Activating Cultural Knowledge to Support EFL Reading Comprehension

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This article reports the results of an experiment that tested the effects of cultural familiarity on the reading comprehension of native Korean-speaking students of English as a foreign language. The participants were 94 intermediate-proficiency students from elementary school to college, who were randomly assigned to two groups. The experimental materials were two versions (one original, one adjusted) of four English reading passages in three different genres: diary, report, and short stories. The original texts were adjusted by being nativized, which was done by changing elements of the text to increase the degree to which the content would be culturally familiar to the participants. Each group was given four readings (two original texts, two adjusted texts). Group A read the original version and Group B read the adjusted version of two of the readings for the other two readings, Group A read the adjusted version and Group B read the original version. The study’s results show that cultural familiarity has a direct influence on reading comprehension and that EFL learners can benefit from materials that activate their cultural knowledge.

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper intends to show the results of a study on the role of cultural familiarity in the reading comprehension of EFL students. Its primary purpose is to promote awareness of the activation of cultural knowledge as an effective strategy in foreign language pedagogy. Reading is a process not only of understanding words and sentences, but also of understanding
meanings, which emerge from the interaction of the reader and the text. According to Blau (1982), a learner’s understanding of the content of a text indicates that the learner’s internalized knowledge has been stimulated. For EFL learners whose linguistic competence is low, activating their cultural knowledge may be a beneficial strategy for facilitating their reading comprehension.

This paper reports the results of an experiment that investigated the effects of the activation of cultural knowledge on the reading comprehension of Korean EFL learners. Compared to the previous studies, in the present study, the participants read four passages in four separate sessions whereas only single passage was done in most previous studies. Moreover, this paper differs from the studies in the past in that no studies done in Korea have used nativization in the passages yet used a passage equivalent to the other which could be a big limitation of the studies. Considering differences mentioned, in this paper, the frameworks of given set texts are syntactically, lexically and rhetorically equivalent which lead to more accurate results.

I begin with a brief critical introduction to the state of English education in Korea. The official curricula are based on the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach and give equal emphasis to the four skills of speaking, writing, listening, and reading. However, most English classes in fact focus heavily on reading. Many educators and students consider reading to be the most important skill, because the ability to read and understand texts is prerequisite to being able to extend one’s knowledge and broaden one’s language ability. Moreover, reading is the basis of the assessment methods most frequently used to evaluate English acquisition and proficiency in Korea. University admission is based on high school students’ College Scholastic Ability Test scores: the test’s English assessment portion is 40% listening and 60% reading. Therefore, reading is a key to achieving a high score on the test. Students in Korea thus encounter English through reading more frequently than any other way, and they have a strong motivation to develop their reading comprehension ability. In Korea, English serves two purposes: it is a communication tool, of course, but this aspect is emphasized only in the earliest grades of school; its second purpose is as a key to admission into the top universities, which means that older students focus on
reading comprehension in order to score well on tests.

Many methodologies can be applied to the teaching of reading in a second/foreign language. Nevertheless, most English education in Korea uses one method. Currently, high schools in Korea teach English reading in such a way as to best prepare students for the College Scholastic Ability Test. In other words, reading focuses on the ability to read a passage and translate it into Korean based on the classical method of grammar translation. Students are trained in various strategies to analyze sentence structures and to extract main ideas as they read texts. Little attention is paid to the content of the texts, which are treated as exercises in grammatical analysis. This method tends to be popular among teachers. According to Brown (2001, p. 19), it requires few specialized skills on the part of teachers: tests of grammar rules and translations are easy to construct and can be objectively scored. Brown also discusses how standardized tests of foreign languages typically do not attempt to tap into communicative abilities, so students have little motivation to go beyond grammar analogies, translations, and rote exercises. Woo (2014) adds that because most schools and institutes in Korea use the same teaching methodology, and students in Korea do not learn ways to enhance their communicative competence in English, and many students think of English reading as boring and serious. The purpose of this paper is to explore the relationship of culture background knowledge and ESL reading and promote awareness of the activation of cultural knowledge as an effective strategy. Importantly, this study suggests an effective strategy for English learners and implication it may have upon second language reading in an EFL context for teachers in Korea.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Schema Theory

Schema theory suggests that reading provides directions for learners as to how they should retrieve or construct meaning from their own experience, which is previously acquired knowledge. Previously acquired knowledge is background knowledge, and previously acquired knowledge structures are
schemata (Bartlett, 1932). A schema is an abstract mechanism that acts like a frame of the mental structure in human memory in which things and incidents are associated. In other words, schema theory defines a schema as a knowledge structure that an individual has developed through past experience (Kim, 2007).

Schema is a Greek word, meaning “form” or “a frame of thoughts.“ The term was first used in the current sense by Piaget in 1920s and has since been most frequently used by Bartlett and, later, by Anderson and Pearson (1984), who expanded the notion.

Nunan (1995) suggested that schemata help understanding by providing frames built on previous experiences that allow human brains to understand new experiences. That is, when people experience new things, they draw on similar situations that they remember while correcting and updating the memories. Gagné (1986) defined schemata as integrated knowledge structures, probably hierarchical, about any topic or content. Such knowledge structures make it possible to comprehend texts in appropriate ways. When new information mismatches with previous knowledge, then the schema revises the old information to match the new. Rumelhart and Orthon (1977) proposed that schemata may be thought of as “interacting knowledge structures” stored in hierarchies in long-term memory, and also called them “building blocks of cognition” (p.100). People are born with basic schemata, and throughout their lives, they store various things in their schemata. People have schemata for going to places, seeing things, buying and using products, and so on. Schemata are enhanced by organization and adaptation processes, which help keep them updated. According to Adams and Collins (1979), because comprehension involves not only information in a text, but also knowledge that the listener or reader already possesses, efficient comprehension requires the ability to relate textual material to one’s own knowledge. The following illustrates the effects of schematic interpretation.

“Yoobin’s mom is preparing for Kimjang. Her house is already full of the kimchi smell. Yoobin leaves home excited. She wants to come straight home after school.”

This text assumes that those who read or hear it already have certain kinds of knowledge – for instance, that Kimjang is a big event of the fall
season, and while it’s a day to make kimchi, it is more than that as well. Many people will come to Yoobin’s house to help with the kimchi making. On Kimjang day, neighbors and friends take turns helping each other, and they gather to talk, laugh, and make plenty of food to share. Yoobin is excited because she knows all this, having a schema for Kimjang day. And although the text does not say any of these things, that’s the schema that would be activated by most Korean people on encountering this text. People comprehend something only when they can relate it to something that they know: that is, when they can relate a new experience to an existing knowledge structure.

Anderson (1985) summarized some features of schemata as follows. First, a given schema has a blank slot for concepts, thus offering a frame to adopt new information. Generally, a schema allows different interpretations, case by case. By activating a schema, people easily assimilate new knowledge, which is absorbed into previous knowledge. Second, a schema decides what the more crucial information is and selectively gives more attention to that which contributes more to understanding it. Third, schemata help in memory searches by creating order that facilitates the search for necessary information. Fourth, schemata provide evidence that learners need to make inferences. This means that students need cultural background information to understand and infer. Fifth, schemata make it easy to edit and summarize the content of new information. Hence, cultural background knowledge affects the reading process by assisting learners to figure out a text’s main ideas. Sixth, through inference, schemata allow learners to reconstruct a text’s content by adopting a new frame, reshaping it by interacting with previous knowledge, expanding their knowledge, and then allowing the frame to retrieve appropriate information. The placement of background knowledge in the reading process has been discussed within schema theory. In the rest of this paper, the term schema and cultural background knowledge will be used synonymously and interchangeably.

2. Types of Schemata

1) Formal Schema
Carrell and Eisterhold (1983) made a distinction between formal and content schemata. Formal schemata are about background knowledge of the formal rhetorical organizational structures of different types of texts. For example, Carrell (1983) explained one type of formal schemata that readers must possess, which is background knowledge about, and expectations of, differences among rhetorical structures, such as differences in genre, that is, differences in the structures of fables, simple stories, scientific texts, newspaper articles, poetry, and so forth. A story, for instance, has its own frame, in that it is of a certain kind, based on the writer’s intention and the development of the story development. Judging the type of a story is inherent in a reader’s formal schema. For expository texts, Meyer (1975) recognized five different types of expository rhetorical organization: (1) collection: list; (2) causation: cause and effect; (3) response: problem and solution; (4) comparison: comparison and contrast; and (5) description: attribution. Each of these types represents a different abstract schema of the way writers organize and readers understand topics.

2) Content Schema

Content schemata are background knowledge of content areas of a text. Content schemata indicate the background knowledge that is related to the content and the notion of memory and experience stored in the brain. Steffensen, Joag–dev, and Anderson (1979) showed that the implicit cultural content knowledge presupposed by a text interacts with the reader’s own cultural background knowledge of content to make texts whose content is based on one’s own culture easier to read and understand than syntactically and rhetorically equivalent texts based on a less familiar, more distant culture. Many studies have found general effects of content schema on reading comprehension. Johnson (1982) showed that a text on a familiar topic is better recalled by ESL readers than a similar text on an unfamiliar topic. Alderson and Urquhart (1983) demonstrated a discipline–specific effect of content background knowledge in a study measuring reading comprehension in the context of English for specific purposes.
3) Cultural Schema

Cultural schema is more relevant to this study. Ketchum (2006) proposed cultural schema as culture-specific extension of content schema because it refers to the role of cultural membership that is needed to fully comprehend the meaning intended. Culture schema involves cultural familiarity and helps readers to reconstruct the story line through referring to more personally and culturally relevant scripts (Oller, 1995). The effect of this is a lessened workload to process meaning and make personal interpretations because such texts entail involvement with sociocultural relations with which readers identify and find some common things. It is because different concepts may have different referent in different cultural contexts and may thus generate different expectations on the readers. For every problem based on culture-specific interference, there is an opportunity to explore and build upon culture-specific schemata. There are benefits that the learners bring to the table such as quick recognition, acceptance and understanding. Life experiences, skills, accumulated cultural knowledge are attributes for the main part that can be called upon in reading tasks to provide a rich source of potentially new ideas and personal reasoning.

3. Bottom-up and Top-down Process

According to schema theory, the process of interpretation is guided by the principle that all input is mapped against some existing schema and that all aspects of that schema must be compatible with the input information. This principle results in two basic modes of information processing: bottom-up and top-down (Carrell, 1983). Bottom-up processing is data driven: It is evoked by incoming data. Schemata are organized hierarchically from the most general at the top to the most specific at the bottom. New data features enter the system through the best fitting bottom level schemata. As these bottom-level schemata converge into higher level, more general schemata, these too become activated (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983). On the other hand, top-down processing is conceptually driven: It takes place as the system makes overall predictions based on higher level, general schemata.
The system searches input for confirmation of predictions made on a higher level. Bottom–up processing ensures that learners will be sensitive to information that is novel or that does not fit the learners’ ongoing thoughts about the content or structure of the text. In contrast, top–down processing helps learners resolve ambiguities or select between possible interpretations of the incoming data.

A reader’s failure to activate an appropriate schema may be due either to a lack of sufficient clues in the text for the reader to effectively utilize bottom–up processing or to the reader’s lack of the appropriate schema and consequent inability to use top–down processing. In order for learners to be successful in reading, EFL teachers need to ensure that students have the necessary schemata and instruct them in how to build bridges between existing and new knowledge.

The current study explores schemata activation as an ESL reading strategy by investigating the effects of cultural familiarity on Korean EFL learners’ comprehension of reading texts. Its results may help educators better understand how to utilize learners’ existing knowledge to facilitate their reading in a foreign language.

III. THE STUDY: METHOD AND PROCEDURE

1. Research Questions

Q1. Does cultural familiarity have a direct influence on reading comprehension for EFL learners?
Q2. Can activating cultural knowledge be a good reading strategy for EFL learners?

2. Method

This study was conducted in two different sites in South Korea: a private English academy located in Incheon and a women’s university located in Seoul. The private English institute offers English classes for elementary, middle, and high school students. New students are assigned to classes based
on placement test scores, not according to their age or school grade. Every four months, the school conducts placement tests to check the students’ achievement. Therefore, the proficiency levels of the participants were accurate and up-to-date. The women’s university offers business English classes, to which students are assigned based on class.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1. Participants’ Information</th>
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<tr>
<td>(a) Gender</td>
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<td>Group A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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<th>(b) Age</th>
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<td>Middle school students</td>
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<td>University students</td>
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<th>(c) Level</th>
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<td>Group A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intermediate level</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advanced level</td>
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<td>Total number of participants</td>
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3. Participants

94 students participated in the study. Of the 59 students from the private English institute, 35 were elementary school students and 24 were middle school students. Their class level ranged from basic to advance. The 35 university students were all second-year students majoring in international tourism. The university students’ proficiency level was equivalent to the
levels at the private English academy in Incheon, with the classes at these levels being taught with same materials.

The participants were assigned randomly and proportionally according to their levels, genders, and ages into two different groups. Each group had 47 participants. Table 1 summarizes the participants’ information.

4. Materials

1) Texts

Four English reading passages were selected from three different genres of text materials: diary, report, and short stories. The passages were from books designed for 4th–6th grade native English-speaking elementary school students, and the contents were easy to relate to, everyday-life stories. For the experiment, an adjusted version of each reading was created, resulting in eight texts in total (i.e., one original and one adjusted version of each of the four reading passages).

The texts were adjusted by being nativized, which was done by changing elements of the text to increase the degree to which the content would be culturally familiar to the participants. (Henceforth, the terms “adjusted” and “nativized” are used interchangeably.) Nativization (Alptekin, 2006) functioned as an independent variable. In the process of nativization, most of the nouns were changed to fit a local setting. The names of the characters were changed to recognizably Korean names, and all the names of places, buildings, and so on were changed to make sense in a Korean context. Furthermore, some conceptual cues also had to be changed in order to complete the nativization process. For example, in the adjusted texts, the characters ate Hoddeck (호떡) rather than bread, and they celebrated Children’s Day (어린이날) instead of Halloween. No other type of change was made; for example, the sequence of actions in the adjusted stories conformed to that of the original stories.
2) Comprehension Questions

Reading questions were given to the students at the end of the reading sessions. They included open-ended questions and multiple-choice questions, as well as both target and filler questions. The total number of questions varied depending on the reading passages, but only the three target comprehension questions for each reading are relevant to this study. The questions for the two different versions of each text (i.e., nativized and original) were the same in format and substance, differing only in the words that differed in the two versions. The questions included different elicitation techniques in order to maintain the students’ attention.

5. Procedures

During the four days of the study, the students were asked to read a passage per day. This activity took less than 5 minutes and was a class activity. Students were instructed to wait to start answering the questions until everyone had finished the reading. The questions were written on the reading hand-outs, and, in addition, the facilitator read out the questions one by one to prevent misunderstandings. As participants were answering, they were encouraged to indicate any confusion, and the facilitator provided clarification when necessary. The procedure was very carefully conducted to minimize the variables that could affect the results.

A total of four readings (two original texts and two adjusted texts) was given to each group. For two readings, Group A read the original version and Group B read the adjusted version; for the other two readings, Group A read the adjusted version and Group B read the original version. Thus, each group read two original stories and two nativized stories, so that the answers to the comprehension questions could be compared between groups to look for differential effects of adjusted (more culturally familiar) and original (less culturally familiar) texts.
6. Data analysis

1) Scoring

Answers were only marked for comprehension. In the participants’ answers to the open-ended questions, grammatical mistakes were ignored in order to minimize the effect of any variation among the students’ writing skills, because assessing reading comprehension, not writing skills, was the study’s goal. Multiple-choice answers were scored either right or wrong, and the scores were simply averaged.

2) Statistical Analysis

The participants’ scores were analyzed using t-tests to find any differences between the groups’ performances on the original and nativized texts, and to learn whether any such differences were statistically significant.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Results

The descriptive statistics presented in Tables 2 and 3 show considerable differences between the participants’ performances with the original and the nativized texts. Table 2 displays the mean scores and Table 3 shows the results of t-tests conducted with the scores.

Table 3 reveals a high level of correlation between the nativized texts and the reading scores of the students. In all but one case, the scores on the nativized versions of the readings were higher than the scores on the original versions. The only exception was the text consisting of the nativized version “My brother, the Hoddeck maker” and the original text “My brother, the artist.”

As Table 2 indicates, with three of the readings, participants scored higher on the nativized texts than on the original texts. The exception is the text “My brother, the Hoddeck maker” for which the participants’ scores were
slightly higher on the original text, although, as seen in Table 3, the
difference was not statistically significant (t = 0.52).

**TABLE 2. Group Statistics**

(a) Children’s Day (May 5th) vs. Halloween (October)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group A</th>
<th>Group B</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.7021</td>
<td>1.2128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>0.8659</td>
<td>0.8668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of participants</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>47</td>
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(b) My Brother, the Hoddeck Maker vs. My Brother, the Artist

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<th>Group A</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.4255</td>
<td>1.5745</td>
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<td>Variance</td>
<td>1.2063</td>
<td>1.2932</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total number of participants</td>
<td>47</td>
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(c) Business Trip to Africa vs. Business Trip to Jeju Island

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<th>Group A</th>
<th>Group B</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>0.9787</td>
<td>1.6170</td>
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<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>0.9343</td>
<td>0.8936</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total number of participants</td>
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(d) Pancake vs. Bindaetteck

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<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.3617</td>
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<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>0.7826</td>
<td>0.4968</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total number of participants</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>47</td>
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TABLE 3. Results of T-tests (Significance Level $\alpha = 0.05$, 2-tailed)

(a) Children’s Day (May 5th) vs. Halloween (October)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F-test</th>
<th>t-test</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>p (Sig.)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.9990</td>
<td>0.9972</td>
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(b) My Brother, the Hoddeck Maker vs. My Brother, the Artist

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<th>F-test</th>
<th>t-test</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>p (Sig.)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.9328</td>
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(c) Business Trip to Africa vs. Business Trip to Jeju Island

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<td>F</td>
<td>p (Sig.)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.0455</td>
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(d) Pancake vs. Bindaetteck

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<td>p (Sig.)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.5754</td>
<td>0.1268</td>
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</table>

The explanation for the unexpected outcome in this single case can be found in the content of the story. The nativized versions of the other three stories are about specifically Korean content, which would be expected to effectively activate the participants’ cultural knowledge. In contrast, “My brother, the Hoddeck maker,” is about a boy looking at his baby brother, and is not strongly culture-based; therefore, it was less advantageous for cultural knowledge activation.

These results show that cultural familiarity has a significant impact on reading comprehension and can enhance students’ reading performance.

2. Discussion

This experiment provided noteworthy results, demonstrating a gap between
the participants’ mean scores on the reading comprehension questions for the original and the nativized texts. That the scores on one nativized text countered the expected outcome can be attributed to the particular text, in which the adjustments made to it had less nativizing effect; therefore, less cultural familiarity was required for participants to process that text. As a whole, the study’s empirical findings suggest the high probability that cultural familiarity can provide a noticeable advantage to learners in comprehending texts. On this basis, it can be argued that educators should choose reading texts carefully, considering learners’ interests and backgrounds. The effect of activating cultural knowledge may also be related to motivational issues. In an EFL setting, the use of texts drawn from the learners’ own culture may be very advantageous to motivate the learners. Dörnyei’s (2003) work on attitudes and motivation showed that motivation is related to achievement, and involves many factors such as ownership and interest. Tomlinson (1998) maintained that when students see elements of their local culture in classroom materials, they feel much more engaged and identify themselves with the context of the text. If this is the case, participants in the current study might have found the nativized texts more appealing than the original versions because of the local references. Such appeal might, in turn, have contributed to a higher level of motivation and better reading comprehension (Wigfield, 1997). In achieving immediate goals in the EFL reading classroom, teachers must strive for optimum balance between the background knowledge the students have and the that presupposed by the texts. It is important for teachers to recognize that culturally familiar cues have a facilitative effect on comprehensive of the stories and a good strategy reading for EFL learners.

V. Conclusion

The study’s results support the proposition that cultural familiarity has a direct influence on reading comprehension and that EFL learners can benefit from materials that activate their cultural knowledge. Educators and facilitators need to recognize the importance of cultural knowledge activation and take advantage of it as a strategy for teaching EFL learners.

This study has some limitations. The selection of the readings may well
have influenced the results. Although a variety of genres and topics was included, they might not have been equally interesting or familiar to all participants. Different topics and genres might yield different results. Another limitation might be related to participant age, although participants were classified by proficiency level, not age group. For example, younger participants might have participated insincerely due to immaturity; but older participants might also have participated insincerely if the texts were too easy for them.

Despite these limitations, the results of this study have important pedagogical implications. The significant difference between scores on adjusted and original versions of the texts demonstrates that reading content that includes local references with personal relevance to learners can produce a facilitative effect and, therefore, should be considered as a useful reading strategy in EFL classroom settings.

REFERENCES


psychology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.


(1), 10-29.
APPENDIX

A. Children’s Day (May 5th) vs. Halloween (October)

1. The best trick is __________
   (A) Things-children-like-to-do-on-Children’s-day
   (B) My-favorite-month-of-the-year
   (C) My-favorite-day: Children’s day
   (D) None to go on Children’s day

2. According to the reading what do other parents do for their children on Children’s day?
   (A) Take children to the amusement park
   (B) Make cookies with them
   (C) Dress up as a family costume
   (D) Do homework

3. Who also likes Children’s day in the story?
   (A) Dad
   (B) Me
   (C) Children
   (D) No ones

4. The word “trick” in line seven means __________
   (A) A maze
   (B) Tie
   (C) Will
   (D) Candy

5. Why do you think he said “I am not sure Dad really understands the concept of Halloween.”

Children’s Day

Well, it’s finally May, and there are only four days left until Children’s day. Children’s day is my FAVORITE holiday even though Mom says I’m getting too old to go trick-or-treating anymore.

Children’s day is Dad’s favorite holiday, too, but for a different reason. On Children’s day, while all the other parents are taking their children to somewhere fun or giving gifts, Dad is taking his own holiday going fishing in Kangwha-dong or falling on Mt. Mountak which Dad either skis or hikes.

I’m not sure Dad really understands the concept of Children’s day. But I’m not gonna be the one who spoils his fun.

Halloween

October

Well, it’s finally October, and there are only thirty days left until Halloween. Halloween is my FAVORITE holiday even though Mom says I’m getting too old to go trick-or-treating anymore.

Halloween is Dad’s favorite holiday, too, but for a different reason. On Halloween night, while all the other parents are handing out candy, Dad is hiding in the bushes with a big truck full of water. And if teenagers pass by our driveway, he splashes them.

I’m not sure Dad really understands the concept of Halloween. But I’m not gonna be the one who spoils his fun.

Source: Diary of a Wimpy Kid by Jeff Kinney (p. 48)
B. My Brother, the Hoddeck Maker vs. My Brother, the Artist

My brother the messy baker

The other day I picked up my younger brother at his school. His face was covered in flour like a messy baker, in his hair, and on his school bag too.

“What happened to you?” I asked.

“We did baking at Nonsang!” he replied. “I baked Hoddeck!”

“You certainly did,” I replied. “You’re a mess!”

My brother just smiled. He looked so happy.

“Look at these Hoddecks I made!” There were brown sugar and peanuts in them.

“I want to give them to you when we get home! I love baking!” he said.

“Perhaps you love it too much. Next time, don’t wear the flour! Just use it to fix your hoddeck.”

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My brother the messy artist

The other day I picked up my younger brother at his school. His face was covered in paint like a clown, on his hair, and on his school bag too.

“What happened to you?” I asked.

“We did finger painting!” he replied. “I painted everything!”

“You certainly did,” I replied. “You’re a mess!”

My brother just smiled. He looked so happy.

“Look at these pictures I made!” There were covered in colorful lines.

“I want to hang them on the wall when we get home! I love painting!” he said.

“Perhaps you love it too much. Next time, don’t paint everything! Just paint the paper.”

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1. What is this passage about?
   (A) Why the woman liked his brother’s baking
   (B) What the woman’s brother enjoyed eating
   (C) How much the woman’s brother enjoyed painting
   (D) The woman’s brother’s favorite day

2. How does the woman feel when she sees her brother?
   (A) surprised
   (B) happy
   (C) angry
   (D) excited

3. What is true about the woman’s brother according to the passage?
   (A) He was worried about his messy face.
   (B) He saw a painting of his brother.
   (C) He likes going to Nonsang.
   (D) He is a baker.

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C. Business Trip to Africa vs. Business Trip to Jeju Island

**Africa**

John left the United States in 1969 to work in Africa. Africa was hot, and when John came back to the United States in 1979, he said to himself, "It's much colder here than it was before. I'm going to buy an electric heater. Also, everything is much more expensive."

John went to a store the next day to buy an electric heater. The salesmen showed him three or four different kinds and then said, "And this is our best electric heater. It costs a lot of money, but it saves half of your electricity, and electricity is very expensive now, isn't it?"

"Yes, it's very expensive," John answered, "and it's becoming worse every year." He looked at the electric heater carefully, thought for a few seconds and then said, "Well, I'll take two of these, please, and then I'll save all of my electricity.

**Jeju Island**

Mauro left Iceland in 2011 to work in Jeju Island. Jeju Island was hot, and when Mauro came back to Iceland in 2013, he said to himself, "It's much colder here than it was before. I'm going to buy an electric heater. Also, everything is much more expensive."

Mauro went to a store the next day to buy an electric heater. The salesmen showed him three or four different kinds and then said, "And this is our best electric heater. It costs a lot of money, but it saves half of your electricity, and electricity is very expensive now, isn't it?"

"Yes, it's very expensive," Mauro answered, "and it's becoming worse every year." He looked at the electric heater carefully, thought for a few seconds and then said, "Well, I'll take two of these, please, and then I'll save all of my electricity.

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7. Who is John fond of?

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B. Which words in the story mean the opposite?
1. mild
2. cheap
3. save
4. warm
5. suddenly

C. Put the sentences in order:
1. He went to Iceland.
2. He went to a store to buy an electric heater.
3. It was very cold there.
4. It was very hot there.
5. Mauro left Iceland.
6. Then he came back to Iceland.
D. Pancake vs. Bindaetteok

Pancake

Who doesn’t like pancakes? Many people in America eat them for breakfast with syrup. Americans are not the only ones who eat pancakes, though. In fact, no matter where you go in the world, you will find people eating them.

Pancakes have many different names. In Australia they are called “paffles”; in Mexico, “tortillas.” In France people call them thin pancakes called “crepes.” Ask for a pancake in Russia and you may get a “pannekoek,” big enough to cover your plate, or you may get “sambeik,” which are bite-sized.

Filled with meat and vegetables, any kind of pancake makes a main meal.

Bindaetteok

Who doesn’t like bindaetteok? Many people in Korea eat them on a rainy day with pajjang. Koreans are not the only ones who eat bindaetteok, though. In fact, no matter where you go in the world, you will find people eating them.

Bindaetteok has many different names. In America they are called “pancakes” in Mexico, “tortillas.” In France people call them thin bindaetteok called “crepes.” Ask for bindaetteok in Russia and you may get a “pannekoek,” big enough to cover your plate, or you may get “sambeik,” which are bite-sized.

Filled with meat and vegetables, any kind of bindaetteok makes a main meal.

1. The best title is ___________.
   (A) Eating
   (B) World foods
   (C) Pancakes Across the World
   (D) Eating Around the World

2. The pancakes called “sambeik” can be found in ___________.
   (A) Australia
   (B) Russia
   (C) Mexico
   (D) France

3. One country the story does not mention is ___________.
   (A) Australia
   (B) Russia
   (C) France
   (D) India

4. Being read the story, you can say that pancakes are ___________.
   (A) hard to make
   (B) good for you
   (C) popular
   (D) the same everywhere

5. The word “which” is line six mean ___________.
   (A) away
   (B) Swiss
   (C) reference
   (D) box

6. 아래의 단어들은 사용하기 적합하지요. (또는 단어들 각 사용하시는 결과는 없습니다.)
   (A) Sambeik
   (B) Half-moon-shaped rice cake
   (C) Thanksgiving
   (D) people

한국에서는 사람들은 순례를 주머니에 만듭니다.
Examples in: English
Applicable Languages: English
Applicable levels: Tertiary
Key words: EFL, English Education, Cultural Familiarity, Reading Comprehension

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