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Effect of reading comprehension instruction enriched with cultural materials on English learning

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Abstract: This research examines the effect of reading comprehension instruction enriched with cultural materials on seventh graders' vocabulary knowledge and attitudes towards English lessons. The study group comprised two 7th grade classes at a socio-economic middle-level public school in Aydın Province in the spring semester of the 2013–2014 academic year. In the research, a pretest and post-test quasi-experimental model was used. Reading comprehension instruction enriched with cultural materials in two lesson hours per week was given to the learners in the experimental group for 6 weeks, while the control group followed their normal reading comprehension instruction. According to the results, reading comprehension instruction enriched with cultural materials positively contributed to learners' vocabulary knowledge and attitudes towards English lessons.

Subjects: Educational Research; Teaching and Learning; Modern Foreign Languages

Keywords: attitude; culture; reading; vocabulary

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Imagine that you were a foreign language teacher at a primary school and trying hard to get your students' attention and to make them to achieve the goals of the lesson. Unless much effort and time, students failed to be successful in your lesson. What would you do? Probably, taking advantage of materials belonging to the learners' own culture could make difference. This research aims to explain the effect of cultural materials on vocabulary knowledge and attitudes towards English lessons. The researcher studied on two 7th grade classes at a public school and applied a quasi-experimental model. According to the results, reading comprehension instruction enriched with cultural materials positively contributed to learners' vocabulary knowledge and attitudes.

1. Introduction

Reading comprehension in English is a key to achievement in academic studies in many countries around the world (Hellerstein-Yehzekel, 2017). Thus, difficulty with reading comprehension can pose a challenge in an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classroom. Hawkins (1999) states that one of the reasons why learners fail at learning foreign languages is their difficulty with reading comprehension. He notes learners' lack of prior knowledge as the main cause of failure in learning a foreign language. Acquisition and development of language skills require enhancement of vocabulary (Özbay, Büyükkiz, & Uyar, 2011), but unless it is used in a suitable context, comprehension of vocabulary becomes difficult, and vocabulary may be forgotten easily. Wolsey, Smetana and Grisham (2015) suggest that students learn vocabulary deeply when they read in particular contexts. This research aimed to determine the effect of reading comprehension instruction enriched with cultural materials on seventh graders' English vocabulary knowledge and attitude towards English lessons. The research questions are listed below:

- RQ1. Is there any statistically significant difference between the vocabulary pretest, post-test and retention scores of the experimental group having reading comprehension instruction enriched with cultural materials and those of the control group having common seventh grade English instruction?
- RQ2. Is there any statistically significant difference in favour of the experimental group between the attitude pretest and post-test scores of the experimental group having reading comprehension instruction enriched with cultural materials and those of the control group having common seventh grade English instruction?

2. Enrichment of vocabulary knowledge

Language is formed as the mixture of vocabulary and grammar intertwined with context, strategy and previous knowledge (Drumhiller & Schwanenflugel, 2013). Thus, vocabulary knowledge is seen as one of the most important components of verbal and nonverbal communication. Therefore, enrichment of vocabulary knowledge, in other words vocabulary learning, is one of the cornerstones of successful language acquisition (Coady, 1997). An individual's susceptibility to a language shows a linear relationship with her/his knowledge of the target language vocabulary (Unsworth, Persson, Prins, & De Bot, 2015). Laufer (2005) notes that vocabulary knowledge is a crucial predictor of reading comprehension success. Lots of studies show that vocabulary knowledge is related to reading comprehension in the long-term and school success (Wright & Peltier, 2016). Krashen (1989) states that reading enhances vocabulary knowledge of the target language. Moreover, many studies show that enhancing vocabulary knowledge facilitates reading comprehension (Stoller & Grabe, 1993). Also Swanson, Orosco and Kudo (2016) report that an increased instructional focus on vocabulary is needed to make positive predictions of reading skills.

It has been recognized since the 1950s that vocabulary should be taught in a context in foreign language teaching (Demirel, 2012). Even if the target word did not make any sense for the learner, giving the word in context would make it meaningful and help the learner make sense of it (Bağçeci & Kılıç, 2012). It is also important that the words be related with learners' daily lives (family, school, playground, colours and numbers etc.; Hanbay, 2013). Comprehending a text is based on understanding and knowing the vocabulary presented in the text (Demirel, 2007). An excess of unknown words in a text sometimes makes it too difficult to understand. In this case, pictures and materials can be used to facilitate comprehension. The basic function of pictures in foreign language textbooks is to facilitate comprehension of the message. Pictures in texts are visual designs that explain unfamiliar words. This positive interaction among linguistic signs makes meaningless words meaningful (Tarcan, 2004).

3. Material in foreign language teaching

Use of material is an effective tool to develop learners' language skills and bring the culture to the educational environment (Chandrasene Premawardhena & Jayasundara, 2012). The purpose of foreign language education is not only to teach grammar and vocabulary but also to embody, make permanent and use the information that is taught in a fluent and relevant way. Thus,

teachers need to use a variety of tools and equipment. Textbooks are used at all levels of education as a basic educational material when foreign language education is handled as a whole system (Tarakçioğlu, 2012).

Instructional materials (textbook etc.) should not be distant from real life. For example, if one of the topics in the lesson is fruit, real fruits can be brought to the classroom. If this is impossible, picture cards can be used (Hanbay, 2013). New methods and techniques should be used to attract the interest of learners, facilitate assimilation of materials and make the lesson more attractive (Ioana-Claudia, 2013). Objects used in the material should have features that can be comprehended immediately. Selecting instruction material from the immediate environment and adhering to teaching principles are crucial steps to transform the unknown into the known and to make the unknown meaningful for learners (Bağçeci & Kılıç, 2012).

4. Mother culture in foreign language teaching

The term culture is an abstract concept. People perceive culture in many different ways (Wengan & Yaya, 2013), and there are hundreds of definitions of the word. When the word is pronounced, works created by a nation throughout its history are understood. Almost all of the elements representing a culture have achieved excellence through the processing of generations over centuries (Kaplan, 2013). Gül (2007), in the most general sense, refers to culture as lifestyle. All of the material and spiritual products in social life transferred throughout generations are included in the scope of a nation's culture. For example, language, expressional patterns of thoughts and feelings, traditions, customs, institutions, social and political structures, laws, ceremonies, celebrations, tools and techniques, art, shapes of life maintenance, religions, music, dance and sports of a nation are in that scope.

The importance of culture teaching in foreign language education is contested (Michelson, 2017). Foreign language may be easily forgotten, because it is composed of foreign vocabulary and patterns and reflects a foreign culture (Tarcın, 2004). If the content of the studied text includes subjects about which the reader has no knowledge, then the number of unknown elements will be doubled; in other words, the burden on the brain will be doubled. In addition, as it is difficult to understand a subject not known beforehand, it is difficult to comprehend the subject. A feeling of failure may occur because of challenges in meaning, which eventually may adversely affect the psychology. An individual may even consider quitting foreign language study. Therefore, especially at the beginner level, it is useful to study a text whose content is known. That situation will both reduce the burden on the brain, as it minimizes the number of unknowns, and allow the individual to experience the feeling of success as the known topics will facilitate understanding in the foreign language (Işık, 2013). Thus, Damen (1987) states that teachers should emphasize the mother culture so that the learners will learn about the culture in which they live. The mother culture is all of the physical and spiritual products that are transferred to the learner in social life throughout generations (Gül, 2007).

Işık (2013) states that studies in foreign languages will be easier if the learner already knows the content. Thus, he adds that it will be useful to remember the information that is relevant to the subjects studied. In this context, the materials to be used in accordance with the content should be arranged in an understandable manner. Defending that images in textbooks should not be foreign to the learners' culture, Greimas (Bozkurt Anşın, 1994) suggests that the image should be first understood by learners, and that only materials and items equipped with cultural commonality should be used.

Prior information will positively affect motivation and support foreign language development. The rate of understanding a foreign language will increase when the learner studies a known subject, which gives the learner the feeling "I can do it, I can be successful". This situation sustains effective foreign language study (Işık, 2013). Language learning should be promoted with materials with which learners are familiar to encourage learners to experience this feeling. Eva Buck

(Bozkurt Anşın, 1994) says that the image of a French coffee pot will be foreign to a Turkish foreign language learner, while French learners will be familiar with that item. Likewise, while French learners know the word “coffee pot”, the image of a Turkish coffee pot will challenge their language development.

In fact, reading comprehension activities arises as a result of the collation of information in the text and background related with the subject. Prior knowledge has a great effect on reading comprehension. Işık (2013) assumes that understanding a text about the construction of a suspension bridge will be difficult without prior knowledge, even if it is written in Turkish. He notes that even if the text is Turkish, lack of prior knowledge will become a barrier to reading comprehension. Thus, prior knowledge should be activated.

5. Attitude in foreign language teaching

İnceoğlu (Saracaloğlu, Başer, Yavuz, & Narlı, 2004) defines attitude as a cognitively, affectively and behaviourally responsive predisposition that an individual organizes on the basis of his experience, motivation or knowledge towards himself or any social issue, object or event around him. Anxiety and stress in foreign language classes especially affect learners’ attitudes negatively and make language learning difficult (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). Gömleksiz (2003) states that learners taking language lessons sometimes show negative attitudes towards the lesson and that the attitudes constitute a serious barrier to language learning. Learners experience most difficulty in the case of negative attitudes towards the lesson. While positive attitudes help learners to be more successful, negative attitudes can cause failure (Karasakaloğlu & Saracaloğlu, 2009).

Attitude towards language learning emerges at early ages. Learners encounter the necessity of learning a foreign language at the beginning of elementary school, and they cannot conceive the importance of knowing a foreign language. Use of methods and techniques appropriate to learners’ interests and expectations will contribute to the development of positive attitudes towards foreign language lessons. It will be difficult to correct negative attitudes arising at this stage in later periods. Additionally, it is possible that positive attitudes will transform into negative attitudes (Kadan, 2013); however, it is most probable that the attitude acquired at an early age will affect one’s attitude towards English learning in adulthood either positively or negatively (Tin, 2013).

6. Method

6.1. Research model

This research aimed to determine the effect of reading comprehension instruction enriched with cultural materials on seventh graders’ English vocabulary knowledge and attitude towards English lessons. Thus, a pretest and post-test quasi-experimental model was used to achieve the research. In the research, the pretest results of the experimental group were compared with their post-test results, and similarly, the pretest results of the control group were compared with their post-test results. Additionally, the pretest, post-test and retention test results of the experimental group were compared with those of the control group in terms of vocabulary knowledge. In addition, the pretest and post-test results of the experimental group were compared with those of the control group in terms of attitude towards English lessons.

The reading comprehension curriculum enriched with cultural materials by the researchers was given to the learners in the experimental group for 6 weeks as two lesson hours per week, while the control group followed their normal reading comprehension instruction for 6 weeks. An achievement test for vocabulary knowledge developed by the researchers was also applied to both groups. Moreover, a scale to measure attitudes towards English lessons developed by the researchers was applied to both groups.

6.2. Participants

The Statistics Department of the Ministry of Education in Aydın was consulted to determine the participants of the research, and the mean results of schools in Aydın at the entrance exam to high school were used. A secondary school at a medium socio-economic level in the Efeler District of Aydın was selected for the research. One of two 7th grade classes that were equivalent to each other in terms of vocabulary knowledge was chosen as the experimental group, and the other was chosen as the control group.

The main reasons for conducting the study with seventh graders are given below:

- Following the needs analysis done at the very beginning of the study, it was determined that the teachers considered that learners' interests in foreign languages diminished as they grew older. Tutaş (2000) states that changes in biological conditions and cognitive and psychological factors can negatively affect foreign language learning. Thus, it seems more useful to study with older students at secondary school rather than younger students at elementary school, as older students have more challenges in foreign language learning.
- Eighth graders were not included in the study because teachers stated in the needs analysis that learners were unwilling to follow the regular curriculum because of ongoing exams. Indeed, cognitive and psychological factors negatively affect foreign language learning, as Tutaş (2000) asserts. In addition, it would be challenging to obtain the necessary permission to conduct a study on eighth graders because of the entrance exam to high school.

6.3. Data collection

Before explanation of the data collection of the study, it was better to mention the needs analysis study upon which the research is based. After the needs analysis, the research model, participants, research tools, data collection process, data analysis and interpretation are explained in detail.

6.4. Needs analysis

A needs analysis was required in order to determine the challenges which learners had experience while learning English as a foreign language. For needs analysis, interviews were realized with eight English teachers working at secondary schools, five from different public schools and three from different private schools, to determine teachers' perceptions of skills, topics and themes where learners had difficulty. Content analysis of the collected data revealed categories of learners' interests in English lessons.

As the findings were examined, it was found that teachers agreed that higher grade learners' interests in English lessons were lower than lower grade learners' interests in English lessons. The main reason for this may be beginning adolescence and the forthcoming entrance exam to high schools. Three teachers from public schools expressed that interest in lessons decreased as the time for the entrance exam to high schools approached. Two teachers from public schools and two teachers from private schools stated that interest in lessons decreased during adolescence. One teacher expressed that interest in lessons decreased as the curriculum became more challenging for learners.

The category of "theme" with which learners had difficulty emerged as the result of an analysis of the interviews. As findings were reviewed, it was observed that two teachers from public schools and one teacher from a private school stated that learners had difficulty in themes that did not appeal to them; two teachers from public schools expressed that students had difficulty in themes where there were grammar subjects they did not comprehend; one teacher from a public school and one teacher from a private school asserted that learners had difficulty in themes where there were historical topics, and one teacher from a private school suggested that learners had difficulty in themes where there were challenging texts and paragraphs. Teachers were asked what kind of difficulties learners had in their class. This question sought to determine

the teachers' perceptions on difficulties learners had in reading comprehension activities. When findings were examined, it was seen that four teachers from public schools and two teachers from private schools noted lack of vocabulary knowledge as learners' biggest challenge in reading comprehension activities. Moreover, one teacher from a public school and one teacher from a private school stated that learners had difficulty with text containing complicated sentences, and one teacher expressed that learners had difficulty in reading comprehension, as they interpreted through Turkish mentality.

After the interviews with English teachers, studies on English language teaching in the context of the mother culture were sought. However, no such study was found at the Turkish Academic Network and Information Center, the Academia Social Science Index or the Turkish Council of High Education. Only in the study conducted by Gülden (2003), it is noted that learners should be given the opportunity to compare the target culture with their own culture, and thus, the culture to which learners belong should be used in class. It was also found that the number of studies on transferring the target culture was insufficient. Moreover, the studies were theoretical, and there were only a few empirical studies. Therefore, how the target culture could be transferred into the classroom environment was little explored.

Data were collected with the achievement test for vocabulary knowledge developed and applied to control and experimental groups and with a scale for attitudes towards English lessons. The test and scale were applied to both groups as pretests before the implementation of the curriculum. Reading comprehension instruction enriched with cultural materials was given to the learners in the experimental group by the researchers for 6 weeks as two lesson hours per week, while the control group followed their normal reading comprehension instruction for 6 weeks. Post-tests were applied to both groups after the implementation of the curriculum. Then, a retention test was applied to both groups after 6 weeks.

6.5. Data collection tools

First, the literature was reviewed about the research topic, and reading comprehension instruction enriched with cultural materials and the achievement test for vocabulary knowledge were developed for the purpose of the study. Additionally, the scale for attitudes towards English lessons was applied after the necessary permissions to use the scale were taken from Aydoslu (2005).

6.5.1. Preparation of reading comprehension curriculum

The path below was followed to prepare the reading comprehension curriculum:

- (1) Cultural concepts with which learners were familiar were detected by using learners' environment. Literature, particularly about Aydin Province and its culture, was reviewed to identify the cultural concepts.
- (2) Texts and reading activities were designed based on objectives and achievements to be reached by texts and reading activities in the normal curriculum.
- (3) Textbooks as a teaching material in the normal curriculum were examined, and vocabulary and grammar to be instructed to learners were included in texts written for the experimental group.
- (4) The degree of difficulty and length of texts were determined according to the common curriculum.
- (5) The reading comprehension curriculum was designed to last 2 h per week for 6 weeks. Twelve reading texts with cultural material were developed, and specific activities and exercises that were unique for each text were prepared.

Several parts of the applied texts are given below as examples:

- Yeast Frister

...On a hot day, I saw a small car through the window. I thought that it was an ice-cream seller's car. I wanted to eat some ice-cream on that hot day. There was a huge queue. I joined the queue. I couldn't see the front of the queue. I took out some money from my purse. I reached out the money to the man behind the counter. He smiled at me and put out something into a box like a popcorn box; he gave the box to me and said "you don't have to pay for it"....

- Aphrodisias

For many years, people are always interested in the mystery of ancient buildings. How did people build those huge stone buildings? You can see several buildings in Aphrodisias. Aphrodisias is an ancient city in Aydın. It had a huge population for its period.

- Fig Tree

...It was a small village on the countryside in Aydın. Most of the villagers had a lot of fig trees and used to sell figs to earn money. We had got a huge garden with a lot of fig trees....

- A Huge Friend

..It was a huge camel. I was very frightened and began to shake. It leaned towards me and licked my face again and again. It was really funny. I laughed a lot and hugged its head. It was a friendly camel and wanted to play with me....

6.5.2. Preparation of achievement test for vocabulary knowledge

One of the research data collection tools was the achievement test for vocabulary knowledge. Vocabulary to be learned in the common curriculum was included in the curriculum to be implemented. The achievement test was prepared to measure vocabulary knowledge gained by both common curriculum and developed curriculum. Thus, the same test could be applied to both the control group and the experimental group. Teaching vocabulary in context was preferred in the text given for developing reading comprehension in the common curriculum, so texts to be implemented were developed to teach the vocabulary in context.

Seventh graders took the high school entrance exam only in 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011. Exams before 2008 and after 2011 were only for eighth grades. Exams that seventh grades took were analysed. There were 15 questions about English in the exams for seventh grades, and there were 3 types of questions to measure vocabulary knowledge:

- Choosing appropriate words for blanks in a sentence. Pictures were used for this kind of question.
- Choosing the most appropriate picture for a word.
- Choosing the most appropriate word for a picture.

The path followed during preparation of the achievement test is given below:

- (1) Questions similar to those in the high school entrance exam were prepared to measure vocabulary knowledge given in the text in the common curriculum, and a question pool was created.

- (2) Questions in the pool were edited in terms of content and shape by two specialists in foreign language teaching, a specialist in measurement and evaluation and two specialists in curriculum and instruction. Then, several questions were eliminated.
- (3) Questions approved or corrected by specialists were adapted for the pre-pilot test. For pre-pilot test, questions were answered face to face by 12 seventh graders. The researcher took notes on questions by getting feedback continuously. Later, some questions were eliminated and some were corrected.

The pilot achievement test prepared after the pre-pilot test was applied to 177 seventh graders at 4 different secondary schools. Reliability of the vocabulary achievement test was found to be $KR-20 = 0.905$. Distinctiveness index and degree of difficulty of items in test were calculated. In total, 16 items were eliminated after the calculation. The reliability of the final forms of the 50-item achievement test was $KR-20 = 0.902$. Each item in the vocabulary achievement test consisting of 50 items had 1 point, and the highest score a learner could get was 50.

6.5.3. Scale for attitudes towards English course

The scale for attitudes towards English course developed by Aydoslu (2005) was used to measure learners' attitudes towards English lessons. The scale contains 15 positive items and 15 negative items. The highest score possible is 150, while the lowest score is 30.

6.6. Data analysis and interpretation

The data were analysed by SPSS. Two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine the changes in pretest, post-test and retention test scores between the experimental group and the control group.

7. Findings and interpretation

The findings obtained at the end of the analyses were interpreted in order of the hypotheses of the study.

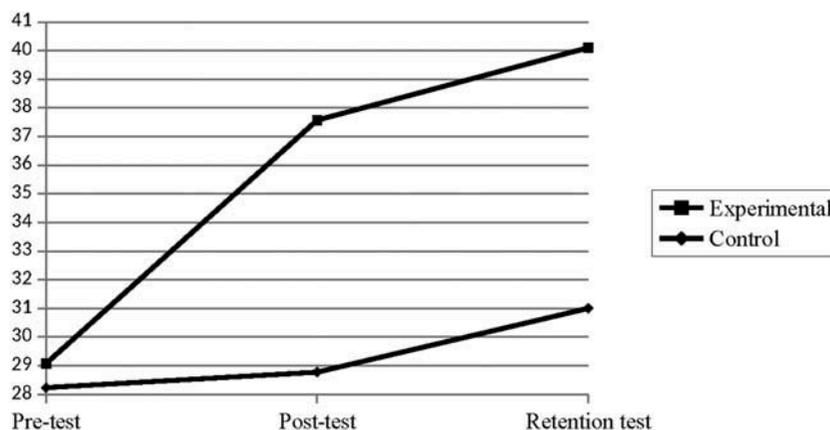
7.1. Findings related to first hypothesis

The first hypothesis of the study expressed that there was a statistically significant difference concerning the vocabulary pretest, post-test and retention scores in favour of the experimental group. Two-way ANOVA was used to analyse the first hypothesis. First, assumptions for variance analysis were examined, and it was found that assumptions suggested by Büyüköztürk (2012) were met:

- The dependent variable was in at least interval scale.
- Scores of differences calculated for the dependent variable were independent for every sample.
- Scores related to the dependent variable had normal distribution.
- The variances of the scores of the pretests, post-tests and retention tests of the groups were equal to one another.

The means and standard deviations of the pretest, post-test and retention test scores related to the achievement test for vocabulary knowledge of 60 learners in the experimental and the control groups were examined. It was seen that the mean of the pretest scores of learners in the experimental group was $\bar{X} = 29.07$, while the mean of the post-test scores of the same learners was $\bar{X} = 37.57$, and the mean of their retention test scores was $\bar{X} = 40.10$. The mean pretest score of learners in the control group was $\bar{X} = 28.23$, while their mean post-test score was $\bar{X} = 28.77$, and the mean of their retention test scores was $\bar{X} = 31.00$. According to the findings, it can be asserted that there is an increase in the achievement level for vocabulary knowledge for both the experimental group and the control group. Changes in the means of the pretest, post-test and

Figure 1. Line chart showing changes in means of pretest, post-test and retention test scores of the experimental group and the control group.



retention test scores of the experimental group and the control group are given by the line chart in Figure 1.

While the mean pretest scores of the experimental group and the control group are very close to each other, there is a statistically significant difference between them, as seen in Figure 1. To explain why there is an increase in the means of both groups, it can be suggested that learners get higher scores as they encounter the same words in subsequent themes and thus review the words once again. The results of two-way ANOVA on whether there is any statistically difference among changes in the pretest, post-test and retention test scores of both groups for vocabulary knowledge are given in Table 1.

The means of the pretest, post-test and retention test scores for vocabulary knowledge of both groups are significantly different from each other [$F(1,58) = 15.346, p < .001$]. In other words, the increase in vocabulary knowledge of learners in the experimental group is statistically higher than that of learners in the control group. This finding shows that the reading curriculum enriched with cultural materials positively affected vocabulary knowledge success and retention.

7.2. Findings related to second hypothesis

The second hypothesis of the study posited that there was a statistically significant difference in favour of the experimental group between pretest and post-test scores on attitude towards

Table 1. Two-way analysis of variance of pretest, post-test and retention test scores for vocabulary knowledge

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	p
Between groups	17,497.689	59			
Group (experimental/control)	1754.689	1	1754.689	6.464	.014
Error	15,743.289	58	271.436		
Within groups	3878	60			
Measurement (pretest/post-test/retention test)	1428.300	1	1428.300	42.764	.000
Group × measurement	512.533	1	512.533	15.346	.000
Error	1937.167	58	33.399		
Total	21,375.689	119			

English lessons compared to the control group. Two-way ANOVA was used to analyse the second hypothesis. First, assumptions for variance analysis were examined, and it was found that assumptions suggested by Büyüköztürk (2012) were met:

- The dependent variable was in at least interval scale.
- Scores of differences calculated for dependent variables were independent for every sample.
- Scores related with the dependent variable had normal distribution.
- The variances of the groups' pretest and post-test scores were equal to each other.

The means and standard deviations of the pretest and post-test scores related to attitude towards English lessons of the 60 learners in the experimental and control groups were examined. It was seen that the mean pretest score of learners in the experimental group was $\bar{X} = 95.93$, while their mean post-test score is $\bar{X} = 117.57$. The mean pretest score of learners in the control group was $\bar{X} = 105.13$, while their mean post-test score was $\bar{X} = 97.67$. According to the findings, it can be asserted that there is an increase in attitude scores towards English lessons of both the experimental group and the control group. Changes in the means of pretest and post-test scores of the groups are given by line chart in Figure 2.

While the mean pretest score of the control group is higher than that of the experimental group, there is a statistically significant difference between the mean post-test scores of the experimental and the control groups, as seen at Figure 2. While the mean score of the control group decreased, that of the experimental group increased. The results of two-way ANOVA on whether there is any statistically significant difference between changes in the pretest and post-test scores of both groups for attitudes towards English lesson are given in Table 2.

The means of the pretest and post-test scores for attitudes towards English lessons of the groups are significantly different from each other [$F(1.58) = 30.600, p < .001$]. In other words, the improvement in the attitudes of learners in the experimental group is statistically higher than that of learners in the control group. This result shows that the reading curriculum enriched with cultural materials positively affected learners' attitudes towards English lessons.

8. Conclusion, discussion and suggestions

This research examined the effect of reading comprehension instruction enriched with cultural materials on seventh graders' vocabulary knowledge and attitudes towards English lessons, and it

Figure 2. Line chart showing changes in means of pretest and post-test scores of the experimental group and the control group.

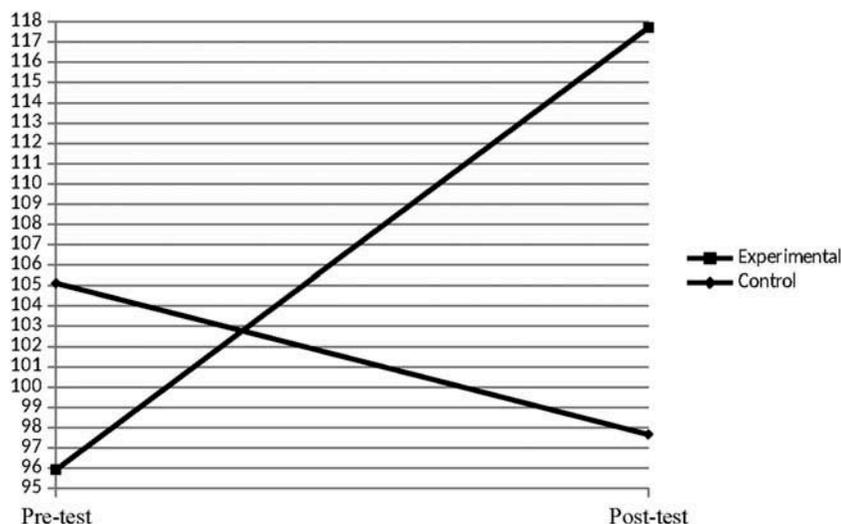


Table 2. Two-way analysis of variance of pretest and post-test scores for attitudes towards English lessons

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	p
Between groups	59,820.091	59			
Group (experimental/control)	880.208	1	880.208	0.866	.015
Error	58,939.883	58	1016.205		
Within groups	20,091.5	60			
Measurement (pretest/post-test/retention test)	1533.675	1	1533.675	7.322	.009
Group × measurement	6409.408	1	6409.408	30.600	.000
Error	12,148.417	58	209.455		
Total	79,911.591	119			

was concluded that the hypotheses were verified. The results revealed that reading comprehension enriched with cultural materials had a positive effect on vocabulary knowledge and attitudes towards English lessons. At the end of the experiment, the level of the vocabulary knowledge of the control group having similar inputs to the experimental group was lower than that of the experimental group. De Marie et al. (Drumhiller & Schwanenflugel, 2013) find that prior knowledge facilitated vocabulary learning in the target language. In addition, Drumhiller and Schwanenflugel (2013) suggest that context provided to teach vocabulary facilitates effective vocabulary acquisition. Tuğyan (2010) concludes in his study that the experimental group surpassed the control group in terms of the number of words and vocabulary diversity. Moreover, Gülsoy (2013) states that there is no statistical difference between pretest and post-test scores of the control group following the traditional curriculum. Thus, it is asserted that traditional methods are not so effective to improve learners' vocabulary knowledge. Yurdabakan (2010) shows that any method other than the traditional one has a positive effect on teaching "if clauses". The results of these studies support our study. Vocabulary retention test scores increased in both groups. Similarly, learners' retention test scores were higher than their post-test scores.

The instructions applied to each group affected learners' attitudes differently. At the end of the implementations, the attitudes of learners in the experimental groups towards English lessons improved, while the attitudes of learners in the control group worsened. Chandrasena Premawardhena and Jayasundara (2012) conclude in their study that use of material increased learners' performance, provided more effective participation, increased interactions among learners and constituted a source of motivation for autonomous learning. Wang and Li (2011) state that learners' reading comprehension level will increase if foreign language learning anxiety is eliminated. Saito, Horwitz and Garza (1999) state that anxiety will decelerate the process of foreign language learning and reading comprehension. Kadan (2013) implements a different method than the traditional ones and concludes that the method was more effective in terms of scores for motivation and attitude towards lessons. Varmış Kılıç (2011) implies that authentic materials are effective materials for positively developing learners' attitude and motivation towards English lessons. Moreover, there are studies indicating that success and attitude affect each other mutually (Saracaloğlu, Serin, & Bozkurt, 2002). Hence, it can be seen that several studies have supported our research.

In spite of all the effort and time invested in foreign language instruction, the targeted level could not be reached. Several studies were realized, but they could not overcome this problem. The majority of studies tried to integrate foreign culture into foreign language teaching; unfortunately, learners were thoroughly alienated from the foreign language because of this foreign culture integration. However, foreign language learning can be facilitated by including cultural materials

that learners are familiar with in the learning process. Consequently, reading comprehension curriculum enriched with cultural materials both improves vocabulary knowledge and positively affects attitude towards English lessons.

8.1. Suggestions

In the framework of the conclusions, some suggestions can be made for practitioners and researchers.

For practitioners:

- Foreign language lessons may be instructed with cultural materials with which learners are familiar.
- Teachers should know the features and culture of the region where they work.

For researchers:

- As this research was realized in Aydın Province, more comprehensive studies in different regions can be performed to increase the scope of the research.
- The research was limited to a 6-week period. Thus, by realizing a more long-term study, research results can be compared.
- Effects of writing, speaking and listening curriculums enriched with cultural materials on vocabulary knowledge, attitude and grammar can be examined.

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