

Teaching How to Infer Cultural Features through the Integration of the Directed Reading Thinking Activity

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Abstract:

*Language teaching is inextricably intertwined with culture teaching, and the reading skill is not exempted whereby many cultural features are pervasively encoded in literary texts. As an aftermath to the delineation of the poor level of inferential reading comprehension of first-year students of English at l'Ecole Normale Supérieure of Sétif- Messaoud Zeghar- Algeria, the instruction of the inferential comprehension of culturally laden texts through the integration of the Directed Reading Thinking Activity stimulated the aim behind the current scrutiny. To this end, a quasi-experimental pretest/posttest design constituted the methodological framework by dint of a purposeful sample selection of 34 students. Fundamental to this research was the selection of a realistic narrative entitled *The Great Gatsby*, which is inherently ingrained in the American culture. Ultimately, the statistical outcomes of the independent samples t-test on the performance of the posttest revealed a significant difference of $p = .000$ at the probability level of $\alpha < .05$ in favor of the experimental group. This fact accentuated the positive effect of the treatment on the inferential reading comprehension whereby cultural schemata were omnipresent. Accordingly, diverse cultural features, that had characterized the American society in the 1920s, were inferred.*

Keywords: *Inferential Reading Comprehension; Culture Instruction in EFL; Cultural Features in The Great Gatsby; Directed Reading Thinking Activity*

1. Introduction

Foreign language learners are exposed to myriad written materials in which the target culture is implanted; hence, reading becomes multifaceted as to learning both the target language and the target culture (Kramsch, 1993). Additionally, the ultimate end of reading is reading comprehension which is a compound process in terms of the large array of conscious and subconscious strategies employed by the reader to construct meaning (Johnson,

2008). Nonetheless, this is not an easy task to achieve because reading strategies might be either ineffective or missing altogether in the reader's mind (Carrell, 1985; Dreyer & Nel, 2003; Johnston, 1983). Therefore, teaching readers how to infer the implied meaning whereby cultural schemata cognitively fuel this process has been proven of weight and worth by many scholars in different times and contexts (Alderson, 2005; Barnett, 1989; Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983; Hudson, 2007; Koda,

2004; Perfetti & Stafura, 2015; Rumelhart, 1980).

Nevertheless, the absence of the instructional techniques that purport to enhance higher-order thinking of reading comprehension is one of the main reasons behind the poor inferential reading comprehension of first-year students of English at l'École Normale Supérieure (ENS, hereafter) of Sétif- Messaoud Zeghar-Algeria, as it has been revealed in a pre-experimental study with these students and their teacher in charge of the reading module. Moreover, the dilemma in inferring the implied meaning is partially colligated to the paucity of the learners' repertoire from some cultural features relevant to English cultures.

To this end, the instruction of inferential reading comprehension in the English as a foreign language (EFL, henceforth) educational context could be achieved through the implementation of the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA, hereafter) (El-Koumy, 2006; Nazari & Hashemi, 2012). This technique functions by dint of the direction of learners' thinking while reading in the eventual search to develop their critical and reflective reading comprehension (Fatmawati, 2015; Nazari & Hashemi, 2012; Novita, 2014). In light of these assertions, the current research integrates the DRTA to help promote inferential reading comprehension.

In this respect, many studies investigated the nexus between the DRTA and reading comprehension in the EFL setting, notwithstanding they relatively differ with regard to the population, the level of reading comprehension under scrutiny,

and whether the DRTA is used as a single technique or alongside other techniques. Researchers examined the effect of the DRTA on referential and inferential comprehension of secondary school students in Egypt (El-Koumy, 2006) and Iran (Nazari & Hashemi, 2012). Other investigations scrutinized the effect of the DRTA on reading comprehension, as a comprehensive construct, of eighth-grade (Novita, 2014) and tenth-grade Indonesian students (Fatmawati, 2015). The DRTA was integrated through cooperative learning to investigate its effect on the reading comprehension of secondary stage students in Jordan (AL Odwan, 2012). Besides, the DRTA was implemented with Guided Reading as another strategy to compare their respective efficiency on secondary school Iranian students' reading comprehension (Yazdani & Mohammadi, 2015).

Albeit the foregoing investigations spotlighted the effectiveness of the DRTA on enhancing learners' reading comprehension, they left some gaps to be bridged by the current probe. The latter brings groundbreaking elements to the forefront of the research stockpile: the Algerian context, the participants' grade as university students, the scrutiny of a well-defined single level of comprehension, i.e., the inferential comprehension and subsequently the nature of inferential questions, which are advanced in contrast to the previous studies. Another key element to foreground is the nature of the instructional material. None of the abovementioned studies opted for texts endowed with cultural features as a vital

step to raise learners' awareness of the target culture ingrained in the reading texts. Therefore, the researcher selects an American cultural fingerprint, i.e., the American Dream that is accorded an overall specific interpretation when it is espoused with a certain period of American history. Both *The Grapes of Wrath*, the story adapted for the pretest/posttest, and *The Great Gatsby*, the story chosen for the treatment, inherently embrace this aspect.

As a corollary, the present investigation aims at promoting the inferential comprehension of culturally loaded texts through the implementation of the DRTA as a remedial instructional technique. To meet this purpose, the following questions need to be answered: what is the effect of integrating the DRTA on the inferential comprehension of first-year students of I' ENS? To what extent do these students infer some target cultural features via the integration of the DRTA? Accordingly, this hypothesis needs to be tested to answer the research questions: if the DRTA is integrated, there will be an improvement of the participants' inferential reading comprehension, and consequently, they will infer an array of cultural features pertinent to the target culture.

2. Literature Review:

2.1. Inferential Reading Comprehension:

Koda (2004) asserts that "an inference is information not explicitly stated in the text, and it arises from the need to mentally bridge voids in explicitly stated text elements" (p.131). The overwhelming bulk of scholars contend that the act of inferring the implied meaning stems from the reader's prior knowledge and that it has

nothing to do with the conventional meaning of words in a text (Perfetti & Stafura, 2015).

2. 2. Schema Theory and Inferential Comprehension in the Foreign Language Classroom:

The omnipresent position of the background knowledge in the process of comprehension is labeled schema theory whereby the reader's previously acquired knowledge structures are dubbed schemata (Alderson, 2005; Barnett, 1989; Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983; Hudson, 2007; Rumelhart, 1980). Fundamental to schema theory is the paramount contribution of the reader in the construction of meaning by dint of some explicit textual clues (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983).

Additionally, Carrell and Eisterhold (1983) confirm that there is a double-faceted point that must be present to ensure comprehension. First and foremost, the existence of the right schema is mandatory; afterward, it has to be activated during the process of text understanding. The inability of the reader to activate the suitable schema, however, is associated with either the lack of some necessary textual elements that are not furnished by the author in the first place or the total absence of this schema in the reader's mind. Consequently, the logical question that should be leveled in this context is: what makes some schemata part of certain readers' mental dictionary and others not? Carrell and Eisterhold elucidate this question by admitting that schemata are culturally determined, i.e., each culture has its idiosyncratic content schemata. In other words, schemata may be either culturally-

based or culturally biased in relation to the reader's socio-cultural proximity/distance from the writer (Alderson, 2005).

2.2.1. Teacher's Role to Stimulate the Appropriate Schemata:

In light of the potential variability in the schemata of readers, it is by no means rational to think of an author who successfully conveys his/her intention to every single reader regardless of their own particular and unique cultural aspects (Goodman, 1979). Accordingly, Carrell and Eisterhold (1983) assert that FL teachers are in the position to plug this gap through their assistance to activate the students' appropriate schemata whilst reading. According to these authors, the instructor's manipulation of the reader and/or the text is pivotal to dispatch this end.

2.3. Definition of Culture:

Culture is a multifaceted concept that can be depicted as a "complex system of concepts, attitudes, values, beliefs, conventions, behaviours, practices, rituals, and lifestyle of the people who make up a cultural group, as well as the artefacts they produce and the institutions they create" (Liddicoat et al., 2003, p.45). In this vein, culture is conceptualized either as the deep layers of the 'little c' culture in compliance with a repository of values, beliefs, attitudes, assumptions, perceptions, expectations, and identities that are pertinent to a certain speech community, or knowledge about the 'Big C' culture concerning a certain society's history, civilization, geography, institutions and the artifacts that the elite creates in congruence

with literature, music, dance, architecture, sculpture, and painting (Liddicoat, 2002).

2.4. Culture Instruction in the Foreign Language Classroom:

The cultural dimension of language is at the heart of any language learning, and the reading skill is no exception. In this respect, Kramersch (1993) asserts that "culture in language learning is not an expendable fifth skill, tacked on, so to speak, to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading and writing. It is always in the background, right from day one" (p. 1). Besides, FL learners who are exposed to culturally loaded texts need to be equipped with a set of appropriate strategies in the ultimate quest to infer the implied meaning which is culturally conditioned (Koda, 2004).

2.5. Directed Reading Thinking Activity:

The DRTA is an instructional strategy coined by Stauffer (1969, as cited in AL Odwan, 2012; El-Koumy, 2006; Fatmawati, 2015; Nazari & Hashemi, 2012; Novita, 2014). It aims at directing learners' thinking while reading to nurture their critical reading comprehension (El-Koumy, 2006). Additionally, Haggard (1988) confirms that via the integration of the DRTA "students are guided through the process of sampling text, making predictions based upon prior knowledge and textual information, resampling text, and confirming or adjusting predictions in light of new information" (p. 527).

The DRTA is framed within a three-step process of prediction, reading, and proving/disproving the previously made predictions; or, as it has been otherwise labeled, pre-reading, during reading, and

post-reading (AL Odwan, 2012; El-Koumy, 2006; Fatmawati, 2015; Nazari & Hashemi, 2012; Novita, 2014). Furthermore, the task of both students and instructors during the practice of the DRTA is well determined. On the one hand, students engage in a plethora of roles mainly producing predictions; hence, setting purposes for their reading, justifying those hypotheses, reading the part where the evidence is displayed, and then concretely confirming/refuting those predictions. On the other hand, the teacher is in charge of text choice, its division into manageable sections based on the premise that each part contains information gaps upon which the learner builds his/her predictions; then, the instructor directs the predictions and justifications of the students (Stahl, 2008, as cited in Novita, 2014).

3. Research Methodology:

3.1. Research Sample:

The current study was conducted during the academic year of 2016/2017. The sample under investigation consisted of 34 first-year students of English at l'ENS of Sétif -Messaoud Zeghar-Algeria, whose ages ranged between eighteen and twenty years old, and who have been learning English for seven to eight years. Subsequently, the sample assignment to the comparison and the experimental groups was voluntary in the sense that seventeen students volunteered to be part of the experimental group, and the remaining seventeen students were assigned to the comparison group.

3. 2. Experimental Design:

The present probe manipulates the integration of the DRTA, which is the independent variable, and examines its impact on the dependent variable, i.e., the inferential comprehension whereby cultural schemata are primordial. Besides, the quasi-experimental design was the possible choice due to the non-randomized assignment of the sample to the control and the experimental groups (Bhattacharjee, 2012). In this continuum, a pretest/posttest non-equivalent group design is selected. Albeit there exists an alleged disconformity between the characteristics of the comparison and the treatment groups that may stymie the accurate interpretation of the findings due to the non-random assignment (Lodico et al., 2006), the existence of the general linguistic placement test and the pretest prior to the treatment affords sound insights as to the homogeneity/heterogeneity of the control and comparison groups. By this token, it has been empirically established that both groups are relatively homogenous in terms of their linguistic competence and inferential reading comprehension before the treatment.

3.3. Pretest/Posttest:

This test is self-designed, and it attempts to measure the inferential reading comprehension of the sample. It embraces an adapted text entitled *The Grapes of Wrath* that is written by John Steinbeck. Additionally, this test is built upon two criteria. Firstly, it matches the level of inferential questions with the participants' cognitive maturity. Secondly, the text depicts a factual era of American history

that embodies different socio-cultural features.

Moreover, it is compartmentalized into nine main items each of which contains a twofold scaling technique: a three-level multiple-choice structure and an open-ended justification of the selected option. The purport of merging these assessment strategies is twofold. The multiple-choice structure helps in restraining the scope of the answer. The requirement of the justification, however, is paralleled to the precepts of the DRTA and to the implicit nature of the inferential understanding which has to be overt and explicit to the rater, besides its elimination of the haphazard answer to the item.

Inasmuch as the pretest/posttest is self-developed because of the unavailability of a valid and reliable test that meets the set of criteria upon which the current test is devised, its validity will be questionable provided that it is not piloted. Consequently, the first draft was refined by a board of ten teachers in literature, didactics, and research methodology. Afterward, this test was piloted with a convenient sample of students other than the experimental sample in the ultimate quest to meet their knowledge of the vocabulary items, their overall comprehension of the literal meaning, and the time frame of the test.

3. 4. Rationale of the Narratives Selection:

The logical line of thought in the choice of *The Great Gatsby* as the experimental material, and *The Grapes of Wrath*, as the text of the pretest/posttest, is derived from

the inherent realistic depiction that these narratives reveal. They both depict historical eras that reflect some of the American socio-cultural agendas. *The Great Gatsby* is heavily rooted in the period of the Roaring Twenties, and *The Grapes of Wrath* is underpinned in the era of the Great Depression. Besides, the common cultural feature that both stories share is the underlying notion of the American Dream which bears different interpretations in varied historical periods.

Moreover, the economical and political circumstances play an actuating role so that this interpretation takes on a collective consensus upon which people of each period act. Basically, it is a collective dream of a whole nation that is set for each individual's search for prosperity. Nevertheless, the inevitable quest for the sophisticated self-actualization produces some subsidiary consequences that undress humans from their moral accounts in favor of materialistic gains.

This collective interpretation of the American Dream is documented through both eras via the citizens of East and West Eggs in *The Great Gatsby* and the Californians in *The Grapes of Wrath*; with some exceptions, Nick and Gatsby in *The Great Gatsby*, and The Joads family in *The Grapes of Wrath* who reserve their moral beings against the greediness of concrete luxury. Ultimately, the acquaintance of the experimental group with some cultural aspects, through these realistic narratives, is the main objective that underlies this option.

3.5. Description of the Experimental Phase:

This period has been split into seven sessions of about ten hours. Before the inception of the treatment, the researcher has compartmentalized the experimental material into manageable sections; each contained a predictive gap and/or clues for evidence. To concretize, a detailed description of some experimental sessions is provided (cf. Appendix A).

In the present study, the independent t-test is used twice to compare the means of the control and the experimental groups on the performance of the pretest and the posttest.

H0: Mean of the experimental group on the pretest = Mean of the control group on the pretest

H1: Mean of the experimental group on the pretest ≠ Mean of the control group on the pretest.

4. Analysis and Interpretation of Findings:

4.1. Quantitative Findings:

4.1.1. Hypotheses Testing:

Table 1. Independent T-Test of the Pretest of the Control and the Experimental Groups

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means ²						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Pre-test : experimental and control groups	,023	,880	,095	30	,925	,15098	1,59016	-3,0965	3,3985
			,095	29,609	,925	,15098	1,58867	-3,0953	3,3972

This table indicates that Levene's Test for Equality of Variances demonstrates that $TS=f=,023$; $p=,880$; $p>,05$. These findings mean that no evidence suggests the inequality of the variances of the

experimental and the control groups. Therefore, the Pooled t-test results of equal variances assumed are used rather than the Welch t-test results. This means that the distribution of the scores in both groups is

similar in shape that is already backed up with their equal standard deviations which are the square roots of their variances. Accordingly, the results read from the pooled t-test display that $TS = t(30) = .095$; $p = .925$ and $p > .05$. This fact indicates that the mean score between the groups is not significantly different (.15) and that the null hypothesis, concerning the existence of no significant difference between the

experimental and the control groups on the performance of the pretest, is accepted. Besides, only 7,5% of the difference between the groups' performance may be due to chance at the probability level of $\alpha = .05$. It is 95% confident to say that the actual difference of the mean scores between the groups is between -3,09 and 3,39.

Table 2. Independent T-Test of the Posttest of the Experimental and the Control Groups

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Post-test : experimental and control groups	Equal variances assumed	,131	,721	4,32	27	,000	6,77644	1,56862	3,5578	9,9949
	Equal variances not assumed			4,34	26,28	,000	6,77644	1,56001	3,5715	9,9813

H0: Mean of the experimental on the posttest = Mean of the control on the posttest

H1: Mean of the experimental on the posttest ≠ Mean of the control on the posttest

This table exhibits that Levene's Test for Equality of Variances shows that $TS = f = 13$;

$p = .721$; $p > .05$. These findings mean that the variances of the experimental and the control groups are not significantly different. Thus, the Pooled t-test results of equal variances assumed are used rather than the Welch t-test results. This means that the distribution of the scores in both groups is similar in shape that is already backed up by their equal standard

deviations which are the square roots of their variances. Consequently, the results demonstrated by the Pooled t-test show that $TS = t(27) = 4,320$; $p = ,0001$ and $p < ,05$. This indicates that the mean score between the groups is significantly different (6,77) and that the null hypothesis, concerning the existence of no significant difference between the experimental and the control groups on the performance of the posttest, is statistically rejected, and that less than,01% of the difference between the groups' performance is due to chance. Rather, a percentage of 99.9999% is attributed to the effects of the treatment. It is 95% confident to say that the actual difference of the mean scores between the groups is between -3,55 and 9,99.

4.1.2. Interpretation to Disclose the Efficacy of the DRTA:

The main purport propelling the act of conducting this probe is to investigate the effects of integrating the DRTA on the inferential comprehension of first-year students of l'ENS through the intentional incorporation of culturally loaded texts. As a corollary, the findings from this scrutiny reveal significant positive differences between the inferential comprehension of the control and the experimental groups in favor of the latter after the implementation of the DRTA.

Moreover, the results of this scrutiny further validate the empirical outcomes of

two studies conducted by El-Koumy (2006) and Nazari and Hashemi (2012) in which they accentuate the positive effects engendered by the implementation of the DRTA on FL learners' referential and inferential reading comprehension. Over and above, the improvement of this group's inferential comprehension might be due to the activation of the appropriate cultural schemata through the researcher's assistance and direction during the verbal discussion (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983). This progress might align with the act of instilling new cultural schemata that characterize the American society and which were initially absent from the participants' background knowledge repertoire before the experiment.

4.2. Analysis and Interpretation of Qualitative Findings:

This segment is devoted to the document analysis of data gathered from the post-reflections of the experimental group after the accomplishment of the treatment.

4.2.1. Analysis of Post-Reflections:

Through the lens of document analysis, the researcher viewed and reviewed the reflections of the experimental group participants after the accomplishment of the experiment. Accordingly, the main patterns that emerged were: inferential comprehension and cultural features. These patterns are thoroughly analyzed by means of the following table:

Table 3. Analysis of the Post-Reflections of the Experimental Group

Code	Theme	Label
Inferential comprehension	Development in inference	-Reading between the lines. -Inferencing. -Getting the implicit meaning. -Infer meaning. -Getting the right intention of the author and his purpose of writing. -Understanding what is behind the words. -Understanding the implicit ideas.
	Enhancement of critical thinking	-Think critically. -Read intelligently. -Think deeply. -Use the critical minds to answer mysterious questions. -Engaging minds in the right and good way.
	Development in text analysis	-Text analysis. -Text understanding.
Cultural features	The inference of some cultural features of the American society during the 1920s	-Social class segregation. -The materialistic interpretation of the American Dream by the majority of Americans. -The lack of moral considerations. -The superiority of masculinity in terms of physical and mental power. -The bad and dark consequences of the materialistic interpretation of the American Dream.

4.2.2. Interpretation of Post-Reflections:

Throughout the reflections furnished by fourteen students, who constituted part of the experimental group, two omnipresent codes emerge: inferential comprehension and cultural features. Accordingly, diverse themes pertinent to each code are established, and each theme is labeled differently by varied participants.

On the one hand, the most recurring pattern is associated with the improvement of the participants' inferential comprehension that is displayed in three themes. Firstly, the development of the participants' inference is stressed by the majority of the participants; for instance, quoting some participants: "I feel that my inferences developed way much better" and "This technique (discourse analysis) helps me to improve my thinking and I

benefit how to get the implicit meaning". Secondly, another definition of inferential comprehension is embodied in the development of the participants' critical thinking. To illustrate, one participant asserts: "this technique really helped me to develop my critical thinking", and another participant confirms: "this technique is a good technique elaborate my (ability) capacity of reading and engage brain to think critically". Lastly, other participants refer to inferential comprehension by talking about their progress in text analysis. In this vein, some participants assert: "I learned how to analyse a text", and "This process helps a lot to understand the text". Moreover, this finding is emphasized by Silver et al. (2012), who consider that "inference is a 'foundational skill'-a prerequisite for higher-order thinking" (p.2).

On the other hand, another emerging pattern is exhaustively stated by the majority of the participants in relation to the inference of some cultural features that characterize the American society during the 1920s. For instance, a participant contends: "The American society was new to me. I learned a lot of their culture in the 1920s: the material interpretation of the American dream, the bad consequences of it, the negative regard to women and the positive to men", and another participant affirms: "I have acquired some American culture, the American dream, social class and the material interpretation of the American dream in the 1920s".

5. Discussion of Findings:

Initially, to answer the first research question with respect to the nature of the

effect of integrating the DRTA on the inferential comprehension of first-year students of l' ENS, it is compulsory to discuss the quantitative findings that spring from the analysis of the performance on the pretest and posttest.

The quantitative findings of the current investigation reveal no significant difference between the experimental and the control groups regarding their initial level of inferential comprehension before the treatment. Additionally, these findings demonstrate a statistically significant accretion of the experimental participants' inferential comprehension in comparison to the control participants after the treatment. Accordingly, the alternative hypothesis, which predicts a significant difference between the inferential comprehension of the control and experimental groups because of the implementation of the DRTA, is confirmed. Over and above, the inferences, generated by the experimental group, are based on an array of cultural features pertinent to the American society during the 1920s.

Subsequently, the second research question, in accordance with the extent to which the integration of the DRTA helps in the inference of some cultural features, is answered by means of the results generated from the analysis of the post-reflections of the treatment group. The inference of a plethora of American cultural aspects during the 1920s that underpin the narrative of *The Great Gatsby* is tangled with the implementation of the DRTA as part of the assigned predictions. These features are the excessive consideration of the materialistic gains at the expense of

moral standards, the social class division, the social standards of masculinity and femininity, and the bad consequences of the materialistic interpretation of the American Dream.

6. Conclusion:

The main purpose of the current research was to help first-year students of l'ENS palliate the expedient difficulties in compliance with their inferential comprehension, which were partially attributed to their unfamiliarity with the target culture. The DRTA as a remedial instructional technique was the rational choice to pedagogically solve this problem. The DRTA was incorporated within a particular socio-cultural sphere of the American society during the 1920s via implementing the realistic narrative of *The Great Gatsby*. The positive effect of the DRTA on the improvement of the experimental groups' inferential comprehension was confirmed. Accordingly, it was disclosed that this technique was effective in the inference of an array of American cultural features during the 1920s.

This scrutiny fuels the emergence of myriad pedagogical implications for the instruction of the reading skill to university students. The integration of the DRTA is significant to cultivate the inferential comprehension of university students as a new and fertile sample of investigation. Moreover, the inference of some target cultural features, by virtue of the DRTA, is of paramount importance, and this fact is attained by the careful selection of culturally dense English texts. Furthermore, the implementation of the DRTA builds strong social networks

between students and instructors. Eventually, the selection of other university levels and other culturally-bound narratives is highly recommended.

Over and above, insofar as there is no flawless research whatsoever, the current scrutiny has been faced by a bulk of empirical limitations that need to be considered by further studies to improve the outcomes. As far as the participants' non-random assignment to the experimental and the control groups, the fact of jeopardizing the internal validity is still leveled. Accordingly, true experimental designs via the randomization of sample assignment are more robust alternatives for prospective studies. Additionally, the inconvenience to find the narrative texts in a form of graded readers to succinctly ensure the literal comprehension of the participants before the inferential process constitutes a further limitation to be overcome by other investigations.

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Appendix A

Some Experimental Sessions

1. Session One:

1.1. Pre-Reading Phase:

The following section was distributed, and the definition of “fashionable” was

highlighted: “Fashionable means having elegance or taste in manners or dress”.

Fig.1. Section One

In the summer of 1922, it was a matter of chance that I have rented a house in one of the strangest communities northeast of the United States. I lived at West Egg-the less fashionable- in comparison to its neighbouring district- East Egg- though this is the most superficial label to express the bizarre contrast between them.

Then, the documents on which learners could write their prediction, justification, and evidence were distributed whereby this question was raised: Based on this section and mainly on the definition of fashionable, can you predict the characteristics of West Egg and East Egg citizens? Justify your answer. Afterward, some of the predictions and justifications of the students were given orally:

1. “West Egg citizens are poor and East Egg citizens are rich, trendy, elegant and stylish because of the comparison between them by the author”. This argument was rejected because there was no indication of poor versus rich in the passage and the only comparison that existed was in terms of fashion.

2. “Citizens in West Egg were not fashionable and less elegant and those of East Egg were fashionable and have taste in manner and everything because of the word “less” that compares between them”. This argument was accepted with no comments.

Accordingly, after the discussion, the appropriate prediction was that East Egg citizens were elegant and have taste and refinement whereas West Egg citizens were less elegant and relatively lacked taste and refinement which was justified by the fact that West Egg was less fashionable than East Egg.

1.2. During Reading Phase:

Thereafter, the following section was administered in the during-reading phase to be read silently and then aloud.

Fig.2. Section Two

Unlike the conservative, aristocratic East Egg, West Egg is home to the "new rich," those who, having made their fortunes recently, have neither the social connections nor the refinement to move among the East Egg set. West Egg is characterized by abundant displays of wealth and poor taste.

1.3. Post-Reading Phase:

In the post-reading phase, students' predictions and justifications were verified in light of the evidence that is exhibited in section two and that was the fact that the section entirely exhibited the characteristics of both districts. Ultimately, the researcher spotlighted that this **inferred social class divide** was an **actual cultural feature** pertinent to the American society during the 1920s between the poor and the rich and even between the rich themselves in terms of fashion and manners.

2. Session Two:

2.1. Pre-Reading Phase:

The following section was distributed and read aloud alongside the documents of prediction, justification, and evidence whereby the following question was asked: Through Daisy's description of the manner she wishes her daughter to be like, can you predict the American social standards of femininity and masculinity in the 1920s? Justify your answer.

Fig.3. Section Three

One night, Nick drives out to East Egg to have dinner with his cousin Daisy and her husband, Tom Buchanan. After dinner, Daisy and Nick talk about her three-year-old daughter:

-Daisy: "Listen Nick, let me tell you what I said when she was born. Would you like to hear?"

-Nick: "Very much."

-Daisy: "It'll show you how I've gotten to feel about things. Well, she was less than an hour old and Tom was God knows where. I woke up with an utterly abandoned feeling, and asked the nurse right away if it was a boy or a girl. She told me it was a girl, and so I turned my head away and wept. 'All right,' I said, 'I'm glad it's a girl. And I hope she'll be a fool-that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool.'"

After a while, the verbal discussion started with the following students' suggestions:

1. "Social standards of femininity are: Weak, inconsiderable, idiot and good looking and social standards of masculinity are : Strong, intelligent, dominant and they express themselves freely because it is

based on Daisy's words that she wanted her daughter to be fool, that was the best thing a girl can be in this world". This argument was logically accepted.

2. "The standards of femininity are beauty and being fool and those of masculinity are power and leadership because she said: "I hope she'll be a fool-that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool". This argument was accepted.

Accordingly, through the researcher's guidance, The appropriate prediction was that the American social standards of femininity were physical beauty as well as the absence of thinking and intelligence the fact that entailed women's dependency on men; hence, men's superiority with regard to decision making that was justified by Daisy's assertion "...the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool".

2.2. During Reading Phase:

The following text was administered to be read.

Fig.4. Section Four

Daisy is not a fool herself but is the product of a social environment that, to a great extent, does not value intelligence in women. The older generation values subservience and passivity in females, and the younger generation values thoughtless giddiness and pleasure-seeking.

2.3. Post-Reading Phase:

Students were asked to check their predictions/justifications and look for the evidence. Accordingly, the entire section

evidenced the previously made prediction. Eventually, the researcher accentuated that these **inferred standards of masculinity and femininity** were **real cultural features** of the American society during the 1920s, which portrayed women's position as externally beautiful but devoid of mind to remain in permanent dependency on men, who subsequently thought on their behalf.