Understanding Unfamiliar Words In A Text: Do L2 Learners Understand How Much They Don't Understand ?

Batia Laufer and Yasukata Yano
University of Haifa, Israel and Waseda University, Japan

The study investigates how accurately learners can assess their understanding of words and whether this accuracy is influenced by the learners' culture, gender and lexical knowledge. The subjects were 106 university students of English in China, Israel and Japan. The study was carried out in three stages. In stage one, the students were asked to read a text and assess their understanding of twenty target words in text context. For each word, the subjects had to state whether they did not understand it, understood it approximately, or fully understood it. In stage two, they were asked to translate or explain these words, in stage three, to self-assess their understanding, as in stage one. The objective scores from stage two were compared with self-assessment scores from stage one and three. We found that all learners over-estimated their understanding of words. The mismatch between the objective and the perceived understanding was not affected by gender, but was related to the country of the learners and their objective lexical knowledge.

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary learning is a never ending process in one's native language, let alone in a foreign language. In spite of the lexical growth which is characteristic of native or foreign language development, it is impossible to master the entire lexicon in any language. According to modest estimates, native speakers of English who are high school graduates know about 20,000 word families[1], a figure which corresponds to about 32,000 lexical items (Nation 1990). Dictionaries, on the other hand, even if they are intended for learners, contain much larger numbers of words e.g. 56,000 headwords (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English), 50,000 (Cambridge International Dictionary of English), 63,000 (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary).

The vocabulary of foreign learners who are high school graduates and even university students does not amount to a quarter of the vocabulary known by their native speaking peers. In Indonesia, EFL university learners are reported to know 1,220 word families after 900 hours of instruction (Nurweni and Read 1999), in Japan, 2,000-2,300 after 800-1,200 hours of instruction (Shillaw 1995, Barrow et al.1999),

---

Dr BATIA LAUFER is Chair of English Language and Literature at the University of Haifa. She teaches and supervises research in Applied Linguistics, Second Language Acquisition and Vocabulary Acquisition. She has published in the areas of L2 vocabulary acquisition, L2 reading, cross-linguistic influence, and vocabulary testing. She may be contacted at: Dept. of English Language and Literature, University of Haifa, Haifa 31905 ISRAEL e-mail: batialau@research.haifa.ac.il http://english.haifa.ac.il/batia.htm
YAKASUKATA YANO is Professor of Applied Linguistics in the School of Education at Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan and has been a visiting fellow and professor at the University of London and University of Hawaii, and is President of the Japan Association of Applied Linguistics. Special interests are TEFL, Pragmatics and World Englishes. Contact at the address above and at: yano@mn.waseda.ac.jp

in Oman 2,000 after more than 1,350 hours of instruction. (Horst et al. 1998). The best high school graduates in Israel were found to know 3,500 word families after 1,500 hours of instruction (Laufer 1998). The above figures represent passive vocabulary knowledge as the Vocabulary Levels Test (Nation 1983) used in the studies required the learners to recognise the meaning of tested items.

And yet foreign learners in tertiary education are expected to read authentic academic texts which were not written for people with a limited vocabulary and are therefore bound to contain many words unfamiliar to the learners. The surest way to gradually reduce the load of unfamiliar vocabulary is to keep on learning new words, which is a demanding and a never ending process. At the same time, to alleviate the lexical burden, learners are encouraged to use several reading strategies when they come across unknown vocabulary. They are taught that if a word is considered unimportant for the understanding of the message, it can be ignored. If it is deemed important, its meaning can be looked up in a dictionary, or inferred from context. The latter strategy has been particularly advocated by some reading experts (Haastrup 1991, Schouten-van Parreren 1989, Elley 1989). They have argued that guessing is beneficial for the flow of reading and may eventually lead to the retention of the guessed word. Other researchers, however, have warned against the pitfalls and dangers of guessing, both as an online reading strategy and as a way to acquire vocabulary incidentally (Laufer 1997, Hulstijn 1992). One solution which is recommended against incorrect guesses is verification of the guess in a dictionary (Mondria 1993).

Our belief in the efficacy of guessing, looking up words in a dictionary, or both, must rest on two assumptions. First, we assume that learners can notice unknown words, i.e. recognise which words are unfamiliar to them, and, second, that they can accurately assess their ability to guess these words correctly. Yet these assumptions cannot be taken for granted. First, students may not recognise some words as unfamiliar because they confuse them with other words. For example, a student who has come across 'adapt' may think s/he is reading 'adopt' rather than an unfamiliar word which should be guessed or looked up (see Laufer 1989, 1997 for the discussion of Deceptive Transparency). Second, even when the student has noticed a word as unfamiliar and attempted to guess it, the guess may be incorrect. Yet the learner may not verify the word meaning in a dictionary if s/he is confident that the guess was successful. Guessing and verification are important and useful reading strategies, but their efficacy depends on two conditions: a. that learners are accurate in recognizing words as unfamiliar and b. that they are either accurate in their guesses, or critical enough to admit defeat in their attempt to guess. If these conditions do not obtain with learners, then we might have overestimated the value of guessing and verification of meaning as compensatory strategies in reading

comprehension. If this is the case then expanding the learners' vocabulary knowledge is even more important than has been realised so far.

Brutten (1981) investigated whether students and teachers agreed on which words were considered difficult for comprehending a text. The students were asked to read a text and underline words they felt they could not understand. Teachers were asked to underline words they thought their students did not understand. The agreement between the two groups was 53%. The study did not check the students' objective knowledge of the vocabulary in the text, the words they underlined and other words which they considered familiar. The gap between the objective and the perceived knowledge is what may determine how learners approach unknown vocabulary.

We do not know how accurately learners assess their understanding of unfamiliar words and whether this accuracy is similar to all of them, or whether it is a function of cultural background, gender, or the real lexical knowledge. A culture in which risk taking, confidence and an urge to win are respected could indirectly promote unwillingness to admit ignorance and failure. On the other hand, a culture in which caution and modesty are virtues could lead to a more careful and critical self-assessment. If women are less assertive and less confident than men, we may expect a lower self evaluation than in the case of men. The real lexical knowledge may also influence self-assessment and the relationship between the two may be non-linear. The task of distinguishing known from unknown words may not be very difficult at the beginning stage of learning, when very little is known, or at very advanced, near native-like, stage when little is unknown. However, between these extremes, learners may be less certain about which words they know and how well they know them.

THE STUDY

The study investigates how accurate learners are in recognizing words as unfamiliar and whether this accuracy is affected by cultural background, by gender and by lexical knowledge.

Research Questions

The specific research questions were as follows :

1 How accurately can EFL learners assess their understanding of lexical items in text context?
2 Do learners from different cultures assess themselves differently?
3 Is there a difference between males and females in the accuracy of self-assessment?
4 Do learners with different lexical knowledge assess themselves differently?

Subjects

The subjects chosen for the study were all 'advanced' EFL learners from three different countries. All were students in their first or second year in the English department and their vocabulary size was found to be around 4,000 word families by a previously administered Vocabulary Levels Test (Nation 1983). Their regular written assignments showed that their free expression was fluent even though it contained occasional lexical and grammatical errors.

We investigated learners in 3 different cultural environments. Our subjects were 46 Israeli learners, whose mother tongue was Hebrew, 34 Japanese learners, whose L1 was Japanese, and 26 Chinese EFL university learners whose L1 was Mandarin.

PROCEDURE

Twenty lexical items in text context were chosen for investigation. A pre-test of these words that was given to a group of learners of a similar language proficiency showed that about 40% of the words were familiar to the learners while the rest were not. This was a satisfactory proportion as we wanted to elicit judgements about known and unknown vocabulary.

Stage One - Self-assessment

The subjects were given a 600 word text and a list of 20 target words on a separate sheet (see Appendix). Next to each word, there was a line number which showed where the word appeared in the text. There were also three numbers next to each word: 0, 1, 2 which were the self-assessment scores learners assigned to their comprehension of the word. They were asked to read the text, look at each word in text context and circle one of the three numbers next to it: 0 if they thought they did not understand the word, 1 for approximate understanding and 2 for complete understanding. When the self-assessment task was completed, the word lists with self-assessment ratings were collected.

Stage Two - Objective assessment

Immediately after the collection of self-assessment sheets, the learners received a clean sheet of the same 20 words. Next to each word there was a blank and in it the learners were asked to write an L1 translation of the word, or its explanation in English. Since the text remained available for consultation, learners could see the word in text context. Upon completion of the task, the translation sheets were collected. The text sheets remained with the students.

Stage Three - Second self-assessment

Immediately after the collection of the translation sheets, learners received word sheets as in stage one and were asked to rate their understanding of the target words once more as in Stage One. This was done in order to check whether self-perception would change after a task which required the actual demonstration of

knowledge in Stage Two. Upon completion of the second self-assessment task, the sheets were collected.

Data Analysis

For each student, we obtained three data sheets. Two of these (from Stage One and Stage Three) contained self-rating. The test sheets from Stage Two, which contained translations, or explanations of the target words, were marked by the researchers. When a blank was left next to the word, or when the word was mistranslated, it received 0 points. When the translation was correct it received 2 points. When it was approximate, i.e. contained some of the semantic features, but not all, it received 1 point.

The three assessment sheets were compared for each student.

We noted cases where word knowledge was assessed correctly, i.e. the self-score on a word was identical to the score given by the researcher, where it was overestimated, i.e. self-score was higher than the objective score, and where it was underestimated, i.e. the self-score was lower than the objective score.

Each student received 5 final scores. Three were the total word comprehension scores on each of the three tests. The maximum score of each test could be 40 (20 words x 2 points), if all the words were judged to be fully known by the learner in Stages One and Three of the experiment, or if all of them were correctly translated in Stage Two. Furthermore, each student received an over-assessment score and an under-assessment score. The first showed the difference between the self-given scores and the objective scores for all those words in which the knowledge was overestimated by the learner, i.e. words for which self-score was higher than the objective score. The second was the difference between the objective scores and the self-given scores for all those words in which the knowledge was underestimated by the learner, i.e. the self-given score was lower than the objective score. Each student was coded for gender and for country.

RESULTS

The results in Tables 1-6 answer research question 1:

- How accurately can EFL learners assess their understanding of lexical items in context?

The tables present the real scores of the learners, the self-given scores, the differences between the two after each self-assessment test, and the differences between the scores of the two self-assessment tests. These results are presented separately for each country that was investigated.

'Real score' is the score the learners received on the translation test (the test was given once though it appears twice in the tables for purposes of clarity). The two

'self-scores' reflect the subjects' self-evaluation. The mismatch value (self-given score - real score) shows the discrepancy between the objective and the subjective evaluations. The differences between self-score and objective score, and the difference between the two self-scores were calculated by paired t-tests. One asterisk * means that the result marked by it was significant at .05 level, ** - at .01 level, *** - at .001 level.

In Tables 2, 4, 6, the mismatch between the objective and the self-given scores is separated into over- and under-assessment scores as pointed out in the data analysis section. Comparisons between the mismatches of the first self-assessment test and the second one, vis a vis the real score, were calculated by paired t-tests.

	1st self-assessment test maximum score = 40				**2nd self-assessment test** maximum score=40			
	mean	sd	min	max	mean	sd	min	max
Real score	14.73	6.76	2	29	14.73	6.76	2	29
Self-given score	19.76	6.54	3	30	19.05	6.75	2	31
Mismatch	5.03** 34% higher	5.01	-9	16	4.32** 29% higher	5.09	-6	15

Table 1: Japanese learners (n=34) - Self-assessment versus real knowledge

The negative figure of the 'minimum mismatch' means that a learner under-evaluated himself/herself. The difference between self-given scores on the two self-assessment tests was not significant.

	1st self-assessment test		**2nd self-assessment test**		**difference**
	mean	sd	mean	sd	
Over-assessment (real score =14.73)	7.41 50% higher	3.62	6.48 44% higher	3.92	Not significant
Under-assessment (real score =14.73)	2.46 17% lower	2.23	2.2 15% lower	1.93	Not significant

Table 2: Japanese learners: Mismatch analysed

	1st self-assessment test maximum score = 40				**2nd self-assessment test** maximum score=40			
	mean	sd	min	max	mean	sd	min	max
Real score	15.5	7.89	3	35	15.5	7.89	3	35
Self-given score	27.15	4.98	4	40	26.78	5.5	13	40
Mismatch	11.65*** 75% higher	5.01	-4	23	11.28*** 73% higher	5.55	-2	23

Table 3: Israeli learners (n=46) - Self-assessment versus real knowledge

The difference between self-given scores on the two self-assessment tests was not significant.

	1st self-assessment test		**2nd self-assessment test**		**difference**
	mean	sd	mean	sd	
Over-assessment (real score =15.5)	13.67 89% higher	4.86	13.02 84% higher	4.82	Not significant
Under-assessment (real score =15.5)	1.93 12% lower	1.69	1.70 11% lower	1.33	Not significant

Table 4: Israeli learners: mismatch analysed

	1st self-assessment test maximum score = 40				**2nd self-assessment test** maximum score=40			
	mean	sd	min	max	mean	sd	min	max
Real score	18.15	4.12	8	24	18.15	4.12	8	24
Self-given score	25.73	4.23	17	33	25.38	4.23	17	33
Mismatch	7.58** 42% higher	4.57	-2	17	7.23** 40% higher	5.55	-1	15

Table 5: Chinese Learners (n=26) - Self-assessment versus real knowledge

The difference between self-given scores on the two self-assessment test was not significant.

	1st self-assessment test		**2nd self-assessment test**		**difference**
	mean	sd	mean	sd	
Over-assessment (real score =18.5)	10.88 60% higher	3.55	10.34 57% higher	3.28	Not significant
Under-assessment (real score =18.5)	3.07 17% lower	1.85	2.72 15% lower	1.64	Not significant

Table 6: Chinese learners: mismatch analysed

The results in Tables 1-6 show that learners were not accurate in their self-assessment of whether they understood unfamiliar words in a text. This was true for learners in all three countries that had been researched. Even though in some isolated cases they underestimated their understanding, on the whole, they assumed they understood more than they actually did. This error in judgement did not change even after the students had been asked to translate the target words. The differences in under-assessment and over-assessment did not change significantly. The overall inflated score of subjective lexical understanding ranged from 29% in the case of the Japanese learners (Table 1) to as much as 75% in the case of the Israeli learners (Table 3).

The results in Table 7 answer research question 2:

- Do learners from different cultures assess themselves differently?

The table presents summaries of the real and self-given scores for the three groups of learners. It also shows the differences (calculated by F-tests) between the groups in the real scores and in their errors of judgement, or mismatches between the real and the self-given scores.

	1st self-assessment test maximum score = 40				**2nd self-assessment test** maximum score=40			
	Japanese	Israelis	Chinese	Difference	Japanese	Israelis	Chinese	Difference
Real score	14.73	15.5	18.15	Not Significant	14.73	15.5	18.15	Not significant
Self-given score	19.76	27.15	25.73		19.05	26.78	25.38	
Mismatch	5.03	11.65	7.58	F(2,103) = 16 P<.0001	4.32	11.28	7.23	F(2,103) = 18.76 P<.0001
Over-assesment	50%	89%	60%	F(2,103) = 21.76 P<.0001	44%	84%	57%	F(2,103) = 22.10 P<.0001
Under-assessment	17%	12%	17%	F(2,103) = 2.96 P=0.56	15%	11%	15%	F(2,103) = 3.29 P<.05

Table 7: Japanese, Israeli and Chinese Learners Compared

The difference in the real scores of the 3 groups of learners was not significant. This means that the learners were roughly equivalent in their lexical knowledge. Yet they differred significantly in their self-evaluation. To check which pairs of groups were different, the mismatch, the over-assessment and the under-assessment scores were subjected to post hoc ANOVA test. Duncan's Multiple Range test showed that in the 1st self-evaluation test, the Israeli group was different from the other two groups while after the second self-evaluation test, all three groups were different from one another with regard to the mismatch between the real and the self-given score. On the under-assessment scores, the Israeli group was different from the other two in the two tests. On the over-assessment, all three groups were different from one another in both self-assessment tests. The Israeli group displayed the highest error of judgement in its lexical understanding, the Japanese group the

lowest. The results suggest that learners' self-assessment may be influenced by their cultural background.

The results in tables 8-10 answer research question 3:

- Is there a difference between males and females in the accuracy of self-assessment?

The tables present the results by gender: self-given scores, real scores, mismatches between the two, and gender differences. Comparison of males and females was calculated by t-tests.

	1st self-assessment test				**2nd self-assessment test**			
	Males (n=21)		Females (n=13)	Difference	Males (n=21)		Females (n=13)	Difference
	Mean	sd	Mean sd		Mean	sd	Mean sd	
Real score	14.73	7.4	14.5 5.08	Not significant	15.1	7.4	14.5 5.08	Not significant
Self-given score	19.67	7	19.92 5.99	Not significant	19.19	7.4	18.85 5.69	Not significant
Mismatch	4.57	5.4	5.76 4.39	Not significant	4.09	4.3	4.70 3.87	Not significant

Table 8: Japanese learners: males and females compared

	1st self-assessment test				**2nd self-assessment test**			
	Males (n=7)		Females (n=39)	Difference	Males (n=7)		Females (n=39)	Difference
	Mean	sd	Mean sd		Mean	sd	Mean sd	
Real score	14.43	4.03	15.69 8.42	Not significant	14.43	4.03	15.69 8.42	Not significant
Self-given score	25.29	6.02	27.49 4.79	Not significant	25.43	7.99	27.03 5.04	Not significant
Mismatch	10.86	6.97	11.80 5.21	Not significant	11.00	3.75	11.34 5.67	Not significant

Table 9: Israeli learners: males and females compared

	1st self-assessment test				2nd self-assessment test			
	Males (n=9)		Females (n=17)	Difference	Males (n=9)		Females (n=17))	Difference
	Mean	sd	Mean sd		Mean	sd	Mean sd	
Real score	18.44	2.69	18.00 4.77	Not significant	18.44	2.69	18.00 4.77	Not significant
Self-given score	26.44	3.08	25.35 4.78	Not significant	24.77	4.12	25.70 4.38	Not significant
Mismatch	8.00	1.08	7.35 5.55	Not significant	6.33	1.4	7.70 5.52	Not significant

Table 10: Chinese learners: males and females compared

The results in Tables 8-10 show that male and female learners did not differ in their self-assessment. Both genders over-evaluated their lexical comprehension to a similar extent.

The fourth research question was

- Do learners with better lexical knowledge assess themselves more accurately?

The question was answered in two ways. We correlated between the real score, i.e. the objective lexical knowledge and the mismatch, i.e. the difference between the self-given and the real score. Spearman rank order correlation was moderate and significant -.48, p.0001 for all learners. The negative correlation means that the higher the lexical score, the lower the mismatch. This suggests that learners with better lexical knowledge are more accurate in their self-assessment.

We also divided all the learners into 3 groups by their objective lexical scores. The entire range of scores was from 2 to 35. Hence, group 1 included learners with scores lower than 12, group 2 included scores which ranged from 12 to 23, group 3 had scores from 24 to 35. The 3 groups were compared on the mismatch between the self-given and the real scores in the 2 self-assessment tests. The F-tests were significant ($F(2,103)=12.89$, $p<.0001$ and $F(2,103)=11.51$, $p<.0001$ respectively). Duncan's multiple range tests showed that the three groups of learners were significantly different from one another. These results corroborate the correlation found earlier between the learners' lexical level and their accuracy of judgement.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study clearly demonstrated that learners do not assess their lexical understanding very accurately. In this experiment, learners were asked to rate their

comprehension of the target words in text context. If a word was comprehended, this could have been the result of prior knowledge of this word, or the result of a successful attempt to infer its meaning from contextual clues. Our subjects thought they comprehended most target words while in fact they did not. This means that either they did not recognize the words as unfamiliar, or they did and thought they inferred their meaning but, in fact, they could not do this. In a real life reading situation, these learners will probably not consult the dictionary since, due to the over-evaluation of their comprehension, they are unaware of the need for the dictionary. The over-evaluation is equally charactersitic of men and women. It may be different, however, in different cultures. The most 'Western' group of subjects, the Israeli group, exhibited the largest mismatch between self-perceived and real lexical understanding. The Japanese learners were the most modest ones, but they too over-evaluated themselves. The results of the Japanese learners were somewhat surprising for the researchers, who expected them to follow the cultural tradition of a more humble self-evaluation. A possible explanation for these unexpected results could be the westernization process of the young Japanese people (Yano, 1997). Nevertheless, the Japanese learners exhibited the lowest mismatch between perceived and objective lexical understanding.

The study demonstrated that self-evaluation of lexical comprehension is related to the level of lexical knowledge. Our subjects were English majors, above high school level but below native speaker competence. As stated earlier, the task of distinguishing known from unknown material may not be difficult at beginner and near native like levels of proficiency. Our learners, like most language learners, were between these extremes. According to our results, such learners exhibit better self evaluation when they improve their lexical knowledge.

The results of this study underscore the importance of vocabulary enrichment programmes. Noticing unknown words, success in inferring meaning from context and dictionary use cannot be taken for granted. Better lexical knowledge, on the other hand, leads to a more accurate self evaluation. Hence, the best way to ensure accuracy in distinguishing comprehended from uncomprehended words and subsequent dictionary consultation is increasing learners' vocabulary knowledge. This may be particularly important for groups of learners who may have been brought up to feel confident in their own ability and take frequent risks. A high vocabulary coverage of the text, i.e. a large percentage of known vocabulary of the text, is claimed to be essential for successful reading comprehension (Hirsh and Nation 1992, Hazenberg and Hulstijn 1996, Laufer 1997). One of the reasons for this may lie in the positive effect a high coverage has on learners' ability to understand what they do not understand.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

We assume that lack of awareness of unknown vocabulary may interfere with successful comprehension. Whether this indeed happens is a question for further empirical research which could relate learners' awareness of vocabulary understanding to their text comprehension.

Another question is whether the lack of awareness is, to some degree, the "fault" of the text rather than of learners' tendency to over-estimate their knowledge. In a future study, the target words could include words of different importance to the understanding of the message and also words with different types of contextual clues. It is possible that learners do not give much thought to the less important words, or are over-confident about words which seem to have contextual clues to their meanings.

Finally, self-assessment may be related the person's cultural background, as our results suggest. In a follow-up study, we will try to gather self-evaluation data of older Japanese subjects and compare them with the data of the students. Such a comparison will test our assumption that the younger generation has absorbed some influence from the Western thought and behaviour which is reflected, among other things, in over-evaluating their knowledge. Similar studies could be conducted with learners from different social and socio-economic backgrounds and different age groups.

NOTES

1 A word family consists of the basic word and its common derivatives as outlined in Bauer and Nation (1993)

2 Some European results of high school students in the middle of high school studies suggest that the results at the end of the school may not be much better than in Israel.

REFERENCES

Barrow J, Nakashimi, Y. and Ishino, H. (1999) Assessing Japanese College students vocabulary knowledge with a self-checking familiarity survey. *System*, 27, 223-247.

Bauer, L. and Nation, I.S.P. (1993) Word families. *International Journal of Lexicography*, 6, 253-279.

Brutten, S. R. 1981. An analysis of student and teacher indications of vocabulary difficulty. *RELC Journal*, 12, 66-71

Elley, W.B. (1989) Vocabulary acquiistion from listening to stories. *Reading ResearchQuarterly* 24, 174-187.

Haastrup, K. (1991) *Lexical inferencing procedures or talking about words.* Tubingen: Gunter Narr.

Hazenberg, S. and Hulstijn, J.H. (1996) Defining a minimal receptive second vocabulary for non-native university students: an empirical investigation. *Applied Linguistics,* 17, 145-163.

Hirsh, D. and Nation, P. (1992) What vocabulary size is needed to read unsimplified texts for pleasure? *Reading in a Foreign Language,* 8, 689-696.

Hulstijn, J.H. (1992) Retention of inferred and given word meanings: experiments in incidental vocabulary learning. In P.J.L Arnaud and H. Bejoint (Eds) *Vocabulary and Applied Linguistics,* London: MacMillan

Horst, M., Cobb, T. and Meara P. (1998) Beyond a clockwork orange: acquiring second language vocabulary through reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language,* 11, 207-223.

Laufer, B. (1989) A factor of difficulty in vocabulary learning: deceptive transparency. *AILA Review 6 (Vocabulary Acquisition),* 10-20.

Laufer, B. (1997) The lexical plight in second language reading: words you don't know, words you think you know and words you can't guess. In J. Coady and T. Huckin (Eds) *Second Language Vocabulary Acquisition: a Rationale for Pedagogy.* Cambridge University Press. pp. 20-34

Laufer, B. (1998) The development of passive and active vocabulary in a second language: same or different? *Applied Linguistics,* 12, 255-271

Mondria, J-A. (1993) *The effects of different types of context and different types of learning activity on the retention of foreign language words.* Paper presented the 10th AILA World Congress of Applied Linguistics, Amsterdam.

Nation, I.S.P. (1983) Testing and teching vocabulary. *Guidelines* 5 (1), 12-25.

Nation, I.S. P. (1990) *Teaching and Learning Vocabulary.* New York: Heinle and Heinle.

Nurweni, A. and J. Read. (1999) The English vocabulary knowledge of Indonesian University students. *English for Specific Purposes,* 18, 161-175.

Schouten-van Parreren, C. (1989) Vocabulary learning through reading: which conditions should be met when presenting words in texts? *AILA Review 6 (Vocabulary Acquisition),*75-85.

Shillaw, J. (1995) Using a word list as a focus for vocabulary learning. *The Language Teacher* (JALT), 19 (2), 58-59.

Yano, Y. (1997) Contact Llnguistics to contact culture Studies: Western influence in modern Japanese and its usage. In W. Wolck and A. De Houwer (Eds) *Plurilingua: Recent Studies in Contact Linguistics*. Brussels: Dummler-Bonn, Research Centre on Multilingualism, XVII, 474-480

APPENDIX

Text

Most children take maleness or femaleness as their first identification of themselves. But once this identification is made, the growing child then begins to compare itself not only in physique, but even more importantly in impulse and interest, with those ABOUT it.

Are all of its interests those of its own sex? "I'm a boy, but I love colour, and colour is something that interests only women." "I'm a girl, but I'm FLEET of foot and love to run and LEAP. Running and leaping, and shooting arrows are for boys, not girls." "I'm a boy but I love to RUN soft materials THROUGH my fingers; an interest in touch is feminine, and will unsex me." "I'm a girl, but my fingers are clumsy, better at handling an axe-handle than at stringing beads; axe-handles are for men." So the child, experiencing itself, is forced to reject such parts of its particular biological inheritance as conflict sharply with the sex stereotype of its culture.

Moreover, a sex stereotype that DECREES the interests and occupations of each sex is usually not completely without a basis. The stereotyped idea of the male or female in a given society may CONFORM very closely to the temperament of a particular type of male or female. For the children who do not belong to these preferred types, only the primary sex characteristics will be DEFINITIVE in helping them to classify themselves. Their impulses, their preferences, and later much of their PHYSIQUE will be abnormal.

They will be DOOMED throughout life to sit among the other members of their sex feeling less a man, or less a woman, simply because the cultural ideal is based on a different set of clues, a set of clues however no less VALID.

We can understand what is meant by different cultural ideals if we look at the roles of males and females in the Tchambuli tribe in New Guinea. In Western society, women are supposed to be passive and men active, powerful, aggressive and achieving. In the Tchambuli, it is the women who have the real position of power in society. Men never fish unless a sudden SCHOOL of fish appears in the lake, when they may leap into canoes in a FROLICSOME spirit, and SPEAR a few fish. But the real business of fishing is controlled

entirely by the women: for traded fish they obtain sago, TARO and areca nut. And the most important manufacture, the mosquito-bags, are made entirely by women. Moreover, the women control the money even though they may permit the men to do the shopping, both for food at the market and in trading the mosquito bags.

The men make a gala occasion of these LATTER shopping trips: when a man has the final negotiations for one of his wives' mosquito-bags IN HAND, he goes off RESPLENDENT in feathers and shell ornaments to spend a delightful few days over the TRANSACTION. He will take his time about it and enjoy bargaining. He will enjoy looking at what he might buy in the same way as a modern woman with a well-filled purse looks forward to a shopping trip in a big city. But the Tchambuli male can only spend the money that he brings back if his wife APPROVES. He has got a good price from the PURCHASER; he has still to persuade his wife to give him some pocket money. From boyhood up, Tchambuli men have to realise that real property, which they actually own, can only be received from women. To get it they have to give the women romantic looks and soft words.

Self-assessment. Name_____ (M/F)

Look at the following words. They are written in capital letters in the text. For each word, say whether you understand its meaning as used in the text, or not. Rate your understanding on a scale: 0 - don't understand, 1 - understand approximately, 2 - fully understand.

Circle the appropriate number for each word.

Word	Line number	Word understanding
1. about	3	0. 1. 2
2. fleet	6	0. 1. 2
3. leap	7	0. 1. 2
4. run through	8	0. 1. 2
5. decrees	13	0. 1. 2
6. conform	15	0. 1. 2
7. definitive	17	0. 1. 2
8. physique	18	0. 1. 2
9. doomed	19	0. 1. 2
10. valid	20	0. 1. 2
11. school	27	0. 1. 2
12. frolicsome	28	0. 1. 2
13. spear	28	0. 1. 2
14. taro	30	0. 1. 2
15. latter	34	0. 1. 2
16. in hand	35	0. 1. 2
17. resplendent	36	0. 1. 2
18. transaction	37	0. 1. 2
19. approves	40	0. 1. 2
20. purchaser	41	0. 1. 2

Translation/Explanation Name_____

Translate the following words into your mother tongue or explain them in English. Look at the text to see what the words mean in the text and translate them accordingly.

Word	Line number	Word understanding
1. about	3	_____
2. fleet	6	_____
3. leap	7	_____
4. run through	8	_____
5. decrees	13	_____
6. conform	15	_____
7. definitive	17	_____
8. physique	18	_____
9. doomed	19	_____
10. valid	20	_____
11. school	27	_____
12. frolicsome	28	_____
13. spear	28	_____
14. taro	30	_____
15. latter	34	_____
16. in hand	35	_____
17. resplendent	36	_____
18. transaction	37	_____
19. approves	40	_____
20. purchaser	41	_____