008). *Cultural Dimension of Foreign Language Education as Perceived by Teachers and Students: A Case Study*. Unpublished MA Thesis. Istanbul University.
- Furstenberg, G. (2010). Making culture the core of the language class: Can it be done?. *The Modern Language Journal*, 94(2), 329-332.
- Furstenberg, G., Levet, S., English, K., & Maillet, K. (2001). Giving a virtual voice to the silent language of culture: The CULTURA project. *Language learning & technology*, 5(1), 55-102.
- Genç B., & Bada, E. (2005). Culture in language learning and teaching. *The Reading Matrix*, 5(1).
- Gesteland, R. R. (2012). *Cross-Cultural Business Behavior: A guide for global management*. Copenhagen Business School Press DK.
- Goodman, K. S.(1971). Psycholinguistic universals in the reading process. *P. Pimsleur & T. Quinn (Eds.), The psychology of second language learning*, 135-42.
- Gülden, Ö. (2003). *Foreign language education today and intercultural communication theory*. Unpublished MA Thesis. Istanbul University.

- Gürkan, S. (2012). The effects of cultural familiarity and reading activities on L2 reading comprehension. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 55, 1196-1206.
- Güven, S. (2015). *EFL Learners' Attitudes Towards Learning Intercultural Communicative Competence*. Unpublished MA Thesis. Bilkent University.
- Hager, M. (2011). *Culture, psychology, and language learning*. Peter Lang.
- Hinkel, E. (1999). *Culture in second language teaching and learning*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hismanoglu, M. (2011). An investigation of ELT students' intercultural communicative competence in relation to linguistic proficiency, overseas experience and formal instruction. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 35(6), 805-817.
- İnceçay, G. (2012). Turkey's foreign language policy at primary level: Challenges in practice. *ELT Research Journal*, 1(1).
- İnceçay, G., & Akyel, A. S. (2014). Turkish EFL teachers' perceptions of English as a lingua franca. *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry*, 5(1).
- Jiang, W. (2000). The relationship between culture and language. *ELT journal*, 54(4), 328- 334.
- Kachru, B. (1985). Standards, codification and sociolinguistic realism: The English language in the Outer Circle. In R. Quirk and H.G. Widdowson (Eds.) *English in the World: Teaching and Learning the Language and Literature*. (pp. 11–16). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kahraman, A. (2008). A study of cultural aspects of English language with Turkish learners of English. *Dumlupınar Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 21(21).
- Keranen, N., & Bayyurt, Y. (2006). Intercultural telecollaboration: In-service EFL teachers in Mexico and pre-service EFL teachers in Turkey. *Tesl-Ej*, 10(3), 1-50.
- Kırkgöz, Y. (2009). Globalization and English language policy in Turkey. *Educational Policy*, 23(5), 663-684.
- Kramsch, C. (1998). *Language and culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kramsch, C. (2002). In search of the intercultural. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 6: 275–285.
- Kramsch, C. (2006). Culture in Language Learning. In Andersen, H. L., Lund, K., & Risager, K. (Eds.). *Culture in language learning*. (pp. 11-25). Aarhus: Aarhus University Press.

- Kramsch, C. (2009). Third culture and language education. In V. Cook & L. Wei (Eds.), *Contemporary applied linguistics*. (pp. 233-254). London: Continuum.
- Kitao, K. (1991). Teaching Culture in Foreign Language Instruction in the United States. *Doshisha Studies in English*, 52(53), 285-306.
- Kitsantas, A., & Meyers, J. (2001). Studying Abroad: Does It Enhance College Student Cross-Cultural Awareness?. Paper presented at the combined annual meeting San Diego State University and U.S. Department of Education Center for International Business Education and Research. San Diego, CA.
- Kovecses, Z. (2006). *Language, mind, and culture: a practical introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Larson-Hall, J. (2009). *A guide to doing statistics in second language research using SPSS*. New York: Routledge.
- Liddicoat, A. J., Papademetre, L., Scarino, A., & Kohler, M. (2003). Report on intercultural language learning. *Canberra ACT: Commonwealth of Australia*.
- Lockley, T., & Yoshida, C. (2014). Language and culture exchange in foreign language learning: an experiment and recommendations. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 1-17.
- Mackey, A., & Gass, S. M. (2005). *Second language research: Methodology and design*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Malczewska-Webb, B. (2014). Cultural and intercultural awareness of international students at an Australian university. In *Awareness in Action* (pp. 225-239). Springer International Publishing.
- McKay, S. K. (2003) Toward an appropriate EIL pedagogy: Re-examining common ELT assumptions. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*. 13(1), 1–22.
- Meyer, M. (1991). Developing Transcultural Competence: Case Studies of Advanced Foreign Language Learners. In D. Buttjes and M. Byram (Eds.) *Mediating languages and cultures: Towards an intercultural theory of foreign language education*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı (MEB) [Turkish Ministry of National Education]. (1997). *İlköğretim Okulu 4. ve 5. Sınıf Yabancı Dil (İngilizce) Öğretim Programı* [Primary education Grades 4 and 5 foreign language (English) curriculum]. pp. 606. *Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Tebliğler Dergisi*, No. 2481. [MEB official journal].

- Nault, D. (2006). Going global: Rethinking culture teaching in ELT contexts. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 19(3), 314-328.
- Norton, B., & Toohey, K.. (2001). Changing Perspectives on Good Language Learners. *TESOL Quarterly*, 35(2), 307–322.
- Nostrand, H. L. (1967). Language, culture and curriculum. In M. R. Donoghue (Ed.), *Foreign language and schools: A book of readings* (pp. 237-246). Dubouque, Iowa: WMC Brown.
- Oxford, R. L. (1995). Teaching culture in the language classroom: Toward a new philosophy. *Educational Linguistics, Crosscultural Communication, and Global Interdependence*, 26.
- Önalın, O. (2005). EFL Teachers' Perceptions of the Place of Culture in ELT: A Survey Study at Four Universities in Ankara/Turkey. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 1(2). 215-235.
- Rafieyan, V., Eng, L. S., & Mohamed, A. R. (2013). Language Learners' Attitudes towards the Incorporation of Target Language Culture into Foreign Language Instructions. *International Journal of Linguistics*, 5(4), 169-177.
- Rafieyan, V., Majid, N. B. A., & Eng, L. S. (2013). Relationship between Attitude toward Target Language Culture Instruction and Pragmatic Comprehension Development. *English Language Teaching*, 6(8), p. 125-132.
- Risager, K. (2006) Culture In Language: A Transnational View. . In Andersen, H. L., Lund, K., & Risager, K. (Eds.). *Culture in language learning*. (pp. 27-44). Aarhus: Aarhus University Press.
- Ryan-Scheutz, C., & Nuessel, F. (2010). Teaching and assessing Italian culture in North America. *Italica*, 87(1), 37-68.
- Salzmann, Z., Stanlaw, J., & Adachi, N. (2014). *Language, culture, and society: An introduction to linguistic anthropology*. Colorado: Westview Press.
- Sapir, E. (1970). The status of linguistics as a science. In D. G. Mandelbaum (Eds.), *Culture, language, and personality* (pp.65-77). Berkley: University of California Press.
- Sarıçoban, A., & Çalışkan, G. (2011). The influence of target culture on language learners. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 7(1), 7-17.

- Sercu, L., del Carmen Méndez García, M., & Prieto, P. C. (2005). Culture learning from a constructivist perspective. An investigation of Spanish foreign language teachers' views. *Language and Education, 19*(6), 483-495.
- Shanahan, D. (1997). Articulating the relationship between language, literature, and culture: Toward a new agenda for foreign language teaching and research. *The Modern Language Journal, 81*(2), 164-174.
- Shin, J., Eslami, Z. R., & Chen, W. C. (2011). Presentation of local and international culture in current international English-language teaching textbooks. *Language, Culture and Curriculum, 24*(3), 253-268.
- Stern, H. H. (1983). *Fundamental concepts of language teaching: Historical and interdisciplinary perspectives on applied Linguistic research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Su, Y. C. (2008). Promoting cross-cultural awareness and understanding: incorporating ethnographic interviews in college EFL classes in Taiwan. *Educational studies, 34*(4), 377-398.
- Şen, S. (2010). *A profile of EFL teachers' knowledge of the target culture from their epistemological sources to classroom applications*. Unpublished master's thesis. Hacettepe University.
- Tannen, D. (2014). Language and Culture. In Fasold, R. W., & Connor-Linton, J. (Eds.). *An introduction to language and linguistics*. (pp.343-372). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- The National Standards Collaborative Board. (2015). *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages*. 4th ed. Alexandria, VA: Author. Retrieved November 29, 2015, from [http://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/WorldReadinessStandardsfor LearningLanguages.pdf](http://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/WorldReadinessStandardsforLearningLanguages.pdf)
- Tomalin, B., & Stempleski, S. (1993). *Cultural awareness*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Utley, D. (2004). *Intercultural Resource Pack: Intercultural Communication Resources For Language Teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Üzüm, B. (2007). *Analysis of Turkish learners' attitudes towards English language and English speaking societies*. Unpublished master's thesis. Middle East Technical University, Ankara.

- Wilson, A. H. (1993). Conversation partners: Helping students gain a global perspective through cross-cultural experiences. *Theory into practice*, 32(1), 21-26.
- Woodgate-Jones, A., & Grenfell, M. (2012). Intercultural understanding and primary-level second language learning and teaching. *Language Awareness*, 21(4), 331-345.
- Yılmaz, D. (2006). *Students' opinions of the role of culture in learning English as a foreign language*. Unpublished master's thesis, Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, Turkey.



APPENDIX A: TARGET CULTURE PERCEPTION QUESTIONNAIRE

English Language and Literature Students' Perceptions of Target Culture and Its Teaching

The purpose of this study is to collect detailed information for a scientific study about the target culture perceptions of students studying at the department of English Language and Literature. All information provided by this questionnaire will be kept strictly confidential and will be used only for the purpose of this study.

By completing and returning this questionnaire, you will have shown your agreement to participate voluntarily in this study.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Asiye Doğan Uçar
Erciyes University, SFL

PART I

1. Age : 17-19 20-22 23-25 26+

2. Gender: Female Male

3. How long have you been learning English? 5-8 years 9-12 years 13-16 years 17 years +

4. Have you ever been abroad before? Yes / No

a. Which country/countries:

b. For how long:

5. Which country's culture do you associate most with the English language? Choose only one.

- the UK (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) the USA
 Australia Canada Republic of Ireland New Zealand
 Other _____

6. Which country's culture do you most want to learn about? Choose only one.

- the UK (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) the USA
 Australia Canada Republic of Ireland New Zealand
 Other _____

7. What is your main reaction when you are provided with cultural information? Choose only one.

- Interested (positive reactions)
- Analytical (analyzing, comparing with my own culture)
- Skeptical (questioning, doubting whether it is true or useful)
- Rejected (negative reactions)
- No reaction at all
- Other: _____

8. What should be the main aim of presenting cultural information in language learning? Choose only one.

- Developing an awareness of other cultures and people.
- Insight into one's own culture.
- More successful communication.
- Comparison between own and other cultures.
- Intellectual development.
- Familiarization with other cultures.
- Other: _____

9. Which one is the most significant source of your knowledge about British/ American culture?

- Academic life (coursebooks, textbooks, literature books, instructors –native and non-native-, research for assignments or exams, etc.)
- Personal life (visits to foreign countries, native speakers, websites, social networks such as Facebook and Twitter, films, songs, TV programmes)

10. Do you want to learn more about British/ American culture?

Yes (Please tick all the applicable reasons)

- I hope to live in the UK/US.
- I will need it when I become a teacher of English.
- I need it for a better understanding of English literature.
- It is useful when engaged in communication with native speakers.
- Other: _____

No (Please tick all the applicable reasons)

- Some issues may have negative effects on Turkish culture.
- I find some culture-specific information inappropriate to the classroom environment.
- Personally, I do not feel comfortable with some specific culture-based topics.
- Some cultural information is not suitable to my language level.
- Particular cultural subjects have sensitive/controversial nature in Turkish culture.
- I already know a great deal about British/ American culture.
- Other: _____

11. Are there any advantages of learning cultural information in language classes?

No

Yes (Please tick all the applicable options)

- Attaining at a global understanding of culture.
- Respecting different cultures.
- Improving general background knowledge.
- Better communicative competence
- Adds interest to teaching and learning the language
- Other: _____

12. Are there any disadvantages of learning about British/ American culture in language classes?

No

Yes (Please tick all the applicable options)

- Indifference to my own culture.
- Over-sympathy to British/ American culture.
- Linguistic and cultural imperialism.
- Cultural assimilation.
- Inclusion of too much cultural information creates a boring atmosphere.
- Other: _____

PART II

13. Please specify how important it is to have information about these aspects of British/American culture. (tick \checkmark the box you choose)

	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	Not Important At All
Everyday living, e.g.: • food and drink, table manners • public holidays • work hours • leisure (hobbies, sports, media)					
Living conditions, e.g.: • living standards • housing conditions;					
Interpersonal relations e.g.: • relations between sexes • family structures and relations • relations between generations • relations in work situations					
Values, beliefs and attitudes in relation to such factors as: • social class • institutions • politics • religion • history • tradition and social change • arts (music, visual arts, literature)					
Body language, e.g.: • gesture • facial expression • posture • eye contact • body contact					
Social conventions, e.g.: • punctuality • presents • dress • length of stay • behavioural and conversational conventions and taboos					
Ritual behaviour in such areas as: • religious observances • birth, marriage, death • celebrations, festivals,					

14. Please specify how much information you have about these aspects of British/American culture. (**tick** ✓ the box you choose)

	A lot	Quite A Lot	Some	Little	No
Everyday living, e.g.: • food and drink, table manners • public holidays • work hours • leisure activities (hobbies, sports, media)					
Living conditions, e.g.: • living standards • housing conditions;					
Interpersonal relations e.g.: • relations between sexes • family structures and relations • relations between generations • relations in work situations					
Values, beliefs and attitudes in relation to such factors as: • social class • institutions • politics • religion • history • tradition and social change • arts (music, visual arts, literature, drama)					
Body language, e.g.: • gesture • facial expression • posture • eye contact • body contact					
Social conventions, e.g.: • punctuality • presents • dress • length of stay • behavioural and conversational conventions and taboos					
Ritual behaviour in such areas as: • religious observances • birth, marriage, death • celebrations, festivals,					

PART III

15. Please **tick** ✓ the box you choose.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. English can be taught without any links to culture.					
2. The best way to learn about British/ American culture is to go and live in that country.					
3. The textbooks/ texts we study provide a great deal of information on British/American culture.					
4. British/ American culture is usually idealized and its positive aspects are emphasized during classes.					
5. Our instructors seem to have adequate knowledge of British/ American culture.					
6. We do not learn about British/American culture much in our classes.					
7. Some of the assignments given require research on British/ American culture.					
8. More cultural background information would help our reading and appreciating British/American literature.					
9. In our classes there should be more references to elements related to Turkish culture.					
10. In our classes there should be more references to elements related to British culture.					
11. In our classes there should be more references to elements related to American culture.					
12. In our classes there should be more references to elements related to other cultures. (e.g. Indian, Chinese, etc.)					
13. Cultural information given during instruction should be assessed in exams.					
14. I need to learn more about British/ American culture.					
15. I would try to give cultural information to my students if I were a teacher of English.					
16. I ask my instructors questions about British/American culture.					
17. I have difficulty understanding the cultural information given in our classes.					
18. My classmates and I talk about what we have learned about British/American culture after class.					
19. I communicate with people of different cultures and need to make use of intercultural communicative skills.					
20. I believe I can communicate and function well in multicultural settings.					
21. I would be willing to take a separate course on British/ American culture.					

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Do you think students studying at the Department of English Language and Literature have a more positive attitude towards the target culture than other learners of English? Why?
2. Do you think it is interesting and enjoyable to learn about the target culture in addition to being useful?
3. Do you have any negative ideas about certain aspects of the target culture? If yes, what are they and where and how did you get them? Do you think only positive aspects are focused on during classes?
4. Do you think students studying at the Department of English Language and Literature need more information on the target culture than other learners of English?
5. In what ways do you think your knowledge and understanding of the target culture has changed over the months/ years you have spent studying at this department? What else can be done?
6. What are the classes during which you get the most information on the target culture?
7. What do you do to learn more about the target culture other than schoolwork?

APPENDIX C: CURRICULUM VITAE**Asiye DOĞAN UÇAR****Telephone:** 0 505 5153554**Address:** Erciyes Universitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu Melikgazi/ Kayseri**Date of Birth:** 01.09.1981**Place of Birth:** Sivas**Marital Status:** Married**E-mail:** asiyedogan@hotmail.com**Education:**

1999-2003: BA Middle East Technical University, Department of Foreign Language Education

1995-1999: Prof. Dr. Necati Erşen Anatolian Teacher Training High School

Foreign Languages: English (Advanced- YDS: 98,75)**Job Experiences:**

2005 February – Instructor - Erciyes University, School of Foreign Languages

Fields of Interest: Culture in English Language Teaching, Literature in English Language Teaching**Courses Taught:** English for General Purposes