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**ENHANCING LANGUAGE-CULTURE INTEGRATION IN TURKISH EDUCATION:  
AN ANALYSIS OF THE YENİ HITİT BEGINNER TEXTBOOK**

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**Summary**

This exploring conducted a cultural text analysis on beginner Turkish textbooks to investigate the implementation of integrated language-cultural education, which is a recent focus in second language education, within Turkish language education. The findings are summarized as follows: Firstly, a predominant emphasis on daily culture was noted, with daily culture accounting for 62% and achievement culture for 38%. Secondly, within daily culture, the focus was mainly on living culture(38%) and play culture(23.8%), while the domain of value culture received no coverage. Thirdly, upon exploring subcultures within achievement culture, the study found that artistic culture (19%), symbolic culture(14.2%), and institutional culture(4.7%) were addressed in descending order, with no inclusion of language culture. Lastly, the study underscored the inadequate representation of cultural tasks, totaling only two, indicating a significant deficiency.

**Key Words:** Turkish language education, Language and culture integrated education, Second and foreign language education, Turkey, Yeni textbooks Anlysis

**TÜRK EĞİTİMİNDE DİL-KÜLTÜR BÜTÜNLEŞMESİNİ GELİŞTİRMEK:  
YENİ HİTİT BAŞLANGIÇ DERS KİTABININ ANALİZİ**

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**Özet**

Bu çalışma, Türkçe ders kitaplarında bütünleşik dil-kültür eğitiminin nasıl uygulandığını araştırmak amacıyla kültürel metin analizi gerçekleştirdi. Bu, ikinci dil eğitimindeki son dönem odaklarından biridir. Bulgular şu şekildedir: İlk olarak, günlük kültür üzerinde baskın bir vurgu olduğu belirlendi. Günlük kültür %62 ve başarı kültürü %38 oranında yer aldı. İkinci olarak, günlük kültür içinde, ana vurgu genellikle yaşam kültürüne(%38) ve oyun kültürüne(%23.8) olmuştur, değer kültürü ise hiç ele alınmamıştır. Üçüncü olarak, başarı kültürü içinde alt kültürler incelendiğinde, sanatsal kültür(%19), sembolik kültür(%14.2) ve kurumsal kültür(%4.7) sırasıyla ele alınmıştır; dil kültürü ise hiçbir şekilde dikkate alınmamıştır. Son olarak, çalışma kültürel görevlerin yetersiz temsiliyetini vurgulamıştır; toplamda sadece iki görevin bulunması, önemli bir eksikliği göstermektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Türkçe dil eğitimi, dil ve kültür entegre edilmiş eğitim, ikinci ve yabancı dil eğitimi, Türkiye, Yeni Hitit ders kitapları analizi

**TÜRK TƏHSİLİNDƏ DİL-MƏDƏNİYYƏT İNTEQRASIYASININ TƏKMİLLƏŞDİRİLMƏSİ:  
YENİ HİTİT BAŞLANGIÇ DƏRSLİYİNİN TƏHLİLİ**

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### Xülasə

Bu araşdırmada türk dərslərlərinə inteqrasiya olunmuş dil-mədəniyyət təhsilinin necə həyata keçirildiyini araşdırmaq məqsədilə mədəni mətn təhlili aparılmışdır. Bu, ikinci dil təhsilində son vaxtlar diqqət mərkəzində olan məsələlərdən biridir. Nəticələr belədir: Birincisi, məişət mədəniyyətinin üstünlük təşkil etdiyi müəyyən edilmişdir. Təsadüfi mədəniyyət 62%-ə, nailiyyət mədəniyyəti isə 38%-ə daxil edilib. İkincisi, məişət mədəniyyəti daxilində əsas diqqət, ümumiyyətlə, həyat mədəniyyətinə (38%) və oyun mədəniyyətinə (23,8%) yönəldilib, dəyər mədəniyyətinə isə, ümumiyyətlə, toxunulmayıb. Üçüncüsü, uğur mədəniyyəti daxilindəki subkulturalar araşdırıldığında müvafiq olaraq bədii mədəniyyət (19%), simvolik mədəniyyət (14,2%) və korporativ mədəniyyət (4,7%); Dil mədəniyyəti heç bir şəkildə nəzərə alınmırdı. Nəhayət, tədqiqat mədəni vəzifələrin kifayət qədər təqdim edilməməsini vurğuladı. Ümumilikdə cəmi iki tapşırığın olması əhəmiyyətli çatışmazlıqdan xəbər verir.

**Açar sözlər:** Türk dili təhsili, dil və mədəniyyət inteqrasiyalı təhsil, ikinci və xarici dil təhsili, Türkiyə, Neo-Hetit dərslərlərinin təhlili

**Actuality.** This study is academically significant as it emphasizes the integration of language and culture education, a topic of considerable discussion in recent second language education. Its aim is to assess whether Turkish textbooks in Turkish education are aligning with the current trend in cultural education.

**Annotation.** This study aims to enhance learner-centered communication skills by integrating Turkish language and culture education. This approach underscores the importance of cultural understanding alongside the traditional focus on reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Ultimately, our aim is to facilitate seamless communication with Turkish speakers.

**Methods.** This paper focuses on examining the Turkish textbook 'Yeni Hitit' to evaluate the current state and future prospects of integrated language and culture education [1]. It conducts a thorough analysis of the cultural elements portrayed in the textbook, aligning them with the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) for Languages standards [2].

**Introduction.** The language of a nation represents a unique symbolic framework that mirrors its culture. Each country's language encapsulates distinct modes of thought, collective experiences, and cultural nuances cultivated by its populace. Essentially, language acts as a conduit for cultural expression and offers a reflective lens through which a nation's cultural identity is revealed. As an illustration, there's a commonly used expression among Turks known as 'İnşallah'. This phrase is frequently employed as a response to inquiries regarding the future, and comprehending its meaning fully without a basic understanding of Islam can pose a challenge. Originating from Islamic determinism, it translates to "God willing." For instance, when asked, "Shall we meet tomorrow?" typically, one would anticipate a specific answer reflecting the other person's intention, such as "Yes" or "No". However, for many Turkish speakers, who are predominantly Muslim, they believe that only Allah knows the future. Therefore, rather than providing a specific answer based on their own will, they often use expressions like 'İnşallah', leaving it to the will of God. Such cultural disparities can impede smooth communication among individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds [3,4]. This example underscores the significance of understanding a country's culture for effective communication [5,6].

Consequently, learning a language entails delving into the culture it embodies [7,8,9]. Nevertheless, there are instances when the cultural nuances embedded within language remain elusive, resulting in challenges in communication with native speakers. In contemporary foreign language education, the incorporation of cultural elements to enhance communicative proficiency has transitioned from being optional to imperative [10,11,12]. This study endeavors to apply this paradigm shift to Turkish language instruction. The rationale for prioritizing Turkish education stems from the escalating global demand for proficiency in the Turkish language. This demand is on a steady incline and is anticipated to surge further in the foreseeable future. Consequently,

research pertaining to the integration of language and culture in Turkish education has never been more pressing.

Many scholars abroad assert the inseparability of language and culture. The renowned scholar Whorf, for instance, perceived language and culture as deeply intertwined, mutually shaping each other's development [13]. Kramsch shared a similar perspective, viewing language as a vessel for embodying cultural realities [14]. She suggested that humans intertwine with culture through language in various communicative contexts, recognizing language as a conduit for cultural expression. Brooks also emphasized the centrality of language within any culture, asserting that language and culture are inherently interconnected [15]. Rivers echoed this sentiment by highlighting the inseparable bond between language and culture, arguing against the complete separation of language from its cultural context [16].

Considering the inherent embedding of culture within language due to this inseparable relationship, it becomes crucial for foreign language learners to grasp the cultural background of the target language [17]. Turkish, for example, serves as a reflection of Turkish culture. Consequently, it is imperative not to segregate language and culture education for Turkish learners but to integrate them, facilitating more effective communication with Turkish speakers.

The global demand for learning Turkish is steadily increasing, with expectations of further growth in the future. Therefore, research on Turkish language and culture integrated education becomes increasingly imperative. Hence, this study aims to analyze the cultural elements present in current Turkish textbooks, aiming to comprehend the practices of cultural education within Turkish language instruction and pinpoint areas requiring enhancement.

The rationale for employing textbook analysis as the research method in this study is the pivotal role textbooks hold in foreign language education [18,19]. Serving as the cornerstone educational tool, textbooks bridge the connection between teachers and learners within the educational environment [20]. They are widely regarded as the quintessential and emblematic medium of instruction. Thus, this paper chose Yeni Hitit as its research subject and conducted an analysis of the Yeni Hitit Temel textbook, designed for beginners.

The reason for choosing the featured textbook is its publication by TÖMER (Turkish Language Institution), affiliated with Ankara University, a leading institution in foreign language education in Turkey. Additionally, it has obtained official certification from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Moreover, given that beginners constitute the primary target audience for Turkish education, the analysis was centered on textbooks tailored to this level.

Upon reviewing the structural framework of the analyzed textbook, it becomes apparent that it is organized into language functional elements such as vocabulary and grammar, as well as communication skills areas encompassing listening, reading, speaking, and writing. This study specifically narrowed its focus to cultural references embedded within the reading or listening texts of the textbook. Accordingly, the research questions were formulated as follows:

[Research Question 1] Which cultural subjects and content are addressed in beginner Turkish textbook, and what areas require improvement for future editions?

[Research Question 2] How effectively are cultural learning activities integrated into text assignments within the textbook?

For Research Question 1, although this study initially intended to rely on the CEFR for reference, it became evident that the social and cultural knowledge provided by the CEFR alone has limitations in classifying cultural types and analyzing content. This is due to the CEFR's limited description of cultural topics. Therefore, in addition to the cultural items outlined in the CEFR, Kim Hae-young's cultural classification chart was consulted and adapted to suit Turkish cultural items [21].

The analyzed textbook, designed according to European Common Standards, was assessed to determine how well it reflects the direction of cultural education at the beginner level. Cultural items

were categorized into daily culture and achievement culture as the primary classifications, with subcategories (such as living culture, play culture, value culture, artistic culture, language culture, institutional culture, symbolic culture) provided for each. Items under each subcategory, such as clothing, food, housing, family relations, behavior patterns, and lifestyle under living culture, were further examined and analyzed.

Moving on to Research Question 2, the study will investigate whether the assignments in the textbook are integrated with cultural activities and, if so, what form these activities take. The inclusion of cultural activities in textbook exercises is crucial for language-cultural integration education. Therefore, the study will focus on analyzing the types and specific content of assignments to assess their effectiveness in promoting cultural engagement. The analysis of cultural items in the textbook revealed several findings and areas for improvement

1) Findings from the analysis of cultural items

After reviewing the findings regarding cultural types in the analysis of the beginner textbook, it's clear, as depicted in Figure 1 below, that daily culture constitutes 62%, whereas achievement culture comprises 38%, suggesting a stronger emphasis on daily culture. Following this, the breakdown of cultural items by topic is detailed in the table below.

Upon closer examination of the cultural subcategories covered within daily culture and achievement culture, the following specific findings emerged:

Daily Culture:

Living Culture(38%): This category received the highest emphasis within daily culture. It included topics such as family relations and modern Turkish eating habits, featuring popular beverages like Çay(tea) and foods like Döner.

Play Culture(23.8%): This subcategory covered hobbies, travel destinations, and New Year's customs. It introduced activities like bead crafting as a hobby and prominent tourist spots in Turkey such as Kapadokya and Fethiye.

Achievement Culture:

Artistic Culture(19%): Artistic culture was the most prominently featured subcategory. It included introductions to prominent figures like 'Yıldız Kenter' in theater and literary works by Cahit Kulebi.

Symbolic Culture(14.2%): This category included texts related to symbolic landmarks in Turkey, particularly focusing on Istanbul's iconic features.

Institutional Culture(4.7%): Institutional culture covered aspects like media, introducing TRT(Turkish Radio and Television Corporation) as a representative television channel.

Additionally, the analysis revealed that certain areas, such as value culture and language culture within daily culture, were not addressed. Furthermore, while some topics related to language culture were included under living culture, no specific text addressing language culture was provided. Similarly, texts discussing historical aspects like the Hittites were also included, indicating a diverse range of cultural content covered in the textbook.

Table. 1

Culture types	Culture items		Specific cultural content	Total		
Daily culture	Living culture	Clothing	-	-	38%	
		Food	-	-		
		House	-	-		
		Family relationships Ritual ceremony	Family: Grandma's album	1		
		Behavior patterns	The eating habits of Turks	1		
		Life habits	Occupation: Turkish female taxi driver, Turkish male nanny	2		
			Shopping: How do Turks shop?	2		
			Life in the city and countryside	1		
		Facility usage: Using a travel agency	1			
	Play culture	Play/Sports/Leisure/ Travel/Etiquette	Hobby: Bead crafting, Tourist destination: Cappadocia, Balıkesir, New Year's customs, Travel aerial activities: Paragliding in Fethiye	5	23.8%	
Value culture	Philosophy/ Values /Religion	-	-			
Daily culture items within the Turkish culture section of the beginner textbook				13		
Achievement culture	Art culture	Traditional arts Literature/ Pop culture	Artist: The story of Turkish actress 'Yıldız Kenter' Mythology: The story of Tamara from Lake Van Literature: Introduction to the poetry of 'Cahit Kulebi' Fashion: Fashion trends in Turkey in the 1920s, 1950s, and 1970s	4	19%	
			Buildings/ Artworks	-		-
	Language culture	Language(Turkish)	-	-	38%	
	Institutional culture	Social institutions/ Transportation/ Education	Media: Introduction to various TV channels in Turkey	1		4.7%
	Symbolic culture	Symbols/Figures/ History of Turkey	Symbols: Introduction to major attractions in Istanbul Radio: "Good Morning Istanbul" History: Hittites	3		14.2%
	Achievement culture items within the Turkish culture section of the beginner textbook					8
Total				21		

2) The analysis of assignment activities in the textbook

Next, an analysis was conducted to assess the level of integration of cultural learning activities with text assignments in the beginner-level textbook, in accordance with Research Question 2. The results are outlined in the table below.

Table 2. Tasks Related to Texts in Beginner-level Textbooks

Cultural material	Assignment status	Assignment type	Assignment details	Cultural integration status
Grandma's album	X	-	-	X
The eating habits of Turks	X	-	-	X
Turkish female taxi driver	O	Writing	Answering questions	X
Turkish male nanny	O	conversation	Discussing the correlation between occupation and gender	X
How do Turks shop?	O	conversation	Discussing shopping trends in your country	O
How would you like to pay?	X	-	-	X
Life in the city and countryside	O	Writing	Answering questions	X
Using a travel agency	X	'yes or no'	Say 'yes or no'	X
Bead crafting	X	-	-	X
Cappadocia	O	'yes or no'	Say 'yes or no'	X
Balikesir	X	-	-	X
New Year's customs	O	Writing	Answering questions	O
Paragliding in Fethiye	O	'yes or no'	Say 'yes or no'	X
The story of Turkish actress 'Yıldız Kenter'	X	-	-	X
The story of Tamara from Lake Van	O	Writing	summarizing the content	X
Introduction to the poetry of 'Cahit Kulebi'	X	X	-	X
Fashion: Fashion trends in Turkey in the 1920s, 1950s, and 1970s	O	Writing	summarizing the content	X
Introduction to various TV channels in Turkey	O	Writing	summarizing the content	X
Introduction to major attractions in Istanbul	O	Writing	summarizing the content	X
Radio: "Good Morning Istanbul"	X	-	-	X
Hittites	O	Writing	summarizing the content	X

Upon thorough analysis of the cultural subcategories presented in the beginner-level textbook, several areas for improvement have been identified. Firstly, in the domain of daily culture,

fundamental aspects like clothing, food, and housing were not sufficiently covered through textual content. While Unit 5 briefly touched upon food culture, it primarily relied on visuals such as photos or menus, lacking detailed textual descriptions. Additionally, topics concerning facility usage were limited to travel agencies, neglecting other essential public institutions and facilities like banks, hospitals, post offices, and libraries crucial for daily life. Hence, there is a pressing need to enrich the textbook with a broader range of textual content providing information on these common facilities and their usage.

In the realm of play culture, it is crucial to place greater emphasis on prominent tourist cities and attractions in Turkey. Given Turkey's significance as a tourist destination, providing information on Turkish travel destinations is paramount, especially considering the European Common Standards, which stress the importance of acquiring basic travel-related information at the beginner level. Furthermore, the textbook should introduce a diverse array of cultural customs beyond New Year's traditions. While major holidays in Turkey were not introduced in the textbook, they were merely presented through photos without detailed explanations. Therefore, additional content on various Turkish holidays is necessary.

The analysis of achievement culture also identified several areas requiring enhancement. Firstly, textual content related to architecture and artworks was notably absent, indicating the necessity to incorporate such topics in future editions. Additionally, textual content addressing language culture should be included, as there was a lack of text covering this aspect. Currently, texts introduce expressions like "Allah Allah" and "İnşallah" without providing cultural background explanations. For instance, expressions related to Allah require a deeper understanding of their cultural significance, which can enhance learners' comprehension. Hence, providing explanations of frequently used expressions and their cultural contexts would be an effective teaching strategy.

Moreover, there is a need to expand the coverage of institutional culture beyond the media sector. Introducing additional topics relevant to daily life, such as basic transportation methods commonly used in Turkey, would be beneficial. Furthermore, it is crucial to significantly increase the number of culturally integrated assignments. Upon analyzing Table 2, it is evident that out of a total of 12 assignments provided for 21 texts, only 2 assignments were culturally integrated. Therefore, future assignments should offer a more diverse range of cultural learning activities to enable learners to effectively integrate language and culture.

**Conclusion.** This study aimed to investigate the potential direction of development by analyzing cultural texts in Turkish textbooks, operating under the assumption that integrated language and culture education could enhance Turkish language learning. The analysis revealed the following insights:

Firstly, there was a notable emphasis on daily culture, constituting 62% of the content, compared to 38% for achievement culture. Within daily culture, topics such as living culture (38%) and play culture (23.8%) were addressed, while value culture was entirely absent. Similarly, within achievement culture, artistic culture (19%), symbolic culture (14.2%), and institutional culture (4.7%) were covered, with no attention given to language culture.

The analysis of beginner-level textbooks highlighted several areas requiring improvement. Notably, there was a lack of both diversity and quantity of cultural content within each subcategory. Some subtopics were entirely overlooked, and the cultural content presented was limited in both scope and variety. Moreover, there was an inadequate number of culturally integrated assignments, with only two out of 21 cultural texts featuring such assignments. Therefore, there is a pressing need to increase the inclusion of assignments that promote cultural engagement among learners. Drawing from these findings, the following recommendations are proposed to advance language and culture integration in Turkish education:

Increase the quantity and diversity of cultural content within each subcategory.

Ensure comprehensive coverage of all subtopics without any omissions.

Undertake further research to develop a more specialized and detailed classification of Turkish cultural topics.

Enhance the proportion of learner-centered cultural activities in assignments.

Conduct research on cultural education content tailored to various proficiency levels, beyond just beginner-level textbooks.

This study holds academic significance as it addresses the underexplored field of Turkish language and culture education in Korea. By advocating for integrated language and culture education, it aims to deepen Turkish learners' understanding of Turkish culture, ultimately facilitating smoother communication with native Turkish speakers.

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