Reading anxiety's effects on incidental vocabulary acquisition: Are culturally relevant texts exempt?

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READING ANXIETY'S EFFECTS ON INCIDENTAL VOCABULARY ACQUISITION: ARE CULTURALLY RELEVANT TEXTS EXEMPT?

by

Midena M. Sas

Bachelor of Education
University of Manitoba, Canada
2000

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Master of Science in Curriculum and Instruction
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
College of Education

Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
August 2002

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Midena M. Sas

Entitled
Reading Anxiety's Effects on Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition: Are
Culturally Relevant Texts Exempt?

is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science in Curriculum and Instruction

Examination Committee Chair

Dean of the Graduate College
ABSTRACT

Reading Anxiety’s Effects on Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition: Are Culturally Relevant Texts Exempt?

by

Midena M. Sas

Dr. Steven G. McCafferty, Examination Committee Chair
Associate Professor of Language Literacy and Culture
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

This study explored the relationships among reading anxiety, incidental vocabulary acquisition and culturally relevant texts. Thirty adult ESL students, 16 of Mexican origin and 14 of Chinese origin, completed modified forms of the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Survey, vocabulary tests assessed on the Vocabulary Knowledge Scale, and an interview that solicited their opinions regarding reading anxiety remedies and the importance of cultural relevance in reading. Results revealed a significant negative correlation between reading anxiety and performance on vocabulary tests, but not achievement, i.e. vocabulary gain. Out of six variables considered, reading anxiety was the primary predictor of performance, and cultural relevance was the only predictor of achievement. Discussion includes suggestions for practical application of results for participants of both Mexican and Chinese origin, as well as recommendations for future research that must address the specific needs of these two ethnic groups.
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CHAPTER I

QUESTIONS ARISE

It has been estimated that some sixty percent of today’s world population is multilingual. Both from a contemporary and a historical perspective, bilingualism or multilingualism is the norm rather than the exception. (Richards & Rodgers, 2000, p.1)

Hence, language learners are not a minority. Their needs reflect the needs of the norm. It is important to consider that those who have studied a language that was foreign to them, and even those who have not, seem to share the opinion that language learning is an overwhelming process. Learning a new language does not only involve learning vocabulary, nor only grammar, nor only new phonetics and intonation, nor only different conventions for communication, nor only a new culture, but all of these; and more. Research in the area of second language acquisition has attempted to ameliorate the language learning process by focusing on different aspects of it and offering findings to aid language teachers and learners. More recent decades have brought forth revolutionary theories that have changed our language learning classrooms and the language learning experience in general. “Changes in language teaching methods throughout history have reflected recognition of changes in the kind of proficiency learners need, such as a move toward oral proficiency rather than reading comprehension as the goal of language study” (Richards & Rodgers, 2000, p.1). The contemporary communicative approach has allowed for authentication of the language learning experience (VanLier, 1999); No
longer does language learning mean a mechanical memorization of verb conjugation patterns and lists. It now refers to the journey of becoming acquainted with and integrating into the culture in which the language you choose to learn originated and the society in which that language exists, through scaffolded ways of interaction (VanLier, 1999). Such meaningful developments have attended to the diverse needs of the growing population of language learners.

Among the numerous aspects of language that language learners need to master, I find the need for vocabulary most critical and intriguing. Consider the following scenarios: a middle-aged man in Japan needs to master English for career advancement purposes; a teenage girl immigrates to a country where she needs to speak English to make friends. Historical advancements have added a demanding new dimension to language learning: emphasis on speed. Language learning no longer reflects aristocracy entertainment (Richards & Rogers, 2000), but immediate needs of diverse people. In such a context, bounteous vocabulary acquisition becomes vital. On reading the literature on this topic, one cannot help but be captivated by the intricate factors that affect foreign language vocabulary acquisition. Three of these have grabbed my attention significantly, namely incidental vocabulary acquisition, reading anxiety and cultural relevance of reading materials. All three pertain to the acquisition of vocabulary through reading. Chapter II will present the chronological development of these factors, the research that shaped the progress, and the areas that sparked most interest for me.

Within the areas of incidental vocabulary acquisition, reading anxiety and cultural relevance of reading materials, there exist different interpretations of meaning. It is important to provide an operational definition for the three terms. (1) Incidental
vocabulary acquisition (IVA) refers to vocabulary knowledge that a language learner gains incidentally. Vocabulary knowledge possesses both breadth and depth, and when either of these dimensions expands by chance, IVA has occurred. The literature stages some arguments over the primacy of breadth or depth in vocabulary knowledge and the significance of the incidental nature of IVA. Chapter II will expound on these issues. For the purposes of this study, the incidental aspect of IVA is this factor’s main appeal. If IVA offers a means of learning vocabulary without conscious effort or, more precisely, as a secondary side-effect of an enjoyable activity, then this concept will partially satisfy the need for rapid language learning. Also, breadth and depth are both considered vocabulary gains in this study. Evaluation instruments and methods that attend to both breadth and depth, as well as “incidenntality” of vocabulary gain have been implemented in this study in order to reflect the definition of IVA outlined above. (2) Reading anxiety (RA) is a fairly new concept in language learning research. Its emergence in 1999 (Saito, Horwitz, & Garza) has faced the same challenges as those of general language learning anxiety upon its introduction. Sparks, Ganschow and Javorsky (2000), contemporary critics of all aspects of language learning anxiety, have brought to readers’ consideration the possibility of anxiety being the effect, not the cause of poor performance in all aspects of language learning. This debate will be outlined in more detail in Chapter II. In this study, reading anxiety will refer to that feeling of discomfort and nervousness, due to unfamiliarity with written form, topic, or vocabulary, when reading in English. Whether this feeling is the cause or effect of poor performance, and whether this is different for different language groups are interests I will explore in this study. (3) Cultural relevance (CR) of reading materials has been explored for some time in the literature and thus
possesses well-defined interpretations. Though they vary from each other considerably, they are all rational and significant. For example, whether cultural relevance refers to ethnic identification or appeal due to familiarity that stems from a source other than ethnicity (Jimenez & Gamez, 1996), CR is still candidly real for the person experiencing it. Research indicates that CR is so real that it has consistently had positive effects on learning. I am interested if CR is powerful enough to override a phenomenon like RA, if language learners consider CR valuable and if different language groups differ in this consideration. For the purposes of this study, CR will bear its traditional definition, i.e., identification with native culture. CR and cultural irrelevance will be incorporated in a story through the use of easily identifiable cultural items such as: names of main characters, names of ethnic foods, and ethnic geographical landmarks. These definitions will make the explorations of this study easier to follow.

As I observed the needs of language learners, both through the investigation of available literature and firsthand, and as specific interests emerged out of that reading, some of which are listed above, the need to formulate researchable questions surfaced. I have encapsulated my inquiry into five questions that will address both my interests and some unexplored ground in language learning research. Due to the freshness of RA in the research field, the unresolved debates in IVA and the continual insight CR can offer, this study promises an exciting journey.
Research Questions

Question 1: Does RA negatively influence IVA?

Question 2: Does CR influence RA?

Question 3: Does CR positively influence IVA?

Question 4: Do language learners prefer CR texts?

Question 5: What do language learners believe will lower RA?
CHAPTER II

A JOURNEY THROUGH IVA, RA AND CR

Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition

It is not surprising that a concept like Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition (IVA) would gain attention in language learning research. The language learning process is challenging, mainly due to the enormity of the task. Naturally then, any language learner will warmly welcome acquisition that may occur incidentally. In the 80s, research confirmed that IVA is not a myth. Krashen (1989) provides a thorough review of the pioneering studies that validated this exciting phenomenon. Researchers shared a similar approach at this time: they presented a short text, which included unfamiliar words. Their participants would read the text for meaning, not knowing that a vocabulary test would follow. On being tested after reading, vocabulary gains were consistently found. One may have expected such results in light of the fact that native speakers experience vocabulary gain from reading also (e.g., Nagy, Herman & Anderson, 1985). However, IVA is a particularly welcome finding in the language learning field due to its incidental nature. Research in the 80s accentuated this incidental feature of the IVA phenomenon through the basic research design that asked participants to read for meaning and tested for vocabulary gain as by-product.

The 90s brought forth some criticism concerning the depth of the acquisition claimed to take place. Research during this time introduced different techniques for
deepening IVA. Cho and Krashen (1994) found that reading thematically related texts assisted IVA. Lexical processing strategies, such as inferring word meaning and consulting (e.g., checking a dictionary) to obtain accurate definition of unknown vocabulary, led to higher acquisition and retention rates, especially when these strategies were used complementarily (Fraser, 1999; Paribakht & Wesche, 1999). The aid of text-based tasks gained popularity as IVA growth proved industrious when supported by such activities as: use of marginal glosses and dictionaries when reading (Hulstijn, Hollander, & Greidanus, 1996), engagement in generative processes, i.e., retelling a story after reading it (Joe, 1998), and numerous other exercises that promote elaboration and strengthening of word knowledge (Wesche & Paribakht, 2000). This line of research culminated in the result that involvement in all previously researched text-based tasks, which is characterized by “Need, Search and Evaluation” (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001) of new vocabulary, will optimize IVA.

Additional engagement with vocabulary learned from reading will naturally increase exposure to that vocabulary and, as 90s research supports, enhance the acquisition process. This is, indisputably, valuable insight concerning IVA. On closer inspection of the IVA process, however, anything occurring after the initial exposure to new vocabulary when reading, is an aid that takes away from the purely incidental nature of IVA. More plainly, vocabulary exercises are not incidental. Most recent efforts in IVA research have attempted to revert to the 80s approach which, as detailed above, analyzed IVA as a by-product of reading, a phenomenon occurring by chance. The innovative twist lies in contemporary researchers’ attention to the pre-exposure stage in the IVA process. If exposure to new vocabulary is the reading experience itself, today’s interest is in what
will make that experience more conducive to deeper vocabulary acquisition, as opposed to what post-activities will transform the vocabulary gained during exposure to vocabulary acquisition, i.e., deeply encoded information that will be retained. A recent study that explores this facet of IVA “emphasizes the goal-directedness of activity in relation to the intentionality of those involved” (McCafferty, Roebuck, & Wayland, 2001, p. 289). In this study, there was an increase in IVA for participants who engaged more intensely with new vocabulary because it served their chosen goals. Engagement in this instance was not the consequence of a planned post-activity. Rather, it was a motivated choice of manner of participation during the exposure stage of the IVA process.

My study resembles the contemporary research approach exemplified by McCafferty et al. (2001). It isolates IVA from the aid of supplemental involvement and examines the impact of two variables, RA and CR, both existent prior to the new vocabulary exposure stage. The chosen means of exposure is reading. Can CR and RA alone produce or reduce involvement in such a way as to increase or decrease IVA? If they do, we will learn ways of contriving circumstances that are conducive to IVA. In doing so, we are preserving the incidental nature of IVA where the learner acquires vocabulary without conscious effort, which is the fundamental appeal of IVA, as the concept’s designated title suggests.

Reading Anxiety

Anxiety in a language learning context has received attention from significant language learning theories, including the psycholinguistic view and sociocultural theory. The former sustains that optimal language input occurs when the "affective filter" is low.
This screen of emotion that can block language acquisition or learning if it renders the users too self-conscious or too embarrassed to take risks during communicative exchanges predicts that anxiety would have a negative impact on language learning. Sociocultural theory maintains that social interaction and cultural institutions, such as schools, classrooms, etc., have important roles to play in an individual’s cognitive growth and development (Donato & McCormick, 1994). In other words, the social environment within which the language learner interacts will highly influence language learning progress. It seems reasonable to expect that if a social environment is an anxiety producing one, language learning will be hindered.

However, the literature on language learning anxiety challenges such an expectation. Research on anxiety as it impacts language learning began in the 60s, though at that time, the foreign language profession did not pay significant attention to the issue. The 70s produced scattered and inconclusive research due to an unfocused definition of the anxiety construct and lack of attention to anxiety’s specific effects on language learning. Scovel (1978), a leading researcher in this field at that time, identified the main source of confusion: research findings revealed everything from negative relationships to positive ones and no relationship at all between anxiety and second language achievement. He proposed that this was due to researchers using different anxiety measures to evaluate different types of anxiety. The 80s then experienced an advancement in measurement and theory, which has generated more productive language learning anxiety research. The methods and instruments of measurement generated at that time include interviews, questionnaires, diaries, and self-report instruments epitomized by the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz,
Horwitz and Cope (1986). These developments produced empirical data which confirmed the existence of an anxiety specific to language learning. Students' perspectives on anxiety in language learning began to raise interest at this time also. Moving into a new decade, concern with cures for language learning anxiety have produced such recommendations as engaging in choral reading (Bradley & Thalgott, 1987; McCauley & McCauley, 1992), and different reading incentive programs (Fawson & Moore, 1999). Language learning anxiety research in the 90s has progressively focused on different aspects of language learning that anxiety can impact, from language learning classroom anxiety to specific communication anxiety: oral, aural, writing, and reading. Horwitz (2001) outlines an excellent review of the research completed in these areas.

Reading anxiety is the most recent focus of language learning anxiety research. In 1999, Saito, Horwitz, and Garza introduced the concept of foreign language reading anxiety and developed an instrument for its measurement. The Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Survey (FLRAS) mirrors the earlier developed FLCAS and gets more specific as it “elicits students’ self-reports of anxiety over various aspects of reading” (Saito et al., 1999). Saito et al. discovered several relationships between reading anxiety and language learners’ performance. Out of these, the finding that anxiety is responsible for a decrease in foreign language grades has been the topic of arduous controversy. Sparks, Ganschow, and Javorsky (2000) have long been critics of language anxiety research. They argue that language learning anxiety, including reading anxiety, does not cause poor achievement but, rather, is the consequence of it. This chicken-or-the-egg debate has become heated in the literature as responses back and forth are published.
(Horwitz, 2000). It is interesting to follow the argument and watch this new reading anxiety concept become increasingly well defined.

I expect reading anxiety is the cause, not the consequence of subtle cognitive processing and first language disabilities, as Sparks et al. (2000) propose. This study will explore this issue. Moreover, recent research is consistently finding that there are negative relationships between anxiety and performance (e.g., Rodriguez, 1995), and that levels of foreign language anxiety vary in different cultural groups (e.g., Truitt, 1995 as cited in Horwitz, 2001). With respect to the former, I am interested not only in reading anxiety's impact on performance but also on actual learning, which will be measured through reference to IVA. As for the latter, I would like to examine whether language learners of Asian origin are affected more by reading anxiety, just as they are affected more by general foreign language anxiety. My curiosity will be answered when this study's main research questions are addressed.

Cultural Relevance

Cultural relevance (CR) is a third aspect of language learners' reading experience that I find appealing. Many studies have explored the role context plays in reading for both native and foreign speakers of a language (e.g., Mondria & Wit-De Boer, 1991; Cho & Krashen, 1994). When it comes to contexts that are culturally relevant for the reader, research has ranged from the effects of broadly viewed cultural contexts, such as video games (Gee, 2001 as cited in Cambournre, 2002), to the impact of more specific cultural embedment, such as culturally loaded words where the lexical meaning is culturally situated, e.g. conservative (Qi, 2001). Findings consistently support the advantages of
aiding readers by exposing them to culturally relevant reading materials (Gee, 2001 as cited in Cambourne, 2002; Nestel, 2001; Jimenez & Gamez, 96). Nestel (2001) indicates that cultural relevance proves beneficial for Chinese learners of English, and Jimenez and Gamez (1996) indicate that culturally relevant texts also aid Hispanic learners of English. Considering earlier findings which suggest that language learners of Asian background experience higher language learning anxiety (Truitt, 1995 as cited in Horwitz, 2001), I would like to examine whether the reading of culturally relevant texts can neutralize the negative effects reading anxiety may have on language performance and achievement of Chinese learners of English. This study will provide an opportunity to view the effects of both cultural relevance and reading anxiety on language achievement of participants from both Asian and Hispanic backgrounds.

Foreword

Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition, Reading Anxiety and Cultural Relevance are fascinating factors of reading, especially as they pertain to language learning. Reviewing the literature produced in these three areas is a breathtaking realization process, as the enormous body of work of researchers of the past four decades emerges and elicits new questions, ideas and exciting anticipation.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY – SEARCHING FOR ANSWERS

Participants

Thirty (30) students in an adult ESL program volunteered to take part in the out-of-class research sessions. The ESL class in which they were enrolled is an Adult Basic Education (ABE) program offered free of charge to U.S. residents of the Las Vegas area and it serves two main goals: to improve language proficiency and to prepare non-native speakers of English for the workforce. The participants' English proficiency at the time this research was conducted was Level A: High Beginning ESL, as determined by the CASAS\(^1\) ESL appraisal. Sixteen (16) participants were of Mexican origin and the other fourteen (14) were from the People’s Republic of China. There were 13 males (43%) and 17 females (57%). Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of these participants.

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<th>Mean</th>
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<tr>
<td>age (years)</td>
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<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education (years)</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time in the U.S. (months)</td>
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\(^1\) The Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS), a national leader in adult education and training systems, provides essential tools and resources for assessment, instruction and evaluation. CASAS is the only adult assessment system of its kind to be approved and validated by the U.S. Department of Education in the area of adult literacy. For further reference, please visit www.casas.org

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Instruments and Materials

To address the questions of this study, the instruments constructed included five (5) evaluation tools while the materials required for the control and experimental groups consisted of three (3) short stories. The eight (8) items will be presented below.

Instruments

1. Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Survey (FLRAS) – Adaptation 1: The Pre-Test

This questionnaire (Appendix A) is based on the FLRAS developed by Saito, Horwitz and Garza (1999)\(^2\) that aimed to elicit language learners' self-reports of anxiety over numerous aspects of reading. For the purpose of this study, the FLRAS was adapted to include 15 of the original 20 FLRAS items, in a simplified version. This modification was necessary because the participants in this study did not possess English as their first language, as the participants of Saito, Horwitz and Garza (1999) did. To elicit an accurate self-report, I had to ensure that the participants understood the questions perfectly. Changes to the FLRAS included not only reduction in the number of items but also simplification of grammar and vocabulary used. For example, FLRAS question 1 states “I get upset when I’m not sure whether I understand what I am reading in (French, Russian, Japanese)” (Saito, Horwitz, & Garza, 1999). The first question on the FLRAS – Adaptation 1 used here is, “I get upset when I am not sure if I understand what I am reading in English”. One may observe that the contraction “I’m” is simplified to the more recognizable “I am” and the possibly unfamiliar word “whether” is changed to the more popular “if”. An additional 3 questions were added to enable investigation of what these language learners considered would cause a change in reading anxiety level. Questions 1

\(^2\) Permission for the use of the FLRAS was granted by Dr. Saito on June 14\(^{th}\), 2002.
though 17 were scored on a 4-point scale. Question 18 was an open-ended question and thus, was evaluated qualitatively by looking for patterns. Cronbach Alpha internal consistency for the FLRAS – Adaptation 1 was .89.

2. Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Survey (FLRAS) – Adaptation 2: The Post-Test

This questionnaire (Appendix B) emulated Adaptation 1, The Pre-Test, with only minor adjustments. Adaptation 2 inquired into the same issues, in the same format, but giving the participants a recent reading experience to refer back to when considering each of the questionnaire items. For example, in Adaptation 1, the first item was “I get upset when I am not sure if I understand what I am reading in English”. After reading a short story, participants were presented with Adaptation 2 in which the first item was “I got upset because I was not sure if I understood the story”. Cronbach Alpha internal consistency for the FLRAS – Adaptation 2 was .93.

3. The Vocabulary Test

This instrument (Appendix C) elicited the definition of 30 vocabulary items. The definitions were reported through the Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS), which was developed by Paribakht and Wesche in 1993 and has been used widely since (e.g., Fraser, 1999). Like many before me, the attraction to this evaluation technique stemmed from its ability to assess the levels of familiarity with given words. When investigating incidental vocabulary acquisition, depth of vocabulary knowledge is a facet that rises in significance over breadth of vocabulary gain. The format of VKS implementation in the present instrument varies slightly from the original VKS, again to assist the special linguistic needs of the participants. For example, in the original VKS the first category of self-report states, “I don’t remember having seen this word before” (Paribakht & Wesche,
1993). To simplify grammar structure, this statement was changed to “I do not remember having seen this word before”. Changes from the original were kept at the minimum exemplified. Cronbach Alpha internal consistency for this VKS Vocabulary Test ranged between .93 and .96.

4. The Interview

The interview included two questions formulated to obtain participants’ opinions about cultural orientation in what they read, and about sources of foreign language reading anxiety and possible remedies for these. They were stated in the following manner: (1) In English, do you prefer to read books that relate to your native culture or books that relate to another culture? (If another culture, which?) Why?; and (2) In your opinion, if a person experiences reading anxiety when reading in English, what could remedy this problem?

5. Demographics Table

Designed to gather demographic information about the participants, this table recorded such data as name, gender, age, country of origin, languages spoken, level of education completed, time spent in the U.S., and amount of formal English instruction.

Materials

As previously mentioned, three short stories were used to control for cultural relevance. They were titled, “The Magic of the Rio Grande – A Mexican Folktale” (Appendix D), “The Magic of Chang Jiang - A Chinese Folktale” (Appendix E), and “The Magic of Duna – A Hungarian Folktale” (Appendix F). I invented one story which served as a template for all three. Items determined to be culturally-relevant, i.e., names, geographical entities (e.g., places, rivers), and foods, were incorporated in the template
story. These were changed according to what culture each story was supposed to have derived from. As such, while all participants read the same story, half of them experienced cultural-relevance, at least to the degree stated, while the other half did not.

Aiming to isolate cultural relevance as the only variable that would impact the findings of this study, I composed the story in such a way as to convey credibility in the consideration of whether or not it is a folktale from one's native country. To achieve this, I read numerous Mexican, Chinese and Hungarian folktales, in order to familiarize myself with the archetypal folktale schema of each culture. At the same time, upon establishing credibility, I led the story into an unexpected turn of events, so as to avoid the possibility of participants relying on folktale schema to understand the story, rather than on engaging with the story itself and, naturally, the vocabulary through which it was conveyed. The stories' readability level rated at 5.4 through the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Score evaluation. Grade 5 reading ability level is consistent with the participants' English proficiency level, i.e. Level A.

Procedures

All procedures were conducted after July 25th, 2002 when the UNLV Social-Behavioral Institutional Review Board granted approval for this research. The study was held during two sessions, over a one-week period. The 30 participants, a Chinese interpreter, a Mexican interpreter, and I were present at both sessions. The interpreters were on hand to clarify the purpose of the study and any instructions given, as well as to coach the participants on the use of the instruments.
First session

The participants were introduced to the term “reading anxiety” and the interpreters clarified this phenomenon. On consensus of understanding of this term, the participants were presented with the FLRAS-Adaptation 1: The Pre-Test and coached on the Likert-scale format. They also had the assistance of the interpreter and/or their dictionaries to ensure accurate understanding of the questions asked. Upon completion, the participants were trained on the use of the VKS. Then, they proceeded to the completion of the Vocabulary Test. No dictionaries were allowed and interpreters were instructed to only address questions that pertained to the format of the test, not the actual vocabulary items. A half-hour break followed.

When the participants returned from their break, they were divided into 4 groups. Groups were determined to be equivalent due to the students’ similar English proficiency level (across all groups) and identical cultural background (within each group). Two (2) of the 4 groups included participants of Mexican origin and will be referred to as Group M1 and Group M2 in this study. Each of these groups had 8 participants. The remaining 2 groups had participants of Chinese origin and will be referred to as Group C1 and Group C2. These groups had 7 participants each. All groups were instructed that they would read a short story and answer comprehension questions afterward, and that they would not have access to their dictionaries or interpreter during this part of the study. Group M1 was presented the Mexican Folktale, Group C1 the Chinese Folktale, and Groups M2 and C2 the Hungarian Folktale. They were permitted to read the story until they considered they understood it. After that, they handed in the story and were given the FLRAS-Adaptation2: The Post-Test. The interpreters were again available to clarify the
questionnaire format and the actual questions. Once they completed this Post-Test, the Vocabulary Test was administered for a second time. Clarifications on the VKS format were again available. The completion of this test concluded the first session.

**Second session**

The participants, the interpreters and I reconvened one week following the first session. Participants were not aware that the Vocabulary Test, identical to the one administered twice during the first session, would be completed one third and final time. The interpreters were once more available to ascertain the participants’ comfort with the VKS format. Once this test was completed, the students were called up individually for a private interview. I, the interviewer, took notes on their answers to the two questions and then, for confidentiality purposes, I recorded the demographic information they provided onto a Demographic Table.

**Limitations**

Limitations of this study included sample size and potentially exclusive characteristics of the participants. Since participants joined the study on a volunteer basis, the number of participants of Chinese origin did not equal that of Mexican origin, nor were the subsequent 4 groups ample in size. Small sample size is often a limitation to statistical analysis and the minimum group size required for the statistical analysis performed on the data was just met. The participants who volunteered may also share characteristics that could set them aside from the general ESL population because they were members of an ESL workforce education class which was offered free of charge to those able to commit for a six-week, intensive study period.
CHAPTER IV

FINDING THE ANSWERS

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to analyze the collected data. Quantitative methods included Pearson Product Moment correlation, independent and paired samples t-tests and Stepwise regression analysis; a .05 level of significance was used. Results will be presented as answers following each of the five proposed research questions. Multiple examinations will explore relationships among the different variables emerging from the concepts in question: Reading Anxiety (RA), Cultural Relevance (CR) and Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition (IVA).

Reading Anxiety (RA)

An RA-pre score will refer to the original reading anxiety level, while an RA-post score will indicate reading anxiety upon completion of research treatment. As per the FLRAS, a score of 60 points will indicate a maximum reading anxiety level, and a score of 15 will bespeak a minimum level of reading anxiety. In addition, a reading anxiety change score was calculated by subtracting RA-pre from RA-post. This score will be called RA-change.

Cultural Relevance (CR)

The participants of Mexican origin who read a culturally relevant story make up group $M1$, and those who read the culturally irrelevant story are in group $M2$. Similarly, the participants of Chinese origin who read a culturally relevant story are in group $C1$, 

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and those who read the culturally irrelevant story make up group C2. Thus, groups M1 and C1 experienced cultural relevance in their reading, while groups M2 and C2 did not.

**Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition (IVA)**

The vocabulary test was administered three times, obtaining three vocabulary scores for each participant: (1) score before any treatment; (2) score after treatment; and (3) score one week after initial treatment. The maximum score of 120 possible points reflected not only depth of vocabulary knowledge but also comfort level with the vocabulary known. As such, vocabulary score can indicate knowledge of words only at recognition level before treatment, and gain in that knowledge as a participant's score goes up after treatment. It is also possible that vocabulary score goes down after treatment due to the participant's loss of confidence in knowledge of a particular word. The VKS measurement scale allows for this, as described in Chapter III herein.

The changes that occur in vocabulary knowledge due to treatment and the time factor will be accounted for in the following manner: The change from the first vocabulary score to the second one obtained will be referred to as *vocabulary gain*. (If this change score is a negative number, the participant has actually lost, not gained vocabulary knowledge.) The change from the second vocabulary score to the third one obtained will be called *retention*. Finally, the change from the first vocabulary score to the third one obtained indicates actual vocabulary acquisition, i.e. vocabulary that was gained and retained, and will thus be named, *IVA*. 

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Question 1: Does RA negatively influence IVA?

Statistically speaking, no, RA does not negatively influence IVA. Table 2 relates the means and standard deviations of RA-pre, vocabulary gain, retention, and IVA for all 30 participants. Pearson product moment correlations were obtained to discover the relationships between initial anxiety, or RA, and: (1) vocabulary gain, (2) retention, and (3) IVA. Table 3 displays these correlations. Though there is no statistically significant relationship between RA and vocabulary gain, it is interesting that there is a positive relationship of .277 between the two because this suggests that the higher the anxiety, the more vocabulary knowledge the participants gained initially. Surprisingly then, there is a statistically significant -.420 relationship between RA and retention. So, the lower the anxiety, the more vocabulary knowledge was retained. These were interesting facts to discover about the IVA process. However, when it came to actual IVA, there was no statistically significant relationship with RA (-.069), though the weak negative relationship between these two suggests that the higher the anxiety, the lower the IVA.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RA-pre</td>
<td>38.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary gain</td>
<td>12.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention</td>
<td>-3.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IVA</td>
<td>8.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 3

**Correlations among RA and Vocabulary Gain, Retention and IVA (n=30)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Vocabulary Gain</th>
<th>Retention</th>
<th>IVA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RA-pre</td>
<td>0.277</td>
<td>-0.420*</td>
<td>-0.069</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* statistically significant at .05 level

It is worthy of note that, although RA shared no significant relationship with IVA, a Stepwise Regression analysis selected RA out of six variables as the primary predictor of performance on the vocabulary test. RA held strong significance (p=.007) as predictor variable in spite the analysis being performed using the vocabulary scores obtained on the third administration of the vocabulary test, by which time, the participants were familiar with the test format. Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics of the criterion variable, the 3rd vocabulary score, as well as the six possible predictor variables, i.e., RA, gender, cultural relevance (CR), age, education and time in the U.S. Table 5 demonstrates that RA proved to be the most significant predictor of performance, and that time in the U.S. and CR are also significant predictors.

Table 4

**Descriptive Statistics: Predicting Vocabulary Test Performance (n=30)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3rd vocabulary test score</td>
<td>62.00</td>
<td>29.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA-pre</td>
<td>38.80</td>
<td>8.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gender</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cultural relevance</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>age (years)</td>
<td>34.43</td>
<td>7.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education (years)</td>
<td>13.07</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time in the U.S. (months)</td>
<td>40.17</td>
<td>40.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 2: Does CR influence RA?

An independent samples t-test examined if there is a difference between the impact cultural relevance and cultural irrelevance of reading materials have on the change in RA. Table 7 indicates that $t_{(28,1)}=-1.396$, $p>.05$ and, therefore, there is no statistically significant difference in the RA change of groups reading culturally relevant or those reading culturally irrelevant texts. Table 6, however, reveals that on average, the groups exposed to culturally relevant texts experienced a decrease of 5.3 points in RA, while the ones who read the culturally irrelevant story lessened their RA by 2.8 points. Interpreting this qualitatively, this result may be practically significant for the language learner.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model Code</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>R Square Change</th>
<th>F Change</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Beta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.235</td>
<td>0.235</td>
<td>8.623</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>-0.485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.356</td>
<td>0.121</td>
<td>5.055</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0.033</td>
<td>0.353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.451</td>
<td>0.095</td>
<td>4.519</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.043</td>
<td>-0.314</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Predictors: (Constant), RA-pre
2 Predictors: (Constant), RA-pre, time in the U.S.
3 Predictors: (Constant), RA-pre, time in the U.S., Cultural Relevance

Note: Excluded Variables - gender, age and education

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Relevance</th>
<th>RA-change</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>RA-change</td>
<td>-5.33</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>RA-change</td>
<td>-2.8</td>
<td>4.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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It is interesting to consider which of the four groups experienced the most RA reduction. For this purpose, paired samples t-tests evaluated the difference in the mean RA-pre score and mean RA-post score for each group. Table 8 shows these mean scores for each group, as well as the standard deviations. It is evident that the participants of Chinese origin did not experience much of a reduction in RA, regardless of whether or not they read a culturally relevant story. This is noticeably different for the participants of Mexican origin. Group M1 experienced a drastic reduction of RA, while group M2 that read the culturally irrelevant story, had a similar experience to the participants of groups C1 and C2. Table 9 bears further witness to the pattern already evident in Table 8. Indeed, only group M1 produced a significant result and this was actually at a .01 significance level: \( t(7,1) = 4.1 \), \( p < .05 \). This suggests that culturally relevant reading contributes to RA reduction for students of Mexican origin.

Table 7

*Independent t-test comparing RA-change by Cultural Relevance (n=30)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RA-change</td>
<td>-1.396</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0.174</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8

*Descriptive Statistics: RA-pre and RA-post mean scores by group*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group C1</th>
<th></th>
<th>Group C2</th>
<th></th>
<th>Group M1</th>
<th></th>
<th>Group M2</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RA-pre</td>
<td>RA-post</td>
<td>RA-pre</td>
<td>RA-post</td>
<td>RA-pre</td>
<td>RA-post</td>
<td>RA-pre</td>
<td>RA-post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>44.43</td>
<td>39.14</td>
<td>37.29</td>
<td>34.25</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>35.88</td>
<td>32.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>7.93</td>
<td>7.01</td>
<td>8.86</td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td>9.09</td>
<td>7.77</td>
<td>9.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 9

**Paired Samples T-test: Difference in RA-pre and RA-post across all groups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RA-pre to RA-post</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group C1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.721</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group C2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.391</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group M1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.106</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.005*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group M2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.864</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*statistically significant at .05 level

Question 3: Does CR positively influence IVA?

An independent samples t-test assessed whether cultural relevance had an impact on IVA. As previously, when attending to question 1, the entire IVA process was examined by considering initial vocabulary gain means, retention means and actual IVA means. These statistics appear in Table 10. Table 11 indicates that CR made a significant difference in vocabulary gain ($t_{(28,1)}=2.397$, $p<.05$) and in overall IVA ($t_{(28,1)}=2.76$, $p<.05$); those who read culturally relevant texts had higher initial vocabulary gain and IVA. And though CR influence on retention is not statistically significant, claim to practical significance is necessary. Upon closer inspection of Table 10, one will find that those who read culturally relevant stories, on average, lost one point in their vocabulary knowledge during the one-week span that aimed to evaluate retention. On the other hand, those who read culturally irrelevant stories lost approximately 6.5 points, on average.

Since the ethnic origin of the four groups dictated considerably different responses, it is again valuable to consider the interaction of CR and IVA in each of the four groups. Paired samples t-tests calculated the difference in the mean scores of all vocabulary tests, by group. One can thus view initial vocabulary gain, retention and overall IVA as they occur in the different groups. Table 12 relates the descriptive
Table 10

Descriptive Statistics: CR, vocabulary gain, retention and IVA (n=15)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Relevance</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>vocabulary gain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>retention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>24.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>-6.47</td>
<td>7.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IVA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>-2.93</td>
<td>19.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11

Independent Samples T-tests comparing vocabulary gain, retention and IVA by CR (n=30)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>vocabulary gain</td>
<td>2.397</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0.023*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>retention</td>
<td>0.814</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0.427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IVA</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0.010*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*statistically significant at .05 level

statistics for all these variables while Table 13 indicates that only the participants of Mexican origin who read culturally relevant stories experienced statistically significant vocabulary gain (t(7,1)=-3.48, p< .017), retention (t(7,1)=-4.082, p< .017), and IVA (t(7,1)=-4.9, p< .017). Alpha was set at the .017 level in order to reduce the possibility of Type I error.
**Table 12**

*Descriptive Statistics: The Means of all Vocabulary Test Scores, by Group*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>Vocabulary Test</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>42.00</td>
<td>24.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>60.71</td>
<td>29.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>60.71</td>
<td>29.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43.57</td>
<td>24.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>42.00</td>
<td>24.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>60.71</td>
<td>29.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43.57</td>
<td>24.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>52.86</td>
<td>30.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>65.14</td>
<td>27.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>65.14</td>
<td>27.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>55.43</td>
<td>23.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>52.86</td>
<td>30.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>55.43</td>
<td>23.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>55.75</td>
<td>24.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>78.75</td>
<td>22.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>78.75</td>
<td>22.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>91.86</td>
<td>24.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>55.75</td>
<td>24.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>91.86</td>
<td>24.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>61.75</td>
<td>23.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>57.63</td>
<td>23.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>57.63</td>
<td>23.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>54.00</td>
<td>25.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>61.75</td>
<td>23.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>54.00</td>
<td>25.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*statistically significant at .05 level*
Table 13

*Paired Sample T-tests: difference among all vocabulary test scores by group*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>Vocabulary Test</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1st to 2nd</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-2.108</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2nd to 3rd</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.640</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1st to 3rd</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-0.265</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1st to 2nd</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-1.706</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2nd to 3rd</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.463</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1st to 3rd</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-0.307</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1st to 2nd</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-3.477</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.010*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2nd to 3rd</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-4.082</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.005*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1st to 3rd</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-4.899</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.002*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1st to 2nd</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.667</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2nd to 3rd</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.800</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1st to 3rd</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.260</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.248</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *Significance level used here was .017, to account for Type I error

Finally, a Stepwise regression analysis was performed to determine which of five variables are predictors of IVA. Table 14 lists the variables considered; their means and standard deviations. Table 15 identifies CR as the only predictor of IVA and indicates that this relationship is significant (p<.05).

Table 14

*Descriptive Statistics: Possible variables predicting IVA (n=30)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IVA</td>
<td>8.53</td>
<td>25.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cultural relevance</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>age (years)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>7.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education (years)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time in the U.S. (months)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA-pre</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>8.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 15

**Stepwise Regression Analysis - Criterion Variable: IVA (n=30)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model Code</th>
<th>R Square Change</th>
<th>F Change</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Beta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.215</td>
<td>0.215</td>
<td>7.650</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0.010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Predictors: (Constant), Cultural Relevance
Note: Excluded Variables - age, education, time in the U.S., and RA-pre

Question 4: Do language learners prefer CR texts?

The first interview question explored the participants' preference in cultural orientation toward what they read. Semiotic content analysis (Shank, 1995) of the recorded responses indicated that participants shared a strong pattern in their answers. Those of Mexican origin first indicated that they enjoy reading about many different cultures. As an after-thought, many added that it is "easier" or "more comfortable" to read about their own culture. They also agreed that the reason culturally relevant texts are "easier" to read is that the storyline or topic is easier to identify. The quantitative evaluation methods above support this claim. Group M1 not only gained vocabulary knowledge and retained it; They also gained further vocabulary knowledge during the one week break period, which was intended to test for retention only (see Table 12). Group M2, however, did not experience IVA. In fact, reading the culturally irrelevant story lowered their confidence level in the vocabulary knowledge they already had. It seems that even though these participants expressed interest in reading about all cultures, cultural relevant reading aided their vocabulary acquisition while culturally irrelevant reading tended to impede it.

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The participants of Chinese origin indicated a strong preference for culturally relevant texts. They explained that their "familiarity" with the culture aids "comprehension". Interestingly, the quantitative analysis (see Table 12) indicated that the participants of Chinese origin who read the culturally irrelevant story actually experienced slightly more IVA. Hence, for participants of Chinese origin preference in reading material does not appear to be a good predictor of the gain in vocabulary knowledge that one can experience from reading.

Question 5: What do language learners believe will lower RA?

The open-ended question at the end of the FLRAS-Adaptation 1 and 2 attended to this concern. Again, semiotic content analysis (Shank, 1995) revealed a clear pattern where participants of Mexican origin attributed the lowering of RA level to overall language learning anxiety change due to classroom activities that promoted comfort, fun and respect. Among the participants from group M2, concern was reported with the confusion caused by reading a culturally irrelevant text. Participants of Chinese origin indicated that reduction in RA level was due to their familiarity with the actual language structures (e.g., the grammar used in the story). Most, however, did not self-evaluate a reduction in RA. In these cases, when answering the question pertaining to RA change, most related their disappointment in their English fluency level, which they believe is accountable for their lack of RA change. Overall, participants of Mexican origin estimated the remedy of RA to lie in the language-learning environment, which they believe has the power to eliminate RA, while participants of Chinese origin believed the
RA remedy to lie within language learning itself where growing fluency in the target language continually brings about lower anxiety levels.

The second interview question also addressed research question 5 by asking what suggestions the participants would have for remedying RA if it existed. Participants of both origins converged in their views. Their main recommendation was to work on increasing overall English fluency. They also reported practical suggestions such as: read slower; ask for help with unknown words because vocabulary items verified in the dictionary often do not "stick"; learn more vocabulary; ask for retelling of what was read in simpler terms and for pronunciation of unknown words; engage in computer activities or any other activity you enjoy that involves reading in English.
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This study was a satisfying quest that supplied interesting information about the effects of both reading anxiety and cultural relevance on language performance and achievement of participants of Mexican and Chinese origin. I was fortunate to have an almost equal number of volunteers who shared ethnical backgrounds. This has focused my inquiry on the effects of RA and CR on the IVA of learners of English from these particular language groups. And even though the number of participants was not large, a limitation for the statistical analysis, it was still interesting to detect the patterns that emerged from the quantitative examination and to observe the way they overlapped with the patterns that surfaced from the qualitative evaluation. I will present the matching patterns by ethnic group below.

Participants of Mexican Origin

Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition

When observing vocabulary gain on the first post-test, it seemed natural to assume an apparent IVA. However, there was still a one-week waiting period, after which I planned to test for retention. After this second post-test, noticing that some participants retained the vocabulary gained and some did not, I was assured that the original vocabulary gain could not be considered acquisition. If the vocabulary gained is lost after
one week, then, technically it was not gained, much less *acquired*, a term that implies deep, meaningful learning. The retention score seemed to fit the definition of IVA better. However, this score did not account for the initial vocabulary gain or the starting point of the IVA process. At last, the score that would best exemplify IVA became clear: it was the difference score between the score on the first vocabulary test and the last. This score would balance vocabulary gain with retention of at least one week. Participants of Mexican origin all benefited from IVA, though the ones who read the culturally relevant story acquired significantly more vocabulary. This reveals two important conclusions: (1) To aid their language learning process, individuals of Mexican origin can benefit from reading. Even if they learn a small amount of vocabulary at each exposure, it is still a gain and one that carries no cost for the learner. (2) If individuals of Mexican origin read culturally relevant texts, they are likely to gain considerably more vocabulary. This is excellent news for those interested in rapid language learning. Reading can be an enjoyable activity, which can supplement the language learning process even to high benefit if the reading bears cultural relevance. This finding is consistent with previous research (e.g., Jimenez & Gamez, 1996). In terms of recommendations for language learning classrooms, it appears to be a significant experience for high-beginner level students to read culturally relevant texts. Teachers may find it useful to incorporate such texts into a type of reading program, possibly 10 minutes of reading per class. It would be interesting to investigate the effects of long-term exposure to culturally relevant texts.

**Reading Anxiety**

Participants of Mexican origin reported low to medium reading anxiety. The way their RA interacted with achievement, i.e., IVA, and with performance, i.e., actual scores
on the vocabulary tests, reflected the consistent irregularities in the findings produced in this area. Horwitz (2001) warned that studies in reading anxiety have reported all types of relationships: negative, positive and even no relationships. Interestingly, data for this study inclined toward both positive and negative relationships, the latter reaching significance. With respect to the impact of RA on achievement, a definite pattern occurred throughout the learning process. Initially, RA had a positive relationship with vocabulary gain, so the higher the anxiety, the more vocabulary knowledge was gained. However, RA had a significant negative relationship with retention indicating that the higher the RA, the more difficult it was for the participants to retain gained information. When it came to actual IVA, as defined in this study, there was no significant relationship with RA, even though a negative correlation was apparent. It is interesting that most findings in the past have found significant negative relationships. The crucial line that needs to be drawn is between achievement and performance. They are very different. The studies of the past have correlated anxiety with performance on tests, not actual achievement, or acquisition of new knowledge. When running an analysis on the effect of RA on performance, I also found that RA is the strongest variable, out of many significant others, that predicts performance. The consistency in these findings suggest that RA indeed negatively influences test performance. The effects of RA on achievement, however, can still use confirmatory research. This study suggests that retention is lowered by high anxiety but further investigation is required for RA’s effects on overall IVA.

Regarding these participants’ beliefs about what can lower RA, qualitative investigation revealed that my expectation was accurate, i.e., anxiety-evoking
environments hinder learning, and that the participants of this study confirmed the findings of past research in this area. Palacios (1998 as cited in Horwitz, 2001) found that classroom atmosphere and the teacher’s manner can be anxiety provoking. The participants of Mexican origin in this study actually used those exact words to express where anxiety can come from. It is important for language teachers to be familiar with their students’ attitudes and expectations of classroom environment. This study suggests that individuals of Mexican origin expect a comfortable, fun classroom environment, which they believe will prevent anxiety. It may be valuable to compare the effects of “comfortable” classroom environments to those of a more traditional language learning classroom on the actual performance of individuals from this ethnic group.

Lastly, with respect to Sparks, Ganschow, and Javorsky’s (2000) supposition that reading anxiety is the consequence, as opposed to the cause of poor performance, the data collected here do not support their claim. Participants of Mexican origin ranged in performance level and RA did not affect them significantly. In fact, they all experienced IVA, regardless of their initial competence level and RA. This suggests that even though RA is not a significant predictor of achievement, it is also not the result of poor performance.

**Cultural Relevance**

For the participants of Mexican origin, cultural relevance did lower RA. It also positively influenced all steps of the learning process, the initial vocabulary gain, retention and overall IVA. In fact, CR was the only predictor of IVA, out of many important variables. Considering its significant impact on IVA, I strongly recommend the implementation of the suggestions listed under the IVA section above. It was interesting
to find that the participants of Mexican origin did not hold a specific preference toward the reading of culturally relevant texts, even though they proved to benefit so highly from it. Though they predicted it would easier to read CR texts, it seems they did not know the advantages, in terms of actual vocabulary gain, that they could benefit from when reading CR texts. Again, I recommend that individuals of Mexican origin be acquainted with this discovery. It would be worthwhile to compare whether the advantages this study has found for high-beginners of Mexican origin is comparable to language learners of higher and/or lower levels of English proficiency. Table 16 incorporates my conclusions, ideas for implementation of findings, and recommendations for further study.

Table 16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants of Mexican Origin</th>
<th>IVA</th>
<th>RA</th>
<th>CR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For those interested in rapid language learning, reading can supplement the language learning process even to high benefit if the reading bears cultural relevance.</td>
<td>This study confirms that RA negatively impact performance, but not achievement. Participants indicated preference of comfortable classroom environment.</td>
<td>CR positively influenced all steps of the language learning process and was the only predictor of IVA, even though these participants indicated no significant preference toward CR texts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-beginner level adult ESL students can benefit from reading culturally relevant texts. Incorporating such texts into a reading program may be useful.</td>
<td>It is important for teachers to be familiar with students’ attitudes and expectations of classroom environment.</td>
<td>Teachers may wish to acquaint students of Mexican origin with the high vocabulary gains they can experience from CR reading.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It would be interesting to investigate the effects of long-term exposure to culturally relevant texts.</td>
<td>Further study of RA influence on achievement is necessary. Also, an analysis of how participants’ expectations of environment correlate with their actual performance and achievement would be interesting.</td>
<td>It would be worthwhile to examine whether the advantages this study has found for high-beginners is comparable to language learners of higher and/or lower levels of English proficiency.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants of Chinese Origin

Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition

This was a most interesting group to observe. The results will be discussed further in the RA and CR sections below because those factors are the ones that directed the changes in the IVA process. Here, it is noteworthy that the participants did experience IVA, though at a minimal level. On average, the ones who read the culturally relevant story gained 1.57 points worth of vocabulary knowledge and the ones who read the culturally irrelevant story, 3 points. The gain in vocabulary knowledge reflects increase in depth of vocabulary and comfort level with the knowledge of a word. Their gain was, as mentioned, minimal so it is important to consider the cause of these results. Overall, participants of Chinese origin reported a much higher RA level. In fact, there was a question on the FLRAS, which addressed how these participants felt about the new letters they had to learn when learning English. Participants in this group consistently indicated high anxiety toward this issue. It may be that this additional challenge that language learners of Chinese origin face is responsible for their low IVA. Further investigation of the adjustments needed to make reading profitable for individuals of Chinese origin is necessary. It was also surprising to find that those who read a culturally irrelevant story gained more than those who read the CR story did. I suspect that the CR markers chosen, i.e., character names, foods, and geographical locations, may have actually served as distractions due to their appearing in a foreign alphabet. Further study may reveal some interesting findings here.
Reading Anxiety

Participants of Chinese origin reported medium to high reading anxiety. It appears that RA does follow the general language learning anxiety trend where, as Truitt (1995 as cited in Horwitz, 2001) found, individuals of Asian origin seem to have a higher anxiety level. When asked to what RA may be due, the participants of Chinese origin in this study consistently indicated that their RA is due to their unfamiliarity with the language. This seems to support Sparks, Ganschow, and Javorsky's (2000) claim that low levels of English proficiency are the cause of all types of language learning anxiety. Curiously, participants at all levels of displayed proficiency, high and low, followed the same pattern of IVA: they gained a lot of vocabulary knowledge initially, did not retain it, and completely lost it after a week. As with the participants of Mexican origin, RA was not a high predictor of achievement, but it was a primary predictor of performance. I am not convinced, however, that their English proficiency is the cause of their RA, as they suggested because the varied additional challenges Asians face when learning English have not been sufficiently explored in conjunction with RA. A study that would isolate RA and measure it against different variables that are challenges exclusively for Asian learners of English would produce more accurate information regarding the origin and effects of RA on these individuals. As for my expectation, that an anxiety-producing environment hinders language learning, the participants of Chinese origin did not address this at all. They believed that increased English proficiency would lower their anxiety. It is notable that the person with the highest performance on the first vocabulary test, which was used to estimate English proficiency before research treatment, actually also had one
of the highest RA levels. Again, I suspect the variables influencing the RA level of participants of Chinese background remain to be examined.

**Cultural Relevance**

CR did reduce RA level, though not significantly. It also produced IVA for those reading the Chinese folktale, but surprisingly not as much as for those who read the Hungarian folktale. As discussed earlier, the significantly different challenges these participants faced may be responsible for these results. Further investigation is required to compare the variables identified as posing specific burden on this group of language learners, to cultural relevance. Only when controlling for the extra extraneous factors, such as the one identified in the FLRAS, i.e., the different alphabet, can we draw further conclusions about the role CR plays in proficiency gain. The quantitative data suggests CR does not aid participants of Chinese origin with vocabulary learning, while the qualitative data indicates that these individuals hold significant preference toward reading CR texts. It is valuable to further investigate, in the meticulous manner suggested above, what can aid them benefit from IVA. Table 17 includes my conclusions, ideas for implementation of findings, and recommendations for further study.

**Conclusion**

The interaction of three important aspects of reading in a foreign language, i.e. IVA, RA, and CR, has been explored. The analyses used have reiterated the power quantitative and qualitative methods have to complement each other and bring to light more accurate evaluations. Participants of Mexican origin benefited greatly from this investigation and, though participants of Chinese origin did not benefit as much, ideas for
the investigation of their unique needs have been identified. On a mission to meet the needs of the growing number of diverse language learners, I look forward to joining researchers in further exploration.

Table 17
Participants of Chinese Origin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>IV A</th>
<th>RA</th>
<th>CR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>IVA was experienced but not in significant quantities. The low IVA may be due to the anxiety provoked by the different alphabet, as reported on the FLRAS. CR did not serve as an aid but seems to have actually been a distraction.</td>
<td>RA was higher for the Chinese participants, as anticipated from the literature. Participants reported that they believe RA is caused by proficiency level in the target language and can, therefore be minimized by improving language proficiency.</td>
<td>The different challenges these learners face may be responsible for the lack of significant impact CR seemed to have on these participants' learning, even though they preferred CR texts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>Reading can produce vocabulary gain. Experimenting with reading programs that benefit Chinese students' language learning process is encouraged.</td>
<td>It is important for teachers to be familiar with students' attitudes toward RA and their suggestions for its remedy.</td>
<td>It is important for teachers to be aware of these participants' preference toward CR texts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation</td>
<td>Investigation of (1) what would make reading profitable for Chinese learners of English and (2) whether the new alphabet can serve as a distraction when it attempts to emulate Chinese words, is suggested.</td>
<td>A study that would isolate RA and measure it against different variables that are challenges exclusively for Asian learners of English would produce more accurate information regarding the origin and effects of RA on these individuals.</td>
<td>Only when controlling for the extraneous factors, such as the one identified in the FLRAS, i.e., the different alphabet, can we draw further conclusions about the role CR plays in proficiency gain.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Survey – Adaptation 1: The Pre-Test
FLRAS-pre Questionnaire

For questions 1-15, please give your first reaction using the following response scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. I get upset when I am not sure if I understand what I am reading in English.  
2. When I am reading English, I get so confused I cannot remember what I am reading.  
3. I feel intimidated whenever I see a whole page of English in front of me.  
4. I am nervous when I am reading a passage in English and I am not familiar with the topic.  
5. I get upset whenever I see unknown grammar when reading English.  
6. When reading English, I get nervous and confused when I do not understand every word.  
7. It bothers me to see words I cannot pronounce when reading English.  
8. I usually translate word by word when reading English.  
9. By the time I understand the funny letters in English, it is hard to remember what I am reading about.  
10. I am worried about the new letters I have to know in order to read English.  
11. I feel confident when I am reading in English.  
12. The hardest part of learning English is learning to read.  
13. I do not mind reading to myself, but I feel very uncomfortable when I have to read English aloud.  
14. American culture and ideas seem foreign to me.  
15. You have to know about American history and culture in order to read English easily.

16. At this moment, I believe my reading anxiety level is: High 4 3 2 1 Low

17. Before taking this class, my reading anxiety level was: High 4 3 2 1 Low
18. a. Is there a difference between the levels reported in items 16 and 17 above?
   ___Yes ___No
   b. If the answer to 18.a. was “yes”, please explain on the next page why there was a change in your anxiety level. Feel free to add any comments about this questionnaire in general.
Appendix B

Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Survey – Adaptation 2: The Post-Test
FLRAS-post Questionnaire

Questions 1-15 refer to the story you just read. Please use the following response scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>strongly agree</th>
<th>agree</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>I got upset because I was not sure if I understood the story.</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>When I read the story, I got so confused, I could not remember what I was reading.</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>I felt intimidated when I saw the long story in English.</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>I was nervous when I read the story because I was not familiar with the topic.</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>I got upset because I saw unknown grammar in the story.</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>When I read the story, I got nervous and confused because I did not understand every word.</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>It bothered me when I saw words I could not pronounce in the story.</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>I translated word by word when I read the story.</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>By the time I understood the funny letters, it was hard to remember what I was reading about.</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>I worried about the new letters I had to know in order to read the story.</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>I felt confident when I read the story.</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>The hardest part of learning English is learning to read.</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>I did not mind reading the story to myself, but I would feel very uncomfortable if I had to read the story aloud.</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>American culture and ideas seem foreign to me.</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>You have to know about American history and culture in order to read English easily.</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16. At this moment, I believe my reading anxiety level is: High 4 3 2 1 Low

17. Just before reading the story, my reading anxiety level was: High 4 3 2 1 Low
18. a. Is there a difference between the levels reported in items 16 and 17 above?
   ___Yes  ___No

   b. If the answer to 18.a. was "yes", please explain on the next page why there was a
      change in your anxiety level. Feel free to add any comments about this questionnaire
      in general.
Appendix C

The Vocabulary Test
Vocabulary Test

Please give a definition for the following words using the scale given.

1. QUEEN

☐ I do not remember having seen this word before.
☐ I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means.
☐ I have seen this word before, and I think it means ___________________. (synonym or translation)
☐ I know this word. It means ________________________________
☐ I can use this word in a sentence: ________________________________

2. IMMEDIATELY

☐ I do not remember having seen this word before.
☐ I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means.
☐ I have seen this word before, and I think it means ___________________. (synonym or translation)
☐ I know this word. It means ________________________________
☐ I can use this word in a sentence: ________________________________

3. MEAL

☐ I do not remember having seen this word before.
☐ I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means.
☐ I have seen this word before, and I think it means ___________________. (synonym or translation)
☐ I know this word. It means ________________________________
☐ I can use this word in a sentence: ________________________________
4. MIGHTY

☐ I do not remember having seen this word before.
☐ I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means.
☐ I have seen this word before, and I think it means __________________________. (synonym or translation)

☐ I know this word. It means __________________________. (synonym or translation)
☐ I can use this word in a sentence: __________________________.(If you do this section, please also do the section immediately above.)

5. DELICIOUS

☐ I do not remember having seen this word before.
☐ I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means.
☐ I have seen this word before, and I think it means __________________________. (synonym or translation)

☐ I know this word. It means __________________________. (synonym or translation)
☐ I can use this word in a sentence: __________________________.(If you do this section, please also do the section immediately above.)

6. GREW UP

☐ I do not remember having seen this word before.
☐ I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means.
☐ I have seen this word before, and I think it means __________________________. (synonym or translation)

☐ I know this word. It means __________________________. (synonym or translation)
☐ I can use this word in a sentence: __________________________.(If you do this section, please also do the section immediately above.)

7. CASTLE

☐ I do not remember having seen this word before.
☐ I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means.
☐ I have seen this word before, and I think it means __________________________. (synonym or translation)

☐ I know this word. It means __________________________. (synonym or translation)
☐ I can use this word in a sentence: __________________________.(If you do this section, please also do the section immediately above.)
8. FLOWED

☐ I do not remember having seen this word before.
☐ I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means.
☐ I have seen this word before, and I think it means ___________________________. (synonym or translation)
☐ I know this word. It means ___________________________. (synonym or translation)
☐ I can use this word in a sentence: _____________________________________________
                                             ___________________________. (If you do this section, please also do the section immediately above.)

9. POWERS

☐ I do not remember having seen this word before.
☐ I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means.
☐ I have seen this word before, and I think it means ___________________________. (synonym or translation)
☐ I know this word. It means ___________________________. (synonym or translation)
☐ I can use this word in a sentence: _____________________________________________
                                             ___________________________. (If you do this section, please also do the section immediately above.)

10. ANGRY

☐ I do not remember having seen this word before.
☐ I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means.
☐ I have seen this word before, and I think it means ___________________________. (synonym or translation)
☐ I know this word. It means ___________________________. (synonym or translation)
☐ I can use this word in a sentence: _____________________________________________
                                             ___________________________. (If you do this section, please also do the section immediately above.)

11. FAIRY

☐ I do not remember having seen this word before.
☐ I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means.
☐ I have seen this word before, and I think it means ___________________________. (synonym or translation)
☐ I know this word. It means ___________________________. (synonym or translation)
☐ I can use this word in a sentence: _____________________________________________
                                             ___________________________. (If you do this section, please also do the section immediately above.)
12. RIVER

☐ I do not remember having seen this word before.
☐ I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means.
☐ I have seen this word before, and I think it means ___________________. (synonym or translation)

☐ I know this word. It means ___________________. (synonym or translation)

☐ I can use this word in a sentence: ___________________.

(If you do this section, please also do the section immediately above.)

13. WISE

☐ I do not remember having seen this word before.
☐ I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means.
☐ I have seen this word before, and I think it means ___________________. (synonym or translation)

☐ I know this word. It means ___________________. (synonym or translation)

☐ I can use this word in a sentence: ___________________.

(If you do this section, please also do the section immediately above.)

14. BOTTLE

☐ I do not remember having seen this word before.
☐ I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means.
☐ I have seen this word before, and I think it means ___________________. (synonym or translation)

☐ I know this word. It means ___________________. (synonym or translation)

☐ I can use this word in a sentence: ___________________.

(If you do this section, please also do the section immediately above.)

15. AMAZED

☐ I do not remember having seen this word before.
☐ I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means.
☐ I have seen this word before, and I think it means ___________________. (synonym or translation)

☐ I know this word. It means ___________________. (synonym or translation)

☐ I can use this word in a sentence: ___________________.

(If you do this section, please also do the section immediately above.)
16. FOREST

☐ I do not remember having seen this word before.
☐ I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means.
☐ I have seen this word before, and I think it means __________________________. (synonym or translation)

☐ I know this word. It means __________________________. (synonym or translation)

☐ I can use this word in a sentence: ___________________________.

(If you do this section, please also do the section immediately above.)

17. BASKET

☐ I do not remember having seen this word before.
☐ I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means.
☐ I have seen this word before, and I think it means __________________________. (synonym or translation)

☐ I know this word. It means __________________________. (synonym or translation)

☐ I can use this word in a sentence: ___________________________.

(If you do this section, please also do the section immediately above.)

18. KINGDOM

☐ I do not remember having seen this word before.
☐ I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means.
☐ I have seen this word before, and I think it means __________________________. (synonym or translation)

☐ I know this word. It means __________________________. (synonym or translation)

☐ I can use this word in a sentence: ___________________________.

(If you do this section, please also do the section immediately above.)

19. UGLY

☐ I do not remember having seen this word before.
☐ I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means.
☐ I have seen this word before, and I think it means __________________________. (synonym or translation)

☐ I know this word. It means __________________________. (synonym or translation)

☐ I can use this word in a sentence: ___________________________.

(If you do this section, please also do the section immediately above.)
20. ENORMOUS

☐ I do not remember having seen this word before.
☐ I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means.
☐ I have seen this word before, and I think it means _____________________. (synonym or translation)

☐ I know this word. It means ___________________________________________. (synonym or translation)
☐ I can use this word in a sentence: _______________________________________. (If you do this section, please also do the section immediately above.)

21. WITCH

☐ I do not remember having seen this word before.
☐ I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means.
☐ I have seen this word before, and I think it means _____________. (synonym or translation)

☐ I know this word. It means ___________________________________________. (synonym or translation)
☐ I can use this word in a sentence: _______________________________________. (If you do this section, please also do the section immediately above.)

22. POURED

☐ I do not remember having seen this word before.
☐ I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means.
☐ I have seen this word before, and I think it means _____________________. (synonym or translation)

☐ I know this word. It means ___________________________________________. (synonym or translation)
☐ I can use this word in a sentence: _______________________________________. (If you do this section, please also do the section immediately above.)

23. CAUSING

☐ I do not remember having seen this word before.
☐ I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means.
☐ I have seen this word before, and I think it means _____________________. (synonym or translation)

☐ I know this word. It means ___________________________________________. (synonym or translation)
☐ I can use this word in a sentence: _______________________________________. (If you do this section, please also do the section immediately above.)
24. TRUSTED

☐ I do not remember having seen this word before.
☐ I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means.
☐ I have seen this word before, and I think it means __________________________. (synonym or translation)

☐ I know this word. It means __________________________. (synonym or translation)

☐ I can use this word in a sentence: __________________________. (If you do this section, please also do the section immediately above.)

25. TOWERS

☐ I do not remember having seen this word before.
☐ I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means.
☐ I have seen this word before, and I think it means _________________. (synonym or translation)

☐ I know this word. It means __________________________. (synonym or translation)

☐ I can use this word in a sentence: __________________________. (If you do this section, please also do the section immediately above.)

26. RUDELY

☐ I do not remember having seen this word before.
☐ I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means.
☐ I have seen this word before, and I think it means __________________________. (synonym or translation)

☐ I know this word. It means __________________________. (synonym or translation)

☐ I can use this word in a sentence: __________________________. (If you do this section, please also do the section immediately above.)

27. INCLUDING

☐ I do not remember having seen this word before.
☐ I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means.
☐ I have seen this word before, and I think it means __________________________. (synonym or translation)

☐ I know this word. It means __________________________. (synonym or translation)

☐ I can use this word in a sentence: __________________________. (If you do this section, please also do the section immediately above.)
28. RESPONDED

- I do not remember having seen this word before.
- I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means.
- I have seen this word before, and I think it means _____________________________. (synonym or translation)
- I know this word. It means _____________________________. (synonym or translation)
- I can use this word in a sentence: _____________________________. (If you do this section, please also do the section immediately above.)

29. ALRIGHT

- I do not remember having seen this word before.
- I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means.
- I have seen this word before, and I think it means _____________________________. (synonym or translation)
- I know this word. It means _____________________________. (synonym or translation)
- I can use this word in a sentence: _____________________________. (If you do this section, please also do the section immediately above.)

30. TRANSFORMED

- I do not remember having seen this word before.
- I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means.
- I have seen this word before, and I think it means _____________________________. (synonym or translation)
- I know this word. It means _____________________________. (synonym or translation)
- I can use this word in a sentence: _____________________________. (If you do this section, please also do the section immediately above.)
Appendix D

The Magic of Rio Grande – A Mexican Folktale
Once upon a time, the land we now call Mexico was one big kingdom called Tenochtitlan. This kingdom was ruled by a king and a queen who had a daughter named Xochitl. They lived happily in a mighty castle with ivory white towers. As the time passed, Xochitl grew up to be the most beautiful and wise princess in the land.

One day, an evil witch named La Llorona heard about how happy everyone was in that kingdom. She became very angry because she did not want people to be happy. So she went to see for herself if the story about Tenochtitlan was true.

She traveled the kingdom for three days and three nights and she saw happy people everywhere. She finally reached the castle and she was amazed, absolutely shocked at how beautiful the castle was. There was a forest full of mighty trees that stood like guards all around the castle. In the middle of the lively green forest, La Llorona could see the grand castle. It was enormous, so big that you could see its towers rise above the forest that surrounded it. A river with sparkling waters and happy fish flowed in front of the castle. The people called this river Rio Grande and said that it had magic powers.

La Llorona started laughing and laughing when she heard about the magic powers of the river. She thought that her powers were greater and she knew that she could change this beautiful place into a very ugly one where everyone was unhappy. So she started her work, causing problems for everyone. In a few years, the people of that happy kingdom became very unhappy. No one knew how to stop the evil witch.

One day, Xochitl decided that something must be done to stop the witch. She told her parents that she was going to visit the witch and talk to her. Her parents were afraid but they also knew that Xochitl was not only beautiful, she was also intelligent. They trusted Xochitl.

So Xochitl started her plan. She first cooked a very big meal with the most delicious tamales, pozole and capirotada. She packed all the food in a basket. She also took a big bottle and filled it with water from the river Rio Grande. Xochitl was now ready. She took all she prepared and went to La Llorona’s house.

“La Llorona, I have something for you” said Xochitl nicely.

“What is it?!” responded La Llorona rudely.

Xochitl showed her the basket of delicious food. La Llorona could smell the tamales from the house and she really wanted some.

“Let’s have this meal together and talk” suggested Xochitl.
La Llorona didn't know what to think about the whole situation but she really wanted to eat those pozole and capirotada immediately. So she agreed and invited Xochitl into her house. They sat at the table and started eating. La Llorona thought there could not be anything wrong because Xochitl was eating the same food and they were both alright. Xochitl offered La Llorona water also. Xochitl drank some first to show La Llorona it was OK. This was the water from the river, of course. When La Llorona drank the water, she immediately fell asleep. Then, Xochitl put La Llorona on the bed and poured the rest of the river water on her. The next morning, La Llorona woke up and she looked very confused.

"How are you?" asked Xochitl.

"I am feeling very ... happy. But who are you? And who am I?" responded La Llorona.

"I am princess Xochitl and, now, you are La Llorona a good fairy who helps people become happy".

So, you see, the river water transformed the witch into a good person. Now that La Llorona was not a witch anymore, she went everywhere in the kingdom making all the people happy because she wanted everyone to be as happy as she was. So, Xochitl, the king and the queen, and all the people of that kingdom, including La Llorona lived happily ever after. That was the magic of Rio Grande.
Appendix E

The Magic of Chang Jiang – A Chinese Folktale
The Magic of Chang Jiang

A Chinese Folktale

Once upon a time, the land we now call Mexico was one big kingdom called Qing Dynasty. This kingdom was ruled by a king and a queen who had a daughter named Pai Ping. They lived happily in a mighty castle with ivory white towers. As the time passed, Pai Ping grew up to be the most beautiful and wise princess in the land.

One day, an evil witch named Dazi heard about how happy everyone was in that kingdom. She became very angry because she did not want people to be happy. So she went to see for herself if the story about the Qing Dynasty was true.

She traveled the kingdom for three days and three nights and she saw happy people everywhere. She finally reached the castle and she was amazed, absolutely shocked at how beautiful the castle was. There was a forest full of mighty trees that stood like guards all around the castle. In the middle of the lively green forest, Dazi could see the grand castle. It was enormous, so big that you could see its towers rise above the forest that surrounded it. A river with sparkling waters and happy fish flowed in front of the castle. The people called this river Chang Jiang and said that it had magic powers.

Dazi started laughing and laughing when she heard about the magic powers of the river. She thought that her powers were greater and she knew that she could change this beautiful place into a very ugly one where everyone was unhappy. So she started her work, causing problems for everyone. In a few years, the people of that happy kingdom became very unhappy. No one knew how to stop the evil witch.

One day, Pai Ping decided that something must be done to stop the witch. She told her parents that she was going to visit the witch and talk to her. Her parents were afraid but they also knew that Pai Ping was not only beautiful, she was also intelligent. They trusted Pai Ping.

So Pai Ping started her plan. She first cooked a very big meal with the most delicious Jiao Zi, Sui Mai and Won Ton. She packed all the food in a basket. She also took a big bottle and filled it with water from the river Chang Jiang. Pai Ping was now ready. She took all she prepared and went to Dazi’s house.

“Dazi, I have something for you” said Pai Ping nicely.

“What is it?!” responded Dazi rudely.

Pai Ping showed her the basket of delicious food. Dazi could smell the Jiao Zi from the house and she really wanted some.

“Let’s have this meal together and talk” suggested Pai Ping.
Dazi didn’t know what to think about the whole situation but she really wanted to eat those Sui Mai and Won Ton immediately. So she agreed and invited Pai Ping into her house. They sat at the table and started eating. Dazi thought there could not be anything wrong because Pai Ping was eating the same food and they were both alright. Pai Ping offered Dazi water also. Pai Ping drank some first to show Dazi it was OK. This was the water from the river, of course. When Dazi drank the water, she immediately fell asleep. Then, Pai Ping put Dazi on the bed and poured the rest of the river water on her. The next morning, Dazi woke up and she looked very confused.

“How are you?” asked Pai Ping.

“I am feeling very ... happy. But who are you? And who am I?” responded Dazi.

“I am princess Pai Ping and, now, you are Dazi a good fairy who helps people become happy”.

So, you see, the river water transformed the witch into a good person. Now that Dazi was not a witch anymore, she went everywhere in the kingdom making all the people happy because she wanted everyone to be as happy as she was. So, Pai Ping, the king and the queen, and all the people of that kingdom, including Dazi lived happily ever after. That was the magic of Chang Jiang.
Appendix F

The Magic of Duna – A Hungarian Folktale
The Magic of Duna

A Hungarian Folktale

Once upon a time, the land we now call Hungary was one big kingdom called Pannonia. This kingdom was ruled by a king and a queen who had a daughter named Gyöngyvér. They lived happily in a mighty castle with ivory white towers. As the time passed, Gyöngyvér grew up to be the most beautiful and wise princess in the land.

One day, an evil witch named Boszorka heard about how happy everyone was in that kingdom. She became very angry because she did not want people to be happy. So she went to see for herself if the story about Pannonia was true.

She traveled the kingdom for three days and three nights and she saw happy people everywhere. She finally reached the castle and she was amazed, absolutely shocked at how beautiful the castle was. There was a forest full of mighty trees that stood like guards all around the castle. In the middle of the lively green forest, Boszorka could see the grand castle. It was enormous, so big that you could see its towers rise above the forest that surrounded it. A river with sparkling waters and happy fish flowed in front of the castle. The people called this river Duna and said that it had magic powers.

Boszorka started laughing and laughing when she heard about the magic powers of the river. She thought that her powers were greater and she knew that she could change this beautiful place into a very ugly one where everyone was unhappy. So she started her work, causing problems for everyone. In a few years, the people of that happy kingdom became very unhappy. No one knew how to stop the evil witch.

One day, Gyöngyvér decided that something must be done to stop the witch. She told her parents that she was going to visit the witch and talk to her. Her parents were afraid but they also knew that Gyöngyvér was not only beautiful, she was also intelligent. They trusted Gyöngyvér.

So Gyöngyvér started her plan. She first cooked a very big meal with the most delicious gulyás, paprikás csirke and dobos torta. She packed all the food in a basket. She also took a big bottle and filled it with water from the river Duna. Gyöngyvér was now ready. She took all she prepared and went to Boszorka’s house.

"Boszorka, I have something for you" said Gyöngyvér nicely.

“What is it?!” responded Boszorka rudely.

Gyöngyvér showed her the basket of delicious food. Boszorka could smell the gulyás from the house and she really wanted some.

“Let’s have this meal together and talk” suggested Gyöngyvér.
Boszorka didn’t know what to think about the whole situation but she really wanted to eat those paprikás csirke and dobos torta immediately. So she agreed and invited Győngyvér into her house. They sat at the table and started eating. Boszorka thought there could not be anything wrong because Győngyvér was eating the same food and they were both alright. Győngyvér offered Boszorka water also. Győngyvér drank some first to show Boszorka it was OK. This was the water from the river, of course. When Boszorka drank the water, she immediately fell asleep. Then, Győngyvér put Boszorka on the bed and poured the rest of the river water on her. The next morning, Boszorka woke up and she looked very confused.

“How are you?” asked Győngyvér.

“I am feeling very … happy. But who are you? And who am I?” responded Boszorka.

“I am princess Győngyvér and, now, you are Boszorka a good fairy who helps people become happy”.

So, you see, the river water transformed the witch into a good person. Now that Boszorka was not a witch anymore, she went everywhere in the kingdom making all the people happy because she wanted everyone to be as happy as she was. So, Győngyvér, the king and the queen, and all the people of that kingdom, including Boszorka lived happily ever after. That was the magic of Duna.
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