Reading process: The effects of nativization and reading activities

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the influence of cultural schema and reading activities on reading comprehension. The impact of cultural schema was tested through the use of nativization that involved nativizing short stories to make them culturally more familiar. The study was carried out at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University with 3rd grade students at the department of English Language Teaching through a 2X2 true-experimental research design where the participants were homogenously placed in different groups according to their GPAs. The first group of participants were given the original short story while the second group of participants were given the nativized one. On the other hand, the third group of students read the original short story with reading activities while the fourth group of students read the nativized short story with the same reading activities. Pre-tests and post-tests were administered. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) on SPSS indicated that the treatment groups who received the nativized version of the short story, regardless of whether they received any reading activities or not, outperformed the other two treatment groups who received the original short story. This implied that cultural schema appears to have a significant effect on the comprehension of short stories. Nevertheless, the treatment groups who were supported with reading activities outperformed the others who did not do any reading activities. This study concludes that cultural schema is rather influential on reading. Therefore, it suggests teachers use nativized texts in reading classes in order to help readers for better comprehension. This study also suggests that readers' schemata should be activated before reading or reading teachers should provide background knowledge about the topic in case of the lack of background knowledge.

Reading Process:
The Effects of Nativization
and Reading Activities

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Presentation Outline

Literature Review
The definition of reading,
Reading Models,
Reading Activities,
Short-Term Memory and its effect on reading comprehension
The definition of schema and schema types
Background knowledge and its effects on reading comprehension
The Study
Participants
Data collection
Data analysis
Findings & Discussion
Conclusion

THE DEFINITION OF READING & THE READING PROCESS

Reading is one of the most important academic skills (Carrell 1988a; Grabe and Stoller 2001).

The ability of drawing meaning from the printed page and interpreting this information appropriately (Grabe and Stoller's 2002).

Readers use a variety of clues in order to achieve the writer's intended meaning (Harmer 2001).

The readers' task is to activate background and linguistic knowledge to recreate the writer's intended meaning (Chastain 1988).

HISTORY OF READING MODELS

The role of the reader changed in the 1980s and 1990s (Wallace 2001).

Reading was accepted as a passive skill in early accounts, then the role of the reader changed and was "...typically described as 'extracting' meaning from a text" (Wallace 2001: 22).

Lately, reading has started to be described as 'interactive' rather than simply being 'active'(Ediger 2001; Wallace 2001).

The bottom-up model reader is defined as passive, the top-down model reader as active, and interactive model reader as interactive (Wallace 2001).

METAPHORICAL MODELS OF READING

•bottom-up,
•top-down, and
•interactive reading processes (Grabe & Stoller 2002)

The history of reading research starts with Javal's (1879) paper on eye movements (Samuels and Kamil 1988).

Until the mid 1950s and 1960s, no serious attempts were observed to build any explicit models of reading.

The development of reading models accelerated after the 1960s.

BOTTOM-UP MODELS

The reader goes through a mechanical pattern (Grabe and Stoller 2002) by creating a piece-by-piece mental translation of the information in the text (Anderson 1999a) where the interaction between the reader and the text includes little or no interference from the reader's own background knowledge. In traditional models (Nassaji 2003), readers are supposed to succeed in each step.

| Meaning |
| Sentence |
| Word |
| Syllable |
| Letter |
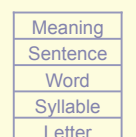
TOP-DOWN MODELS

Top-down models emphasise the importance of schema (Alderson 2000) where readers are expected to bring their background knowledge to the text (Carrell and Eisterhold 1983; Carrell 1985 & 1987; and Grabe and Stoller 2002).

This model is valid for skilful and fluent readers (Eskey 1988).

INTERACTIVE MODELS

This model combines elements of both bottom-up and top-down models (Anderson 1999a) in which background knowledge is accepted as a major contributor to text understanding (Grabe and Stoller 2002).

The reader needs to combine the reading material with her background knowledge.

The reader needs to be fast in order to recognise the letters.

Not only should the word recognition be fast, but also efficient.

COMPARISON OF MODELS

top-down model: looking at a forest

bottom-up model: studying the individual trees in a forest (Harmer 2001).

bottom-up model: a passenger in a plane which flies low – watch the view in detail

top-down model: a passenger in a plane which flies high – observe a wider view

interactive model: the pilot in a plane – watch the view according to the needs (Razı 2004)

READING ACTIVITIES

• *pre-reading*,
• *while-reading*, and
• *post-reading* activities (Ur 1996)

Reading activities (especially pre-reading activities) play a vital role in schema theory reading models (Chen and Graves 1995 and Demiriz 1998).

Reading activities try to prevent failure so that they can support the reader's interpretation of the text (Karakaş 2002).

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

• Provide the outline for reading the text and teaching cultural key concepts.
• Motivate readers to read the text Chastain (1988).
• Help the teacher to encourage the learners to evaluate what they read (Lewin 1984).
• Make the activity more interesting since the readers have a purpose in reading (Ur 1996).
• The reading teacher may see how well the text is understood with the help of activities (Ur 1996).
• Activating readers' prior knowledge of a topic before they begin to read may help students' comprehension (Carrell and Eisterhold 1983; Grabe 1991 and Ur 1996).
• Provide background knowledge.

WHILE-READING ACTIVITIES

Skimming and scanning are thought to be the most valuable reading strategies (Brown 2001).

Through skimming, a reader is able to predict the purpose of the passage, or gets the writer's message (Flowerdew and Peacock 2001).

Readers scan to get specific information in a text, such as names, dates, etc. (Brown 2001).

Through surveying, the reader previews the text content and organisation where she uses referencing and non-text material (Hyland 1990).

The activities reciprocal teaching, evaluating, inferring and re-reading provide a dialogue between the reader and the writer while the activities scanning, skimming and clarifying draw a clear mental picture for the reader (Karakaş 2002).

POST-READING ACTIVITIES

Post-reading activities help readers to clarify any unclear meaning where the focus is on the meaning Chastain (1988).

Through summarizing activity the readers are asked to summarise the content in a sentence or two. It is also possible to give this activity in the mother tongue (Ur 1996).

The readers interpret the text and illustrate the relationship between the questions and their answers by using activities such as summarising, question and answer, and drawing conclusions. The readers catch the missing parts of the mental picture through thinking aloud and discussion (Karakaş 2002).

SHORT-TERM MEMORY (STM)

"The memory used for keeping information for periods of time up to a few seconds" (Cook 1991: 49).

The capacity of STM is limited (Miller 1956).

Controlled and automatic processes in STM:

If readers are not familiar with the new information or they do not have any background knowledge they use controlled processes. It is just the opposite for automatic processes where readers are familiar and do not require too much mental effort (Erten 1998).

STM AND READING

The concept of memory is closely related to the process of reading.

Two relationships between our memory and reading:
❏ Firstly, reading involves various processes carried out simultaneously.
❏ Secondly, there is an interaction between the reader's activated background knowledge and linguistic information from the text (Grabe and Stoller 2002).

SCHEMA THEORY

Schema theory deals with the reading process, where readers are expected to combine their previous experiences with the text they are reading.

SCHEMA (Schemata plural)
Schemata are accepted as interlocking mental structures representing readers' knowledge (Perkins 1983; Zaher 1987; Anderson and Pearson 1988; Cook 1997; Alderson 2000; Brown 2001; and Harmer 2001) of ordinary events (Nassaji 2002).

The notion of schema is related with the organisation of information in the long-term memory that cognitive constructs allow (Singhal 1998).

SCHEMA TYPES

Formal schema: background knowledge relating to the formal and rhetorical organisational structures of different types of texts Carrell and Eisterhold (1983), Carrell (1987 and 1988b) and Alderson (2000). Comprehension is affected by the reader's formal schemata interacting with the rhetorical organisation of a text (Carrell 1985).

Content schema: background knowledge of the content area of the text that a reader brings to a text (Carrell and Eisterhold 1983; Carrell 1987; Alptekin 1993; 2002 and 2003; Singhal 1998 and Stott 2001) such as knowledge about people, the world, culture, and the universe (Brown 2001).

Cultural schema: "...background knowledge about cultural aspects of the language being learned…" (Bedir 1992: 8).

NATIVIZATION & TEACHING CULTURE

Changing the cultural cues in the target language with the native cultural elements of the readers (Erten & Razı 2004).

Becoming an international language has made English denationalised (Alptekin 2002 & 2003).

Non-native speakers have no desire to learn the culture of native speakers (McKay 2003).

As a global language, English does not belong to Britain any more. Teaching English culture is not possible since whose culture is going to be taught is not clear (Alptekin 2002 & 2003).

THE STUDY

AIM OF THE STUDY

The study addressed the following research questions and hypotheses:

RQ1 - *Does cultural familiarity of the participants affect reading comprehension?*

RQ2 - *Do pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading activities affect reading comprehension?*

RQ3 - *Can reading activities make up for the lack of cultural schema (cultural familiarity)?*

H1 - *Cultural familiarity will have a significant impact on reading comprehension.*

H2 - *Pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading activities will have a less significant effect than the effect that cultural familiarity will have.*

H3 - *Although reading activities contribute to comprehension, the impact of cultural familiarity will remain a significant factor.*

SETTING

ELT Department at the Faculty of Education in Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University

during the fall semester of the 2003-2004 Academic Year

PARTICIPANTS

60 third year students participated

The students were assigned according to their cumulative Grade Point Averages (GPA) at the end of their fourth term in the department to four random groups so as to create a 2X2 true experimental research design.

Table 1: Courses taken into consideration while calculating participants' GPA

Name of the course	Credits	Year	Semester
Grammar I	3	1	Fall
Speaking Skills I	3	1	Fall
Reading Skills I	3	1	Fall
Writing Skills I	3	1	Fall
Grammar II	3	1	Spring
Speaking Skills II	3	1	Spring
Reading Skills II	3	1	Spring
Writing Skills II	3	1	Spring
Elective I: Phonetics	2	1	Spring
Advanced Reading Skills	3	2	Fall
Introduction to English Literature I	3	2	Fall
Language Acquisition	3	2	Fall
Advanced Writing Skills	3	2	Spring
Introduction to English Literature II	3	2	Spring
Approaches for Language Teaching	3	2	Spring
Linguistics I	3	2	Spring
Total Credits	47		

Table 2: Range of marks

Points	Equivalence	Mark	Result
90-100	AA	4.00	Successful
85-89	BA	3.50	Successful
80-84	BB	3.00	Successful
70-79	CB	2.50	Successful
60-69	CC	2.00	Successful
55-59	DC	1.50	Conditional pass
50-54	DD	1.00	Conditional pass
40-49	FD	0.50	Fail
0-39	FF	0.00	Fail

Table 3: Ranges of GPAs

Groups	Ranges
1	4.00 – 3.75
2	3.74 – 3.50
3	3.49 – 3.25
4	3.24 – 3.00
5	2.99 – 2.75
6	2.74 – 2.50
7	2.49 – 2.25
8	2.24 – 2.00
9	1.99 – 1.75
10	1.74 – 1.50
11	1.49 – 1.25
12	1.24 – 1.00
13	0.99 – 0.75
14	0.74 – 0.50
15	0.49 – 0.25
16	0.24 – 0.00

Table 4: Scheffe Test Homogeneous Subsets

Name of the Group	Mean Value (GPA)	n
Original no activity	2,3333	15
Original with activity	2,3416	15
Adjusted no activity	2,3621	15
Adjusted with activity	2,3484	15

An ANOVA test indicated no significant differences between the groups ($p < .05$).

Table 5: Post-hoc Scheffe Test – mean differences (GPA) between groups

(I) Condition	(J) Condition	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
OWA	AWA	-6,8181E-03	,12679	1,000
	ONA	8,3333E-03	,12679	1,000
	ANA	-2,0454E-02	,12679	,999
AWA	OWA	6,8182E-03	,12679	1,000
	ONA	1,5152E-02	,12679	1,000
	ANA	-1,36364E-02	,12679	1,000
ONA	OWA	-8,33333E-03	,12679	1,000
	AWA	-1,51515E-02	,12679	1,000
	ANA	-2,87879E-02	,12679	,997
ANA	OWA	2,0455E-02	,12679	,999
	AWA	1,3636E-02	,12679	1,000
	ONA	2,8788E-02	,12679	,997

MATERIALS AND INSTRUMENTATION

THE READING TEXT AND NATIVIZATION

The short story 'The Girls in their Summer Dresses' by Irwin Shaw was chosen for 'Turkification'.

The story was nativized for research purposes in a way that the story takes place in the city of Çanakkale.

During the nativization period, the names of the characters were changed to Turkish names.

Figure 1: Some of the differences between the stories

Original short story	Nativized short story
Michael	Coşkun
Frances	Özlem
New York	Çanakkale
Ohio	Erzurum
Theaters	Cinemas
Rolls and coffee	Simit and tea
An extra five pounds of husband	An extra several kilos of husband
Phonograph	Computer
Outside Sardi's, waiting for producers to look at them	Outside Lodos Disco, trying to forget all about lessons

POST-TEST

A recall type post-test was administered at the end of the reading session.

The post-test included three different elicitation techniques (True/false/not given; ordering; and open-ended).

Students were not allowed to refer to the reading text during the post-test period. Nor were they allowed to use their dictionaries.

PROCEDURES FOR DATA COLLECTION

Figure 2: Procedures for each group of students

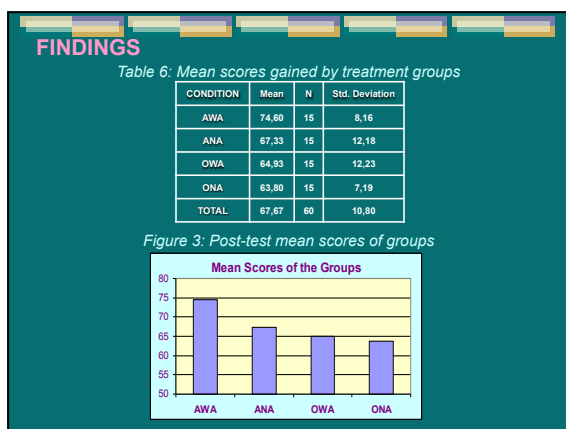| TREATMENT 1 ONA	TREATMENT 2 OWA	TREATMENT 3 ANA	TREATMENT 4 AWA
The original text was given without activities (40″)	*Pre-reading activities:* Brainstorming (2″) Pre-questioning (2″) *Reading the story (25″)* *While-reading activities:* Scanning (1″) Skimming (1″) Clarifying (2″) Reciprocal teaching (1″) Inferring (2″) *Post-reading activities:* Thinking aloud (2″) Question / Answer Relationships (2″)	The adjusted text was given without activities (40″)	*Pre-reading activities:* Brainstorming (2″) Pre-questioning (2″) *Reading the story (25″)* *While-reading activities:* Scanning (1″) Skimming (1″) Clarifying (2″) Reciprocal teaching (1″) Inferring (2″) *Post-reading activities:* Thinking aloud (2″) Question / Answer Relationships (2″)
Post-test given (15″)	Post-test given (15″)	Post-test given (15″)	Post-test given (15″)
Total 55″	Total 55″	Total 55″	Total 55″

(″ = minute)

PROCEDURES FOR DATA ANALYSIS

Marking the papers: The open-ended part of the post-tests was marked by two independent raters who rated papers only for comprehension and ignored grammatical mistakes.

Inter-rater reliability: Pearson Correlation Coefficient Procedure pointed out a high correlation coefficient between the two sets of marks (r: .807 and p <.01).

Statistical analysis: An analysis of variance (ANOVA) procedure on SPSS was used to find out any between-group differences.

FINDINGS

Table 6: Mean scores gained by treatment groups

CONDITION	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
AWA	74,60	15	8,16
ANA	67,33	15	12,18
OWA	64,93	15	12,23
ONA	63,80	15	7,19
TOTAL	67,67	60	10,80

Figure 3: Post-test mean scores of groups

Mean Scores of the Groups

One-Way ANOVA Test Results indicate statistically significant differences between groups (p <.05).

Table 7: One-Way ANOVA Test Results

Dependent Variable		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Between Groups	1059,067	3	353,022	3,392	,024
Post-Test Score	Within Groups	5828,267	56	104,076		
	Total	6887,333	59			

Post Hoc Scheffe Test Results supported the hypotheses.

Table 8: Post Hoc Scheffe test for the total score of the post-test

Dependent Variable	(I) condition	(J) condition	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
TOTAL	OWA	AWA	-9,67	3,73	,093
		ONA	1,13	3,73	,993
		ANA	-2,40	3,73	,937
	AWA	OWA	9,67	3,73	,093
		ONA	10,80	3,73	,045
		ANA	7,27	3,73	,294
	ONA	OWA	-1,13	3,73	,993
		AWA	-10,80	3,73	,045
		ANA	-3,53	3,73	,825
	ANA	OWA	2,40	3,73	,937
		AWA	-7,27	3,73	,294
		ONA	3,53	3,73	,825

DISCUSSION

RQ1: *Does cultural familiarity of the participants affect reading comprehension?*

Cultural familiarization of the text has a significant effect on reading comprehension.

Readers are expected to achieve the writer's intended meaning by combining existing information with what they read.

The familiarization of the names of people and places in the short story contributed to schema activation of the readers.

Original text readers used controlled processes that required greater effort.

Nativized text readers used automatic processes since they were familiar with the new information and that would make it possible for them to free up space in their short-term memory.

RQ2:

Do pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading activities affect reading comprehension?
Reading activities do have an effect on reading comprehension.

Pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading activities helped these two group of readers for better comprehension.

Pre-reading activities made it possible to give background knowledge about the short story and also to activate readers' schemata before reading.

While-reading activities also contributed to the comprehension of the short stories.

Post-reading activities helped them to clarify any unclear meaning.

RQ3:

Can reading activities make up for the lack of cultural schema (cultural familiarity)?

Reading activities have an impact on reading comprehension and they can make up for the lack of cultural familiarity.

Reading teachers can activate readers' schemata by pre-reading activities.

In case of lack of schema, reading teachers should provide background knowledge by pre-reading activities.

The effect of cultural familiarisation remains an important factor.

CONCLUSION

❑ First, cultural familiarization to the text has a significant effect on reading comprehension and nativization contributes to reading comprehension since readers are provided with cultural familiar texts.

❑ Second, reading activities have an effect on reading comprehension.

❑ Third, reading activities have an impact on reading comprehension and they can make up for the lack of cultural familiarity.

THE PRESENTATION IS OVER

Thanks for your participation.

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