

The Use of Architectural Design as Mediator in Intercultural Communication and Understanding: Japanese Example in Cappadocia-Avanos Location Selection

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Abstract: Architectural design courses are among the main courses of architectural education. Especially during the first years, there is a great deal of knowledge that should be provided during these courses and it is difficult for students who have graduated from high school to grasp the concepts. However, it is also possible to make these courses more efficient, enjoyable and intensive with regard to knowledge. In this study, Architectural Design III course that is part of the 2015-2016 fall semester at the Erciyes University Faculty of Architecture has been considered. A topic that will enable communication between two architectures and two cultures has been studied in this studio. The objective was to make a spatial organization that will enable foreign visitors who will accommodate temporarily to live their own cultures in a local architecture and at a different geography while getting to know local cultures. Japanese culture and Cappadocia were the focus points of the study. We hope that this study will set an example for future studies..

1. Introduction

Many definitions have been made for education throughout history. It is possible to say that the words society, individual, practical life, ideal state, thinking have been at the forefront in these definitions. Education is defined as a general teaching method for the teaching of skills, habits and knowledge to new generations and as researching, working etc. as part of a definition that includes these concepts (Dewey, 2001).

Design process that is also defined as the time that passes from the first conception of a project until its completion also includes various sub-processes (Broadbent, 1969). RIBA approaches architectural design process in seven stages. These stages are; preparation, concept design, developed design, technical design, specialist design, construction, use and aftercare (RIBA, 2012).

Architectural design education which is part of the undergraduate education aims to provide students with the line of thought that encompasses putting forth the creative power of students, ensuring their intuitional development, carrying out researches, determining what is necessary, putting these into application, ensuring that the students try them out and inspecting them (MSGÜ, 2012). In addition, the objective of the discipline of architecture is to ensure that students use the knowledge they have for developing their ability for creative thinking since it is part of the design and engineering applications (Yazıcıoğlu, 2013). It can be observed that these skills are used in different stages of design. Therefore, architectural education should include the sub-processes of design as well. In addition, it is known that pursuit for developing creativity lies at the heart of all efforts related with architectural education (Usta, Onur, 2011). Therefore, design studios are environments where students spent the most amount of time and where methods for design are taught (Shoshi, Oxman, 2000). It is known that design courses are the most important courses in architectural education and that design studios are

places where the students can put forth their creativities (Schön, 1984). Design studios are places where formal education is carried out and where knowledge and skills related with design are tried to be passed onto the students. Hence, it is thought that any incident that takes place at design studios should be considered as an experience and indeed part of the process (Usta, Onur, 2011). It is also put forth that the model to be used for design education in architecture should reveal and develop creativity, should be unconditional and limitless, should be novel and indeed should be developed from scratch, should have an imaginative, graphic manner of telling that moves from a divergent way of teaching to a convergent one which is colorful and photogenic (Cappleman, Jordan, 1993; Friedman, 1989; Ertürk et.al., 1999).

Design education which is one of the most important parts of architectural education has the same properties in Turkey much like the rest of the world. There are also national and international equalization studies ongoing in Turkey in the field of architecture. Equalization is important and necessary to enable architects to carry on with their professions at different geographies in the world and to ensure that the architectural product put forth is above a certain level with regard to quality (Yazıcıoğlu, 2013). Information on different nations should be put forth as input during the design process.

It is important to put forth knowledge for design and to put the design into application. Physical data that will enable the generation of a dream is important for putting forth knowledge. Cultures feed architecture just like architectural schools and the education provided at these schools feed the culture of architecture. Education on design, reaching the information required for design and the process of putting the design into practice are given at undergraduate level architecture courses. Design activity has its own internal dynamics. There are also many scientific studies that examine this activity. While examining the many aspects of design action; designs that are the results of culture and traditions which are important for defining

the society have been considered during a workshop carried out as part of a design course. Japanese culture and its various elements have been determined by the student as input. The student has developed his/her own project based on the pre-determined cultural elements.

2. A Sample Workshop Study For Department Of Architecture Design Education In Turkey

Architectural design courses make up the basis of architectural education. It is important that the other courses will provide knowledge that will support this main course. Especially, design 1-2 and 3 studios have a separate importance for the first years of architectural education in which it is expected to develop design ability. Architectural Design III studio that is carried out during the 2015-2016 fall semester by Assoc. Prof. Z. Özlem PARLAK BİÇER and Research Assistant Özlem ATAĞ DOĞAN which is carried out together with the students has an important place for this process. The objectives of this course have been determined as; approaching a design problem with different experiences by examining the environment and the user, going over the knowledge and experiences acquired during previous design courses, acquisition of the ability to analyze functional and environmental problems within an architectural issue, reinforcement of the transformations between different scales of expression, establishing a main idea by way of concepts such as sheltering, accommodation, temporary and long term accommodation, residence, house etc. and acquiring the ability to express this main idea in 2 and 3 dimensions. It was expected from the students within the scope of the study to develop different architectural project suggestions. Sketch works by students were evaluated together with the instructors who also guided the students within this scope. Learning outcomes were determined as the formation of a concept related with architectural design and the development of the design within the analyzed physical environment.

Whereas texture, connections between actions were provided as main topics during the course participated by 20 students, architectural designs of the topics were carried out after which their applicability on the terrain, harmony with the terrain and accessibilities were evaluated. The topic of the course was different than the topic that was given to the same semester students in previous years. A topic was selected that will contribute to the development of a new culture and new architectural understanding in the students while also developing the architectural project. The function of the main topic was determined as long and short term temporary accommodation. It was expected from the students to develop a design that can combine the habits of especially foreign users with the local culture and geography. They were guided towards projects in which there are accommodation units where users can feel comfortable while also participating in courses related with their fields of interest and/or developing their hobbies or where they can make use of recreational areas. The starting point was the idea that people who visit a different country will have established strong intercultural bonds if they also take with them something from their culture while examining the local culture of the country they visit.

Foreign guests to visit Turkey were determined as Japanese. In this regard, it is expected that students will carry out a project study including Japanese architecture, traditions and way of life. Traditional Japanese domestic architecture was explained by way of translations made by faculty and students from the Japanese Literature department, their experiences as well as the Japan experiences of Assoc. Prof. PARLAK BİÇER. In addition to traditional Japanese residences, Japanese handcrafts, sports and

spaces that come into the forefront have been explained. These studies were reinforced by the instructors as well as through the individual and group coursework and studio presentations by the students. The students were then expected to select a Japanese cultural element that they feel an affinity to or that they love. Detailed studies were carried out by students who selected one of the many Japanese cultural elements such as aikido, onsen, tatami, bonzai, origami, ikegami, rice cultivation, Japanese ceramic art.

Field studies and trips for getting to know the terrain have been carried out within the scope of this project. Cappadocia region was selected as the project area which is known throughout the world as well as in Japan and which attracts attention thanks to its geographical structure and location in addition to its local properties. Cappadocia Region is an area covered with lava following the volcanic eruption of Mount Erciyes and it is a unique region where soil erosion has taken place over time and local architecture has been made by carving this rock structure inwards. The location was determined within the borders of Avanos which is one of the regions that strikes out in Cappadocia thanks to the carved rock structures (Photographs 1, 2) and the associated rock architecture (Photographs 3). The reasons for selecting Avanos in Cappadocia were; the general geological structure of Cappadocia in addition to the fact that Kızılırmak, the longest river in the country, passes through the center of the city thus forming a green valley amidst the local texture (Map 1, Photograph 4), that it is a center where traditional handcrafts such as carpet weaving and ceramics art are still practiced (Photographs 5, 6), the fact that traditional viticulture and by extension wine making are still carried out via traditional methods, the fact that it has an architecture in which both rock carving and stone masonry are used in addition to the fact that it is home to the first modern architectural pieces dating back to the final period of the Ottoman Empire and the founding years of the Turkish Republic, that it was an important area of settlement during the Seljuq Period and that it is located on the historical Silk Road which was an important means of intercultural communication at the time.



Photograph 1. Cappadocia Rock Carving Architecture Examples (Taşkın, M., 2016)



Photograph 2. Avanos Traditional Rock Carving Space Example (Taşkın, M., 2016)



Photograph 3. Avanos Traditional Rock Civil Architecture Examples (Taşkın, M., 2016)



Photograph 4. The Area at Cappadocia Avanos Selected for the Course (Taşkın, M., 2016)



Map 1. Avanos-Kızılırmak and Study Area (Googleearth, 2016)



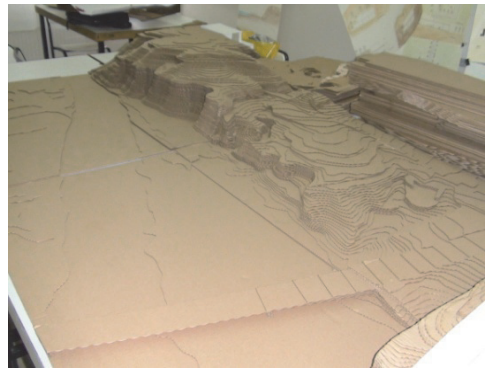
Photograph 5. Avanos Traditional Carpet Weaving (Taşkın, M., 2016)



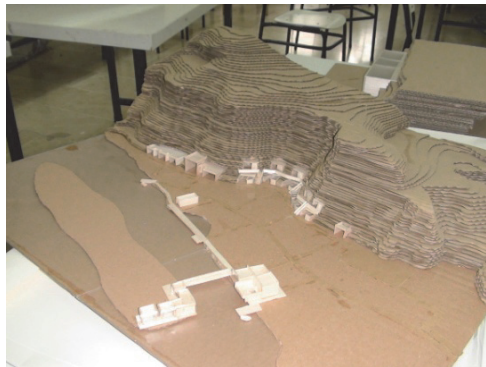
Photograph 6. Avanos Traditional Ceramic Workshop (Taşkın, M., 2016)

Avanos is as important for Cappadocia as Cappadocians important for Turkey. The selected area (Photographs 7) is where intercultural dialogue continued throughout history. It is not a coincidence that the project topic is one which may influence Turkish-Japanese cultures by putting forth their differences-similarities.

Following the selection of location and topic, studies were carried out for carrying out the design encompassing the areas for accommodation, social spaces for mass use, traditional life and hobbies consisting of at least 15 temporary units with Japanese traditional culture as well as daily life elements etc. selected by the students themselves. In addition, it was also expected from the students to consider spaces where they can carry out activities for establishing connections between local culture and traditional handicrafts. In this regard; a student designed an onsen themed rehabilitation center considering the hot springs of the Cappadocia region which can be used by Japanese guests (Photograph 8). Another student completed a project based on the idea that Japanese rice cultivation can be carried out along the coast of Kızılırmak (Photographs 9). 20 different projects carried out within the scope of the course include; spaces for Japanese flower arrangement art of ikebana and bonsai cultivation (Photograph 10), spaces for instructors and students of aikido courses and local folk dances, projects where origami and yoga courses can take place which include spaces for rehabilitation purposes (Photograph 11), designs with spaces that combine traditional sake production and local winemaking (Photograph 12), projects that combine carpet weaving which is a part of the local culture and silk weaving which is an important part of Japanese culture (Photograph 13), projects which combine ceramic workshops comprising an important source of income for the local people with Japanese traditional art of ceramic making (Photograph 14). Some students have enriched their presentations by making origami cherry blossoms (Photograph 15).



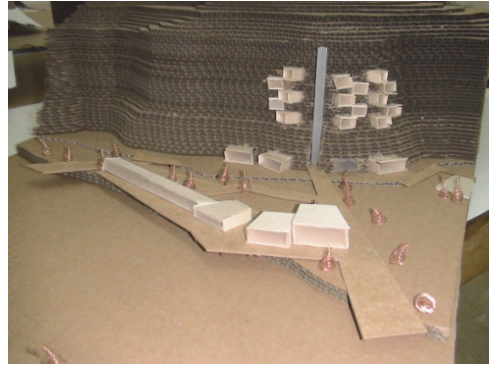
Photograph 7. Project area model (Parlak Biçer, Z. Ö., 2016)



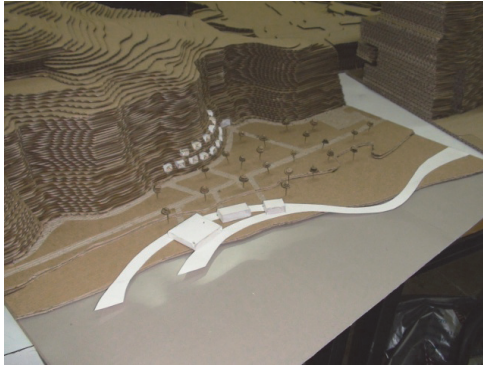
Photograph 8. Design for Japanese Onsen and Traditional Hot Spring for Rehabilitation Purposes (Parlak Biçer, Z. Ö., 2016)



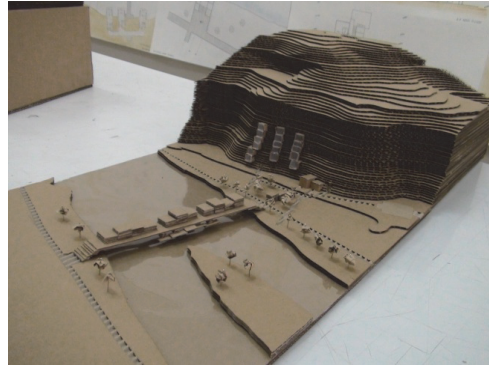
Photograph 9. Design for Japanese Rice Cultivation (Parlak Biçer, Z. Ö., 2016)



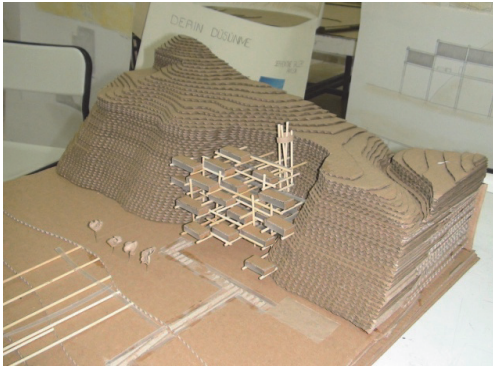
Photograph 13. Design for fabric weaving (Parlak Biçer, Z. Ö., 2016)



Photograph 10. Design for ikebana, bonsai cultivation (Parlak Biçer, Z. Ö., 2016)



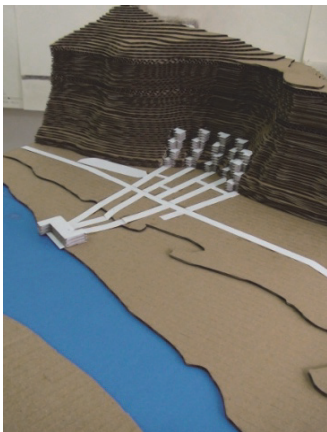
Photograph 14. Design for Japanese ceramic art and local ceramic art (Parlak Biçer, Z. Ö., 2016)



Photograph 11. Examples of Student Projects (Parlak Biçer, Z. Ö., 2016)



Photograph 15. Origami Cherry Blossom Model (Parlak Biçer, Z. Ö., 2016)

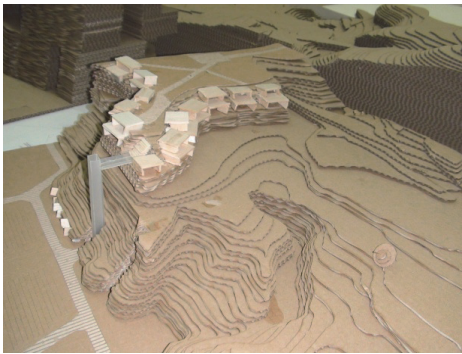


Photograph 12. Design for traditional sake and wine making (Parlak Biçer, Z. Ö., 2016)

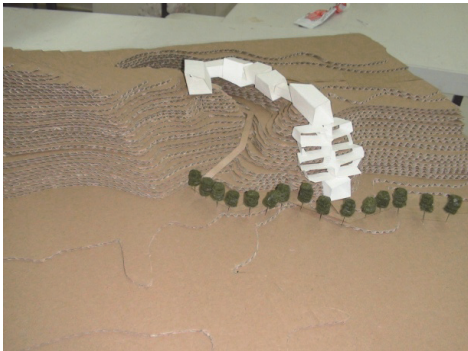
In addition to these projects, topics related with the interests of the students considered to be also attractive for Japanese tourists were included. A few of these were determined as spaces for those who wish to work on Oriental style painting (Photographs 16), designs for horse rearing which is carried out locally (Photograph 17), spaces for producing Oriental style incense (Photograph 18) and designs that combine traditional Ryokan style hotels with modern hotel concept (Photographs 19, 20), designs that combine traditional Japanese and Turkish kitchens (Photographs 21). It was also expected from the students to make larger scale models for the accommodation units (Photographs 22, 23). Especially those who make rock carving accommodation space designs supported their studies with large scale models.



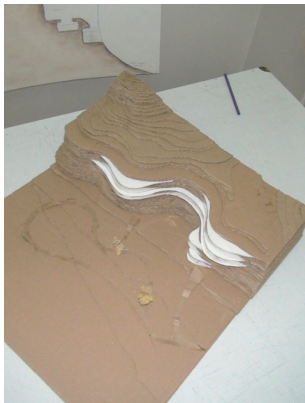
Photographs 16. Center for Oriental Style Painting (Parlak Biçer, Z. Ö., 2016)



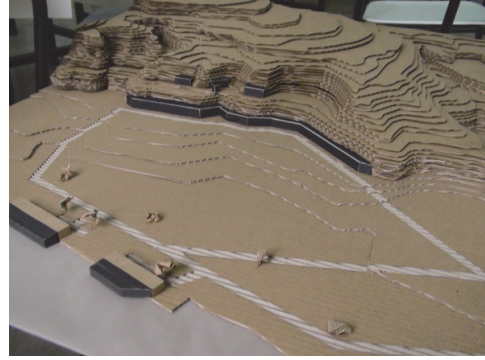
Photograph 17. Traditional Horse Rearing (Parlak Biçer, Z. Ö., 2016)



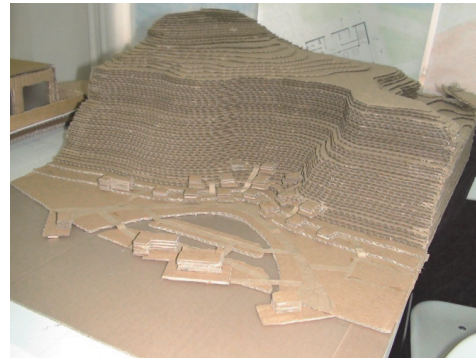
Photograph 18. Design for Producing Oriental Style Scents (Parlak Biçer, Z. Ö., 2016)



Photograph 19. Accommodation Unit with Rock Carving and Modern Materials (Parlak Biçer, Z. Ö., 2016)



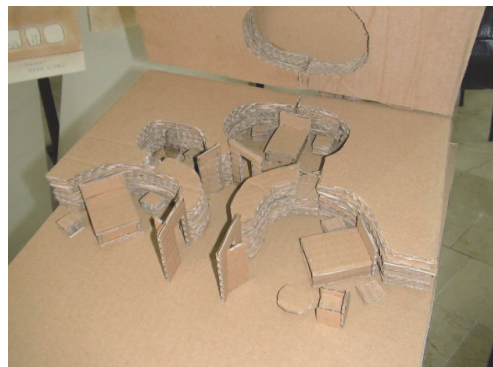
Photograph 20. Rock Carving Accommodation Unit (Parlak Biçer, Z. Ö., 2016)



Photograph 21. Design for Japanese kitchen and traditional kitchen (Parlak Biçer, Z. Ö., 2016)



Photograph 22. Rock Carving Accommodation Unit (Parlak Biçer, Z. Ö., 2016)



Photograph 23. Rock Carving Accommodation Unit (Parlak Biçer, Z. Ö., 2016)

The use of Kızılırmak and geological structure of the region were at the forefront when carrying out these functions. The terrain provided to the students covers large planes on the Kızılırmak valley as well as a rock mass with a cliff that has a high elevation difference (Photograph 4). Students used both the sloped and non-sloped sections of the terrain. Rock carving spatial designs were carried out similar to the local architecture for sections with sheer slopes. The students worked hard to apply the functions considered above that will be used by the Japanese guests.

It was possible to accomplish the fundamental goals of this design studio as is the case for project courses. In addition, students who took this course gained an increased interest in another culture and architecture, their interest was not limited solely to local architecture and was directed to encompass another culture and architecture. Thus, their interests in Japanese culture and architecture also increased as a result. It was tried to ensure that students gain an awareness that an architect should not make architectural arrangements intended for a specific human profile but that he/she should make architectural projects taking into consideration people from all cultures and styles of life. Of course, this does not mean that basic life standards of people should be changed or architectural designs should reflect the properties of a single culture only. Strengthening intercultural dialogue should also be mentioned within the scope of the courses in addition to a universal mentality. Thus, it will be ensured as a social goal that one society will get to understand another society. It is apparent that the geographical and cultural bond attained via the Silk Road can be continued in our day through the topics selected in architectural education and the means for treating these topics. What is lacking in this study was the fact that it was not carried out in cooperation with the students and instructors of a Japanese school of architecture. It will be beneficial for future project courses that dialogues will be attained between schools, studios, instructors and that the projects will be carried out in cooperation. It is hoped that this study will be a guide for selecting topics in architectural design courses and for increasing mutual understanding between cultures.

3. Conclusion

The development of students via different knowledge provided to them during design education and workshops which are important for architectural education have been examined in this study. Distinct elements of Japanese culture have been selected as the topic during the workshop which is the topic of the study and projects have been developed under the light of this. This study has set an example both for the operations of an architectural studio and the architectural interaction of the country as a whole. The importance of knowledge input for different cultures in the globalizing world has been observed. It is hoped that the study will contribute to understanding different cultures and architecture as well as studies that can be used in architectural designs.

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