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THE CURRENT POSITIONS OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION ELEMENTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOL COURSE BOOKS IN TURKEY

Hatice Kübra KOÇ 

Erzincan University Faculty of Education

kubra.tuncarslan@gmail.com

H. Kübra Koç is a Ph.D candidate of English Language Teaching and a Research Assistant at the Department of English Language Teaching at Erzincan University, Erzincan, Turkey. Her research interests are literature for young learners and teaching English to very young learners.

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kubra.tuncarslan@gmail.com

Abstract

In foreign language teaching, both cultural elements and communicating with others in a cultural environment are some of the indispensable requirements for language learners. In this sense, intercultural communication can be seen as a keystone for language teaching and learning. However, it is known that in order to improve intercultural communication; course books should be designed via some basic elements based on intercultural communication. In this study, for the aim of determining the current situation on the contexts of course books which have been related to intercultural communication, the course books developed by Ministry of National Education in Turkey were examined in terms of consisting activities or tasks related to intercultural communication. As for the grades of these course books; fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth grades were selected, since activities based on intercultural communication have been begun to be adapted to young learners' course books after they are at least eleven because of their cognitive development. At the end of the study, the main themes of the cultural elements in these course books were discussed one by one as referring the related literature, and some suggestions on intercultural communication skills of young learners were introduced for researchers and educators.

Keywords: intercultural communication, young learners, course book

1. Introduction

Nowadays, communicating with others from different cultures has become more popular and it has been seen as a necessity for human-beings because of changing needs in this era. For all people, communicating effectively and making a connection with people in different cultures has been crucial for being a part of global needs. Recently, not only diplomats, politicians or footballers, but also nearly all people have needed to communicate with others from different cultures because of the changing requirements of being a human. For this reason, intercultural communication has been a term that has become more popular in these days. As for this term, it can be said that intercultural communication is a kind of communication between people who have different languages, values, beliefs and customs (Bennett, 1998). However, Rogers and Steinfatt (1999) defined this term as “the exchange of information between individuals who are unlike culturally” (p.1). For a more specific definition, Samovar, Porter and McDaniel (2010) stated that communicating with others who have distinctly different cultural aspects means intercultural communication.

In terms of globalization, internationalization and a several of advances in technology or transportation; intercultural communication has become an indispensable part of education (Jackson, 2014). However, cultural studies are based on language researches because they consist of linguistic elements which are interested in cultural features. Since cultural elements are mainly related to the linguistic concepts, while teaching or acquiring a culture, language is seen as a keystone concept. Accordingly, the linguistic studies which have been discussed the importance of culture can be realized in literature.

The studies on intercultural communication in terms of language go back to Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis. In this hypothesis, Sapir and Whorf stated that differences in cultures in which different languages have been used could affect users' linguistic views (Sapir & Whorf, 1921). Even if the studies on intercultural communication and language has mentioned in ancient times, the interaction between those two concept has become more popular after World War II and researchers have become more interested in those terms in order to clarify the main concepts of language learning and teaching (Martin & Nakayama, 2007). After that time, some materials which were based on both language and culture have become to be designed to be helpful for learners in terms of learning a language professionally (Jackson, 2014). In this sense, it can be said that intercultural communication has been thought under the main title of learning a language appropriately and using a language in cultural contexts (Chen, 2017). For this reason, as for language learning, intercultural communication has a vital role for both educators and learners and also researchers who have been studying in this field.

When studying on intercultural communication and language researches, it can be stated that learners who are young ages should be taken into consideration because their language barriers and prejudices on some concepts are seen as lower than adults. It means that young learners do not have any prejudices on people who have different cultures, beliefs or values; and so, they can easily acquire some cultural elements easier than adults. Additionally, learning different customs or cultural elements can be enjoyable and attractive for young learners in language learning courses. Since they are curious and energetic, they are eager to learn a new culture that is a part of learning a new language.

Additionally, because activities or materials that are based on intercultural communication can be seen as authentic materials, these can support language learning in a real context (Jin & Cortazzi, 2017). In this sense, Harmer (1991) stated the importance of using authentic materials as defining this term as selected materials that designed for native speakers and based on real –life situations. Authentic cultural information and real-life communication can be supplied via authentic materials in a language teaching or learning environment (Richards & Rogers, 2001). Therefore, using some cultural elements in language teaching to young learners gives a chance to teach both target culture and target language in an integrative way. In this sense, it is believed that language teaching materials might consist of cultural elements and those elements could be designed for intercultural communication while teaching young learners.

However, in Turkey, even if there are some studies that reflect the importance of culture in foreign language teaching (Çakır, 2010; Çalman, 2017; Demirbaş, 2013; Hamiloğlu & Mendi, 2010; Işık, 2011; Türkan & Çelik, 2007; Üstünel & Öztürk, 2014), the design of course books in terms of both learners' own culture and their target culture is not observed adequately for young learners. In fact, it is known that teaching young learners begins in early ages when young learners are in the second grade and it goes on after they are graduated from high school. Yet, during these years, how they are taught about cultural elements and how they learn about their target culture has not been discussed effectively. For this reason, it is believed that even if they are taught about language skills or target grammar rules, they can have some problems in terms of communicating in an intercultural context. In this sense, the aim of this study was declaring the intercultural communication elements in course books that are used in teaching English to young learners in Turkey. As regarding to this aim, the research questions given below were aimed to be answered at the end of this study:

1. Do secondary school course books in Turkey include local cultural elements in visual items?
2. Do secondary school course books in Turkey include local cultural elements in written-text items?
3. Do secondary school course books in Turkey include target cultural elements in visual items?
4. Do secondary school course books in Turkey include target cultural elements in written-text items?
5. Do secondary school course books in Turkey include international cultural elements in visual items?
6. Do secondary school course books in Turkey include international cultural elements in written-text items?

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study is designed as a qualitative research design and specifically, it is organized with a descriptive content-analysis method. Neundorf (2002) stated that content-analysis is a technique that supplies objective and quantitative data for researchers. However, according to Seliger and Shohamy (1990), descriptive content- analysis is a method that is used to clarify the frequency of some linguistic elements in the determined course books. In the light of this research method, in this study, there was no real participants who are selected or determined for this study; yet in this study, four course books that are used in state secondary schools in Turkey were preferred to analyze in terms of consisting of intercultural features. As for this study, four Common European Framework (CEF) based course books (We Speak English, English Net, English Route and Upturn in English) designed and accepted by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) in Turkey were analyzed. While analyzing those course books, it was taken into consideration that how young learners are faced to intercultural communication. Since those books are approved by the Ministry of National Education, those are used in many state schools in Turkey.

2.2 Data Collection

In literature, some researchers have used some different criteria for the aim of evaluating the books in terms of cultural content. In this sense, Byram (1998) designed a checklist which was consisted of some basic titles such as cultural differences, identity, ethnicity, values and beliefs, daily routines, families, professions, relationships, and schools. Whereas Korkmaz (2009) analyzed course books under the four main criteria as fictional or non-fictional texts, visual references, conversational items and listening parts; Cakir (2010) preferred evaluating course books as base on idioms, proverbs, and some festivals. Additionally, as referring Jahan and Roger (2006), Çelik and Erbay (2013) determined three criteria mainly based on cultural elements as local culture, international culture and target culture; and they used those three elements on analyzing course books in terms of cultural elements. Differently, Demirbaş (2013) analyzed four course books that were designed for the aim of teaching English to young learners as considering the perspectives of intercultural items and items from target cultures. In another study conducted in Turkey, Çalman (2017) preferred two different models which were firstly based on Erbay and Çelik's (2013) criteria and secondly on Siddiqie's (2011) theoretical concepts in order to analyze a course book that was used for ninth grade high school students in English Language Teaching.

In this study, accordingly, the basic classification based on the criteria was preferred as considering the cognitive abilities and social interactions of young learners. In this sense,

firstly the basic criteria determined by Erbay and Çelik (2013) was determined since it consists of both local, target and international cultural elements; as for this study, it was believed that since young learners have been eager to introduce themselves and interact with other people from different cultures, both their own cultural elements and international cultural elements should be given in their course books in order to develop their intercultural communication skills. For this reason, the criteria that were based on local, target and intercultural elements were firstly examined. Accordingly, the main reason of preferring this criterion was based on the ages and interests of young learners; it means that young learners need to learn a new language as using their own sensations and they can acquire easily if the courses are presented via different language skills.

2.3 Data Analysis

During the organization of course book analysis, both visual and communicative activities were considered. In this sense, both written texts and visual materials were discussed one by one for each one of the course books. Additionally, the activities were examined in terms of consisting of both local and international cultural elements since both of them could give a change to learners on acquiring culture (Jahan & Rogers, 2006). As for visual elements, Korkmaz (2009) stated that figures, photographs, signs and symbols could be thought as visual materials in a course book. For this sense, all of visual elements in those course books were analyzed in terms of intercultural elements. As for written texts; dialogs, short texts and authentic reading paragraphs or passages were taken into consideration. As it was stated above, the course books that were specifically designed for young learners were analyzed in this study; hence the written texts were designed as short and simple in those course books. In this sense, all of the texts in written form were analyzed as written-text activities. The results of the analysis process were generalized in terms of the general scope of course books and the data collected via this study were introduced in tables. At the end of the study, the current position of cultural elements in those course books was discussed as referring the related literature.

3. Findings and Discussion

In this study, it was aimed that the current position of the cultural elements given in intercultural communication skill for young learners would be analyzed in terms of the course books that were used in secondary schools in Turkey. In detail, it was specified that intercultural figures or elements in secondary school course books that were used in Turkey could be made more understandable. As for course books, *We Speak English (5th grade)*, *English Net (6th Grade)*, *English Route (7th grade)* and *Upturn in English (8th grade)* which were designed by the Ministry of National Education in Turkey were analyzed one by one. In the analysis process, it was understood that because all of those course books were specifically designed for young learners, those were highly consisted of visual materials, vocabulary teaching based activities, short reading texts, short listening texts, games, interactive activities, colorful figures, original art-craft activities and communicative activities. Hence, the analysis of those course books were mainly based on visual and communicative items in terms of local, international and target culture specific items (British / American).

Table 1. Ratio of the cultural elements in *We Speak English* (5th grade)

	Local Culture		International Culture		Target Culture	
	Written text	Visual elements	Written text	Visual elements	Written text	Visual elements
f	15	15	22	34	20	59
%	26.31	14.01	38.59	31.02	35.10	54.97

As for analysis of this course book, first of all, it was seen that this book was written by a committee and then the general scope of the course was overviewed, at the end of this session, it was realized that this course book was based on teaching vocabulary and it consisted of just short reading sentences, games and lots of visual materials. As for cultural elements, in general it was seen that this course book was started with introducing the basic characters who were used in the book and all of those characters were chosen from different cultures and their names were also preferred some well-known names that were used in different countries (Melisa, Jenny, Ege, Martin, Akiko, Marta, Bela, Ceren, Sophia, Emre). All of the units in this course book, those characters were used, for this reason, the names of those characters were not analyzed one by one for each units and they were counted just for one at the beginning of the book. In other sense of the general scope of the course book, it was seen that there were totally 10 units and those were mainly selected from the real life contexts.

As for intercultural items, as it was given in Table 1, local culture elements were seen to be 26.31% in written texts and 14.01% in visual elements. In detail, those local elements were seen in Unit 1 (My Daily Routine) as tea, honey and bread in breakfast, Karagöz and Istanbul city; in Unit 2 (My Town) as Atatürk Secondary School, country name and flag in Unit 3 (Hello!); cultural games in Unit 4 (Games and Hobbies), mint-lemon tea in Unit 5 (Health), Keloğlan and Nasreddin Hodja in Unit 6 (Movies) and in Unit 10 (Festivals) as Children's Day, Ramadan and Independence Day.

However, international culture elements were seen to be 38,59% in written texts and 31.02% in visual elements. Those international elements were seen in Unit 1 (My Daily Routine) as different characters, Rome and Paris; country names and flags such as Japan, China, Spain and Italy in Unit 3 (Hello!); cultural games such as Origami, Tick and Checkers in Unit 4 (Games and Hobbies); different film posters in Unit 6 (Movies), cultural foods as Sushi and Pizza in Unit 7 (Party Time) and different festival names and customs in Unit 10 (Festivals) such as Dragon dance, Chinese New Year, Cinco de Mayo and Diwali.

Finally, target culture elements were examined in terms of American-British culture and it was seen that there were more highly target culture elements in this course and young learners were introduced with 35.10% target culture elements in written texts and 54.97% visual elements from their target culture elements. More specifically, those local elements were seen in Unit 1 (My Daily Routine) as different characters and London in map; country names and flags in Unit 3 (Hello!); cultural games in Unit 4 (Games and Hobbies); lots of different film posters such as Harry Potter, Smurfs, Dracula and Ocean's Eleven in Unit 6 (Movies); and different festival names and customs in Unit 10 (Festivals) such as Easter, Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Table 2. *Ratio of the cultural elements in English Net (6th grade)*

	Local Culture		International Culture		Target Culture	
	Written text	Visual elements	Written text	Visual elements	Written text	Visual elements
f	1	9	9	28	2	10
%	8.33	19.14	75	59.57	11.67	21.29

As for analysis of this course book that was used for 6th grade students in state secondary schools in Turkey, first of all, it was seen that this book was written by Güler Şilit, not by a committee; and then the general scope of the course was overviewed, at the end of this session, it was realized that this course book was based on teaching grammar rules and language skills. Therefore, it was consisted of just reading sentences, listening activities, projects, games and lots of visual materials. It was designed as 10 Units and nearly all of the characters in the course book were preferred from the foreign cultures; so their names were not Turkish.

As for cultural items, as it was given in Table 2, local culture elements were seen to be 8.33% in written texts and 19.14% in visual elements. In detail, those local elements were seen in Unit 1 (After School) as Halay Dance; in Unit 2 (Yummy Breakfast) as tea, ayran, Turkish cheese; city names such as Istanbul, Ankara and Turkish airlines in Unit 3 (A Day in My City); a Turkey Map in Unit 4 (Weather and Emotions). In a reading text in Unit 6 (Vacation), there was reading text on Marmaris.

As for international culture items, as it was given in Table 2, there were 75% international items in written texts and 59.57% items in visual elements. In detail, in visual elements, those international culture elements were seen in Unit 1 (After School) as flamingo and Polka dance; in Unit 2 (Yummy Breakfast) as a Japanese child character and traditional Japanese foods; film posters in Unit 3 (A Day in My City); 6 international signs in Unit 5 (At the Fair), a tour guide in Unit 6 (Vacation), a Van Gough painting in Unit 8 (Detectives at Work) and 3 singers as Iron Maiden, Ryan Tedder and 50 Cent in Unit 10 (Democracy). As for written elements, those were seen in Unit 2 (Yummy Breakfast) as a traditional Japanese food, and there were different expressions from different cultures in terms of saying “Good Appetite”; a text on Chinese Restaurant in Unit 3 (A day in My City) and a reading text on election in Brazil in Unit 10 (Democracy).

Finally, as for the target culture items, as it was given in Table 2, there were 11, 67% international items in written texts and 21.29% items in visual elements. In detail, in visual elements, those international culture elements were seen in Unit 2 (Yummy Breakfast) as pancake, muffin and croissant; film posters in Unit 3 (A Day in My City); Statue of Liberty, Hyde Park and London Eye in Unit 6 (Vacation). As for written elements, those were seen in Unit 3 (A day in My City) as a reading text on England, a reading text on Statue of Liberty in Unit 6 (Vacation).

Briefly, in *English Net* course book, most of the cultural elements were seen in international culture and the least of them were seen in local culture elements. Additionally, visual elements were consisted of much more cultural elements than written texts and reading activities. Although this book consisted of some cultural and intercultural elements, they were seen as not so much for young learners. In some units such as Unit 7 (Occupations) and Unit 9 (Saving the Planet), there was no any cultural elements and also in some units such as Unit 5 (At the Fair) and Unit 8 (Detectives at Work), there were just a few intercultural figures. In this sense, it can be said that cultural figures or elements were not used in all of the units in this course book for young learners.

Table 3. Ratio of the cultural elements in English Route (7th grade)

	Local Culture		International Culture		Target Culture	
	Written text	Visual elements	Written text	Visual elements	Written text	Visual elements
f	5	9	16	20	2	2
%	21.76	29.04	69.58	64.51	8.66	6.45

While analyzing the course book that was used for 7th grade students in state secondary schools in Turkey, first of all, it was seen that this book was written by Evrim BİRİNCİOĞLU KALDAR, not by a committee; and then the general scope of the course was overviewed, at the end of this session, it was realized that it was designed for teaching grammar rules and language skills. Since young learners in these years can pay attention longer, it was analyzed that this course book was consisted of longer reading sentences, listening activities, projects, games and writing activities than the previously analyzed ones. Similar to the other course books that were used for fifth and sixth grade student, *English Route* was also designed with 10 Units and nearly all of the characters in the course book were preferred from the foreign cultures; so their names were not Turkish.

As for cultural items, as it was given in Table 3, local culture elements were seen to be 21.76% in written texts and 29.04% in visual elements. In detail, those local elements were seen in Unit 1 (Appearance and Personality) as Murat Boz (a Turkish singer); in Unit 2 (Biographies) as Hadise (a Turkish singer) and Atatürk; Istanbul city and Bosphorus in Unit 3 (Sports); a Turkish Series namely “Aramızda Kalsın” in Unit 5(Television); Turkish coffee in Unit 7 (Superstitions). In terms of written elements, it was seen that there were some local cultural figures in this book. In this sense, in the first unit, there was a reading text on Murat Boz and another written text on Hadise in Unit 2. In Unit 3, there was reading activity on Zeynep’s marathon adventures. In Unit 5, a reading text on a Turkish TV series was used, and in Unit 7, there was a written text on Turkish coffee.

As for international culture items, as it was given in Table 3, there were 69.58% international items in written texts and 64.51% items in visual elements. In detail, in visual elements, those international culture elements were seen in Unit 1 (Appearance and Personality) as Robert Patterson; in Unit 2 (Biographies) as Marie Curie, Einstein, Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen and Merly Streep; football teams such as Manchester United, Bayern Munich and Atletico Madrid in Unit 3 (Sports); a safari in Unit 4 (Wild Animals); Halloween and costume party in Unit 6 (Parties); fortune cookies, gypsy woman in Unit 7 (Superstitions), R&B CD in Unit 8(Public Buildings), snacks in Unit 9 (Environment) and Curiosity Rover in Unit 10 (Planets). In terms of written elements, it was seen that there were some international culture elements in this book. In this sense, in the first unit, there was a reading text on Robert Patterson and different reading texts on Maries Curie, Einstein and Merly Streep in Unit 2. In Unit 3, there was reading activity on Messi and some other football teams. In Unit 4, Two and a Half Man and A Turtle’s Tale were used, and in Unit 7, there was a written text on fortune cookies and some different superstitions from different countries such as Japan, India, Italy and Thailand. In Unit 9, there was a written text on California and finally, in Unit 10, there was a text about NASA and another one about Space Shuttle Challenger disaster.

For the last one, as for the target culture items, unfortunately, there was not so much items and as it was given in Table 3, there were 8.66% target culture items in written texts and 6.45% items in visual elements. In detail, in visual elements, those target culture elements

were seen in Unit 3 (Sports) as football team namely Manchester United; in Unit 7 (Superstitions) as a superstition in The UK; Neil Armstrong in Unit 10 (Planets). In terms of written elements, it was seen that there were some target culture elements in this book. In this sense, in Unit 4, an idiom known as couch potato was used, and in Unit 7, there was a written text on a superstition form The UK.

Briefly, in *English Route* course book, most of the cultural elements were seen in international culture and the least of them were seen in target culture elements. Additionally, similar to other course books that were analyzed in this study, visual elements covered more cultural items than written elements. In the course book, similar to *English Net*, the names of the characters were not Turkish and they were used all over the book. However, it was seen that there was attempt to use cultural figures in all units and some intercultural elements were tried to be integrated in the activities.

Table 4. *Ratio of the cultural elements in Upturn in English (8th grade)*

	Local Culture		International Culture		Target Culture	
	Written text	Visual elements	Written text	Visual elements	Written text	Visual elements
f	6	13	7	28	4	6
%	35.29	27.66	41.18	59.58	23.53	12.76

While analyzing the course book that was used for 7th grade students in state secondary schools in Turkey, first of all, it was seen that this book was written by Mehmet Şener, not by a committee; in general scope, it was realized that it was mainly designed for teaching grammar rules, vocabulary items and language skills. In this course book, there were much more reading texts than the others that were analyzed in this study and additionally, there were much more vocabulary items which had been tried to be taught. However, similar to the other course books that were used for fifth, sixth and seventh grade student, *Upturn in English* was also designed with 10 Units and nearly all of the characters' names were selected from abroad.

As for the cultural items, as it was given in Table 4, local culture elements were seen to be 35.29% in written texts and 27.66% in visual elements. In detail, those local elements were seen in Unit 3 (Cooking) as Turkish Pilaf; in Unit 6 (Adventures) as cities in Turkey such as Antalya, Nevşehir and Muğla; in Unit 7 (Tourism) as Bursa, Tarsus and İstanbul; in Unit 9(Science) as Utkan Demirci. In terms of written elements, it was seen that there were some local cultural figures in this book. In this sense, the reading texts that were used in this course book were consisted of local culture elements in the same units which have been mentioned above for visual elements.

As it was given in Table 4, international culture elements were seen to be 41.18% in written texts and 59.58% in visual elements. In detail, those local elements were seen in Unit 1 (Friendship) as film posters such as “My Name is Khan”, “Gravity” and “Jack Reacher”; in Unit 3 (Cooking) as traditional foods such as pizza, lasagna, Kabuli Pilaw, Beshbarmak and Colcannon; in Unit 7 (Tourism) as Jamaica, pyramids; in Unit 9(Science) a few scientists from abroad such as James Watson, Edison and Galileo; in Unit 10 (Natural Forces) as Indonesia. In terms of written elements, there were totally seven written text were analyzed in terms of consisting cultural elements and those were parallel to the visuals that were given above.

For the last one, as for the target culture items, similarly, there were not so much items and as it was given in Table 4, there were 23.53% target culture items in written texts and 12.76% items in visual elements. In detail, in visual elements, those target culture elements were seen in Unit 3 (Cooking) as a muffin; in Unit 4 (Communication) as street names from England; in Unit 7 (Tourism) as Statue of Liberty, Big Ben and The Tower Bridge, in Unit 9 (Science) as National Park and in Unit 10 (Natural Disaster) as a TV program. In terms of written elements, there were some target culture elements in the same units that were the same as visual items.

Briefly, in the course book namely *Upturn in English*, similarly, most of the cultural elements were seen in international culture and the least of them were seen in target culture elements. Additionally, it was understood that, similar to other course books that were analyzed in this study, visual elements consisted of more cultural items than written elements. In conclusion, it can be summarized that in this course book, unfortunately, there was not so much cultural figures and intercultural activities or information for young learners.

As regarding to those findings, it can be said that cultural instruments or figures are tried to be integrated in all of the course books that are used in secondary state schools in Turkey. It is known that culture is seen as an indispensable part of language teaching and learning process, hence while teaching English, cultural elements could be introduced in an appropriate and authentic way. In the process of acquiring a foreign language, culturally presented ones can be learned easier (Çakır, 2010). Accordingly, teaching in an authentic context makes language learning more meaningful and it can be seen as an advantage for language learners, especially younger ones.

At the end of the analysis, it was seen that the course book namely *We Speak English* (5th grade) had the most cultural elements in visual elements and written texts. However, it was realized that target culture items were mainly preferred in this book; yet local culture elements were limited. While learning a new language, the comparison of target culture and local culture can make an advantage for young learners, since they learn from near to close. Additionally, if they acquire their target language in an authentic context in which both target culture and their own culture is presented interactively, they may learn more permanently. In this sense, it can be suggested that local culture elements are needed to be added in this course for young learners.

Another result of this study showed that *Upturn in English* (8th grade) was determined to have the least frequently used cultural items in written texts. Additionally, it was understood that in this course book, not all of the units were consisted of cultural items, yet just some specific units determined as *Tourism*, *Science* and *Cooking* were consisted of cultural elements. Therefore, it can be generalized that in this course book, there is not enough cultural elements for young learners in terms of consisting cultural figures in context. There may be some reasons of this result; firstly, as Alptekin (2002) suggested that course books may be designed with regard to their writers' point of view and their social lives, so this course book cannot be based on intercultural figures. Secondly, it may be because the exam system in Turkey, it means that since learners in 8th grade have to attend a national exam for entrance of high school namely TEOG, their course is designed with heavily vocabulary teaching and reading passages that are important for this exam. Because there is no culturally integrated question in TEOG exam, it may be neglected by both teachers and learners in this grade.

On the other hand, *English Net* (6th grade) and *English Route* (7th grade) had cultural elements to some extent; and they had similar ratios for international and target culture elements. More specifically, it was realized that those course books consisted of mainly

international culture elements and target culture was seen as neglected in terms of written texts. However, there were some instruments in local culture and young learners had a chance to see their own cultural or traditional elements in those two course books. It could be an advantage for young learners in terms of connecting target language and native language and also in terms of motivating themselves in natural contexts. As it was suggested by Alptekin (2002) and McKay (2003), cultural items in native language and foreign language should be integrated and presented interactively to supply a more successful teaching environment for learners. As for conclusion for the analysis of those two course books, it could be said that the cultural elements that were used in those two course books might be enriched via more game-like activities and listening skills. It could be also suggested that more visuals and authentic reading texts may be added in these two course books.

In this study, it was seen that all of the course books that were used in secondary state schools in Turkey had cultural items to some extent, and there were some specific units in each of those course books in which it was aimed to introduce cultural elements from both local culture and international culture. As it was stated by Byram (1998) learning a language in a culturally enriched environment could be helpful for using target language in a collective way. In this sense, the design of those units that were consisted of cultural elements could help young learners to develop their language proficiency in terms of language skills (Demirbaş, 2013). Accordingly, it could be expected that learners could use their target language interactively via culturally enriched activities and communicative skills (Korkmaz, 2009), and acquiring a target language in culturally developed contexts could be needed by learners for analyzing some expressions and understanding real life context more attractively.

However, it is known that even if children between 10-12 years are young learners, children up to 13 can be seen as early adolescents (Pinter, 2011); in this manner, course books' designing may be affected by this difference between young learners. It means that, at the end of the analysis of this study, it was seen that in the course books used in 5th and 6th grade consisted of much more visual elements, games, art-craft activities and shorter reading texts; however in 7th and 8th grade course books, it was realized that there were longer reading texts, written-texts, less visual and interactive activities. Yet, all of the course books were designed via four basic language skills, and it was easily seen that those course books aimed to improve all of the language skills for young learners. In *We Speak English* (5th grade), there were cultural elements mostly in international and target culture, though it was suggested by Byram (1991) that younger learners had negative aspects for some cultural elements and they biased for some cultural figures. In this sense, as it was stated by Üstünel and Öztürk (2014), "culturally enriched lessons may improve students' knowledge"; and it can be suggested that thanks to cultural items, lessons in foreign language teaching can be more colorful, attractive and interesting for young learners, since they need to learn a new language in a natural context (Harmer, 2007).

4. Conclusion and Suggestion

The main purpose of this study is to reveal the current position of intercultural elements that are used in the course books that are seen as the basic resource while teaching English in Turkey; since the main idea of this study is based on teaching English to young learners, the course books that are used in secondary schools in Turkey are purposefully selected by the researcher. The analysis of the course books was based on Erbay and Çelik's (2013) criteria; in this criterion, cultural elements were divided into three parts as local, international and target culture elements. Hence, in this study, four course books were analyzed in terms of this criterion and the results of the study were presented via tables in above.

As a result of the study, it was seen that *We Speak English* (5th grade) had the most frequency for consisting of cultural elements, whereas *Upturn in English* (8th grade) had the least cultural figures. It may be because of the views of writers (Alptekin, 2002), and may be because of the exam system in Turkey, since it affects the course books and activity use by teachers in Turkey (Üstünel & Öztürk, 2014). In another result of this study, it was seen that cultural elements were mainly seen in visual materials, not in written ones. It may be because visual instruments such as figures, signs, pictures, drawings and photographs may help young learners to acquire some linguistic items permanently. Finally, unlike some studies in literature like Özil (1999) and Çakır (2010) which suggested that local culture elements were highly used in the course books; it was seen at the end of this study that all of the course books consisted of mostly international culture elements; and local and target culture elements were not emphasized as much as international ones. The result of this study in terms of the use of international and target culture elements much more than local elements is seen as similar to the results of a study conducted by Erbay and Çelik (2013) on course books analysis for intercultural instruments.

In conclusion, it is known that cultural items in English language teaching classrooms should be enriched for a better understanding and acquisition for learners (Erdoğan, 2015); in this field, it can be said that since course books are the basic resources or materials that are used to teach English in state schools (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999), the design of course books should be developed via cultural elements and these elements are selected from both local and international culture (McKay, 2003). As it is suggested by Baker (2012), the interaction between global and local communication can be supported via culturally enriched activities and teaching ways. Briefly, intercultural elements are seen as the most significant helpers in terms of acquiring a foreign language attractively and using target language communicatively in a real life context. For this reason, these kinds of elements should be supported in course books and they are introduced both for local and international culture elements.

As for suggestions, it is suggested that some other course books that are designed for young learners can be examined in order to give a more specific and detail knowledge on this field. Additionally, in this study just the course books were analyzed, however workbooks which were designed for just learners could be analyzed for the aim of supplying more component data for the study. Furthermore, in this study, the books used in secondary schools were discussed, yet the course books used for younger learners in primary schools can be searched for giving original data on the course books in primary schools. Finally, some different criterion can be used to examine the course books in terms of consisting of intercultural elements.

In terms of pedagogical implication, it can be said that because enhancing intercultural communication consists of thinking critically (Lin & Gallois, 2014) and it requires more logical and contextual skills, the course books written for young learners may be designed as based on these important concepts. Additionally, it can be suggested that evaluation of learners can consist of some basic principles of intercultural communication and learners have a chance to evaluate themselves at the end of each unit in terms of using cultural elements in their language learning. All in all, designing and developing intercultural communication can be presented in an interdisciplinary way for learners, and they may be supported by their teachers in other courses during their education.

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