TECHNOLOGY ENHANCED AND CULTURE EMBEDDED LANGUAGE LEARNING[i]

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Abstract:

This study focuses on perceptions and practices in relation to integrating culture and technology into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching and how students' language skills and attitudes are affected. Within this framework, an action research was planned and designed; both qualitative and quantitative methods such as observation, semi-structured interview, scale and exams were used to gather data. The study was conducted during one semester with 40 undergraduate students. The data gathered was studied using descriptive analysis and t-test. Students' skill scores were analyzed by descriptive and inferential statistical analyses for 14 weeks. The findings revealed that the students' language skills among the weeks were statistically significant. The research results also revealed that the difference between two speaking exams and attitude scales was statistically significant. Participants reported positive opinions about using technology and integrating culture into EFL teaching. Results of the current study support the other studies in the field.

Keywords: foreign language learning, culture, technology, communication skills, attitude

1. Introduction

The necessity of learning a foreign language has been increasing continuously since it links the international relations, and it still maintains its importance today as it always

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has been. In particular, the increase in inter-communal relations and co-operation after the Second World War has made it even more significant to recognize the importance of foreign language knowledge, and to know two or more foreign languages has even been regarded as a prerequisite in academic or professional life (Yasar, 1990, p. 378).

To know a foreign language has become one of the most important factors for both education and employment after education in Turkey as it is in all over the World. Everyone in the community wants to learn a foreign language, especially English among the common languages. For this purpose, the time allocated to teaching English in educational programs, starting with primary education, starts with two hours and increases to four hours, and even up to ten hours in foreign language secondary schools. Moreover, in private primary and pre-school institutions, children get foreign language education from early ages. As a part of globalization in 21st century, as all the nations of the World, the universities in Turkey such as METU, Boğaziçi, Hacettepe, Bilkent, etc. has determined English language as a medium of instruction. Furthermore, many tourists come to Turkey because of its geographical location and historical features. As a result, in many institutions the need for staff who knows foreign language has arisen. In this context, learning and teaching a foreign language has become a very important need. Although we know our needs for learning foreign languages very well, we cannot achieve this effectively at primary and secondary level (Paker, 2006, p. 684). Within the framework of these problems, this study aims to examine the practices of integrating culture and technology into English language learning process.

2. Culture in English Language Teaching

Many difficulties are encountered in the teaching process of all foreign language, in particular in the English language teaching in Turkey. Perhaps the most important factor of these difficulties in language teaching is the fact that the foreign language being taught is focused on only vocabulary and grammar, neglecting cultural and daily life. However, language does not consist of a random combination of words and grammatical structures; the factor which makes the words and the structures meaningful is the context in which words and structures are used (Widdowson, 1990, p. 111). A learning process that is disconnected from the context of foreign language leads students to develop a negative attitude towards the target language, which poses another problem in foreign language education.

Acquiring a foreign language is not a matter of finding the concepts and expressions of our mother tongue in the target language and using them. The foreign language is a gateway to the viewpoints, thinking and value systems of the various societies. The way to understand the various activities and behaviours of a society or the individuals of that society passes through learning the language of that community (Ozil, 1991, p. 100). To know a foreign language also means understanding a foreign culture. (Tapan, 1995, p. 152).

The behaviour and mentality structure of a society is a combination of behaviour and thought structures of individuals shaped by the culture of that society. For this

reason, culture at the applied level is the power that provides communication between individuals through language. Moreover, language and culture are interactive; they are mutually influenced by each other and can even change each other. In this sense, language and culture are interwoven together (Brown, 2000, p. 301).

The methods applied in the processes of foreign language teaching are constantly changing. It can be said that each new method tries to eliminate the missing points of the previous method. The popular teaching method of the 21st century is that only the word or grammar instruction cannot be sufficient in the globalizing world; it is also necessary to solve the problem of understanding arising from the cultural differences of the different countries. After the second half of the twentieth century, it is better understood by the "Communicative Language Teaching Method", which is more widely used in foreign language teaching approaches and is becoming increasingly popular and still retains its popularity, that language and culture cannot be isolated (Cetinkaya, 2008, p. 3).

2.1 Technology in English Language Teaching

In addition to communication-oriented language teaching, technology that is rapidly advancing in today's' information age due to the developments in communication field has become an essential part of our life. Changes in this field also affect the field of education. Technology is used in order to make the education and training process in the education system effective, efficient and attractive with the effect of facilitating human life. The idea that in the globalized world it is no longer sufficient to teach only words and grammar rules brings the idea to the mind that educators should be open to new methods of teaching foreign language. Technology enhanced language learning is an approach that has been used in recent years after the use of computer-assisted language teaching to enrich the teaching environment (Slate, Manuel & Brinson, 2002; Hertel 2003; Usun, 2003).

Technology is an effective and attractive learning resource for integration of the target language culture into the teaching process (Lunde, 1990; Beauvois, 1994; Vincent & Hah, 1996). Technology enhanced language learning (TELL) has emerged as a concept which has been begun to be used as computer assisted language teaching (CALL) and then incorporated into the educational technology field with the developments in technology. It is believed that authentic materials that can be used in technology enhanced language teaching will help teach the socio-cultural knowledge of the target language. Besides, the fact that the visa is required for entering foreign countries makes it difficult for Turkish students to learn the foreign languages and cultures in their context. In this study, the natural learning environment in which Turkish students cannot be included due to many different limitations has been tried to be provided by using technology.

3. Method

3.1 The Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

This study focuses on perceptions and practices in relation to integrating culture and technology into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching and how students' language skills and attitudes are affected.

The questions that guide this research are as follows:

- To what extent does the technology enhanced and culture embedded foreign language teaching affect students' language skills?
- To what extent does the technology enhanced-culture embedded foreign language teaching affect students' attitudes to learning English?
- What are the students' opinions about the practice?

3.2 Research model

In the study, a technology-enhanced and culture embedded foreign language teaching was designed for 14 weeks and students' opinions on this practice and on English language teaching in Turkey as a foreign language were obtained. At the same time, the effects of this practice on the language skills of students were tried to be measured in various ways.

The study is designed as an action research, one of the qualitative research methods, in which the researcher is also practitioner. Action researches are kinds of researches in which the researcher tries to understand the dynamics of the process and the effects of these dynamics, to find solutions and to produce new ideas rather than to prove something or test a hypothesis by taking the position as a practitioner himself (Johnson, 2014; Stringer, 1996).

In this context, the researcher held meetings every week to discuss the process, the problems experienced in practice and possible solutions.

3.3 Participants

The study group is composed of undergraduate students of a higher education institution. In the study, there are a total of 40 students including 27 females and 13 males. The academic achievement level of the students is above the average value of 2.0. The age of the students ranges from 21 to 23. The duration of the practice was determined to be 14 weeks, 4 hours per week and therefore 56 hours in total.

3.4 Validity and Reliability

Since the techniques and the materials used in collecting the data are important in ensuring the validity and reliability of the research, in the study triangulation, which is defined as a necessity for qualitative researches, has been provided by collecting different types of data by different techniques. In this study different methods such as observation, interview and questionnaire were used to provide the methodological diversity in the data collection process. In order to ensure the diversity in the research process, two American academics were assisted, and the ideas were exchanged on the authenticity of

the topics and activities. Therefore, diversity was provided not only in data collection process but also in the analysis and evaluation of the data.

3.5 Observation Notes
Particularly in action research, it is important to make observations for the researcher to obtain more in-depth data and to ensure the consistency of the data. In this study, direct observation notes taken in each lesson and after the interviews were utilized in order to remember the process, to guide the new lesson plans, to diversify the data and to ensure that the research is carried out accurately. In this context, a recorder was used for the three course hours of the researcher; and in the speaking classes conducted by the American teacher; the researcher was in the classroom and kept observation notes.

3.6 Researcher's Journal
The researcher's journal is a tool which reflects the thoughts, indecisiveness, understanding, observations, comments and feelings of the researcher during the process and therefore establishing personal ties with the research; and which presents the raw data related to research process and content. (Altrichter, Posch & Somekh, 1993, p. 63). The researcher herself also served as a data source and during the application process she kept diaries before and after the class reflecting the teaching process and the problems encountered in this process to provide data on the research process and reflect on the practice.

3.7 Speaking Exam
In foreign language teaching after the 1970s, the language teaching experts led by Henry Widdowson, Christopher and Brumfit put forward a conceptual-functional approach and a communicative approach as a method to be used in the classroom. With the addition of a third notion as communicative competence, the communicative approach has emerged (Hymes, 1972, p. 273). In the research, because of the importance of the communicative competence mentioned, a speaking exam was conducted before and after the application in order to measure the effect of the application on the students' speaking skills. In the speaking exam, the researcher studied together with the American teacher who conducted the speaking classes and the average of the points given by the two teachers was taken.

3.8 Facebook
It is important to use social networks which are becoming more common day by day in teaching and learning activities because of their potentials in allowing communication between and share information among individuals regardless of time and place (Yuksel & Olpak, 2014, p. 172). In this context, a closed Facebook group was formed in this study in order to increase students' interaction with technology and to get them feel more active in learning processes. In this way, it was ensured that the learning environment was included in a technology tool that students had already spent in their lives and spent time

each day. Students were required to make preparation for the class by sharing a title, picture and / or video for the topics to be processed before coming to class on the page.

3.9 Attitude Scale

In the study, a 30-item attitude scale developed by Aydoslu (2005) was used. According to Ellis (1994), the attitude of the student affects the level of success in learning the language and at the same time the student is affected by this success. In other words, the student's positive attitude increases with success. However, the student's negative attitude increases with the failure. (Ellis, 1994, p. 565).

In this context, the data collection tool used in the study is a 5-point Likert-type Attitude Scale for English. For this application, the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the items in the cognitive dimension was calculated as 0.72, 0.95 for affective items, and 0.89 for items with behavioural dimensions.

3.10 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 40 participants. An interview form was prepared by the researcher and these questions were presented to two English instructors to ensure validity. The questions were directed to five students outside the study group before the interviews to make sure that the questions were clear and understandable. The responses of the participants were recorded and then decoded for descriptive analysis. In order to ensure consistency in deciphering, a second encoder was assigned to the study. The aim here is to agreement between codes. Items that could not be reconciled were re-evaluated and consensus was reached.

3.11 Practice

In the study, weekly course subjects were selected and designed according to the socio-cultural knowledge identified at the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and required for students in language teaching process. The framework is a model of language learning which gives importance to intercultural communication skills as well as gaining the language skill and is widely used today in more than one country.

Socio-cultural information which can be taught within the framework of foreign language learning is as follows:
- everyday living,
- living conditions,
- interpersonal relations (including relations of power and solidarity,
- values, beliefs and attitudes,
- body language,
- social conventions,
- ritual behaviour (CEFR, 2000, p. 102).

CD, projection, computer, internet and smart phones were used in the classroom in the study in which the content is mostly cultural items of the target language. Particularly in language learning, the aim is to create contexts that simulate the life of the

target language so that students can imitate the language in these contexts. It is thought that technology is an effective tool for doing this simulation. In this context, students in the classroom were provided to watch authentic videos such as movies, series, and so on. Songs, CDs, various radio stations and voice dictionaries were preferred for listening skill. Themes, subjects, grammatical structure and assignments determined according to the framework are given in Table 1 as a summary.

Table 1: Themes, subjects, grammatical structure
and assignments determined according to the framework

Chronology	Theme	Subject	Grammatical Structure	Assignments
Week 1 13 February 2015	Interpersonal relations	Family structures and relations	-to be-	Can you introduce yourself and your family?
Week 2 20 February 2015	Everyday living	Occupational groups (jobs)	-to be- and adjectives to describe personality	Do you think you can be a good teacher? Why/Why not?
Week 3 27 February 2015	Everyday living	Leisure activities	Simple Present Tense	What's your daily routine? What do you do in your free time?
Week 4 6 March 2015	Everyday living	Sports (Super Bowl)	Simple Present Tense	Do you like sports? Do you do or watch sports? Do you think sports are important in our lives? Why/Why not?
Week 5 13 March 2015	Everyday living	Food and drink	''At the restaurant'' Can I have/ May I have…?	Describe your favourite meal
Week 6 20 March 2015	Social Conventions	Behavioral and conversational conventions and taboos	Imperatives Dos and don'ts -should-	What should/shouldn't a person do in Turkish culture?
Week 7 27March 2015	Social conventions	Gift giving	It's +adj+ to V1 Should/shouldn't	Plan and give presentation about your culture or a culture you know well
Week 8 3 April 2015	Everyday living	Media (TV Shows)	-to be- and Simple Present Tense	Do you watch TV? What's your favourite show on TV?
Week 9 10 April 2015	Values, beliefs and attitudes	History; especially iconic historical personages and events	Past Tense	Who do you think is an iconic person in our history? Write and tell about his/her life.
Week 10 17 April 2015	Everyday living	Public holidays (Independence Day)	Past Tense	Learn about the history of a public holiday in Turkey.
Week 11 24 April 2015	Values, beliefs and attitudes	Arts (Literature, Mark Twain)	Past Tense	Who is your favourite author? Write and tell about his/her life.
Week 12 1 May 2015 (19 May)	Ritual Behaviour	Marriage	Simple Past Tense and Past Progressive	What are the similarities and the differences between Monica's wedding and our weddings?

Week 13 8 May 2015	Ritual Behaviour	Celebrations (Thanksgiving)	Simple Past Tense and Past Progressive	Tell and write one of your memories when you last celebrated something.
Week 14 15 May 2015	Values, belief and attitudes	Christmas	-will/ will not-	What are the common New Year's resolutions? What are your New Year's resolutions?

The study was conducted in a higher education institution in the Marmara Region between the dates of 9 February and 15 May, 2015. The practice lasted 14 weeks as 4 hours per week in the spring semester of 2014-2015 academic year. Apart from the class hours, students continued to interact with the researcher, the target language, and each other with a closed Facebook group without time limits. Some of the students' writing assignments were requested on the page and further comments were included in the student evaluation. The researcher fully documented the participation of students for each shared assignment and comments. The comments on course assignments, pictures, videos, etc. on the page and the writings were followed daily, and therefore the required data were gathered in order to improve the students' writing skills and feedback was provided to the students about the errors. The studies of the students for writing assignments were requested as a portfolio at the end of the semester. The listening skills of the students were rated with the song performance of the week. It was assumed that the lyrics of the songs are a good tool to reflect the culture of the target language. In the same way, students' reading abilities were graded by comprehension and interpretation questions and true-false exercises conducted after each topic for the reading texts that were processed. Speaking classes were determined to be in the last class hour each week and were conducted by an American teacher. In these classes, the researcher was in the class and took notes in order to observe the students' speaking skills in the target language. The students sent their speaking assignments to the researcher via WhatsApp program. The researcher gave students a list of weekly evaluation criteria and aimed to inform students about what points they should focus on and therefore enabling them to make a preliminary evaluation of the homework.

3.12 Analysis of Data
Descriptive and predictive statistics were used in the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data obtained in the study. Qualitative data obtained from the observation notes of the researcher and interviews conducted with 40 participants were later typed on the computer by the researcher. The data were deciphered and tried to be identified through descriptive analysis. The students' skill scores were analyzed weekly for 14 weeks by taking averages for each week and comparing them with descriptive analysis.

4. Results

The results are explained in relation to the research questions and the purpose.

4.1 Quantitative Data

4.1.1 Research Question 1: To what extent does the technology enhanced, and culture embedded foreign language teaching affect students' language skills?

In the research, the effect of the application on reading, writing, speaking and listening skills of the students related to the target language was tried to be evaluated with various activities, exercises, quizzes, exams and assignments. The students' skill scores were compared with descriptive analysis by taking the average of each week for 14 weeks. The results of these analyzes are given in Table 2.

Table 2: The comparison of students' skill score averages according to weeks

	Reading	Speaking	Listening	Writing
Average	57,10	56,90	51,22	54,32
Ss	14,70	17,72	18,63	13,02
Minimum	24,40	22,30	11,00	25,60
Maximum	83,92	90,17	85,00	81,25

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that the highest average scores of the students' target skills is the reading skill (57, 10). Second, the highest average score is in students' speaking skill (56, 90). The weekly average score of writing skill is 54.32. Finally, according to the obtained weekly scores, the least improvement in the students is in listening skill (51, 22).

A speaking exam was conducted before and after the application to assess students' speaking skills. Four of the students did not participate in the two tests. Speaking exam scores were analyzed using paired student t test.

The values for this analysis are given in Table 3.

Table 3: The comparison of the students' average scores obtained from speaking exam

	Mean	n=36	Ss
Speaking 1	54,33	36	20,98
Speaking 2	63,31	36	23,08

It is seen that there is a statistically significant difference between speaking pre-test (mean=54, 33; S=20, 98) and speaking post test score (mean=63, 31; S=23, 08) in favour of the post-test group (t (36) = -5, 26; p<0,001).

According to Pearson correlation coefficient (r=0.896 p<0,001) a high positive relationship was obtained between the two tests. Therefore, it can be said that the practice affected the oral communication process positively.

4.1.2 Research Question 2: To what extent does the technology enhanced-culture embedded foreign language teaching affect students' attitudes to learning English?

For the second purpose of the research, it was tried to find the answer to the question of how is the culture-oriented language teaching enriched with technology affect the attitudes of students towards language learning?

In this context, t-test was performed for the dependent samples for the attitude scale given to the students before and after the application, and the mean attitude scores were calculated for each sub-dimension. Pre-test and post-test scores were compared for the average scores of cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions and general attitude scores.

In Table 4, the pre-test and post-test scores of the attitude scale are given.

Table 4: The comparisons of attitude scale mean scores

n=40	Mean	Ss
Pre Cognitive	2,70	,965
Post Cognitive	3,71	,828
Pre Affective	3,12	1,01
Post Affective	3,90	,685
Pre Behavioural	3,90	1,03
Post Behavioural	4,38	,566
Pre-test	3,24	,893
Post-post	4	,626

In general, there is a statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test mean scores of all subscales and total scores of the attitude scores with %95 confidence level ($t(40)= -5,30$; $p<0,001$; $r=0.33$). The highest increase in all dimensions was observed in cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions, respectively. According to the results of the dependent samples t test, a statistically significant increase was observed between the pre-test ($M_{pre}=2,70$) and post-test (Mpost = 3.72) mean scores of the students for the cognitive sub-dimension ($t(40)= -6,50$; $p<0,001$; $r=0.40$). Similarly, for the affective sub-dimension a statistically significant increase was observed between the pre-test (Mpre=3, 13) and post-test (Mpost = 3.89) mean scores of the students ($t(40)= -4,90$; $p<0,001$; $r=0.37$). A statistically significant increase was observed between the pre-test ($M_{Pre}= 3.89$), and post-test ($M_{post} = 4.38$) mean scores of the students' attitude scores for the behavioural sub-dimension ($t= -3, 04$; $p<0, 05$; $r=0.31$).

4.2 Quantitative Data

4.2.1 Research Question 3: What are the students' opinions about the practice?

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the students after the classes were finished. The answers of the students obtained from the interviews are summarized below.

When the opinions of the students about learning foreign languages were asked, 29 students (72.5%) expressed that they liked at least one foreign language. Eight students out of these 29 students indicated that they felt bored because they had learnt English since elementary school. Out of 40 students, 21 students (52.5%) stated that they liked English as a foreign language and 11 students stated that (27.5%) they did not like it.

F7 student who is prejudiced against English because she was not provided with a comfortable learning environment expressed her experiences as follows:

"… My teacher, when you are learning a foreign language. How can I learn without making mistakes? We could not open our mouths because we were too afraid to make mistakes. The teacher was constantly humiliating us since we did not know the answer. Feeling comfortable is very important in liking the class…"

The answers given by students to the question of how they were instructed in foreign language classes before are as follows: 36 (90%) of the students stated that they got education in foreign language courses completely on the basis of grammar and learning the tenses of the target language. Only 4 (10%) of the students stated that they had learner-centred and practice-based education in their previous courses.

F11 student who complained about the fact that too many grammatical subjects were processed in previous classes stated her experiences as follows:

"… It usually starts with grammar, but there is a constant revision, but it does not get into our heads. English is more complicated in terms of structure, grammar even when we have difficulties in many subjects in our mother tongue. It was very weak in terms of practice."

In the study, 16 of the students (40%) had positive attitudes towards English before participating during the application and this did not change at the end of the application. Half of the students had negative attitudes towards the English language before the application and 20 of these students changed their negative attitudes positively. Four of the students (10%) stated that they did not like English before the practice and this situation did not change.

During the 14 weeks, the students' skills in the target language were tried to be evaluated. When students were asked about their opinions on this issue, 37 (92.5%) of the students stated that at least one skill among listening, reading, writing and speaking skills improved after the application. 24 students out of these 37 students only talked about one skill in this improvement. The rest 13 students expressed that more than one skill improved. According to 3 students (7.5%), there was no contribution of the application to their improvement.

M10 who said that the most improvement was in his speaking skill after the classes he participated in told the following about the reasons for this:

"… I absolutely admit that this is because of James teacher. So, I think it is the best thing we have done. We are not the people who can go abroad easy. How will you learn without learning the culture and talking to native people? (Why is it so important to you?). It is important because it is necessary to know the culture of those people and talk according to this and act accordingly."

In the interviews, the students were asked what they benefited most from during the process. In response to this question, 15 (37.5%) of the students said that the most beneficial thing for them was to learn the culture of the target language.14 students (35%)

stated that the most beneficial practice was the use of technology. Six of the students (15%) benefited most from Facebook. Finally, 5 of the students (12.5%) regarded speaking classes instructed by an American teacher as the most beneficial practice of the term.

Students were asked to share the negative aspects of the 14-week practice during the interviews. 33 (82.5%) students stated that there wasn't anything in the practice to be criticized negatively. According to 2 students (5%) the grammar was neglected in the courses. According to 3 students (7.5%), the level of the reading texts used in the class was higher than their level. According to one student (2.5%) the class was disorganized. Finally, according to one student, the class was boring because the songs chosen for the listening activities in the class did not suit their fancies.

When students were asked in the interviews about the listening activities and the selected songs for these activities, 39 students (97.5%) reported positive opinions about the use of the songs for the listening activities in the class. On the other hand, according to one student, songs should not be used for listening activities.

M2 expressed his criticism about this activity as follows:

"… For me, there is a criticism about the classes, if you don't get me wrong. So now, for example, what we did for listening. There was a song for every week. You selected more among the classic songs. But I like rock music. That's why I think that this kind of exercise should follow from the course book. At least there can be a standard by doing so…"

Two dictionaries were selected for students to use during the classes (Urban and Merriam Webster). Related to this situation, 11 students (27, 5 %) stated that they benefited from this application. According to 20 students (50%) dictionaries were containing the cultural elements that were not found in other dictionaries. On the other hand, 9 students (22, 5%) stated that their learning was affected negatively since these dictionaries were from English to English.

A closed Facebook group was formed in order for students to be exposed to the target language and reach the materials. Only 4 (10%) of the students expressed negative opinions related to this question.

Finally, the students were asked their opinions about being instructed by native speakers of English language and who does not know Turkish. 33 of the students (82.5%) were positive and 7 (17.5%) were negative about this issue.

M6 expresses his ideas about this question as follows:

"… Teacher, the man has come and he comes from a country where English is the native language. You know, he is a person from that culture. That is to say, it was very different for me. I live in Istanbul but I have never dared to speak English. His body language and tone of voice were also different…"

5. Discussions and Conclusion

In literature, it is seen that researchers such as Lado (1957), Hall (1959), Saussure (1959),Vygotsky, (1962); Chomsky (1968), Seelye (1976), Wittgenstein (1980), Quine (1980), Kramch (1988), Byram (1989), Widdowson (1990), Adorn (1993), Foucault (1994) investigated the relationship between language and culture.

Prior to World War II, having knowledge of the topics such as literature and history, and being able to translate texts on these subjects could meet the concept of culture. However, the rise of language and social sciences after the Second World War has given rise to the foreground of dialogue and intercultural communication in everyday life.

Studies examining the language and culture relationship and emphasizing the importance of this relationship have increased in literature since the communicative approach has become widespread in learning a foreign language (Firges & Melenk, 1982; Adaskou, Britten & Fahsi, 1990; Thürmann, 1994; Edmondson and House, 1998; Kramsch, 1998; Risager, 1998; Holliday, 1999; Crozet & Liddicoat, 2000). On the other hand, there are also studies that critically analyze the questions "Are global languages a threat to local cultures, and is it a cultural imperialism that the English language becomes widespread and is becoming a world language?" (House, 2014; Aldera, 2017; Sullivian & Schatz, 2009; Gil, 2005; Baker, 2009; Ceramella, 2012; Mahmoud, 2015; Hidayati, 2016).

Findings obtained in the context of this research are supported by other studies. Snodin (2016) blended the target language with technology in his qualitative research conducted with 28 students. As a result of the application, it is concluded that the academic achievements of the students developed. During the semi-structured interviews, students expressed that they started to respect other cultures after the study, and that such instructional design facilitated communication in the target language. The findings of the research show a great similarity with this study. Elkılıç (2000) found in his doctoral dissertation with the title of "Ways to overcome the interference of mother tongue culture into target language culture in the oral performance of intermediate level students at the ELT department of Ataturk University" that 56.2% of the errors committed in the speaking activities were due to interference of mother tongue culture. In this context, it can be concluded that the ability to think in the target language, that is to say the ability to develop the ideas will positively affect the communication skills of the students.

The participants of the study conducted by Gulden (2003), with the title of "Culture Teaching in Foreign Language and Intercultural Communication Theory" consists of 89 preparation class students. In the study, most of the students expressed positive opinions on the integration of target language culture into language teaching process. Stapleton (2000) conducted interviews with teachers from 28 different universities in his study. Teachers were asked to share the positive and negative sides of their own experiences. In the interviews, teachers came to the conclusion that they found it difficult not to incorporate the culture while teaching English as a foreign language and then they changed their teaching styles. Sercu, Garcia and Prieto (2005) concluded in their study

conducted with 424 participants that the grammar competence was insufficient for the development of communication skills of the students and teaching the target language culture developed the intercultural communicative competence. This result supports the findings of the study.

Studies conducted within this context and arguing that culture is an integral part of the process of learning a foreign language coincide with the results obtained from this study (Stapleton, 2000; Tseng, 2002; Lazaraton, 2003; Peterson and Coltrane, 2003; Li, 2004; Tsou, 2005; Sinicrope, Norris & Watanabe, 2007; Vickers, 2008; Georgiou, 2011; Hlas et. al., 2011; Çepik and Doghonadze, 2011; Ziad, 2011; Barak & Lavrenteva, 2015; Obaid, 2015; Zhan, 2016).

In their study conducted with 300 students, Savithri and Kamala (2016) had students score a questionnaire after the application process to see how a culture-focused lesson affected their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills in English. For most students, it did not matter that the culture of the target language was included in the lessons as it could be learned outside the classroom. In this context, the opinions of the students and the answers they gave in the questionnaire do not overlap with the findings of this study.

In the study, technology was used to blend culture into lessons. Using technology in the lessons affected students' attitudes towards language learning positively. In literature, there are some other studies supporting these findings. Yang and Chen (2007) concluded in the case study on the technology-supported language learning that technology support in language learning positively influenced students' attitudes toward target language learning. Bahrani and Rahmatollah (2011) evaluated students' opinions on technology use in language learning by giving an attitude and motivational scale to the students before and after the application. In addition, according to this study it was found that language learning enriched by technology improves the listening and speaking skills of the students the most. On the other hand, the finding that enriching the learning process by technology positively affects the attitudes, motivations and skills of the students is supported by these researches (Chapelle & Jamieson, 1986; Lunde, 1990; Beauvois, 1994; Vincent & Hah, 1996; Parker, 2000; Hulstijn, 2000; Sanders & Morrison, 2001; Salaberry, 2001; Cooper, 2001; Lee, 2002; Slate et. al., 2002; Hertel 2003; Usun, 2003; Ishihara & Chi, 2004; Chinnery, 2005; Bedjou, 2006; Asan & Koca, 2006).

6. Recommendation

Based on the assumption that language and culture are integral, this study explores how the students' language skills and attitudes are affected by technology enhanced and culture embedded language learning and students' opinions about it. However, the research is not without limitations. First, the content of the classes is limited to the socio-cultural knowledge in the CEFR. Second, the number of the participants is 40, which is not the optimum number to learn a foreign language. If the number of the students in the study group were less, the results of the research may be different. Third, 4 hours a week for 14 weeks is not efficient to practice the target language thoroughly. Therefore, in the

future, studies should be replicated taking these limiting factors into consideration in order to get deeper results.

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