The Cultural Baggage of Second Language Reading: An Approach to Understanding the Practices and Perspectives of a Nonnative Product

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Abstract: The role of background knowledge in second language (L2) reading has received much attention in pedagogical research through theoretical paradigms such as schema theory, mental models, scripts, and expectations. The recent culture goals of the National Standards (1999) have provided new direction for research in interactive reading models, as sufficient background knowledge can help students comprehend the relationship between the practices and perspectives of a nonnative text or product. This article presents a 3R model of reading strategies (Recognize, Research, Relate) that focuses on developing background knowledge about a target culture while applying this schema to appropriate clues in a foreign text. Samples of data from a qualitative study testing the effectiveness of the 3R model accompany the discussion of this approach designed for a wide-ranging instructional audience.

Key words: francophone, literature, reading, schema theory, second language acquisition (SLA), Standards

Language: French

Introduction
In today's global society, foreign language study has become increasingly important as world leaders recognize its value for effective international communication and intercultural understanding. ACTFL's 2005: The Year of Languages campaign attests to the growing need for language educators to encourage more students to continue with foreign language study in a world progressively dominated by culturally diverse populations and international conflicts. The consequential rise in intercultural communication in all its forms—spoken, e-mail, formal documents, literary texts, and so forth—inevitably poses specific challenges because of the cultural baggage that each word carries. The written word in particular, taken devoid of its cultural and interpersonal context, can lead to vast misunderstandings easily avoidable through a culturally informed approach to textual communication.

Indeed, the past few decades of research on reading strategies in second language acquisition (SLA) have focused on the importance of cultural knowledge in teaching foreign literature, leading to a somewhat broader view of the text than in
previous decades. This interdisciplinary approach to literary analysis joins and expands upon prior research in fields such as cultural anthropology and semiotics. Schema theory, introduced in its earliest forms in 1932 by Sir Frederick Bartlett in his book *Remembering*, has provided new insights for SLA reading strategy research through its emphasis on the relationship between the reader's background knowledge and the cultural context of the writer. Alternatively referred to throughout the years as *scripts* (Schank & Abelson, 1977), *frames* (Minsky, 1975), *expectations* (Tannen, 1978), *schemata* (Adams & Collins, 1977; Bartlett, 1932; Rumelhart, 1977; Rumelhart & Ortony, 1977), and *mental models* (Johnson-Laird & Nicholas, 1983), reader background knowledge has particular significance in foreign language study because of the differing cultural perspectives of author and receiver. Findings by Carrell (1981, 1984a, 1984b, 1985, 1987) and others have shown that reading in a foreign language requires more active preparation on the part of the reader, who must not only activate the appropriate *scripts* or *mental models* while reading a text but also recognize and acquire any cultural information that may be lacking for an adequate understanding of the text. While one might assume that native readers already possess this necessary background knowledge when approaching a written document, readers of a foreign language text must overcome an added challenge of cultural unfamiliarity when processing written communication.

In light of these issues, the purpose of this article is to examine studies on background knowledge in reading comprehension conducted throughout the past 20 years. This investigation will emphasize in particular those findings that highlight the challenges of foreign language reading comprehension, culminating in the development of a new model of reading strategies for foreign literature. A thorough explanation of this model will be complemented by examples from a qualitative study in which students applied these strategies to literary texts in an intermediate French language class, demonstrating the successes of interdisciplinary approaches that provide multifaceted, student-centered explorations of the target culture. This discussion will outline general strategies for the teaching of foreign language reading comprehension and the use of pedagogical tools that help students bridge the gap between a native and nonnative reading of a text and that promote intercultural understanding.

**Review of Literature**

The past 20 years of research into the role of background knowledge in reading comprehension has often concentrated on three general categories: content schemata, formal schemata, and linguistic schemata. The majority of studies have investigated strategies for developing and activating content schemata, or informational clusters in the reader's mind that pertain to ideas, experiences, or contextual clues found within the text. Although formal schemata have frequently been clumped within that same category, their distinction as knowledge of text structures, organization, or form deserves recognition when such structures are culturally determined. Studies into the role of linguistic schemata have particular relevance for nonnative readers, as language poses the primary and perhaps most significant obstacle when analyzing a foreign text.

**Content Schemata**

The earliest studies in content schemata focused on the role of background knowledge in first language (L1) reading comprehension (Bartlett, 1932; Schank & Abelson, 1977), concluding that readers rely upon previously acquired knowledge—organized into "slots" or specific organizational patterns—that they may retrieve when triggered by certain clues in a text. The complexity and relevance of this information to the particular text will determine the reader's comprehension and
recall of the text. In the past two decades, however, researchers began applying some of these findings to second language (L2) research, with results indicating that familiarity with the cultural content of a text (prior experience in the target culture as a native or nonnative member) can positively affect students' reading comprehension (Carrell, 1981; Hammadou, 1991; Johnson, 1982; Pritchard, 1990; Roller & Matambo, 1992; Steffensen, Joag-dev, & Anderson, 1979). Based on these findings, other researchers investigated the effects of providing culturally specific background knowledge to students prior to their reading a foreign text (Barry & Lazarte, 1995, 1998; Kim, 1995). These studies found that students with adequate instruction in the cultural content of a foreign text understand and recall more information from the text than those without any instructor-guided preparation. Instructors might want to consider students' preferences when developing their background knowledge about the target culture, as reader interest in the topic also seems to play a role in L2 reading comprehension. Studies have shown that topics which interest students the most in their own culture can assist them in their comprehension of the same subjects in foreign language texts, outweighing any types of linguistic difficulties they may encounter (Bügel & Buunk, 1996; Carrell & Wise, 1998; Leloup, 1993;). In sum, the past 20 years of research into content schemata have demonstrated that reading in a foreign language can be greatly facilitated by developing students' background knowledge about the culture represented in the text.

Formal Schemata

Formal schemata have frequently been explored in conjunction with content schemata, as the two interact simultaneously during the L2 reading process. Indeed, investigations into the effects of students' knowledge of text organization and rhetorical structures have shown that such experience can positively affect reading comprehension as students rely on this knowledge to assist them with culturally unfamiliar material (Carrell, 1981; Kintsch & Greene, 1978). Although no specific conclusions can be drawn from these studies regarding the role of formal schemata alone, conclusions were later made by Carrell (1987) in a study aimed at uncovering the simultaneous or individual effects of formal and content schemata on English as a second language (ESL) reading. Comparisons of two groups of students reading texts on Arab and Western religious traditions (one group reading familiar, well-organized versions of the two texts; the other reading unfamiliar, rhetorically altered versions) showed that cultural familiarity with the texts, or content schemata, had a greater effect on reading comprehension than did formal organization of the text.

Studies were later conducted that specifically tested the role of formal schemata by controlling for content schemata and varying text types or organizational structures (Carrell, 1984a, 1984b; Riley, 1993). As one might expect, results showed that L2 learners who read texts following a familiar, episodic or tightly organized structure could recall more idea units than those students who read more loosely or deliberately altered versions of the same text. In other words, L2 reading comprehension is greatly facilitated by knowledge of text types or rhetorical structures, given that students can activate this type of schemata to assist them when encountering a text posing linguistic or cultural difficulties. As such, it would seem that prior training in rhetorical organization to develop students' formal schemata would benefit L2 reading comprehension. Studies have indeed shown that students who received instruction in text types or discourse structures recall significantly more of a foreign language text (indicating higher reading comprehension) than readers provided with minimal or no such preparation (Carrell, 1985; Lee & Riley, 1990; Raymond, 1993). Overall, research into formal schemata in L2 reading comprehension
has demonstrated the importance of developing students' knowledge of text types and formal structures, given that students can use their familiarity with discourse structures and organizational patterns when their cultural or linguistic competencies fail them.

**Linguistic Schemata**

As with formal schemata, linguistic schemata have primarily been investigated in relation to other schemata in the interactive reading process. More specifically, researchers have explored the interaction between linguistic competencies (or knowledge of the target language) and cultural knowledge in L2 reading comprehension. Johnson (1981, 1982) investigated whether the cultural origins of a text or its linguistic complexity would affect the reading comprehension of nonnative readers. In the first study, Johnson presented two Iranian and American folk tales to two groups of Iranian ESL students, one group reading linguistically complex English versions and the other group reading simplified English versions. The second study investigated whether prior experience in a foreign cultural tradition (the U.S. custom of Halloween) or vocabulary instruction would affect ESL students' reading comprehension of a text describing this custom. Both studies found that cultural familiarity assisted students more with their comprehension of the texts than did linguistic competency, concluding that content schemata can greatly assist students when their linguistic skills are low. Other studies had similar results (Chen & Donin, 1997; Hammadou, 1991) in that researchers discovered that students with low or inadequate language proficiency tended to process and recall more thoroughly those texts that included familiar topics than those texts that presented unfamiliar subjects. In other words, nonnative readers may rely on their background knowledge to compensate for their ineffective language skills when reading L2 texts.

These results point to the importance of developing cultural schemata when introducing literature in a foreign language class, helping students understand texts that may pose linguistic challenges in lower level language classes. Instructors can indeed present linguistically challenging texts to their students provided that the students have adequate preparation in the cultural content of the material. Additionally, texts that focus on topics familiar to students (or topics that interest them) within their own culture allow students to activate this information when processing linguistically difficult material. Finally, knowledge of text structure and organization, both in the students' own culture and those of the target culture, can add to students' comprehension and retention of a foreign text. It would seem, then, that developing all three types of schemata—content, linguistic, and formal—is necessary for adequate L2 reading comprehension. Of those three, content schemata is the key component, particularly when considering the cultural differences inherent in L2 literature. Figure 1 demonstrates this relationship between the three types of background knowledge, with cultural information (or content schemata) at the top, guiding and directing the other two types of knowledge in a triangular fashion.

![Triangular Relationship of Schemata](image_url)

These findings led to the development of a model of reading strategies for L2 reading comprehension that focuses on the development of background knowledge sufficient for analyzing and understanding literary practices (formal schemata) and linguistic structures (linguistic schemata) from the cultural
Standpoint of the author. In effect, the Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (National Standards, 1999) outlines similar goals in the “Cultures” standard: “Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture studied” (p. 9) and “Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied” (p. 9). For the purposes of the current model, practices would be defined as the literary and linguistic practices (structures, text organization, literary techniques, word choice, and so forth) that comprise formal and linguistic schemata, and products would be defined as written documents or literature. The perspectives, therefore, would represent the content schemata necessary for an informed and insightful interpretation of these practices.

The 3R Model of Reading Strategies
Given that schemata are triggered by clues within a text, the 3R model of reading strategies focuses on activating, developing, and incorporating background knowledge into the students' perspectives of the text. Figure 2 represents the three phases of this model in triangular fashion, each stage simultaneously affecting the other in an interactive process of reading comprehension that helps bridge the gap between a native and nonnative reading of a foreign text.

1. Recognize. In the first phase the students recognize those textual elements that trigger their appropriate informational clusters or schemata. This recognition phase also helps students discover any gaps in their knowledge regarding the target culture, and as a result, guides the second phase of research into the target culture.

2. Research. Using multiple and varied types of resources, students then investigate those areas of the target culture that most interest them and in which they lack adequate background knowledge.

3. Relate. Finally, students apply their newly developed schemata back to the text in the Relate stage, helping them make connections between the literary and linguistic practices of the author and his or her cultural perspectives that the students have researched.

In the discussion that follows, each phase will be explained in detail with examples from a qualitative study involving intermediate French students who analyzed a poem by francophone African writer David Diop. Twenty students enrolled in a sixth-semester French course at a large midwestern university took part in a study in which they read a poem entitled “Rama Kam” (see Appendix A) prior to any training in the 3R model or any discussion of other francophone texts. After six weeks of learning and applying the 3R model to three other francophone African texts (Leopold Senghor's “Femme noire,” David Diop's “A une danseuse noire,” and Birago Diop's “Un jugement”), the students then analyzed the same poem again, following the steps of the 3R model. The data from these pre- and posttests illustrate the successes of this reading strategies model, particularly the student-centered development of background knowledge and the application of this schemata to the appropriate clues in a foreign text.

Recognize
The Recognize phase directs students to find linguistic and literary elements in a text that reflect a distinct cultural reality of the author. Clearly, prior to developing any background knowledge in the target culture, students will probably point to char-
acteristics that seem bizarre or foreign to them without much justification for their choices. In-class discussions of their choices may reveal preexisting stereotypes and impressions about the target culture, impressions that the instructor or fellow students may question and request further information about through research. In such a situation, the students' inability to justify their choices of literary elements in the Recognize stage emphasizes the areas in which they need to concentrate for further schematic development and comprehension of the text. Literary or formal elements such as the rhythm of a poem, repetition of certain words or expressions, particular images or metaphors, the form of a text, and the organization or order of elements in the text may appear in the students' preliminary analyses at this stage. Linguistic elements might include the insertion of words from another language (such as Arabic in a francophone text), geographical references within the target culture, names of historical figures or events, or expressions native to a dialect of that culture, and so forth. In the early stages of using this 3R model, it may be helpful to provide guiding questions that would focus the students' analyses on particular literary or linguistic elements, later allowing the students to choose freely the characteristics that they recognize.

Appendix B presents samples of pre- and posttest data of those textual clues that students recognized in “Rama Kam” in response to the first pre- and posttest question: “Identify all the elements in the text that seem characteristic of African literature.” Of particular note in this data is the insistence on stereotypical images in the pretest, such as references to “une forêt sauvage” [a savage forest], “primitivisme” [primitivism], “l'Afrique majestueuse” [majestic Africa], and one student who admitted her stereotypical impressions of Africa as “la sensualité, la chaleur, les danses, c'est mon idée d'Afrique” [sensuality, heat, dances, that's my idea of Africa]. Although students seemed able to point out certain clues or triggers in the text, they then referred to faulty or superficial background knowledge about the culture to explain their choices. Such indications underline the need to develop students' background knowledge fully and accurately, so as to avoid reinforcing stereotypes and ethnocentric judgments about another culture.

In the posttest, these same students not only could recognize more elements in the text as seemingly characteristic of African literature but could succeed in explaining why these textual clues pointed to an African cultural reality. For example, Student 1 explained the link between the tam-tam, dancing, and the griot as part of an African celebration. Other students recognized the repetitive rhythmic elements in the text and detailed their role within the overall structure of the poem. Relationships were made between the rhythm of the poem, the griot playing his tam-tam, and the movements of the dancer, Rama Kam, at the heart of this poem. Student 7 referred to “beaucoup de textes africains que nous avons lus” [a lot of African texts that we have read] as a reference for finding literary clues in this text, illustrating his ability to rely on his newly developed formal and content schemata for a more informed response than in his pretest. Generally, the posttest responses to Question 1 tended to be more elaborate, longer lists of literary and linguistic elements than those from the pretest, justified by informed references to the African culture represented in this poem.

In essence, the main objectives of the Recognize phase are to ascertain students' first reactions to a text in order to provide direction for research and discussion in the following stages of the 3R model. Moreover, since this recognition task demands little interpretation at this early stage, students do not feel threatened to perform at a level beyond their linguistic capabilities. As pointed out earlier, preliminary discussions of the students' choices in the Recognize stage help to expose gaps in their knowledge about the target culture without rein-
forcing stereotypes. Indeed, it is these gaps, the students’ inability to justify their choices in the early stage, that guide the second phase of the 3R model. Therefore, the research conducted by the students—and the manner in which they go about that research—begins the process of shedding initial false impressions about the target culture and ideally leads to a more native view of these “other” literary and linguistic practices.

Research

The Research stage of the 3R model has two essential goals: (a) develop students’ schemata about the target culture, and (b) provide students with research skills and resources that help them become lifelong independent learners. Rather than focusing on teacher-centered lectures about the target culture, this stage directs students to research those elements that interest them in the text and that they pointed out in the Recognize stage, perhaps developing prior knowledge about the culture or filling in gaps they discovered in their schemata. Prior studies have shown that interest in a topic promotes more effective schematic development and reader comprehension, and this stage reinforces that tendency by having students choose areas that they would like to research from the text. In essence, this stage involves both the gathering of facts about the particular culture (visible culture or practices) and the interpretation of these facts as underlying cultural values (invisible culture or perspectives). However, rather than relying on one single source, students must conduct research using multiple resources to arrive at a multifaceted, informed interpretation of the subject in question.

Students begin a preliminary search by looking up unknown vocabulary words in dictionaries and explaining why these particular words, these linguistic practices, might represent the cultural reality of the author. In the present study, students were given a dictionary of Senegalese French, the *Lexique du Français du Sénégal* (1979), to use in class for discussing any words they identified as particularly representative of Senegalese culture. The instructor may be a helpful resource as well, drawing from his or her own knowledge of French when exploring words and expressions the students do not know. Following this preliminary investigation, small groups of four or five students then research a cultural topic chosen from the Recognize stage (such as Sub-Saharan African dance), using various resources over a selected period of time. Research materials might include books, articles, the Internet, videos, museum exhibits, e-mail correspondence in the target culture, and native sources from the community. Afterward, the students share their findings with the rest of the class in order to benefit from one another’s research and acquire similar schemata. The primary goal for the instructor at this stage is to serve as an external but informed guide in the research process, possibly assisting the students in choosing their research topic or demonstrating the databases and resources at the school library. In this way, the students explore the target culture independently and are motivated to explore those areas of their schemata that most interest them.

For the present study, students had six weeks between the pre- and posttests, during which they researched a particular cultural topic in small groups. Throughout that time, students conducted multifaceted research using the Internet, articles and books, videos, CDs, and e-mail correspondence in Senegal. The e-mail correspondence provided an individual perspective on the information that the students were researching, illustrating the dynamic nature of culture and the need to question and explore another culture on a continual basis. Additionally, the entire class participated in an interactive dance and drumming demonstration provided by local African experts. Through this experience, students could sense firsthand the intimate correspondence between music and dance at the heart of Sub-Saharan African cultures. Instructors can effectively provide such a sensory experience for students by
taking advantage of the interdisciplinary opportunities of an educational setting: specialists in music, folklore, art, religions, anthropology, dance, or history might provide excellent resources for exploring the link between literature and culture with the students. Thus, the Research phase helps students develop their schemata in many ways—through written materials, spoken or e-mail communication, and personal experiences. As with Johnson’s 1982 study of ESL students’ experiences of Halloween, such multifaceted research undoubtedly becomes ingrained in the students’ minds and provides a solid foundation to which they can refer when interpreting the text a second time in the Relate stage.

**Relate**

Finally, the Relate stage asks students to apply their newly acquired background knowledge about the culture back to the text, demonstrating an understanding of the relationship between the literary practices and cultural perspectives of the author. Students first return to the Recognize stage by reviewing the literary and linguistic elements they pointed out previously as representative of the target culture, either to reject some elements or add other clues that they may now recognize in the text based on their ongoing research. Second, the students interpret how these literary and linguistic elements uniquely represent the cultural reality of the author, thereby attempting to understand the text from a more native point of view than in previous readings. Lastly, the Relate stage places each text in a larger framework of literature from the target culture by asking the students to compare and contrast the current text with others that they have read from that culture. This reconsideration of other literature allows students to position each author’s literary and linguistic practices in relation to one another, demonstrating to students the variety of perspectives that exist in a single culture and helping them shed stereotypical generalizations. For example, the decision of a Haitian author to write in Creole or French might indicate the value he or she places on Haitian customs versus those of the European colonizer. Moreover, a writer may include in his or her text historical figures and events that refer to narratives passed down through indigenous peoples, rather than those recounted by European or western historical texts. Such literary decisions underline the author’s belief in representing the reality of his or her ancestral origins and subsequent rejection of a forced assimilation of western history. Indeed, students’ ongoing research of history, language, traditions, and so forth would allow an informed interpretation of such literary and linguistic practices.

Appendix C presents examples of students’ responses to the second question in the pre- and posttests, referring to this relationship between practices and perspectives: “How do these literary elements [pointed out in Question 1] reflect African cultural values?” This question aimed at uncovering the degree of students’ background knowledge about the target culture and their ability to activate the appropriate schemata when triggered by clues in the text. In the pretest, students tended to refer to cultural values as “important” or “essential” without much explanation as to why, whereas in the posttest they seemed to be able to rely upon greater developed schemata to present the underlying reasons for their importance. For example, although Student 4 presented relatively complex thinking in her pretest analysis of “Rama Kam,” her answer represented primarily the visible facts, the cultural practices represented by these literary elements. In her posttest, she succeeded in relating these cultural practices to the underlying cultural perspectives of the author. Indeed, one of the successes of the 3R model lies in helping students understand why cultures have certain practices. Through practice and continual application of these analytical strategies, students come to a greater realization of the underlying worldviews that motivate seemingly foreign behaviors
and customs. Moreover, the posttest data for Question 2 illustrate the students' development of their formal schemata through more thorough explanations of literary techniques and structures than those found in the pretests. Student 2, for instance, entered into a detailed explanation of the poem's structure as reflecting the images portrayed of an African dancer. Furthermore, this student made links between the value of dance and the African woman, albeit in a somewhat superficial manner. Student 4, on the other hand, succeeded in making connections between the poem's form, the images of the woman represented in the poem, and the cultural perspectives of women as linked with nature and communal development through their powers of birth. Her analysis illustrated the underlying worldviews of the target culture that led to the author's literary choices. Student 6 discussed the poem's rhythm at length, making connections between the literary structures and the value of music in African cultures. Rather than saying simply that music is important, as often found in the pretests, this student named specifically the links between music and dance (perhaps triggered by his experience with the African dance and music demonstration) as well as music's various roles in Senegalese daily life.

As for linguistic schemata, Students 1, 2, and 3 analyzed particular words as representative of the author's culture, primarily through the emphasis on noir [black] in the poem. These three students demonstrated how the words chosen by the author underlined his role in glorifying African culture prior to colonization, values explained in detail by Student 3 as indicative of the negritude movement. Certainly students could have made similar connections had the instructor given a lecture on negritude writers and their literary techniques. However, the fact that students discovered this information on their own, later reinforced through class discussions of other poems, undoubtedly gave them a certain sense of confidence in their own abilities to conduct independent research and literary analysis. Moreover, as students chose their own subjects of research, their interest in the topic could help them retain this information within their overall schematic framework.

Due to time constraints of the study and the 50-minute class period allotted for the posttest itself, these analyses are not extensive by any means and certainly do not reach a level of understanding that a native reader of this same text would reach. However, the differences between the pre- and posttest analyses of "Rama Kam" do indicate an improvement in cross-cultural comprehension, including a new ability to analyze cultural differences in relation to underlying cultural values and perspectives. Rather than simply seeing cultural differences, the students began to realize the relationship between practices and perspectives, as outlined in the National Standards (1999). It is through building background knowledge about the culture, along with acquiring skills for gaining that knowledge, that students begin the process of shedding stereotypes about the target culture and viewing that culture on an equal plane with their own. Student 7 offers a prime example of this removal of cultural baggage that previously obstructed her view of the poem. Whereas in the pretest she emphasized the openness or primal sexual nature that she associated with African cultures (supposedly drawn from a course in anthropology), her posttest analysis explained the emphasis on sexual desire in the poem as a glorification of Africa and an element of the negritude movement. In all, the 3R model opens students' eyes to a new interpretation of foreign literature and helps remove initial stereotypical judgments by teaching students to question their opinions of other cultural practices as bizarre or different.

Given that the present study occurred over only a six-week period, students could benefit more if instructors applied these techniques to a semester or yearlong course. Indeed, the 3R model would be quite effective in a course such as introduction to literary
analysis or a survey course of literature in the Caribbean or francophone world, for example. Students might be responsible for particular research topics throughout the course of the unit, periodically presenting their findings to the class as applied to the specific region under investigation. In a course where multiple texts are introduced, the instructor might initiate class discussions in the Recognize phase for each text and have the students conduct their research at home. The students would then return to class for a second analysis of the same text, relating their research findings to the text at hand. In that way, students could not only deepen their background knowledge (the content schemata) about the various cultures that speak the target language but could also expand their linguistic and formal schemata by exploring numerous linguistic varieties (e.g., French in Senegal vs. French in Quebec) and variations of text types from different cultures (e.g., folk tales in Sub-Saharan Africa vs. folk tales in Martinique). Clearly, the longer the amount of time devoted to students' research and literary analyses, the greater the chances that the students will develop a highly complex and advanced schematic framework for future reference.

Conclusion
Based on previous research regarding the role of background knowledge in L2 reading comprehension, the 3R model provides a structured framework of reading strategies that guide students and instructors in the process of analyzing the relationship between practices and perspectives of another culture. Although the data samples here have been presented in French, the general nature of the tasks involved in each stage of the 3R model permits their application to almost any body or genre of literature and in any target language. Indeed, the examples shown in this article reinforce previous findings in L2 reading comprehension and illustrate certain pedagogical strategies for the teaching of foreign literature:

1. Students should learn to recognize literary and linguistic practices on their own through continual analysis and reanalysis of a particular text.
2. Students should research those topics from a text that most interest them so as to build upon previous knowledge or begin developing lifelong interest in that culture.
3. Students should research a target culture using multiple resources in order to arrive at a multifaceted comprehension and schematic development.
4. Instructors should serve as guides for helping students acquire cultural and literary analysis skills, in an effort to promote individual exploration by the students.
5. Students should learn to reexamine a text once they have acquired cultural knowledge, thereby encouraging their understanding of the relationship between literary practices and cultural perspectives as well as helping remove their initial stereotypes about the target culture.
6. Students should read multiple texts from a single culture so they can relate each text, each author's particular literary and linguistic practices, to other textual practices and individual cultural perspectives.

These general strategies perhaps need framing within an overall goal of intercultural understanding; that is, beyond literature, what can this Recognize-Research-Relate process teach students about intercultural communication as a whole?

Returning to the issues of cultural baggage and miscommunication presented at the beginning of this article, it is clear that the 3R model provides a useful tool for analyzing the quintessential relationship between language and culture. More specifically, students learn that a word cannot be understood outside of its cultural context, that the worldview of the speaker or writer influences the words that he or she uses when communicating with others. Therefore, each written
piece of communication must be interpreted in reference to cultural, linguistic, and formal schemata that have shaped the document at hand. It is this realization that can ultimately open students’ eyes to the dangers of interpretation and translation founded upon superficial knowledge and stereotypical impressions. In the present state of rising political and cultural conflict around the globe, such knowledge can perhaps bring a closer understanding between peoples of differing and often opposing practices, a new respect for cultural difference as equal to one’s own view of the world.

References


Appendix A
Pre- and Posttest

David Diop (1927–1960) was born in Bordeaux, France in 1927, to Senegalese and Cameroonian parents. He spent most of his life in France before returning to Senegal and Guinea. He died in 1960 in a plane accident. His only collection of poems, *Coups de pilon* (1956) manifests a profound attachment to the African continent and to the traditions lost during European colonization.

**Rama Kam—*Coups de pilon* (1956)**
par David Diop

Me plaît ton regard de fauve
Et ta bouche a la saveur de mangue
   Rama Kam
Ton corps est le piment noir
Qui fait chanter le désir
   Rama Kam
Quand tu passes
La plus belle est jalouse
Du rythme chaleureux de ta hanche
   Rama Kam
Quand tu danses
Le tam-tam Rama-Kam
Le tam-tam tendu comme un sexe de victoire
Halète sous les doigts bondissants du griot
Et quand tu aimes
Quand tu aimes Rama Kam
C'est la tornade qui tremble
Dans ta chair de nuit d'éclairs
Et me laisse plein du souffle de toi
   O Rama Kam!
Your fawn look pleases me
And your mouth has the flavor of mango
Rama Kam
Your body is the black pepper
That makes desire sing
Rama Kam
When you pass
The most beautiful is jealous
Of the warm rhythm of your hip
Rama Kam
When you dance
The tam-tam Rama Kam
The tam-tam tensed like a victory sex
Pants under the bouncing fingers of the griot
And when you love
When you love Rama Kam
It is the tornado that trembles
In your flesh of a night of lightening
And leaves me full of your breath
Oh Rama Kam!}

Lisez ce poème au moins 2 fois – vous pouvez utiliser un dictionnaire pour chercher les mots que vous ne reconnaissez pas. Après, répondez aux questions suivantes. [Read this poem at least 2 times – you can use a dictionary to look up words that you do not recognize. After, respond to the following questions.]

1) Identifiez tous les éléments du texte qui vous semblent caractéristiques de la littérature africaine. [Identify all the elements of the text that seem characteristic of African literature to you.]

2) En quoi ces éléments littéraires reflètent-ils des valeurs culturelles africaines? [How do these literary elements reflect African cultural values?]

3) En quoi ces valeurs culturelles sont-elles similaires ou différentes des valeurs de votre propre culture? [How are these cultural values similar or different to the values of your own culture?]
Appendix B
Recognize Data: Pretest and Posttest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>Posttest</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>L'atmosphère de ce poème est une forêt sauvage. La concentration des éléments naturels, la tornade, le primitivisme de Rama Kam, sont africains. [The atmosphere of this poem is a wild forest. The concentration of natural elements, the tornado, the primitivism of Rama Kam, are African.]</td>
<td>Le poème décrit une célébration, une danse avec le tam-tam et les danseurs. Le griot, qui joue le tam-tam, développe aussi un thème, une histoire pour la communauté. L'ambiance est créée par l'usage des mots africains, comme “mangue”, “tam-tam”, “griot”, et “Rama-Kam”. Les images de la nature décrivent la danse et la culture africaine. [The poem describes a celebration, a dance with the tam-tam and the dancers. The griot, who plays the tam-tam, develops this theme also, a story for the community. The ambiance is created by the use of African words, like “mango,” “tam-tam,” “griot,” and “Rama Kam.” The images of nature describe African dance and culture.]</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Le rythme du poème est un peu comme un tam-tam. Dans le texte il y a des mots pour les choses d'Afrique, le tam-tam, le piment. Aussi il utilise chanter et danser, les traditions africaines. Des mots comme la tornade, tremble, éclairs disent la force de l'Afrique majestueuse. [The rhythm of the poem is a little like a tam-tam. In the text there are words for African things, the tam-tam, pepper. Also he uses singing and dancing, African traditions. Words like tornado, tremble, lightning speak of the strength of majestic Africa.]</td>
<td>mots africains: tam-tam, griot, mangue, piment, rythme, danses, aimes rythme: répétitions de “Rama Kam” chaque 2 ou 3 vers, Rama Kam est la fin des phrases souvent, “Le tam-tam” est répété pour l'emphase pas très structuré, comme un poème oral images de la femme: nature — fauve, saveur de mangue, tornade qui tremble, nuit d'éclairs; corps — piment noir, belle, rythme de ta hanche, dans ta chair de nuit, souffle de toi [African words: tam-tam, griot, mango, pepper, rhythm, dance, love. rhythm: repetitions of “Rama Kam” every 2 or 3 lines, Rama Kam is often the end of phrases, “the tam-tam” is repeated for a less structured emphasis, like an oral poem images of the woman: nature—fawn, flavor of mango, tornado that trembles, night of lightning; body—black pepper, beautiful, rhythm of your hip, in your flesh of night, your breath]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3 Le rythme du poème me fait penser d'une danse et les fêtes. Les mots africains sont utilisés aussi, comme “Rama Kam”. Quand je regarde le poème (les images), je vois une image stéréotypique d'Afrique. La sensualité, la chaleur, les danses, c'est mon idée d'Afrique.

[The rhythm of the poem makes me think of a dance and parties. African words are also used, like “Rama Kam.” When I look at the poem (the images), I see a stereotypical image of Africa. Sensuality, heat, dances, that is my idea of Africa.]

Les mots comme Rama kam, tam-tam, et griot démontrent l'importance de la musique, les histoires, et la danse en Afrique. La langue est comme une danse—les phrases courtes, la répétition. Le rythme du poème évoque la musique d'une danse et les rythmes d'un tam-tam. Le rythme est aussi comme le rythme d'une histoire d'un griot.

[Words like Rama kam, tam-tam, and griot show the importance of music, stories, and dance in Africa. The language is like a dance—short phrases, repetition. The rhythm of the poem evokes the music of a dance and the rhythms of a tam-tam. The rhythm is also like the rhythm of a griot's story.]

4 Les éléments qui semblent caractéristiques de la littérature africaine sont le rythme et la répétition. Le rythme du poème est comme un tam-tam et la répétition est de la phrase “Rama Kam”.

[The elements that seem characteristic of African literature are the rhythm and repetition. The rhythm of the poem is like a tam-tam and the repetition is of the phrase “Rama Kam.”]

Il y a un rythme dans ce poème avec les rimes et les répétitions. Il y a les répétitions de la phrase “Rama Kam” et “le tam-tam”. Les répétitions de “Rama Kam” créent une division de ses sentiments et de la beauté de Rama Kam. Il y a les assonances à la fin des lignes, entre les phrases qui sont séparées par “Rama Kam”, comme une chanson africaine. Par exemple, “fauve” et “mangue” et “noir” et “désir”. Les répétitions de la phrase “Rama Kam” sont comme un tam-tam dans une histoire.

[There is a rhythm in this poem with the rhymes and repetition. There are repetitions of the phrase “Rama Kam” and “the tam-tam.” The repetitions of “Rama Kam” create a division of his feelings and the beauty of Rama Kam. There are assonances at the end of lines, between the phrases that are separated by “Rama Kam,” like an African song. For example, “fawn” and “mango” and “black” and “desire.” The repetitions of the phrase “Rama Kam” are like a tam-tam in a story.]

5 Les éléments qui me semblent caractéristiques de la littérature africaine sont la répétition du mot “Rama Kam”, les actions de danser et rythme, et la nature.

[The elements that seem characteristic of African literature to me

La répétition des mots “Rama Kam” crée des divisions entre les parties de la femme africaine. Au début, v. 1-2 décrivent la figure, vs. 4-5 décrivent le corps et la peau, v. 7-9 décrivent sa beauté, et v. 11-19 décrivent ses actions. Le vers “Le tam-tam Rama Kam” exprime le rythme très bien.
are the repetition of the word “Rama Kam,” the actions of dancing and rhythm, and nature.]

On peut voir une cérémonie avec les tam-tams, un griot qui raconte les histoires, et Rama Kam, qui danse au rythme de tous les éléments ensemble. [The repetition of the words “Rama Kam” create a division between the parts of the African woman. In the beginning, lines 1-2 describe the face, lines 4-5 describe the body and skin, lines 7-9 describe her beauty, and lines 11-19 describe her actions. The line “The tam-tam Rama Kam” expresses the rhythm very well. One can see a ceremony with tam-tams, a griot who tells stories, and Rama Kam, who dances to the rhythm of all the elements together.]

Un élément du texte qui est caractéristique de la littérature africaine est la répétition. Il répète la phrase “Rama Kam” six fois. Il répète aussi des phrases deux fois, l’un après l’autre, comme “Et quand tu aimes / Quand tu aimes Rama Kam”.

An element of the text that is characteristic of African literature is the repetition. He repeats the phrase “Rama Kam” six times. He also repeats phrases two times, one after the other, like “And when you love / When you love Rama Kam.”]

L’auteur utilise les images de la nature pour décrire la femme, par exemple le mangue, la tornade, l’éclair. Ce poème se concentre aussi sur le corps de la femme, utilisant les métaphores pour la décrire, par exemple “ta bouche a la saveur de mangue, ta chair de nuit d’éclairs”. Il y a la répétition dans le poème, qui lui donne la structure d’une chanson. La répétition de Rama Kam est comme le chœur de cette chanson. La répétition du mot “tam-tam”, avec le mot “Rama Kam”, donne au poème un rythme vite comme une danse. [The author uses images of nature to describe the woman, for example the mango, tornado, lightning. This poem also concentrates on the body of the woman, using metaphors to describe her, for example “your mouth has the flavor of mango, your flesh a night of lightening.” There is repetition in the poem, which gives it the structure of a song. The repetition of Rama Kam is like the chorus of this song. The repetition of the word “tam-tam,” with the word “Rama Kam,” gives a fast rhythm like a dance to the poem.]

On trouve des références aux animaux et aux danses africaines et la population a les mêmes qualités. Ils sont affamés, passionés, ardents, mais chaleureux et gracieux.

Dans beaucoup de textes africains que nous avons lus, l’auteur fournit la femme africaine comme un animal sauvage mais majestueux. Dans ce poème, sa bouche est “la saveur de mangue”. Aussi, on trouve des références à la musique africaine quand l’auteur utilise le mot “tam-tam”.
One finds references to animals and to African dances and the population has the same qualities. They are famished, passionate, ardent, but warm and gracious.

Finalement, plusieurs poèmes africains développent une idée de la nature. L'auteur dit que "c'est la tornade qui tremble" "quand tu aimes Rama Kam".

In a lot of African texts that we have read, the author supplies the African woman like a wild but majestic animal. In this poem, her mouth is "the flavor of mango." Also one finds references to African music when the author uses the word "tam-tam." Finally, several African poems develop an idea of nature. The author says that "it is the tornado that trembles" "when you love Rama Kam."

Appendix C

Relate Data: Pretest and Posttest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>Posttest</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Une grande valeur est le respect et la reverence qu'on montre dans ce poème. Les Africains, dans leur littérature, parlent des personnes grandes et qu'elles ont beaucoup de pouvoir. [A great value is the respect and reverence that one shows in this poem. Africans, in their literature, speak of grand people and that they have a lot of power]</td>
<td>Ici, les mots sont la base qui définissent les images principales dans le poème. Encore, comme &quot;Femme noire&quot;, l'image est d'une femme respectée et mystérieuse. Elle a du pouvoir et de l'intrigue aussi. Elle est un symbole de toutes les choses qui représentent l'Afrique passée. Elle est le rêve des Africains en pensant aux temps difficiles (l'esclavage et la perte de la fierté). [Here, the words are the base that defines the principal images in the poem. Still, like &quot;Black woman,&quot; the image is of a respected and mysterious woman. She has power and also intrigue. She is a symbol of all the things that represent past Africa. She is the dream of Africans when thinking about difficult times (slavery and the loss of pride).]</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ces éléments suggèrent que la communauté est une valeur importante. Les activités qui peuvent se trouver dans le poème sont sociales. Elle sont essentielles à la culture africaine. [These elements suggest that the community is an important value. The activities that can be found in L'importance de la danse et de la musique est évidente dans le poème. Les lignes les plus longs ont un effet cathartique, comme la danse, parce qu'ils décrivent l'activité d'une danse avec plusieurs détails. La danse est une activité de communauté. L'importance de la femme est montrée dans ce poème. Lignes 7-9 suggèrent qu'une femme est la danseuse. En croyant l'importance de la danse, on peut voir l'importance</td>
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</table>

the poem are social. They are essential to African culture."

Les éléments reflètent les valeurs culturelles africaines parce que les cérémonies ont beaucoup de danse au rythme du tam-tam, un élément très important.

[The elements reflect African cultural values because the ceremonies have a lot of dance to the rhythm of the tam-tam, a very important element.]

Les mots et le langage expriment les valeurs africaines parce que le "noir" est un élément important de la négritude, qui s'est passée à Paris pendant les années 1930, et les buts de ce mouvement de Senghor, Césaire, et Damas étaient d'unifier et exprimer les valeurs noires, utiliser et exprimer et avoir la confiance dans ses racines, et raconter les éléments naturels. Le tam-tam est un instrument essentiel pour les histoires, la musique, la danse. Le griot est une personne qui raconte les légendes oralement, et la danse et la musique et les chansons sont ainsi très importantes pour la communauté.

[The words and the language express African values because “black” is an important element of negritude, which occurred in Paris during the 1930s, and the goals of this movement of Senghor, Césaire, and Damas were to unify and express black values, use and express and have confidence in one's roots, and recount natural elements. The tam-tam is an essential instrument for the stories, music, dance. The griot is a person who tells legends orally, and dance and music and songs are thus very important for the community.]
Le rythme du poème reflète le rythme de la vie africaine. Il est structuré et omniprésent. Les émotions semblent avoir une spiritualité qui tire au religion. Bien sûr, l'usage des fruits et de choses africaines suggère l'endroit et l'atmosphère. Je dirais que le soulignement des caractéristiques naturelles et physiques reflète les goûts africains.

[The rhythm of the poem reflects the rhythm of African life. It is structured and omnipresent. The emotions seem to have a spirituality pulled from religion. Of course, the use of fruits and African things suggests the place and the atmosphere. I would say that the underlining of natural and physical characteristics reflects African tastes.]

Parce que la femme n'est pas spécifique, mais un symbole, le poème crée une forme parfaite des femmes. Dans nos articles de recherche, nous découvrons que la négritude est responsable pour avoir amélioré la valeur des femmes dans la culture africaine. Ce poème décrit la femme puissante et sexuelle. Il implique que toutes les femmes possèdent ces valeurs. Egalement, l'association de la nature à la femme est un autre trait africain. La femme, parce qu'elle a des enfants, a un lien spécial à la nature. La femme symbolise le commencement de la vie, le cycle de la vie, et le futur pour la communauté.

[Because the woman is not specific, but a symbol, the poem creates a perfect form of women. In our research articles, we discover that negritude is responsible for having improved the value of women in African culture. This poem describes the powerful and sexual woman. It implies that all women posses these values. Equally, the association of nature to the woman is another African trait. The woman, because she has children, has a special link to nature. The woman symbolizes the beginning of life, the cycle of life, and the future for the community.]

Les images de la femme montrent que la femme est très importante. Elle représente l'Afrique sans les Européens (colonisation). Elle exprime les valeurs de la culture africaine dans ce poème – comme l'influence forte de la danse, la musique, la communauté, la femme, et la fierté des Africains de leur propre culture. La femme est essentielle de la culture africaine, elle la représente.

[The images of the woman show that the woman is very important. She represents Africa without the Europeans (colonization). She expresses the values of African culture in this poem – like the strong influence of dance, music, the community, the woman, and the pride of Africans of their own culture. The woman is essential to African culture, she represents it.]
Le rythme des chansons, des danses, des tam-tams et du poème sont une partie de la culture. Leurs fêtes utilisent le tam-tam pour les chansons et les danses, et les gens utilisent le tam-tam pour raconter les histoires aux enfants.

[The rhythm of songs, dances, tam-tams and of the poem are a part of the culture. Their parties use the tam-tam for songs and dances, and the people use the tam-tam to tell stories to the children.]

La tradition de la musique est décrite d'abord avec l'usage du tam-tam pour créer un rythme pour le poème. Avec le rythme sont les danses et les chansons. Quand on danse, on joint avec la musique et combine les deux. Le musicien change son rythme avec les pas du danseur et le danseur change ses pas pour la musique. Ici, la musique aide à raconter l'histoire de Rama Kam. Dans la culture africaine, la musique peut raconter les histoires, aider le travail, être une partie des cérémonies ou être dans une forme de divertissement.

[The tradition of music is first described with the use of the tam-tam to create a rhythm for the poem. With the rhythm are the dances and songs. When one dances, one joins with the music and combines the two. The musician changes his rhythm with the steps of the dancer and the dancer changes his steps for the music. Here, music helps to tell the story of Rama-Kam. In African culture, music can tell stories, help with work, be a part of ceremonies or be in a form of entertainment.]

La sexualité peut signifier une culture plus ouverte sexuellement. Je trouvais que les cultures africaines sont plus ouvertes dans une classe d'anthropologie. Les caractéristiques animales peuvent refléter l'association et le rapport entre l'homme et l'animal. Le texte me semble “primal” dans le sens de la nature basique.

[Sexuality can signify a more sexually open culture. I found that African cultures are more open in an anthropology class. The animal characteristics can reflect the association and the connection between man and animal. The text seems “primal” to me in the sense of basic nature.]

Dans ce texte, la femme est plus idéale que celle du conte. Elle a un rapport unique avec la nature. Ici, elle est un objet élevé de désir. Cette idée vient de la négritude, de laquelle Diop était une partie. Elle (Rama Kam) symbolise l'Afrique et cela est pourquoi l'auteur emploie les métaphores de la culture africaine.

[In this text, the woman is more ideal than that of the folk tale. She has a unique connection with nature. Here, she is an elevated object of desire. This idea comes from negritude, of which Diop was a part. She (Rama Kam) symbolizes Africa and that is why the author employs metaphors of African culture.]