

The Effect of Cultural Transfer of Connotative Meaning of Vocabularies on Iranian EFL Learners' Reading Comprehension

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Abstract—This research has been worked upon analyzing the effect of cultural transfer of connotative meaning of vocabularies on Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension. 100 participants took part in the study who were divided into 2 groups: experimental group in which the cultural transfer took place; and the control group in which the traditional teaching without mentioning cultural transfer occurred. It should be taken into consideration that both groups have been tested by the same text taken from TOEFL as a pre-test and a post-test. The obtained results were calculated and analyzed by statistical t-test, indicated that the learners had a better comprehensive performance in second language texts by using the cultural transfer of connotative meaning of vocabularies. Results indicated the outperformance of the experimental group.

Index Terms—connotative meaning, cultural transfer of connotative meaning, denotative meaning, reading comprehension

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Introduction

In second Language learning, first Language is a main factor affecting L2 learners' inter-language development. Findings involving the L1 transfer to L2 are very argumentative and contradictory. In recent years, there has been an agreement that language transfer involves cultural factors, such as thought patterns, cultural values, customs, habits and it is also a common phenomenon in L2 learning. Language transfer is regarded not only as a mechanical transference of first language structure but also as a cognitively complex mechanism involving many factors. It is important that some cultural factors be taken into consideration with the study of language transfer in development of sociolinguistics. In traditional English classroom teaching, learners and teachers spend quite a lot of time and energy on the expansion of learners' vocabulary but they rarely combine word learning with the cultural background of target language (WU & DOU, 2011). When talking to the people who used to be students in the years 1340s and 1350s, I found that the teachers used to teach a book which was called "Direct Method" and in this book the students had to learn a lot of difficult vocabularies and passages that had no relation with their cultural background. It was just a number of words that the students had to memorize just to pass the course without in aim. A word has the conceptual meaning, metaphorical meaning, and associative meaning. Such as the word "economy" which has different meanings and usage depends on where and how it is been used. It can refer to course of study and also the wealth obtained by a country or region from business and industry. Gamble (1996:77), believes that perception is the process of selecting, organizing, and interpreting sensory data to make us realize the sense of our world. Nanda gives the definition of religion which deals with the nature of life and death, the creation of the universe, the origin of society and groups within the society, the relationship of individuals and groups to one another, and the relation of humankind to nature. Nature refers to the air, water, land, geography, and all the other situations that influence the way in which people live, speak, and behave. History as a world view penetrates on people's perception, behavior, and thus is reflected in the languages (Nanda 1994: p.349). As a result in teaching vocabulary, the teachers and the learners should both see through the conceptual meaning and permeate the cultural meaning in the target language. Although teachers have had the agreement that cultural-loaded words affect text understanding, few experimental studies seem to have been conducted in this field to provide sufficient evidence to support the above statement in EFL context so far. However, understanding a word's cultural connotation is rather important and difficult, and it is an absolutely necessary part of what Read (1993) calls "depth" of vocabulary knowledge (how well they know particular words) and David D. Qian's (1998) finding produced empirical evidence that depth of vocabulary knowledge made a unique contribution to the prediction of reading comprehension scores. For this reason, passages, stories, novels, and etc. are all written by professional writers and actors for the people to convey their thoughts and opinions. As a result, they ought to use words that are applicable based on the subjects, situation, and titles of what they are writing. These vocabularies sometimes have denotative meanings which indicate

signs or symbols of something which in turns are necessary to be familiar with EFL learners who should be aware of them for comprehending what they are reading. Here, the role of the teacher is to make the learners be acquainted with these factors including: background knowledge and also cultural meanings of vocabularies in reading texts based on what the writer's opinion has been and for what purpose the reading is to be thought. Connotative meanings of vocabularies in rising EFL learners' reading comprehension could help only if the learner himself/herself has a widespread comprehensive knowledge and information relating to the subject which is dealt with. Imagine a person who is planning to travel to other countries, how much language should he know in order to be able to communicate and contact with people? It depends on for what purpose he is going to that particular place. Therefore, he must learn as many necessary words as possible to convey and transfer his thoughts. Learners' enthusiasm, motive, and interests are important factors in learning a foreign language. Therefore, improving, expanding, and having as much information and vocabulary as possible about a particular language would be essential in comprehending a passage and naturally increases the awareness of a learner. So, this study will explore some of the challenges in more details in which intermediate learners face when acquiring vocabulary and what strategies could help them in their process to reach a native like proficiency in comprehending L2 reading texts.

B. Statement of the Problem

Once I observed a class of 20 students who were taught how to deal with the passages that were in their course books. The teacher started to read the passages to the students through paraphrasing the paragraph without letting the students be aware of the new and key words and expressions of the target language and after the teaching was done the teacher tried to ask some comprehension questions but most of the students could not respond accordingly. As it was seen, in many cases, vocabulary was not teaching in advance, but testing the students without knowing the new words. It means that some teachers used to give the students some texts and asked them to have external reading and comprehend the texts. Here, the learners used bilingual dictionaries while reading texts to find the unknown words. In some other cases, the learners were asked to translate the reading texts sentence by sentence into their L1 to get the main ideas. It is obvious that transferring the cultural connotation of vocabularies is closely related to the learners' background knowledge and awareness with their second language cultures. As a result, if the learners are not fully aware of their L2 cultures, how could it be possible to do the transference correctly? If in intermediate levels, there is no treatment by the teachers, how can the learners comprehend the reading texts through extensive reading? And finally, how can the students deal with the collocations and expressions which have no equivalent meaning to their L1? How can they transfer them correctly? They may get confused or find the meanings irrelevant to those texts, and they won't also be able to understand the author's main ideas or the text's main points. These obstacles have intrigued the present study lessen the L2 learners' misunderstandings in translating cultural connotations of words into their first language.

C. Significance of and Justification for the Study

As it is obvious, learning another language involves fundamental knowledge of words. The above-mentioned concept leads this study in mind and presents the following aims: Revise theoretical literature that supports the importance of learners' awareness in vocabulary acquisition in reading texts, identify the challenges that L2 intermediate learners have in acquiring vocabularies in an EFL context based on a personal introspection and literature purpose, and describe solutions (vocabulary teaching strategies) for intermediate learners who want to reach most of their comprehension in reading texts. This is an important fact for the teachers, how to teach reading texts, and for the students, how to comprehend the texts and how much they get to the author's main opinions in the text. It seems that most teachers and learners, pay more attention to the denotative meaning of words in reading texts, so they may get confused in comprehending the main points. But using connotative meanings of vocabularies through transferring can help them understand the texts better. Mostly, EFL learners, always used to challenge themselves in comprehending reading texts without mentioning each word's dictionary meaning. The majority of learners want to guess the cultural meaning of unknown words while reading a text and also expect their teachers to do this while teaching them. Most of the time, they are used to asking them to look up the new words in their dictionaries and find denotative meanings of unknown words without mentioning their cultural meanings in that especial text. Sometimes, it made them confused because the denotative meaning isn't meaningful at all there. Consequently, the present study is an attempt to base on this vocabulary teaching strategy (cultural transfer of connotative meaning) to verify whether the reading texts could be more comprehensive.

II. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

A. Cultural Transfer and Cultural Connotation of Vocabulary

In 1989, Odlin gave an explicit definition of transfer after summarizing all the studies about the transfer in second language acquisition, believing that it is the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired (1989:27)". Based on this belief on the definition of language transfer, cultural transfer possibly refers to the cultural influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target culture and the culture that has been previously acquired. Dai and Zhang (2000) categorized cultural transfer into two layers: the surface- structure transfer which occurs at the exterior level. For

cultural meanings of vocabulary, the Russian linguists stated that there can be 5 categories of vocabulary: vacant words, words with strong cultural connotation, idioms, proverbs and polite formulas. These categories exist in all languages. Native speakers apprehend them unconsciously within the particularly cultural settings. L2 learners, however, are subject to understand and output L2 based on their own cultural background due to the lack of intercultural cultivation. Therefore surface- structure transfer occurs. Deep- structure transfer which occurs at the unconscious level, is considered as a dominant barrier in L2 learning and is closely related to the perception, attitude, beliefs, and values of a culture.

B. Analysis Approach to Cultural Transfer

Lado (1957), who was the first person conducted the study of cultural comparison, argued that there are 3 cases which would lead to cultural transfer: when the form has different meanings in two cultures; when the same meaning in two cultures is related to different forms; when a pattern that has the same meaning shows different distributions. However, Lado and other linguists did little research on this field. They just mentioned cultural transfer as early as language transfer.

C. Kellerman's Psychological Markedness Theory

Kellerman (1987) refers to the perception of L2 and the distance from the L1 as a "psychotypology". Kellerman (in Gass and Selinker, 1993) argues that there are constraints on language that go well over mere similarity and some differences of the two languages in question which ultimately involve the learner as a very active participant in the learning process, who decides exactly on what can and cannot be transferred. He suggests two interacting factors which are involved in language transfer. One of them is the learner's awareness of the nature of the L2 and the other one is the degree of markedness of the L1. According to Kellerman, there are parts of one's language which native speakers ponder irregular, infrequent or semantically obscure. These irregular items are more significant and less transferable comparing to frequent and regular forms. The former was language- specific; meanwhile, the later was language- natural. Language- specific elements are those which a learner views as a unique to his language, whereas language- natural elements are those which the learner believes to be common, at least to the native and the target language.

Kasper (1992) presents that learner's language proficiency and intercultural awareness are two factors which may influence the possible transfer. In his paper, he conducted an experimental study to justify how the factors influence transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary and considers that transfer refers to the influence which previous pragmatic knowledge has on the use and acquisition of L2 pragmatic knowledge. As he mentioned, pragmatic transfer in interlanguage pragmatics shall refer to the influence exerted by learners' pragmatic knowledge of languages and cultures other than L2 on their comprehension, production and learning of L2 pragmatic information. We notice that, Kasper's approach is process-oriented and comprehensive; allowing the study of transfer in learning and in communication; and also in the sense that she talks of 'influence' without definite mention of the types of influence referred. Kasper (1995) defined pragmatic transfer as the influence exerted by learners' pragmatic knowledge of languages and cultures other than L2 on their comprehension, production, and acquisition of L2 pragmatic information. Wang (1998) in a research defines that major is an important factor that may influence the transfer. He argues that there is significant difference between English- major students and non English- major students in the learning of language vocabulary. Furthermore, Gass and Selinker (1993) mentioned that language transfer is in fact a real and central phenomenon that must be considered in any full account of the second language acquisition process. In recent years, there has been renewed interest in vocabulary research, however, there is a lot of uncertainty about teaching vocabulary, and the reason is not only the anti-teaching principles of Krashan and some other applied linguists and methodologists, but also the communicative approach, which has predominated in most countries in recent years, is focused on the message rather than code. Therefore, teachers have come to be rather discomposed about any activity that is directed at learning the code (Cowin 1992:11). The learner is expected to acquire the word meanings from context, preferably fortuitously. Lexical guessing and extensive reading are encouraged as conducive to good reaching strategies and vocabulary acquisition. Learning words fortuitously and guessing on the basis of context have their own problems. You cannot be sure that the learner has guessed correctly or the words he/she has acquired will be available for productive use. Consequently, learning words and word meaning from context must be supplemented by some activities. Chamell (1998) claims that vocabulary work doesn't necessarily have to be consolidated with general classroom communication, but it can be a separate learning activity. Learning words in language learning is a more conscious process than learning grammar. The process of vocabulary acquisition is slow and gradual. Corder (1973) believes that an item can be regarded as fully acquired when the learners mastered both the form and the meaning of the given item. This level of word knowledge is not always attained even in our native language, and very often we only have fragmentary knowledge of a considerable number of words. This fact, however, doesn't prevent us from using these words in specific contexts (Urdang 1997).

D. Vocabulary; Cinderella of the Second Language Acquisition Process

As earlier stated, teaching and learning vocabulary was less paid attention during a long period of time, making it the Cinderella among all the language components required. But what was the reason that this important aspect was ignored? Richards was one of the first scholars that apprehended this phenomenon (Coady, 1988). First, he suggested, that was a

consequent of the linguistic trends' effects. Ferdinand de Saussure's structuralism and subsequent Chomsky's universal grammar were mainly focused on grammar and second language. There was not much concern about the role of vocabulary because it was believed that words would take care of themselves during the learning process. It is obvious that linguists were absorbed in syntax matters since it seemed to be the most difficult component in terms of language learning. For this reason, it was seen as the key stone for L2 learners and teachers. Second, according to Sinclair and Renouf (1988) it is extremely difficult to design a syllabus based on grammar components and lexis (Coady, 1988). Because the grammatical components are narrower, so it seems that organizing the syllabi grammatically is much simpler. Third, Zimmerman (1997) concludes that old approaches and methods noticed vocabulary just as a complementary area. Forth, Zimmerman also claims that vocabulary has not been taught because teachers were not taught it. Here, He states that there are some factors which could affect the teacher's attitude toward the role of vocabulary in language acquisition:

- "What was the teacher's personal experience of learning a foreign language and how did the methods, the teacher experience, deal with?
- What is the teacher's metacognitive attitude toward vocabulary learning? Is it mostly effectively achieved through reading, speaking communication, memorizing words, and so on?
- What is the teacher's knowledge of the research done in this issue?
- What impact has the experiences achieved through teaching had on the teacher? (Coady, 273- 74)

The above questions are appropriate for a deeper analysis and reflection on the role of a teacher as a facilitator of vocabulary. Because teachers have beliefs and experiences that are reflected in the classroom, they are pivotal players in the learning game. If a teacher becomes more aware of the importance of teaching vocabulary, it could lead to big changes in the way L2 learners promote strategies to reach proficiency (Rojas, 2008).

Research Question

Does cultural transfer of connotative meanings of vocabularies have a significant effect on EFL learner's reading comprehension?

Definition of key terms

Connotative meaning what is communicated by virtue of what language refers to. It is the idea or quality that makes you think of. Connotative meaning of a word is what you guess during reading a text.

Cultural transfer of connotative meaning Lado (1957) argues that there are 3 cases which would lead to cultural transfer: when one form has different meanings in two cultures, when the same meaning in two cultures is related to different forms, when a pattern that has the same meaning shows different distribution. Following this argumentation, the present study considers cultural transfer in a similar way that is the teacher tries to find the similarities or differences in the habits, traditions, and beliefs of one nation into another nation for the learners to comprehend the reading passages thoroughly. Therefore, new key terms will be explained by the teacher focusing on these similarities and differences.

Denotative meaning is a formal or dictionary meaning of a word.

Reading comprehension refers to learners' performance on the reading passage which is selected from TOEFL and will be scored based on the scoring procedure of reading passage of TOEFL.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Participants

The population of the study consisted of 100 intermediate EFL students studying in ILI institute in Mashhad. All of these 100 students were female and each participant was assigned a number during the data analysis procedure because of ethical considerations. They were randomly assigned to two groups of experimental and control.

B. Instrument

In order to conduct this study, a test of reading passage from TOEFL was employed which tested the learners' level of comprehension at the onset and end of the courses as the pretest and the post test (see Appendix 1). Before the pretest, all the participants have been interviewed to make sure they were at the proper level (intermediate level). Then, the reading text, selected from TOEFL, was given to the both groups. They started to read the texts and after comprehending, answered the comprehension questions at the end of the text, which needed cultural transfer of the new vocabularies. During the semester, they were taught 5 more reading texts from their course books (The ILI English series, INTERMEDIATE 1). In the control group, the teacher used the regular teaching method, grammar translation method. It means that for explaining the meaning of the unknown words, he asked the students to look up their dictionaries and find denotative meanings or he himself explained the meanings of them. But in the experimental group, the treatment was done by the teacher. He explained that to understand the new vocabularies, dictionaries are not used here. For each new word, he brainstormed them to use their background knowledge. By using synonyms, antonyms and transferring to their L1 culture they could understand the connotative meanings of the unknown vocabularies. The following texts are the reading texts which were taught during the course in both experimental and control groups. After reading each text, the learners answered the comprehension questions following them.

C. Procedure

The participants were selected randomly from intermediate students of ILI institute. Then, they were randomly divided into two groups of 50 subjects: one experimental and one control. At the onset of the study, a test of reading passage from TOEFL was administered in both groups as the pre-test of the study. The experimental group got the treatment which was based on teaching each reading text through connotation transfer of words. In order to teach a passage, a warm up is vital and necessary for activating the students' mind cognitively and get the students' background knowledge about the subject which is going to be taught. This process could be done through either asking general questions or discussions. When this was done, the passage was read by the teacher paragraph by paragraph. At this stage, the teacher asked detailed questions to make the students understand the points and if there were any vocabularies which were not comprehensive and vague to the students, the teacher tried to make the students understand, either through defining the words by giving synonyms and examples or if it was necessary, through pantomime, facial and body language. For example, in one of the passages titled "Lost in the snow", which is for intermediate levels, in paragraph 2, "All agreed that a campfire would save us, and so we **set about** building it...", the word "set about" was a new word and the teacher tried to make the students understand by giving synonyms which means "start or begin an activity" and then an understandable example was given for the students to know why this word is used in this passage by the writer. The teacher transfers the word "set" into the students' L1, then she explains that when a preposition is added to the verbs in English, it turns into a phrasal verb, so the meaning is completely different from the base verb. Such changes do not exist in Farsi language. According to Lado's definition (1957) of cultural transfer of language, one form in a culture corresponds to several meanings in another culture like the word "woman" which has two meanings in Farsi: wife and woman. He also argued that two meanings in a culture correspond to one form in another culture like the forms "he" and "she" in English but in Farsi both of them have the same meaning as "او". Or when they get to the word "head" in a passage, it confuses them to different meanings like "body, organization, and phrase". Therefore, while teaching the readings, the teacher should mention these transference and differences and finds similarities in both cultures for the students not to get confused and comprehend more. So, the use of dictionary is not appropriate, for the teacher is a spoken dictionary himself. The control group won't get the treatment and the teacher will use a usual teaching by using both connotative meaning and denotative (dictionary) meaning of unknown words. At the end of the term, both groups are going to be tested by the same test of reading which was used as the pretest to verify any probable changes in both groups' performances.

IV. ANALYSIS OF DATA

Testing Assumptions

The present study focused on the effect of cultural transfer of connotative meaning of vocabularies on Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension. Two groups of subjects – experimental and control – took a pretest of reading comprehension followed by the administration of the cultural transfer of connotative meaning of vocabularies to the experimental group. Both groups took a posttest at the end of the treatment phase. The two groups were compared on the pretest and posttest through the independent t-test which has two main assumptions; homogeneity of variances and normality. The former will be discussed below when reporting the main results. The assumption of normality was met. As displayed in Table 4.1 the ratios of skewness and kurtosis were within the ranges of +/- 1.96.

TABLE 4.1
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS; TESTING NORMALITY ASSUMPTION

Group	Statistic	N	Skewness			Kurtosis		
			Statistic	Std. Error	Ratio	Statistic	Std. Error	Ratio
Experimental	Pretest	50	.020	.337	0.06	-1.049	.662	-1.58
	Posttest	50	.153	.337	0.45	-.394	.662	-0.60
Control	Pretest	50	.437	.337	1.30	-.470	.662	-0.71
	Posttest	50	-.402	.337	-1.19	-.304	.662	-0.46

Pretest of Reading Comprehension

An independent t-test was run to compare the experimental and control groups' means on the pretest of reading comprehension in order to prove that the two groups enjoyed the same level of reading comprehension ability prior to the administration of the treatment to the former group. Based on these results (Table 4.1) it can be concluded that the experimental group (M = 6.70, SD = 2.33) showed a slightly higher mean than the control group (M = 6.45, SD = 1.99) on the pretest of reading comprehension.

TABLE 4.2
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS; PRETEST OF READING COMPREHENSION BY GROUPS

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	Experimental	50	6.70	2.330	.330
	Control	50	6.45	1.990	.281

The results of the independent t-test ($t(98) = .57, p > .05, R = .058$ representing a weak effect size) (Table 4.3) indicated that there was not any significant difference between the experimental and control groups' means on the pretest of reading comprehension. Thus it can be claimed that they were homogenous in terms of their reading ability prior to the administration of the treatment.

TABLE 4.3
INDEPENDENT SAMPLES T-TEST, PRETEST OF READING COMPREHENSION BY GROUPS

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	1.693	.196	.577	98	.565	.250	.433	-.610	1.110
Equal variances not assumed			.577	95.666	.565	.250	.433	-.610	1.110

Note. The negative lower bound of 95% confidence interval indicated that the mean difference on pretest might be zero.

It should be noted that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met (Levene's $F = 1.69, p > .05$). That is why the first row of Table 4.3, i.e. "Equal variances assumed" was reported.

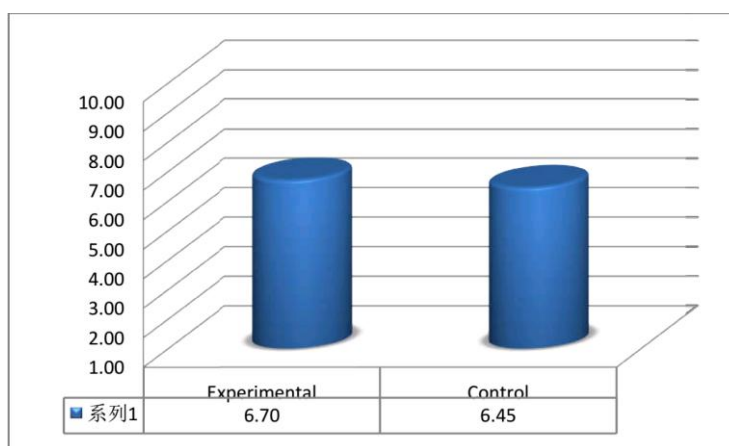


Figure 4.1: Pretest of Reading Comprehension by Groups

Research Question

Does cultural transfer of connotative meaning of vocabularies have any significant effect on the Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension?

An independent t-test was run to compare the experimental and control groups' means on the posttest of reading comprehension in order to investigate the effect of cultural transfer of connotative meaning of vocabularies on the enhancement of their reading ability. Based on these results (Table 4.3) it can be concluded that the experimental group ($M = 8.68, SD = 1.24$) after receiving cultural transfer of connotative meaning of vocabularies outperformed the control group ($M = 6.61, SD = 1.23$) on the posttest of reading comprehension.

TABLE 4.4
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS; POSTTEST OF READING COMPREHENSION BY GROUPS

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	Experimental	50	8.68	1.240	.175
	Control	50	6.61	1.230	.174

The results of the independent t-test ($t(98) = 8.37, p < .05, R = .64$ representing a large effect size) (Table 4.5) indicated that there was a significant difference between the experimental and control groups' means on the posttest of reading comprehension. Thus the null-hypothesis as cultural transfer of connotative meaning of vocabularies did not have any significant effect on the Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension **was rejected**.

TABLE 4.5
INDEPENDENT SAMPLES T-TEST, POSTTEST OF READING COMPREHENSION BY GROUPS

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.035	.852	8.379	98	.000	2.070	.247	1.580	2.560
Equal variances not assumed			8.379	97.993	.000	2.070	.247	1.580	2.560

It should be noted that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met (Levene's $F = .035$, $p > .05$). That is why the first row of Table 4.5, i.e. "Equal variances assumed" was reported.

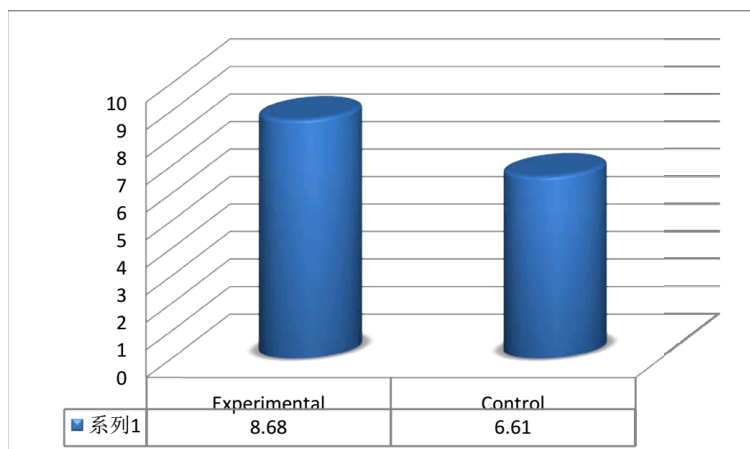


Figure 4.2: Posttest of Reading Comprehension by Groups

V. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

As second language acquisition has always been a big problem for both teachers and learners, this research may help them to get the main goal during their educational process. The findings, if proven to be effective, may also contribute to syllabus designers in that they will better know how they design appropriate syllabi that take cultural factors into consideration which in turn may result in the improvements of the learners' awareness in learning L2.

VI. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

It is suggested that a researcher should consider and have in mind that in writing a passage, a learner should be able to comprehend the vocabularies, expressions, etc. through his connotative background and it goes the same when he/she is dealing with a listening text which knowing both cultural background and connotative meaning would be crucial and vital. Otherwise, it would be difficult and almost impossible to pick up the main ideas of the authors' point of view.

APPENDIX. SAMPLE OF READING TEST FROM TOEFL

Ketchup

The sauce that is today called ketchup (or catsup) in Western cultures is a tomato-based sauce that is quite distinct from the Eastern **ancestors** of this product. A sauce called *ke-tiap* was in use in China at least as early as the seventeenth century, but the Chinese version of the sauce was made of pickled fish, shellfish, and spices. The popularity of this Chinese sauce spread to Singapore and Malaysia, where it was called *kechap*. The Indonesian sauce *ketjab* derives its name from the same source as the Malaysian sauce but is made from very different ingredients. The Indonesian *ketjab* is made by cooking black soy beans, fermenting them, placing them in a salt brine for at least a week, cooking the resulting solution further, and sweetening it heavily; this process results in a dark, thick, and sweet variation of soy sauce.

Early in the eighteenth century, sailors from the British navy **came across** this exotic sauce on voyages to Malaysia and Singapore and brought samples of it back to England on return voyages. English chefs tried recreate the sauce but were unable to do so exactly because key ingredients were unknown or unavailable in England; chefs ended up substituting ingredients such as mushrooms and walnuts in an attempt to recreate the special taste of the original Asian sauce. Variations of this sauce became quite the **rage** in eighteenth-century England, appearing in a number of recipe books and featured as an exotic addition to menus from the period.

The English version did not contain tomatoes, and it was not until the end of the eighteenth century that tomatoes became a main ingredient, in the ketchup of the newly created United States. It is quite notable that tomatoes were added to the sauce in that tomatoes had previously been considered quite dangerous to health. The tomato had been cultivated by the Aztecs, who had called it *tomatl*; however, early botanists had recognized that the tomato was a member of the *Solanaceae* family, which does include a number of poisonous plants. The leaves of the tomato plant are poisonous, though of course the fruit is not.

(*A)Thomas Jefferson, who cultivated the tomato in his gardens at Monticello and served dishes containing tomatoes at lavish feasts, often receives credit for changing the reputation of the tomato. (*B)Soon after Jefferson had introduced the tomato to American society, recipes combining the newly fashionable tomato with the equally and exotic sauce known as ketchup began to appear. (*C)By the middle of the nineteenth century, both the tomato and tomato ketchup were **staples** of the American kitchen.(*D)

Tomato ketchup, popular through it was, was quite time-consuming to appear. In 1876, the first mass-produced tomato ketchup, a product of German-American Henry Heinz, went on sale and achieved immediate success. From tomato ketchup, Heinz **branched out** into a number of other products, including various sauces, pickles, and relishes. By 1890, his company had expanded to include sixty-five different products but was in need of a marketing slogan. **Heinz settled on the slogan “57 varieties” because he liked the way that the digits 5 and 7 looked in print, in spite of the fact that this slogan understated the number of products that he had at the time.**

Questions

1. The word “ancestors” in paragraph 1 is closest in meaning to
 - a) Predecessors
 - b) Descendents
 - c) Creators
 - d) Ingredients
2. It is NOT stated in paragraph 1 that
 - a) The Chinese sauce was in existence in the seventeenth century
 - b) The Malaysian sauce was similar to the Chinese sauce
 - c) The Chinese sauce was made from seafood and spices
 - d) The Indonesian sauce was similar to the Chinese sauce
3. The word “it” in paragraph 1 refers to
 - a) A salt brine
 - b) A week
 - c) The resulting solution
 - d) This process
4. The expression “came across” in paragraph 2 could best be replaced by
 - a) Traversed
 - b) Discovered
 - c) Transported
 - d) Described
5. It can be inferred from paragraph 2 that mushrooms and walnuts were
 - a) Difficult to find in England
 - b) Not part of the original Asian recipe
 - b) Not native to England
 - d) Transported to England from Asia
6. The word “rage” in paragraph 2 could best be replaced by
 - a) Anger
 - b) Distinction
 - c) Misunderstanding
 - d) Fashion
7. The author mentions “The English version” at the beginning of paragraph 3 in order to
 - a) Indicate what will be discussed in the coming paragraph
 - b) Explain why tomatoes were considered dangerous
 - c) Make a reference to the topic of the previous paragraph
 - d) Provide an example of a sauce using tomatoes
8. According to paragraph 3, the tomato plant
 - a) Was considered poisonous by the Aztecs
 - b) Is related to some poisonous plants
 - c) Has edible leaves
 - d) Has fruit that is sometimes quite poisonous
9. The word “staples” in paragraph 4 could best be replaced by
 - a) Standard elements
 - b) Strong attachments
 - c) Necessary utensils
 - d) Rare alternatives
10. The expression “branched out” in paragraph 5 is closest in meaning to
 - a) Contracted
 - b) Stemmed
 - c) Converted
 - d) Expanded
11. Which of the sentences below best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence in paragraph 5? Incorrect choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.
 - a) Heinz selected a certain slogan even though it was inaccurate because he liked the look of it

- b) Heinz was eventually able to settle a dispute about which slogan would be the best for his company
- c) Heinz was unable to print out the actual number of varieties, so he printed out a different number
- d) Heinz's company actually had far fewer products than the slogan indicated that it did.

12. Look at the four stars (*) that indicate where the following sentences could be added to paragraph 4.

It turned from very bad to exceedingly good.

Where would the sentence best fit? Put check on the star (*) to add the sentence to the passage.

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