ANALYSIS OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES IN EFL CLASSES THROUGH TWO AUTHENTIC LITERARY TEXTS

Abstract

Language and culture cannot be separated. In that sense Culture affects the language spoken. Although there is a close relationship between language and culture, this is ignored throughout centuries by many teaching methods and approaches. In addition the language is seen as a collection of words which are isolated and independent from the context of the language itself. As a result language learning becomes mere memorization of grammar structures and patterns and using them in artificial classroom settings. Lately, this situation has changed a lot with new teaching methods like Communicative Language teaching Method (CLT). For this method language learning cannot be seen as memorization of grammar rules since language is context bound and it is unreasonable to teach and learn a language without its context that is culture. The new and the big target of foreign language learning is to develop students’ intercultural communicative competence. According to The Council of Europe's Common European Framework, the aim in foreign language learning and teaching should be raising individuals who can use the language and to develop socio-cultural competence which means being able to act and behave in the foreign language. In order to achieve this aim, students need to develop their intercultural dimension through the learning process. This paper is interested in developing EFL students’ intercultural competences by using two authentic texts.

Keywords: Language, Culture, Intercultural Competence
The aim of this study is to discuss the importance of using authentic literary texts in Turkish EFL classrooms to develop students’ intercultural communicative competences. In order to do this, the issue of family structure as well as the roles woman and man play in this sacred institution in two cultures which are British and Turkish cultures, within the context of two different literary texts will be handled one by one. The first literary text is Dorris Lessing’s *To Room Nineteen* (1979) and the other one is Zeynep A. Karabey’s *Sessizlik* (*Silence*) (1980). The first short story “To Room Nineteen” mainly gives its readers clues about the family structure and the roles of modern British married woman and man in British culture while the second short story “Sessizlik” (*Silence*) pictures the typical family life of a Turkish urbanized married woman and man in Turkish culture. In other words they both present two dissimilar marriages which belong to different cultures but share the same problems. In this paper, first of all the terms “culture”, “language” and their relationships as well as “intercultural competence”, which is one of the intercultural dimension, and its relation with “literature” will be discussed first. Then, the two short stories which are *To Room Nineteen* (1979) and *Sessizlik* (*Silence*) (1980) will be analyzed as an example in terms of family structure and in order to develop students’ intercultural communicative competence.
2. THE ROLE OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES IN CLASSROOM SETTING

2.1. The Relationship of Language and Culture

To grasp the relationship between language and culture the definitions of both should be covered first:

Basically, language is the set of common sounds and symbols by which individuals communicate. In addition to this, it is the primary medium by which our social lives are conducted accordingly. As Claire Kramsch states “...the words people utter refer to common experience” which “…express facts, ideas or events that are communicable because they refer to a stock of knowledge about the world other people share.” (1993:3). Thus, it becomes obvious that language conveys the cultural elements and act as social identity of an individual.

Similarly, culture may mean different things to different people for this reason; it is a very subjective concept. In general culture can be described “as a concept containing moral and material values explaining the life styles of peoples” (my translation) (Caya, 2015: 393). From the anthropological point of view it is described as the human beings way of life (Chastain 1988:302). Tri-novitch defines culture as “…an all-inclusive system which incorporates the biological and technical behavior of human beings with their verbal and non-verbal systems of expressive behavior starting from birth, and this ‘all-inclusive system’ is acquired as the native culture” which trains human beings for “the linguistically and non-linguistically accepted patterns of the society” they are living in (1980:550). For me, culture is like our identification cards but this time it doesn’t just say who we are but gives information about our way of thinking, way of acting, moral standards, traditions, and objects which the members of a society make use of to deal with their world and with one another, and that are transferred from one generation to another through learning.

To put it differently, culture is a manner of life. It is the domain within which we live, think, feel and affect others. It is the cement that brings people together. It guides people in community and is originates in family life. It arranges our behavior in groups, makes us insightful, and helps us to know what others anticipate of us and what will happen if we do not act correctly. Thus, culture helps us to know our limits as individuals and what our obligation is to the group we live in (Brown, 1994:163). In a way culture is what we all possess and share as a society.

All things considered, as Brown suggests “culture is deeply ingrained part of the very fiber of our being, but language – the means for communication among members of a culture- is the most visible and available expression of that culture.”(1994:170) Similarly, Tang proposes the idea that “culture is language and language is culture” (1999:171). He suggests that “language and culture are inextricably linked, and as such we might think about moving away from questions about the inclusion or exclusion of culture in foreign language curriculum, to issues of deliberate immersion versus non-deliberate exposure to it” (1999:171). So there is a close relationship between language and culture since it is evident that language is a vital constituent of culture.
2.2 What is intercultural dimension in language teaching?

As it is stated above, language learning does not mean having enough knowledge of grammar of the target language. It is actually the ability to use the language in socially and culturally suitable context, which is also the main aim of communicative language teaching. As known by all, the communicative approach have pioneered many alterations in the ways of teaching, the materials applied, what to teach and how to teach as well as its assessment methods (Byram, et al, 2002:9). Unlike many teachers who think that communicative teaching method’s only concern is oral language, it gives utmost importance to communication between two cultures. Accordingly, now in the developing 21st century it is not enough to teach high culture with a big C which can be defined as the “culture of the elite”; “common culture” should also be thought in EFL contexts (Fenner and Newby 2000: 143). EFL students do not need to talk about literature to the foreign people therefore textbooks should reflect everyday lives of ordinary people not literary characters.

Likewise, the Common European Framework (2001) inserts the ‘Intercultural Dimension’ into the aims of language teaching. Its main target is to provide interaction between language learners and speakers of other languages as equals, as well as to be sensitive of their own identities and those of their speakers. In other words, the desired outcome is to turn language learners into ‘intercultural speakers’ who are skillful not only in communicating information but also in connect with other language learners with different cultures (Byram, et al, 2002:10).

Basically, in the daily life, the interaction between two people and the information they exchange is shaped according to the specific social context. For instance, an individual identity of being a ‘teacher’ or a ‘pupil’ affects what they say, how they say it, what response they expect and how they make sense of the response. Namely, social identities are inevitable part of the social interaction when people are communicating with each other. Therefore, communicative language teaching strongly advises to develop language learners’ skill of communicative competence which means the knowledge of what is appropriate language instead of pure grammatical competence. (Byram, et al, 2002:10). Thus, to use phrases in socially appropriate situations is important.

While two people from different countries are speaking in a language that is a foreign or second language for one of them, or while they are both having a conversation in a language which is foreign to both of them, a lingua franca, they are most probably alert of their national identities. They know that one of them is communicating in a foreign language and the other is hearing their own mother tongue being spoken by a foreigner. Since they accept the other person as a representative member of a country or nation, this has an effect on what they say and how they say. However, this situation of paying too much attention on national identity, and the problem of relying on stereotypes, reduces the individual from a complex human being to someone who is seen as representative of a country or culture (Byram, et al, 2002:10). Hence, in language teaching the intercultural dimension focuses on raising learners’ awareness as intercultural speakers or mediators who could deal with multiple identities and ignoring the stereotypes which means perceiving someone through a single identity. It takes its basis from recognizing the speaker as a separate entity whose features are to be revealed instead of as a model of an identity of an outsider (Byram, et al, 2002:11). Intercultural communication means respect for individuals and equality of human rights as the foundation of social interaction.

Social identities are in close connection with cultures. A ‘Turkish’ identity is acquired through being surrounded by other Turks, unconsciously realizing their behaviors, values and
belief systems. In addition, a person whose social identity involves being ‘a doctor’ will have acquired the systematic knowledge, values and behaviors they share with other doctors by means of socialization. However, since being a Turkish and a doctor has many other identities, it can be still accepted as simplification. Therefore, it is a mistake for an intercultural speaker who knows something about the beliefs, values and behaviors to see a single identity in a person (Byram, et al, 2002:12).

Because of that reason, being an intercultural speaker demands some information in the areas of what it means to be Turkish, or a doctor, for instance. Yet, an additional awareness of to be known and understood from the other person’s view point which includes skills, attitudes and values that are very important in appreciating intercultural human relationship is also required by an intercultural speaker (Byram, et al, 2002:12). As a result, it can be said that the best teacher is not the native or the non native speaker of the target language, but the teacher who can guide learners in understanding the relationship between their own and other cultures, can assist them to attain interest and curiosity about being ‘other’, and an understanding of themselves and their own cultures seen from other people’s stand point.

Apparently, in language teaching it is vital for learners to acquire the linguistic competence which is the inevitable result of intercultural dimension in order to communicate and write appropriately. Moreover, it also improves learners’ intercultural competence which involves the ability to have a common understanding of individuals coming from different backgrounds and their skills to communicate with people as complex human beings with diverse identities and their own individuality (Byram, et al 2002:11). Hence, acquiring the intercultural dimension in language teaching means developing learners’ intercultural competence along with linguistic competence, training them for interaction with people from other cultures, assisting them to appreciate and accept people of other cultures as separate entities with other distinctive perspectives, values and belief systems, and finally guiding them to understand such interaction as an enlightening experience.

### 2.3. What is Intercultural competence?

In foreign language teaching the concept of ‘intercultural competence’ has gained impetus recently. As for Corbett it is a significant step forward from the communicative teaching method. Considering all the communication occurs in a social and cultural pretext, it has become clear that it is not suitable to encourage the four skills and the capability to communicate information (2003:146). Social and cultural function of a certain communicative situation is necessary in order to negotiate meaning.

Byram develops two different concepts as ‘intercultural competence and ‘intercultural communicative competence’. According to him, ‘intercultural competence’ means the capacity to establishing contact with members of other cultures in one’s own language while ‘intercultural communicative competence’ stands for the same ability but using a foreign language (1997: 12). The attainment of ‘intercultural competence’ is neither complete not perfect. The first reason for this is very clear: it is impossible to learn or to predict all the knowledge while communicating with people of other cultures. The cultures those languages are spoken are in a constant change and many languages are used in more than one country thus it is difficult to know with whom one will speak a specific language (Byram, 1997:14). Consequently, it becomes impossible to predict the knowledge language learners are in need of and this has been accepted as the main failure of the focus on knowledge in civilisation, Landeskunde etc, since whatever is taught it is inevitably not enough.
When it comes to the second reason why complete and perfect competence cannot be required is less clear yet equally important: every individual’s identity is unique as it is acquired throughout life, which suggests that coming across new experiences, seeing unforeseen beliefs and behaviors and values

The second reason why complete and perfect competence is not required is less obvious but just as important: everyone’s own social identities and values develop, everyone acquires new ones throughout life as they become a member of new social groups; and those identities, and the values, beliefs and behaviors they symbolize are deeply embedded in one’s self. This means that meeting new experience, seeing unexpected beliefs, values and behaviors, can often shock and disturb those deeply embedded identities and values, however open, tolerant and flexible one wishes to be (Byram, 1997: 14). Everyone has therefore to be constantly aware of the need to adjust, to accept and to understand other people - it is never a completed process.

Knowledge, skills and attitudes which are complemented by the values and as a result they are part of one’s social identities are the components of intercultural competence. Fenner states that the basis of intercultural competence is in the attitudes of the intercultural speaker and mediator (2001:30). That is to say, language is not the single criterion of intercultural competence because some cultures share the same language yet their culture can be totally different as in the case of United States and India where English is the official language. Becoming interculturally competent is way more difficult than just realizing there Self and Others. Therefore, within foreign language education Byram categorizes the following constituents of ICC.

**Intercultural attitudes (savoir être):** means being inquisitive open, ready to suspend doubt about other cultures and believing about one’s own. In short, it is the sensitivity towards otherness as well as the ability to accept and respect the values of other cultures.

**Knowledge (savoirs):** has two main components. The first one is the knowledge of social processes and knowledge of illustrations of those processes and products. The second one is the knowledge about how others understand you (Byram: 1997, 12). In other words, it is an understanding of small c culture and capital C culture aspects such as individual and social norms of reference, history, literature, ways of life, customary practices, music, arts and architecture.

**Skills of interpreting and relating (savoir comprendre):** is the capability of deciphering a document or an event from another culture, explaining it and relating it to documents and events from one’s own perspective. The knowledge that might be essential for learners cannot be anticipated by any teacher. In fact, most teachers have not experienced all or any of the cultures that their learners may have to deal with, yet this not a very important detail. What is important for a teacher is to develop attitudes and skills as much as knowledge and teachers can learn the information about other countries along the way with their pupils. The skill of interpreting and relating is vital for learners since by putting ideas, events, text from other cultures side by side and seeing how each might look from the other perspective, an intercultural speaker or a mediator could perceive how people might understand what is said or written or done by someone with a different social identity (Byram: 1997, 13).

**Skills of discovery and interaction (savoir apprendre/faire):** is the ability for intercultural speakers to learn new information about a culture and cultural practices and integrate it within what they already have. Knowing how to ask people from other cultures about their values, beliefs and behaviors which they are often unconscious or cannot explain easily is especial-
ly required for learners in order to develop intercultural speakers’ specific skills related to the various contexts of communication (Byram: 1997, 13).

**Critical cultural awareness (savoir s’engager):** is a skill to evaluate critically and based on the explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one’s own and other cultures and countries. It is not the purpose of teaching to try to change learners’ values, but to make them explicit and conscious in any evaluative response to others. There is nonetheless a fundamental values position which all language teaching should promote: a position which acknowledges respect for human dignity and equality of human rights as the democratic basis for social interaction (Byram: 1997, 14). Finally, intercultural speakers/mediators need a critical awareness of themselves and their values, as well as those of other people.

The role of the language teacher is therefore to develop skills, attitudes and awareness of values just as much as to develop knowledge of a particular culture or country. Byram concludes that:

> In short someone with some degree of intercultural competence is someone who is able to see relationships between different cultures- both internal and external to a society- and is able to mediate, that is interpret each in terms of the other, either for themselves or other people. It is also someone who has a critical or analytical understanding of their own cultures- someone who is conscious of their own perspective, of the way in which their thinking is culturally determined, rather than believing that their understanding and perspective is natural (1997: 9).

Namely, to be able to see the differences between different cultures the EFL students need to develop these four skills which are savoir etre, savoir, savoir comprendre, savoir apprendre/faire and finally savoir s’engager. To develop international communicative competence in EFL contexts, using authentic texts is crucial. There are various other authentic texts which can be used in EFL classrooms yet this paper focus on literary texts which are really authentic as they address their readers irrespective of context and situation. In addition, these texts add a source of enjoyment, information about background, incentive for dialogue, generative tasks and reaction.

**2.4. Literature and Intercultural Communicative Competence**

Literature is one of the effective ways of learning a foreign language. By means of literary texts learners can enhance four skills as well as practicing pronunciation, learning new vocabulary, studying grammar, improving learners’ accuracy or fluency in foreign language classes. Yet, it is potential cannot be limited to its text level or seen as only language teaching material. As a matter of fact, its potential as a method of improving personal and social skills as well as in terms of cultural and literary aspects has superseded its potential as mere foreign language teaching (Fenner 2001:98). In that sense, literature encourages learners with linguistic and communicative competence.

Furthermore, learning a foreign language and teaching it has a complicated mechanism. It bears resemblance to an iceberg when viewed as mere language learning. Through teaching certain linguistic skills and items of knowledge an additional ‘below the surface’ skills are also thought. These skills are related to the attitudes and they are more crucial for personal educational and social development than the ‘surface skills’ (Fenner, 2001: 100). ‘Below the surface’ skills are always found in foreign language teaching whether we are aware of them or not. Since
they provide a foundation for the ‘surface skills’ to keep that part afloat as in the case of an ice-berg, it is vital for the foreign language teacher to know the components below the surface. To sum, a good foreign language teacher should develop an awareness of the ‘below the surface skills’ of foreign language learning as well as finding teaching methods to encourage development of both surface and below the surface skills in order to reach success (Fenner:2001, 101). Therefore, literature develops learners’ personal enrichment by teaching both the surface skills (fluency, vocabulary, listening, accuracy, writing and etc.) and below the surface skills (social and communicative skills and competences, manners, rights and responsibilities, learner autonomy, respect, attitudes, critical thinking, tolerance and etc.).

It is crucial to choose a text which is suitable to train students in terms of developing their intercultural competence. Fenner thinks that “teachers should be able to apply criteria that include linguistic, literary, educational and cultural aspects in choosing a text for their class” (2001: 102). For that reason, a teacher should be knowledgeable enough to know the basics of literary theory, a brief overview of history of literature, contemporary literature and children’s literature in the targeted foreign language.

3. ANALYSIS OF “TO ROOM NINETEEN“ AND “SESSİZLİK”

3.1 How can be the Short Stories To Room Nineteen(1979) and Sessizlik (Sessizlik)(1980) Used to Develop Turkish EFL students’ Intercultural Communicative Competence?

As it is stated before, the aim of this paper is to display how these short stories can be used to develop students’ communicative competence in EFL classrooms. To do this, the components of them which are: attitude, knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, and finally critical cultural awareness should be found in the text and handled one by one. The two short stories deal with the lives of two women coming from different cultures. The first short story To Room Nineteen (1979) by Dorris Lessing narrates the details of Susan and Matthew Rawlings family life with their four kids and the different gender roles they play in this marriage. The other short story Sessizlik (Silence) (1980) by Zeynep Karabey depicts a marriage of an unanimous man and woman with two children. Both short stories draw us the picture of a typical family life in two different cultures. While the first story To Room Nineteen (1979) reflects the values and a typical family life in British society the other one portrays a modern Turkish family and the different roles man and woman plays in their marriage.

To start with, after reading these two short stories Turkish EFL students increase their awareness of intercultural attitudes (savoir etre) which is defined as being open to one’s own cultural values as well as others. Generally Turkish students think that typical married women in a British culture have more rights and thus are freer than the typical married women in a Turkish culture. However, after reading the short stories they understand that the women in both cultures share the same destiny in their marriage: emptiness and unhappiness as a result of the feeling of being bound responsible for the household duties In the short story the To Room Nineteen (1979) the female protagonist Susan Rawlings considers her marriage as “balanced and sensible” (306). She has everything what someone calls as happy marriage: four kids, a handsome husband and a beautiful house. Yet, she feels “flatness” and could not find the reason. (306).Her whole life is her children, husband and the housework. She knows that she has become totally dependent on her husband for outside interests and money (306). And they think this is what sensible couples do if they do not want to jeopardize their marriage. Susan feels that
their marriage is “strong and indestructible” yet she still feels as if her life becomes a desert (309). She tries to forget the feeling of emptiness and demonic thoughts by occupying herself in the house and the garden. Although she thinks she has what every women wish for she could not help herself to question her marriage and she could not avoid the feeling of emptiness that haunts her. Day by day the feeling of emptiness increases and Susan wants more of her freedom. Susan feels bound in her marriage and she tries to get rid of her “bondage” (317). She always feels bound while Matthew doesn’t feel bound at all (317). To achieve her freedom she even asks for a “private room” which is written “Do not Disturb” on it (317). However, this room does not give her what she wants which is freedom. And she feels even more caged there than in her bedroom (318). While she is undergoing this pain she also continues to do her chores and takes care of everything. When it is looked outside everything is in perfect order but the inner side of her is boiling with turmoil. There is no order at all. It is very obvious that Susan does not feel free in her marriage although she owns everything a woman wishes in her marriage except her freedom. Susan is aware of the fact that what she is doing everyday is worthless. All she can do is to wait for children to come home, give orders to maid or worry about the dinner. On the other hand, her husband Matthew cannot understand the problem she is suffering from. What is more, he does not even make an effort to see the ordeal she is undergoing. Most probably, he thinks that Susan thinks too much about trivial things in life.

The female protagonist of Sessizlik (Silence ) (1980) undergoes the same problems like Susan. In this marriage the couple has been married for ten years and they have two small kids. The woman is author, trying to write her second book at home, at the dining room table. From the beginning of the story it is very obvious that the woman is responsible for all household duties since her husband continuously complains due to the untidiness of the place: he cannot find his newspaper or his pajama tops, his toothbrush bristles are broken, and one of his slippers is missing. Furthermore, his wife has not been available to have sex with him for over a week. This woman is not performing her household duties; she is not holding things together; there is a potential for chaos. She tries to communicate with her husband but all she gets is “silence” (40). Therefore, when she sits to write something she realizes that the “emptiness” she feels increases (40). Similarly, in the To Room Nineteen (1979) Susan Rawlings is responsible for all the household duties. For instance, it also becomes clear throughout the story that Susan desperately needed to escape her household responsibilities in addition to her family. Between hiring a fulltime au pair girl and running off to London for the hotel, it is clear that Susan has no interest in being with her family at home. Even when she is at home for supper, all she could think about is how desperate she is to be alone again. The association she makes between her responsibilities and her house drives her away to be in Room 19 where she is completely alone and hidden from the outside world. There, she could let go of her life completely for the duration of the day and go back to pretending to love her home life at night. In brief, the students understand that both women although they share different cultures feel the same feeling of emptiness and unhappiness.

Secondly; the students develop knowledge (Savoir) not only about British culture but also about their culture which is Turkish. To illustrate it more; after reading the “To Room Nineteen” students will see that a perfect marriage in British culture means “having well-paid jobs, kids, a perfect husband and a house with garden”. Susan has everything what someone calls as perfect marriage: four kids, a handsome husband and a beautiful house. Her husband Matthew’s physical appearance is described with the adjectives “handsome, blond, attractive, manly” (309) and “blue-eyed” (312). He is presented as a perfect-looking man who fits exactly to all the oth-
er perfect things which occur throughout the story. These are the perfect-matched couple and they have the perfect house in Richmond. Consequently Matthew has to be a gorgeous man to go together with all the ideal things which exist in the story. Furthermore he is portrayed as a sensible and intelligent person. He works as a sub-editor on a large London newspaper and earns a lot of money (305). As a result, the students will immediately compare this knowledge of a perfect marriage to the perfect marriage in Turkish culture. They will at the end find similarities and learn to appreciate it.

Thirdly, the students develop another skill which is the skills of interpreting and relating (savoir comprendre). It is as it is name suggests interpretation of documents or events from the other culture and relating them to the documents from one’s own culture. For example; in the two short stories both women tolerate the affairs of their husbands in order not to disturb the order of the things. In addition to this, in both cultures when a man deceives his wife that means it is woman’s fault, not men’s. In the story To Room Nineteen (1979) Susan and Matthew’s marriage is based on reason therefore it is banal for Susan to question Matthew’s affairs with other women. On one occasion after he confesses his affair to Susan, Matthew says that the word “faithful is stupid, belonging to a savage old world”. And they do what “sensible people do and put the thing behind them” (309). This shows that he does not care much about the feelings of his wife. On the contrary, Matthew thinks that it is all Susan’s fault (324) and he withdraws himself both as a husband and a father from the household (325). It is very obvious that the couples are living side by side in the house like two “tolerably friendly strangers” (322). After all, he thinks that Susan is the one who is guilty therefore he isolates himself from everything related with his marriage. Similarly, the woman in Sessizlik (Silence) (1980) shares the same destiny with Susan Rawlings. The man in the story accuses the woman of being untidy and distant from the house while writing her short stories. The woman tries to explain to her husband that she has not been replaced by the story she is writing, but that in fact she has a place for everything. She always says that “You are just as important…and the children too… as my writing,” (41). She makes it clear that she does not replace one thing with another (41). Yet her words seem incomprehensible to him, and he does not accept her invitation to a dialogue that explores each other’s needs, a dialogue that might lead to real intimacy. Instead, her explanation is followed by “a short silence- and an enormous emptiness.” The man, in fact, ends this silence and emptiness for himself by leaving the house in the evening to have an affair. After all the men like Matthew Rawlings and this anonymous male character think that it is all the woman’s fault not his since she does not take care of her house and husband properly.

Fourthly, the students also develop their skills of discovery and interaction (savoir apprendre/faire) which is the ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constrains of real-time communication and interaction. After analyzing the two short stories students discover new things in one culture and learn to develop empathy. For instance, in the first short story “To Room Nineteen” the female protagonist Susan Rawlings rents hotel rooms and pays occasional visits to these rooms in order to be alone and free of her duties as a mother and wife. In these rooms, she mentally analyzes herself and confesses to herself that she is “besieged by seven devils” (320). As time passes, she isolates herself from everything and she feels like a visitor in her own house (332) since the au pair girl Sophie Traub from Hamburg takes care of everything when the mother is away. After Susan’s frequent visits to the hotel room Matthew gets suspicious and thinks that she has a secret lover. He says that he does not have any problems with that since he has another affair with Phil Hunt. (332). He is not jealous of her and he even suggests to go out
someday as a foursome (334). He does not want to believe that his wife is mad. He would be very terrified when he would find out that she spends her days in Room 19 with doing nothing instead of having an affair there. This would scare him so much because it is not sensible to sit hours and hours in a lonely room and feel absolutely happy. Before he believes in this he rather believes in Susan having an affair. Even if there are many proofs speaking against an affair, he would kid himself about it. He would never believe that she is mad.

Turkish students may at first find it odd for a woman to rent a hotel room to feel free and do nothing but sitting there. In addition to this, they may think that what kind of man let her wife have an affair with another man. Yet, when they look at the woman in Sessizlik (Silence) (1980) they see that the woman is also sharing the same feelings with Susan. She does not rent a room to feel free but she writes what she feels in order to be free. She mentally opens herself in her writings. When it comes to the deceiving issue Turkish men regard this as an honor and generally kills the woman who is having an affair with another man in order to purify his honor. In Turkish culture few men prefer divorce in the face of this situation. In English culture men tend to get a divorce but for Matthew since he is very “reasonable” it is not normal for his wife to sit in a hotel room, do nothing and absolutely feel happy, therefore he chooses to believe that she is having an affair and accepts it. Moreover, Turkish students are not familiar with the idea of having an “au pair” as a domestic assistant from a foreign country working for, and living as part of, a host family since it is Europe originated idea and in our culture foreigners do not come to learn Turkish. After reading the story To Room Nineteen (1979), students discover a new term which is new to them and develop empathy as a result.

Finally, Turkish students also develop critical cultural awareness (savoirs’ engager) which is known as an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectively, practices and products in one’s own and other cultures and countries. In the story “To Room Nineteen” the woman, Susan could not handle the situation she is in and commits a suicide in the room nineteen. In other words, she stops the hypocrisy she is suffering from by killing herself. According to Susan, her whole life and marriage is nothing but fake and her happiness, her intimacy with her husband and children are all fake for Susan. While reading this short story students in Turkey may see Susan as an irresponsible mother who kills herself without blinking her eyes and not thinking of her four kids. In Turkey, a woman who acts in that way are not appreciated because of religious and cultural reasons. Committing suicide is one of the greatest sins that Islam banned. Since culture is influenced by religion, Turkish ELF students will have questions in their minds when it comes to answer the question whether Susan is right in ending her own life in order to find ultimate happiness. Furthermore, since mothers are seen as self sacrificing in Turkish culture they are expected to endure all the sufferings in their lives for the sake of their children even if they do not have happy marriages. Therefore, the students most probably criticize Susan for leaving her children behind her by killing herself.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, the target of intercultural competence is not merely the knowledge of another culture, nor is it just the ability to behave appropriately in that culture. Developing intercultural competence demands a mix of culture-specific approaches that stress the apprehension of a particular subjective culture combined with culture general approaches that address the larger issues of ethnocentrism, cultural self awareness, and general adaptation strategies. It is very clear that using literature in EFL classrooms is a first-rate way of improving students’ intercultural awareness/competence since it not only works at a cognitive level but also, often very subtly, at
an emotional level. Literature develops personal response by providing gaps that the reader has
to fill with his/her own culturally-determined imagination apart from the factual knowledge
about the other culture that can be drawn from it. Hence, the reading process turns out to be a
constant interaction between a text and a reader sometimes motivates the reader to reassess
his/her own attitudes and beliefs. Literature becomes a perfect tool to promote empathy by giving
the reader/students the chance to look into the characters’ minds by sharing their thoughts
and perspectives.

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