



THE EFFECT OF BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE AND CULTURAL NATIVIZATION ON READING COMPREHENSION AND VOCABULARY INFERENCE

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the influence of background knowledge and cultural familiarity on reading comprehension and vocabulary inference of Turkish 7th grade students in public primary schools in Turkey. For this purpose; two texts, one of which was based on the authentic culture and the other one based on the nativized version, a vocabulary test and parallel reading comprehension tests were developed by the researcher. To carry out the research, experimental and control groups were arranged and reading comprehension texts & tests were administered to the subjects in both groups. Additionally, experimental (EG) and control (CG) groups took a multiple-choice vocabulary test. It was concluded that cultural nativization of the text and elements related with background knowledge in the nativized text had a facilitative effect on comprehension of the short passages and inferring the meaning of the unknown words by the students. It was observed that EG students, who read the nativized version of the text got higher scores both in reading comprehension and vocabulary tests compared to CG students who read the denativized(authenticated) version. The findings of the study are expected to bear some implications for English material designers and EFL teachers.

Key Words: Cultural nativization, background knowledge, vocabulary inference.