



'HABITUS' AND TASTE FORMATION AND ELT STUDENTS' VIEWS ON INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH LITERATURE COURSES

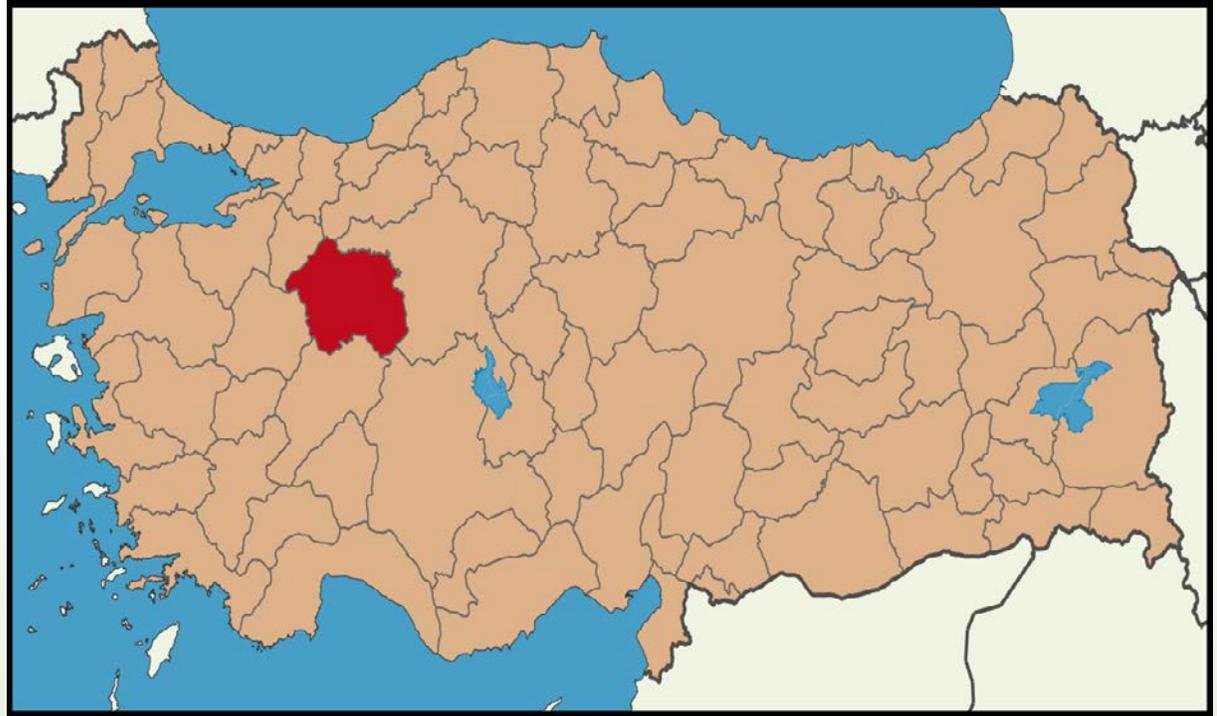
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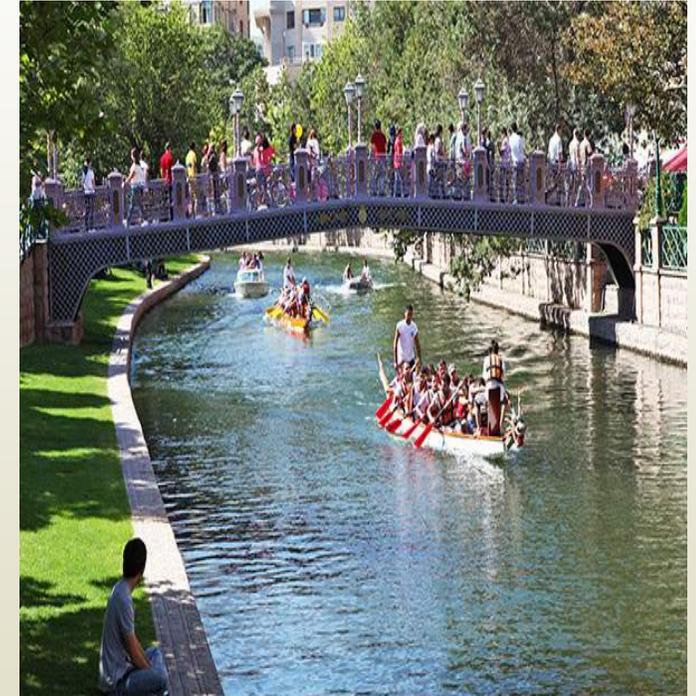
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Content

- The paper is about Turkish students attitude toward reading and English Literature (student's feedback at the beginning and end of the semester)
- The paper discusses habitus and the taste formation in Turkish society through the Reading of Pierre Bordieu, R.D Laing and Deleuze and Guattari
- And highlights the importance of Nomadic thought and to enlarge the schemata and the necessity to deconstruct and decentralize the ELT Discourse and the basic concepts related to dominant thought (capitalistic).





The aim of the paper

- ▶ The ELT students come to the ELT Department with diverse needs and English literature classes seem to provide awareness and make the discussion of these needs possible.
- ▶ The aim of this paper is to analyze the views of ELT students on Introduction to English Literature II course and to understand their reading habits and tastes.



The Reading of Pierre Bordieu

- ▶ The Reading of Piere Bordieu provides insight in habitus formation in Turkish Schools and teachers' roles.
- ▶ Such, there is the possibility of change in their outlooks related to creative teaching and learning environments, and to produce original learning outcomes and the possibility of change in teachers and students attitude towards education at Education Faculties.



The Student's feedback

- ▶ The student's feedback is analyzed in the light of Pierre Bourdieu, Guattari and Deleuze's views and to open up a space for the creation of new concepts related to life and teaching philosophy.
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Habitus

- ▶ The habitus prevents the students' reading habits and makes them reluctant in taking responsibility for their presentation assignments.
- ▶ Thus, it is important to understand the ELT context in which the students and teachers' habitus are shaped.



The reasons for Turkish ELT teachers using literature in ELT classes are:

- to broaden students' horizons by giving them a knowledge of the classics of literature;
- to improve student's general cultural awareness
- to stimulate students' creative and literary imagination and to develop their appreciation of literature;
- to introduce students to masterpieces in British and American literature as an educative experience, and to add to students' knowledge of the world at large. (Akyel and Yalçın, 1990, p.175)



The teaching of literature

- ▶ the teaching is to feed student heavy, repetitive and somewhat redundant literature, which has little or no relevance to their immediate problems and needs.
- ▶ This efforts little opportunity for creativity.
- ▶ The students are told of literary terms and the meaning of words, and is asked to analyze the subject of literary piece, which is often too abstract a task for the non-native speaker.



Linguistics at the focal point/Literature as a discourse

- ▶ Teaching Foreign Language Literature to non-native speakers is not always easy, where linguistics is at the focal point in the ELT Departments.
- ▶ the focus of literary study should not be limited either to language usage or cultural content and literature should be viewed as discourse and discourse is a way of life



The need to deconstruct the Turkish ELT context

- *Therefore, literature as a discourse must be studied in order to be deconstructed in Turkish ELT context and concepts like “success,” “competition,” “difficult,” “good,” “standard” must be deconstructed and decentralized in dominant thought.*



Global education reforms

- ▶ global education reforms in Europe changed curriculum standards in many countries
- ▶ There is a strong emphasis on system world of knowledge, like structural knowledge of system, technical skills and cognition



The concept of Success

- ▶ to be competent and respected in the capitalistic society, Turkish students are required to be “successful”
- ▶ and curriculums are designed accordingly (at the ELT Department with the decision of the head of the D.)



Test for teaching position after B.A

- ▶ preparing for the YOK (Higher Education Institution) exam consisting of multiple choice questions (Mathematics and Turkish analysis and synthesis questions and no field knowledge) for a teaching position in a State school, (which are to be passed to be competitive)
- ▶ and the “difficult” content of remaining Literature classes should be transformed into a “student friendly” one.



Change of perspective

- To change these views related to literature among both Turkish students and teachers via literature in ELT Departments and high schools is a very difficult task.



The schemata

- ▶ Teaching is a process and it requires time and patience.
- ▶ The materials should be chosen carefully to provide extended themes and concepts to be discussed.
- ▶ they should be “interesting”
- ▶ and open the way for questioning life problems and requires a wide schemata.



Various placement examinations

- ▶ So, the focus should be on the needs and expectations (enlarging the schemata) of the students, who have been trained in multiple choice questions tests starting from primary school till entering the university exam
- ▶ (YDS) (Foreign Language Test), followed by state job (teaching) placement exam (KPSS), academic degrees (multiple choice question test ALES) and so on as a profit sector (students attend private school like institutions ('Dershane') .

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

- ▶ But what do the students need in order to form self-identity and to become competent self-reliant individuals in a competitive capitalist system to make their own decisions in life (job choice, career making and seemingly irrelevant theme in ELT context the partner choice).
- ▶ Teaching is mainly considered to be “a woman’s job” in Turkish society and a female teacher candidate will have the opportunity to make a “good marriage.”
- ▶ Parents usually decide for job choice.
- ▶ Teaching is one of the top jobs providing a secure position at a State school with two months summer holiday and 5 half working days.
- ▶ It is also fashionable for male students, who do not have the formation to study engineering, medicine or law.



Reading Turkish society and culture through Piere Bourdieu

- ▶ So, the reading of Bordieu provides insight in habitus formation in Turkish Schools and teachers' roles.
- ▶ Such, there is the possibility of change in their outlooks related to creative teaching and learning environments,
- ▶ and to produce original learning outcomes
- ▶ and the possibility of change in teachers and student's attitude towards education.



Bourdieu being influenced by structuralism asserts the idea of 'genetic structuralism' saying that power relations are embedded in the everyday life.

- ▶ He sees power as culturally and symbolically created, and constantly relegitimized through an interplay of agency and structure.
- ▶ This happens through 'habitus' or socialized norm and tendencies that guide behavior and thinking.
- ▶ Habitus is not fixed or permanent and can be changed under unexpected conditions and over a long historical period. Social practice, cultural signification and class status are the consequence of meaning construction (Bourdieu, 1996, p.179).
- ▶ Bourdieu aims at breaking down the traditional sociological dualisms arguing that people's activities as being simultaneously shaping and being shaped by the social world.



Behavior is socially constructed and signs show status. The 'field' of social relations refers to the areas of social life where strategies are used in the struggle for resources:

- A field of possible forces exercised on all bodies entering it, the field of power is also a field of struggle, and may thus be compared to a game: the dispositions, that is to say the ensemble of incorporated properties, including elegance, facility of expression or even beauty, and capital in its diverse forms - economic, cultural, social - constitute the trumps which will dictate both the manner of playing and success in the game - in short, the whole process of social ageing which Flaubert calls 'sentimental education.' (Bourdieu, 1996, p.10).



Social World and Doxa

- The social World, in which people are born is already structured. Each area of social life has its own social order.
- There is the need to unpack the nature of social rules, practices and strategies in an intuitive, automatic way people read and understand the social world in which they operate.
- People engage in the social world using a combination of the 'practical sense' and 'doxa' (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 184).
- Agency involves individuals strategically engaging in and manipulating the rules of the social situations by playing a game. Going to a university and studying for a degree can be seen as a game with a very definite rule and teachers can be seen as agents manipulating the rules.



The concept of Respect

- ▶ For example, in Turkey, a young man or a young woman of 18 has to be a university student in order to be 'accepted' and 'respected' as an individual in the Turkish society and so secure the position and prestige of the parents.
- ▶ The test taking process continues althrough the schooling career sometimes until the age of thirty (in the search for the most 'desirable job,')
- ▶ As a result of this demand in turn, the teachers prepare the education environments by giving the students what the majority want.



Autonomous learning

- So, the students come short in becoming autonomous and independent creative learners and a wish of conducting original research (they are also not given the opportunity to come up with original ideas and good research).
- The teachers spoon feeding the students
- and the students memorizing the given information do not want to challenge the prevalent system (leading to capitalistic 'success').
- Accordingly, the curriculums and school programmes are designed to maintain the old order.

Wrong sense of taste

- ▶ With the help of the parents and teachers, the candidates develop a wrong sense of taste in which they ignore reading long texts like novels and anything they think is 'difficult' and develop no taste for artistic creations.
- ▶ They also do not want to write long essays that require critical reading and academic writing skills as also evident in their essays and paragraphs.
- ▶ They are aim oriented (M.A. or even Ph. D. to gain 'signs').

Political discourse

- ▶ . Unfortunately, in the recent years there is no guarantee for teaching positions at (State Schools).
- ▶ The center of the political discourse becomes “university” centered and the slogan is opening “as many universities as possible” to provide new career and job opportunities for young people and to delay their job needs (University teaching positions are more prestigious)
- ▶ So, the students develop a ‘feel for game’; what are inappropriate, good and bad moves. They develop skills to play the game intuitively.
- ▶ There is an unending demand for ‘ Dershane ’ (teaching test strategies only- it is another job possibility) and the parents pay willingly.



A Game



- ▶ In case of being “unsuccessful” the system will devour the individual and the individual submits to dominant patterns of thought (the unqualified university student, too).
- ▶ It is a game to be played in Turkish society, but neither the university graduate nor the parents (teachers, even Professors) question the ‘fairplay’ of the staged game.



Understanding of what is happening, becomes crucial to understand social life (habitus).

- **So, how is habitus formed and why are they unchallengable** as they are a set of dispositions resulting in particular practices, improvisations, bodily attitude, gestures, etc, which provide the 'feeling for the game.'
- **Teachers show a stereotypical behavior in their attitudes, codes of behaviors, related to teaching and social life.** 'With a deeper analysis of the meaning of cultural signs and meaning formation and strategic action and class power Bordieu tries to show habit formations.



It is the culture and ideology not the economic classes or state that promotes that particular education policy, because the policy makers are also from the same society and the same culture.

- Poverty is taken as the primary reason for not reading books in Turkish society, but in reality people do not have a reading habit.



Social classes are reproduced through symbolic domination and the education system (via teachers), because the teachers are the power holders in classrooms and it is up to them to develop taste.

- ▶ the parents want less art and music lessons
- ▶ and the teachers design their syllabus or school curriculums likewise.
- ▶ An art or a music teacher may be criticized for having graded low by the student' s mother the following day.
- ▶ Many Turkish people (even in possession of enough money and status) would be reluctant for going to the theatre and read in analytical way that would provoke to think



By being both objectivist and subjectivist and realizing the role as both being researcher and the researched, signifier and signified, the teachers and students can become aware of their two sided contribution to the field

- ▶ and structure in the Turkish culture and ideology. Leading to self-awareness, personal growth and enhancing critical abilities beside language competency should be the focus.



' Experiential Learning'' and ''Nomadic Thought''

- ▶ The discussion of the various concepts from various different texts of literature (poems, short stories, novels or movements) in an interactive and communicative way seems to make this aim possible.



Content becomes the Subject of Debate

- ▶ The habitus prevent them to indulge in the thinking process actively and discourages both the students and the instructors, so that the content of the course and style becomes a great subject of debate.
- ▶ So, the deconstruction and descentering of these particular concepts and false ideas about literature classes are necessary to open up a new plane for teaching “thinking” in the sense of Gilles Deleuze via literature as “thinking” is not the job of philosophers only, this can be achieved through literature:



Interaction of philosophy and Art

- ▶ The interaction of philosophy and art should create difference and divergence, rather than agreement and common sense. Philosophy has to do with creating concepts, while art has to do with creating new experiences, but the two can transform each other . . . new concepts in philosophy can also provoke artists into recreating the boundaries of experience. For this reason Deleuze drew upon all sorts of texts, insisting on their difference from each other and on their power to transform each other. His work does not provide a theory of literature so much as a way of forming questions through literature, questions that should challenge life... Opinion is a very inertia or failure of thinking, opinion is a laziness... (Colebrook, 2002, pp. 7- 16)



So, students and to be teachers' ideas (opinions) about literature must be challenged through the discussion of concepts via literature as a tool in order to redefine and create new concepts instead of internalizing clichés (like the difficulty of literature).

- ▶ **the students insist** (misbehavior-ignoring what the instructor says) on **teacher centered classes** and **coming to the class unprepared** and **creating a negative atmosphere in the classroom.**
- ▶ **The high anxiety about the midterm and final grades bring high expectancy for ready answers that they can memorize for the exam (rather than relying on their own analysis and synthesis abilities and reading capacities).**



Instead of generating their own flexible ideas, the students tend to write the given answers in hope of high grades. The presenters, too, are reluctant in taking the responsibility of their own presentation tasks,

- ▶ eventhough they are told to be graded for midterm (correct and hand in their presentation reports after the teacher's feedback in class and to distribute them to their classmates the following week). Some of the students copy, pasted (plagiarism) and prepared superficial power point presentations (although instructed what and how to do).



The ways for changing the notions of the students should be thought. Although the students have taken autonomous learning, listening and notetaking, critical reading and academic writing in the first year many remain passive.





Method



Syllabus design and materials used during the semester

Due to some students' weakness in critical thinking abilities and reading/ writing/ speaking skills, poems and short texts, which are easy to handle, but dense in meaning are chosen.

romantic and realistic poems are chosen to discuss particular concepts

- religion, environmental aspects and nature and human relations, power relationships in context of capitalism, industrialization, technology, progress and patriarchy ("The Tiger," "The Lamb", "The Sick Rose" by Blake, "I wandered Lonely as a Cloud" by Wordsworth, "Ozymandias" by Shelly)
- "democracy", "tolerance", "equality," "individual power" and "self" and "identity" ("Oh Captain, My Captain" by Whitman)
- "the place of woman," "the role of woman", "love," "marriage," "betrayal" and "exploitation" in context of colonialism (The poem "Ah Are you Digging on my Grave" by Hardy)



Naturalistic or modern short stories (3 to 4 pages) are chosen to overcome reading anxiety

- ▶ to discuss the concepts of “crime” (visible and invisible), “violence,” “sanity,” “insanity,” “normal,” “abnormal,” “justice” and the “place of woman,” “sisterhood” and “feminism.” (*Trifles* (8 pages drama) by Susan Glasspell)
- ▶ Bernard Shaw’s play *Pygmalion*, which is assigned for out of class reading to display drama of ideas.
- ▶ Films are also assigned (*Dead Poet’s Society*)



Nomadic Thought and the role of Teacher's Schemata

- ▶ The analysis of the concepts is activated by the teacher's schemata mainly based on the views of existentialist anti-psychiatrist R. D. Laing, Foucault and Deleuze and Guattari's views of "nomadic thought," (wandering thought) / shifting ideas) and androgynous way (students coming from different regions) of perception.



Teaching style and tasks assigned to students

The First semester

- ▶ 200 students take the three hours obligatory course *Introduction to English Literature I* in eight groups (25-30 students).
- ▶ There are two instructors (as decided by the head of the department)
- ▶ in two major divisions (six groups & 2 groups)
- ▶ **The teaching style in the first six groups is lecturing** (easier to handle with), where students are memorizing the transferred information.
- ▶ In the second two groups the students are required to take part at the class discussions, but the lesson is mainly carried out by the instructor.



The subject of this study is the *Introduction to English Literature II* course in the Second Semester

- Seven groups with the similar number of students take the course from the researcher whereas the instructor with the two groups took only one group she knew from previous semester.





Students' Presentations

- ▶ **Duration:** The students are required to make 10-15 minute presentations on the assigned topic in the first lesson (each week three students are asked to volunteer for the next week).
- ▶ **Topics** may vary from historical events to literary movements that are related to the back ground of the literary text.
- ▶ **Eliciting, Brainstorming & Free Association :** When discussing the text the following two lessons, the instructor elicits and prepares an atmosphere for brainstorming and activation of schemata to foster student-teacher interaction and a " thinking process."



Asking the students for answers

- By close reading of the text, students are required to concentrate on the title, the keywords and important lines and they are guided to express their own opinions.
- The instructor conducts the discussion and gives spare ready answers, so that they are left with some questions in mind to lead them to research.
- They should read the text before coming to class to overcome language difficulties and to make research about literary, historical, biographical background.

Negative feedback:

- For some students, the student centered nature of the classes are annoying and literature classes were difficult and useless.
- ▶ They also found the presentations unnecessary, claiming that they were copy-paste and they preferred lectures.
- ▶ The result of the process is the lack of ready notes and material for studying for the exams (as they tend to study in the last week- the last day).
- ▶ They also criticized the teachers' shifting (disconnected ideas)' ideas displaying nomadic thought (the teacher is jumping from one idea to another). 'They also had difficulty in restricting and presenting their topics in front of their classmates (they are not like the instructor).

Feedback Sample

Introduction to English Literature 2

Arkadaşlar, I don't want to be an English Teacher, But, I must do something to do because I don't understand anything from math, physics, etc. Because I'm here now, I'm trying to do my best. But I don't think English literature is necessary or useful as a lesson for our department. Such lessons includes general culture. So, I think everyone should provide general culture by yourself.

(Özellikle 1, 2 dönemle anlatılabilecek yada öğrenilebilecek bilgiler olduğunca düşünüyorum.)

Because I will be a teacher, I want to take much more lesson about how I can teach. if I want to take or learn such lessons, I would studied English Language and Literature Department.

bilgi edinerek
reklam

Because you want me to tell the truth, I confess that I didn't read anything from the book during the term, because I can't understand the aim of this lesson. Whyone didn't give me a purpose for this lesson.

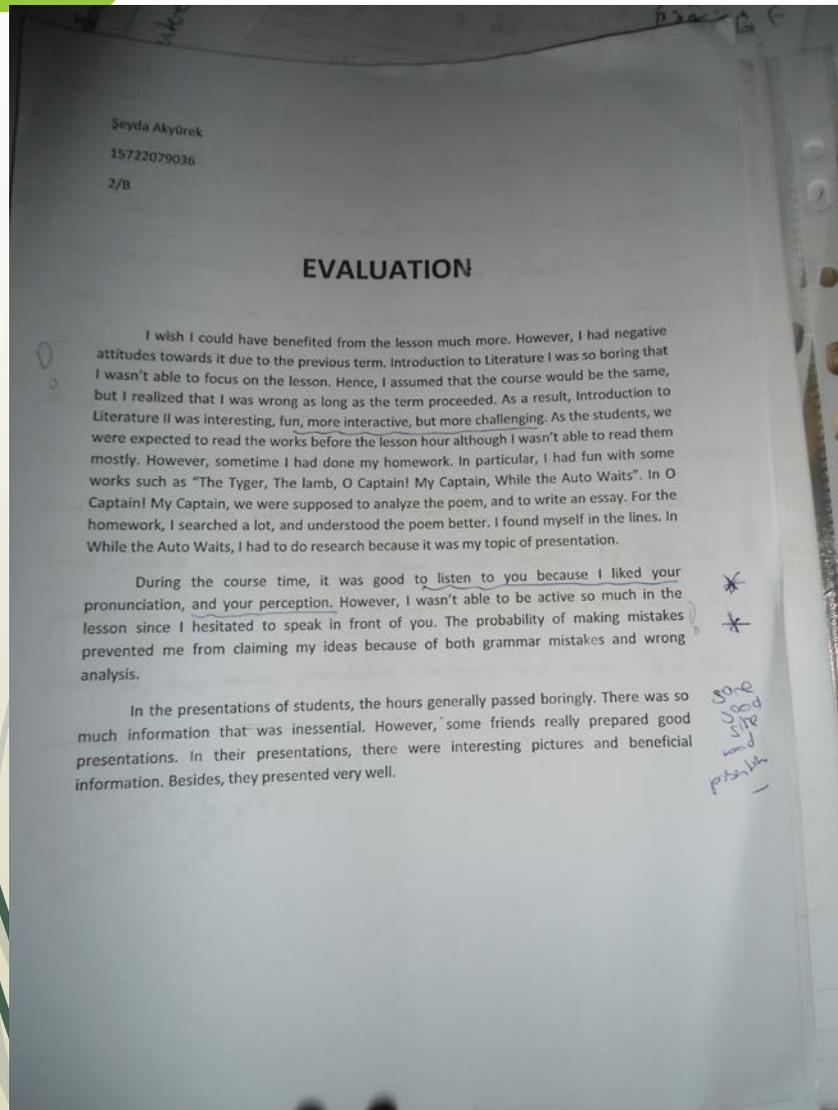
(Bu dersi gerçekten çok meraklı olarak yapıyorum bir öğretmenlik ödümün için. Edebiyat okuyanlar bizim method derslerimizi görmüyo ama biz öğretmenlik okuyanlar nedense edebiyat dersi olmak zorundayız. İste tam da bunu mantığıma yatırmadığım için bir dönem boyunca isteyerek derslere gitmedim. İsteyerek çalışmadım. İlla böyle bir ders konulursa müfredata seçmeli olmalı bence. Gerçi bizim sorumluları da zorunlu hale getiriyorlar ya neyse.)



Positive feedback:

- ▶ On the other hand, the majority of the students think that despite its difficulty the literature classes are useful and thought provoking.
- ▶ They have gained different perceptions and sensations related to many fields of life.
- ▶ They developed a taste for artistic creations and a feeling for perceiving abstract ideas and the teacher with her different teaching style and teaching philosophy and use of humor becomes a new model.
- ▶ The presentations are useful because they gained self-confidence and became aware of their own capacities as well as opportunity to practice and present what they have learned (many interrelated information) in front of the class, so that they can overcome presentation anxiety

Feedback sample





Discussion and Conclusion

- Whereas some students resist to change the majority of the students show willingness despite their habitus (the classes were thought providing).
- Some of them showing misbehavior in class (which is dealt by the teacher with sarcastic language - student feedbacks) which is a big problem in EFL classes, where students make fun of the teacher' s tone of voice (the first semester's lecturing instructor) or pronunciation or language insufficiencies.



Teaching certificates would not solve the problem

- ▶ in order to refine their classroom management skills and these courses or seminars can be organized in cooperation with universities and psychological counsellors in schools
- ▶ (this would also be problematic- teachers tend to get rid of the “problem student” by sending them to psychological counsellors (same habitus) rather than investigating the real causes of the problem and the labeled student ends up taking countless treatments and pills). This model would also label the teacher candidates.





Teacher' s role

- ▶ Despite self-criticism some of the students still have much expectations from the teacher.
- ▶ The pressure of the competitive system and their inability to cooperate and establish real friendships make them work in isolation (habitus).
- ▶ Lack of organization abilities and selfishness prevented them from sharing their slides on time, so that they could not study regularly.
- ▶ Eventhough, having not read the material on time they expected the teacher not to get angry.
- ▶ The students think that the system is unchangeable as there are lacks.
- ▶ Their effort would not be enough and they are not "responsible" for their own behaviors (despite a democratic and flexible learning environment - open to creation and productivity). Despite the negative feedback the effect on the students is hopeful (take selective literature courses).

The role of the Final Exam in learning

- ▶ The studying process for the final examination (which they postponed till the end of the exam time) was also useful in consciousness raising.
- ▶ The "unusual final exam" consisting of analysis and synthesis questions (tests or fill in the blank questions in other courses are common among ELT instructors) are challenging.
- ▶ They were required to write a paragraph for each question (6 questions / & 6 paragraphs to check what they have internalized although it is a time consuming activity to read 4x 200= 800 exam pages in ten days) related to the texts discussed in class.
- ▶ Fiftysix students out of 200 had to take the resit exam and about 30 of them passed with just the average marks.
- ▶ The second instructor (M.A. thesis in literature on D.H. Lawrence- Deleuze) with the remaining one group is also shocked, because although the group was good at presentations and class discussions 10 out of 30 students had to take the resit exam as they handed in blank exam papers (high expentency of teacher centered class and memorization).



Literary text should be a tool and not the sole aim

- ▶ Despite the difficulties and rejections of the students and instructors (in the first semester the instructors excluded students' presentations, because of the above mentioned problems) **there should be presentations in literature classes to make the students autonomous**
- ▶ and the texts should be thematically interrelated and the teacher's role is great in introducing the text as a tool.
- ▶ The focus should be on producing "thinking process" and to make the students speak out.
- ▶ They should also be given philosophical papers or quotes from various thinkers (beside their conduct of research on the internet and in the library).

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- Ways to prevent plagiarisms should be thought (students' projects are done by their parents at primary and high school – also known by the teacher). On the other hand the great number of young people in Turkey and the lack of the qualified instructors (mass production of teacher candidates at countless Education Faculties established over night), the game will go on and can hardly be changed and requires a long period as the ÖYSM (a center for exams providing money for the instructors and teachers conducting the sessions) which is viewed as the "only solution" for 'fair' choice (no personal relations). As stated by Deleuze, all forms of art, literature, theater, cinema and philosophy should be integrated in the Turkish education system to do philosophy (life and education), which is a task for every body, especially teachers (as a guide).