

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

THE IMPACT OF A PROGRAMME FOR TEACHING READING  
COMPREHENSION SKILLS ON FEMALE SAUDI STUDENTS IN KING  
ABDULAZIZ UNIVERSITY IN AL-MADINAH AL-MUNAWWARAH

BEING A THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF  
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BY

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Dedication

*This work is dedicated to*

*My husband Mr. Abduljawad*

## Abstract

The present thesis is concerned with the teaching of reading comprehension in Saudi Arabia. Its purpose is to explore ways of improving reading comprehension skills and to investigate the effectiveness of an Experimental Reading Programme devised by the researcher. The experimental reading programme for EFL students was designed based on the basic principles of the use of the communicative approach and the use of authentic materials.

This experimental research followed a pre-test, post-test, comparison group design to achieve the above aim. An important limitation to the study, however, was that students in the experimental programme received extra hours of tuition, since the regulations of the centralised system of education required all students to complete the standard curriculum already in place; the experimental programme could only be offered as a supplement. Two instruments, the Reading Achievement Test (multiple choice test) and the Affective Questionnaire (Likert scale) were given to 90 female Saudi students in King Abdulaziz University in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah in Saudi Arabia. Students' reading achievement scores before and after the programme were compared, and their attitudes assessed via the Affective Questionnaire.

The pre-test of Reading Achievement revealed that the comparison and the experimental groups were similar in score distribution and approximately equal but in the post-test, the mean score of the experimental group was significantly higher than that of the comparison group. This finding shows that students who were taught by the experimental reading programme and trained in reading a variety of authentic reading materials performed better and were able to score higher than the comparison group in the post-test. The t-test result supports this claim; it showed significant differences at ( $<0.05$ )  $p<0.001$  level between the two tests. The Affective Questionnaire revealed that

students, before the experimental programme, had negative attitudes to the current teaching of reading in English as a foreign language. This impression was confirmed by the fact that they failed to distinguish between teaching methods and teaching materials. This is because the materials drove the teaching methods; in effect, there was no variation in the ways that the teachers taught, because the standard textbook compelled teachers to follow a particular approach. In contrast, the findings obtained from factor analysis showed that students appreciated the experimental programme.



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## **CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

## Introduction

The growth of modern technology in society has brought increasing demands for reading, and the English language has become the chief international language of the world. Consequently, reading in English as a second language is increasingly a focus of education. A higher level of education is needed in study, in jobs, and even in everyday life. The importance of reading ability is to comprehend materials in daily living, such as newspapers, e-mail etc. Barnes and Powell state that “Nowadays, the general consensus seems to be that school pupils’ reading skills are deteriorating. Yet reading permeates our lives and those of our students more than ever before. The inability to read can cause huge social and psychological problems. The technological advances which have made people’s lives easier in many ways have certainly not dispensed with the need to read, but have altered the way in which we are required to read and the occasions on which we are expected to do so”(Barnes and Powell, 1996, p.5). Indeed, the demand for using reading in this sense (comprehending text transmitted via various kinds of information technology such fax machine, e-mail etc) plays a vital and important role in the whole world.

## The Problem

Beginning reading programmes can be distinguished by an emphasis on the development of decoding and word recognition (Underwood and Batt, 1996), while readers in high school use materials more appropriate to an adult age. Programmes that deal with development of higher-level skills at the functional literacy level emphasise not only the acquisition of new information but also the ability critically to analyse text and achieve an optimal reading rate, depending on the difficulty of the material and the purpose of the reading. In the present study, functional literacy has been defined in the

light of the importance of English as a world language. It is concerned with preparing students to enter the world able to use language to communicate, for example reading e-mails, understanding television programmes.

Many teachers complain that students are unable to read effectively in a foreign language (Susbielles, 1987, p.198). Female students of the English Department in King Abdulaziz University are rated as poor readers of English as a second language as a result of lack of attention to reading skills in intermediate and secondary schools (Al-Ebsi, 1997). Also in a study (Kondarge, 1991) of the English reading proficiency of Saudi college English majors and its correlation with their achievement in English courses at King Abdulaziz University, it was found that the standard of Saudi students' reading proficiency was low, based on their scores in a reading proficiency test. Students with raw scores of 50 and over were considered to have passed the test and those with a raw score of less than 50 were considered to have failed the test. Nearly half of the sample (47%) failed the test. Moreover, a comparison between female (means: 49.0) and male (means: 52.0) students revealed that the achievement level of female students was lower. Consequently, female students in King Abdulaziz University in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah who are training to be English teachers need to develop their reading ability (Kondarge, 1991) because poor reading transfers into poor teaching of reading as well.

This situation has prompted the researcher to study in more depth the problem of how to improve L2 reading skills among female students in King Abdulaziz University in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah who are going to be English teachers. Moreover, students' attitude and interest toward reading was studied. A positive attitude is widely held to be a vital component in learning language successfully. Harmer argues that the teaching methods by which the students are taught must have a great effect on their

attitude and motivation and if students find them boring, they will become de-motivated (Harmer, 1989, p.5). Many researchers and educators have been concerned with studying students' attitude and its important role in the level of success in the student learning process.

### The Objectives of the Study

The main aim of the present study is to explore how to improve reading comprehension skills of female Saudi students in King Abdulaziz University in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah. This aim was pursued through the following objectives:

1. to design and implement an Experimental Reading Programme based on a review of current research on reading and reading instruction, and on a critical analysis of the objectives of the current programme;
2. to find out whether there is any difference between students who follow the Experimental Reading Programme (the experimental group) and those who do not (the comparison group), in scores on a test of reading achievement;
3. to ascertain students' feelings towards the teaching methods and reading materials currently in use and to compare these with feelings towards the methods and materials of the experimental reading programme.
4. to investigate what skills of reading students find most and least difficult before and after the experimental programme;
5. to ascertain students' (experimental group) general feeling about the Experimental Reading Programme.

The researcher proposed the adoption of an experimental programme which emphasises the skills that should improve reading comprehension. The programme has



been classified into eight units; each unit contains different kinds of activities and tasks, emphasis being given to including the three important aspects, graphic, syntactic and semantic, in each unit. Units were designed to develop and enhance many sub-skills of reading comprehension, such as letter recognition, sound recognition, decoding and encoding, understanding meaning / comprehension (reading for information), speed reading, skimming and scanning, research and reference skills, analysis and interpretation skills, expectancy and prediction skills and awareness of word functions.

Activities include using a dictionary and thesaurus, studying word parts, and learning how to find the meaning of a word from the context. Various activities and different materials were used to develop reading comprehension skills, such as practising skimming for general meaning and scanning for specific information.

### **Research Questions**

As previously mentioned, the main objectives of this study were to develop a new reading teaching programme and to test its impact on students' reading skills and attitudes to reading lessons, compared with the current programme. The following questions were formulated to guide the investigation:

1. Will the students (experimental group) who attend the experimental programme achieve higher scores in reading?
2. What is the attitude of students towards the current methods of teaching reading?
3. What is the attitude of students towards the current reading materials?
4. What is the attitude of students who attend the experimental programme towards the new reading teaching method and the reading materials?

5. What skills of reading do students find most difficult before and after the experimental programme?
6. What skills of reading do students find least difficult before and after the experimental programme?

## The Significance of the Study

There is no doubt that reading is an important skill which serves as an input in teaching English as a foreign language in our schools. There are several reasons for believing that this study into the development of reading comprehension is important:

1. With reference to research evidence on the role of designing experimental reading programmes in fostering learners' progress in reading development and improvement, the study is significant because it can provide 'comprehensible input. Krashen (1982) argues that reading interesting and extensive materials will lead to the acquisition of the language which contains appropriate discovery of the language, through using interesting material, and a relaxed, tension-free learning environment. The development of reading skills will contribute in turn to the development of other language skills, for example the writing skill; several studies have reported statistically significant correlations between reading ability and writing ability (Woodward and Philip, Applebee, Donalson, Ryan, Grobe and Grobe cited in Krashen, 1984, pp. 4&5).
2. Many studies have indicated that Arab students are relatively poor in EFL reading and have focused on testing reading ability (for example, Ryan and Meara, 1991; Kondarge, 1991). However, EFL reading literature has neglected the problems of how to develop reading

comprehension and remedy problems in this area. There is, therefore, a need to develop and update reading strategies to improve the reading comprehension ability of students, which will help them as readers and as teachers of reading. There is a need for research in the area of reading as an active process to which readers bring their own knowledge and experience, and in which they engage mentally and emotionally with what they read and get out of the text.

3. An important aspect that has also been neglected is students' attitudes and interest towards reading. Al-Ayyar highlights this deficiency, noting that his study is the first of its kind to investigate reading interests (Al-Ayyar, 1994, p.8). In particular, there is a need for research on the role of reading interesting materials and activities in developing comprehension skills in reading English.
4. It is the researcher's hope that the study will prove useful to teachers, students, researchers, authors, decision and policy makers. It is hoped that students will benefit from the encouragement of teaching development in the area of English reading skills.

This study will develop knowledge of the way that reading, in the context of English as a second language, is taught in Saudi Arabia. Its originality lies in the fact that no one has so far studied this particular topic in this country.

### Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to students at King Abdulaziz University in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah city, at level three in the second year of study in the English

department; other universities in other cities in Saudi Arabia were not included. The university was chosen because of its accessibility for the researcher, who comes from Madinah. Furthermore, Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah city is one of the holy cities, and among the most important cities in the country, so the university attracts students not only from the immediate area, but also from other areas. King Abdulaziz University is the second most important among the western region's universities. Thus, the sample would represent students with a wide range of backgrounds, increasing the possibility that the research findings might be generalisable to other universities in the country.

The study was confined to female students only; male students were not included. Because the education system in Saudi Arabia is strictly segregated, the researcher could not gain access to male students. Moreover, the study was limited to students in level three, in the second year of the degree course, because in subsequent levels, students are required to take more modules that depend on reading, such as poetry, novels etc, so at this stage they are consolidating their reading skills.

The above limitations, however, do not pose a serious threat to the validity of the study (this issue will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five).

A further limitation is that students in the experimental group were required by university regulations to continue to attend their normal classes and complete the standard curriculum. The experimental programme had to be supplementary to this curriculum, rather than an alternative to it. Therefore, the experimental group received more teaching hours than the comparison group. The implications of this are discussed in the methodology, in Chapter Four.

## **Terminology**

In this section, some terms which are frequently used in this study are defined.

### **Graphic**

The aspect of language concerned with the shapes and sounds of letters and words, including spelling, rhyming words, prefixes/ suffixes, etc.

### **Syntactic**

The aspect of language concerned with the forms and arrangements of words in phrases and sentences; the function and structure of the language, such as passive and active sentences, tenses, parts of speech etc.

### **Semantic**

The aspect of language concerned with meaning. Semantic skills include understanding meaning, reading for information, skimming and scanning skills, expectancy and prediction skills, analysis and interpretation skills etc.

### **The Experimental Reading Programme**

This is a collection of authentic materials chosen to be lively and engaging and a variety of reading activities and exercises based on the use of the communicative approach by which to develop reading comprehension skills. It includes a wide range of reading comprehension activities and tasks, grouped according to the main dimensions: graphic, syntactic and semantic, and other aspects of the language.

### **The Affective Questionnaire**

This is a two-part questionnaire. In the first part: a Likert scale is used to measure students' attitude towards teaching methods of reading English and their attitude towards English reading materials. The second part consists of a list of reading skills and asks how well students think they are able to learn these skills. For the

experimental group only, there is a third section in which students are asked how they feel about the Experimental Reading Programme.

### **Reading Achievement Test**

This is a multiple choice test applied to examine students' reading level before and after exposure to the programme, to see if a difference in reading performance occurred.

### **Research Procedures**

The study was conducted according to the following steps (full details are given in Chapter Five).

1. A literature review was carried out on theories of reading and reading structure in order to see which teaching approaches are considered most effective. Topics reviewed include the communicative approach, the use of authentic materials, and suggested activities and materials.
2. An Experimental Reading Programme was devised in the light of the current objectives of teaching reading comprehension to female students in the English department at King Abdulaziz University, and the literature review.
3. Pre-tests were administered to assess students' level in reading (Reading Achievement Test) and to explore students' feelings towards the current programme (Affective Questionnaire).
4. The Experimental Reading Programme was taught over 8 weeks, for 4 hours a week to an experimental group.

5. Post-tests in Reading Achievement were administered to both experimental and comparison groups, to measure gains in achievement (the Affective Questionnaire was administered to the Experimental group only, to explore students' responses to the new programme).
6. The obtained data were subjected to statistical analysis and interpretation.

## Organisation of the Thesis

The remainder of the thesis is presented in six chapters, as follows:

Chapter Two presents the situation of the educational system in Saudi Arabia. Background information on primary, intermediate, secondary, and other kinds of education is presented, followed by a focus on higher education, with particular reference to King Abdulaziz University in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah. The curriculum, teaching methods and aids, facilities and examination system are explained. Criticisms of the present programme are reported. This chapter gives an indication of the present situation of the current programme and students' past education and experience.

Chapter Three reviews research on reading comprehension, with particular reference to the communicative approach. Cognitive and social approaches to the study of reading are discussed, and several models are presented of the relationship between author, reader and text learning strategies and their application to reading are also considered.

A discussion is presented of the communicative approach, which highlights the way in which reading comprehension can be developed by providing interesting and varied practice with authentic materials in a range of different reading activities. This chapter also reviews specific reading skills that teaching seeks to develop, such as skimming and scanning text, and analysing and interpreting texts critically. A number of factors which influence reading development are also reviewed. Some of these, such as innate intelligence and home background, are beyond the teacher's control. However, it is argued that by building students' self-esteem, linking reading activities to the student's level of linguistic ability, and fostering a positive attitude to reading, the teacher can encourage the development of reading skills, and so lay the foundation for future study, and for lifelong enjoyment of reading.

Chapter Four presents an account of the Experimental Reading Programme designed by the researcher for EFL students. It starts with a description and general overview, then highlights the basic principles of the programme: authentic materials, the communicative approach, the four skills, reading skills and techniques and the aim of the programme, to provide a basis for the new reading comprehension programme. Various comprehension activities and tasks are then presented, grouped according to the main dimensions (graphic, syntactic and semantic) and other aspects of the language.

Chapter Five deals with the methodology of the empirical work carried out in this study. It begins by considering the problem of the research, the questions it addresses, and the overall research design. An exploratory study conducted to obtain preliminary insights into the research problem is reported and it is shown how the outcomes were used to develop the experimental programme. A comparison is presented between the objectives of the experimental programme and the one in current



use. The construction of the research instruments, including an Affective Questionnaire exploring students' attitudes toward the current and the new programmes, and a reading comprehension test to measure students' level of reading, is described. The piloting of the instruments, including validity and reliability issues, is reported. Then, the procedures for conducting the main study, including obtaining permission, selecting the sample, and administering the pre and post tests, are explained.

Chapter Six presents the findings obtained from the main study, in relation to the research questions.

In Chapter Seven, conclusions are drawn regarding the implications of the findings. Recommendations for improving the teaching of reading comprehension are offered, and suggestions are made for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: A REVIEW OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN  
SAUDI ARABIA WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO KING  
ABDUL AZIZ UNIVERSITY

## Introduction

Education policy in Saudi Arabia differs from that of many other educational systems. Since all aspects of Saudi life and culture are based on the Islamic religion, the government focuses much of the education programme at all educational stages on teaching students the fundamentals of Islam. The first message from Allah to the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was, “*Read in the name of the Lord who created*” (The Holy Quran, surat Al-Alak, ayah 1). Consequently, education is highly regarded in Islam. Bughdadi comments that

” امتاز نظام التعليم في المملكة على أنظمة التربية في العالم كله لأنه النظام الوحيد الذي يقوم على أصول التربية الإسلامية ومضامينها ومفاهيمها، وعلى أساس المبادئ التي تحتويها ، والأساليب التي قامت عليها“ البغدادي 1985 ص 124.

“Education policy in Saudi Arabia is distinguished from all the others in the whole world, because it is the only system that is based on the principles, contents and ideas of Islamic education and on the basis of the principles and styles that it includes”(Translated by the researcher, 1985, p. 124).

Moreover, the education policy is also distinctive in being designed to reinforce the gender divisions, as El-Sanabary (1994) points out through “ (1) a dual system of male and female education; (2) a gender-specific educational policy that emphasises women’s domestic function; (3) gender-segregated schools and colleges; and (4) curriculum differentiation at the various educational levels” (El-Sanabary, 1994, p.141). In fact, there are two education systems according to gender: boys and girls came under the supervision of two different state agencies, each authority having its own functions, principles, schools and materials. For example P. E is just for boys and home economics only for girls.

## Educational Organisation

The historical background of Saudi education before 1950 is not clearly known. The earliest formal organisation of education occurred between 1949-1950, with the ruling family's support. Al-Farsy mentions that "Surveying the total educational system of Saudi Arabia, it must be remembered that it had its real start only in 1949-50 with the personal support of the then Prince Faisal and the encouragement of Prince Fahd bin Abdulaziz, who later became Minister of Education in the Kingdom, and is now the king" (Al-Farsy, 1990, p.251).

Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is subject to the supervision and control of a number of state agencies, as follows:

1. The Ministry of Education, which was established in 1952, is the principal authority for boys' education at every level. Not only public (state) schools but also boys' private schools are supervised by the Ministry of Education, as are Colleges of Higher Education.
2. The General Presidency for Girls' Education (GPGE) was established in 1960, as the principal authority for female education at every level, including private schools and Colleges of Higher Education.
3. The Ministry of Higher Education was established in 1975 as a completely independent administration responsible for developing higher education for both males and females (though maintaining segregation) at the university level.
4. The General Organisation for Vocational Education and Training is the principal authority for post-Intermediate vocational education of boys. There are three disciplines: Industry, Commerce and Agriculture.

In addition to these four main authorities, there are other authorities which have some involvement in education provision, such as the Ministry of Defence, which is responsible for the administration and financing of its own schools; and adult education centres.

## **Organisation of the Educational System in Saudi Arabia**

### **Introduction**

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's educational system has continued to grow in terms of both quality and quantity. The government has encouraged education and made extensive efforts to expand the spread of education and support it by providing buildings, facilities and establishments. The education system of Saudi Arabia, including books and transport, is free at all stages, primary, intermediate, secondary and higher. Moreover, the state grants a monthly stipend to students in the universities and vocational institutes. As El-Sanabary (1994) indicates, "Saudi Arabia's general education policy affirms the rights of all general citizens to free public education from the primary level to the college level. Female and male students alike enjoy education free from tuition fees, free textbooks, lab uniforms, and school transportation, as well as boarding facilities for college students living away from home. College and university students receive a monthly stipend throughout the year" (Op.cit., p.144).

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's educational system is divided into two main levels, those of general and higher education. The term general education in Saudi Arabia refers to the three fundamental levels: Primary, Intermediate and Secondary Education. There are also other kinds of education such as Vocational Education, Adult Education, and Special Education. These various levels and types of education are discussed in more detail below.

## Kindergarten

Kindergarten education, which lasts for two years, is not compulsory, nor is it a requirement for acceptance into primary school. It is the only stage that is co-educational. There are two kinds of kindergarten schools, government and private. The government kindergartens were established especially to provide day care for the children of female teachers and other staff. Children are enrolled at the age of three, and there are three stages, designated 'Buds', 'Flowers', and Reception. Education in these establishments, which are affiliated to the General Presidency of Girls' Education, is free of charge. The second kind of kindergarten is privately owned and run, though under supervision of the GPGE. Places in these establishments are not restricted to children of government employees but are available to all, subject to payment of fees.

Kindergarten education has developed rapidly in the last few years. Table 1 shows statistical data on numbers of children and schools. It reveals that the government schools are more numerous than the private ones, though there has been rapid growth in both sectors, with an increase from 71,632 children in 1991 to 86,452 children in 1996, while the total number of schools increased from 608 in 1991 to 969 in 1996.

At this level of education, English as a foreign language is not taught in government kindergarten schools. It is, however, taught in the private schools as an introduction to the language: just individual letters and numbers.

**Table 1 Development of Kindergarten Education 1991-1996**

Year	Private Schools	Government Schools	Total Schools	Total Children
1991-1992	297	311	608	71,632
1992-1993	313	366	679	80,083
1993-1994	343	409	752	85,415
1994-1995	358	437	795	84,299
1995-1996	399	570	969	86,452

Source: Ministry of Planning, 1996, pp.52-53.

## Primary Education

The aim of primary education is to introduce basic skills and principles and prepare pupils for the next stage of their life. Alzaid indicated that the principles of primary education in Saudi Arabia are to “provide them with the principles of their true faith, sound guidance, experience, information and skills. ” (Alzaid, 1981, p.46). Primary education lasts for six years. Pupils enrol at the age of six. As indicated earlier, from the beginning of this stage onward, boys and girls are educated separately and their schools come under different authorities. At the end of each year, pupils take an examination which they must pass in order to move on to the next grade. On successful completion of the final year of primary education, the student is awarded the Primary Certificate. Statistical information on the development of primary schools in Saudi Arabia is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2 Development of Primary Education 1991-1996**

Year	Schools	Classes	Pupils	
			Male	Female
1991-1992	9,490	88,344	1,028,978	893,094
1992-1993	10,230	95,134	1,074,883	951,065
1993-1994	10,699	99,960	1,117,655	997,081
1994-1995	10,871	103,687	1,135,637	1,033,092
1995-1996	11,217	107,740	1,178,655	1,069,526

Source: Ministry of Planning, 1996, pp.54-55.

It is clear from the table that there has been a steady increase in the number of schools, classes and pupils during the period in question. At this level of education, English as a foreign language is not taught in public schools but, in the private schools, English is taught starting in the first year of the primary stage with the basics of the language, for example, individual words, phrases, sentences about personal information, telling the time, days of the week, months...etc

## Intermediate Education

Intermediate education for girls was introduced 35 years ago, in 1963-1964. According to the second annual report of the GPGE,

”كانت بداية التعليم المتوسط في عام 83 – 1384 حينما قامت الرئاسة العامة لتعليم البنات بافتتاح أربع مدارس متوسطة ، ثم ازدادت إلى سبع مدارس في العام التالي.“ التقرير السنوي الثاني 1991 ص 27

“The beginning of Intermediate Education was in 1383/84 when the G. P. G. E. opened four schools and then seven schools in the following year”(Translated by the researcher, General Presidency for Girls’ Education, 1991, p. 27).

The duration of intermediate education is three years, for pupils from 13 – 15 years of age. Pupils can enter intermediate school only when they have successfully completed all the stages of primary school. Promotion through intermediate school depends on the yearly examination and the Intermediate Certificate is awarded at the end of the third year. Intermediate education has witnessed tangible quantitative development, as in shown in Table 3. Between 1991 and 1996, the number of pupils increased from (347,198) to (493,369), an increase of 42%. There has been a corresponding development in the number of schools and classes.

**Table 3 Development of Intermediate Education 1991-1996**

Year	Schools	Classes	Pupils	
			Male	Female
1991-1992	3,582	23,359	347,198	269,362
1992-1993	4,009	25,969	390,028	269,362
1993-1994	4,431	28,954	434,073	303,170
1994-1995	4,598	31,361	462,207	336,764
1995-1996	4,898	33,259	493,369	394,558

Source: Ministry of Planning, 1996, pp.58-59.



### Teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Intermediate Education

English in this stage of education is taught in a structured way as a compulsory subject. At government schools, the teaching of English as a foreign language starts in the first year of intermediate school and continues up to the third year of the secondary level.

In 1990, the Ministry of Education and General Presidency for Girls' Education up-dated the textbooks for English, producing the current series. It is called English For Saudi Arabia and contains 24 units in the pupils' book. Each unit is divided into 45-minute lessons. Every fourth lesson is a summary of all the points covered in the preceding three lessons. This course uses three ideas in teaching English through: grammatical terminology, topics and language function, such as asking for directions, giving instructions, etc. The first book does not try to explain English grammar, but introduces numbers and letters, then sentences and small paragraphs. In the second and third books, the emphasis is on grammatical roles and language functions in the light of Islamic culture and the norms and values of Saudi Arabia. The topics are graduated in difficulty so students start by asking about names, age, place of residence, names of countries, telling the time, colours, dates etc, and end by asking about hobbies, learning how to write a letter and reading about developments in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It should be noted that the materials currently used in English teaching in Saudi Arabia schools exhibit a high level of localisation. Alptekin and Alptekin point out that there are two contrasting views regarding cultural context in teaching EFL. One view is that English should be taught in the light of the norms and values of a country in which the native language is English, in order to make pupils not only bilingual, but also bicultural. This is the view usually put forward by native English-speaking teachers. On the other hand, there is a view that English teaching should reflect the norms and values

of the country where instruction takes place, with a view to developing bilingual, but not bi-cultural people (Alptekin and Alptekin, 1984, p.14). This latter view predominates in the Saudi educational context.

According to official regulations, the school year is divided into two terms, and a test is taken at the end of each. Total marks are aggregated after the second term test.

The following objectives are set by the education policy for teaching English at the intermediate level:

1. "To produce, in three years, an individual who is able to speak, read and listen with understanding to simple current English and to write a connected passage of up to half a page about a simple subject or incident.
2. To give pupils who finish their formal education in the third year Intermediate enough knowledge of the language to help them in their vocation.
3. To give pupils who proceed to the secondary stage a sound foundation on which to build their future studies" (Al-Subahi, 1992, p. 6).

### **Secondary Education**

The first secondary schools were established in Riyadh. According to the second annual report,

”لم تفتتح أية مدرسة ثانوية في غير مدينة الرياض إلا مع الخطة الخمسية الأولى للتنمية التي بدأت في عام 1390-1391هـ“ الرئاسة العامة لتعليم البنات 1991 ص27.

“No secondary schools were opened other than in Riyadh city, until the first five-year development plan, which started in 1390-91 A.H” (GPGE., 1991, p.27). 1390-91 AH is equivalent to 1970-1971 AD in the Gregorian Calendar.

This stage lasts for three years, from ages 16-18. Applicants for secondary education must have gained the Intermediate Certificate. The first year of secondary

education is a general one, during which all students study a wide range of subjects including the literary and scientific. Then, in the second year, students have to choose one of two sections, literary or science, according to their interests and aptitudes. In the final year of this stage, students sit a final examination. The final grade they obtain in secondary school determines whether they can enter higher education, and in what fields. Secondary education has developed remarkably and rapidly, as the following statistics indicate.

**Table 4 Development of Secondary Education 1991-1996**

Year	Schools	Classes	Pupils	
			Male	Female
1991-1992	1,539	11,967	169,804	143,772
1992-1993	1,732	13,022	188,537	152,349
1993-1994	1,915	14,280	212,138	173,615
1994-1995	2,002	15,764	233,059	202,016
1995-1996	2,318	17,483	266,491	232,168

Source: Ministry of Planning, 1996, pp.61-62

It can be seen that the ratio of increase in the numbers of schools, classes and pupils differs: the increase in pupils is considerably more than the increases in classes, so class sizes must have got bigger. Larger classes make it difficult for teachers to deal with less able pupils who lack motivation.

#### Teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Secondary Education

The objectives that are set by the education policy for teaching English at the secondary level are as follows:

1. "To help the pupils gain in three years a reasonable mastery of the four language skills which are:
  - a. Listening with understanding to spoken English.

- b. Speaking current English correctly with proper stress and intonation.
  - c. Reading with understanding English texts that vary in difficulty from adapted and simplified material to the original in an abridged form.
  - d. Writing a connected passage of up to a full page on a subject of a descriptive nature.
2. To stress the utilitarian point of view of learning a foreign language as a useful tool for cultural as well as social and economic communication.
  3. To foster in the pupil an interest in reading so that later on he may be prepared to read reference books, periodicals and pamphlets bearing on his future field of specialisation” (Al-Subahi, 1992, p. 6).

One of the most important objectives of teaching English as a foreign language in Saudi is to help students to improve and extend reading ability. Unfortunately, according to Al-Sulaimani, (1990) most pupils in Saudi have poor concentration and find it hard to participate in English discussion. They have a limited grasp of English concepts and their goal is merely to pass the exam. Most pupils in Saudi schools belong to this category where English is concerned. On the other hand, even the more able and motivated students have difficulties, in that, because of the limited time available and the size of classes, they do not have a chance to practise the language. Nor are any supplementary materials available for them to read. Most of the time, they do the required assignments (reading, writing) at home (Al-Sulaimani, 1990, p.332).

It is can be seen from the above section that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia’s educational system is highly centralized and that according to protocol English is taught as a compulsory subject in a structured way in the light of certain set objectives set by the education policy and to meet to official regulations, tests and examinations. Moreover, students and teachers have the limited goals of “to pass the exam” and “to

finish the curriculum in the limited time available” respectively. Neither students nor teachers can seek ways to improve the situation because of the strict centralized system; everybody has to have the same standard textbook, the same standard curriculum, the same specific hours of teaching and of course, the same standard examination. It is impossible for any school, or teacher, head teacher, or researcher to change any features of the system, because it is laid down by law.

### **Background to Reading in Saudi Arabia**

In Saudi society, the majority of children begin to learn reading at the age of 6 or 7 years, in other words, when they enter primary school. They acquire literacy in their mother tongue, Arabic. In girls’ primary schools, the textbooks for reading have not changed for a long time, so pupils and teachers face difficulties in learning and teaching. In the researcher’s experience, children do not have any opportunity for self-selection of reading materials; the teacher determines what is read. Moreover, all children read the same thing; there is no concept of offering a variety of materials to suit pupils’ different interests and abilities. There is a standard reading book (Zafer et al, 1999), which is prescribed for pupils at the first year, the second year, the third year and so on; the same book is used for all pupils all over the Kingdom. Albednah criticises the reading textbook on the ground that “Most of reading passages do not reflect the students’ interest, also most of them are not accompanied by pictorial aids” (Albednah, 1982, p.57).

Moreover, in the researcher’s personal experience, reading is done aloud, either in chorus or individually; there is no silent reading. When children read aloud, emphasis is placed on correct and accurate recognition and pronunciation of letters and sounds. The aim in teaching reading in class is to improve children’s oral reading and recitation. If pupils make a mistake in the pronunciation of a word, the teacher automatically

corrects it. Consequently, the pupils experience and practise only one approach or strategy, namely, word by word reading. Their reading is simply accurate vocalisation of the text. Children are not introduced to any other strategies and they do not go beyond the text. The monolingual Arabic dictionary is never used and when pupils meet an unfamiliar word, either they are given the meaning in a footnote in their reading book or they get the meaning directly from the teacher. The private schools have the same way of teaching reading: recitation and accurate identification of letters and words. It is noticed that schools in Saudi basically emphasise the decoding process and accurate pronunciation but do not emphasise learner construction. Undoubtedly, accurate pronunciation is necessary for reading, but it is not enough if the aim is to achieve the social function of reading.

In my experience, children in Saudi Arabia do not often read for pleasure and many pupils up to fourth grade in the primary school are incapable of reading any material other than that which they have read at school.

At home, parents help children to practise what they have been reading at school. However, from what I have seen, most parents do not encourage children to read, and very rarely read at home for themselves. Sometimes, the father reads a newspaper or magazine and often, parents or other family members read the Holy Quran, especially on holy days like Friday or during Ramadan, but it is uncommon to find parents reading other materials such as stories, novels, or other kinds of books.

Some educated families who recognise the importance of reading, encourage children to read by buying stories and books, but many less educated parents think that reading material such as stories is a waste of time and that children should spend their time in doing their homework.

Thus, we can say that the Saudi home is not, in general, a good environment for literacy acquisition. Al-Shetry (1986), in a study of how people in Riyadh spent their time, found that most people spent their time watching T.V. or playing sport, but few of them spent their time reading or visiting the general library (Al-Shetry, 1986, p.306). So children do not see their elders read, and reading materials are not available. Dean and Nichols comment that “The child from a literate home, who sees his parents reading and using books, comes to school with certain attitudes to reading” (Dean and Nichols, 1986, p.14). Saudi children, in general, do not acquire a positive attitude toward reading because they are not presented with interesting and enjoyable books and their environment does not encourage reading. School is the primary environment for literacy acquisition, but what takes place at school is not enough to create a good attitude toward reading. Parents have an important role to play in this respect. Dean and Nichols indicate that “Parents can be and often are the most powerful agents in facilitating the child’s literacy” (ibid., p. 13).

From this brief background to the situation of reading in a Saudi society, it can be understood that the reading of pupils at the intermediate and secondary stages is adversely affected by a number of factors, such as the choice of material, the teaching methods and strategies adopted, and a social environment in which reading is not valued and encouraged. Consequently, this background still affects the students when they reach university level.

### **Other Kinds of Education**

#### *Vocational Education*

The purpose of this kind of education is to meet the country’s requirements for skilled workers. There are various types of school. Industrial, commercial and

agricultural schools are available for male students, while tailoring schools are available for female students. There are also schools which provide training in health care and nursing, under the supervision of health institutes. Vocational Education in the health field is available for both males and females.

### *Adult Education*

The Saudi government has made extensive efforts to eradicate illiteracy and to develop adult education, to help adults and young people who for various reasons did not complete general education, and give them an opportunity to progress into higher education and employment. Classes are held in the afternoons, usually in the same buildings and with the same teachers as general education.

### *Special Education*

This kind of education is provided for three categories of special need: blind, deaf and mentally retarded students. Special need students are usually educated in separate schools, with specially designed curricula. The aim of special education is to help the disabled person to be as self-reliant and as productive a member of society as possible.

### **Higher Education**

The definition and aim of higher education according to the education policy of Saudi Arabia are as follows:

"التعليم العالي هو مرحلة التخصص العلمي في كافة أنواعه ومستوياته ، رعاية لذوي الكفاية والنبوغ وتنمية لمواهبهم وسدا لحاجات المجتمع المختلفة في حاضرة ومستقبل بما يساير التطور المفيد الذي يحقق أهداف الأمة وغاياتها النبيلة" وزارة التعليم العالي 1988 ص13



“Higher education is the practical specialised stage in all its kinds and levels. It cares for those who have a high level of ability and develops their talents and fulfils the different needs of society at present and in the future, in order to achieve the aims of the nation and its noble goals”(Translated by the researcher, Ministry of Higher Education, 1988, p.13).

The history of higher education can be traced from 1949 when King Abdulaziz ordered a Shariah College to be established in Makkah. After a short time, in 1953, the Shariah College in Riyadh was established, then in 1954, an Arabic Language College was opened in Riyadh. The aim of opening these colleges was to prepare qualified secondary school teachers. The period of study was four years (Al-Sheikh, 1994, p.95).

During the last four decades, seven large universities have been established in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, beginning with King Saud University in Riyadh which was opened in 1957. Then came the Islamic University in Meddinah, which was established in 1961, and specializes in religious studies. King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah was established in 1967 as a private university, then in 1970 it became a public one. In 1974, the Islamic University of Imam Muhammad Ben-Saud was opened in Riyadh, specializing in religious studies and Arabic language. Shortly after, in 1975, the Petroleum and Minerals University was established in Dhahran, as an upgrading of the College of Petroleum and Minerals established in 1963. In 1987, the university changed its name to King Fahad University for Petroleum and Minerals. In the same year that the previous university was established, 1975, King Faisal University was opened in Dammam and Hofuf. The last university was established in 1979 in Makkah, and is called Umm Al-Qura University.(Al-Farsy, op.cit., p.257 and Ministry of Higher Education, op.cit., p19)

The earlier universities were established under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, but were brought under the newly established Ministry of Higher Education in 1974. Since then, higher education has received much attention from the government.

### **Girls' Higher Education**

Girls' higher education is not confined to the colleges run by the G. P. G. E. Most of the seven universities mentioned above admit female students. The precedent in this respect was set by King Saud University which in 1961-1962 accepted four female students, studying part-time. Since then, university education for women has expanded year after year. The numbers of students have increased and various departments have been opened. In 1964-1965 King Abdulaziz University started girls' higher education, while the following year, the Islamic University of Imam Muhammad Ben-Saud began to accept females. King Faisal University started receiving female students in 1976, the year following its establishment, while Umm Al-Qura University accepted women from the beginning. The Islamic University in Meddinah and the Petroleum and Minerals University in Dhahran, however, take male students only (Ministry of Higher Education, 1988, p38).

### **King Abdulaziz University (K.A.U.)**

As previously mentioned, K. A U. was established in Jeddah, in 1967, as a private university, and then in 1970 it became a governmental instructional institute which has its own system and goals. The aims of the university are as follows:

1. To provide opportunities for undergraduate and postgraduate studies in various religious and literary specializations.
2. To deal with Islamic studies and research.

3. To prepare teachers.
4. To develop science and knowledge through conducting academic research and encouraging students to conduct such research.
5. To provide social, academic, sports and cultural activities. (Translated by the researcher, Ministry of Higher Education, 1988, p.260).

In order to achieve the above aims, the K. A U. has passed through several stages of growth that have increased the number of departments and of subjects offered. At present, the K. A U. has nine faculties:

- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Faculty of Economics & Administration  | 2. Faculty of Science             |
| 3. Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences     | 4. Faculty of Engineering         |
| 5. Faculty of Medicine                    | 6. Faculty of Education (Madinah) |
| 7. Faculty of Geology                     | 8. Faculty of Meteorology         |
| 9. Faculty of Sea Sciences (Oceanography) |                                   |

This research is concerned with the Faculty of Education (located in Madinah). Information about this Faculty is provided below.

### **Faculty of Education (Madinah)**

The faculty was established in 1977-1978 in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah. This university awards the bachelor degree, in the following departments which contribute in the preparation of specialist teachers:

1. Arabic Language and Islamic Studies Department: This includes two branches, Arabic language and Islamic studies for both male and female students.
2. Foreign Language: It is limited to the English language, at present, for both male and female students.

3. Natural Sciences department: This includes three branches, Chemistry, Biology and geology. It is available for male and female students.
4. Mathematics and Physics department: including two branches, Mathematics and Physics for male and female students.
5. Social Science department: This includes three branches, history, geography and social science.
6. Art department: This is for male students only.
7. Physical Education: This is for male students only.
8. Home Economics, for female students only.

The University awards the following qualifications:

1. Bachelor Degree: in Science and Education, in Literature and Education and in Educational Science, mentioning the name of the branch department;
2. General Diploma in Education, mentioning the name of the branch department (this diploma is awarded to non graduates who are working in teaching);
3. Master's Degree in the following fields: Arabic Language and Islamic Studies, English language, Educational Psychology, Teaching Methods and Educational Technology;
4. Doctor of Philosophy in two departments only (Educational Psychology - Teaching Methods and Educational Technology);

The quantitative development in the number of students, teachers and graduates has been considerable in the last few years. The statistical information in Table 5 indicates that the number of students in 1991 was 4924, rising to 7417 in 1996.

**Table 5 Development of Students, Teachers and Graduates in King Abdulaziz University Faculty of Education in Madinah, 1991-1996**

Year	Graduates	Students			Teachers					
		Total	F*	M*	Total		Non Saudi Teachers		Saudi teachers	
					F	M	F	M	F	M
1991-1992	648	4924	2446	2478	101	133	38	63	63	70
1992-1993	789	7760	4904	2856	42	140	17	62	25	78
1993-1994	880	8710	5099	3611	119	126	35	56	84	70
1994-1995	2187	9146	5214	3932	110	124	32	55	78	69
1995-1996	-	7417	4373	3044	129	143	41	54	88	89

\*F = Female

\*M = Male

Source: Ministry of Planning, 1996, p.73.

### Requirements for Graduation

In order to graduate and obtain the bachelor degree, students must study 136 credits, distributed as follows:

- 34 credit hours of general culture orientation, divided into 14 credit hours university requirements + 12 credits college requirements + 8 credit hours for elective courses.
- 33 credit hours of educational courses.
- 69 credit hours courses in the students' academic specialisation.

The total for graduation is 136 credit hours. Appendix 1 explains the requirements for graduation in the English Language department.

## **System of Study in the University**

### **Terminology**

**Academic Year:** There are two semesters, though an extra summer semester may be held (see below).

**Academic Semester:** It is fifteen weeks long, not including the time spent in registration and final examination.

**Summer Semester:** This is a period of time not more than eight weeks, excluding the time spent in registration and final examination. The number of hours for each course is doubled.

**Academic Level:** This indicates the studying stage. For graduation, students have to pass eight levels or more, equal to four years or eight semesters.

**Academic Module:** This is a course followed at a specified level according to a fixed study plan in each department. Each module or course has its own number, symbol, name and a detailed description of individual items which explain the content and the purposes of the course. Some modules are conditional upon study of previous modules or synchronous modules.

The system of studying in the university is based on levels. There are at least eight levels. Each level equals one Academic semester. Modules are distributed across these levels for every department. At each level, a number of modules are studied according to the academic plan. Students move from one level to the next according to their result in the final examination and the total marks for each module. In addition to the two main semesters, there is a summer semester. Students who do not gain the required mark must repeat failed modules and cannot register for the following level until they have completed the required modules.

## The English Language Department

### Objectives

The aims of the English language programme are as follows:

- A. to prepare qualified teachers to teach both in intermediate and secondary schools;
- B. to establish a centre for English language study and translation to serve both the university and the country at large;
- C. to enable students to master the English language and to learn something about English culture;
- D. to provide the Department with Saudi English teachers to teach in the Department after their graduation;
- E. to qualify students in the field of translation to translate Islamic books from Arabic into English, and to enable them to spread the Islamic Law (Da'wa) outside Saudi Arabia by lecturing to foreigners who wish to embrace Islam (Al-Faryh and Al-Hajailan, 1983).

### Curriculum

The study at the university is distinguished by the fact that there are no centrally prescribed text books, as there are for general education. The trend that the researcher wishes to point to here is that there is a greater demand for English at the higher education level than there is at the secondary level. Teaching at the university level focuses on the aims and main topics which should be taught to students. Tutors and experienced teachers decide on the main topics which each course should cover. Moreover, the university teacher has the freedom to change some of these topics and choose suitable references according to students' needs. Reading, as a course, is not

included within the programme. There is an assumption that reading will take care of itself because students have practised reading in secondary school, so they do not need to know more about reading skills. But when students are at the university level, they suddenly require different skills beyond simply extracting the meaning of the passage. They need extension, interaction and development of all the different skills of reading such as reading for information, scanning and skimming, research and reference, and analysis and interpretation of the text. This implies different views of reading from the skills taught in school. The question therefore arises whether the current curriculum of English Language departments fully meets students' needs and, if not, what changes and expansion may be appropriate.

### **Availability of Teachers**

Teachers in the English Language department in Al-Madinah can be divided into three groups. The first group is a Saudi group which contains professors who have gained a PhD. degree to teach special English courses (professors), and teachers who hold a B. A. with distinction in English. These latter have been nominated by the college as demonstrators under training (teaching assistants) to teach students in the first and second levels. Non-Saudi teachers make up the second group. They include masters and professors, most of them from various Islamic countries except one, an American native speaker who embraced the Muslim faith and has been contracted to teach. The English department in Al-Madinah does not make use of native English speakers to teach its students. This is because Al-Madinah is the holy city and non-Muslims cannot enter it. Most of the staff are native Arabic and Urdu speakers. The third group is teachers who are studying abroad to continue their studies to get master or Ph.D. degrees. The following table indicates the distribution of the three groups:



**Table 6 Teachers in the English Language Department**

	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Saudi Teachers	7	2	9
Non-Saudi Teachers	5	4	9
Saudi Teachers who are studying abroad	4	4	8
Total	16	10	26

Sources: Ministry of Higher Education, 1996, p.25

### **Teaching Methods and Aids**

The teaching methods and aids used may play a very important role in the way subjects are introduced to students. Lectures are the normal method of teaching in the university. This is because most of the courses are theoretical, and because of the large number of students. Al-Subahi criticises the methodology of ELT in general, saying “The current methodology of ELT encourages demonstration of grammatical rules and translation of lexical items; this keeps learners dependent on a teacher’s exposure and blocks their attempts to engage in spontaneous interaction” (Al-Subahi, 1995, p.5). The current teaching methods develop the students’ linguistic competence more than their use of the language to communicate and interact. Aids such as overhead projectors are available, but the main teaching aids used are the traditional ones such as white / black boards and chalk/pens. The reasons why most teachers do not use aids are lack of confidence and the time needed to operate the aids.

### **Facilities and Equipment**

The women’s English Language department is well equipped, in so far as it has a language laboratory, but it is used for few courses, so there are few opportunities to practise and develop listening skills. Also, it is normal to find a library in any Faculty, but unfortunately the women’s EL department is very poor in supporting resources and

materials, which would enable students to develop and exploit the important skill of reading. In addition, the lack of resources limits students' opportunities to browse and read material relevant to their courses, or other resources.

### **Examination and Evaluation**

Students must attend courses regularly for a minimum of eighteen hours each week. As previously mentioned, study in the university is organised by levels, and at the end of each level, students are required to sit a final examination. Students who fail (i.e., score less than sixty percent) in one or two courses can repeat the courses at a later time, but they are not allowed to repeat more than two, because this will influence the students' accumulative grade. If the accumulative grade is less than 2.0, the students will be given a warning. If it is still less than 2.0 after three warnings, the student will be dismissed from the university. Twenty per cent of each student's mark is based upon assignments and class work and eighty percent upon examinations (divided equally between a mid-term exam and final exam). According to the teacher training programme (there are two modules about training), the evaluation of trainees' performance at the present time is based on students' performance in examinations and on their performance in their class activities as trainee teachers. The marks which students obtain are accounted and evaluated as follows:

**Table 7 Evaluation Marks and Grades**

Percentage	Grades	Grades Symbol	Accumulative Grade Point Average
90-100	Exceptional	A+	5.0
90 to less than 95	Excellent	A	4.75
85 to less than 90	Superior	B+	4.5
80 to less than 85	Very Good	B	4.0
75 to less than 80	Above Average	C+	3.5
70 to less than 75	Good	C	3.0
65 to less than 70	High-Pass	D+	2.5
60 to less than 65	Pass	D	2.0
less than 60	Fail	F	1.0

Sources: Ministry of Higher Education, 1996,p.18

## Comments on English in Saudi Arabia

In general, the standard of student proficiency in English is very low in Saudi Arabia (Al-Qahtani, 1996, p.88). Al-Faryh and Al-Hajailan (1983) have commented on several factors which affect student proficiency in English, such as:

1. lack of motivation;
2. use of Arabic and translation;
3. shortage of qualified teachers;
4. short tenure of non-Saudi teachers;
5. shortage of qualified supervisors;
6. lack of books in libraries of schools and school districts;
7. some teachers feel that they must cover each unit in a set time and complete the book whether or not the students have understood. They thus teach “knowledge” not “skills”;
8. some teachers create negative attitudes in their students by telling them that English is one of the most difficult languages to learn and that a Saudi student will not be able to master it;
9. the teaching time allocated for English at intermediate and secondary level is insufficient to enable the students to develop complete language skills;
10. language laboratories are often not used (op. cit, 1983, p. 117).

Students are taught English in the classroom only; they do not have the opportunity to practise English outside the classroom. Students’ background is very poor because most of them are from little educated or even illiterate families. Consequently, when they move to university level, they have only limited experience from the intermediate and secondary stages. The programmes which receive those students with poor experience face the difficult challenge of developing all the four

English skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) in the current context. As previously mentioned, there is no specific course on reading skills within the programme of the Faculty of Education English Language departments, although reading is a very important skill to extract and gain access to information and knowledge of the world. Moreover, students in higher education are required to write numerous essays and assignments, so they need to develop their reading skills such as reading for information, scanning and skimming, research and references, and analysis and interpretation of the text. This suggests that they may need help to develop of higher-level skills with such as the ability to read critically, to analyse text and achieve an optimal reading rate depending on the difficulty of the material and the purpose of the reading.

Female students of the English Department in King Abdulaziz University are poor readers of English as a second language, as a result of lack of attention to reading skills in intermediate and secondary schools, as identified by Kondarge (1991) in the study referred to previously (see p.3).

Last, but certainly not least, the researcher's opinion, based on personal experience as a student and teacher, as well as the experience of colleagues, that there are gaps in the current English programme, as indicated in the above brief description, has prompted the researcher to study in more depth the problem of how to improve L2 reading skills among female students in King Abdulaziz University in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah who are going to be English teachers. The researcher intends to propose a programme which emphasises skills that have been shown in the literature (see chapter 3) to improve reading ability.

## Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the situation of the educational system in Saudi Arabia with particular reference to King Abdulaziz University in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah. It has shown the rapid increase of primary, intermediate, secondary, and other kinds of education. Then it focused on higher education and, in particular, upon King Abdulaziz University. It has explained in detail the current education system of the University (English Language Department). This includes the curriculum, teaching methods and aids, facilities and examination. An indication has been given of the current situation of the present programme and students' past education and experience of reading in English. Criticisms have been made of the present programme. Students' achievement in English and in reading skills in particular is poor. There is a need to develop reading and to motivate students.

## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH INTO READING COMPREHENSION

## **Introduction**

This chapter establishes the theoretical foundation for the present study by considering conceptions of the reading process, and key themes in previous work on reading comprehension, that influenced the development of the author's new reading programme for Saudi Arabia. The discussion opens with several contrasting definitions of reading, which focus attention on two main components of the reading process: the decoding of text and the comprehension of what is read. The different emphases of the cognitive and social perspectives to our understanding of the reading process are viewed, and a number of models of the relationship between reader and text are presented. Learning strategies are also considered, with particular reference to their use in reading. An account is then given of the communicative approach to reading, with its focus on authentic use of language to exchange ideas and information. Particular attention is paid to the skills and sub-skills that readers need to acquire for fluent, effective reading, notably skimming and scanning, and analysis interpretation skills. The chapter ends with an overview of factors that have been found to affect reading development.

## **Definitions of Reading**

The term "reading comprehension" is viewed by people in different ways, and numerous conflicting views and definitions appear in the literature on reading. As Hall, Ribovich and Ramig (1979, p.6) note, "Conceptions of "Reading" range from extremely narrow to extremely broad; they are confined to the decoding of printed symbols and basic oral responses at one extreme and they move through the grasping of literal meaning and the interpretation of ideas to the inclusion of changes in behaviour that result from decoding at the other extreme". This range of definitions is reflected in the examples which follow.

According to Dowing (1967, p.14): “Reading is much more than mere word, phrase or even sentence recognition. Reading involves not only the skills of recognition (such as the use of configuration; contextual clues; and word analyses, which includes phonics as one of the basic means of word attack) but also comprehension”. This definition implies that it is not enough for readers to possess skills merely to recognise individual words, or even larger units of text. Readers must be able to understand what they read.

Thus, definitions of reading tend to focus on two basic processes: a decoding process and a comprehension process. The decoding process refers to understanding the letter - sound relationships and involves the translation of printed words into a representation similar to oral language. That is, decoding skills enable the learner to pronounce the words correctly. But recognition of letters and words is, itself, fraught with problems. For instance, in English, 26 written symbols have to represent over 40 sounds, which the reader has to blend together to form words. The second element of the definition, comprehension, is the main goal of the reading process. Students need to be able to understand material of varying degrees of difficulty, and to extract from it the information they need. In this respect, a crucial task for the teacher is to help students not only to recognise and reproduce words mechanically, but also to realise that they convey ideas and information, and to understand these. However well students can recognise and voice the words in the text, if they do not understand what is conveyed by the text, they are not really reading. Reading is an interactive process to which readers bring their own knowledge and experience; they engage mentally and emotionally with what they read. Harris and Sipay agree with Lapp and Flood (1978) about this. “Reading comprehension is a result of the interaction between the perception of graphic



symbols that represent language and the reader's language skills and knowledge of the world" (Harris and Sipay, 1980, p.8).

Thus, the reading process includes not only letter and word perception or recognition but also comprehension of the concepts conveyed by the printed words. Moreover, Harris and Sipay share Lapp and Flood's view that comprehension involves the whole of the reader's experience of life: readers come to understand the full meaning conveyed by written text, by relating the words in front of them to their own ideas, senses, memories and feelings.

The following two definitions of reading are quoted from Arabic sources:

"القراءة عملية عقلية انفعالية دافعية تشمل تفسير الرموز والرسوم التي يتلقاها القارئ عن طريق عينيه ، وفهم المعان ، والربط بين الخبرة السابقة وهذه المعاني ، والاستنتاج والنقد والحكم." (شحاتة 1993م ص 105).

"Reading is a mental, passionate, and motivational process. It involves decoding the symbols and script, which the readers take in through their eyes; understanding the meaning; relation between readers' past experience and new knowledge; expectancy, criticism and evaluation"(Shahata, 1993 p.105) (Translated by the researcher).

"مفهوم القراءة يمثل وحدة متكاملة تتمثل في: نطق الرموز وفهمها ، وتحليل ما هو مكتوب ونقده ، والإفادة منه في حل المشكلات" (مجاور 1974 ص 308).

"The term reading is considered to involve complete integration of pronouncing the symbols, recognising them, and analysing the written word, and criticising them, interaction, and utilisation in solving problems"(Mijawar, 1980 p.308) (Translated by the researcher).

## Approaches to the Study of Reading

Two broad approaches have been taken up by scholars investigating reading, one seeing it as a cognitive process, the other as socially and culturally determined. In both cases, this is a matter of emphasis.

### **1. Reading as a cognitive process**

The cognitive perspective is concerned with the way the brain of the reader processes text and turns it into meaning. In other words “the act of understanding involves an act of problem-solving”(Mayer, 1996, p. 258). It can be said that the cognitive view looks purely at mental processes; it examines how the mind works when it faces a problem such as trying to read or understand.

A numbers of researchers have looked at reading from the cognitive perspective and emphasised different aspects of the process. For example, LaBerge and Samuels (1974) focus on word-encoding, Kintsch and van Dijk (1978) focus on integration and Just and Carpenter (1980) put forward a more inclusive model which encompasses both elements. Their model draws heavily on Anderson’s (1983) architecture of cognition, proposed in his ACT (Adaptive Control of Thought) theory, of which ACT\* is the latest and most fully developed version. O’Malley and Chamot (1990, p.19) point out five reasons for the influence of Anderson on the cognitive approach: (1) it integrates several concepts of cognitive processing, both general and current views in the field; (2) it encompasses a complete view and theory of the development of production systems; (3) it differentiates between factual knowledge and procedural skill; not only in the memory presentation but also in learning; (4) it integrates processing with characterization of how information is learned; and (5) it is up to date, having been extended in recent publications.

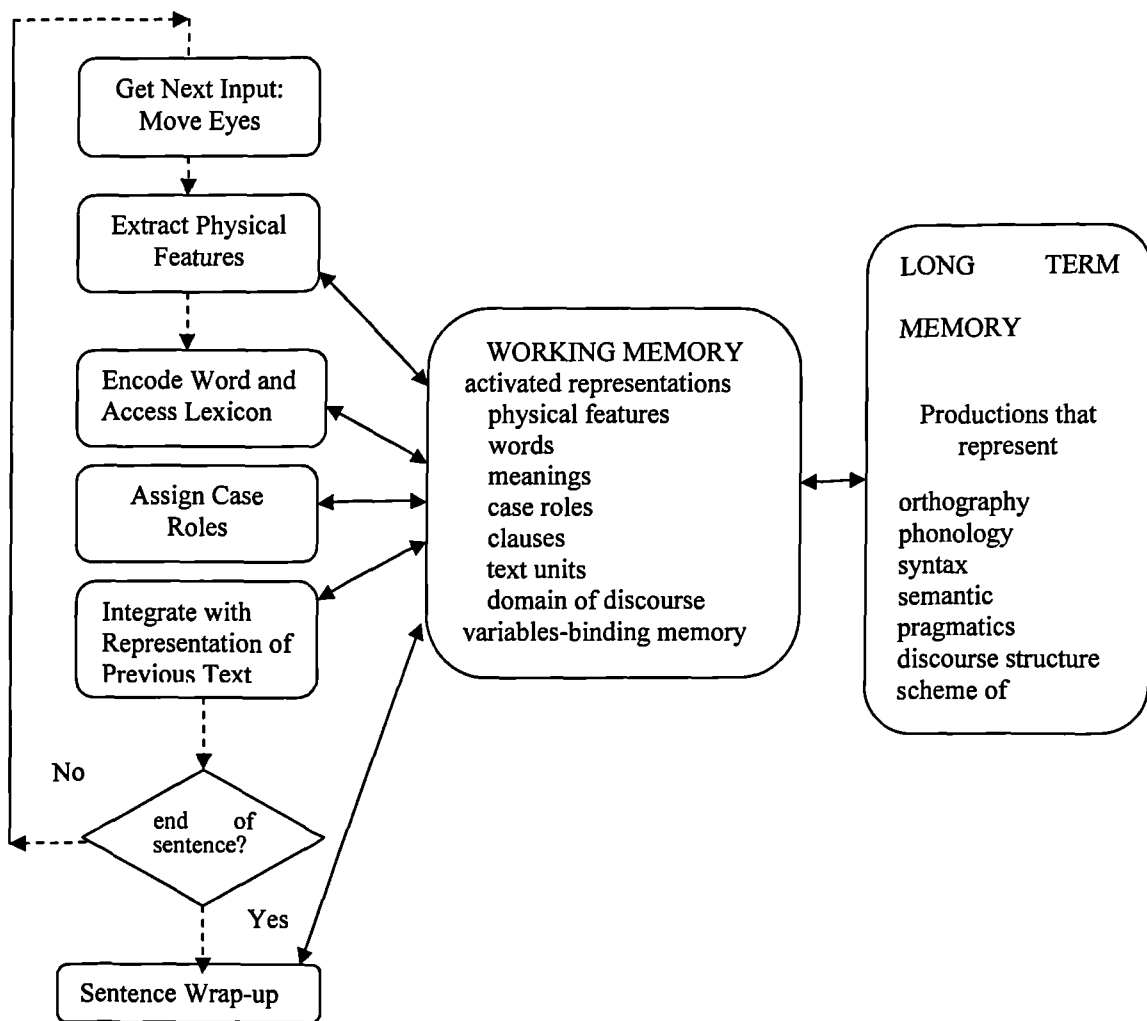
Anderson's ACT theory is based on three main principles as follows:

1. There is a basic unity underlying all higher cognition processes: "The most deeply rooted preconception guiding my theorizing is a belief in the unity of human cognition, that is, that all the higher cognitive processes: memory, language, problem solving, imagery, deduction, and induction, are different manifestations of the same underlying system" (Anderson, 1983, p.1). Anderson's theory is about cognition in general; it seeks to establish general principles, which apply to language as just one of several cognitive activities which he claims all depend on the same basic cognitive system in the brain.
2. The cognitive architecture which, in Anderson's view, can explain all higher level mental processes, is based on production systems. The concept of production systems indicates how knowledge, through cognitive processes, is represented in human memory, using consistent principles of representation. O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p.231) define production systems as "the processes by which procedural knowledge is stored in long-term memory".
3. The ACT production system of Anderson consists of three memories: working, declarative and procedural, and the interaction between them. Anderson (1983) explains that "working memory contains the information that the system can currently access, consisting of information retrieved from long term declarative memory as well as temporary structures deposited by the encoding process and the action of productions. Basically, working memory refers to declarative

knowledge, permanent or temporary, that is in an active state” (pp.19, 20). Working memory (WM) corresponds to what some authors call ‘short-term’ memory (STM); the declarative and procedural memories together make up the long-term memory (LTM). Declarative knowledge, according to O’Mally and Chamot (1990), is a particular type of information maintained in the LTM, like events and facts that are already familiar. It is stored in terms of propositions, schemata, and prepositional networks. It may also be stored in terms of isolated pieces of information, temporal strings and images. Procedural knowledge is knowledge about how to do something.

Just and Carpenter’s model, which incorporates several of Anderson’s concepts, consists of three different components: (1) the comprehension process, in terms of the stages of word encoding, lexical access, assigning semantic roles, and relating the information in a given sentence to previous knowledge; (2) the long-term memory as a stockroom of knowledge which refers to the reader’s previous experience and (3) the working memory, a message centre which receives data after they have been encoded from the text (for more details see Figure 1).

**Figure 1 A model of reading comprehension as a cognitive processes**



Source (Just & Carpenter, 1980, p.331)

According to this model, items enter the working memory as a result of being encoded from the text, or as a result of production operations. “Retrieval from long-term memory occurs when a production fires and activates a concept, causing it to be inserted into working memory” (Just and Carpenter, 1980, p.332). In terms of reading comprehension, the reading process is viewed as an interpersonal problem solving task and in this respect, the STM holds information for a short while, where it is ready for current use such as comprehending this sentence and making cognition of it as it becomes active in the short term memory, the LTM stores past experience and

information for later recall to solve the problem, and the working memory (WM) draws on information from the STM and LTM together to solve the problem, so in working memory, all complex forms of reading comprehension can be solved. Reading comprehension depends on the capacity of working memory. Just and Carpenter (1992) studied the capacity of working memory in reading comprehension among college-age adults and found that individuals differ in the total amount of activation in the working memory. They found that people who have a large capacity in working memory are able to integrate semantic and syntactic aspects of the language. Moreover, they are able to use this in alternative syntactic interpretations of unclear sentences. Thus, cognition takes place when the reader reads information or information comes in through our sense receptors. As Wenden and Rubin (1987) explain, "At this time selected items of information are attended to, identified, and, then, moved into the short-term memory or working memory. In the short-term memory a series of mental operations are applied to this information. Then the changed or modified product is stored in the long-term memory to be retrieved when it is needed. The mental operations that encode incoming information are referred to as processes. The changes brought about by these processes are referred to as organizations of knowledge or knowledge structure" (Wenden and Rubin (1987, p.6).

The cognitive perspective is equally important and relevant in second language reading. For example Abdulmalik (1983) found that, when reading in English, readers whose first language is Arabic found various degrees of difficulty related to grammatical structures and specific characteristics of the orthography (Abdulmalik, 1983, p.110). Regarding grammar, in the Arabic language there are two types of sentence. The first one starts with a noun, and such sentences are also found in English; the second kind of sentence starts with a verb, and this pattern is not characteristic of

English style. Most English sentences start with the subject, which could be a noun or pronoun, while in Arabic style, a sentence never starts with a pronoun. Regarding orthography, Al-Ebsi (1997) points out the similarities and differences between the two languages' writing systems. Similarities include the need to leave adequate spaces between words, and the existence of different heights of letters. There are, however, also many differences: "both languages have different kinds of scripts and sounds, Arabic does not have two sets of letters as English does; English is written in both joined and separate letters while Arabic is a combination of letters; in Arabic, all letters are pronounced or readable and there are no silent letters at all as there are in English; and in the Latin alphabet, two letters may be combined to form a sound, e.g. th ch sh, but this does not occur in Arabic" (Al-Ebsi, 1997, p.23). When Arabic readers read English and encounter similar patterns and features to those found in Arabic, they have little difficulty, but when they encounter structures and features that do not exist in Arabic, then they may have a problem, because they do not have the relevant production rules in their minds.

Where there are cognitive similarities between the first and second languages, the reading process is facilitated. Sarig (1987) compared the reading process in L1 and in L2 and found that "reading processes from the first language do appear to transfer to the foreign language" (Sarig, 1987, p118). In learning any language, learners may have to get used to the idea that the sort of expectancies that exist in their own language do not always work when translated into another language, because the languages are structured in a different way. They therefore have to learn new rules to help them anticipate what sort of words can follow each other.

A critical view of Just and Carpenter's (1980) model and other cognitive models of reading is that they fail to take account of variations in the way readers react to text. Underwood and Batt note that "there are variations in the skill of different readers and there are variations between texts" (Underwood and Batt, 1996, p.37). They point out that, "some words are more difficult to process than others" (ibid). Moreover, cognitive models do not take account of the effect of social context, which is emphasised in the second approach.

## **2. Reading as a social process**

Bloome (1993) defined reading as a social and cultural process as "the establishment, maintenance, and change in social relationships and cultural behaviour through the use of written language" (Bloome, 1993, p.100). This definition indicates that reading is viewed in the light of social and cultural events, in which people act and react to each other. The social element is a very important aspect of reading in a foreign language because the native speaker belongs to the same culture as the author of the text and is likely to have knowledge which the second language reader does not have. The latter may therefore not grasp the full implications of the text and might understand the words but still not appreciate the full argument.

Regarding the importance of the social dimension, Bernhardt (1998, p.15) gives an example of how different people might react if a particular American magazine is mentioned. To appreciate her account, we really need to know the style, content and target audience of the publication in question, then we would understand why some people were dismissive about it or did not admit to reading it. But if we do not know what the magazine is, and what it is like, although we can understand all the words, we cannot fully appreciate what the writer is actually saying, because we do not realize all



the values that an American might associate with that particular magazine. This example shows how, even if readers know all the words in a text, they may still not be able to interpret it completely and accurately, if they do not understand the social context. They may misunderstand certain words or not understand the significance of certain points. This indicates that not only is the cognitive process of reading important, but so is the social experience that readers bring to the text.

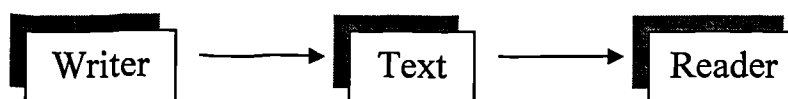
The reading process is based on the text and on readers' familiarity with the words of the text. Furthermore, according to the context, the same words may have different meanings and be seen in different ways by different people. So the readers see the same text but they process it in their own way according to what they think is important; in other words, they reconstruct the text, i.e. create their own impression of the text in their minds. So from the original text, depending on the connections and implications they have seen of things, they reconstruct a new meaning that goes beyond the basic words that they have seen on the page. Parry (1993) investigated the effect of social perspective of Japanese and Nigerian readers and found that "Considerable differences have been found in strategies employed by the readers, especially by those of different social and cultural backgrounds. These diverse strategies can be partly attributed to the different processes by which people learn to read and through the different ways in which they see written texts used in their own social environments" (Parry, 1993, p.148). Moreover, sometimes the same reader may read the same reading material more than once and may respond in different ways, depending on the time he/she reads it and in what context (Bernhardt, 1998). So readers see different things in the text and make different decisions about what is important and how to make sense of it.

## Models of Reading

There are considerable difficulties in describing what happens when someone reads. There is no neat, accessible product; it is a private engagement between reader and the text that goes on in the head. As far as we can gather from retrospective accounts, each individual reads and responds in a unique way. Psychologists can measure brain activity, heart rates and eye movements that are associated with reading, but this tells us little about the reading process itself. To do this, scholars have had to fall back on metaphorical verbal or diagrammatic explanations that they call models.

Two traditional and opposed models have increasingly been rejected as inadequate descriptions of the process. The first of these is the extreme objective or ‘bottom-up’ model, which suggests that a writer conveys a ‘meaning’ through the text which the reader decodes and passively accepts. The ‘bottom-up’ theories are rarely held in their simple form today. Basically, the writer writes the text, which ‘contains’ the meaning, the reader ‘decodes’ the text and receives the meaning automatically. It is just a simple transfer in one direction, from the writer to the text, then to the reader (See Figure 2).

**Figure 2 ‘Bottom-up’ Theory**



According to the ‘bottom-up’ or ‘text-driven’ view, as Grauberg argues, “the reader is thought to start from the text (the bottom), and construct meaning from words, phrases and sentences” (Grauberg, 1997, p.129). In this perspective, readers try to comprehend the text by decoding the letters to identify words and so to understand the sentences. In other words, the bottom-up process examines and identifies text

components in order to comprehend the meaning of the text. As Williams and Moran indicate, “Bottom-up models have been criticised on the grounds that they fail to account for a variety of context effects” (Williams and Moran, 1989, p.217). Unfortunately, this approach to reading, which emphasizes the role of the text, is the one currently adopted in the Saudi TEFL context, particularly with beginning readers.

The second is the extreme subjective, ‘top down’ or ‘reader-driven’ model, which sees the text as lifeless until its ‘meaning’ is supplied by a reader. At its most dramatic, ‘reception theory’ has been presented as the death of the author. Barthes (1977) and Fish (1980) suggest that meaning is basically created by the action of the reader on the text. The writer is on the outside, in this theory. The meaning is something that the reader recreates from the text by interacting with it. As Klapper (1992, p.27) explains, “Psycholinguistic models of reading have seen it as a ‘top-down’, ‘concept-driven’ or ‘hypothesis-driven’ process, in which learners make samples and predictions on the basis of their prior syntactic and semantic knowledge” (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3 ‘Top-down’ Theory**



In this model, reading is seen as a psycholinguistic process in which readers are guided by their background knowledge of the world, language and topic to predict language structure and the meaning of the text.

The third view is a combination of the two previous theories. The relationship between reader and text has been variously termed a transaction, a recreation, an interplay, an encounter, or a performance. The interactive perspective strikes a balance between the bottom-up and the top-down approaches. It sees reading as combination of

both what the writer has put into the text and how the reader acts on the text to create meaning. As Carrell underlines, “comprehending a text is an interactive process between the reader’s background and the text” (Carrell, 1984, p.333). So the writer writes the text, but the reader is co-author of the text. The writer has an obvious influence on the nature of text, but the reader also chooses what to pay attention to (see Figure 4).

**Figure 4 Interaction Reading Response Theory**



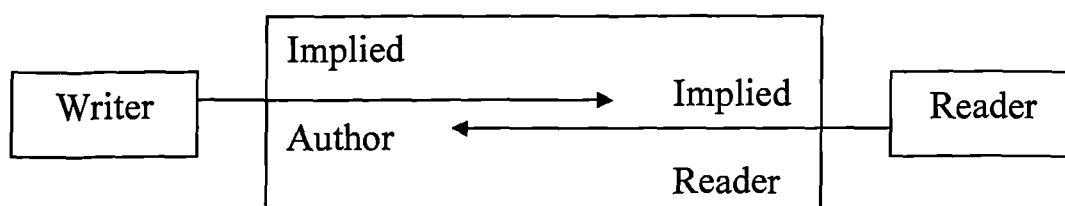
This perspective emphasises two important aspects: readers’ ability to recognise letters and words rapidly and accurately and at the same time the use of background knowledge and expectations in relation to the context. From this perspective, a good reader will be both a good encoder and a good interpreter of the text. To sum up, as Klapper concludes in his article, “in the interactive model of reading, the meaning of a text is reconstructed through a constant interaction between the information obtained through bottom-up decoding and that obtained through top-down analysis” (op. cit, p.29). Moreover, this model relates to the development of language ability. Kember and Gow (1994) attempted to examine the approaches which take place in the mind while performing a reading task. They attempted to examine reading as second language, from a cognitive psychological perspective, considering the approaches to study of a sample of 35 Hong Kong students randomly selected. The main methodology of the study was interviews, using the Approaches to Studying Inventory (ASI), which measures the degree to which the students employ certain approaches or strategies to perform a task. It was found that English language ability was highly correlated with learning

approaches related to the interactive model of second language reading. The researchers concluded that the effective use of the interactive model of second language reading is significantly associated with the development of language ability. Thus, to comprehend a text, students must interact with that text, which means they must be able to relate the new meaning of the text to their prior knowledge, because as Swaffar (1988) argues, the greater the reader's prior familiarity with text, the more he/she can interact and enhance language recognition (Swaffar, 1988, p.126).

So far, only a basic interactive model has been presented. Further analysis of the implications of the theory results in more complex models, which elaborate on the previous one. Writers have in mind a particular kind of reader and write according to the expected taste or education level of those readers. For example, the researcher who writes a dissertation, has in mind that the dissertation is going to read by examiners, and so adopts the writing style and manner of presentation that it is thought they are going to want. All writers, indeed, write the text with specific principles in mind: who they are writing for; what sort of material, e.g. fact or fiction; whether for a sophisticated readership or for ordinary people with a very basic level of knowledge or very simple responses. Widdowson (1990) mentions that, "The writer is engaged in a kind of vicarious interaction with a presumed reader and anticipates and provides for likely reactions. The reader, for his part, is drawn into the discourse role that the writer has cast him in" (Widdowson, 1990, p.108). Bloome (1993) describes how the writer may use lexical items such as imperatives, choice of pronoun, sentence structure, dialect and tone to structure a relationship between him/herself and reader, casting the latter in the role of child, adult, novice, expert, friend confidant and so on. Thus, there is an 'implied reader', which means the writer's idea of the sort of reader that he/she is writing for. Equally, the reader who reads the book has his/her own notion of an implied author, and

builds impressions in his/her mind, from the text, about what sort of person has written it. Various linguistic markers in the text may suggest the author's age, gender, ethnicity or social class, for example, but these have to be interpreted by the reader. So part of the meaning that readers construct is based on their ideas of who they think the author is and what they think the author intended when writing the text (see Figure 5). As Bloome notes, "author-reader relationships are not given in the text, regardless of what linguistic markers are used. Rather, author-reader relationships depend on the reader's (readers') interpretation(s) of the various linguistic features of the text" (Bloome, 1993, p.100).

**Figure 5 An expansion of the interactive model: 'implied author and reader'**

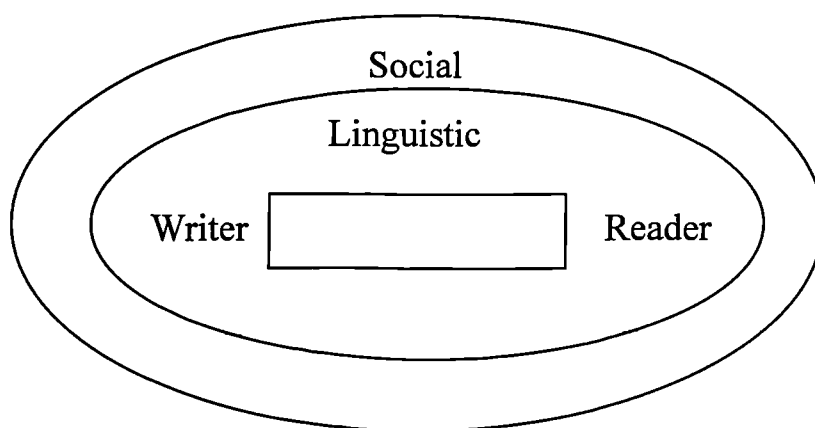


A noticeable feature of the models presented so far is that they all see communication through text as a self-contained activity. A further elaboration on the theory recognises that what is going on between the writer and the reader is not the whole story, because both the writer and the reader exist in contexts (linguistic and social) which, in L1 reading, both of them may share.

Linguistic context means the writer is writing within a particular linguistic mode, using a specific series of literary techniques, deciding which words it is possible or acceptable to use in different genres and styles, and for different purposes. When writers use metaphor, for instance, they depend on the idea that the reader will understand the concept of metaphor. To take another example, there are different kinds

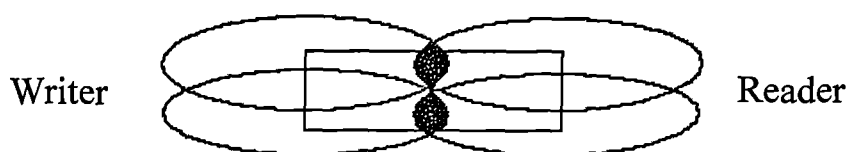
of novels and each type has its own particular conventions with regard to plot, character, style, and vocabulary. When the writer and reader are operating in the same context, the writer and readers will share basic language and genre expectations. This linguistic context is represented by the first circle in Figure 6. The second circle represents the social context, because the writer/ reader interaction takes place within the wider system of society and understanding between them is based on the fact that they share a certain understanding of how a particular society works. This dimension of the model draws on the social perspective on reading, discussed in the previous section.

**Figure 6 The writer-reader interaction in L1: a shared context**



The situation is more complex for second language readers, where the writer and reader come from different linguistic and social contexts. McDonough (1995) notes that “a constant difficulty posed by learning to read in a second language is that L2 texts are usually written within the cultural assumptions of speakers of that language, not within those of the reader’s first language” (McDonough, 1995, p.42). Therefore, although there might be an overlap between the reader’s and the writer’s contexts and understandings, it would not be complete (see Figure 7).

**Figure 7 The writer/reader interaction in L2: overlapping contexts**



So there may be some aspects of the writer's language and some aspects of the society that the writer conveys, e.g. cultural assumptions, that are new to the reader and unfamiliar. Similarly, some aspects of the reader's language and cultural assumptions are not known or relevant to the writer, who does not bear them in mind in the act of writing. Thus, there is some overlap, but there are also some things that belong to the writer or the reader alone, which makes it hard for the reader to understand the text. Steffensen and Joag-Dev (1984) assumed that misunderstandings of people from outside the L2 culture will cause difficulties of comprehension and they designed an experiment to measure this effect. The sample was asked to read and recall two passages describing an Indian and an American wedding, and it was found that subjects had difficulty in comprehending the passage that did not relate to their own culture, because their reading comprehension depended on reference to their own cultural background. A further finding was that people can read faster if they read passages related to their own culture, than when reading passages related to a foreign culture.

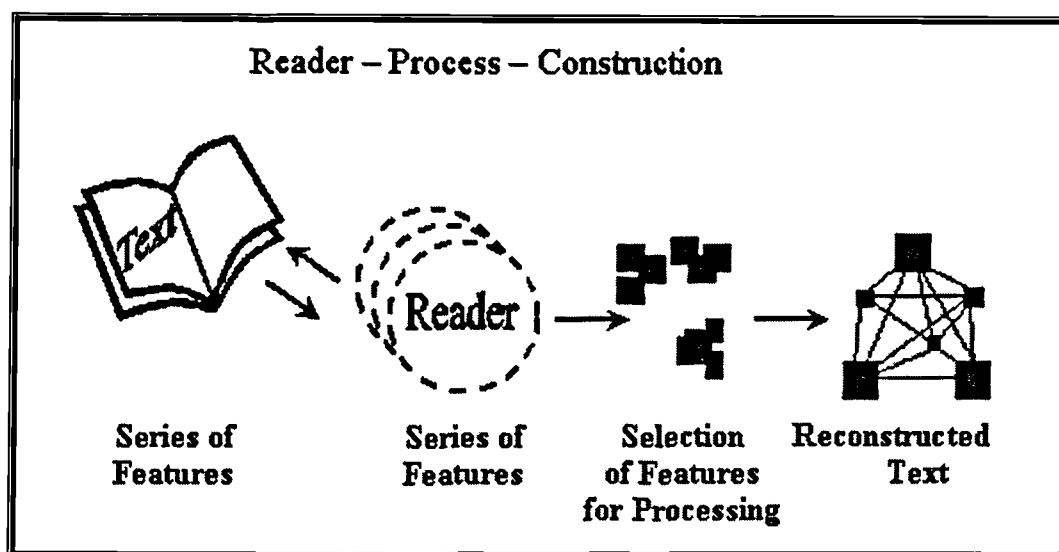
Whereas in Figure 6, both the reader and the writer had the same language and the same surrounding social culture, so they could between them come to a similar meaning, in Figure 7 the writer has one language and culture, and the reader has another. There is only a small proportion of the context that is shared. This problem of misunderstanding due to cultural differences may not arise in lower-level classroom learning, because policy makers and publishers concentrate on the structure of the language, rather than cultural information about the society of the foreign language. But



at a more advanced level, where students are required to read authentic materials, McDonough suggests they need to enrich their cultural information of the foreign society and the teacher should facilitate the reading tasks to avoid incomprehension (Op.cit, p.43).

These more sophisticated, elaborate versions of the interactive theory take account not only of the relationship between the writer, the text, and the reader but also of the whole linguistic and social context. The last view is what Bernhardt (1998) calls the socio-cognitive view, which has specific implications for second language readers, because teachers need to consider the social context to help the reader to read and make sense of the text. In Bernhardt's model, reading is viewed in terms not only the language but of the text as a whole: "Text is no longer characterized simply by its linguistic elements (semantic and syntax), but also by its structure, its pragmatic nature, its internationality, its content, and its topic"(Bernhardt, 1998, p.15). All of these interact with the reader's mind. (See Figure 8)

**Figure 8 A model of reading comprehension showing the sociocognitive processes**



Source: "(Bernhardt, 1998, p.15)

In this model, the first two components are the text and the reader. The latter reads the text and interacts with it. Then the reader processes it in his/her own way, so what comes out is the text as the reader perceives it. Interpretations of the text might not be the same; they could be different for every reader and even for the same reader at different times and in different contexts.

In fact, Bernhardt's constructive model is considered the best known in the foreign language reading process, as Ridgway notes that "A number of factors are portrayed as interacting with one another – a highly plausible state of affairs, and one extremely unlikely to be falsified" (Ridgway, 1994, p.56).

O'Malley and Chamot sum up the socio-cognitive view, saying, "Whereas reading comprehension was once thought of as a process of representing with reasonable accuracy the information contained in a text, more recent views of reading focus on the constructive elements of the process and acknowledge that what is retained is the result of dynamic interaction between the reader, task, and context. The reader's prior knowledge and strategies may vary depending on their ways of perceiving the reading task" (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990, p.65). What follows is an explanation of Learning Strategies in general; then, a detailed discussion of the findings on reading strategy will be presented.

## Learning Strategies

Currently, attention is focused not only on the teaching methods and learning materials that the teachers use in the classroom, which is not enough for the success of learning in second language, but also on the need to understand what strategies learners use to improve their learning. The term learning strategies means the different ways or techniques the second language learner uses to promote and enhance his/her own level

of learning. Related research examines how people learn the language and studies the mental processes of human beings. Oxford (1990) notes, “The learning strategies are steps taken by students to enhance their own learning” then adds that they are important for language learning, “because they are tools for active, self-directed involvement, which is essential for developing communicative competence. Appropriate language learning strategies result in improved proficiency and greater self-confidence (Oxford, 1990, p.1). This indicates that the improvement of learning strategies leads to the improvement of communicative competence. Also, the effective use of learning strategies enhances self-confidence which the learner needs to achieve the goal of communicative competence. Cohen’s definition of learning strategies is a more encompassing and inclusive one than that of Oxford. It includes an important feature, which is the choice of kinds of learning strategies by the learner: “those processes which are consciously selected by learners and which may result in action taken to enhance the learning or use of second or foreign language, through the storage, retention, recall, and application of information about the language (Cohen, 1998, p.4). Cohen defined learning strategies as the learning processes which learners choose intentionally (consciously means that they take control of their learning) to improve their performance in second language and facilitate learning it through the use of various mental actions such as remembering information, repetition, memorizing, grouping words according to category (nouns, verbs, prepositions etc), keeping information in memory for later retrieval. Some of these strategies are observable to human eyes, like asking questions or cooperating with someone else, and some of them are not observed, like making a mental comparison. The latter kind of strategy would be difficult for teachers to identify (Wenden and Rubin, 1987, p.7, Oxford, 1990, p.12).

In fact, the teacher's role is very important in developing and promoting language learning strategies by directing students to appropriate strategies which will work effectively for them. Beginner learners may need help from the teacher, while older learners may be capable of choosing effective and appropriate language learning strategies. Cohen and Scott (1996) state that "They make a rapid scan through their knowledge base to identify vocabulary and structure that might be suitable" (Cohen and Scott 1996, p.89).

Oxford (1990) classifies the system of language learning strategies into two major classes, direct strategies and indirect strategies, which he further sub-groups into six categories. The direct class refers to those strategies that involve direct mental processing of the language and include: memory strategies (such as storage and retrieval of new information); cognition strategies (such as analysing and making summary) and compensation strategies (such as expectancy and using synonyms). The second, indirect, class refers to strategies which have an indirect effect but are important in language. They include metacognition strategies (such as planning and organising learning); affective strategies (such as learners encouraging themselves); and social strategies (such as cooperation with peers and asking questions) (for more details of the classification of learning strategies see Oxford, 1990, pp14 & 21, Graham, 1997, p.42 and Cohen, 1996, p.21).

### **Learning Strategies in Reading**

The reading strategies which learners use to improve their learning are a current interest for much research in second language. Research indicates a strong relationship between reading comprehension and the use of learning strategies that involve memory, such as recalling information after reading a passage. Consequently, various researchers have attempted to examine how text is comprehended and how information can be

recalled. There are various approaches to assessing language learning strategies such as interviews (thinking aloud), questionnaire, observation, and verbal reports. What follows is a discussion of some important studies and findings on reading strategy.

In an early study on reading, Hosenfeld (1984) examined what techniques good readers used with reading tasks, which poor readers did not use. The subjects were two case studies. A think aloud protocol was used as the assessment approach. This asked learners to describe in their native language what they were doing to accomplish the reading task and comprehend the text. The study question was: can unsuccessful readers acquire the reading strategies of successful readers? The first case study was a 14-year-old girl who was considered a good reader and enrolled in an A-level French class in high school. The second case was Ricky, a ninth-grade poor reader; in this case Hosenfeld used two sessions, an explanatory one and remedial one. According to the thinking aloud protocol, Hosenfeld found that the successful reader used the following reading strategies:

“Keep the meaning in mind; read in broad phrases; skip inessential words; guess from context the meaning of unknown words; have a good self-concept as a reader; identify the grammatical category of words; demonstrate sensitivity to a different word order in the foreign language; examine illustrations; read the title and make inferences from it; use orthographic information (e.g. capitalization); refer to the side of gloss; use glossary as a last resort; look up words correctly; continue if unsuccessful at decoding a word or phrase; recognize cognates; use their knowledge of the world; follow through with proposed solution to a problem; and evaluate their guessing” (Hosenfeld, 1984, pp. 233, 234).

Hosenfeld gave the second case, Ricky, a remedial session including specific instruction on many aspects of decoding words and how to guess the meaning of new

words. “Specific techniques included: substituting the filler word ‘something’ for new words and guessing their meaning from the remaining words in the sentence; using information in preceding and succeeding sentences and from the broader meaning of the entire reading passage to decode new words; and asking a series of questions about new words including: what kind of word is it (noun, verb)? Does it look like an English word? Given my knowledge of the world, what word would I expect to find in the sentence?” (ibid, p.239).

Although Hosenfeld could not answer the question of her paper, her work provided good strategies that are particularly related to problem solving when unknown words are encountered. Moreover, this paper indicates the importance and the benefit of improving learners’ awareness of the use of learning strategies and reveals evidence of the importance of the teacher’s role to help students consciously to use appropriate strategies which work for them. The paper concludes by raising the question whether first language strategies transfer to foreign language strategies.

Sarig (1987) and Block (1992) compared the process of reading in the first and second language and used a think aloud protocol like that of Hosenfeld. Sarig studied ten female high-level readers, aged 17-18 years old, whose L1 was Hebrew and L2 English, and found that the subjects used the same reading strategies in both languages, such as identifying the main ideas, identifying the propositions of the passage and synthesising the main ideas. Sarig called the strategies moves, and classified them into four categories: (1) technical-aid moves such as skimming and scanning strategies which facilitate the text process; (2) clarification and simplification moves such as decoding meaning and grouping words, which clarify and simplify utterance in text; (3) coherence-detecting moves, such as the use of prior content schemata or use of cohesive clues, moves that clarify the coherence in the text; and monitoring moves such as

identifying misunderstanding, controlled skipping, and mistake correction all of which relate to active monitoring of the text process. Sarig also found that there is not necessarily a clear dichotomy between good and poor readers in their choice of reading strategies. Rather, individuals have their own reading characteristics. The reading strategies studied by Sarig were more inclusive than those of Hosenfeld, keeping meaning in mind that, as McDonough (1995) mentions, “there is, of course, no final certainty in equating similar-sounding strategies from different pieces of research” (p.57).

Another study that used thinking aloud as a method of strategy assessment was that of Block (1992) who examined how proficient and less proficient L1 and L2 readers direct the monitoring process when they read a passage. The sample was 25 readers, of which 16 were classified as proficient readers (8 native speakers of English and 8 non-native speakers of English) and 9 as non-proficient readers (3 native speakers of English and 6 non-native speakers of English). Block found that native speakers and non-native speakers of English did not differ in their use of reading strategies. These findings reveal that people use similar reading strategies in processing both L1 and L2 language. As McDonough (1999) comments, “Many people think that they don’t use strategies in reading in their first language, that it is an ‘automatic’ process, but research has shown this is not true” (McDonough, 1999, p.5).

Another measure used for assessment of learning strategies is the pause protocol adopted by Cavalcanti (1987) to investigate reading performance in L2 reading. This was an adaptation of the think-aloud method, which aimed to avoid the problem of readers self-reporting retrospectively after reading large quantities of text, by which time they may be unable to remember accurately the strategies used. Instead, participants were asked to read silently until they were aware of a pause in their reading

(denoting a potential problem situation) and to report what they did then. Before the test, readers were given training to lead them from reporting retrospectively to reporting when the pause was first noticed. The results of Cavalcanti's study revealed that readers used the same strategies in L1 and L2, although they read faster in their L1, and made fewer pauses. The analysis of pauses showed that readers' problems resulted from mismatches between the reader's and writer's (via text) schematic and value system.

A larger-scale study was conducted by Carrell (1989) who studied two groups, the first containing 45 readers and the second, 75 readers. Carrell did not use the thinking aloud techniques used in the previous case studies, but instead used a metacognitive questionnaire which asked the readers about their silent reading strategies in both L1 and L2. The structure of the metacognitive questionnaire emphasised four aspects of reading strategies: Confidence; Repair; Effective and Difficulty (for more details of elements included in the statements see Carrell, 1989, p.124, fig.2). The findings revealed that L1 readers' local strategies (such as focusing on grammar and structure, and the meaning of the word) are negatively correlated with reading proficiency, while in L2 readers, they are positively correlated with reading proficiency.

A further study which used a very large sample of 2980 high school students, was carried out by Bügel and Buunk (1996) to measure the impact of prior knowledge on reading comprehension. Taking account of students' interests, authentic texts (magazine and newspaper) on 6 different topics for female students and 5 topics for male students were selected. Students answered multiple choice questions which referred to the text topics before reading. The study found that the choice of text topics affects sex differences in L2 reading comprehension. There are differences between males and females in prior knowledge and interests; male students have greater experience with more complex texts such technical and political than female students,



who like topics such as beauty and fashion which depend on simple structures. The authors concluded that “differential scores on male and female reading comprehension tests are associated with differences in prior knowledge and interests, and mostly with differences in reading habits” (Bügel and Buunk, 1996, p.25).

Reading strategy research faces the difficulty of identifying processes which cannot be directly observed. The researchers cited here used two ways of measuring strategy use; think aloud (including pause protocol) and metacognitive interviews. The evidence suggests that good readers are able to select, and use as needed, a wide range of reading strategies to aid comprehension, and that similar strategies are used in L1 and L2 reading. The strategies employed include the use of context and background knowledge, which in turn depend on interests and reading habit. This may help to explain gender-differences in reading comprehension performance. It also has clear implications for L2 study, where readers may lack relevant background information.

## The Communicative Approach to Teaching and Learning

In the past, teaching methods were based on the theory that language is a system of structurally related words, and the focus was on translation, extensive grammar learning, memorisation and repetition, with little attempt to develop oral skills. Barnes and Powell argue that “To develop students’ reading and to encourage them to read more widely, the initial emphasis must be shifted from simply using text as a mechanical device for acquiring new vocabulary and grammatical structures to utilising text as a tool for increasing the ‘want to read’ factor”(Barnes and Powell, 1996,p.28).

In the mid 1970s, the communicative approach started and attracted considerable interest. “Since the mid 1970s, the international interest in developing a “communication approach” to L2 teaching, first popularised in the context of English as

a foreign language, has been manifesting itself in relation to FL teaching in British secondary schools” (Mitchell, 1988, p.1). The majority of countries started to apply the communicative approach. This necessitated change both in the examination and in the way teachers teach in the classroom. What follows is a focus on what the communicative approach means, particularly with respect to reading.

The communicative approach is based on the conception that language is a means of communication and that the goal of language teaching is to develop communicative competence. It stresses the oral aspect of the language, in order to enable students to communicate, rather than the mastery of language forms. Johnson and Morrow indicate that “we can see communication as a highly complex skill, involving more than the sub-skill of ‘being grammatical’ ” (Johnson and Morrow, 1981, p.11).

The purpose of teaching language via the communicative approach is to help students to use the language for communication. It concentrates, therefore, on the need for comprehension and communicative classroom activities.

Paulston points out that, “ The one thing that everyone is absolutely certain about is the necessity to use language for communicative purposes in the classroom” (Paulston, 1992, p.90). Thus, the communication approach emphasises students’ use of the language, not its for own sake, but in order to exchange ideas and information with others.

The reading aspect of the communicative approach emphasises the use of different activities that involve gathering information from authentic materials like magazines, newspapers, or any materials that were originally designed not for

instructional purposes, but for native speakers of the language to use in real life. Candlin cites the different kinds of authentic material: "Newspaper reports, telexes, advertisements, radio reports, television commentaries, interviews in various mass-media, pictures, film reviews, stories, radio plays: all kinds of text-types which occur daily as authentic communication" (Candlin, 1981, p.53). All these sorts of materials are perfectly ordinary materials which engage the learner in real life communicative activities. The purpose of teaching reading in this approach is to help students to use the language for communication. Some views assume that the use of authentic materials should be accompanied with students' interaction with them. In other words, what is important is not text authenticity, but learner authenticity. Winnie, who explains that "learner authenticity should refer not only to appropriate responses to the materials, but also to positive perceptions of them" has supported this view (Winnie, 1995, p.323). That is, appropriate authentic material should be selected according to students' interest and needs and its usefulness, in order to evoke positive affective and cognitive responses. Peacock investigated the effect of authentic materials on motivation of 31 EFL learners in a South Korean University. The question of the study was whether authentic materials increase the learners' motivation or not. Learners were distributed in two classes. Both of them used artificial materials one day and authentic materials the next day. Data were collected over a seven-week term, via two observation sheets and a self reported questionnaire. The results indicated that overall class motivation significantly increased when authentic materials were used (Peacock, 1997, p. 148). There is agreement among many authors that reading authentic materials is interesting and stimulates EFL learners to increase their motivation, but some argue that using authentic materials is difficult so it decreases the motivation of the learners (Williams: 1983, Freeman and Holden: 1986, and Morrison: 1989, cited by Peacock, 1997). An

additional reason for using authentic materials in EFL is that they are a source of information about the different culture, norms and values. In a study done by Young which investigated the cognitive and affective responses of second language learners on authentic and edited texts, it was found that students benefited more from reading authentic texts, having cultural information, or reading edited texts written with the characteristics of authentic texts, than reading edited texts which lacked these characteristics (Young, 1993).

Another important element in the communicative approach is increasing concern for legitimacy of task. This refers to the validity and usefulness of all kinds of activities that students are asked to do in the classroom. Such tasks must be relevant to the use of the language in real life. For example, we are expected to read in our daily life on various occasions and we use different skills of reading such as skimming and scanning in the use of a telephone directory.

## Developing Reading Skills

As has been suggested in the previous sections, reading comprehension requires the development of a number of skills and sub-skills. The discussion in this section focuses on two main skill areas:

First, skimming and scanning, with the related skill of speed reading and eye movement; and second, analysing and interpreting text, including the sub skills, research and reference skills, and expectancy /prediction skills.

### **A. Skimming and Scanning Skills**

Skimming and scanning are lightning speed exercises. Beard (1990) describes them thus: “scanning - to examine the structure and layout of a text, not necessarily following the author’s sequence” and “skimming - a very quick read to gain an overall

impression of a text, probably following the author's sequence" (Beard, 1990, p.139). These skills should be practised to provide experience in the type of high speed reading that is most used in our daily lives. The main aim of teaching skimming is to help students to gain a general overview of the passage and identify the main points, while teaching scanning is to enable them to look for specific pieces of information.

#### *Why do we use Skimming and Scanning?*

Scanning is an economical way to locate specific information, avoiding wasting time on irrelevant material. It is an important skill in research and consulting references. Scanning and skimming play a vital role in enabling students to improve reading speed. Skimming might be used for rapid identification of general ideas, thoughts and, facts, or to gain an overview of a particular subject. Hall et al. (1979) state that, "Skimming requires looking at a number of selected features to determine what the selection generally is about. Skimmers read headings, subheadings, picture captions, graphs, maps, and introductory and summary paragraphs, as well as underlined or italicised words, single words, and the first sentence in paragraphs" (op cit., p.218). Skimming sometimes is used to discover the salient features of a book or an article when it is difficult to cover the whole because of the limitation of time. Skimming can be used effectively as one of several methods for improving reading rate. Harris and Sipay (1980) mention some uses of skimming in the following situations:

1. "Looking over a chapter in a textbook, prior to serious study, in order to get an idea of the general scope of the chapter.
2. Sampling a few pages of a novel or other type of work to form an opinion as to whether it is worth reading.

3. Going quickly through an article on a controversial issue to find out the author's point of view, without bothering to note his specific arguments.
4. Looking through reading material to judge if it is likely to contain the kind of information one is seeking.
5. Examining reading material to decide if it is comprehensible or too difficult" (op cit., p.487).

On the other hand, scanning can be used to develop reading for comprehension and understanding detailed information. Students need to practise skills of skimming and scanning in order to enable them read efficiently and to find relevant knowledge rapidly.

### **Speed Reading (Eye Movement)**

A good reader moves her eyes quickly along the lines at first glance and can read with good comprehension, while poor readers find it difficult to read, so they read slowly and may not achieve good comprehension. Many empirical reading studies have been conducted of speed-reading and eye movement but most of these were conducted on people learning their mother tongue, because L2 reading research is neglected in Saudi Arabia, so very little was found. Abu-Ghararah (1991) addressed the question of whether or not the modern perceptual method of reading involving fast eye movements and rapid visual recognition would increase EFL Arab learners' reading speed, and their reading comprehension. The researcher used a pre and post-test, in which students were required to read a selected English passage of 695 words and answer 10 true-false items to test comprehension. The sample was 60 randomly selected male graduate students of secondary schools in Medina, Saudi Arabia, ranging in age from 18-21. Thirty students constituted a control group; the other 30 students were the experimental group, who were given rapid eye movement and word recognition exercises for four weeks. The

data were analysed by SPSS to obtain descriptive statistics and then T-tests were applied. The results revealed that the experimental group could read faster and comprehend more because of the fast perceptual eye-movement and rapid visual recognition exercises.

Oda (1982) investigated in her thesis the effect of a speed –reading programme on (1) increasing the students’ speed of reading (2) improving their ability to comprehend written English. A ten week instruction programme was designed, of ten lessons, each 45 minutes long, consisting of important elements of developing reading speed with comprehension: practice in attacking words and developing a word attack skill, reading in thought units with additional exercises for improving eye-movement. Moreover, lectures at the beginning of the course were given to students, aiming to prepare them for the programme, including the causes of slow reading and advice on how to avoid them and improving reading speed with comprehension. The sample were 78 students in the secondary stage, divided into experimental and control groups with 39 students in each. Pre and post-tests were administered to both experimental and control groups. The results of the T tests showed a significant correlation between speed and comprehension. Moreover, the experimental group got significantly better results than the control group in the post-test.

On the subject of eye-movement, Nuttall notes that “a good reader makes fewer eye movements than a poor one; his eye takes in several words at a time. Moreover, they are not just random sequences of words: one characteristic of an efficient reader is his ability to chunk a text into sense units, each consisting of several words, and each taken in by one fixation of his eyes”(Nuttall, 1982, p.33). Poor readers stop their eyes on nearly each word they read; in other words, the eye fixation pauses are too long.

Such readers often go back to see the previous line again. This causes difficulty in word recognition and understanding meaning. Consequently, one reason for slow reading in EFL students is that they do not know the language well enough to chunk correctly. On the other hand, the eye fixation pauses of good readers are short, so they can read quickly and easily with understanding. This is because their eyes do not regress but move rapidly and with full understanding. The MA thesis of Georgy (1980) in Cairo emphasised silent reading as an effective approach to acquire good reading skills (superior reading comprehension and speed-reading). The study found that students who were trained in silent reading obtained better results in reading speed and comprehension tests, while emphasis on reading aloud hindered students' progress in speed and comprehension. Moreover, the study indicated that students need training in speed-reading before they are asked to read, possibly using specially projected slides or transparencies.

### **B. Analysing and Interpreting Text**

It is important to train students to analyse the text they are reading and form a judgement, particularly in the higher levels of education. Dallmann et al. mention that "After the reader has located information, he must be able to interpret it"(Dallmann Rouch, Char, and Deboer, 1978, p.289). Analysis means students' ability to pick out the main ideas and points, compare and contrast them and distinguish the difference between fact, fiction, opinion, ideas. Dean and Nichols suggest that for practice in this area, "Newspapers offer many good examples for this kind of activity and students can be encouraged to collect examples and note the differences" (Dean and Nichols, 1986, p.83).



## **Research and Reference Skills**

The ability to research independently is necessary to develop reading skills. To use books effectively, students should be taught how to elicit, explore, explain, evaluate and organise information. The teacher should teach students to recognise and use the following parts of the book:

1. Book title
2. Author's name
3. Publisher's name
4. Date of publication
5. Place of publication
6. Contents - Chapter titles - Headings and sub-headings
7. Bibliography
8. Index

Practising the above skills is useful, especially in using the library. Dean and Nichols emphasise that "These skills are developed when the students are encouraged to participate in the organisation of the school library, selecting and ordering books" (op. cit., p.77).

## **Expectancy and Prediction Skills**

One of the most essential skills of the reading process is the awareness of preconception or expectation, which means the reader's ability to predict what the writer intends to say and build up the meaning of the text from prediction or expectation. The ability of the reader to predict depends on their past experience and

knowledge of the language and the world; as Nuttall notes, “the reader’s sense and experience helps to predict what the writer is likely to say next”(op.cit, p.11).

Reading prediction can be classified into three types: (graphic, syntactic and semantic).

The three types are as follows:

1. Graphic prediction is the prediction of sounds/letters (combinations)/words or phrases, i.e. students’ ability to predict the script of the language. Prediction at this level involves the recognition of various elements of the language (sounds, words, phrases) For example, when readers have seen the syllable “**con**” at the beginning of a word, they predict what the second syllable is to form the words **conceive**, **concern**, etc.
2. Syntactical prediction relies on linguistic awareness of the grammatical function of words. As an example of this kind of simple prediction, when students have read the pronoun ‘**we**’ in a sentence, they expect a **verb** to come next, or when they read the preposition ‘**on**’ in a sentence, they expect that a **noun** will follow it.
3. Semantic prediction is the prediction of ideas (meaning) in which readers make guesses about what ideas will come next in a sentence or paragraph they are about to read. Good readers use text clues, plus their own experience, to predict the language and ideas of the text. L1 readers automatically know how to find text markers to help them predict ideas without being consciously aware of this in the reading process. But L2 readers sometimes need help to recognise how clues can be used in predicting the ideas.

There are various ways of practising and developing this skill. Markstein and Hirasawa suggest some techniques for content prediction, which they divide into four

levels: (1) Before You Read: This includes asking students several questions about the theme of the article in order to develop the framework of reading it. (2) Illustrations and Title Clues: This means to discuss the illustrative materials with students such as photos, maps, figures, and the title. (3) Content Expectation: when the students are asked about what they expect the passage to be about before they read it. (4) Point of View: when students are asked their opinion as to what the writer feels about the subject and what will be presented, and why (Markstein and Hirasawa, 1983, p.vi).

It may be concluded that all the previous skills are linked with each other and at the same time fit the ideas of the communicative approach. Blass and Pike-Baky indicate that “Predicting what is coming next increases your reading speed and improves your understanding of what you read. Being a good “predictor” involves: general knowledge, vocabulary, past experiences in life, and practice” (Blass and Pike-Baky, 1991, p.80). For example, the prediction skill is linked with the previous skills such as speed-reading, because accurate prediction helps the reader to continue reading with understanding. In this case, the reader does not have to go back to see the previous line again. Consequently, readers will be able to read quickly with fast eye movement and at the same time acquire meaning. Moreover, the practice of reading skills is related to the principle of legitimacy of tasks. For example, one purpose of reading is to obtain information, but in real life we skim and scan; we do not read every name in the telephone directory as we look for the name that we want. Thus, in the reading programme, tasks were selected with the aim of developing the reading skills that students need for authentic communicative use of the target language.

## Factors Affecting Reading Development

Improvement of reading skills is influenced by various factors. In the following section, some of these factors will be briefly discussed:

### **Self Esteem**

Good readers have high self esteem regarding their abilities in reading. Lawrence defines the concept of self-esteem “ as the student’s affective evaluation of the sum total of his characteristics, both mental and physical” (Lawrence, 1981, p.10). Fluent readers feel very confident of their ability to read, while poor readers think that they have failed and do not expect success. Self-esteem is very important to enable students to achieve success. Educational psychologists have studied the concept of low self-esteem and found that it is a significant factor in students’ failure or success (ibid.).

### **Innate Intelligence**

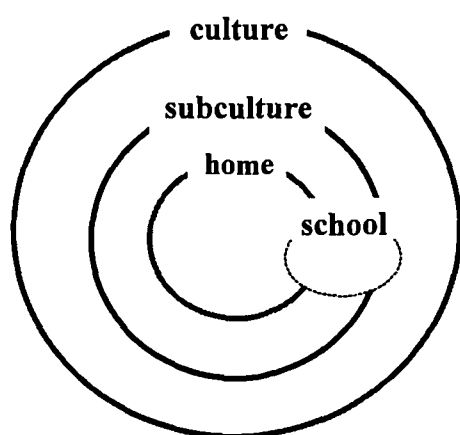
One of the factors that affect reading is individual difference in mental ability. Reading is a complex process which is based on cognitive ability. It is very necessary for students to recognise similarities and differences, remember word formation, remember meanings for a long time, think freely and associate what they read with the required response. There is a positive relationship between intelligence and learning reading. Downing and Leong mention, “This will entail a different conceptualisation of mental retardation or mental sub normality and of the relationship between intellectual deficit and reading disabilities” (1982, p.300). Many research studies have found that reading difficulties and the lack of reading skill are a result of inability to decode script, or poor phonic knowledge, or cognitive problems like difficulty with syntax and semantics. Moreover, studies have found that female readers are more linguistically sensitive than male readers (Alnejahi, 1967, p.45).

## Home Background

A positive family situation and atmosphere helps to develop students' reading skills. At home, parents can help students to practise what they have been reading at school. Downing and Leong explain the environmental influences on reading (see Figure 9) thus: "These four environmental zones - culture, subculture, family and school all have important influences on students' development of reading skills" (op.cit, p.265).

**Figure 9 "Map" of Environmental Situation in Reading**

**Source: (Downing and Leong, 1982)**



The family can encourage students to acquire positive or negative attitudes towards reading. It is apparent from research that if parents share books with their children in a pleasurable way, they are more likely to like reading and develop their own reading skill (Ryan, 1977).

Moreover, what the reader gains from his/her reading depends on the experience acquired in his/her life with others. Reading requires social interaction. The experience acquired by the normal person enables him/her to interpret what he/she reads. When each student reads a passage, he/she carries to it his/her special experience, acquired at home. Students whose experience is broad will gain more benefit from reading than those whose experience is limited. Research studies have found that the percentage of poor readers who come from poor social and economic home backgrounds is greater than the percentage of those who come from rich social and economic backgrounds. It has also been found that the percentage of poor readers whose parents are working is greater than that of those whose parents are free to care for them (Younis, 1996, p.45).

Finally, a good relationship with the parents is important to improve attitude and interest in reading, because this relationship encourages the student to learn and enhances reading.

### **The Level of Achievement in the Language**

A student cannot be expected to read words which are far removed from his/her experience until he/she can comprehend the spoken language. As Durkin emphasises, "It is a fact that a student is not ready to learn a word unless and until it is at least in his listening vocabulary" (Durkin, 1971, p.364). When a student is able to read, he can use this ability to interpret and comprehend the text so he can increase his own vocabulary and increase his understanding of what he has read. But sometimes students find it difficult to understand the content of the passage. As Alkhuli mentions, "It may occur that although a reader knows the words and the patterns of a text, he may not understand it fully owing to the difficulty or strangeness of content" (Alkhuli, 1996, p.74). Consequently, the nature of the topic should be considered when selecting reading materials.

Reading ability depends on a student's linguistic ability. It can be said that a good reader has a good level of achievement in knowledge of language. It involves students' ability to understand and use phonology, orthography, vocabulary, word formation and sentence formation. A thesis by Jarrah (1985) discussed the difficulties faced by Saudi students in learning English pronunciation. This study was applied in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah, King Abdulaziz University. The sample consisted of 60 students. The research method was contrastive analysis of methods of dealing with the sound systems of Arabic and English.

The problem of the study was that students who had been studying for six years basic education had still not attained sufficient mastery of speaking and writing. It was found that students had not acquired an adequate pronunciation of English language. It was found that all students faced difficulties in identifying the correct stress and intonation of the word when they pronounced words and sentences.

This problem arises from the difference between the stress systems of English and Arabic languages. For example in Arabic, every word has an attached stress syllable, so it is very easy to know where the stress of the word will come, while in English, students have to listen first of all to native pronunciation to know where the stress falls. In situations where there is little opportunity to listen to native speakers at first hand, tape recordings are important as a way of presenting authentic pronunciation models.

### **Variety, Participation, Activities**

A variety of activities is very necessary because many slow readers have a short concentration span. As Chambers and Sugden mention, "Variety of activity is essential. Activities should be appropriately challenging and meaningful" (Chambers and Sugden, 1995, p.9). Lessons which are given to poor readers should be very varied. The teacher could vary the activities in terms of long focus and short focus. Long focus means that students keep looking at the teacher or the blackboard or an overhead projector, while short focus activities are those where the student is doing something practical on the desk, like writing, cutting, matching cards etc. Moreover, activities can be used in different ways, such as individual work, pair work, group work and whole class work. Not only do these provide variety, but also, using games, group work and pair work requires co-operation, which develops students' social skills. The total physical

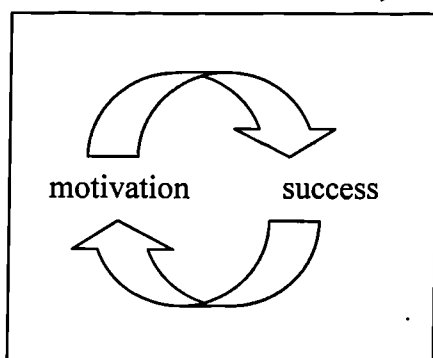
response in terms of gesture, non-verbal answers (tick, circles, underline), varying teacher's and students' position (sitting in a circle, standing, coming out to the blackboard, moving around...etc.) are also useful for adding variety and very important to keep students' attention focused.

### **The Student's Attitude Towards Reading**

The students' attitude towards reading is a very important subject because there is a strong relationship between a positive attitude and success in learning a second language. Many studies confirm this fact. Abu-Rabia (1996, p.589) explores the effect of attitudes of students learning English on their reading comprehension. Moreover, Little et al. draw a diagram to indicate the role of attitude and motivation in second language, see Figure 10 (Little, Devitt, and Singleton, 1988, p.17).

**Figure 10 A Diagram Showing the Role of Motivation in Success in the Second Language.**

Source: Picture from Little et al, 1988, p.17)



Slow readers not only have poor self-esteem, but also they are unmotivated to read a foreign language. They do not want to communicate or enjoy practising reading another language, even if they can. They lack motivation because of their difficulties and

slowness in reading the language. Those students find it difficult to read independently and keep asking for translation into the mother tongue, even for simple words. They need the opportunity to develop and expand their interest in reading. A good teacher can overcome this problem by giving students a variety of activities which are interesting and enjoyable. Moreover, students should have some choice in what they read, because most students do not have a positive attitude toward reading, but they have a positive attitude towards a particular subject. A good use of material is using authentic material



to enhance students' attitude, as Little et al. mention: "Authentic text can fairly obviously have a role in fostering contact with and interest in the culture of the target language and, if sensitively chosen, in making the learning experience enjoyable"(ibid, p.16).

Furthermore, the use of visual aids, songs, magazines, comics, poems, games and drama invests reading with a very important element, that is, the use of reward, encouragement and praise, which are very important to stimulate students with low motivation to develop their reading in a foreign language. Kellermann stresses that "reading in a foreign language must have its immediate reward, both at the emotional and intellectual levels" (Kellermann, 1981, p.55). Such activities enhance students' self-esteem and provide a new learning experience.

Many students in Saudi Arabia have highly negative attitudes toward reading English as a second language, besides lack of opportunity to develop interest and motivation in reading (Albednah, 1982 and Al-Sulaimani, 1990). Consequently, what they need is a programme to develop and expand their interest and enrich their reading experience and develop their ability to respond to what they read.

## **Summary**

Definitions of reading vary greatly in breadth, from the decoding of printed symbols, to a complex response involving analysis and interpretation of the text and resultant changes in behaviour. Reading is a cognitive process involving the application of production rules and the transfer of data between short-term, long-term and working memory. It is also a social process, in which interpretation is aided by cultural knowledge. These different dimensions are reflected to varying degrees in a series of models of reading: the text-driven "bottom-up" model, the reader-driven "top-down"

model, and interactive models of vary degrees of complexity. Recognition that meaning is to some extent socially constructed based on linguistic and social context is particularly important in L2 reading, where only a small part of those contexts is shared between author and reader. This implies that L2 readers may need to be provided with certain kinds of information and language experience, before they can apply the strategies which distinguish good from poor readers.

In recent years, increasing importance has been attached to the communicative approach to L2 teaching – an approach which focuses on the use of language, not for its own sake, but to exchange ideas and information. The approach emphasises the use of authentic materials that interest the learners. Attention has also been drawn in this chapter to the need for learners to acquire important skills such as skimming and scanning, and analysis/ interpretation skills (including research and reference, and prediction skills). In addition to programme content, however, it has been shown that reading development is influenced by a number of personal factors, such as self-esteem and attitude towards reading. The theories and principles discussed in this chapter were influential in the development of an experimental reading programme for Saudi university students' described in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR: THE EXPERIMENTAL READING PROGRAMME

## Introduction

Currently, English is taught in Saudi Arabia using a textbook based on artificial texts, constructed specially to introduce particular grammatical structures and vocabularies. In contrast, the new reading programme designed for EFL students is based on the assumption that “The more students read, the better readers they become, and the more interesting and relevant a text is, the more motivated they are to read” (Blass and Pike-Baky, 1991, p.ix). With this in mind, the researcher collected lively and engaging authentic materials and developed a variety of reading activities and exercises based on the use of the communicative approach. This chapter will present the basic principles of the programme, its aims and techniques, and a wide range of reading comprehension activities and tasks, grouped according to the three main dimensions. The graphic dimension is concerned at the word level with the understanding of the way which words are written and spelled. The syntactic dimension is concerned at the sentence level with the way in which the relationship between words is established in grammatical rules, and the semantic dimension at the passage or text level is concerned with in the way in which meaning is conveyed. An attempt will be made to show how these materials and activities differ from, and seek to overcome deficiencies in those of the current programme.

## A description of the Current Programme

Currently, English teaching is based on a standard textbook written by Alexander (1984). It is highly structured and very heavily exercise driven, with only a very limited amount of actual language, just very brief passages to read. Because copies of the book are also published in the Arabic language, students get the English but then

look at the Arabic text to see what it means. This is unfortunate because it implies that the purpose of learning is to pass the exam, rather than to learn English.

The book consists of four units, each unit preceded by a test, implying that if students can do the test, they can go on to the unit. Each unit contains 24 passages which increase gradually in complexity and length. In terms of length, the reading passages are short. A passage is quoted here to illustrate the artificial language:

It was Sunday. I never get up early on Sundays. I sometimes stay in bed until lunchtime. Last Sunday I got up very late. I looked out of the window. It was dark out side. 'What a day!' I thought. 'It's raining again.' Just then, the telephone rang. It was my aunt Lucy. 'I've just arrived by train,' she said. 'I'm coming to see you.'  
'But I am still having breakfast,' I said.  
'I'm having breakfast, I repeated.'  
'Dear me, she said. 'Do you always get up so late? It's one o'clock!'  
(Alexander, 1984, p. 15)

The above passage is written in a series of short, jerky sentences. It is nothing like the language the people actually speak or read; in other words, it is not authentic language.

The passages are intended to be used for oral comprehension practice, though oral exercises are not included in the book; the teacher must supply them. Also, these passages aim to develop students' comprehension and précis skills; students are asked to make statements based on the passages they have read, both to extract specific information from the passage (comprehension) and to put the statements together to form a paragraph (précis). So-called Composition exercises are introduced in units 2, 3 and 4. These are essentially mechanical exercises, which include joining simple statements to make compound statements, or joining ideas to make compound or complex statements or joining ideas to write two short paragraphs. It is not composition in the usual sense of the word, but is heavily structured. Also, reading aloud is meant to be practised. The teachers' guide to the book suggests, "Chorus, Group or Individual reading depending on the size of the class. If it is very large class, chorus and group

reading is appropriate, if it is a very small class (up to 20 students), individual reading may be more suitable". The passages are also used for dictation. The teacher dictates to students a few sentences taken from the passage, then students correct their own work, referring to the passage. The course also emphasises students' awareness of grammar by supplying written grammar exercises of a recall type. This means not presenting exemplification of some grammar-rule, but demonstrating the correct form and training students to practise and use it automatically. Moreover, the book supplies some instructions for the students, so that in theory it can be used independently.

From the above description of the course, it is clear that the passages are multi-purpose texts, since they are used to train students on the following aspects of the language: aural comprehension, reading aloud, oral comprehension, oral composition, dictation, précis and written grammar exercises. The students must work from specially written text; each text must be used to train students in various skills, after the reading skills.

The good thing about the book is that it is coherently structured, but it implies a kind of step by step sequential learning pattern which, in fact, as indicated in an earlier chapter, is not the way people learn either a first or second language. The books used in Saudi Arabia for teaching English start off with sentences and phrases, noun subjects and predicates. Students do not learn language in that kind of way, grammatically structured and neatly organized; they acquire language quite differently and much more individually.

Although the materials are varied, still some passages are boring and not relevant to female students' needs; for example passage no.30, "Football or Polo", passage no.36, "Across the Channel", and passage no.37, "The Olympic games" all are about sport and although sport can be very important for both sexes, in Saudi Arabia, female students do

not study Physical Education, as mentioned earlier in chapter two; therefore, they are not interested to read about sport. Passage no.72, “A car called Blue Bird”, is about motor racing and this, again, is not of interest to girls, especially as according to the Saudi tradition, females are not allowed to drive. Also, a few materials are not culturally relevant to students, e.g. passage no.59, “In or Out” is about the care of dogs and in Islamic society, it is unusual for people to keep pet dogs; dogs are used for security, not for luxury.

The book is well organised and some of its materials are interesting, but unfortunately, it is not used as intended by the author. There is over-reliance on the traditional methods of learning a foreign language. The tests that students are intended to be set before moving on to a new Unit, are often not applied in practice. It seems, therefore, that the materials and methods currently in use are not really conducive to effective learning of the English language. In each of the three sections which explain practices in the experimental reading programme comparison will be made between this programme and the existing practice, as will be seen on pages 108, 117, and 118 in this chapter.

## General Overview of the Experimental Programme

The programme developed for students of the experimental group was intended to improve students’ reading comprehension skills in English as a foreign language. The programme was divided into eight units; each unit involving different kinds of activities and tasks, emphasis being given to including the three important aspects, graphic, syntactic and semantic, in each unit.

Units were designed to develop and enhance many sub-skills of reading comprehension, such as letter recognition, sound recognition, decoding and encoding,

understanding meaning / comprehension (reading for information), speed reading, skimming and scanning, research and reference skills, analysis and interpretation skills, expectancy and prediction skills and awareness of word functions.

Students' attitudes and motivation were of concern because it was expected they would have a vital role in successful language learning in the programme. Motivation was encouraged by providing authentic and interesting materials and activities and through flexible teaching which allowed students to use the language to communicate.

## Principles of the Experimental Programme

The researcher bore in mind several considerations in devising and designing the new reading comprehension programme, as follows:

### **Authentic Materials**

As indicated in the previous chapter, using authentic materials is seen as important in developing reading comprehension skills, because of their effective role in the communication approach. Cook (1991) confirms that it is beneficial to students to read and listen to authentic language (Cook, p.99). Because, as indicated in the previous chapter, reading is in part a social process that involves students' awareness of the cultural aspects of the language, and since readers have very limited cultural knowledge relevant to the second language, it seems to be beneficial to have students read authentic materials which help them to develop cultural knowledge and at the same time acquire the language, which is the main aim of learning. Also, such materials tend to be more interesting and enjoyable than artificially constructed ones. Little et al. emphasise that: "Because they have been written for a communicative purpose, they are more interesting than texts which have been invented to illustrate the usage of some



feature of the target language; learners are thus likely to find them more motivating than invented texts” (Little et al, 1994, p.46).

In fact, getting students to read authentic materials is not difficult because, as Grellet indicates, “The difficulty of a reading exercise depends on the activity which is required of the students rather than on the text itself” (Grellet, 1987, p.7). Smalley and Morris share this view: “Getting pupils to read authentic texts from the beginning does not necessarily mean a more difficult task on their part. It is relatively easy to grade the task to suit the level of the learners” (Smalley and Morris, 1992, p.24).

The use of authentic materials was covered in the programme - as will be indicated later - by using advertisements, vouchers, leaflets, newspaper articles, food menus, etc. Moreover, having regard to the literature on the use of authentic materials, the researcher took care to select materials according to students’ interests and needs. In the exploratory study, students indicated that some materials, such as topics about sports or cars, are culturally irrelevant to female students but are included in the current programme because both genders follow the same curricula. Consequently, the researcher, in designing the programme, chose materials that women would find relevant and enjoyable, such as advertisements for slimming clubs, fashion catalogues etc.

### **The Communicative Approach**

In the communicative approach, in order to let students read as in real life, a variety of activities should be considered because purposes of reading vary. Grellet emphasises that “In real life our reading purposes constantly vary and therefore, when devising exercises, we should vary the questions and the activities according to the type of text studied and the purpose in reading it” (op.cit., p.4). The programme therefore

provided a variety of tasks using long and short-term activities (as explained in the literature review, chapter 3, when discussing variety of activities). Also, the materials in the programme used a combination of varied authentic texts. The teaching techniques in the programme were also varied, including individual work, pair work, group work and whole class work etc. (see the literature review chapter). Using a variety of activities, materials and teaching methods is more enjoyable and interesting for students, and this encourages the development of their reading skill and understanding of language in general. Barnes and Powell state that “When reading is promoted in intrinsically enjoyable activities, it is at its most motivating and therefore more language is acquired and retained by the learners” (Barnes and Powell, 1996, p.13). Most of the activities of the programme stress practical purposes in order to increase students’ desire to read.

### **The Four Skills**

Reading comprehension skill is one of the four language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking, so it is difficult to separate it in devising a reading programme. There are few cases in real life when people do not talk or write about what they have read or when they do not relate what they have read to something they might have heard (Smalley and Morris, 1992, p.24; Grellet 1987, p.8). In addition, in the communicative approach, reading and writing skills are considered to be as important as listening and speaking skills in the curricula (Little et al, 1994, p.44). Consequently, it was important to include in the reading programme activities practising listening and reading, such as using recorded poems and stories or practising reading and writing, such as summarizing or getting students to read a story with the end or middle missing and asking them to write the missing part. Also, most activities of the programme required discussion, such as giving a summary of what had been read to other students in group

work. So the students used the language as a real means of communication, thereby developing all the four skills of language.

## **Reading Skills**

As we have seen in the literature review, developing the reading comprehension skill demands the development of many sub-skills. Therefore, the new experimental programme introduced many activities to develop and practise these reading skills, such as scanning for information, skimming for the main idea, making predictions, understanding affixes, etc. As mentioned earlier, some skills are relevant to many aspects of the language. For example, considering the prediction skill, readers predict that after q will be u (graphic aspect) or they predict what the second paragraph will be about after reading the first one (semantic aspect) or they expect when they read a sentence that the verb will be after the subject (syntactic aspect).

## **The Techniques**

The main aim of the reading programme was to help students improve and practise their reading skills by providing suitable material and varied activities. The following are examples of typical methods; they are not listed here in any order of teaching or importance, but most of them are used in reading lessons in the programme:

1. Students reconstruct a cut-up text which is helpful for practising the predicting skill.
2. Students read very quickly in order to work out the answers to one or two general questions.
3. Students predict the content of the text from the title/ picture/ first line.
4. Silent reading before discussion of the story's events

5. Students locate topic sentences in some of the paragraphs.
6. The teacher teaches a few key words.
7. Students work out the meaning of selected words and expressions from the context.
8. Students discuss topics related to the content of the text.
9. Students scan the text to pick out proper names.
10. Students ask the teacher questions about unfamiliar vocabulary.
11. Students complete a detailed true/false exercise.
12. The teacher draws attention to some of the grammar in the text.

(In some lessons, some of these elements were omitted and/or additional activities included.) Most of the activities of the programme were done by students working in groups or were done individually and then discussed in small groups. The advantage of doing this was to let students use the language as a real means of communication.

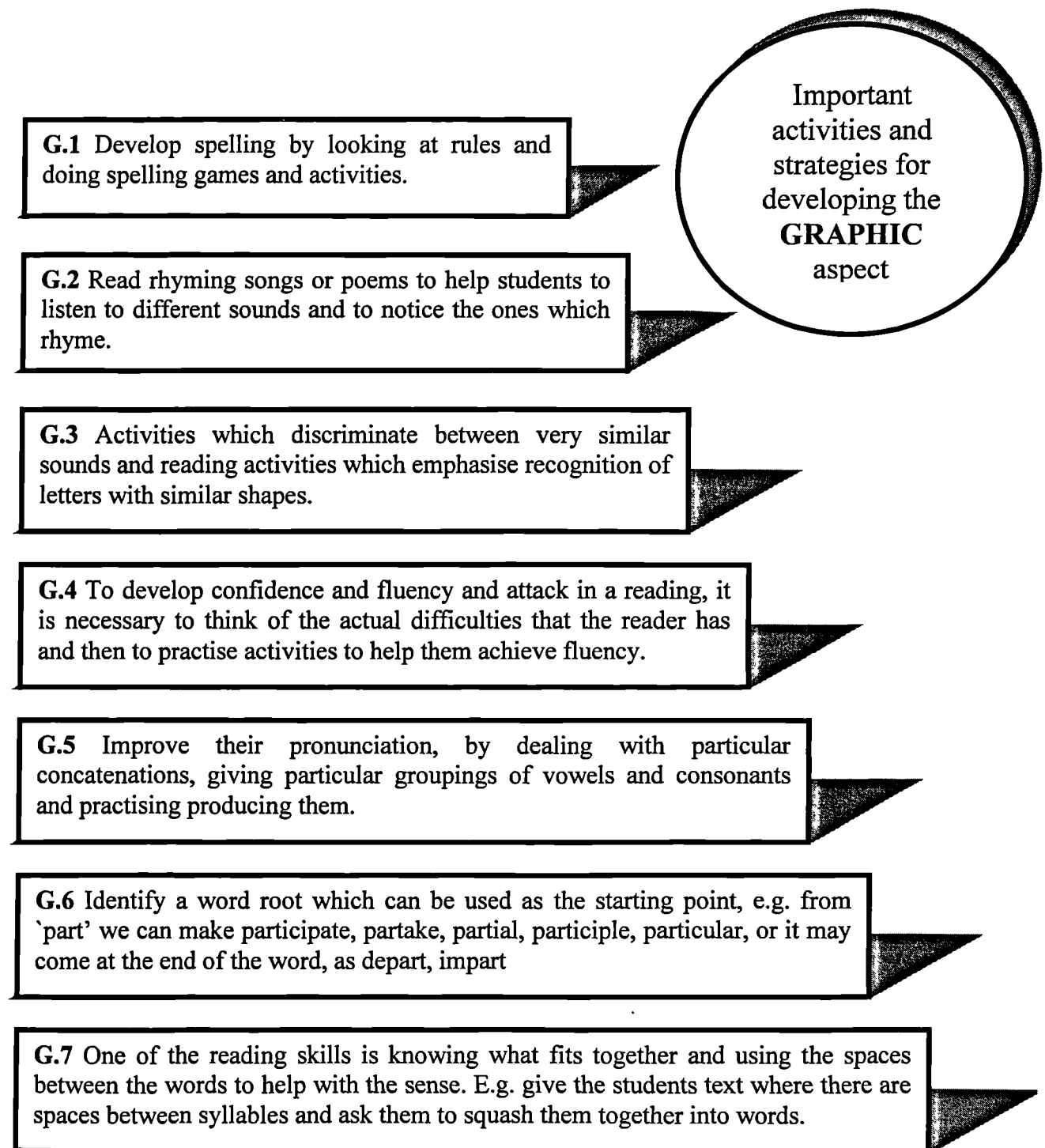
### **The Aim**

The overall aim of the programme was to improve reading comprehension skills. Based on the literature, this aim was to be achieved through the following sub-objectives which, again, are presented in random order:

1. Developing decoding and encoding skills (mechanical reading) by providing activities which emphasise recognising the shape and pronunciation of English letters and sounds, so students can easily decode what they read;

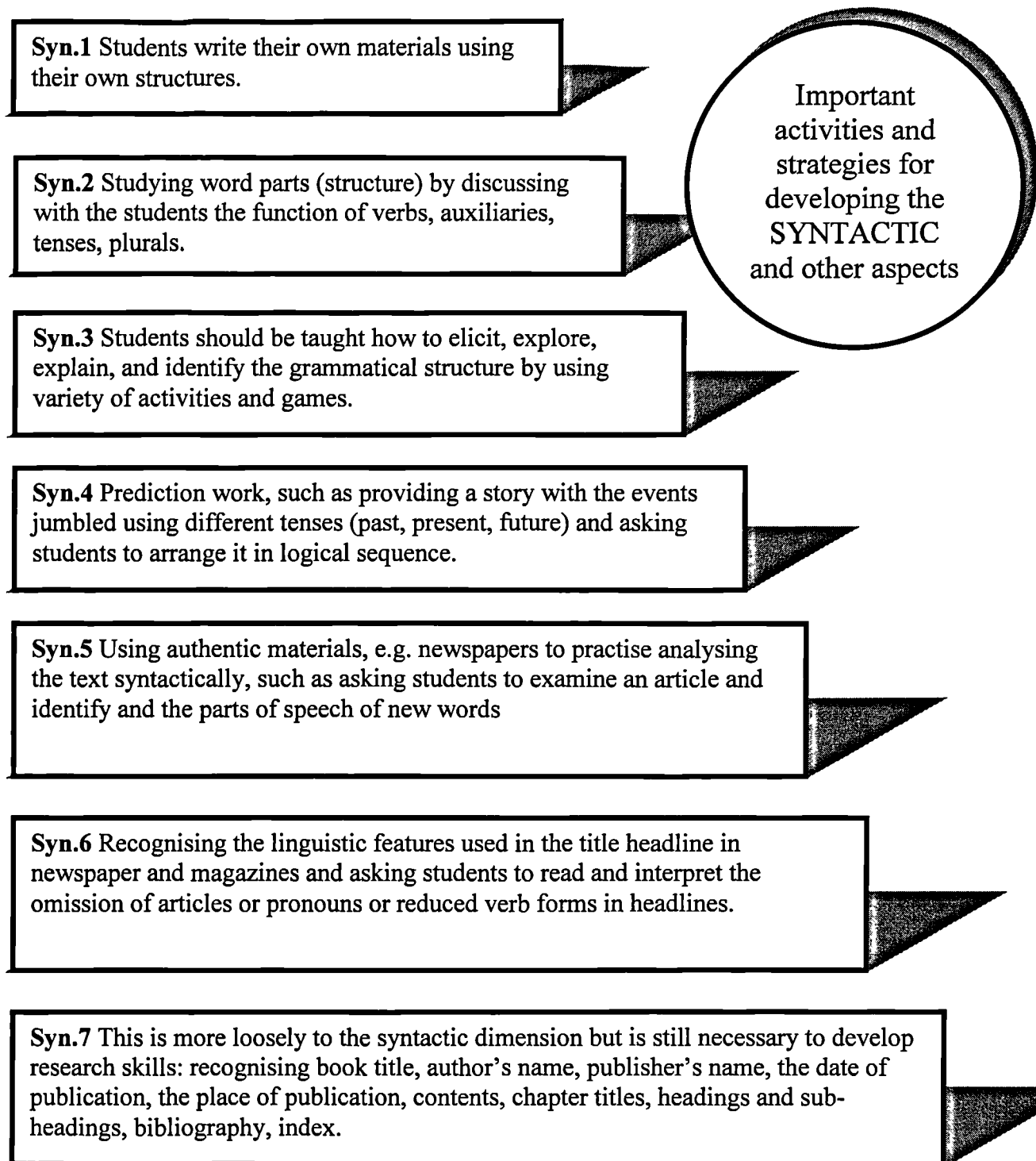
2. Enabling students to develop the sound recognition skill by distinguishing different and similar sounds and noticing the sounds which rhyme when they listen to and read songs and poems;
3. Enabling students to develop writing skills by giving them the chance to produce and read their own reading materials;
4. Helping them to develop skimming and scanning skills in using authentic texts;
5. Enhancing students' prediction skills through the task of sequencing stories;
6. Training students in spelling and helping them to recognise spelling rules and develop letter recognition skill;
7. Helping students to recognise the particular function of words in each sentence correctly and quickly, and training them in functional grammar;
8. Enabling students to elicit or explore vocabulary and ideas, and organise information;
9. Helping students to improve analysis and interpretation of the text by comparing and contrasting ideas and distinguishing between fact, fiction, opinion, and ideas;
10. Helping them to develop listening skills;
11. Enabling them to read with recognition, fluency, comprehension and enjoyment;
12. Training them to recognise the meaning of a word through the text;
13. Enabling them to develop speaking skills;
14. Helping students to develop reading speed and other reading skills through effective, lively and varied reading activities;
15. Training them to practise research skills.

All the above aims were tackled through three main dimensions: graphic, syntactic and semantic, each of which involves a number of skills (see Figures 11, 12. and 13).

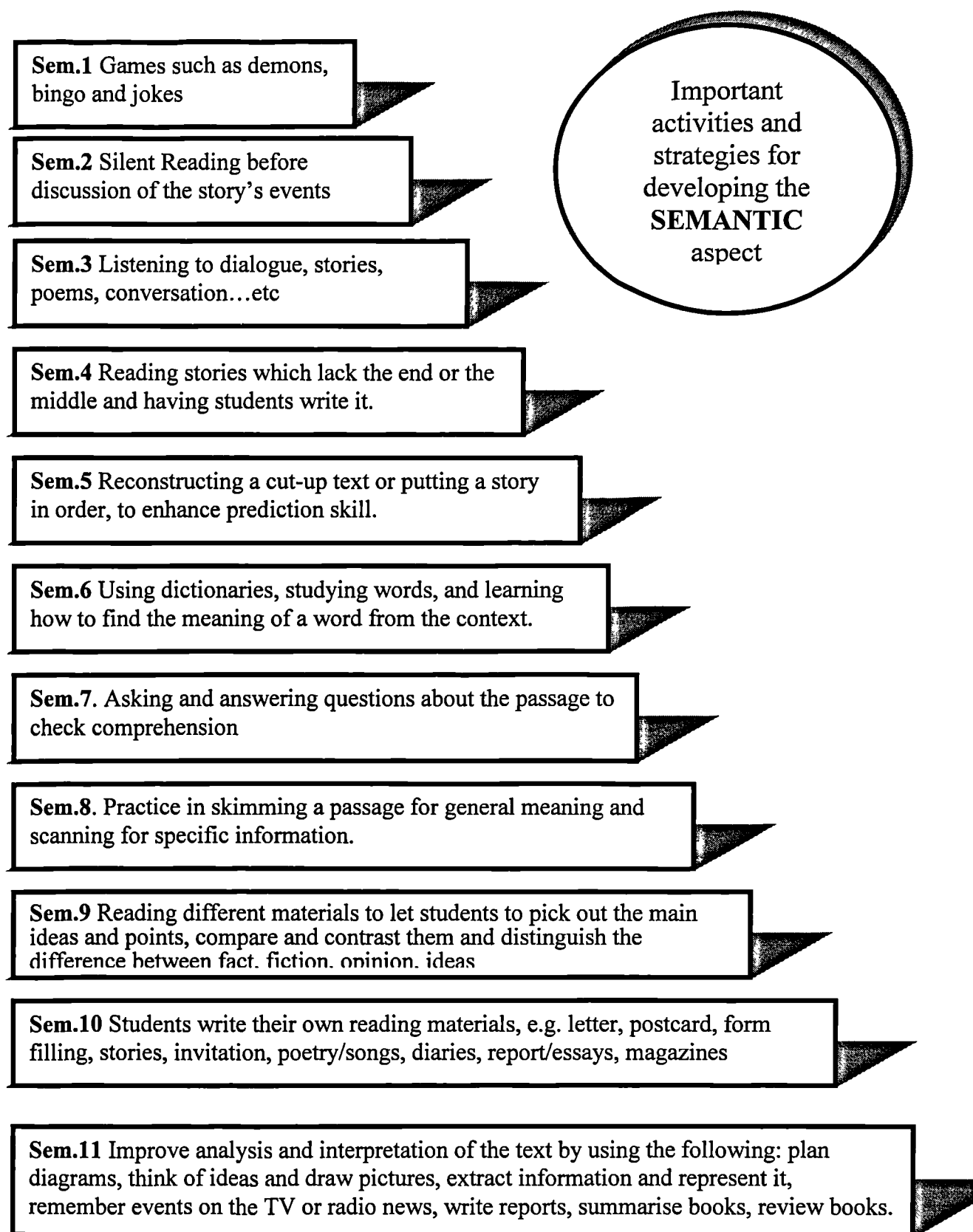


**Figure 11 Ideas for the Experimental Programme (GRAPHIC)**

**Figure 12 Ideas for the Experimental Programme (SYNTACTIC)**



**Figure 13 Ideas for the Experimental Programme (SEMANTIC)**





## The Graphic Aspect

The knowledge of the graphic aspect such as spelling recognizing, letter and sound recognition, prefix and suffixes, and rhyming words etc, is important in developing reading comprehension skills. This section summarises some of the activities which were practised in the experimental programme.

### Spelling

Spelling affects many skills of reading, such as reading speed, skimming, and scanning, but spelling is considered very difficult for speakers of Arabic, which does not use the Roman script (Harmer, 1989, p. 48). In the programme, development of spelling was covered by looking at rules such as adding -er/-est, adding -ing and -ed, adding -ly, adding -s, -ible or -able, and -ie- or -ei. Also, spelling was practised through spelling games and activities such as learning the most difficult and long words, for example, accommodation / Mediterranean / curriculum / inconvenient / environment / fortunately / communication / establishment etc, by using the look, say, cover, write, check method. Games such as Hangman were very useful and interesting at the same time. The hundred most used words were also dictated, to ensure students' familiarity with these words. Homonyms were practised through Homonyms dominos (see Appendix 2) and a Homonyms Quiz, for example:

I have blond hair and \_\_\_\_ eyes.

- a. blew
- b. blue

He said he \_\_\_\_ where the place was.

- a. knew
- b. new

Source: (Alchi Institute of Technology, 1995).

## **Rhymes**

Rhyming songs or poems were read to help students to listen to different sounds and to notice the ones which rhyme. Authentic materials were used to practise this skill. The sources for exploring rhyme were: rhyming proverbs, newspaper headlines /cuisine-feature, advertising, shop signs, songs, nicknames, football chants and poems. Furthermore, activities for developing rhymes were practised such as Sorting Words According to Medial Vowel Sounds, Rhyming Dominoes (see Appendix 2) and Complete two-line rhymes e.g., “He threw the chair, he threw the table, threw them as far as he was able”.

## **Letter and Sound Recognition Skills**

Activities were used which discriminate between very similar sounds, as were reading activities which emphasise recognition of letters with similar shapes. In the exploratory study, the students indicated that they had particular difficulty in recognizing certain similar sounds, such as recognizing the sounds of the letters P & B. When Jarrah (1989) investigated the difficulties of Saudi students in learning English pronunciation at college, one of his findings was that all the population in his study in King AbdulAziz University, in Medinnah, replaced /p/ by /b/. To develop confidence and fluency and attack in reading, it is necessary to think of the actual difficulties that the reader has and then to practise activities to help them achieve fluency. For this reason, the researcher designed some activities developing this aspect of the language. The materials were recorded by native speakers of English, and students practised listening skills as well as reading.

Pronunciation was improved by dealing with particular concatenations giving particular groupings of vowels and consonants and practising producing them. Various games and activities were used to develop letter recognition skill and sound recognition

skill, such as Pelmanism, digraphs, alphabetical order, using cards to make words where the letters occur in alphabetical order , etc.

### **Prefixes and Suffixes**

The researcher collected words that contain either prefixes or suffixes and split the words to create a pack of syllable cards and a pack that contains just prefixes and suffixes. Students practise making words by matching the cards, eg. if the prefixes/suffixes pack contains 'less', that would combine with 'home' or 'child' or 'friend' or 'care' in the syllable pack.

### **Letter Patterns**

Letter Patterns are groups of letters that frequently occur together in words. They are sometimes called letter strings. Some of the most common ones are, sh, ch, th, wh, ph, shr, thr, tch, bl, br, tr, pr, ing...etc. Students were asked to look for letter patterns from newspapers or magazine and see how many words they could find on the page that contained the same pattern.

### **Word Roots**

Students were shown how to identify word roots, e.g. from 'part' they could form participate, partake, partial, participle, particular, etc and (at the end of the word) depart, impart etc. One of the skills in reading is knowing the roots of words and what comes after them, so good readers do not need to examine every word, but their eyes flash over the text, because they know there are certain words that start with con, pre, etc. Giving students some of these syllables and ask them to find as many words as they can, helps students to recognise words with different sorts of shapes. Flash cards with different shapes were useful to help students practise recognising the shapes of words.

## **Hidden Words**

Sometimes short words hide inside long ones; for example, mathematics, vegetables, decorate, hippopotamus, problem, etc; each of these long words has at least one short word hiding inside it. Students were asked to find the hidden words and also collect long words that have short words hiding inside and show their list to a friend to see if they could pick out the words in disguise. Also, words selected from authentic materials such as newspapers or magazines, were presented on cards, written in different sizes or font or in italic or in bold, etc.

## **Possible Syllable Sequences**

One of the reading skills is knowing what fits together and using the spaces between the words to help with the sense (possible syllable sequences). For example, we can give the students a text where spaces have been left between syllables and ask them to squash them together into words (see the following text).

### **Cairo: the mod ern city**

The hub of the mod ern city of Cairo is the spa cious Midan el-Tahrir (Lib er a tion Square). Here all the city's main traf fic arteries meet. – To the SW\* of the square are the Min is try of For eign Affairs and the Gov ern ment Buildings, to the SE the Am er ican Uni ver si ty and the Na tion al As sem bly. To the NW of the Square is the large range of buildings oc cu pied by the Egyp tian Mu se um, which has the world's larg est and fin est col lec tion of Egyp tian and Graeco-Ro man an tiq ui ties. Just be yond the Egyp tian Mu se um the Cor niche el Nil along the bank of the Nile is lined by large mod ern hotels and pres tige buildings.

\*SW= south west; NE= north east etc      Source: from “Designing Tasks for the Communicative Classroom” (1989) by David Nunan

All the foregoing activities (spelling, homonyms, rhymes, games, prefixes/suffixes, letter patterns, the hidden words, words with different sizes and shapes, and possible syllable sequences) are examples of practising the graphic aspects of the language.

The present programme of the university lacks such activities. It is assumed that the letter and sound recognition skills will already have been covered in the early stages, intermediate and secondary schools. However, if we examine the textbooks of the early stages, we find no mention of games and other activities to develop such skills. Moreover, students at the university level have difficulties in spelling and sound recognition, as revealed in the exploratory study.

The following section will deal with the second dimension of reading comprehension skill (syntactic and other aspects) which is to develop students' ability to acquire the function and structure of the language; this breaks down into objectives such as studying the word parts (structure), explaining and organizing information, research and reference skills, expectancy and prediction skills, analysis and interpretation skills etc. What follows is an explanation of the important activities and strategies for developing the **SYNTACTIC** and other aspects.

### Syntactic Aspect

Syntactic information is very important for proficient readers to enable them to master the comprehension of a message. Paulston and Bruder stress that "Native speakers already know the grammar of their language, and they use this knowledge for clues in their reading. Foreign students must be taught to do so" (Paulston and Bruder, 1979, p.175).

### Word Parts

This involves using a dictionary and thesaurus, studying word parts, and learning how to find the meaning of a word from the context. Barnes and Powell emphasise the development of reading in acquisition of vocabulary by providing interesting activities. They mention that "students are likely to read better and more

confidently in the long term if they are given interactive tasks which help them acquire essential new vocabulary in an enjoyable way” (Barnes and Powell, 1996, p.10). Moreover, the same authors suggest different ways of practising identifying words. An interesting activity is chosen as an example of practising this skill. Words are collected from three articles in a magazine or newspaper. These words should include phrases to link ideas: conjunctions, adverbs, adverbial expression, noun phrases, etc. The students are asked to put these phrases into groups according to the word functions (ibid, p.9). Such activities can help and support students to develop the acquisition of vocabulary in an interesting and logical way.

Word parts (structure) can be studied by discussing with the students the function of verbs, auxiliaries, tenses, plurals, etc. It is a fact that awareness of the grammatical aspect when they read the language will help students to be more confident and quick readers. The experimental reading programme provided many activities to improve students’ awareness of word functions when they read (see Appendix 2).

The results of the exploratory study revealed that students found the passive voice a particularly difficult aspect of English grammar. This was confirmed by the analysis of the reading achievement test (see Chapter Six) which revealed that Question 16 (see below) was difficult for students:

**Yeuk Yee had her house painted white yesterday.**

- She had to paint her house white yesterday.
- Her house was not blue last week.
- They painted her house white for her yesterday.
- She painted her house yesterday.

The results show that 33 students (most of them good students) out of 48 got it wrong and did not recognize that to have something done means to employ somebody to do it (passive voice). That is the syntactic aspect again and miscomprehension resulted from failure to recognise the voice of the sentence. This shows how the syntactic problem affects the overall comprehension of what is happening.

An explanation of the Passive voice (see Appendix 2) was given to students in the programme to help them understand the formulation of the passive voice and help to clarify the role. Exercises were used to help students to use the passive voice and recognise it when they read or hear it by identifying who or what is doing the action.

The recognition of the passive and active voices helps students to develop syntactic prediction. For example, see the following sentences:

The flower was picked by a girl.      And      The girl picked a flower.

The moment students see “was picked”, it immediately suggests something is to follow and they know what the next words are going to be; they know that it is going to be an adverbial phrase telling them who did it; the person who actually did the action. In contrast, if they read “The girl picked”, they expect the next word to be either a flower or a leaf or a thing; in other words, a or the + object.

Developing syntactic prediction helps students to read quickly. Take for example, the sentence “Sara had her house beautifully and carefully decorated.” When students read “Sara had her house beautifully” this does not make sense, so the eyes move quickly on until they find the word decorated, because the students know that “beautifully and carefully” simply tells how the action was done and that is less important. They need to predict the important parts of the sentence. The prediction sends them to the important parts of the sentence. This is what we mean by syntactic

prediction. Students predict the part of speech that is going to come next. So when students read the previous sentence, “Sara had her house beautifully and carefully\_\_\_\_\_.”, they predict the past participle of a verb that has to do with ‘house’, such as cleaned, restored, painted, decorated etc.

Also, this helps students’ reading speed because there is only a limited number of things that could be done to the house. Students’ prediction of the grammatical form of the word helps them to predict the actual word which will fit the content and make sense (semantic prediction)

Another activity for developing students’ awareness of the passive voice could be to provide students with newspapers, and ask them to scan the article titles and underline all the example of the passive voice. They should then think about why the passive was used in each situation. A similar kind of activity could be used to practise all word parts (structure) such as prepositions, verbs, auxiliaries, tenses, plurals...etc.

It is clear from the previous section that the experimental programme used various tasks and techniques in practising the passive voice. In the contrast, the current programme uses artificial ways in dealing with the syntactic aspects of the language. The following indicates how the current programme deals with the passive voice:

Change the form of the phrases in italic. Do not refer to the passage until you finish the exercise:

We have an old musical instrument. We *call it a clavichord*. *Someone made* it in Germany in 1681. We *keep our Clavichord* in the living room. *My grandfather bought the instrument* many years ago. Recently *a visitor damaged it*. She struck the keys too hard and *broke two of the strings*. *This shocked my father*. He *does not allow us* to touch it. *A friend of my father’s is* repairing it.

This activity is a mechanical exercise, which asks students to produce a stilted, artificial paragraph; the result, with every sentence in the passive voice, would not be



good style or natural usage of the language. Moreover, the exercise does nothing to help students to practise skills such as prediction, which would help them to analyse and understand new materials. They may learn to complete this exercise, and yet not be able to use or understand the passive voice in other contexts.

### **Analysis Skill**

Students could plan diagrams, think of ideas and draw pictures, extract information and represent it, remember events on the TV or radio news, write reports, summarise books, review books, rewrite instructions or recipes, etc. in their own words using different structures and tenses. Teachers can encourage practice by providing different kinds of activities in order to enable students to recognize the structure of complex sentences such as the following example which is mentioned by Grellet: “Read the following sentences and underline the subject and the main verb of each of them. ‘One team that performed more than two hundred operations found that nearly half the patients underwent a change of personality. In one publicized case in England, a young salesman with an apparent compulsion to gamble was arrested for larceny’ (Op.cit, p. 43). In this activity, students analyse the text in order to recognise the relations within the sentence.

### **Prediction Skill**

Studies have shown that good readers can predict much of what they read. Blass and Pike-Baky (1991) emphasise that “Prediction of what is coming next increases your reading speed and improves your understanding of what you read” (op.cit. p.80). This skill can be practised by providing a story with the events jumbled and asking students to read the story and then put the events in the right order, in a way that makes sense, and with the right functional structures. The students must arrange the sentences in a

logical sequence. Moreover, while students read, they practise the prediction skill automatically, because as they read they use clues which allow them to recognise the structure of the sentences. For example, when students read such phrases as “last week”, “yesterday” or “an hour ago” or see the –ed form of the verb, etc they predict that the sentence is in the past simple tense; similarly, they predict that the sentence is in the future tense when they read words like “next week”, “tomorrow”, “on Monday”, “next month”, “will”, “going to”, etc.

### **The Use of Newspapers**

Authentic materials, e.g. newspapers, can be used to practise analysing the text in order to let students pick out the main ideas and points, compare and contrast them and distinguish the difference between fact, fiction, opinion, ideas. Wright and Haleem suggest various kinds of activities for using newspapers as authentic printed material, to develop some reading skills: “1. Cut out several headlines and ask the students to discuss what the article might be about. This is a good way of developing predictive reading skills. 2. Cut out several headlines and articles and ask the students to match them. 3. Cut out several photographs and their captions separately. Ask the students to match them. One approach to this technique is to give a photograph to a pair of students and to ask them to note down as much as they can surmise from a study of the picture. They should then write a short article or caption to go with it before being shown the actual one used. 4. Cut up an article into several pieces and ask students to sequence the pieces correctly. This can be done in various ways. In one version the class is divided into small groups and each is given one section of an article. They study it and try to make sense of it. Then the teacher asks each group to read out their piece of the article. The groups make notes on the other pieces they hear and try to decide what order they should be in. Next there is a class discussion. The pieces can be read and reread until

everyone is in agreement. Finally the whole article is read out” (Wright and Haleem, 1991, p.87) See the examples in Appendix 2 for tasks using articles in newspapers devised by the researcher.

#### Newspaper Techniques:

Ask students to make a list of the words that they recognise, not only recognising the meaning (semantic) but also recognising them syntactically. See the following example of a newspaper-based syntactic activity

In the beginning of this part of a newspaper, you can find the word *evaluation*, as a noun. At the end of the second paragraph, you can find a corresponding plural person noun, *evaluators*.

Read the following piece of an article and then fill the following table with the appropriate parts of speech. Students should note that not all the forms of the part of speech are in the passage, the words do not all follow the same pattern of formation and some boxes may stay blank.

Noun	Person	Plural	Verb	Adjective	Adverb
evaluation	evaluator	evaluators			
					recently
	teacher	teachers			

Ask students to specify the parts of the newspaper: the main headings, general features, sport, financial page, miscellany etc. then give them some tasks. An example could be recognising the linguistic features used in the headline in order to draw the attention of the readers; students could be asked to read and interpret the omission of articles or pronoun or reduced verb forms in headlines such as (POLICE STEP UP CAMPAIGN = The Police will step up a/the campaign). Baddock summarises the features of headline language. Some of them are as follows: “1. Deletions: omission of articles, personal pronoun, this/that. 2. Reduced verb forms: (a) Past participle (form) = passive (meaning), (b) Infinitive (form) = future (meaning), (c) Simple present (form) =

past (meaning), and (d) Continuous participle (form) = present (meaning)” (Baddock, 1983, p.10).

## **Research Skills**

Teachers are responsible for steering students to use the library independently by showing them how to find books and explaining the way books are organised, to enable them to check books in and out. Dean and Nichols mention that “Introduction to the school library should start early, initially with an introduction to the way books are graded and coded in the classroom, then in the library” (Dean and Nichols, 1986, p.77). Moreover, schools should arrange visits to the public library. Dean and Nichols add that “Most public libraries will be helpful to schools wishing to introduce groups of student to the libraries” (ibid.).

Ability to recognise a book’s title, the author’s name, publisher’s name, the date of publication, the place of publication, contents, chapter titles, headings and sub-headings, bibliography, and index, is very necessary to develop reading skills such as skimming and scanning. In the programme, as students are already at university level, they need to develop their library and research skills. They visited the library of the university and borrowed some books and periodical articles to practise all the research and reference skills. For example, to practise the citation of a book, they would need to note the following:

Author-surname. Plus initials (or forename), Year of publication, Complete title, Place of publication, and publisher’s name (See Appendix 2).

Unfortunately, in Saudi schools, as the researcher found in a previous study (Al-Ebsi, 1997, p.97), there is a lack of supplementary materials and library facilities to support reading and language learning. In some school libraries, there are no English books. Even worse, some schools do not have a basic library at all. In the university

library, there is large selection devoted to English books and sources, but most of them are outdated, difficult for students to comprehend, and not interesting.

The following section will deal with the third dimension of reading comprehension skill (semantic) which is to develop students' ability to extract meaning as they read. This breaks down into objectives such as understanding meaning, reading for information, skimming and scanning skills, expectancy and prediction skills, analysis and interpretation skills etc. What follows is an explanation of the important activities and strategies for developing the **SEMANTIC** aspect.

## Semantic Aspect

### Listening Skill

The aim of this activity is to develop listening and reading comprehension skills, by listening to dialogue, stories, poems, conversation or anything that tells a story or theme. One should ensure that it is not too long and that the words are distinguishable and the content enjoyable.

The students listen to the poems in the tape-recording, made by a native speaker of English, then unfamiliar words are discussed and explained by the teacher. Students are asked to identify rhyming words. After silent reading, the students discuss in groups the overall meaning of the poems, by answering comprehension questions. The technique of asking students comprehension questions is very important, but more important, as Wharton and Race note, is to use *questions carefully*. "If you use it, try to go beyond surface comprehension to involve learners in the ideas behind the text" (Wharton and Race, 1999, p.46). For example students could be asked, after reading the poems, what is the main message that the poet wants to convey to the reader. Moreover,

using poetry should reinforce language development, phonemic awareness, sight vocabulary, and boost self-confidence and self esteem.

### **Writing Skill**

Students write their own reading materials, e.g. letter, postcard, form filling, stories, invitation, poetry/songs, diaries, report/essays, magazines.

One activity is writing mini sagas, asking students to try to write their own version of a well-known story in exactly 50 words. Students could choose a famous story or they could make up one of their own.

Another way of giving students an opportunity to read their own writing materials is to give them a problem and ask them to write the solution in a letter – see Appendix 2– (Waugh, 1996).

### **Reading for Information**

Reading is the richest source of information, which means learners acquire meaning and ideas from what they read. Students should be encouraged to read for information and helped to explore information sources on different topics, and using different methods of organisation and presentation. Dougill comments that “The uncomfortable fact remains, however, that some reading scheme materials can be ‘read’ from back to front without making any difference to the sense”(Dougill, 1993, p.51). Reading for information requires an important skill: reading comprehension; students’ ability to understand the knowledge that they read. There are many subskills which students should practise in order to acquire comprehension. These skills are as follows:

1. Predicting the main idea in each paragraph or in a short story. This strategy is useful and helpful for students as preparation for later study stages.

2. Reading to follow instructions is a practical activity which develops students' understanding.
3. The ability to define the sources of the acquiring information from reading; in other words, students' ability to use information derived from reading and correlate it with other information. Reading to gain new knowledge and information can be a stimulus for students to learn more about a subject. Consequently, they look for other sources to acquire new information.
4. Extracting the value of what they read. It is important when reading to know the goal, because it is the outcome of the reading process. Students need to know whether what they are reading is useful for them or not, and which reading facts are relevant and which are not (critique and judgement)
5. Integrating what they read with their personal experience. The connection between students' experience and what they read helps them to like reading and improve their knowledge, information gathering and language achievement.
6. Identifying the writer's objectives, because these represent the purposes of the reading material.

It is very important for students to practise using information from glossaries, indexes, encyclopaedias, contents pages etc. Harris and Sipay emphasise that "pupils should be encouraged to try their ability on the indexes of encyclopaedias, almanacs, or atlases" (op cit. , p.496).

After reading, the teacher could present the new vocabulary from the text and let the students find the words in the dictionary, then the teacher might ask some questions to check their understanding. The teacher then can help students to formulate some questions and let them work in groups to find out the answers. Reading for information

requires more than reading stories; students need to read about more academic and historical topics. Dougill suggests reading “books which reflect a multicultural world in an accurate and balanced way”(op cit., p.52) in order to develop students’ knowledge and information about other cultures. Students should know that information can be gained from various sources of authentic materials such as newspapers, magazines, charts, tables, maps, brochures, database, video, radio, TV.

In order to develop students’ knowledge and information, they should know that information can be gained from various sources, such as newspapers, magazines, charts, tables, maps, brochures etc. The activities in Appendix 2 are examples of using authentic materials: a catalogue of different kinds of furniture and advertisements in the local paper looking for a job.

The use of pictures can play a significant role in reading comprehension. Good ways to practise understanding meaning include matching pictures and sentences or reading sentences to know how to complete the drawing of a picture (for more details see Appendix 2)

### **Identifying Paragraph Structure**

It is useful to make students aware of how paragraphs start with topic sentences, by asking students to match different paragraphs with their topic sentences. The aim is to develop understanding of meaning and analysis and interpretation skills. For example, students are given some paragraphs and topic sentences (in this case, the first sentence of each paragraph) have been removed. Their task is to read the paragraphs carefully and then match them with the correct sentences. An example of this kind of activity is shown in Appendix 2.



This kind of activity is helpful for students to practise many skills of reading such as understanding the meaning, skimming and scanning, and analysing text to pick out the main ideas. In comparison, the current reading programme uses many activities providing sentences and asking students to write these sentences in different ways. For example the following activity asks students to replace the words in italics by the correct form of 'be' or 'set':

He *has not yet returned*. He will *return* in ten minutes.  
When the concert *ended*, we went home.  
They will *leave* very early tomorrow morning.

If students replace these words as follows,

He has not come back. He will be back in ten minutes  
When the concert was over, we went home.  
They will set out very early tomorrow morning

These examples are typically artificial, because in fact the form that is being changed is perfectly acceptable as it is. The reason for the change it is not clear; the words students are asked to substitute are less effective than the words are already there, so why ask students to do it? The answer is to test their understanding of the different senses of the verb 'to be' with various prepositions attached to it. But it does not seem to be a very effective exercise, since the language used is artificial and the language is taken out of context. Similar activities occur in each unit, so the work becomes repetitive.

### **Skimming and Scanning Skills**

Skimming a passage for general meaning and scanning for specific information are very important skills for fast and efficient reading. Practising these skills helps students to be better readers. These skills can be practised by using various kinds of materials such as newspapers (authentic materials) e.g. 'The Hull Advertiser' to find some specific information like TV. Programmes, National Holidays, items for sale and

purchase (cars...etc.); use of Argos and Index catalogues to find the information the customer needs; using a telephone directory to look up phone numbers or addresses. The teacher can use all the above materials to develop skimming and scanning skills. Another useful drill is practising skimming and scanning by using a map, to find out road names, the location of schools or mosques, students' addresses. etc. The researcher designed various activities for practising skimming and scanning skills based on reading topics which are interesting to female students (such as slimming clubs) and culturally relevant (such as take-away food menus and using vouchers). The researcher tried in those activities to use authentic materials and at the same time design tasks which are enjoyable and culturally relevant to female students in an Islamic culture (see Appendix 2). On the other hand, several of the materials in the current reading programme are basically strange to women as they concern men. The following is an example:

The great racing driver, Sir Malcolm Campbell, was the first man to drive at over 300 miles per hour. He set up a new world record in September 1935 at Bonneville Salt Flats, Utah Bluebird, the car he was driving, had been specially built for him. It was over 30 feet in length and had a 2500 horse-power engine. Although Campbell reached a speed of over 304 miles per hour, he had great difficulty in controlling the car because a tyre burst during the first run. After his attempt, Campbell was disappointed to learn that his average speed had been 299 miles per hour. However, a few days latter, he was told that a mistake had been made. His average speed had been 301 miles per hour. Since that time racing drivers have reached speeds of over 400 miles an hour. Following his father's footsteps many years later, Sir Malcolm's son, Donald, also set up a world record. Like his father, he was driving a car called Bluebird. (Alexander, 1984, p.173)

The above passage is artificial and boring to female students. Others are particularly inappropriate to the Saudi context, because of references to Christian buildings or drinking alcohol, which is forbidden in Muslim society. It does not seem very culturally aware, for example:

The tree was planted near a church fifty years ago, but it is only in recent years that it has gained an evil reputation (p.145).

Herbert loves drinking beer (p.131).

In the bar, five men were drinking whisky (ibid, p115).

By contrast, the materials in Appendix 2 are interesting, enjoyable and culturally relevant. Bügel and Buunk (1996) found that female students like to read materials about beauty, clothing and dating. Also, the exploratory study indicated that students do not like the materials of the current programme and they need topics more related to their interests.

### **Reading Meaningful Text**

The goal is to read a comprehensive text which is meaningful, such as a recipe. Students are asked, “What is your favourite dish? Can you write a recipe for it? Start with ingredients”. Students can write their own recipe and then read each other’s recipes to compare their different kinds of recipes. This activity aims to practise the reading for meaning skill. In the beginning, a discussion is held about favourite foods, traditional dishes for celebration, healthy and less healthy food, etc. Then, in group work, students are asked to start writing by making a list of the ingredients on which they can build to write instructions in sentences in the right order. As they work, attention is drawn to any difficult words and interesting examples are shared by writing them on the board. When students have finished writing their own recipes, they are asked to read each other’s recipes to know if the structure of the recipes is clear enough to help someone who has never heard of the recipe to be able to follow it. At a later stage, each group writes their recipe on a large piece of paper, which is put on the wall for everyone to read.

### **Prediction Skill**

Bowen and Marks give a good example of prediction and reading for confirmation of prediction, to be carried out with students: “Give them a text without any prior discussion of context and find out how long it takes them to work out the content. Then repeat the experiment, this time giving the context first and having some prior

discussion of the content. Ask them which text was easier to understand and why” (Bowen and Marks, 1994, p.123).

Another activity is to read stories which lack the end or the middle and have students write them. Every story includes an introduction which introduces the characters and situation of the story, then the middle in which the story is developed and finally, the conclusion where the denouement is disclosed. In this activity, the students are given an uncompleted story, where the middle of the story is missing and students are asked to read the beginning and the end of the story and predict what the middle of the story should be. Another activity could be done by using a story where the ending is missing. This helps students to develop analysis and prediction skills.

### **Vocabulary**

Important tasks in reading comprehension, from the semantic aspect, are using dictionaries, studying words, and learning how to find the meaning of a word from the context. When students find a difficult word they do not understand, they should, as Grellet mentions, be encouraged “to make a guess at the meaning of the words they do not know, rather than look them up in dictionary” (op.cit, 1987, p.14). Then, when students want to check the exact meaning, they could use the dictionary, after they have found the meaning on their own, whether by predicting or by reading the passage again to find the meaning of a word from the context.

In the reading programme, the students practised all of the above techniques to develop their vocabulary. In addition, the students learned the differences in meaning and spelling between British, Canadian and American English, for example, cross (British), upset (Canadian) and mad (American).

All the above activities (listening and reading comprehension; students write their own reading materials; games such as dominoes; bingo and jokes; reading for information; reading with pictures; analysis and interpretation skills; skimming and scanning skills; reading for information) are examples of practising reading comprehension skills, the semantic aspect of the language, using various kinds of activities.

## Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to discuss the new reading programme designed for EFL students, to address the perceived deficiencies of the current programme. It has been suggested the materials used in the current programme are of limited interest and not always culturally appropriate. The associated activities are mechanical and repetitive, using artificial language, very different from that which students might be expected to meet and use in real life. Moreover, they do not cover all the skills which students need for good reading comprehension. This chapter has shown how these problems were addressed in the design of the experimental programme. The basic principles of the programme were the use of authentic materials, the communicative approach, the four skills, reading skills and techniques, to provide a basis for the new reading comprehension programme. The aims of the programme were outlined so that it could be seen how all the activities serve the objectives, and all the objectives are covered. A wide range of reading comprehension activities and tasks, grouped according to the three main dimensions: graphic, syntactic and semantic and other aspects, were then described in detail.

## CHAPTER FIVE: METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

## Introduction

Chapter Three has focused on the theoretical parts of the research. This chapter deals with the practical aspects (methodology), which can be considered as a basic element in any study and a conceptual framework for understanding the problem under investigation (Cavallo, 1982, p.5).

In this chapter, the researcher will discuss in detail the research design, the exploratory study, and the experimental testing of the new reading programme, including instruments for testing respondents' reading skills and their affective response to the programme. It will also describe the sample, the pilot study, and the administration of the main study.

## Problem

Previous chapters suggested the current deficiency in teaching English as a foreign language in general, the poor achievement of female students in reading English and their resulting poor attitude towards reading. This prompted the researcher to study the problem in more depth in the light of current research and theory in the field of reading and to design a programme to improve L2 reading skills among female students in King Abdulaziz University in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah who are going to be English teachers. The new training programme outlined in chapter four emphasises skills that improve reading ability, such as speed reading, skimming and scanning skills, reading for information, identifying the functions of words, research and reference, analysing and interpreting text, and expectancy and prediction skills.

During the present study, the researcher measured students' attitudes towards teaching methods to develop reading English and their attitude towards English reading materials through an Affective Questionnaire. Also, an Achievement Reading Test was applied to examine students' reading levels before and after exposure to the programme, to assess changes in reading performance occurred.

## Study Questions

It will be recalled from Chapter One that the main objectives of this study were to develop a new reading teaching programme and to compare its impact on students' reading skills and attitudes to reading lessons, with the current programme. The research questions (see chapter one pp. 5 & 6) were formulated to guide the investigation.

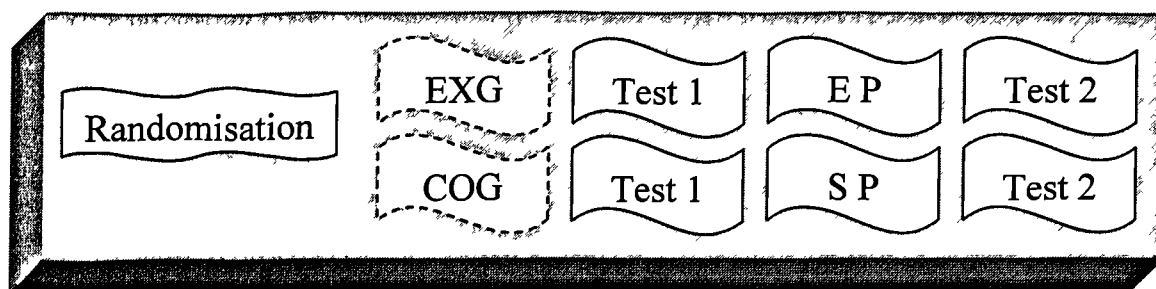
## Research Design

In view of the problem addressed by the study, it was decided to adopt an experimental research design which aimed to investigate the effect of manipulation by the researcher of the method of teaching reading to which female students at King Abdulaziz University are exposed.

The present research was intended to follow a classic (pre-test, post-test, control group) design. But because of the centralised system of education in Saudi Arabia, it was not possible for the researcher to withdraw or substitute part of the standard curriculum. Everybody has to receive the standard curriculum by law (see chapter two p.25). Therefore the best the researcher could do was to add an experimental programme outside the normal teaching hours. Accordingly, the researcher selected a design which was as close as possible to the ideal design. Comparison of figures 14 and 15, will indicate how the present study design differs from the ideal research design.



**Figure 14 The Ideal Research Design**



S P = Standard programme

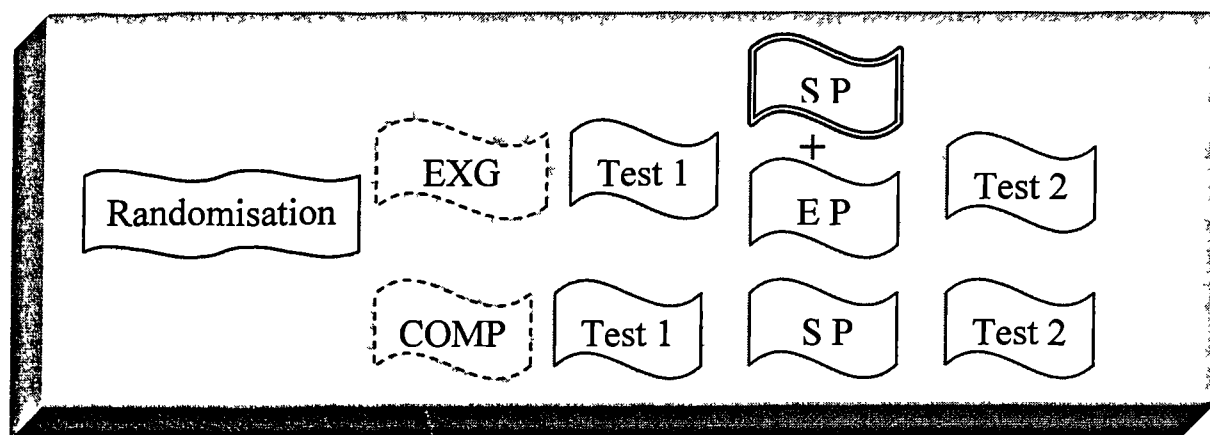
EXG= Experimental group

Test1= Achievement + Attitude under the current programme

Test2= Achievement + Attitude under the new programme

EP = Experimental Programme

COG = Control group



**Figure 15 The Design as Implemented**

S P = Standard programme

EXG= Experimental group

Test1= Achievement + Attitude under the current programme

Test2= Achievement + Attitude under the new programme

EP = Experimental Programme

COMP = Comparison group

It can be seen that as indicated in Figure 15, both groups were taught the standard programme and the experimental group received extra attention. Thus, the comparison group had one programme (the standard curriculum taught by regular class teacher) and the experimental group had two programmes, the standard curriculum, taught to the control group, and the new programme taught by the researcher. The pre-test, post-test comparison group design was chosen because this kind of research can easily compare and contrast the results obtained from the two groups. These can be

analysed in order to decide whether the manipulation of treatment had a differential effect on the subjects or not and to establish causal relationships.

Finally, the importance of using the experimental, pre-test post-test comparison group design in this study is not only to discover the effect of the new programme on developing students' reading achievement, which is the most essential feature of the experimental design since "both groups must be given the same pre-tests and post-test at the same time"(Borg and Gall, 1983, p.665), but also to permit some generalization of those results. For example, its implications may be relevant to all Saudi universities, since they have similar curricula and objectives.

At this point, the threats to validity identified by Campbell and Stanley (1963) will be reviewed with special reference to their relevance to the present study and steps taken to avoid them. The threats that have been identified are history, maturation, testing, instrumentation, regression, selection, mortality, and interaction effect (for more details about the threats to internal validity see Borg and Gall, 1983, p.664, Al-Assaf, 1995, p.309, Wolf, 1993, p.30, and Cohen and Manion, 1994, p.170). Of these, the following are examples:

1. One potential threat is maturation, which is the effect of the time factor on the physical, mental or social growth of the sample between the pre-test and the post-test. In this case the period of time between the two tests was only 8 weeks, which is not long enough for significant maturation, to occur, and to affect the dependent variable (the scores on the post-test after applying the programme).
2. Another issue considered was the instrumentation, which means the possibility that the difference between scores on the post-test and scores on the pre-test occurs not because of the new programme but because of the tests used, e.g. the

post-test being easier than the pre-test. In the present study, the researcher used the same instrument as a pre and post test, so that any difference in scores could not be attributed to the instrument used.

3. One potential threat to validity arises from selection of the sample. Although, within the total sample, the assignment to treatment was random, the sample was not totally random in the sense that volunteers were used. However, this was not a major problem in the present study because almost all the students in the relevant year group agreed to participate and 90% continued right through to the end of the teaching programme as will be described later in this chapter. Only 10 % dropped out for reasons not related to the programme (lack of time and pressure of other assignments), so the effects of volunteering were considered quite small; 90% of the group can be regarded as adequately representative of the whole group. Although those students had many assignments to submit and some of them were married and had children, had many responsibilities, the fact that 90% found time to participate in the programme can be seen as an indication of their interest.

Apart from the above three problems, the major threats to this particular programme are the following:

- \* One limitation is that in addition to the experimental programme the experimental group still had to continue with the traditional course, like the comparison group. This in some ways conflicted with the principles on which the experimental programme was based. Also to be considered is the effect of the standard curriculum. This, as indicated previously, has only one textbook, which students have in an Arabic version. This indicates how the

standard curriculum has limited effect and little potential for the development of reading in English as a second language.

- \* The standard curriculum was assessed by test related to a textbook (TT). The experimental group had a new test (NT) as a pre- post-test which was chosen to test the new materials, and to assess the standard curriculum. The new test (NT) was deliberately aimed to test only the learning which took place in the experimental programme. It was completely different from the (TT), which tested learning on the standard curriculum. Since the contents of the two tests were completely different, the procedure was not a test-retest. It was not the case that students had extra lessons in the standard curriculum. Moreover, as explained in chapter four, because of the differences in materials and methods used in the two programmes, the materials and methods used in the standard curriculum did not help students in the test. Thus, what distinguished the experimental from the comparison group was not so much hours of instruction in English as the fact that it had two programmes, which used differences of approaches, materials, and methods.
  
- \* Another potential threat to the validity of the study as implemented, is the interaction effect, which is very important in the present study. It may be argued that it cannot be known whether the improvement that students made after the programme was because of the quality of the programme or because of the extra hours of teaching. The duration of the standard programme was 4 classes each of 3 hours per week, 180 hours over an academic semester of 15 weeks. By comparison, the experimental programme occupied additionally only 2 classes each of 2 hours per week over 8 weeks, i.e. a total

of 32 hours, less than 1/5 of the standard programme's duration. So the result of the post-test was the result of an extra 32 hours of teaching. It should also be remembered that all these students had been learning reading not only in the current year but also in the previous year, so in fact both groups had a lot in practice of reading. The experimental programme, by comparison, accounted for very little extra time.

- \* Because the present teachers were not able to use the new methods and the researcher did the teaching of the experimental programme on her own. This is a limitation of the study, but it is a restriction imposed by the context.
- \* Students selected for special treatments or a special programme may perform better because they feel themselves to be special in some ways. The fact they are know that they are involved in a research project tends to increase their enthusiasm, their desire to work, and their motivation.

The design eventually adopted places limitations on the interpretation of the findings.

As part of the process of developing the experimental teaching programme and the measurement instruments for the main study, an initial exploratory study and a later pilot study were carried out. The reasons for these studies, the methods used to conduct them, and their role in shaping the main study are described in the immediately following sections.

## Section I Exploratory Study

### **Reason for conducting the Exploratory Study**

In order to prepare for the main study and develop its framework, the researcher began by collecting information and exploring problems or difficulties involved in the current reading programme. The purpose of the exploratory study was to indicate which objective(s) (language skills/ reading) needed enhancing. In designing an experimental new programme, care had to be taken to give extra activities and materials which fitted students' needs and interests. This was the reason why the questions were open, exploratory, not too directed and not specific, so as not to encourage particular types of answers. Since the answers and comments made were turned into items and questions for the main fieldwork, this would help to give the research content validity.

### **Method**

A short questionnaire was designed by the researcher, under the supervision of her supervisors, to elicit information about the students' attitudes (see Appendix 3). The main goal was to collect information in order to know how students felt about the present programme, what skills they perceived they learned well and what not so well, and what extra help they felt they needed. The questions were divided into three parts. The first part asked about students' feeling about the teaching methods, content and teaching aids used in their English course. The aim of this part was to gain understanding of what students liked and disliked about the current programme, so that efforts could be made to incorporate into the new programme elements likely to be conducive to positive student attitudes.

The second part consisted of a list of reading skills and asked students how well they thought they had learned them. This part aimed to identify what students find the most and least difficult reading skills in order to address their specific needs during the experimental programme.

The third part consisted of two open questions asking about the difficulties that students found in learning to read the English language and obtain their suggestions for the ways to overcome these difficulties.

The survey of students was carried out by a colleague of the researcher six months before the main fieldwork, with the help of 17 first and second year female students in the English department at King Abdulaziz University in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah. The test was sent by fax to a tutor in the University, who distributed it to the students.

### **Results of the Exploratory Study**

The findings obtained in this study are presented according to students' comments. Responses to the first part revealed that 13 students (76.4%) were not satisfied with the existing reading teaching methods and materials. As to the teaching aids, all students said that there were no teaching aids.

In the second part 65% of students said they had learned decoding and encoding skills quite well, and 53% of students said that they had been least successful in learning research and reference skills.

The results of the third part indicated that students had particular difficulties in learning reading English, such as difficulties in recognising the sounds of letters and pronouncing new words correctly.

These are not all the comments of the students; other comments will be discussed in the analysis chapter under the heading of qualitative data.

### **Use of the Exploratory Study Outcomes to Develop the Experimental Programme**

Getting the students to give their ideas initially helps in developing the content validity of the programme. This exploratory study was an opportunity for students to give their views and also helped the researcher to achieve a compromise by bringing two things together, i.e. to base the main study on the theory found in the literature and on the findings of the exploratory study, but at the same time to make sure that nothing of relevance to students has been overlooked.

The information and data collected from the exploratory study were valuable in developing the new programme, the Affective Questionnaire and the Reading Achievement Test. For example, the question about teaching aids was omitted from the Affective Questionnaire in the main study because all respondents in the exploratory study said there were no teaching aids. Responses to the last two questions, which asked about students' difficulties and how to overcome them, provided insights which guided the researcher's collection of suitable materials and development of activities to enhance the reading programme. For example, most students mentioned that some reading materials such as topics about football, sport or cars, were not relevant to female needs and not interesting to them. To avoid this problem for the new reading programme, materials were selected to include interesting and enjoyable topics for female students, such as slimming clubs, fashion, recipes etc. which are culturally relevant.



## Comparison of the Objectives of Reading Programme

The basis of designing a new programme for developing reading was to formulate objectives to specify what students will expect to achieve at the end of the programme. Toohey indicates the importance of the idea of objectives in designing courses for higher education: “If an education programme is to be planned and if efforts for continued improvement are to be made, it is very necessary to have some conception of the goals that are being aimed at” (Toohey, 1999, p.133).

In addition, using these objectives is considered as basic for choosing suitable material, activities and learning processes. Toohey adds, “These educational objectives become the criteria by which materials are selected, content is outlined, instructional procedures are developed and tests and examinations are prepared” (ibid, p.133).

In designing a new programme it was borne in mind that it should not conflict with the objectives of the current programme, but care had to be taken to add more activities and materials to develop and enhance reading comprehension, which only the experimental group would receive. Table 8 indicates that the same objectives were covered in both programmes, but in different ways.

**Table 8 The Objectives of the Current and Experimental Reading Programmes**

<b>The National current Programme Objectives *</b>	<b>The Experimental Programme Objectives</b>	<b>**</b>
<b>English language I</b>	Help students to recognise the shape and pronunciation of English letters and sounds, so they can easily decode what they read (mechanical reading).	<b>A</b>
<b>A. Help the students acquire the ability to read simplified English books easily and with full understanding.</b>	Enable them to distinguish different and similar sounds and to notice the sounds which rhyme when they listen and read songs and poems.	<b>A</b>
	Enable students to develop writing skill by give them the chance to produce and read their own reading materials.	<b>C</b>
	Help them to develop skimming and scanning skills.	<b>A</b>
<b>B. Train them to use the basic structures and vocabulary items correctly and fluently.</b>	Provide the students with the task of sequencing stories to enhance prediction skills.	<b>A</b>
	Train them on spelling and help them to recognise spelling rules.	<b>B</b>
	Help students to recognise the particular function of words in each sentence correctly and quickly.	<b>B</b>
<b>C. Give training both in comprehension and writing.</b>	Enable students to elicit or explore vocabulary and ideas, and organise information.	<b>B</b>
	Help students to improve analysis and interpretation of the text, of comparing and contrasting ideas and distinguishing the difference between fact, fiction, opinion, and ideas.	<b>A</b>
	Give students chance to improve their writing skill.	<b>C/D</b>
<b>English Language II</b>	Help them to develop listening skill.	<b>D</b>
	Enable them to read with recognition, fluency, comprehension and enjoyment.	<b>A</b>
	Enable them to recognise the meaning of a word through the text.	<b>A/C</b>
<b>D. Develop the students' skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.</b>	Train them to use the language to communicate correctly and effectively.	<b>D/B</b>
	Help students to develop reading speed and other reading skills through effective, lively and varied reading activities.	<b>A/D</b>
	Train them to study functional grammar.	<b>B/E</b>
	Train them to practise research skills.	
<b>E. Revise and extend the linguistic foundation.</b>		

\* Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Education, 1990

\*\* Letters in this column indicate the objective(s) of the current programme with which the new objective corresponds.

The reader can see in the above table that the new enhanced programme also includes all current objectives. The way in which the framework of the suggested programme was structured and organised was the main concern of the researcher. According to the literature review and the current situation of students and the system of the university, the researcher intended to put focus in the programme on the skills that improve reading ability. Rivers underlines that “What is needed is a carefully designed program of developmental stages, at each of which the student is trained in certain aspects of reading so that he gradually acquires sufficient skill to be able to continue on his own” (Rivers, 1968, p.221). The experimental programme was designed to involve three important aspects in each unit of teaching: the graphic, syntactic and semantic and other aspects. These three aspects were selected according to the theory found in the literature review and in order to cover a wide range of activities to introduce and practise specific reading skills (see the detailed account given in the previous chapter).

## **Research Instruments**

### **Reading Achievement Test**

The researcher was aware of the importance of selection and administration of a suitable Reading Achievement Test and that use of an existing test would facilitate comparison of the results. Therefore, the following procedures were conducted:

- The researcher began the search for a reading comprehension test by looking at test publisher catalogues and visited the S.A. Education Authority to look for suitable catalogues. Such test publishers’ catalogues, as Gronlund describes, “usually contain brief descriptions of each test, including possible uses of the test, cost, administration time, and similar information” (Gronlund, 1985, p.277).

Unfortunately, all of these tests were unsuitable for the sample of the study. A

majority were not culturally relevant to the students, while others were limited to a specific subject, for example the testing of fact reading or fiction reading. Moreover, some of them were very complicated and time-consuming to administer.

- The Cambridge Examinations (Pedley, 1989, p.73) were of interest to the researcher, but they also had problems. For example, the reading examinations did not test just reading skills but also writing skills, so would not be valid. These tests were too long for the limited time available.
- The Language Institute in the university where the researcher is studying was visited but, again nothing convenient and suitable was found.
- Finally, the selection of the achievement test of reading comprehension was based on Gronlund's definition of testing needs, "To make a proper selection, we must first identify the objectives and specific learning outcomes of our instructional program" (op. cit., p.281). The test of reading comprehension was selected from the Internet on [http://www.englishclub.net/reference/levels/test-wc\\_start.htm](http://www.englishclub.net/reference/levels/test-wc_start.htm) and is published by the English Club (see Appendix 4). This test was chosen on the basis of Gronlund's advice, cited above, and for the following features:
  1. It is a multiple choice test.
  2. It is clear and free.
  3. It has validity, as it covers appropriate competences, constructs and sub-skills for the learners.
  4. It is clear to administer and takes only a short time to answer.
  5. It is easy to correct and score.

The reading comprehension test assesses how well the students understand the English that they read. It consists of 20 multiple-choice items and students have to choose the correct answer quickly but carefully. Lindvall and Nitko state the advantages of using a multiple-choice test: “ It is generally considered to be the most useful of objective-type items. Tests using it are usually more reliable than those containing other types. Multiple-choice tests can be scored on a completely objective basis. The role that guessing plays in determining an examinee’s score is reduced when each item is provided with several alternatives. Reducing the possibility of guessing correctly increases the reliability of the test. Furthermore, multiple-choice items can be used to evaluate a greater variety of abilities than can other items. (Lindvall and Nitko, 1975, pp. 57,58) In addition, as Gronlund indicates, “it is free from some of the common shortcomings characteristic of other item types” (op.cit., p.187). Furthermore, this kind of test is popular among all teachers to check students’ understanding. Rivers underlines that multiple-choice testing is a good way to test students’ reading comprehension and the test should be based on development of reading materials. (op.cit., 1968, p.231).

Nevertheless, the researcher was aware that there are also disadvantages to multiple-choice tests and took steps to avoid them. For example, with multiple-choice items it is much easier to cheat, so the researcher made sure students’ seating was organised so they could not see each other’s answers.

### **Affective Questionnaire**

As discussed in Chapter Three, the affective factor (attitude) is considered as an important element in successful learning of a foreign language and influences general achievement in the language. Krashen, for example, found that attitude (affective variables) is the most important single factor in the development of communicative abilities in students. (Krashen, 1988, p.5)

As previously mentioned, the information and data collected from the exploratory study were valuable in developing the Affective Questionnaire. The first two questions on the Affective Questionnaire were about students' attitude towards the current programme, as regards both the methods used for the teaching reading and the reading materials themselves.

The answers and comments that students made in the exploratory study were turned into items describing the current reading programme. Each section consisted of 20 items. Section one is asked students to relate teaching methods on a scale of 1-5 as appears below.

Boring	1	2	3	4	5	Interesting.
Useless	1	2	3	4	5	Useful
Clear (comprehensible)	1	2	3	4	5	Unclear
Out-of-date	1	2	3	4	5	Modern
Varied	1	2	3	4	5	Repetitive
Relevant to my needs	1	2	3	4	5	Irrelevant to my needs
Long	1	2	3	4	5	Short
Rich explanation	1	2	3	4	5	Poor explanation
Easy	1	2	3	4	5	Difficult
Successful	1	2	3	4	5	Unsuccessful
Unfriendly	1	2	3	4	5	Friendly
Frightening	1	2	3	4	5	Non frightening
Not-helpful	1	2	3	4	5	Helpful
Embarrassing	1	2	3	4	5	not Embarrassing
Comfortable	1	2	3	4	5	Uncomfortable
Poorly-prepared	1	2	3	4	5	Well-prepared
Threatening	1	2	3	4	5	Not-threatening
Involves many things	1	2	3	4	5	Involves one thing
Unpleasant	1	2	3	4	5	Pleasant
Necessary	1	2	3	4	5	Not- necessary

Section two used the same items but applied to reading materials. Section three of the questionnaire consisted of a list of a reading skills as in the exploratory study described earlier in this chapter (see Appendix 5 for full questionnaire).

These items look like a semantic differential scale but were analysed as a Likert scale. Tuckman (1978) defines a Likert scale as “a five-point scale in which the interval between each point on the scale is assumed to be equal”.

For each item, students indicated their attitude by circling one of the numbers along the scale. The reason for the choice of this format was to present the items in a way that was student-friendly, would not confuse the respondents, would not make the questionnaire excessively long, and would not need a separate answer scale for each item. It was felt that students could be relied on to provide the intermediate positions themselves, instead of having pre-labelled intermediate positions. Although it was always the intention of the researcher to use the items as a Likert scale, in the analysis it was simpler to let students make their own decisions as to the categories between two extremes.

It should be borne in mind that these students were not young children, and had a high level of education. They were therefore expected to have the ability to discriminate appropriately in their answers. That really is an extension of what Likert did when transforming Thurstone's scales. Whereas Thurstone used judges to sort out the items, Likert allowed respondents themselves to do so. This study simply allowed the students use their own intermediate categories.

The Likert scale is commonly used because of its demonstrated high reliability compared to other scales as Oppenheim indicates "Reliability of Likert scales tends to be good and, partly because of the greater range of answers permitted to respondents, is often higher than that of corresponding Thurstone scales" (Oppenheim, 1992, p.200).

Before the instruments were used in the main study, to evaluate the outcomes of the experimental programme, they were tried out in a pilot study, described below.

## Section II Administration of the Pilot Study

The pilot study was conducted on a small sample in order to "test questionnaire and other instruments and to see whether there is any possibility that worthwhile results will be found"(Anderson, 1998, p.12). The pilot study was a final opportunity to

improve the main study results by creating new ideas, testing hypotheses and reducing the chance of error. In addition, it gave an opportunity to test the validity and the reliability of the instrument.

## **Validity**

A valid test is one that measures what it is supposed to measure. Neuman (2000) defined the term validity in the context of experimental design as “A term meaning truth that can be applied to the logical tightness of experimental design, the ability to generalize findings outside a study, the quality of measurement, and the proper use of procedures” (Neuman, p.521). Neuman divided validity into five types: content, predictive, concurrent, construct and face validity. Of these five types of validity, the researcher assessed two types of validity in this study: content and face validity. The purpose of this assessment was to make sure that the items of the study instruments were valid and relevant for the purpose of the study.

## **Content Validity**

Content validity involves comparison of test items with a defined domain of content, to ensure that all desired concepts and dimensions are included. In the present case, as indicated in the previous chapter, the results obtained from the exploratory study helped to ensure the content validity of both the programme and the research instruments. All students’ views and ideas were considered in designing the experimental programme. Also, students’ comments and answers were turned into items of the Affective Questionnaire. Items for the Reading Achievement Test were selected to be representative of the content covered during the course.



## Face Validity

This is the most basic type of validity, and means that the test is considered to be consistent and related to its intended aims.

In the previous section it was mentioned that to achieve face validity (see Table 8, p.134) the objectives of the experimental programme were designed to meet and enhance all the objectives of the current programme. Furthermore, the programme and the instruments were accepted by jurors, including the researcher's supervisor, a specialist in statistical procedures, and experts in the Arabic language. Copies of the student Affective Questionnaire (the Arabic and English versions), the Reading Achievement Test and the experimental programme were given to the women's section of the department of English in King Abdulaziz University in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah, with a full description of the study in both Arabic and English. These instruments were given to two referees, Dr. A. Jallon and Dr. E. Darwish, who were asked to comment on the Arabic language version and on the clarity of the questionnaire and they indicated their satisfaction with the study, making just a few useful comments on the phrasing in Modern Standard Arabic. The aim was to achieve content validity for both the Arabic and English versions. The researcher's supervisors gave invaluable suggestions on the structure and layout of the instruments with a view to obtaining the highest practicable values of and validity reliability.

## Reliability

Reliability is a very important characteristic of tests and scales used in educational research. Reliability can be defined as "the level of internal consistency or stability of the measuring device over time" (Borg and Gall, 1983 p.281). In the experimental field it is necessary to have reliable achievement tests to identify any

differences between the experimental and comparison groups. Reliability implies that the tests would yield similar results on replication with the same respondents. Reliability can be determined in several ways, all of which test the correlation between two sets of scores; the closer the coefficient is to 1.00, the more reliable is the test.

In the present study, the reliability of all instruments was tested by using Cronbach's Coefficient. This method is commonly used and is considered satisfactory by many specialists in educational measurement. It is an appropriate method for multiple choice tests or Likert-type scales (Borg and Gall, 1983, p. 285). Moreover, the results are easy to interpret.

### **Method**

The sample of the pilot study was 37 female students in the second year, levels three and four, in the English major at King Abdulaziz University in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah. The pilot study was conducted two months before the main study, to ensure the clarity, validity and reliability of two instruments Affective Questionnaire and the Achievement Reading Test. The Affective Questionnaire Arabic version was distributed to the pilot sample and they were asked to complete it, to obtain their opinions of their current reading programme. Then the Reading Achievement Test was administered to measure the students' level of attainment in reading.

### **Results of the Pilot Study**

The results, obtained from the pilot study showed high reliability of the Affective Questionnaire as follows:

For the first 20 items, which concern students' attitude toward teaching reading methods, the value of alpha was **Alpha = .85**.

For the second 20 items, which asked about students' attitude toward reading materials the value of alpha was also acceptable, **Alpha = .87**.

Looking at the two sets of values, it is clear that the two sets of items are highly correlated. In other words, students have a general feeling about the current programme of English teaching; their views about teaching methods and their views about materials are not completely separate: a result that agrees exactly with expectation.

The results of the Reading Achievement Test in the pilot study showed an acceptable value of  $\alpha = .80$ . It showed a range of reading levels as indicated in the following table:

**Table 9 The Result of the Reading Comprehension Test in the Pilot Study**

Scores	Frequency	Percent
15.00	1	2.7
20.00	1	2.7
30.00	2	5.4
35.00	6	16.2
40.00	2	5.4
45.00	1	2.7
50.00	2	5.4
55.00	2	5.4
60.00	7	18.9
65.00	4	10.8
70.00	2	5.4
75.00	3	8.1
80.00	2	5.4
90.00	2	5.4
Total	37	100.0
Mean	54.7297	

This distribution of scores, because of the wide range and approximately normal distribution around the mean, suggests that the test is capable of distinguishing between students' ability levels. Although short, it is suitable for average levels of individual

differences (gradually increasing in difficulty). There is no discrimination against poor or slow writers. It was therefore retained without alteration for the main study.

### Section III Administration of the Main Study

The following table gives a detailed account of how the data were collected as a research methodology protocol:

Date	Action	Purpose	Consideration
22nd August	Phoned the head of English department	To obtain provisional permission for the field work	To speed the initial administrative procedures
1 <sup>st</sup> September	Wrote letters and provided documents to both the head of the university and the head of English department	To get permission to administer the instruments and teach the new reading programme	The researcher gained permission (see Appendix 6)
11th September	Visit the head of English department	Gain introductions to other teachers in the department	This procedure would facilitate gaining cooperation from teachers and, hence access to students
13 <sup>th</sup> September, morning	Met students of teacher A*	Enlist volunteers for the study	Date and time were fixed to let the researcher meet students who were willing to take part in the study
13 <sup>th</sup> September, afternoon	Met students of teacher B*	Enlist volunteers for the study	The same date and time as for students of teacher A were fixed to let the researcher meet all students who were willing to take part in the study
18 <sup>th</sup> September	Met students of teachers A and B to explain the aim of the research	To establish a pool from which to sort cases into two groups (the experimental and the comparison group) using a random process	To ensure as far as possible the equivalence of the two groups
18 <sup>th</sup> September	100 students were asked to write their names then count off then draw the first fifty names were the comparison group and the second 50 names were the experimental group.	to get a random sample	Numbers from 1 to 50 became the comparison group and 51 to 100 the experimental group
20 <sup>th</sup> September	Administered the pre reading achievement test plus the affective questionnaire on attitude towards the current programme to both groups. Students were asked to write their names to distinguish the two groups	To know students' reading achievement before teaching the experimental programme and to know their attitudes towards the current programme.	
22 <sup>nd</sup> September	Met the head of English department	To arrange a suitable room for teaching the experimental programme	Want a room in the department so students would associate what they were doing with the learning of reading English language

Date	Action	Purpose	Consideration
25 <sup>th</sup> September	Begin teaching the experimental programme and for further 8 weeks		
17 <sup>th</sup> November	The end of the experimental programme. Administer the post reading achievement test plus the affective questionnaire on attitude towards the experimental programme to experimental group	To determine students' reading achievement after teaching the experimental programme and to determine their attitudes towards the experimental programme	instruments should be applied as soon as possible after the end of the programme
20 <sup>th</sup> November	Administer the post reading achievement test plus the affective questionnaire on attitude towards the current programme to comparison group		The tests should be given at the first possible opportunity of meeting the comparison group students at the end of the programme, so that the time lapse between tests was the same for both groups

\* Names of teacher

### Obtaining Permission

It is normal in conducting any study in any educational institute to obtain permission (Appendix 6). Thus, the first step was to get permission quickly at the beginning of the term, before the students were busy doing their essays and tests. As the researcher obtained the permission, the researcher visited the female section of the university administration. They referred the documents to the English department staff, who were very cooperative with the researcher. They allowed the researcher to meet the students and talk to them and provided a list of names and other information.

### Timetable

The researcher arranged a suitable time for sessions with the agreement of the volunteer students. After discussion with them, meetings were held twice a week (Saturday and Monday). Each meeting was 2 hours long. The teaching of the reading programme started on Saturday 25th September and continued until 17th November, i.e. 8 weeks, teaching 8 units.

### Room

The experimental treatment of the reading programme was based on the communicative approach, which required a location suitable for pair and group work.

Furthermore, the experimental treatment had to be under control, as Verma and Mallick indicate: “Experiments in education can be conducted either in a classroom situation (a natural setting) or in a laboratory. In a laboratory, situation factors or variables can be controlled adequately”(Op.cit, p, 95). These requirements posed some difficulty in finding a suitable venue for teaching the reading programme, because all the rooms in the university contain immovable separate seats, which makes it difficult for the students to sit and do group work. Eventually, however, permission was obtained to use a big room with eight large tables and moveable chairs, located in the Family Economics department.

### **Constitution of the sample**

In order to accomplish the goal of the experimental design, it was necessary to divide the participants into two groups by using random assignment. Randomisation or random assignment means the equivalence and similarity between the experimental and comparison groups in characteristic factors of the subjects before the initiation of treatment. Cohen and Manion note that when using randomisation of the subjects, “if the groups are made so equivalent, then any so-called ‘clouding’ effects should be present in both groups”(Cohen and Manion, 1994, p.168). Moreover, randomisation is considered as one of two main characteristics of experimental studies as Wolf points out. “The main characteristics of experimental studies are: (1) active manipulation of treatment variables by the researcher, and (2) the use of random assignment of units (usually students) to each type of treatment” (Wolf, 1993, p.23).

The aim of using this procedure, as Neuman mentions, was “to increase confidence that the groups do not differ in a systematic way” (Neuman, 2000, p.225). In the present study, as indicated in the previous table, the researcher visited the English department after obtaining permission and met the teachers, to whom she was

introduced by the head of department. The two teachers A & B were the only teachers of the second year, so there was no question of 'selection' by the head of department. All students in both classes were invited to participate in the study, 100 of the total of 115 agreed to do so.

At a later meeting, the researcher met and took the names of the volunteer students (100 students), who were to form the experimental and comparison groups. In this meeting, the researcher gave participants an idea of the aim of the present study and its implications, but they did not know that they were going to be divided into two groups. Then the researcher randomly assigned the participants by asking each student to write her name then randomly gave each name a number from 1 to 100. Numbers from 1 to 50 became the comparison group and 51 to 100 became the experimental group. The researcher used this kind of random process because it is easy and quick and in Saudi society it is difficult to use tossing a coin or throwing a dice because of their connotations with gambling.

Both groups were asked to fill in the Affective Questionnaire towards the current programme. They were given instructions about how to complete the questionnaire and told that the responses would be confidential and used for the purposes of the research only. Also, both groups were asked to answer the pre reading achievement test. After students had finished the tests, they were asked to write their names to distinguish the two groups. Then, arrangements were made for the use of a room for teaching the experimental programme, and the time table organized, as will be seen later in this chapter. In practice, by the time the researcher started teaching the programme, ten of the students who had originally expressed willingness to take part dropped out, due to pressure of other commitments. Consequently, the empirical work

was conducted with an experimental group of 48 students and a comparison group of 42 students.

As a result of the random selection of the groups described above, the following are the characteristics of the groups:

- Both groups were similar in size.
- Both groups were in the same level of the university (level three) in the second year in the English department.
- Both groups were all female and in the same age range, between 19-20 years old.
- All the students had the same experience, in that all of them had studied English as a foreign language for 7 years.

### Procedure for the Main Study

#### Pre-tests (Affective Questionnaire and Reading Achievement Test for both Comparison & Experimental Groups)

It was previously explained how the Reading Achievement Test was selected and the Affective Questionnaire was designed. This section deals with the administration of the two tests.

#### **The Affective Questionnaire**

##### **Affective pre-test for both groups (experimental and comparison group)**

It was necessary for the researcher to explain to the students how to fill in the questionnaire in order to ensure that all students understood. For example, students were asked about their opinion of the teaching methods of reading in the first part of the questionnaire; the second part of the questionnaire used the same list of descriptions but



students were asked about their opinion of the reading materials, so the researcher emphasised that the same list of adjectives would be used but this time about another topic, the reading materials. However, the researcher took care not to influence the respondents. The time taken to complete the Affective Questionnaire was 15 –20 minutes. After the students finished the questionnaire they were asked to write their names, to enable the researcher to match their answers with their reading scores, though they were assured that their answers would be treated in strict confidence.

### **The Reading Achievement Test**

After students finished the Affective Questionnaire (Arabic version), they were asked to do the Achievement Test of reading comprehension in order to measure their reading level. When conducting the reading test the researcher took into consideration Gronlund's comments on the five tasks of the administration of the test: "(1) motivate the pupils to do their best, (2) follow directions strictly, (3) keep time accurately, (4) record any significant events that might influence test scores, and (5) collect the test materials promptly when the test has ended" (Gronlund, 1981, p.287). The students were motivated to do their best to gain the scores that they were capable of achieving. Most Saudi students do not take tests seriously unless the marks will affect their overall grade. For that reason they were told that the scores of this test would be considered by their original teachers. The reading test took 15-20 minutes, though this was not a fixed limit. The important thing that was emphasised was that students should do the test quickly but at the same time carefully.

In the Reading Achievement pre-test, it was possible to distinguish between the two groups, experimental and comparison, because the students were asked to write their names.

## **Delivery of the Programme**

For the teaching of the programme, the students of the experimental group were divided into 8 sub-groups in order to work with small group and to be sure to have examples of poor and good readers in each group according to original total number of 48 students. Each sub-group contained 6 students, working together. The researcher classified them according their reading level on the Reading Achievement pre-test, such that each group contained two students at each level of reading, high, middle and low, as follows:

- Students who got from 70-100 marks were in the high level.
- Students who got from 69-50 marks were in the middle level.
- Students who got 49 and under were in the low level.

The reasons for classifying the students into groups were as follows:

- It facilitated use of the communicative approach in teaching reading, which is based on using various kinds of activities and tasks in pair work and group work.
- It took into consideration the individual differences between students.
- It motivated fairness in rewarding and encouragement, because some activities were presented as competitions and the researcher felt able to ask which group would finish the first, the second...etc, knowing that all groups were equal in the spread of ability they contained.
- Students' attitude and interest toward reading activities would be balanced in the groups.
- Students sometimes learn from each other.

Post tests (Reading Achievement Test for both comparison & experimental groups & Affective Questionnaire just for experimental group)

After completion of the programme, both groups of students were tested again for reading comprehension level and the experimental group took the Affective Questionnaire on their attitude towards the new programme including the teaching methods and the materials used in the programme. The reliability for this Affective Questionnaire was high; the teaching methods section scored  $\alpha = .89$  while the section on new materials used in the programme scored  $\alpha = .93$ .

As regards the Achievement reading comprehension test, a T-test was used to see if there was any statistically significant difference in scores on the pre-test and post-test. The paired samples form of the T-test was used to examine the difference in scores for individual students. For this purpose the significance level was set at **0 .05** (see Chapter 6 for more details of the analyses).

## Conclusion

This chapter has described the methodology of the empirical work carried out in this study. It started by considering the problem of the research, study hypotheses and the purposes that the study was designed to fulfil. The research instruments included an Affective Questionnaire exploring students' attitude toward the current and the new programmes, and a reading comprehension test which indicated students' level of reading. The exploratory study, pilot study, the sample of the study and the all the procedures for the main study were discussed. The following chapter will present the statistical analysis of the obtained data.

## **CHAPTER SIX:: DATA ANALYSIS**

## The Affective Questionnaire Scale

### Descriptive Statistics of Current Programme (Both Groups, EXG & COMP)

In this section the students' attitude toward the current programme is analysed. The first part of the affective questionnaire was the attitude scale, which was given to the respondents as two units. The first unit examined students' attitude toward the current teaching reading methods (T1) in 20 items while the second unit investigated their attitude toward the current reading materials (M1) in 20 items. Descriptive analysis of responses using the sum and the mean is presented in Table 10.

**Table 10 T-test Analysis of Attitudes to the Current Teaching Methods**

Attitude items	*COMP			**EXG			T test
	N	Sum	Mean	N	Sum	Mean	
Boring or Interesting	42	104	2.48	48	111	2.31	
Useless or Useful	42	141	3.36	48	144	3.00	
Unclear or Clear	42	145	3.45	48	154	3.21	
Out-of-date or Modern	42	124	2.95	48	130	2.71	
Repetitive or Varied	42	130	3.10	48	132	2.75	
Irrelevant to my needs or Relevant to my needs	42	97	2.31	48	100	2.08	
Long or Short	42	106	2.52	48	141	2.94	
Poor explanation or Rich explanation	42	106	2.52	48	118	2.46	
Difficult or Easy	42	118	2.81	48	144	3.00	
Unsuccessful or Successful	42	113	2.69	48	131	2.73	
Unfriendly or Friendly	42	98	2.33	48	120	2.50	
Frightening or Non frightening	42	149	3.55	48	170	3.54	
Not-helpful or Helpful	42	118	2.81	48	139	2.90	
Embarrassing or Not Embarrassing	42	162	3.86	48	164	3.42	
Uncomfortable or Comfortable	42	123	2.93	48	126	2.63	
Poorly-prepared or Well-prepared	42	122	2.90	48	137	2.85	
Threatening or Not-threatening	42	166	3.95	48	196	4.08	
Involves one thing or Involves many things	42	110	2.62	48	181	3.77	
Unpleasant or Pleasant	42	108	2.57	48	112	2.33	
Not- necessary or necessary	42	147	3.50	48	160	3.33	
Total		2487	59.21		2699	56.23	
T value							0.29
T test Sig. (2-tailed)							0.78
*COMP = Comparison group				**EXG= Experimental group			

In this table, N. indicates the sample size of the two groups. There were 42 students in the comparison group and 48 in the experimental group. The sum is the total scores assigned to the item. This is divided by the number of students in the sample, to give the mean score for the item. The column totals (in bold) give the sum and mean for the whole instrument. Those values can be compared with the ‘ideal’ sum and mean, i.e. the values that would have resulted if each participant had given each attribute (item) the most positive rating.

For the comparison group, the ideal sum is the maximum value of each item (5) times the sample size (42) times the number of items (20)

*The total of the highest values  $\times$  N. of attitude items =  $\frac{\text{Sum}}{\text{Sample Size}} = \text{Mean}$*

$$X_i f_i \times f_i = \frac{\sum X_i}{N} = \bar{X}$$

$$210 \times 20 = \frac{4200}{42} = 100$$

For the experimental group, the ideal sum and mean were calculated using the above formula, as follows:

$$240 \times 20 = \frac{4800}{48} = 100$$

Looking at the responses for the comparison group, is clear that the total sum was 2487, out of an ideal (maximum) value of 4200 and the total mean was 59.21, from the ideal total of 100, which is considered low.

The experimental group also had negative attitudes towards the current teaching methods T1. As indicated in the previous table, the total sum of the T1 was 2699, out of an ideal (maximum) value of 4800 and the total mean was 56.22, out of an ideal total of 100, which again were disappointingly low. The T-test confirms that there was no significant difference between the two groups; the t value was 0.29 and the probability

value is  $p = 0.78$ , which reveals that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups; both had negative feelings about the current reading teaching methods.

The same formula was used to calculate the total means and sums for the current reading materials, M1, which are presented in the following table for both groups, the comparison group (N=42) and the experimental group (N=48).

**Table 11 T-test Analysis of Attitudes to the Current Reading Material**

Attitude items	COMP			EXG			T test
	N	Sum	Mean	N	Sum	Mean	
Boring or Interesting	42	113	2.69	48	112	2.33	
Useless or Useful	42	132	3.14	48	145	3.02	
Unclear or Clear	42	143	3.40	48	159	3.31	
Out-of-date or Modern	42	132	3.14	48	138	2.88	
Repetitive or Varied	42	130	3.10	48	135	2.81	
Irrelevant to my needs or Relevant to my needs	42	96	2.29	48	98	2.04	
Long or Short	42	94	2.24	48	113	2.35	
Poor explanation or Rich explanation	42	96	2.29	48	118	2.46	
Difficult or Easy	42	118	2.81	48	143	2.98	
Unsuccessful or Successful	42	124	2.95	48	121	2.52	
Unfriendly or Friendly	42	106	2.52	48	104	2.17	
Frightening or Non frightening	42	151	3.60	48	173	3.60	
Not-helpful or Helpful	42	128	3.05	48	128	2.67	
Embarrassing or Not Embarrassing	42	163	3.88	48	174	3.63	
Uncomfortable or Comfortable	42	122	2.90	48	125	2.60	
Poorly-prepared or Well-prepared	42	125	2.98	48	141	2.94	
Threatening or Not-threatening	42	165	3.93	48	204	4.25	
Involves one thing or Involves many things	42	120	2.86	48	112	2.33	
Unpleasant or Pleasant	42	103	2.45	48	122	2.54	
Not- necessary or necessary	42	142	3.38	48	150	3.13	
Total		2503	59.60		2715	56.56	
T value							.98
T test Sig. (2-tailed)							.34

The result in Table 11 indicates that students' attitude toward the reading materials is similar to their attitude to the teaching methods, for both groups. M1 was also considered low because the total sum for the experimental group was 2715 from

the ideal value of 4800 and the total mean was 56.56 from the ideal total of 100. Moreover, M1 is also considered low for the comparison group because the total sum was 2503 from the ideal value of 4200 and the total mean was 59.60 from the ideal total of 100. Comparing the means of the comparison (59.) and the experimental groups (56.) and the t-value of .98 and the probability value of  $p = 0.34$ , it is found that there was no significant difference between the two groups.

These low values indicate that students in the experimental and in the comparison group did not, on the whole, have very positive feelings towards the current methods or materials; in other words, they were dissatisfied with both materials and teaching methods, which means that both groups had similarly negative feeling about the current reading methods and materials. This result confirms that the randomization by which participants were assigned to one or other group produced groups which, at the start of the experimental period, were similar in their attitudes towards learning reading in English. The descriptive frequencies in the following tables confirm this result.

**Table 12 Students' Attitude Towards the Current Teaching Reading Methods (T1 Boring or Interesting)**

Attitude Scale	Frequency	Valid Percent
Very Boring	14	15.6
Boring	38	42.2
Not Boring and Not Interesting	30	33.3
Interesting	5	5.6
Very Interesting	3	3.3
Total	90	100.0



**Table 13 Students' Attitude Towards the Current Reading Materials (M1 Boring or Interesting)**

Attitude Scale	Frequency	Valid Percent
Very Boring	28	31.1
Boring	18	20.0
Not Boring and Not Interesting	22	24.4
Interesting	15	16.7
Very Interesting	7	7.8
Total	90	100.0

It is clear from Table 12 that more than half of the students saw the current methods of teaching reading as boring; 14 (15.6%) saw them as Very Boring and 38 students (42.2%) saw them as Boring while only 5 students (5.6%) saw them as Interesting and 3 students (3.3%) saw them as Very Interesting.

Moreover, the students' attitude towards the current reading materials was the same as their attitude toward the current teaching methods. As indicated in Table 13, 28 students (31.1%) saw them as Very Boring and 18 (20.0%) saw them as Boring while only 15 students (16.7%) saw them as Interesting and 7 students (7.8%) saw them as Very Interesting. This discussion has focused on one particular item (Boring & Interesting for both M1 and T1), but a similar discussion applies to the other items as will be seen in the following table.

**Table 14 Students' Attitude Towards the Current Methods of Teaching Reading**

T1 Useless or Useful		Very Useless	Useless	Not Useful Not Useless	Useful	Very Useful	Total
		6 (6.7%)	17 (18.9%)	31 (34.4%)	28 (31.1%)	8 (8.9%)	90 (100.0%)
T1 Unclear or Clear		Very Unclear	Unclear	Not Clear Not Unclear	Clear	Very Clear	Total
		8 (8.9%)	16 (17.8%)	33 (36.7%)	25 (27.8%)	8 (8.9%)	90 (100.0%)
T1 Out-of-date or Modern	Missing A.	Very Out-of-date	Out-of-date	Not Out-of-date Not Modern	Modern	Very Modern	Total
	1 (1.1 %)	9 (10.0%)	31 (34.4%)	21 (23.3%)	20 (22.2%)	8 (8.9%)	90 (100.0%)
T1 Repetitive or Varied		Very Repetitive	Repetitive	Not Varied Not Repetitive	Varied	Very Varied	Total
		8 (8.9%)	18 (20.0%)	23 (25.6%)	32 (35.6%)	9 (10.0%)	90 (100.0%)
T1 Irrelevant to my needs or Relevant to my needs		Very Irrelevant to my needs	Irrelevant to my needs	Not Relevant to my needs Not Irrelevant to my needs	Relevant to my needs	Very Relevant to my needs	Total
		19 (21.1%)	11 (12.2%)	20 (22.2%)	16 (17.8%)	24 (26.7%)	90 (100.0%)
T1 Long or Short		Very Long	Long	Not Short Not Long	Short	Very Short	Total
		9 (10.0%)	23 (25.6%)	40 (44.4%)	12 (13.3%)	6 (6.7%)	90 (100.0%)
T1 Poor explanation or Rich explanation		Very Poor explanation	Poor explanation	Not Rich explanation Not Poor explanation	Rich explanation	Very Rich explanation	Total
		15 (16.7%)	15 (16.7%)	19 (21.1%)	31 (34.4%)	10 (11.1%)	90 (100.0%)
T1 Difficult or Easy		Very Difficult	Difficult	Not Easy Not Difficult	Easy	Very Easy	Total
		8 (8.9%)	16 (17.8%)	45 (50.0%)	18 (20.0%)	3 (3.3%)	90 (100.0%)
T1 Unsuccessful or Successful		Very Unsuccessful	Unsuccessful	Not Unsuccessful Not Successful	Successful	Very Successful	Total
		12 (13.3%)	28 (31.1%)	27 (30.0%)	20 (22.2%)	3 (3.3%)	90 (100.0%)
T1 Unfriendly or Friendly		Very Unfriendly	Unfriendly	Not Unfriendly Not Friendly	Friendly	Very Friendly	Total
		15 (16.7%)	20 (22.2%)	23 (25.6%)	18 (20.0%)	14 (15.6%)	90 (100.0%)
T1 Frightening or Non frightening		Very Frightening	Frightening	Not Frightening Not Non Frightening	Non Frightening	Very Non Frightening	Total
		5 (5.6%)	14 (15.6%)	21 (23.3%)	27 (30.0%)	23 (25.6)	90 (100.0%)
T1 Helpful or Not -helpful	Missing A.	Very Not-helpful	Not-helpful	Not-helpful Not Not-helpful	Helpful	Very Helpful	Total
	1 (1.1 %)	9 (10.0%)	24 (26.7%)	22 (24.4%)	26 (28.9%)	8 (8.9%)	90 (100.0%)
T1 Embarrassing or Not Embarrassing		Very Embarrassing	Embarrassing	Neither Embarrassing Nor Non Embarrassing	Not Embarrassing	Very Not Embarrassing	Total
		7 (7.8%)	15 (16.7%)	19 (21.1%)	13 (14.4%)	36 (40.0%)	90 (100.0%)
T1 Uncomfortable or Comfortable		Very Uncomfortable	Uncomfortable	Not Comfortable Not Uncomfortable	Comfortable	Very Comfortable	Total
		6 (6.7%)	21 (23.3%)	26 (28.9%)	26 (28.9%)	11 (12.2%)	90 (100.0%)
T1 Poorly-prepared or Well-prepared	Missing A.	Very Poorly-prepared	Poorly-prepared	Not Well-prepared Not Poorly-prepared	Well-prepared	Very Well-prepared	Total
	1 (1.1 %)	8 (8.9%)	17 (18.9%)	35 (38.9%)	19 (21.1%)	10 (11.1%)	90 (100.0%)
T1 Threatening or Not-threatening	Missing A.	Very Threatening	Threatening	Not Threatening Not Not-threatening	Not-threatening	Very Not-threatening	Total
	2 (2.2%)	2 (2.2%)	10 (11.1%)	11 (12.2%)	18 (20.0%)	47 (52.2%)	90 (100.0%)
T1 Involves one thing or Involves many things	Missing A.	Very Involves one thing	Involves one thing	Not Involves many things Not Involves one thing	Involves many things	Very Involves many things	Total
	2 (2.2%)	10 (11.1%)	12 (13.3%)	25 (27.8%)	23 (25.6)	18 (20.0%)	90 (100.0%)
T1 Unpleasant or Pleasant		Very Unpleasant	Unpleasant	Not Unpleasant Not Pleasant	Pleasant	Very Pleasant	Total
		25 (27.8%)	19 (21.1%)	28 (31.1%)	17 (18.9%)	1 (1.1%)	90 (100.0%)
T1 Not- necessary or necessary		Very Not- necessary	Not- necessary	Necessary Not Necessary	Necessary	Very Necessary	Total
		8 (8.9%)	15 (16.7%)	23 (25.6%)	20 (22.2%)	24 (26.7%)	90 (100.0%)

The above table presents descriptive data on the feelings expressed by students about the current methods of teaching reading. It is clear from the table that if we exclude the middle of the scale, almost half of the students saw the current methods of teaching reading as out-of-date; 9 (10.0%) saw them as Very Out-of-date and 31 students (34.4%) saw them as Out-of-date, while only 20 students (22.2%) saw them as Modern and 8 students (8.9%) saw them as Very Modern. Also they found the present methods of teaching reading unsuccessful on the whole; 12 (13.3%) of students saw them as very Unsuccessful and 28 students (31.1%) saw them as Unsuccessful, whereas only 20 students (22.2%) saw them as Successful and 3 students (3.3%) saw them as Very Successful. Another item which similarly reveals students' dissatisfaction with the methods of teaching reading is that more than the half of the respondents found the teaching methods Unpleasant, 25 (27.8%) saw them as Very Unpleasant and 19 (21.1%) as Unpleasant. In contrast, only 17 (18.9%) saw them as Pleasant and only one student (1.1%) saw them as Very Pleasant.

Moreover, the students' attitude towards the current reading materials was the same as their attitude toward the current teaching methods. As indicated in Table 15, 13 students (14.4%) saw them as Very Out-of-date and 22 (24.4%) saw them as Out-of-date while only 16 students (17.8%) saw them as Modern and 16 students (17.8%) saw them as Very Modern. Also, they found the present reading materials unsuccessful; 19 students (21.1%) saw them as very Unsuccessful and 17 students (18.9%) saw them as Unsuccessful, whereas only 20 students (22.2%) saw them as Successful and 5 students (5.6%) saw them as Very Successful. A further indication of the negative feeling towards the reading materials is that 18 (20.0%) saw them as Very Unpleasant and 22 respondents (24.4%) rated them as Unpleasant, while only 9 (10.0%) saw them as Pleasant and only 2 students (2.2%) saw them as Very Pleasant.

**Table 15 Students' Attitude Towards the Current Teaching Reading Methods**

M1 Useless or Useful		Very Useless 10 (11.1%)	Useless 22 (24.4%)	Not Useful Not Useless 26 (28.9%)	Useful 17 (18.9%)	Very Useful 15 (16.7%)	Total 90 (100.0%)
M1 Unclear or Clear		Very Unclear 10 (11.1%)	Unclear 22 (24.4%)	Not Clear Not Unclear 27 (30.0%)	Clear 18 (20.0%)	Very Clear 13 (14.4%)	Total 90 (100.0%)
M1 Out-of-date or Modern		Very Out-of-date 13 (14.4%)	Out-of-date 22 (24.4%)	Not Out-of-date Not Modern 23 (25.6%)	Modern 16 (17.8%)	Very Modern 16 (17.8%)	Total 90 (100.0%)
M1 Repetitive or Varied		Very Repetitive 14 (15.6%)	Repetitive 17 (18.9%)	Not Varied Not Repetitive 20 (22.2%)	Varied 20 (22.2%)	Very Varied 19 (21.1%)	Total 90 (100.0%)
M1 Irrelevant to my needs or Relevant to my needs		Very Irrelevant to my needs 17 (18.9%)	Irrelevant to my needs 13 (14.4%)	Not Relevant to my needs Not Irrelevant to my needs 22 (24.4%)	Relevant to my needs 13 (14.4%)	Very Relevant to my needs 25 (27.8%)	Total 90 (100.0%)
M1 Long or Short		Very Long 15 (16.7%)	Long 9 (10.0%)	Not Short Not Long 39 (43.3%)	Short 16 (17.8%)	Very Short 11 (12.2%)	Total 90 (100.0%)
M1 Poor explanation or Rich explanation		Very Poor explanation 14 (15.6%)	Poor explanation 21 (23.3%)	Not Rich explanation Not Poor explanation 23 (25.6%)	Rich explanation 19 (21.1%)	Very Rich explanation 13 (14.4%)	Total 90 (100.0%)
M1 Difficult or Easy		Very Difficult 10 (11.1%)	Difficult 18 (20.0%)	Not Easy Not Difficult 35 (38.9%)	Easy 23 (25.6%)	Very Easy 4 (4.4%)	Total 90 (100.0%)
M1 Unsuccessful or Successful		Very Unsuccessful 19 (21.1%)	Unsuccessful 17 (18.9%)	Not Unsuccessful Not Successful 29 (32.2%)	Successful 20 (22.2%)	Very Successful 5 (5.6%)	Total 90 (100.0%)
M1 Unfriendly or Friendly		Very Unfriendly 9 (10.0%)	Unfriendly 17 (18.9%)	Not Unfriendly Not Friendly 20 (22.2%)	Friendly 33 (36.7%)	Very Friendly 11 (12.2%)	Total 90 (100.0%)
M1 Frightening or Non frightening		Very Frightening 7 (7.8%)	Frightening 8 (8.9%)	Not Frightening Not Non Frightening 24 (26.7%)	Non Frightening 26 (28.9%)	Very Non Frightening 25 (27.8%)	Total 90 (100.0%)
Not-helpful or Helpful	Missing A. 1 (1.1 %)	Very Not-helpful 10(11.1%)	Not-helpful 17 (18.9%)	Not-helpful Not Not-helpful 24 (26.7%)	Helpful 24 (26.7%)	Very Helpful 14 (15.6%)	Total 90 (100.0%)
M1 Embarrassing or Not Embarrassing		Very Embarrassing 5 (5.6%)	Embarrassing 10 (11.1%)	Neither Embarrassing Nor Non Embarrassing 25 (27.8%)	Not Embarrassing 13 (14.4%)	Very Not Embarrassing 37 (41.1%)	Total 90 (100.0%)
M1 Uncomfortable or Comfortable	Missing A. 2 (2.2%)	Very Uncomfortable 9 (10.0%)	Uncomfortable 20 (22.2%)	Not Comfortable Not Uncomfortable 24 (26.7%)	Comfortable 23 (25.6%)	Very Comfortable 12 (13.3%)	Total 90 (100.0%)
M1 Poorly-prepared or Well-prepared		Very Poorly-prepared 13 (14.4%)	Poorly-prepared 19 (21.1%)	Not Well-prepared Not Poorly-prepared 25 (27.8%)	Well-prepared 19 (21.1%)	Very Well-prepared 14 (15.6%)	Total 90 (100.0%)
M1 Threatening or Not-threatening	Missing A. 3 (3.3%)	Very Threatening 4 (4.4%)	Threatening 3 (3.3%)	Not Threatening Not Not-threatening 12 (13.3%)	Not-threatening 17 (18.9%)	Very Not-threatening 51 (56.7%)	Total 90 (100.0%)
M1 Involves one thing or Involves many things		Very Involves one thing 8 (8.9%)	Involves one thing 21 (23.3%)	Not Involves many things Not Involves one thing 20 (22.2%)	Involves many things 19 (21.1%)	Very Involves many things 22 (24.4%)	Total 90 (100.0%)
M1 Unpleasant or Pleasant		Very Unpleasant 18 (20.0%)	Unpleasant 22 (24.4%)	Not Unpleasant Not Pleasant 39 (43.3%)	Pleasant 9 (10.0%)	Very Pleasant 2 (2.2%)	Total 90 (100.0%)
M1 Not- necessary or necessary		Very Not- necessary 8 (8.9%)	Not- necessary 15 (16.7%)	Necessary Not Necessary 29 (32.2%)	Necessary 23 (25.6%)	Very Necessary 15 (16.7%)	Total 90 (100.0%)

## Reliability

As previously reported, the attitude scale was given to respondents as two units, The first unit examined students' attitude toward the current teaching reading methods (T1) in 20 items while the second unit investigated their attitude toward the current reading materials (M1) in 20 items. For the purpose of reliability testing, however, the scale was analysed as one unit (40 items).

**Table 16 Summary of Alpha Reliability of Pilot Study of Attitude Scale**

Pilot Study	Alpha Reliability	Sample Size
Both units	.9072	37
T1 first unit	.8465	37
M1 second unit	.8655	37

This result of the pilot study was considered to provide a strong foundation for the main study. Analysis of responses to the main study confirmed the impression obtained in the pilot of high reliability, homogeneity and identity, except for one item. The result of the factor analysis which examined the intercorrelation between the items, revealed that students saw the current teaching methods T1 and the current reading materials (M1) as virtually the same thing for the reasons discussed in chapter 4, dealing with the current programme. This result prompted the researcher to analyse the attitude scale in the main study, for the purpose of reliability testing, as one unit of 40 items describing students' attitude toward the current programme. It showed high reliability, Alpha = .8843. The reliability testing confirmed the finding from factor analysis that one item only had a low correlation (Item T1 clear and unclear  $R = .1184$ ). When this item was omitted, alpha reliability for the remaining 39 items was higher (.8856) but not significantly so, than for the original 40 items (see Table 17).

**Table 17 Summary of Alpha Reliability of Main Study of Attitude Scale**

Number of items	Alpha Reliability	Sample Size
40	.8843	90
39	.8856	90

It can be concluded from the reliability testing that first, the total reliability value of the attitude scale in respect of the current programme was very high for both the pilot and main studies. Second, all 40 items could be used as a single scale and would provide a good basis for students' evaluation of the teaching methods or the reading materials, except for one item which is not homogeneous with them.

#### **Factor Analysis**

Because the two groups, the experimental and comparison groups, were drawn from the same college and were asked about their current programme which is the same for all students, it was appropriate to analyse the attitude scale responses for all students together. Factor analysis was applied to the 40 items of the attitude scale to show the patterns of correlations within the set of variables.

The relationships between the items in the attitude scale were also measured and analysed by using factor analysis. Borg and Gall clarify that "Factor Analysis performs the function of data reduction by grouping variables that are moderately or highly correlated with one another"(Borg and Gall, 1983, p.613). The first procedure in applying factor analysis to the attitude scale in the present study was to recode the data to put the items in the correct order; in other words, value 1 indicates a negative standard of differentiation such as USELESS and value 5 indicates the positive adjective USEFUL. The SPSS Computer programme produced the following tables.

### Table 18 Correlation Matrices of T1 and M1

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40				
1 T1 Boring or Interesting		0.05	0.08	0.37	0.23	0.2	0.13	-0.01	0.13	0.34	-0.02	0.25	0.18	0.13	0.08	0.18	0.08	-0.03	0.38	0.25	0.32	0.11	0.10	0.38	0.17	0.25	0.07	-0.04	0.18	0.35	-0.08	0.25	0.21	0.25	0.08	0.15	0.17	-0.03	0.44	0.23	0.43			
2 T1 Useless or Useful			0.16	0.19	0.13	0.17	-0.03	0.13	0.18	0.05	0.23	0.16	0.40	0.01	0.25	0.28	0.08	0.14	-0.01	0.02	0.10	0.31	0.25	-0.02	0.19	0.04	-0.03	0.04	0.11	0.13	0.10	0.13	0.34	-0.01	0.26	0.45	0.05	0.10	0.06	0.00	0.40			
3 T1 Unclear or Clear				0.08	0.10	-0.07	-0.01	0.00	0.00	-0.07	0.03	-0.08	0.15	0.10	0.28	-0.02	0.12	-0.06	0.08	-0.02	0.08	0.25	0.28	0.03	0.04	-0.12	-0.17	0.04	-0.12	-0.10	0.02	0.10	0.09	0.25	0.01	0.06	0.02	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.40			
4 T1 Out-of-date or Modern					-0.10	0.07	0.21	0.20	0.20	0.28	0.07	0.05	0.17	0.09	0.12	0.05	0.20	-0.04	0.32	-0.03	0.12	0.04	0.21	0.45	0.02	0.01	0.19	0.13	0.31	0.12	0.15	0.07	0.02	0.05	0.14	0.01	-0.01	0.21	0.00	0.01	0.40			
5 T1 Repetitive or Varied						0.18	-0.07	-0.05	-0.03	-0.12	0.29	0.14	0.18	0.13	0.15	0.24	0.14	0.11	0.17	-0.07	-0.07	0.17	-0.17	-0.22	0.34	0.09	0.05	-0.03	-0.02	-0.02	0.07	0.10	0.29	0.18	0.06	0.16	0.04	0.21	0.05	0.12	0.05	0.40		
6 T1 Irrelevant to my needs or Relevant to my needs							0.19	0.47	0.21	-0.03	0.42	0.11	0.44	-0.05	0.28	0.32	0.14	0.54	-0.02	0.12	-0.03	0.18	-0.04	0.02	0.22	0.80	0.44	0.47	0.20	0.01	0.52	0.17	0.34	0.04	0.31	0.28	0.17	0.52	0.10	-0.15	0.40			
7 T1 Long or Short								0.10	0.17	0.18	0.17	0.09	0.25	0.09	0.21	0.04	0.22	0.18	0.20	0.08	-0.06	0.15	0.20	0.19	0.17	0.29	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.06	0.28	0.29	0.21	0.13	0.29	0.12	0.30	0.17	0.21	0.07	0.21	0.40		
8 T1 Poor explanation or Rich explanation									0.19	0.15	0.32	0.06	0.31	-0.06	0.28	0.21	0.20	0.43	0.03	0.07	0.01	-0.01	-0.08	0.06	0.03	0.39	0.39	0.44	0.11	0.07	0.39	0.16	0.14	0.04	0.18	0.12	0.15	0.23	0.22	-0.02	0.21	0.40		
9 T1 Difficult or Easy										0.11	0.28	0.08	0.30	0.03	0.40	0.23	0.08	0.03	0.17	0.09	0.02	0.18	0.28	0.08	0.13	0.23	0.18	0.23	0.80	0.03	0.21	0.34	0.31	0.11	0.28	0.02	0.22	0.09	0.11	0.28	0.22	0.09	0.11	0.40
10 T1 Unsuccessful or Successful											0.01	0.18	-0.02	0.14	0.08	-0.01	0.14	-0.05	0.45	0.27	0.23	0.16	0.08	0.26	0.01	0.04	0.00	0.15	0.22	0.34	0.02	0.32	0.14	0.06	0.07	0.12	0.23	0.13	0.25	0.10	0.31	0.25	0.10	0.40
11 T1 Unfriendly or Friendly												0.08	0.40	0.03	0.48	0.37	0.08	0.40	-0.02	-0.02	-0.09	0.23	0.00	-0.18	0.27	0.43	0.48	0.47	0.17	-0.16	0.53	0.02	0.35	0.00	0.39	0.38	0.12	0.41	0.10	-0.14	0.06	0.00	0.40	
12 T1 Frightening or Non frightening													0.28	0.36	0.07	0.20	0.45	0.04	0.03	0.19	0.28	0.10	-0.13	-0.03	0.08	0.17	0.12	0.02	0.40	0.23	0.08	0.52	0.28	0.35	0.04	0.15	0.36	0.14	0.19	0.14	0.15	0.15	0.15	
13 T1 Not-helpful or Helpful														0.03	0.36	0.42	0.26	0.24	-0.02	0.07	-0.04	0.20	0.18	0.00	0.22	0.25	0.31	0.30	0.20	0.04	0.31	0.28	0.43	0.03	0.27	0.38	0.26	0.17	0.18	-0.16	0.28	0.27	0.18	
14 T1 Embarrassing or Not Embarrassing															0.05	0.03	0.29	-0.16	0.14	-0.08	0.13	0.23	-0.13	0.08	0.12	0.08	-0.17	0.03	0.12	0.23	-0.07	0.30	0.08	0.64	-0.01	0.08	0.29	-0.10	0.15	-0.12	0.15	-0.12	0.15	
15 T1 Uncomfortable or Comfortable																0.32	0.07	0.06	0.11	0.01	-0.05	0.15	0.04	0.00	0.11	0.28	0.26	0.38	0.22	-0.02	0.28	0.12	0.28	0.06	0.44	0.28	0.21	0.12	0.15	-0.10	0.15	-0.10	0.15	
16 T1 Poorly-prepared or Well-prepared																	-0.07	0.37	0.17	0.08	0.10	0.23	0.18	0.08	0.14	0.25	0.16	0.28	0.15	0.07	0.22	0.20	0.44	-0.06	0.28	0.40	0.12	0.38	0.26	-0.04	0.40			
17 T1 Threatening or Not-threatening																		-0.04	0.19	0.15	0.11	0.08	-0.18	0.01	0.05	0.08	0.19	0.14	0.11	0.22	0.08	0.40	0.14	0.30	-0.11	0.03	0.42	-0.02	0.01	0.04	0.40			
18 T1 Involves one thing or Involves many things																		-0.15	0.25	0.33	0.02	0.04	0.26	0.15	-0.05	-0.06	0.08	0.33	0.36	0.08	0.33	0.00	0.10	0.10	0.23	-0.08	0.41	0.20	0.20	-0.08	0.41			
19 T1 Unpleasant or Pleasant																			0.25	0.33	0.02	0.04	0.26	0.15	-0.05	-0.06	0.08	0.33	0.36	0.08	0.33	0.00	0.10	0.10	0.23	-0.08	0.41	0.20	0.20	-0.08	0.41			
20 T1 Not- necessary or necessary																				0.21	0.02	0.13	0.13	-0.07	-0.05	0.08	-0.04	0.11	0.21	-0.04	0.15	0.08	0.08	0.07	0.04	0.08	-0.08	0.31	0.22	0.41				
21 M1 Boring or interesting																					0.13	0.05	0.33	0.22	-0.02	-0.08	0.03	0.10	0.59	0.09	0.34	0.06	0.26	0.03	0.11	0.18	0.04	0.55	0.48	0.55				
22 M1 Useless or Useful																						0.48	-0.04	0.44	0.35	0.01	0.28	0.81	0.08	0.28	0.11	0.81	0.05	0.58	0.17	0.48	0.11	0.47	0.48	0.11				
23 M1 Unclear or clear																							0.17	0.22	0.04	0.02	0.09	0.37	-0.07	0.08	-0.08	0.27	-0.17	0.16	0.39	0.24	-0.04	0.17	0.11	0.00	0.01			
24 M1 Out-of-date or Modern																								-0.10	-0.08	-0.06	0.01	0.07	0.44	-0.12	0.23	-0.09	0.09	-0.08	-0.02	0.13	-0.11	0.27	0.07	0.07				
25 M1 Repetitive or Varied																									0.28	0.14	0.16	0.35	0.22	0.38	0.16	0.44	0.16	0.27	0.27	0.20	0.38	0.19	0.14	0.16				
26 M1 Irrelevant to my needs or Relevant to my needs																										0.51	0.38	0.32	-0.03	0.52	0.11	0.29	0.01	0.35	0.15	0.07	0.28	0.18	-0.01	0.01				
27 M1 Long or Short																											0.37	-0.06	0.55	0.28	0.28	-0.01	0.43	0.33	0.16	0.07	0.28	0.18	-0.01	0.01				
28 M1 Poor explanation or Rich explanation																												0.16	0.32	0.25	0.48	0.17	0.48	0.08	0.36	-0.08	0.36	0.18	0.22	0.28				
29 M1 Difficult or Easy																													0.00	0.48	0.03	0.41	0.05	0.48	0.03	0.41	0.05	0.48	0.03	0.41				
30 M1 Unsuccessful or Successful																														0.14	0.43	-0.07	0.40	0.40	0.16	0.54	0.23	-0.01	0.01	0.01				
31 M1 Unfriendly or Friendly																															0.32	0.41	0.12	0.15	0.59	0.12	0.29	0.13	0.13	0.13				
32 M1 Frightening or Non frightening																																0.02	0.56	0.49	0.32	0.58	0.25	-0.08	0.25	-0.08				
33 M1 Not-helpful or Helpful																																0.02	0.56	0.49	0.32	0.58	0.25	-0.08	0.25	-0.08				
34 M1 Embarrassing or Not Embarrassing																																0.02	0.56	0.49	0.32	0.58	0.25	-0.08	0.25	-0.08				
35 M1 Uncomfortable or Comfortable																																0.02	0.56	0.49	0.32	0.58	0.25	-0.08	0.25	-0.08				
36 M1 Poorly-prepared or Well-prepared																																0.02	0.56	0.49	0.32	0.58	0.25	-0.08	0.25	-0.08				
37 M1 Threatening or Not-threatening																																0.02	0.56	0.49	0.32	0.58	0.25	-0.08	0.25	-0.08				
38 M1 Involves one thing or Involves many things																																0.02	0.56	0.49	0.32	0.58	0.25	-0.08	0.25	-0.08				
39 M1 Unpleasant or Pleasant																																0.02	0.56	0.49	0.32	0.58	0.25	-0.08	0.25	-0.08				
40 M1 Not- necessary or Useless																																0.02	0.56	0.49	0.32	0.58	0.25	-0.08	0.25	-0.08				

Table 18 shows a correlation matrix which lists all 40 items in rows and the same 40 items in the columns, and the intercorrelations between the items. In order to find out the correlation between any two items, it is necessary to find one in the row and the other in the column and identify the point where the lines cross, to read the value. The correlation matrix shows that most of the 40 items have strong relationships. For example the correlation between variable 6 (T1 irrelevant to my needs & relevant to my needs) in teaching reading methods and variable 26 (M1 irrelevant to my needs & relevant to my needs) in reading materials is  $r = .60$  which is a high value. Another example of a high correlation between the variables, is variable 18 (T1 involve one thing & involve many things) in teaching reading methods and variable 38 (M1 involve one thing & involve many things) in reading materials, where the correlation is  $r = .67$ . This result confirms the researcher's impression that the students saw no difference between the methods of teaching reading and the reading materials. This result suggests that students are not well motivated towards the current reading programme, since they make the same judgement about essentially two different aspects, (T1) teaching reading methods and (M1) reading materials. Judging by their responses, students really look at the T1 and M1 scales as one thing, identical and indistinguishable; nothing different. Referring to the literature review, in order to use the communicative approach, emphasis must be given to the use of a variety of teaching methods and techniques, with good use of authentic materials, as previously indicated, and this was the basis of the experimental programme.

The remainder of the factor analysis will present more details about correlation between the variables.



**Table 19 Component Matrix of T1 and M1**

Component Matrix		Component	
		1	2
1.	T1 Boring or Interesting	0.28	<b>0.53</b>
2.	T1 Useless & Useful	<b>0.36</b>	-0.03
3.	T1 Unclear & Clear	0.12	0.06
4.	T1 Out-of-date & Modern	0.26	<b>0.33</b>
5.	T1 Repetitive & Varied	0.23	-0.02
6.	T1 Irrelevant to my needs & Relevant to my needs	<b>0.62</b>	-0.28
7.	T1 Long & Short	<b>0.44</b>	0.07
8.	T1 Poor explanation & Rich explanation	<b>0.45</b>	-0.12
9.	T1 Difficult & Easy	<b>0.46</b>	0.05
10.	T1 Unsuccessful & Successful	0.23	<b>0.49</b>
11.	T1 Unfriendly & Friendly	<b>0.59</b>	-0.36
12.	T1 Frightening & Non frightening	<b>0.34</b>	0.36
13.	T1 Not-helpful & Helpful	<b>0.59</b>	-0.10
14.	T1 Embarrassing & Not Embarrassing	0.15	<b>0.42</b>
15.	T1 Uncomfortable & Comfortable	<b>0.50</b>	-0.11
16.	T1 Poorly-prepared & Well-prepared	<b>0.52</b>	-0.09
17.	T1 Threatening & Not-threatening	0.26	<b>0.34</b>
18.	T1 Involves one thing & Involves many things	<b>0.52</b>	<b>-0.39</b>
19.	T1 Unpleasant & Pleasant	0.26	<b>0.57</b>
20.	T1 Not- necessary & necessary	0.14	<b>0.32</b>
21.	M1 Boring & Interesting	0.22	<b>0.59</b>
22.	M1 Useless & Useful	<b>0.55</b>	-0.09
23.	M1 Unclear & clear	0.27	-0.06
24.	M1 Out-of-date & Modern	0.08	<b>0.47</b>
25.	M1 Repetitive & Varied	<b>0.49</b>	0.03
26.	M1 Irrelevant to my needs & Relevant to my needs	<b>0.68</b>	<b>-0.30</b>
27.	M1 Long & Short	<b>0.51</b>	-0.23
28.	M1 Poor explanation & Rich explanation	<b>0.62</b>	-0.22
29.	M1 Difficult & Easy	<b>0.59</b>	0.14
30.	M1 Unsuccessful & Successful	0.22	<b>0.74</b>
31.	M1 Unfriendly & Friendly	<b>0.66</b>	-0.30
32.	M1 Frightening & Non frightening	<b>0.47</b>	<b>0.52</b>
33.	M1 Not-helpful & Helpful	<b>0.74</b>	-0.08
34.	M1 Embarrassing & Not Embarrassing	0.18	<b>0.57</b>
35.	M1 Uncomfortable & Comfortable	<b>0.66</b>	-0.22
36.	M1 Poorly-prepared & Well-prepared	<b>0.59</b>	-0.08
37.	M1 Threatening & Not-threatening	<b>0.44</b>	<b>0.38</b>
38.	M1 Involves one thing & Involves many things	<b>0.63</b>	<b>-0.41</b>
39.	M1 Unpleasant & Pleasant	<b>0.45</b>	<b>0.49</b>
40.	M1 Not- necessary & & necessary	0.04	<b>0.52</b>

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

A 2 components extracted.

Table 19 presents the factor loadings of the 40 items expressing students' attitude toward T1 and M1 of the current programme on two factors. Bold font numbers indicate the higher item loadings. By looking at Factor1 which presents the variables which are most related to each other, it appears that the majority of the variables have high values in the scale, for example items 33 M1 Not-helpful & Helpful  $r = .74$  and item 26 M1 Irrelevant to my needs & Relevant to my needs  $r = .68$ . In fact it is common

to ignore values of less than 0.3 or 0.4 and accept high values. The lowest value in factor 1 is item 3 T1 Unclear & Clear  $r = 0.12$  and also, referring back to the correlation matrix, this item did not correlate with any other variable. This result indicates that all the other items are correlated with the whole set of items, except for this one. Omitting this item will leave a cohesive single scale with high reliability, as shown earlier in this chapter. Furthermore, by examining the high values in the previous factors the two factors could be classified as follows: factor one indicates *the attitude items* such as Irrelevant to my needs & Relevant to my needs, Uncomfortable & Comfortable, Frightening & Non frightening, Unfriendly & Friendly. Factor two indicates *the factual items* such as Out-of-date & Modern; Unsuccessful & Successful; Involves one thing & Involves many things. Neither factor is comprised predominantly of materials nor of methods.

## Summary

The outcomes of the previous analysis can be summarised in two main points:

The first point is the attitude of students toward T1 and M1 were negative, as revealed by the descriptive statistics. Not only were their views negative, but also they had equal views of T1 and M1. The second point, confirmed by the factor analysis, is that students failed to distinguish between materials and methods, which gives an even more discouraging picture of their response to the current programme.

## Experimental Programme (EXG Only)

### **Descriptive Statistics of Experimental Programme (EXG Only)**

In this section, the students' attitude toward the Experimental programme is analysed. The first part of the post affective questionnaire was the attitude scale, which was given to the Experimental group only as two units. The first unit examined

students' attitude toward the Experimental teaching reading methods (T2) in 20 items while the second unit investigated their attitude toward the Experimental reading materials (M2) in 20 items. Descriptive analysis using the sum and the mean are presented in Table 20

**Table 20 Descriptive Analysis of the Experimental Reading Programme**

Experimental Programme					
Attitude items	N	T2		M2	
		Sum	Mean	Sum	Mean
Boring or Interesting	48	190.00	3.9583	192.00	4.0000
Useless or Useful	48	199.00	4.1458	204.00	4.2500
Unclear or Clear	48	203.00	4.2292	206.00	4.2917
Out-of-date or Modern	48	218.00	4.5417	213.00	4.4375
Repetitive or Varied	48	211.00	4.3958	210.00	4.3750
Irrelevant to my needs or Relevant to my needs	48	169.00	3.5208	174.00	3.6250
Long or Short	48	147.00	3.0625	141.00	2.9375
Poor explanation or Rich explanation	48	163.00	3.3958	158.00	3.2917
Difficult or Easy	48	195.00	4.0625	196.00	4.0833
Unsuccessful or Successful	48	202.00	4.2083	205.00	4.2708
Unfriendly or Friendly	48	212.00	4.4167	201.00	4.1875
Frightening or Non frightening	48	224.00	4.6667	212.00	4.4167
Not-helpful or Helpful	48	201.00	4.1875	203.00	4.2292
Embarrassing or Not Embarrassing	48	219.00	4.5625	218.00	4.5417
Uncomfortable or Comfortable	48	200.00	4.1667	199.00	4.1458
Poorly-prepared or Well-prepared	48	216.00	4.5000	208.00	4.3333
Threatening or Not-threatening	48	219.00	4.5625	219.00	4.5625
Involves one thing or Involves many things	48	194.00	4.0417	188.00	3.9167
Unpleasant or Pleasant	48	186.00	3.8750	189.00	3.9375
Not- necessary or necessary	48	194.00	4.0417	197.00	4.1042
Total	48	3962	82.5417	3933	81.9376

This table shows that the responses of the 48 students who were in the experimental group achieved high mean scores and high sums in both the T2 and M2, based on the following formula:

The total of the highest values  $\times N$ . of attitude items =  $\frac{\text{Sum}}{\text{Sample Size}} = \text{Mean}$

$$X_i f_i \times f_i = \frac{\sum X_i}{N} = \bar{X}$$

$$240 \times 20 = \frac{4800}{48} = 100$$

According to T2, it is clear that the total sum was 3962 from the ideal value of 4800 and the total mean was 82.5 from the ideal total of 100, which is considered encouragingly high. Moreover, M2 is also considered significantly high because the total sum was 3933 from the ideal value of 4800 and the total mean was 81.9 from the ideal total of 100. Although the T2 values were slightly bigger than those for M2, still, both are considered high, which reveals that student have positive ideas about the experimental programme, whether in teaching methods or in materials. For example, the first item (Boring & Interesting in T2 and M2) revealed that the majority of students found the experimental programme interesting. The descriptive frequencies in the following tables confirm this result.

**Table 21 Students' Attitude Towards the Experimental Teaching Reading Methods (T2 Boring or Interesting)**

Attitude Scale	Frequency	Valid Percent
Very Boring	0	0.0
Boring	2	4.2
Not Boring and Not Interesting	13	27.1
Interesting	18	37.5
Very Interesting	15	31.3
Total	48	100.0

**Table 22 Students' Attitude Towards the Experimental Reading Materials (M2 Boring or Interesting)**

Attitude Scale	Frequency	Valid Percent
Very Boring	1	2.1
Boring	4	8.3
Not Boring and Not Interesting	8	16.7
Interesting	16	33.3
Very Interesting	19	39.6
Total	48	100.0

It is clear from Table 21 that most of the students saw the experimental methods of teaching reading as Interesting; 15 (31.3%) saw them as Very Interesting and 18 students (37.5%) saw them as Interesting, while only 2 students (4.2%) saw them as Boring and no one saw them as Very Boring. The students' attitude towards the experimental reading materials was as high as their attitude toward the experimental teaching methods. As indicated in Table 22, 19 students (39.6%) saw them as Very Interesting and 16 (33.3%) saw them as Interesting, while only 4 students (8.3%) saw them as Boring and only one student (2.1%) saw them as Very Boring. In fact, the statistical analysis of all responses to the attitude scale indicated that students had highly motivated feelings about the experimental programme of reading, both in teaching methods and in reading materials.

### **Reliability**

As factor analysis of the experimental programme indicated high intercorrelation between the variables, the reliability testing of this scale also indicated high reliability. The attitude scale was given to the experimental group as two units, as mentioned earlier. The first unit, which measured T2, obtained a high alpha reliability value = .8931. The second unit, which measured M2, had a higher alpha reliability = .9282 (see Table 23)

**Table 23 Summary of Alpha Reliability of the Experimental Group of Attitude Scale**

Attitude scale	Number of items	Alpha Reliability	Sample Size
*T2	20	.8931	48
*M2	20	.9282	48

\*T2: the experimental teaching reading methods

\*M2: the experimental reading materials

There is no significant improvement by omitting any item; it would not result in a significantly higher value, so there is no benefit in omitting any item. It can be summarised that both units of the attitude scale obtained very high reliability values. This means that the scale is homogeneous and cohesive, and represents a single scale. The outcome of the factor analysis below confirms this result.

### Factor Analysis

Earlier in this chapter, factor analysis was used to test the correlation between items which represented students' attitude towards the current reading programme. This section will deal with the experimental programme (experimental group only). It is necessary to be aware of the small size of the experimental group, which contained only 48 students. A larger sample is preferable for factor analysis. Moreover, the post affective questionnaire was given to the experimental group only, to determine the students' attitude toward the experimental teaching methods (T2) in 20 items while the second unit determined their attitude toward the experimental reading materials (M2 in 20 items. Both of the attitude scales were examined using factor analysis in two ways. The first was to analyse responses for the two units together (i.e.T2 plus M2) while the second way was to analyse the units separately as discussed below.

The first method of analysing the attitude scale in relation to the experimental programme combining the two units together, T2 plus M2, produced Table 24.

**Table 24 Component Matrix of T2 and M2**

Component Matrix	Component	
	1.00	2.00
T2 Boring or Interesting	<b>0.66</b>	-0.16
T2 Useless & Useful	<b>0.59</b>	-0.03
T2 Unclear & Clear	<b>0.60</b>	-0.22
T2 Out-of-date & Modern	<b>0.52</b>	-0.16
T2 Repetitive & Varied	0.28	0.10
T2 Irrelevant to my needs & Relevant to my needs	<b>0.63</b>	-0.22
T2 Long & Short	<b>0.56</b>	0.07
T2 Poor explanation & Rich explanation	0.38	-0.03
T2 Difficult & Easy	0.44	0.22
T2 Unsuccessful & Successful	<b>0.57</b>	-0.27
T2 Unfriendly & Friendly	<b>0.60</b>	0.11
T2 Frightening & Non frightening	<b>0.63</b>	-0.03
T2 Not-helpful & Helpful	<b>0.77</b>	-0.33
T2 Embarrassing & Not Embarrassing	0.46	0.35
T2 Uncomfortable & Comfortable	<b>0.66</b>	-0.22
T2 Poorly-prepared & Well-prepared	0.49	0.26
T2 Threatening & Not-threatening	0.49	-0.06
T2 Involves one thing & Involves many things	<b>0.60</b>	-0.28
T2 Unpleasant & Pleasant	0.45	0.03
T2 Not- necessary & necessary	<b>0.56</b>	-0.49
M2 Boring & Interesting	<b>0.80</b>	-0.02
M2 Useless & Useful	<b>0.66</b>	<b>-0.54</b>
M2 Unclear & clear	<b>0.65</b>	0.19
M2 Out-of-date & Modern	0.47	-0.25
M2 Repetitive & Varied	<b>0.55</b>	-0.15
M2 Irrelevant to my needs & Relevant to my needs	<b>0.61</b>	-0.24
M2 Long & Short	<b>0.58</b>	0.20
M2 Poor explanation & Rich explanation	<b>0.52</b>	0.23
M2 Difficult & Easy	<b>0.57</b>	<b>0.50</b>
M2 Unsuccessful & Successful	<b>0.79</b>	-0.21
M2 Unfriendly & Friendly	<b>0.69</b>	0.23
M2 Frightening & Non frightening	<b>0.72</b>	0.35
M2 Not-helpful & Helpful	<b>0.75</b>	0.02
M2 Embarrassing & Not Embarrassing	<b>0.53</b>	<b>0.62</b>
M2 Uncomfortable & Comfortable	<b>0.68</b>	0.38
M2 Poorly-prepared & Well-prepared	0.51	<b>0.57</b>
M2 Threatening & Not-threatening	<b>0.68</b>	0.41
M2 Involves one thing & Involves many things	<b>0.65</b>	-0.21
M2 Unpleasant & Pleasant	0.44	0.03
M2 Not- necessary & & necessary	<b>0.75</b>	-0.29

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

A 2 components extracted

The above table presents the factor loadings of the 40 items expressing students' attitude toward T2 and M2 of the experimental programme on two factors. Bold font numbers indicate the higher item loadings. Earlier in this chapter it was mentioned that

it is common to ignore values of less than 0.3 or 0.4 and accept high values. It appears the majority of the variables have high values in factor1 which represents the variables which are most related to each other. For example item 21 M2 Boring & Interesting  $r = .80$  and item 1 T2 Boring or Interesting  $r = .66$  both have good correlations but item 21 has a higher correlation than item 1. This indicates that students were able to discriminate between the teaching methods T2 and the materials M2. Consequently, further analysis was needed to examine each unit alone, as will be discussed below.

When responses to the experimental programme were analysed for each unit separately, the output of factor analysis for the teaching methods (unit one) shown in Table 25, revealed that 34.6 percent of variance is accounted for by the first factor and 9.0 percent by the second factor and the rest of the percentages can be ignored because they are so small. In fact, since the first factor is so much bigger than the second one (four times the size), it is really a one factor structure.

**Table 25 Total Variance Explained of T2**

Initial Eigenvalues				Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.915	34.573	34.573	6.915	<b>34.573</b>	34.573
2	1.811	9.053	43.626	1.811	<b>9.053</b>	43.626
3	1.533	7.666	51.292			
4	1.365	6.825	58.118			
5	1.126	5.631	63.749			
6	1.054	5.270	69.019			
7	.891	4.457	73.476			
8	.790	3.951	77.427			
9	.737	3.686	81.114			
10	.724	3.620	84.734			
11	.624	3.122	87.856			
12	.486	2.432	90.288			
13	.418	2.090	92.378			
14	.365	1.827	94.205			
15	.311	1.555	95.760			
16	.241	1.204	96.964			
17	.212	1.061	98.025			
18	.181	.907	98.932			
19	.113	.563	99.495			
20	.101	.505	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.



In Table 26, the highest scores were given by two items, 13 & 15. A range of items to do with methods of teaching reading obtained high scores; these are items 1,2,3,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,14,17,18,19 and 20 which showed high intercorrelations and have high loadings on Factor 1. These items have the underlying dimension that all of them deal with *attitudes to techniques of teaching reading*. Moreover, two items, 16 and 5, have high loadings on Factor 2. These state *factually the techniques of teaching reading*. Item 4 shows the same values in both factors, so it was ignored.

**Table 26 Component Matrixes of T2**

	Component	
	Factor 1	Factor 2
T2 Boring or Interesting	<b>0.67</b>	-0.02
T2 Useless or Useful	<b>0.65</b>	-0.21
T2 Unclear or Clear	<b>0.62</b>	-0.45
T2 Out-of-date or Modern	0.50	0.50
T2 Repetitive or Varied	0.31	<b>0.61</b>
T2 Irrelevant to my needs or Relevant to my needs	<b>0.66</b>	0.10
T2 Long or Short	<b>0.59</b>	0.04
T2 Poor explanation or Rich explanation	<b>0.44</b>	-0.28
T2 Difficult or Easy	<b>0.47</b>	-0.11
T2 Unsuccessful or Successful	<b>0.60</b>	-0.34
T2 Unfriendly or Friendly	<b>0.59</b>	0.22
T2 Frightening or Non frightening	<b>0.64</b>	0.19
T2 Not-helpful or Helpful	<b>0.83</b>	0.00
T2 Embarrassing or Not Embarrassing	<b>0.48</b>	0.43
T2 Uncomfortable or Comfortable	<b>0.75</b>	-0.26
T2 Poorly-prepared or Well-prepared	0.47	<b>0.53</b>
T2 Threatening or Not-threatening	<b>0.57</b>	0.05
T2 Involves one thing or Involves many things	<b>0.65</b>	-0.22
T2 Unpleasant or Pleasant	<b>0.47</b>	0.02
T2 Not- necessary or necessary	<b>0.56</b>	-0.24

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

A 2 components extracted.

The second unit of the attitude scale described students' attitude toward the experimental reading materials (M2) in 20 items. The output of factor analysis, shown in Table 27, revealed that 43.7 percent of variance is accounted for by the first factor

and 11.4 percent by the second factor, while the remaining of percentages negligible in size. The fact that the first factor was so much bigger than the second one (four times as big) that it is really a one-factor structure. The second is so much smaller than the first, that it can be ignored as well. Again, the main result is that a one-factor structure was found.

**Table 27 Total Variance Explained of M2**

Initial Eigenvalues				Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	8.741	43.704	43.704	8.741	<b>43.704</b>	43.704
2	2.281	11.406	55.110	2.281	<b>11.406</b>	55.110
3	1.302	6.512	61.621			
4	1.194	5.969	67.590			
5	.983	4.914	72.504			
6	.878	4.391	76.895			
7	.704	3.519	80.415			
8	.657	3.287	83.702			
9	.600	2.999	86.701			
10	.512	2.561	89.262			
11	.451	2.253	91.515			
12	.360	1.802	93.317			
13	.291	1.453	94.770			
14	.285	1.423	96.193			
15	.226	1.130	97.323			
16	.166	.829	98.152			
17	.144	.718	98.869			
18	.104	.520	99.390			
19	6.672E-02	.334	99.723			
20	5.536E-02	.277	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

By examining the component matrix in Table 28 it can be seen that the highest score was given by the first variables and there are strong relationships between the other variables such as items 1,3,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18, 19 and 20, which have high loadings on Factor 1. These items have the underlying dimension that all of them deal with attitudes towards authentic reading materials. Two items only, 2 and 4,

have high loadings on Factor 2. These concern *the factual aspect of authentic reading materials*.

**Table 28 Component Matrix of M2**

Component Matrix	Component	
	Factor 1	Factor 2
M2 Boring or Interesting	<b>0.80</b>	0.14
M2 Useless or Useful	0.58	<b>0.64</b>
M2 Unclear or clear	<b>0.72</b>	-0.24
M2 Out-of-date or Modern	0.45	<b>0.56</b>
M2 Repetitive or Varied	<b>0.51</b>	0.39
M2 Irrelevant to my needs or Relevant to my needs	<b>0.63</b>	0.28
M2 Long or Short	<b>0.60</b>	-0.05
M2 Poor explanation or Rich explanation	<b>0.53</b>	-0.21
M2 Difficult or Easy	<b>0.62</b>	-0.52
M2 Unsuccessful or Successful	<b>0.72</b>	0.36
M2 Unfriendly or Friendly	<b>0.75</b>	-0.09
M2 Frightening or Non frightening	<b>0.78</b>	-0.17
M2 Not-helpful or Helpful	<b>0.77</b>	0.07
M2 Embarrassing or Not Embarrassing	<b>0.61</b>	-0.46
M2 Uncomfortable or Comfortable	<b>0.74</b>	-0.33
M2 Poorly-prepared or Well-prepared	<b>0.62</b>	-0.37
M2 Threatening or Not-threatening	<b>0.76</b>	-0.33
M2 Involves one thing or Involves many things	<b>0.62</b>	0.20
M2 Unpleasant or Pleasant	<b>0.50</b>	0.02
M2 Not- necessary or necessary	<b>0.76</b>	0.39

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

A 2 components extracted.

It can be concluded from factor analysis that the experimental group had high motivation toward the experimental programme, in that they could differentiate in their judgement between two different things, the teaching methods T2 and the reading materials M2 used in the experimental programme. The experimental group looked at the T2 and M2 as different things, varied and interesting. Moreover, the reliability testing of the experimental attitude scale emphasised this result.

## Comparison of Results

Although caution must be exercised in comparing the results of the affective questionnaire in respect of the current and experimental programmes, because of differences in sample size, it is interesting to note that two distinctly different patterns emerged. In the case of the Current Programme, high intercorrelations were found between the teaching methods and materials items, suggesting that students did not discriminate between teaching methods and the materials used in teaching reading. Responses in respect of the Experimental questionnaire, in contrast, showed good discrimination between T2 and M2. This difference in structure can be taken as evidence of greater understanding of the distinction between the experimental programme and the current programme.

## The Reading Achievement Test

The descriptive analysis in this section presents the evaluation of students' results in the reading achievement tests. It discusses the descriptive analysis of the test with regard to reliability testing and the correlations of cross tabulation. Then, comparison of the results using t-test is reported, to find whether there were significant differences in reading comprehension gains between the experimental and comparison groups.

### **Descriptive Statistics of the Reading Achievement Test**

The test of achievement reading was administered twice, in this study, as a pre-test and post-test for both the experimental and comparison groups. At the beginning of the Experimental Reading Programme (ERP), a pre-test was given to both groups (EXG and COMP). Then, a reading comprehension programme was presented to the EXG only, alongside the current programme. The COMP was taught with the traditional

method using the normal textbooks. At the end of the reading comprehension programme (ERP), students in both groups were given the test as post-test. The results information in Table 29 shows a comparison of participants' scores on the pre-reading achievement test.

**Table 29 Reading Comprehension Pre-test Scores, Frequency and Percentages of Comparison and Experimental Groups**

Scores	COMP		EXG	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
25.00	1	2.4	1	2.1
30.00	2	4.8	1	2.1
35.00	2	4.8	4	8.3
40.00	5	11.9	4	8.3
45.00	2	4.8	2	4.2
50.00	5	11.9	5	10.4
55.00	4	9.5	6	12.5
60.00	4	9.5	6	12.5
65.00	5	11.9	8	16.7
70.00	6	14.3	5	10.4
75.00	4	9.5	3	6.3
80.00	1	2.4	-	-
85.00	1	2.4	-	-
90.00	-	-	3	6.3
Total	42	100.0	48	100.0

It revealed that most students in both groups showed a low or intermediate level of proficiency in English reading comprehension. Students classed at the low level, i.e. scoring between 25 and 50, numbered 17 in each group. At the intermediate level, with scores of 55-75, there were 23 students in the COMP and 28 in the EXG. Only 2 students in the COMP and 3 in the EXG were at the advanced level, with scores of 80-90. These results show that both groups were similar in score distribution and were approximately equal, bearing in mind that they were not equal in number, since the

comparison group contained 42 students, while the experimental group contained 48 students. (The mean and the t-test means will be discussed later in this chapter)

**Table 30 Reading Comprehension Post-test Scores, Frequency and Percentages of Comparison and Experimental Groups**

Scores	COMP		EXG	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
25.00	1	2.4		
30.00	1	2.4	1	2.1
35.00	3	7.1	1	2.1
40.00	2	4.8	2	4.2
45.00	3	7.1	4	8.3
50.00	7	16.6	5	10.4
55.00	4	9.5	3	6.3
60.00	2	4.8	7	14.6
65.00	5	11.9	7	14.6
70.00	6	14.3	4	8.3
75.00	6	14.3	5	10.4
80.00	1	2.4	5	10.4
85.00	1	2.4	2	4.2
90.00			2	4.2
Total	42	100.0	48	100.0

The descriptive statistics in Table 30 revealed the sample scores of the post-reading achievement test after applying the experimental reading programme. It shows a considerable improvement in scores among the experimental group. For example, the number of students at the very poor level, score categories 25-35, had decreased in the post test to only 2 students in the experimental group, while in the comparison group there were more than double this number, with 5 students. As another example, at the advanced level, meaning score 80-90, there were 9 students in the experimental group and only 2 students in the comparison group. As indicated by these results, there was a positive significant difference between the experimental and the comparison groups in the post-test. This finding indicates that students who were taught by the experimental

reading programme and trained in reading a variety of authentic reading materials performed better and were able to score higher than the comparison group in the post-test.

Table 31 presents a summary of students' scores of reading comprehension Pre and Post-Tests of the EXG and COMP and shows differences in means, standard deviations, minimum and maximum.

**Table 31 Differences in Means, Standard Deviations, Minimum and Maximum Scores in the Pre and Post-Tests of the EXG and COMP**

Groups	Pre-Reading Comprehension Test				Post-Reading Comprehension Test			
	X	SD	Min	Max	X	SD	Min	Max
EXG	57.2917	15.3317	25.00	90.00	62.92	14.6895	30.00	90.00
COMP	56.3095	15.1440	25.00	85.00	57.7381	14.9472	25.00	85.00
D	0.9822	0.1877	0.	5.	5.18	-0.26	5.	5.00

Mean = X

Std. Deviation = SD

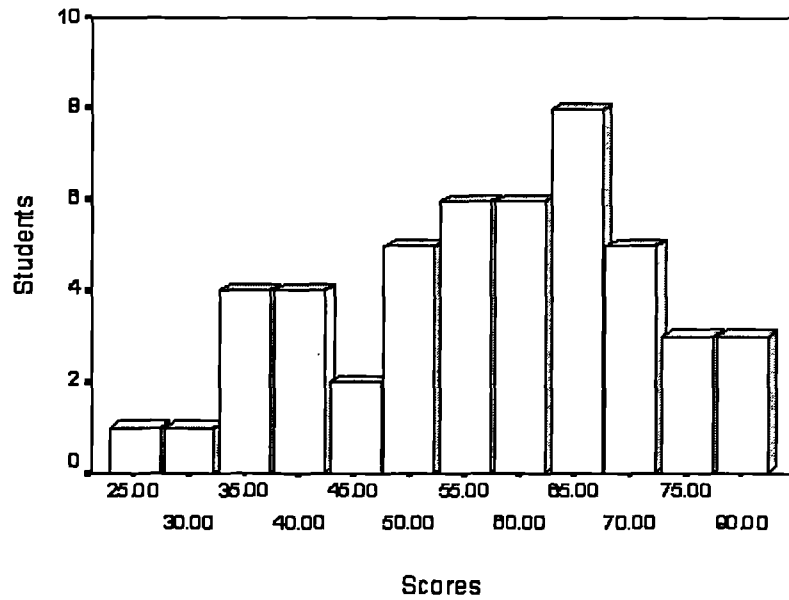
Minimum = Min

Maximum Max

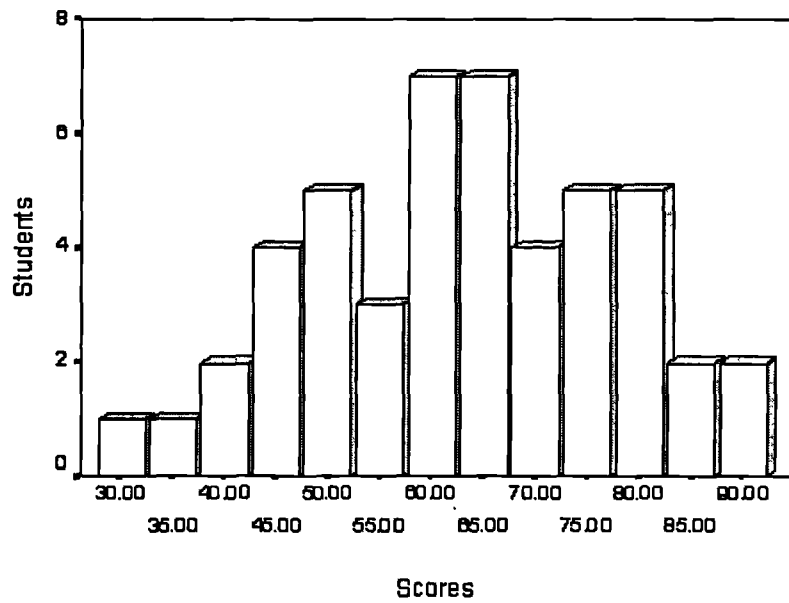
The means in the pre-test are similar in both groups. In COMP it was 56.3 and in EXG, 57.3, which indicates that the groups were similar in the achievement level. In contrast, the mean of EXG in the post-test (62.9) is higher than the mean of COMP in the post-test (57.7). This table shows that there was a positive significant difference between the EXG and COMP in the pre-test ranging from 25 to 85 marks and in the post-test ranging from 30 to 90 marks. This means that students' reading achievement in the EXG was enhanced by the Experimental Reading Programme which had been taught for 8 weeks. This is an indication that after becoming trained using a variety of teaching methods and tasks in the EXRP, students in EXG were able to score higher than the students in COMP and obtain better results. (See Figures 16, 17, 18 and 19

which indicate the students' scores in the pre and post tests for both groups, the EXG and COMP).

**Figure 16 Pre-reading Comprehension Test for EXG**

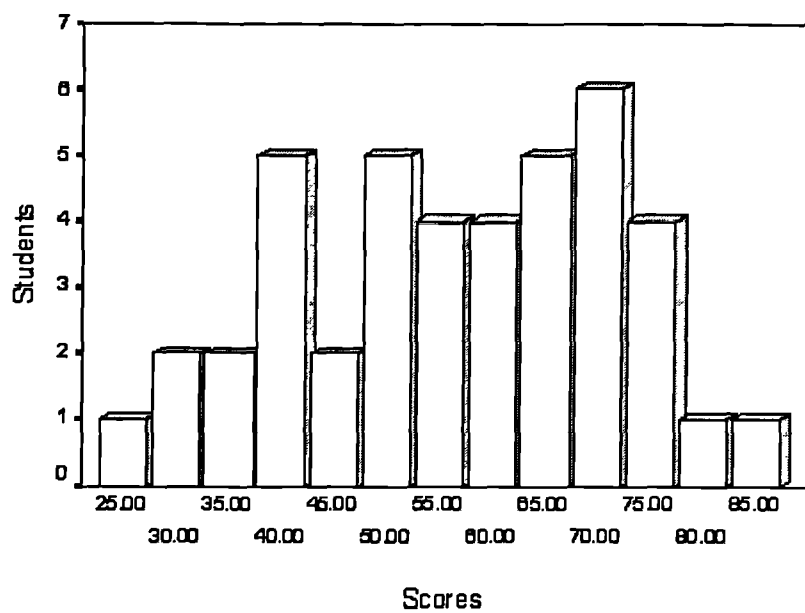


**Figure 17 Post-reading Comprehension Test for EXG**

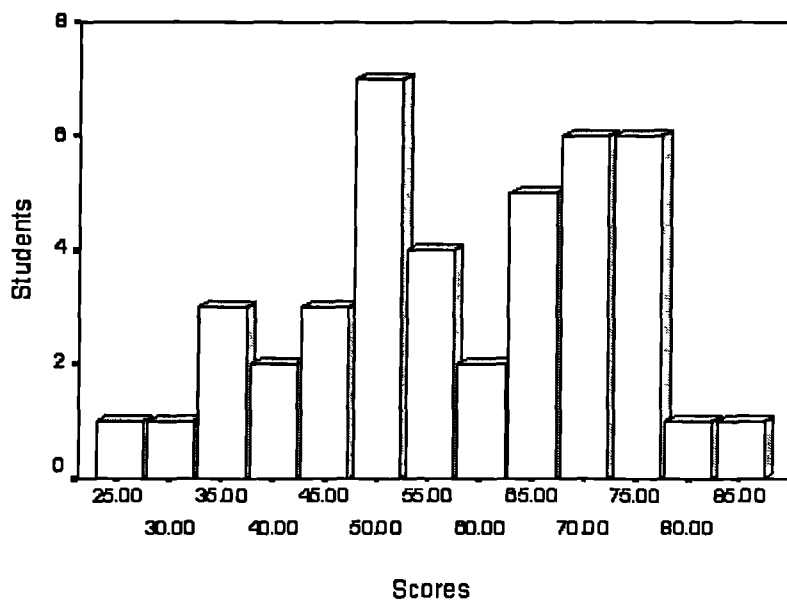




**Figure 18 Pre-reading Comprehension Test for COMP**



**Figure 19 Post-reading Comprehension Test for COMP**



## Result of T-test Analyses

Since the comparison and the experimental groups met the conditions for using the t-test in that the group was large enough  $\geq 30$  to provide data with normal distributions (Black, 1999, p. 402) and the same students were tested in a pre-test and later a post-test, it was appropriate to use the t-test to show that something different had happened to one group. The t-test was the appropriate statistical technique to test the effectiveness of the Experimental Reading Programme in improving students' reading comprehension in English as a foreign language. "The aim of using a t-test is to determine and assess the difference in means in order to gain the level of statistical significance" (Al-Assaf, 1995, p.140). Earlier in this chapter, in Table 31, attention was given to the means of each of the two groups EXG and COMP. Further analysis was carried out using a paired sample t-test in order to confirm that teaching students with the Experimental Reading Programme develops their reading comprehension skills. The results of the paired sample t-test are shown in Table 32.

**Table 32 The Pre-test and the Post-test of the Experimental Group. Differences in Means, Standard Deviations, T-Value and Probability**

$\bar{X}$	SD	N	df	t	2-tail sig	p
-5.42	10.8094	48	47	-3.472	.001	p< 0.001

$\bar{X}$  = Mean

SD = Standard deviation

N = Number of cases

df = Degree of Freedom    t = t-value    p = Probability

It can be seen from the above table that the difference in means for the two tests (-5.42) is highly significant, which indicates that there were significant differences between the scores of the students in the pre-test and the post-test. On the contrary, for

the comparison group results, as indicated in Table 33, the difference in means for the two tests (-1.43) was significantly high but not high as for the experimental group.

**Table 33 The Pre-test and the Post-test of the Comparison Group. Differences in Means, Standard Deviations, T-Value and Probability**

$\bar{X}$	SD	N	df	t	2-tail sig	p
-1.43	2.9808	42	41	-3.106	.003	p< 0.003

$\bar{X}$  = Mean                      SD = Standard deviation                      N = Number of cases  
df = Degree of Freedom                      t = t-value                      p = Probability

It was concluded from these results that the Experimental Reading Programme increased the students' knowledge about English to a greater extent than the conventional reading programme. The number of correct answers produced by the EXG was significantly higher than that produced by the COMP, suggesting improved knowledge of grammar (syntactic) and vocabulary (semantic), and increased confidence in students' reading comprehension.

The null hypothesis for this test postulated that "There is no significant difference between the scores of the pre and post tests of the experimental group."

The above tables reveal significant differences at (<0.05) p<0.001 level between the achievement on the two tests. Students of the EXG who were taught by the Experimental Reading Programme were able to read and differentiate between the wrong and correct sentences in the test and gain high scores and consequently the mean difference of -5.42 supports the effectiveness of the Experimental Reading Programme and leads to rejection of the null hypothesis.

## Reliability of the Reading Achievement Test

The reliability testing in the pilot study showed an acceptable value of  $\alpha = .7562$  (see Table 34). It revealed that only two questions had low correlations (questions 2  $R = .063$  and 13  $R = .196$ ). However, by omitting these questions, the total reliability becomes higher,  $\alpha = .80$  (see Appendix 8 for details of reliability testing).

**Table 34 Summary of Alpha Reliability of the Reading Achievement Test Pilot Study**

N of questions	Alpha Reliability	Sample Size
20	.7562	37
19	.7856	37
18	.80	37

Nevertheless, these questions were retained because they were important to be included in the test for content validity and also showed acceptable correlation in the main study (questions 2  $R = .36$  and 13  $R = .31$ ) although the total reliability in the main study was low, as will be discussed below.

It was disappointing to find, as shown in Table 35, that the result of reliability testing in the main study was not as high as in the pilot study, for either test: the alpha values were .57 and .53. The sample for the pilot study was drawn from the same population as for the main study; both samples were second year university students. The reasons for the difference in reliability may lie in the way they did the test.

**Table 35 Summary of Alpha Reliability of the Reading Achievement Test Main Study**

	Alpha Reliability	N of questions	Sample Size
Pre-test in the main study	.5723	20	48
Post-test in the main study	.5331	20	48

In the researcher's view, the low reliability occurred for the following reasons:

- The correct answers of the test were not distributed evenly among the possible responses.
- Students did not have sufficient time to do the test.
- They were feeling the pressure of work, especially as the tests were done just before their final examinations.
- For the above reasons, students taking the final tests were in a rush, which led to their guessing some answers. An example is question 20, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Although the reliability was lower than expected, this does not prevent the study from reaching a conclusion and answering the research questions. If there had been no difference between students' scores in the pre and post tests, that might be because the test was not officially reliable but in the present case, the marks improved significantly between the pre and posttests, as indicated earlier in this chapter. In that sense, it is demonstrated that the experimental treatment was beneficial to the students as measured by this test. Moreover, whereas it would be very important to have higher reliability if the sample size had been small, in this study the sample size was 48 students, which is large enough. For a group of this size (the standard error was small = 2.1), the test had sufficient reliability to reveal between group differences.

Nevertheless, to say it is accepted that the test needs to be more reliable: another researcher should work on this and perhaps do some further research on the test itself before using it in further work of this kind.

### Correlation Between the Total Mark and Item Mark.

The aim of doing this crosstabulation between the total mark and item mark of the reading achievement test was, as de Vaus mentions, that “The main purpose of trying to detect a relationship between two variables is to help in the task of explanation” (de Vaus, 1998, p.154). In this section attention is paid to clarifying why some questions were difficult or easy for both good and poor students in the post-test. Table 36 indicates the easy questions.

**Table 36 Three Examples of Easy Questions Correlated with the Total Mark**

Post-Test Total Mark	Question 1			Question 5			Question 6		
	C	W	T	C	W	T	C	W	T
30		1	1	1		1	1	-	1
35	1		1		1	1	1	-	1
40	2		2	1	1	2	2	-	2
45	4		4	4		4	4	-	4
50	5		5	4	1	5	5	-	5
55	3		3	2	1	3	3	-	3
60	7		7	7		7	7	-	7
65	7		7	7		7	7	-	7
70	4		4	4		4	4	-	4
75	5		5	5		5	5	-	5
80	5		5	5		5	5	-	5
85	2		2	2		2	2	-	2
90	2		2	2		2	2	-	2
Total	47	1	48	44	4	48	48	-	48

C= correct answer    W= wrong answer    T= total

Question 1 was an easy question, which everyone got right, except for one student. This question was as follows:

**A dog is bigger than a mouse, but smaller than an elephant.**

- A dog is smaller than a mouse.
- A dog is very big.
- A dog is the biggest.
- An elephant is bigger than a dog.

This was intended to test understanding of the comparative. The reason for getting it right, however, is that the answer is common sense. The elephant, dog and mouse are familiar creatures, and one could easily visualise their comparative sizes. So this question in fact tests not only the comparative, but also general knowledge. Therefore it was an easy question.

Question 5 was also found to be easy. Only 4 students (2 at the low level and 2 at the middle level) out of 48 got it wrong. This question was as follows:

**Andrea is looking after the children.**

- She can see the children.
- She is taking care of the children.
- She is looking at the children.
- The children are in front of her.

This question dealt with a potentially difficult semantic aspect of the language but it was pleasing to find that most students got it right. Students had to understand that looking after does not mean looking at or seeing, but taking care. Snow (1998) states that one of the goals of teacher is that the process of developing reading skill enables students to extend their vocabulary acquisition (Snow, 1998, p.3). The result of this question indicates that students' good vocabulary, acquired from developing reading, enabled them to overcome the semantic aspect of this question.

Question 6, was a semantic question which all students got right. This question was as follows:

**They only have one car for the family.**

- They only like cars.
- They do not like any other cars.
- They do not have two cars.
- They have a big family.

This is a matter of logic and common sense. It deals with understanding what the word 'only' means.

Table 37 reveals some of the difficult questions in the post reading comprehension test.

**Table 37 Three Examples of Difficult Questions Correlated with the Total Mark**

Post-Test Total Mark	Question 14			Question 16			Question 20		
	C	W	T	C	W	T	C	W	T
30		1	1	1		1		1	1
35	1		1		1	1		1	1
40		2	2	1	1	2	1	1	2
45	1	3	4		4	4	1	3	4
50	3	2	5		5	5	1	4	5
55	1	2	3	1	2	3	3		3
60	3	4	7	2	5	7	2	5	7
65	3	4	7	1	6	7	4	3	7
70		4	4	1	3	4	1	3	4
75	2	3	5	1	4	5	1	4	5
80	2	3	5	4	1	5	3	2	5
85	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2
90		2	2	2		2	2		2
Total	17	31	48	15	33	48	20	28	48

C= correct answer

W= wrong answer

T= total

Question 14: was considered difficult, being answered incorrectly by 31 poor and good students. The question was as follows:

**Madame Traiviey has lived nearly 115 years.**

- She was very old.
- She is very old.
- She died when she was nearly 115.
- Madame Traiviey has many more years.



By examining students' responses in the pre and post tests, it was found that 12 of them answered correctly in the pre-test and 17 of them answered correctly in the post test, so there was a slight improvement. Also it was found that 20 students in both tests thought the 3<sup>rd</sup> answer was the correct answer. They chose this answer because they could not recognise that *has lived* includes the present; they did not appreciate the difference between *lived nearly 115* and *has lived*. A straightforward syntactic mistake led to a semantic mistake. Because they could not recognise the signal of *has lived*, they presumed the sentence was in the past tense and of course it is not, it is present perfect. Question 16: was considered difficult for 33 poor and good students. The question was as follows:

**Yeuk Yee had her house painted white yesterday.**

- She had to paint her house white yesterday.
- Her house was not blue last week.
- They painted her house white for her yesterday.
- She painted her house yesterday.

Examining students' responses in both tests, in the pre-test it was found that 37 students got it wrong and in the post test, 33 of them got it wrong, most of them good students, so there was a slight improvement. The sentence is in the passive voice; *she had her house painted by somebody else*. Students had to recognise that *had her house painted* means employed somebody else to do it. That is the syntactic aspect again and miscomprehension resulted from failure to recognise the voice of the sentence. This item was quite an advanced one. Sentences like *the house was painted by the men* are much easier to recognise as passive, but sentences like *she had her windows cleaned*, or *she had her floor washed*. meaning that somebody else did it for her, were harder for students to recognise.

Question 20, again, tested the syntactic aspect of the language: the past conditional. The question was as follows:

**If Muriel had come, she would have won.**

- If she hadn't won, she'd have come.
- Muriel didn't win because she didn't come.
- When Muriel came she always won.
- She didn't come, but she won anyway.

Whereas 25 students got this wrong in the pre-test, 28 students got it wrong in the post-test. This is the only question in which the number of correct responses declined. This could be because it was the last question in the test and students answered it quickly under the pressure of work, leading them to guess the answer. This question involves recognition of the syntactic feature, the past conditional (impossible conditions if+ past perfect 'had'+ third form) with enormous implications for understanding, such as *if I had known myself, I would have told you.* or *If we had come earlier, we would have caught the bus.* If students could not recognise the past conditional here, they got completely the wrong idea.

#### *Comment*

It is clear from analysing the previous examples that students found the questions which dealt with the semantic aspect of the language more easy, while the most difficult questions and their mistakes related to the syntactic aspect of the language, such as the recognition of the present perfect *has lived*, meaning *still is living*, the past conditional and the passive voice. Although students had learned about the passive voice in the programme, some students failed to reach the level of answering this question correctly. This is because students find it harder to use the form of the passive voice with 'had ---- done' and in the programme, a lot of time was spent on

practising the more obvious passive voice ‘was ---- by’. Consequently students need to have more practice on “had it done” and need a special session on teaching and practising that kind of passive voice.

## Reading Skills

The third part of the questionnaire asked students to assess their reading skills. In this section their responses will be analysed in order to know what they thought were the most and the least difficult skills.

**Table 38 Reading Skills that Students Found Most Difficult and Least Difficult Before the Experimental Programme**

Reading Skills	Most Difficult	Least Difficult	Not Selected	Total
Letter Recognition Skill	1	24	23	48
Sound Recognition Skill	14	13	21	48
Decoding and Encoding Skills	16	1	31	48
Understanding Meaning	10	24	14	48
Reading for Information	9	17	22	48
Speed Reading Skill	19	12	17	48
Skimming Skill	7	11	30	48
Scanning Skill	8	6	34	48
Research and References Skills	17	5	26	48
Analysis and interpretation skills	20	3	25	48
Expectancy and Prediction Skills	13	12	23	48
Function of Words	11	15	22	48

It appears from the previous table that Analysis and interpretation skill, Speed-reading skill and Research and References skill were the three most difficult skills for students before the experimental programme. Speed reading is difficult to combine with analysis and interpretation. Good readers seek an accurate and deep comprehension of the text, diving into the meaning and following the author’s methods in analysing the topic and ordering ideas, and this requires time to be taken in reading. Moreover, slow reading helps the reader to recognise ambiguous text and analyse the author’s ideas and

enjoy the finer points of style in a text. Albuzaidi mentions, “reading speed necessitates decreasing pauses during reading. But studies have proved that these pauses reflect what happens when the mind analyses what the eyes see” (Albuzaidi, 1996, p.11). Consequently, it was difficult for students to master the two skills simultaneously, as we will see later. The Research and References skill, which refers to the student’s ability to research independently, was also a difficult skill, but after the programme it was considered the least difficult skill, as explained later in this chapter.

The three least difficult skills for students before the experimental programme, as indicated in Table 38 were Letter Recognition Skill, Understanding Meaning and Reading for Information. These skills were considered the least difficult because students concentrate on learning these skills throughout intermediate and secondary levels of general education so it is to be expected that these skills were least difficult for them.

**Table 39 Reading Skills that Students Found Most Difficult and Least Difficult After the Experimental Programme**

Reading Skills	Most Difficult	Least Difficult	Not Selected
Letter Recognition Skill	1	25	22
Sound Recognition Skill	16	12	20
Decoding and Encoding Skills	18	3	27
Understanding Meaning	12	27	9
Reading for Information	9	11	28
Speed Reading Skill	12	17	19
Skimming Skill	4	12	32
Scanning Skill	10	5	33
Research and References Skills	14	7	27
Analysis and interpretation skills	20	8	20
Expectancy and Prediction Skills	8	10	30
Function of Words	11	6	31

It appears from Table 39 that students still had most difficulties with the Analysis and Interpretation skills. For that reason, the proficiency of a writer relates to his/her success in conveying ideas to the readers in easy words, not complicated ones, in order to let students analyse and interpret his/her views. After the programme, Research and Reference skills were no longer quite such a problem. 34 students found Sound Recognition Skill and Decoding and Encoding Skills the most difficult skills. These depend on the pronunciation of the words, which highlights the importance of students having access to native speakers. Furthermore, 25 students said Letter Recognition Skills, 27 students said Understanding Meaning and 17 students said speed-reading skill were the least difficult skills after the programme. It was gratifying to find that after the programme 17 students found this least difficult, while it was considered most difficult by 19 students before the programme.

## Qualitative Data

The present study used a questionnaire because it was not practical to do a set of interviews, but nevertheless some qualitative data were obtained. For instance in the exploratory study, students' opinions and their affective responses about the current programme were sought. Very often, interviews are used for such purposes, but the problem that this is very time consuming to do for a large number of students, while if it is done for only a small number of sample, then it does not yield such a wide range of opinions and may not yield representative responses. This section will deal with the qualitative data obtained in the present study and analyse students' comments about what sort of things they find important. The formulation is presented first for the exploratory study and then for the main study.

## **Students' comments in the exploratory study**

As indicated in chapter four, students made some comments which provided qualitative data on their views about the teacher, the reading materials, the reading skills, and types of reading. It should be noted that most students answered in English; their comments are reproduced in their own words.

### **1. Teachers and teaching methods**

Students found the current teaching methods boring. One said; "It is boring and not exciting", while another said, "it is boring because there are no other activities, only reading and explanation". Students expressed difficulty in comprehending, because of the teaching methods. One student said, "I find it difficult to understand from our teacher". Two students found the teaching methods better than before. One said, "It is clear and better than before" and another said "It is clear and interesting, it is clearer and better than before". Student found the teaching methods out of date, "teachers concentrate on the grammar method and translation" and they felt dissatisfied with the teaching method; as one said, "I do not like the methods used. I think they must improve their methods". Moreover, students thought they needed more time to practise the language. One said, "I think it needs time and more practice" and another commented, "They need further techniques". Students found the teaching method repetitive and not varied, with nothing new. One said, "it is ordinary and not useful", and another said, "it is ordinary, they are limited and there is no change in using teaching methods, there is only one method"

### **2. Reading materials**

Students blamed the deficiencies in the content or the reading materials on the teachers. Three said, "It is good and interesting but the teacher with her way makes it not useful", Students find that some materials are not relevant to female students. One

said, "There are some topics irrelevant to female needs and interests, like sport and cars. We need topics more related to our interests". However, two favoured the materials. One of them said, "The content are useful and helpful in the development of acquiring the language" while the other said, "It is very useful in the teaching process". They recognized that some topics are not culturally relevant. They said, "The book is not in conformity with our society there is a problem to comprehend some topics not in our society." Another one said, "It is useful but it has some difficulties because it does not relate to our environment".

Moreover, students found the textbook easy. One said, "It starts easy but at the end it becomes difficult", Students found that some of the materials repeat those studies at school in the previous year. One mentioned that "It is useless and based on repetition and the majority of it were as revision about last lesson in intermediate and secondary schools". Another one said, "It was useless and as revision about last lesson in intermediate and secondary schools we feel that we not take any extra information which we very need". Students wanted extra materials that support new knowledge and information and they found the present material not suitable and helpful, as they are specialising in English: "It is not so bad, but it is not helpful for the students in English major". They thought they needed a special course for reading. One said, "I think English learners need more practice courses in the first two years. They must take extra courses in reading".

### 3. Reading Skills

Regarding sound recognition skill, the students indicated that they had particular difficulty in recognizing certain similar sounds while they are reading, such as recognizing the sounds of the letters P & B, and they suggested that they needed to read different materials. One said "we can overcome this difficult by reading and listen to

our selves to be familiar of the sounds and language”. Another student mentioned, “listen to native speakers and repeat again the sounds and listen to the radio and TV to distinguish the different sounds”. Another one said, “There are many difficulties in pronouncing new words which have differences in sounds”. Also using language laboratory was one of student’s suggestions “through providing the college by language laboratory”. Students in the university level had difficulties in spelling and sound recognition. One said, “I have difficulty in recognising the spelling of the new vocabularies and pronounce it correctly”. Another said, “We have many difficulties in learning reading English, the different sounds of letters and difficult in using a good pronunciation”.

Regarding other reading skills, 57% of students found the research skill least well learned and 49 % of the students thought they did least well with speed-reading. One said, “I have very big difficult in speed reading skills”. Another said, “I have difficult which is slow reading and hesitation”. Moreover, 41% found the grammar or the functions of words are most difficult to learn and they found difficulty with particular rules such as the passive voice. One said, “We need extra practice and explanation of recognising the passive voice”

#### 4. Kinds of reading

Some students thought that reading aloud would improve their reading. One said, “If one have any difficulties it might be overcome by encouraging students to read aloud in front of the class”. Another kind of reading is extensive reading. Some students suggested being given extra extensive reading comprehension sources to read. One said “Reading novels, literature, poetry to improve our vocabulary”. Another said, “Reading magazine includes topics related to female interest”, while another said, “Reading some novels, newspaper, and some short stories” Moreover, students felt there was a lack of



encouragement for students to read different materials. One said “We can overcome difficulties in learning reading English by encourage students to read more and more about different subjects and topics” Another one mentioned, “By searching for another content which useful and by encouraging students to search and to read a large quantities of materials”.

Finally, the overall view of students was that they were not satisfied with the present course of reading in English and they sought and needed another programme which would address their requests, needs and interests.

#### **Students’ comments in the main study (Feeling about the Experimental Programme)**

The last part of the questionnaire contained open questions asking about students’ feelings about the experimental reading programme. It was administered to the experimental group only and revealed a positive response to the programme. The first question asked about the two things that students liked most in the programme. The answers to this question varied. Examples include “Richer and simpler information”, “Games and interesting activities”, “Working in group”, “New and useful teaching methods”, “Friendly teaching methods, I feel comfortable with the teaching methods psychologically”, “Freedom (I can explain my opinion without being embarrassed), “emphasis on improving our reading skills, which are poor”, “Teaching aids and the variety of materials and activities”, “It is about real life”. Similarly, students were asked about the two things that they did not like in the programme and which they would like to change. Their answers were “Nothing” and “The time”.

When students were asked about their opinion of the teaching methods and activities, their responses varied. Most (40, 83.3%) said “It was clear, slow and enough” while a few (8, 16.7%) said “ It was too fast, unclear and too much”. Also students were asked about the materials that they found most useful and least useful. The most useful

materials were: spelling rules, authentic materials, internet sources such as the homonyms quiz, stories, and the extensive new vocabulary. The least useful materials were poems, and writing stories.

Moreover, students were asked if there was anything they would like to add to the programme. Their suggestions were, more stories, extra time, more visits to the library, dialogue and improving speaking skill, using the laboratory to practise sound recognition.

The last question students were asked was, “What would you like to do less in the programme?” Some answered “nothing” and others said “the letter recognition activities”. Thus, overall, students had a very positive response to the experimental programme, finding it interesting, enjoyable and useful.

## Summary

This chapter has presented the results of the data obtained from the main study. All the information analysed in this chapter was considered in relation to the research questions. Both the Affective Questionnaire and the Reading Achievement Test were examined using various statistical techniques. The findings presented in Chapter Six can be summarized as follows:

Students’ affective responses to the current and experimental reading programmes were assessed by means of a questionnaire, which was shown to be reliable, and sufficiently homogeneous to justify its being analysed as a single scale. For both programmes, factor analysis yielded a basically one-factor structure, reflecting students’ attitudes to various dimensions of the programme. Although a second factor emerged, reflecting more factual information about the programme’s attributes, it was so much smaller than the first factor that it could virtually be ignored.

Responses to the affective questionnaire revealed that students, generally, had negative attitudes to the current teaching of reading in English as a foreign language. This impression was confirmed by the fact that they failed to distinguish between teaching methods and teaching materials.

In contrast, the findings revealed that students appreciated the experimental programme, responding to it with good understanding and interest.

A comparison between the current and experimental programmes was obtained, despite the differences in sample size. The outcome suggested that students did not discriminate between teaching methods and the materials used in the current teaching of reading, but the post-Experimental questionnaire, in contrast, showed good discrimination between T2 and M2. This difference in structure can be taken as evidence of greater understanding towards the experimental programme than towards the current programme.

The outcomes of the Reading Achievement Test were also analysed. The descriptive statistics revealed that both groups were similar in score distribution and were approximately equal in the pretest while there was a positive significant difference between the EXG scores and COG scores in the post-test. Also the mean of EXG in the post-test (62.9) was higher than the mean of COMP in the post-test (57.7). This finding indicates that students who were taught by the experimental reading programme and trained in reading a variety of authentic reading materials performed better and were able to score higher than the comparison group in the posttest.

Although the reliability testing yielded a lower coefficient for the reading Achievement Test in the main study than in the pilot study, perhaps partly as a result of the circumstances in which the student testing was carried out, the difference in

achievement between the two groups was sufficiently marked to give confidence in the new programme. Possible reasons for low reliability have been suggested. The correlations between the total mark and item marks of the reading achievement test indicated that students found the most difficult questions to be those dealing with the syntactic aspect of the language, while the easier questions were those dealing with the semantic aspect of the language. The t-test result showed significant differences at  $p < 0.001$  level between the achievement of the two tests. The mean difference of 5.42 on a scale of supports the effectiveness of the Experimental Reading Programme and leads to rejection of the null hypothesis.

In terms of reading skills, before the experimental programme, the Analysis and Interpretation, Speed-reading and Research and Referencing skills were the three most difficult skills for students. The least difficult skills were Letter Recognition, Understanding Meaning and Reading for Information. After the programme, Sound Recognition Skill and Decoding and Encoding Skills, which depend on the pronunciation of words, and Analysis and Interpretation skill, were the most difficult skills. It was indicated that after the programme, the Speed-reading skill became the least difficult skill alongside Letter Recognition and Understanding Meaning.

It was gratifying to learn from students' answers to questions about reading skills, that speed reading, and research and references skills, which students had found particularly difficult before the experimental programme, were viewed more confidently by them after the programme.

The final part of the chapter discussed the open questions which revealed students' feeling about the programme. Their comments showed that students enjoyed the experimental reading programme and supported the view that it is a useful way to help students to understand written English and improve reading comprehension skills.

Such a programme in the future could help colleges to raise the level of comprehension in reading English as a foreign language.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

## Introduction

In the previous chapter, the findings of the present study were discussed from a statistical perspective. This chapter provides a brief summary, interpretation and discussion of the findings, recommendations, and suggestions for further studies.

The aim of the study was to assess the impact of an experimental programme for teaching reading comprehension skills on female Saudi students in King Abdulaziz University in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah. This chapter therefore considers:

1. The significant differences in reading comprehension achievement between the experimental group scores and comparison group scores, including the significant difference of the mean;
2. Responses to the Affective Questionnaire and students' attitudes toward the current reading programme and the experimental reading programme, in respect of two main dimensions, the teaching methods (T) and the reading materials (M);
3. The most difficult reading skills and the least difficult skills as assessed by the students;
4. Students' general feelings toward the experimental reading programme as reflected in their responses to the open questions in the questionnaire;

In addition, recommendations are made for developing the teaching of reading and suggestions for further research are presented at the end of the discussion.

## Summary

The thesis started by discussing in detail the current general education system in Saudi Arabia, with special reference to the University (English Language Department). Consideration was given to the curriculum, teaching methods and aids, facilities and examinations. Criticisms of the current programme indicated that students' achievement in English and in the reading skill in particular is poor and there is a lack of interesting supplementary materials. A need was identified to develop students' reading comprehension skills and to encourage positive attitudes towards reading, by supplying interesting and authentic materials.

A theoretical foundation to the research was provided by a review of literature on the extension and development of reading comprehension skills. Developing and extending reading in a foreign language involves the development of various reading comprehension skills (*letter recognition skill, sound recognition skill, decoding and encoding skills, understanding meaning, reading for information, speed reading skill, skimming skill, scanning skill, research and references skills, analysis and interpretation skills, expectancy and prediction skills, and function of words*).

Consideration was given to what reading means, including the different skills which reading entails. The teaching and learning of these skills were discussed from a theoretical viewpoint, in relation to the communicative approach. Because the principal purpose of teaching language via the communicative approach is to help students to use the language for communication, the main aim of the experimental reading programme focused on the need for comprehension and communicative classroom activities. It provided interesting and varied practice with authentic materials in a range of different reading activities.



The programme was organised into eight units; each unit involving different kinds of activities and tasks, emphasis being given to including the important aspects graphic, syntactic and semantic and other aspects of the language, in each unit. These were intended to develop and enhance the various skills of reading mentioned above.

The experimental implementation of the programme took place over 8 weeks, for 4 hours a week, including the pre and post-tests. The sample was 90 female students, following first and second year courses in the English department. The outcomes as measured by the Affective Questionnaire and the Reading Achievement Test are summarized below in relation to the research questions set out in Chapter One.

**1. The significant differences in achievement between the experimental group scores and comparison group scores, including the significant difference of the mean:**

Regarding Reading Achievement, the pre-test revealed that the comparison and the experimental groups (COMP, EXG) were similar in score distribution and approximately equal (See Table 29). On the contrary, in the post-test there was a positive significant difference between the two groups' scores (See Table 30). Moreover, the mean of EXG was higher than the mean of COMP in the post-test, as indicated in Table 31. This finding shows that students who were taught by the experimental reading programme and trained in reading a variety of authentic reading materials performed better and were able to score higher than the comparison group in the post-test. The t-test result (Table 32) supports this claim; it showed significant differences at ( $<0.05$ )  $p<0.001$  level between the two tests of achievement. Therefore, overall, the above findings indicated the effectiveness of the Experimental Reading Programme and led to rejection of the null hypothesis of no significant difference in students' achievement in both tests between the experimental and the comparison groups.

Although reliability testing yielded a lower coefficient for the reading Achievement Test in the main study than in the pilot study (See Tables 34 & 35), perhaps partly as a result of the circumstances in which the study was carried out, the difference in achievement between the two groups was sufficiently marked to give confidence in the benefits for students of the new programme. The correlations between the total mark and item marks of the reading achievement test indicated that students

found questions based on the semantic aspect of the language easiest and those on the syntactic aspect of the language most difficult.

**2. The Affective Questionnaire and students' attitudes toward the current reading programme and the experimental reading programme, in two main dimensions: the teaching methods (T) and the reading materials (M).**

The attitude scale was a Likert scale which measured students' affective response to the current and experimental reading programmes.

Responses to the affective questionnaire revealed that students, generally, had negative attitudes to the current teaching of reading in English as a foreign language (See Tables 10, 11, 12, 13 14 & 15). This impression was confirmed by the fact that they failed to distinguish between teaching methods and teaching materials.

In contrast, the findings obtained from factor analysis revealed that students appreciated the experimental programme, in respect of both teaching methods T2 and reading materials M2. The experimental group responded to T2 and M2 as different things and found them varied and interesting, as shown in Tables 20, 24, 25, 26, 27 & 28.

**3. Students' perceptions of the most difficult and the least difficult reading skills.**

In terms of reading skills, before the experimental programme, Analysis and interpretation skill, Speed-reading skill and Research and Reference skill were perceived as the three most difficult skills for students. They thought the least difficult

skills were Letter Recognition, Understanding Meaning and Reading for Information. After the programme, Sound Recognition Skill and Decoding and Encoding Skills, which depend on the pronunciation of words, together with Analysis and Interpretation skill, were rated by students as the most difficult skills. They indicated that after the programme, they perceived the Speed-reading skill as the least difficult skill, beside Letter Recognition and Understanding Meaning.

It was gratifying to learn from students' answers to questions about reading skills, that speed reading, and research and reference skills, which students had perceived as particularly difficult before the experimental programme, were viewed more confidently after the programme.

#### **4. Students' general feeling toward the experimental reading programme as revealed by their responses to open questions in the questionnaire.**

The open questions gave an opportunity to ascertain students' feelings about the programme. Their comments showed that students enjoyed the experimental reading programme and supported the view that it is a useful way to help students to understand written English and improve reading comprehension skills. The positive response of the students is encouraging and suggests that it would be worth exploring further the possibility that such a programme, in future could help the colleges to raise the level of comprehension in reading English as a foreign language whilst maintaining a high level of student interest and motivation.

## Discussion

The implementation of the programme and its outcomes raise a number of issues that require further comment.

The pattern of findings reported in Chapter Six and summarized in the previous section shows that after the teaching period (but not prior to it) students in the experimental group performed better than those in the comparison group, taught by traditional reading methods and materials.

This finding lends support to conclusions reached by earlier studies that students can achieve high scores and better results in reading comprehension tests when work is supplemented by a Reading Comprehension Programme, (e.g.; Abdalla, 1981; Zaher, 1981; Oda, 1982; Hassan, 1988, Al-Tobiqi, 1997, Timothy, 1998 and Galal, 1993). It has been found that, although the programme was conducted in a different culture, and slightly different methods of assessing and analysing the data were used, Saudi students display much the same reading improvement and programme interests as learners in other countries. The poor results in the pre-tests in both groups, concerning their understanding of reading English (also shown in the other studies), may be related to the lack of training in reading comprehension skills, whether through inappropriate materials or poor pedagogy. In this regard, the responses to the Affective Questionnaire dealing with attitudes toward the reading textbook and the teaching methods, supported the view that, together, the teaching methodology of the experimental reading programme and training students to read authentic materials helped them to learn more about the target language and improve their abilities to read with comprehension and confidence. The experimental reading programme appears to be a useful aid in the process of language acquisition.

It has been shown that the students had previously had hardly any chance to read authentic English or to use interesting and varied reading activities, given the traditional teaching methods and learning materials currently in use. Albednah (1982) mentions that most teachers depend on the use of reading the textbook for practising reading activities. But if the basic programme does not offer appropriate materials, supplementary materials are needed (Albednah, p. 57). In the experimental reading programme, particular attention was paid to helping students overcome their difficulties and to participate with positive attitudes toward English in general and toward reading in particular. Their participation was based on their desire to learn the English language, to be able to comprehend and use written English in order to pass examinations and help them to continue their higher education and to achieve a good career in the future.

The present experimental study is considered a preliminary step in developing reading comprehension skills in English as a second language among female Saudi students at King Abdulaziz University in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah. It is likely that the findings can be generalised to other institutions. For example, the research implications may be relevant to all Saudi universities, since they have closely similar curricula and objectives. The principles of the experimental programme could also be generalised to male students, since male and female students follow the same curriculum, but it would be necessary to collect different but still authentic materials that are more relevant and interesting to boys, such as ones about sports, cars, and male careers, particularly in the light of the very different roles of males and females in Saudi culture. Now that the feasibility of developing and using such a programme in Saudi Arabia has been demonstrated, it is worth considering that the same principles may be applicable in urban and rural populations in other regions of Saudi Arabia, and also to

Higher Education students in other Gulf countries and Arab countries which have the same or very similar cultures, norms and education systems.

According to the responses to the Affective Questionnaire more than half of the students saw the current methods of teaching reading and the current reading materials as “boring” (See Table 12). In fact, the statistical analyses in chapter 6 indicated that students had negative feelings about the current programme of reading which led them to fail to distinguish between teaching methods and teaching materials. These findings are in line with those of Al-Qahtani (1996) who indicated that "Looking at the English Language course at present in use in schools in Saudi Arabia it seems possible that the teachers find the course as boring as students often claim to do" (Al-Qahtani, p.144). However, it seems that there is little interest among teachers in the development of teaching methods. Teachers should be aware of the need for development of their teaching skills and read more about the development of teaching reading skills in an interesting, lively and interactive way, in the light of the communicative approach. Students need to have a wide range of materials to read according to their needs and interests. However, using interesting reading materials alone is not enough, as Al-Qahtani noted in discussing the effects of present-day methods of English teaching in Saudi Arabia: “A course which follows the style of communicatively taught courses is now being taught in an uncommunicative way” (ibid, p.145). As discussed earlier, in the literature review, the communicative approach emphasises the use of different activities that involve reading information from authentic materials such as newspapers, advertisements, magazines or any sources that were originally designed not for education purposes, but for native speakers of the language to use in real life. In this regard, to use the communicative approach means to engage the students in real life

activities of communication such as those included in the experimental programme (See Chapter 4).

It was found that students' attitudes towards the new reading materials were as positive as their attitude toward the new teaching methods. In fact, the statistical analysis of all responses to the attitude scale indicated that students were highly motivated towards the experimental programme of reading, both in teaching methods and in reading materials. This result may reflect the fact that in designing the experimental reading programme, the researcher considered students' needs and interests revealed by the exploratory study in selection of the reading materials. This is in line with the theory and evidence presented in the literature review in Chapter Three, showing that students' motivation increases when authentic materials are used (Peacock, 1997).

Students' positive attitudes are considered to be an indication of the importance and the value of the experimental reading programme to them. The evidence suggests that the programme played a valuable role, not only in influencing students' achievement but also in changing their poor attitudes to and lack of discrimination between methods and materials.

On the subject of reading skills, it was found that the least difficult skills before the programme were Letter Recognition, Understanding Meaning and Reading for Information. It is clear that students found the letter recognition skill easy both before and after the programme. By the time they reach the university level, they have had extensive practice in this, especially as, when they were beginners in learning English, they were taught by the traditional method of teaching reading, which is called the *Alphabetical Method*. Students were taught the letters of alphabet; they spelled the letter names, read them, and learned the order of the letters. This approach concentrates on the



appearance of the printed words but does not stress the phonetic side of the words. As Taverner points out, the aim of the alphabetical method “was not, as commonly believed today, to focus on the sound of the word, but rather on its shape and appearance”(Taverner, 1990, p.44). For this reason, students found the sound recognition skill and the decoding and encoding skills most difficult, as will be discussed later in this section.

It was pleasing to find that Understanding Meaning was perceived as comparatively easy by students before and after the reading programme. Students' claims in this respect were confirmed by their answers to question 5. The marks for the question revealed that the majority of the students answered correctly, although it dealt with a potentially difficult semantic aspect of the language (See Table 36).

The fact that Reading for Information was perceived as the least difficult skill for students is an indication that students had the ability to read to explore information sources on different topics and acquire meaning and ideas from what they read. Also, this was clear when students practised the activities shown in Illustrations 8, 13 and 14. Students' responses showed that they enjoyed discovering information through reading these authentic materials.

After the programme, it was gratifying to find that in the EXG, the Speed-reading skill and Research and References skills were ranked as the “Least difficult” skills and students tackled them more confidently after the programme, although these were perceived as the “Most difficult” skills before the experimental programme. This result can be interpreted as a reflection of the programme's provision of opportunities for students to be trained on various activities, enabling them to read quickly. The programme emphasised the use of library skills and practice of Research and Reference skills.

From responses to the Affective Questionnaire, it was found that both before and after the programme, Analysis and Interpretation was perceived as the most difficult skill. It is to be expected that such higher order skills would be more difficult than simple decoding. In the researcher's view, this is a problem in both languages, Arabic and English. Some students fail to develop this skill because they are accustomed to asking the teacher to explain and interpret meaning for them, so they do not have the chance to practise the interpretation skill for themselves. Consequently it remains a problem; they are unable to carry out the deep thinking needed to perceive what lies behind the text. This is a corresponding problem in the mother tongue. Abdulmalik (1983) in his thesis, asked the question, "Does an adult Arabic speaker transfer his reading skills to English a foreign language?" The answer was yes, to some extent. He found that " Despite the overlap of the good and poor readers in reading English, the good readers as a group prove themselves to be better L2 readers than the poor readers".

In order to overcome students' difficulties in analysis and interpretation, it is important that the English textbook should include reading comprehension materials and activities for the purpose of training students to analyse and interpret the passages independently, in order to let them compare and contrast ideas, distinguish the difference between fact, fiction and opinion, summarize the passage, and exercise judgement, by using activities which emphasise going beyond the text and interpreting the author's ideas.

The fact that the Sound Recognition skill and Decoding and Encoding skills were perceived among the most difficult skills after the programme, is expected because, as previously indicated, students were taught to read by using the *Alphabetical Method*. If they possess the ability to discover words through sounds, students can recognise new words that contain these sounds and consequently become good readers.

English is not a regular language, and non-native students have to learn the irregularities and differences between words, e.g. the different sounds of the 'e' in *bed*, and in *near*, homophones, rhyming, letter patterns, word stress and so on. To be competent, students have to practise all these kinds of activities (see Illustrations 1,2,3,4,5 and 6).

Although the experimental reading programme included such activities, still, sound recognition skill was perceived by students as difficult. In the researcher's view, the students, after practising those activities in the experimental programme, recognised that they were weak in such skills, since they are not included in the current reading programme and they depend on students' past experience in the general education schools. This skill needs longer exposure. Mohamed (1994) emphasised the importance of using the language laboratory for developing pronunciation and intonation and recommended it for phonetics courses. Using tape recordings by native speakers is also important. All of these techniques serve the objective of teaching English through the communicative approach, help students become fluent readers and to develop confidence and a high level of self esteem in relation to their ability to read and use the language. As indicated in Chapter Three, self-esteem is a very important factor which affects reading development.

Concerning the evaluation of the experimental reading programme by the students, we note that the last part of the Affective Questionnaire reflected students' feeling about the programme and showed their strongly positive responses to it. They found the teaching methods and activities both enjoyable and a useful way to help them to improve and enhance their reading comprehension skills. Their only criticism was that more time was needed to develop higher levels of skills and confidence. This indicates students' appreciation of the value of the experimental programme.

## Recommendations

In the light of the findings of this thesis, the following recommendations are put forward, for beneficial change in the system of *methods of teaching* English, the *materials* used for reading in English, the *reading programme* and the establishment of *language facilities* to improve and develop the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia.

### **Recommendations Regarding the Methods of Teaching Reading English in the Universities.**

- Because the findings showed students had difficulty with sound recognition (see Table 39), it is recommended that the Ministry of Education should consider the benefits of using the Phonetic Method in teaching reading to beginners, instead of the Alphabetical Method, in order to enable students to be fluent readers at more advanced levels of education.
- Since this study has given indications of the potential value of the communicative approach, and since that approach differs in many ways from the one currently in use, it is suggested that a library should be established in each department, containing a variety of English books and methodology materials, in order to help teachers to up-date their knowledge of the English language and keep abreast of new ideas on methods and materials for teaching the target language, such as the communicative approach.
- Consideration should be given in Pre-service and In-service training courses to encouraging and supporting the use of varied and interesting

techniques, besides a range of interesting and authentic reading materials, which are suitable and enjoyable for all levels of students. This is advisable because, as the present study revealed, students generally had negative attitudes towards the teaching of reading in English as a second language.

### **Recommendations Regarding the Materials for Reading in English in the Universities.**

- Because the findings showed that the students generally had negative attitudes towards the reading materials in current use in the teaching of English as a second language, it is recommended that the Ministry of Higher Education should review the range of books and authentic reading materials available in the library. Students should have access to varied reading materials which fit their needs and interests. The present materials seem boring to students, since all students read the same book, without attention to individual differences. Students in the universities need to read different references and sources in order to be able to search for and organise information. Also, reading various kinds of materials would help students to distinguish between fact, fiction, opinions, and so on.

### **Recommendations Related to the Experimental Reading Programme.**

- In view of the findings regarding students' attitudes to course materials, it can be suggested that a new English reading textbook that covers reading comprehension, with various activities and the use of interesting authentic materials that reflect the language objectives and meet

students' needs and interest, would help them to improve their reading comprehension and pave the way for more positive attitudes, greater understanding of the reading programme and consequently greater progress in learning and using English.

- Since students perceived themselves as having difficulties in analysis and interpretation, it is suggested that the English textbook should include reading comprehension materials and activities, for the purpose of training students to analyse and interpret the passages independently.
- The responsible people in the Ministry of Higher Education should consider carefully the need expressed by both teachers and students, for increasing the number of hours allocated to English reading courses.
- Because the findings revealed that the syntactic aspect of language acquisition is perceived by students as more difficult than the semantic aspect, it is recommended that teachers should provide help and practice in the syntactic aspect of the language at all stages of the programme, by providing different activities which contribute in developing students' awareness of structure and form.

#### **Recommendations Related to Facilities**

- It would be beneficial for language laboratory facilities to be available for teaching reading in English. Such facilities would be particularly helpful in developing the oral skills of the language, particularly as, in the present study, students reported difficulty with sound recognition and decoding and encoding.

- ❑ It is also necessary for teachers of English to use helpful supplementary sources for students, such as posters, flash cards, cassettes, overhead projectors and audio-visual aids.
- ❑ Access to the Internet would be very useful to develop the reading comprehension skill and is likely to stimulate students' interest in reading English (Alkahtani, 1999). The study revealed that students had negative feelings towards the current programme and the experimental group enjoyed Internet resources. The Ministry of Higher Education could supply Internet access, to enable students to use the many web sites that are available for developing the learning of English language in general and reading English comprehension in particular.

### Suggestions for further research

Although the results of this research have provided useful indicators, the following suggestions are made for further research that could be carried out to build on the contribution of this study, since the present programme in Saudi Arabia needs more comprehensive research in order to develop reading in English as a second language in Saudi Arabia:

- ❑ With the agreement of the authorities, a similar study could be set up in which parallel experimental and control groups are taught for the same amount of time but with different methods and materials, to establish more convincingly the advantages of the experimental programme.
- ❑ A similar study could be undertaken, using a different sort of reading achievement test, devised especially for the research purpose, which is more reliable.

- The factor analysis and the reliability testing revealed that the attitude scale could be used as a single scale and would provide a good basis for students' evaluation of teaching methods and materials. Further study could be carried out using this and other scales, to find out more about students' criticism and evaluation of new reading programmes.
- Clearly, additional comprehensive research is needed which is similar to the present one but, based on the outcome of the reading programme, more activities need to be devised to develop analysis and interpretation skills.
- In further research, at least a part of the programme of reading should be given in the language laboratory in order to enable students to practise and be trained on sound recognition skills and decoding and encoding skills.

Since the use of authentic materials plays a vital role in developing students' achievement and interest, a further study could explore suitable authentic materials, having regard to the culture and norms of Saudi students, and how the teacher can select the authentic materials to be relevant to students' needs and interests and at the same time, a useful basis for improving reading through the use of various activities using the communicative approach. Additional research of a similar nature is needed in other Saudi universities, and –more widely – in other Muslim countries, to ascertain how far the results of this study can be extrapolated elsewhere.



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## **APPENDICES**

## Appendix 1 Graduation Requirements (English Language)

King Abdulaziz University

Department of English Language

Faculty of Education

1419- 1420 1999 2000

**First: General Culture Orientation: 34 Credit Hours**

**A. University Requirements: 14 Credit Hours**

**B. College Requirements: 12 Credit Hours**

Course No. & Symbol	Course Title	Cr. Hr.	Course No. & Symbol	Course Title	Cr. Hr.
101 ISLS	Islamic Culture (1)	2	202 EDPH	Health Ed. & Nursing	2
101 ARBA	Arabic Language (1)	3	101 EDAR	Art Education	1
101 ENGL	English Language(1)	3	211 EDIS	Principles of Isl. Ed.	3
201 ISLS	Islamic Culture (2)	2	102 ARAB	Arabic Language (2)	2
301 ISLS	Islamic Culture (3)	2	101 ENGL	English Language (2)	2
401 ISLS	Islamic Culture (4)	2	102 ISLS	Biography of the Prophet	2

**C. Elective Courses 8 Credit Hours**

**Second: Educational Courses: 33 Credit Hours**

212	EDIS	Isl. Ed. & Social Develop.	2	231	EDPS	Intro. to Ed. psychology	2
232	EDPS	Develop. Psychology	2	233	EDPS	Learn. & Indvl. Differ.	3
316	EDCT	Curriculum Founds	3	322	EDPA	School Admn.	2
346	EDCT	Ed. Media	3	353	EDCT	Meth. of Teach. Engl. Lang.	3
413	EDCT	Ed. in the K.S.A.	2	423	EDCT	Eng. Lang. Cur. In Gen. Ed.	3
433	EDPS	Mental Hygiene	2	453	EDCT	Teach. Meth. (2) & Teach. Prac.	6

**Third: Specialisation in the English Language 69 Credit Hours**

101	HIST	Islamic Civilisation	2	104	ISLS	Intro. to Isl. Studies	3
111	HIST	Hist. Of Arab. Peninsula	2	111	ISLS	The Holy Qur'an (1)	2
111	ENGL	Composition (1)	3	212	ENGL	Read. In Isl. Civil.	3
214	ENGL	Composition (2)	3	215	ENGL	Language Practice (2)	3
216	ENGL	Language Practice (1)	3	217	ENGL	Translation (2)	3
221	ENGL	Phonetics (1)	2	222	ENGL	Phonetics (2)	2
231	ENGL	Intro. to Literature	3	232	ENGL	Prose & Short Story	3
233	ENGL	Poetry (1)	2	311	ENGL	Composition (3)	3
312	ENGL	Translation (1)	3	321	ENGL	Grammar (1)	3
323	ENGL	Intro. to Linguistic	3	322	ENGL	Grammar (2)	3
332	ENGL	Novel (2)	2	331	ENGL	Novel (1)	2
334	ENGL	Drama (1)	2	333	ENGL	Poetry (2)	2
423	ENGL	Applied Linguistic	2	335	ENGL	Drama (2)	2
431	ENGL	Literary Criticism	3				

The total for graduation is 136 Credit Hours

## Appendix 2 Examples of Materials and Activities Used in the Experimental Programme

### 2-A Comparing Ideas to Develop Analysis and Interpretation Skills

Features	Version 1	Version 2

Although Version 1 and Version 2 are different, they are alike in some ways.

For example, they both

.....

.....

They are also similar in

.....

.....

The ----- is the same as

.....

Finally, they both

.....

I already knew that

.....

.....

but there were some differences in this version. First of all,

.....

.....

Another difference was that

.....

.....

This version was also different when

.....

.....

The most interesting difference was that

.....

Although not everybody would agree, I want to argue that.....

.....

I have several reasons for arguing this point of view. My first reason is

.....

Another reason is

.....

Furthermore,.....

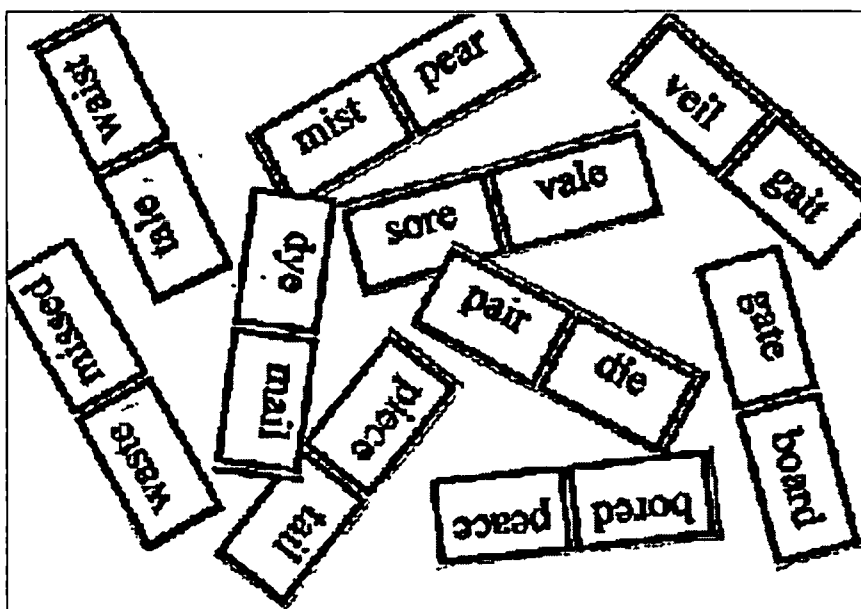
Therefore, although some people might argue that

.....

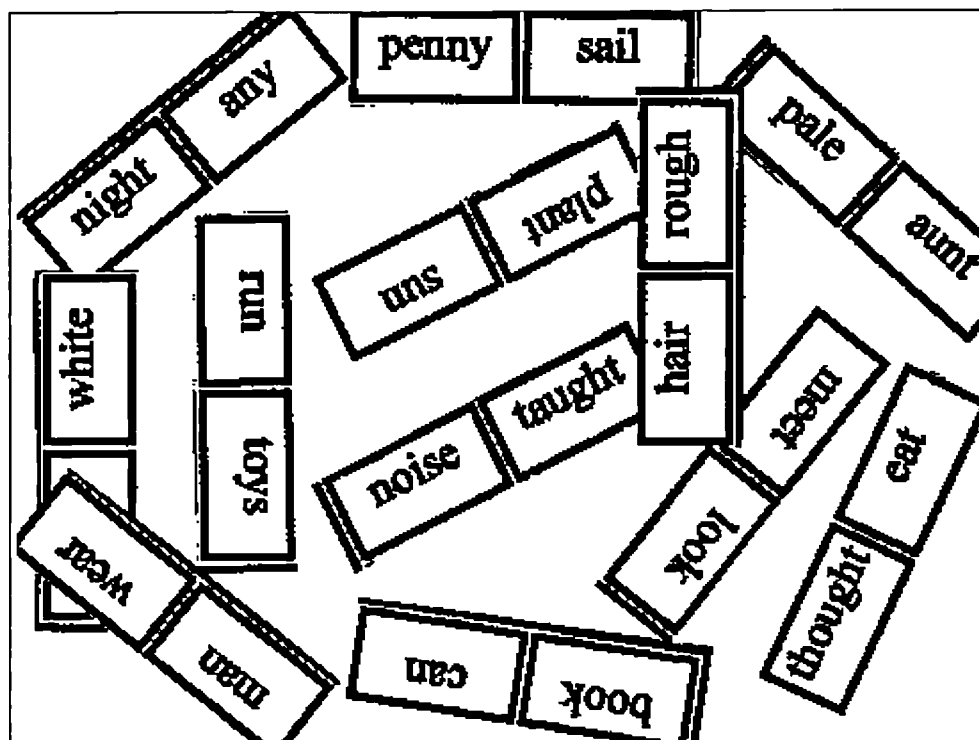
I think I have shown that.....

## 2-B Homonyms Dominos and Rhyming Dominoes

### Homonyms Dominos



### Rhyming Dominoes



## 2-C An example of Activity to Show Students' Awareness of Word Function

Match the item on the left with the appropriate definition from the list on the right:

I usually get up about eight	Past simple
What are you going to do this evening?	Passive
The optician told me I needed to wear glasses.	Present simple
The victim was murdered in the back garden.	Tag
It's a beautiful day isn't it?	Future

Or

A word opposite in meaning to another:	Passive
A group of words that include a subject and a finite verb:	Conjunction
A word that connects two parts of a compound sentence:	Antonym
Expressing an action done to the subject:	Tag
A phrase added to a statement to make a question:	Clause

## 2-D An Explanation of the Passive Voice, Helps Students to Understand the Formulation of the Passive Voice.

### What is the Passive voice?

There are 2 'voices' or forms for verbs:

- the active voice
- the passive voice

In the **active voice**, the object receives the action of the verb:

	Subject	verb	object
Active		----->	
	Cats	eat	fish.

In the **passive voice**, the subject receives the action of the verb:

	subject	verb	object
passive	<-----		
	Fish	is eaten	by cats.

The **object** of the **active** verb becomes the **subject** of the **passive** verb:

	subject	verb	object
Active	Everybody	drinks	water.
passive	Water	is drunk	by everybody.

### How do we make the Passive?

We make the Passive with [auxiliary verb **BE**] + [main verb **V3**].

The main verb is the past participle:

	V1	V2	V3
regular	wash	washed	washed
irregular	sing	sang	sung

Look at these examples:

subject	auxiliary verb BE	main verb V3 (PAST PARTICIPLE)	object etc
Water	is	drunk	by everyone.
100 people	are	employed	by this company.
I	am	paid	in euro.
We	are	not paid	in dollars.
Are	they	paid	in yen?

### When do we use the Passive?

We use the passive when:

- we want to make the active object more important
- we do not know the active subject

passive	subject	verb	object
give importance to active object	President Kennedy	was killed	by Lee Harvey Oswald.
active subject unknown	My wallet	has been stolen.	?

Note that we use 'by' to introduce the passive object.

How do we conjugate the Passive?

To form the passive in the correct tense, we conjugate the auxiliary verb (BE). So, for example:

- present simple: It **is** made
- present continuous: It **is being** made
- present perfect: It **has been** made

Here is a list of most of the possible tenses:

infinitive		to be washed
simple	present	It is washed
	past	It was washed
	future	It will be washed
	conditional	It would be washed
continuous	present	It is being washed
	past	It was being washed
	future	It will be being washed
	conditional	It would be being washed
perfect simple	present	It has been washed
	past	It had been washed
	future	It will have been washed
	conditional	It would have been washed
perfect continuous	present	It has been being washed
	past	It had been being washed
	future	It will have been being washed
	conditional	It would have been being washed

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## 2-E Tasks using articles in newspapers

Newspaper articles:

Understanding the parts of the newspaper. Look at the article provided then answer the following questions:

What is the headline?

Who wrote the article?

What is the caption to the photograph?



*Prediction activities:*

Hull Advertiser WEDNESDAY 13 MAY 1998

# Dolphins could be key to speech

PARENTS Sue and Graham Robinson are planning to launch a fund-raising campaign to a bid to bring the power of speech to their daughter Rebecca.

Austen has robbed the lively six-year-old, known as Becky, of being able to communicate properly with anyone.

Now determined Mr and Mrs Robinson are hoping to take her to America for therapy treatment with dolphins.

The couple, of Worcester Road, off Wold Road, Hull, hit on the idea after hearing that other youngsters had been amazingly helped by mixing with the dolphins as part of their treatment at a centre in Florida.

"Becky is a little girl locked

**IN HER OWN WORLD**

in her own world because she cannot speak and we want to find the key that will enable her to communicate," said 38-year-old Sue.

"We love her and we just want the best for her."

Becky, who attends Ganton Special School, looks like any normal girl of her age. But she needs round-the-clock attention because of her condition.

Sue said: "She cannot speak any actual words and just makes sounds. If she starts screaming and playing up in the street, some people think she's being naughty. But that is just the way she is."

She added: "We have heard that there is a pretty high success rate through the dolphins

therapy treatment. We believe it is worth a go, for Becky's sake."

Graham (38), who is maintenance manager at the Hull Lions sports club, and Sue, are appealing for help from anyone who thinks they can help with their campaign.

They believe they will have to raise thousands in order to be able to take Becky to Florida for the treatment and accommodation.

"The effort will all have been worth it if at the end of the day Becky is able to communicate. It will make such a difference to her quality of life," said Sue.

© If you think you can help in any way, you can contact Mr and Mrs Robinson on (01482) 506632.

Students see the photograph, with text covered up and try to make up their own captions, before uncovering and reading the actual text.

Students are given the newspaper article, plus an abridged version in which blanks are left. They must skim and scan to find the information

needed to fill in the blanks, but substitute the verbs given for others of a similar meaning.

e.g. Becky is unable to \_\_\_\_\_ properly with anyone. Her parents \_\_\_\_\_ to take her to Florida for treatment with dolphins. If you think you can \_\_\_\_\_ in any way, you can \_\_\_\_\_ Mr. And Mrs. Robinson on (01482) 506632.

This activity combines semantic and syntactic elements, as students must not only select a suitable word, but also choose the correct part of speech, tense etc.

Comprehension questions. For example:

**TWO** Well sisters today told of their double delight after giving birth on the same day and in the same hospital.

Sharon Green, 26, and Nicola Union, 27, both of Roversley High Road, had sons within hours of one another, both helped by their mum, Judy Dalton.

Their mother, Sherrill Rollison, said she had never come across a twin before like it in her 20-year career.

The girls have brought joy back into the lives of the Dalton family.

Another sister, Angela, 27, was killed in a road accident while she was working as a holiday representative on Croyde Pier and a half year ago.

Today the family were all sharing the remarkable double birth, hoping it would herald happier times.

The two sisters were moved to beds next to each other at Cricke Hill Hospital, Cottingham, within hours of the babies' first cries being heard.

Sharon said: "It's brilliant that we have both been

## Sisters give birth to boys on same day at same hospital

EXCLUSIVE BY HANNAH STANTY  
NEWS REPORTER

Through this together and have helped each other. It's like the two little angels have been sent from heaven."

Nicola, whose baby was three weeks premature, added: "I just can't believe it. I never thought we would have babies on the same day. I hope they become great friends."

Sharon was taken to hospital at 11pm on Sunday. She had a water birth and Kaan was born weighing 8lbs 13oz at 1.21pm on Monday.

Nicola was admitted at 1pm on the same day and gave the second new male and baby to the morning before going to the maternity ward to give birth herself.

Sharon said: "I just felt so emotional. I was thinking

she would have to go through what I had. It was painful, but afterwards it was just so overwhelming. I didn't want to leave her."

"All afternoon I just kept thinking about her. It was a long, long wait. I couldn't believe it when I found out they were both boys."

Ryan was born at 7.15pm, weighing 5lbs 14oz, and by 11pm the two sisters and new-born babies were getting acquainted.

Nicola said: "They arranged it for us to be on the same ward. It was just so lovely. We were talking about our experiences. I was just glad we had two healthy boys and we were all right, that was the main thing. Nicola's partner Dave



OLDER SISTER: JOANNE

David, 26, and Sharon's husband, Michael Green, now 26, were present at the births.

Proud grandmother Mrs Dalton said she and her husband, Mike, were delighted.

She added: "We are just all so pleased. It is amazing and seems very special. The girls are so close and now these two cousins are going to have a special bond after being born on the same day."

Earlier Mrs Rollison, whose eight-year-old daughter Samantha's birthday was on Monday said: "I have known sisters who have given birth around the same time, but never in the same hospital and on the same day."

**THE NEW 1.21am Sharon has Kaan, 8lbs 13oz**  
**ARRIVALS: 7.09pm Nicola gives birth to Ryan, 5lbs 14oz**



**MOTHERS' PRIDE:** Sharon left, and Nicola with little angels Kaan and Ryan

Picture: Frazer Harrison

What relation is Sharon to Nicola?

Which baby is biggest?

How many years has Mrs. Rollison been a midwife?

At what time was Ryan born?

What is the name of Sharon's husband?

What happened to the women's older sister?

Although the previous task looks semantic rather than syntactic, in fact it is a combination of the two aspects, because students must answer the questions in a comprehensive way and at the same time, their responses must be grammatically correct.

## 2-F A Sheet to Develop Research Skills

Author-surname. Plus initials:.....  
Year of publication (.....)

**Book title:**.....  
**Publisher's name:**.....  
**The place of publication:**.....

Chapter heading

Page

Sub-heading

Page

Other headings

Page

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

Write the names of pictures: maps, charts, tables, figures.. etc.

## 2-G An example of students write their own reading materials

Writing letters: Look at the problems below. The first one has an answer. Do you agree with it? The second problem does not have a solution. Can you write one?

Dear Paula

I am writing to you because I am very worried. My friends don't seem to like me any more. I used to have lots of friends and we always played together, but ever since my family moved house they have not called for me.

Our new house is only a mile from the old one, but my friends don't seem to want to walk that far to see me. There are lots of children from my school in our new street, but I haven't made friends with any of them.

I really wish that I had someone to play with and I am bored. What can I do?

Yours sincerely

Luke

***It's no good grumbling that your old friends don't want to come and see you. Have you thought of going to see them? If your friends are worth having it is worth making an effort to see them. Why not ask your parents if you can invite people to your house for a party or just to come to play? You could invite your old friends and your new friends. Don't sit at home and grumble about your lack of friends. Go out and do something about it! Paula***

***Dear Luke***

***I am sorry that you are unhappy, but I think the solution to your problem is easy. You must make the effort to make friends with the children who live near to your new house.***

***It can be very difficult to make friends if you don't try hard. What you should do is go out and ask if you can join in with their games. They might be a bit reluctant at first, but if you take some sweets with you I'm sure that they will make you welcome!***

Dear Paula

I have a terrible problem. My teachers all say that I am lazy because my work is not very good. They don't know that I find it very difficult to see what is written on the chalkboard, so I do not always know what to do in lessons.

I am a good reader and I manage well when we work from books. I think that I may need glasses, but I would hate to have to wear them. What can I do?

Gemma

Sources Waugh, D. (1996) *Curriculum Bank Writing*, Scholastic Ltd, UK.

## 2-H Examples of reading for information using authentic materials

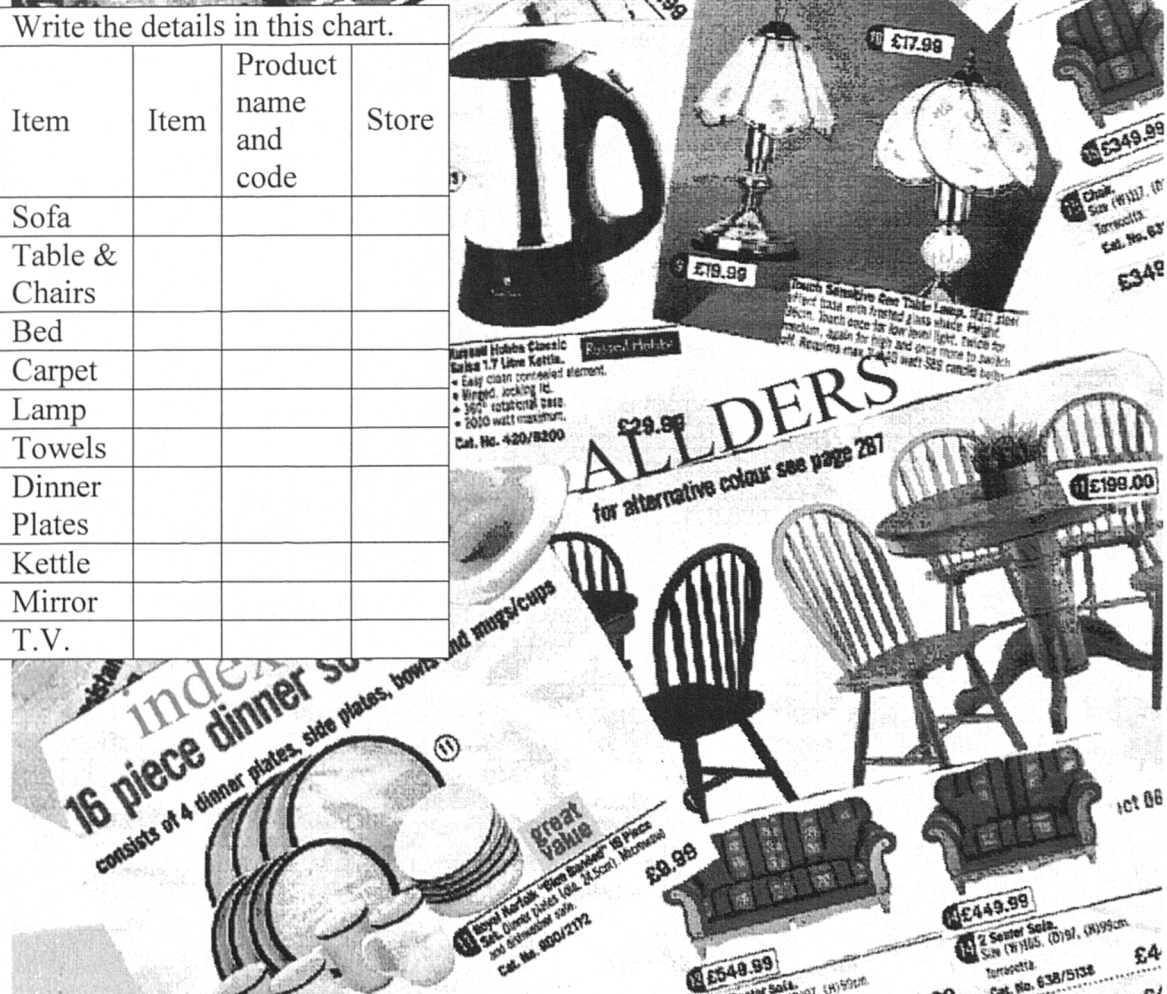
### Reading for Information (Furniture)

You are moving into a new house. You need some furniture and other things for the home. Where can you buy them? How much will it cost? Read the list of items below. Then look at the leaflets. Choose the things you would like to buy (you need only choose one of each kind, for example one sofa, one table) and write the details in the chart.



Write the details in this chart.

Item	Item	Product name and code	Store
Sofa			
Table & Chairs			
Bed			
Carpet			
Lamp			
Towels			
Dinner Plates			
Kettle			
Mirror			
T.V.			



Another example of reading for information is provided by using the newspaper as an authentic material see the following task:

### Looking for a Job

Five people are looking for a job. They see these advertisements in the local paper.



















Read the information about each person, and then scan the advertisements to find a suitable job for him or her. Fill in the details on the chart.

Applicant	Job title	Company/ Organisation	Address/ Phone
Anne has experience in hairdressing. She can only work part time.			
Sarah is a qualified secondary school teacher. She has experience of pupils with special needs.			
Susan is aged 21. She is moving to Scotland and will need somewhere to stay until she finds a house.			
Ali is an engineer with good knowledge of electricity.			
Norah has worked in an administrative department where all procedures were computerised. She has good interpersonal skills. She has just passed her driving test.			

## 2-I Examples of using pictures

### Understanding Meaning (Matching Picture and Sentences)

1. Here are three sheep and a cow.
2. Here are twelve flowers in a vase.
3. It's a fine day.
4. Dad got a cup of tea.
5. Here are two flowers on a table.
6. There are thirteen sheep in the field.
7. It's cold.
8. He's drinking a glass of juice.
9. Sara is drawing a plane in the sky.
10. The present is in front of the window.
11. The hen is at the door.
12. The bird is on the bridge.
13. She's drinking a cup of coffee.
14. Sylvia is drawing a car.
15. Here's a man in a boat.
16. The hat's on the box.
17. The stable is in front of the house.
18. The man's carrying a suit-case.
19. Mary's sitting under a sun-shade.
20. She's listening.
21. He is singing.
22. The little boy is running.
23. They are in a boat.
24. They are on the roof.

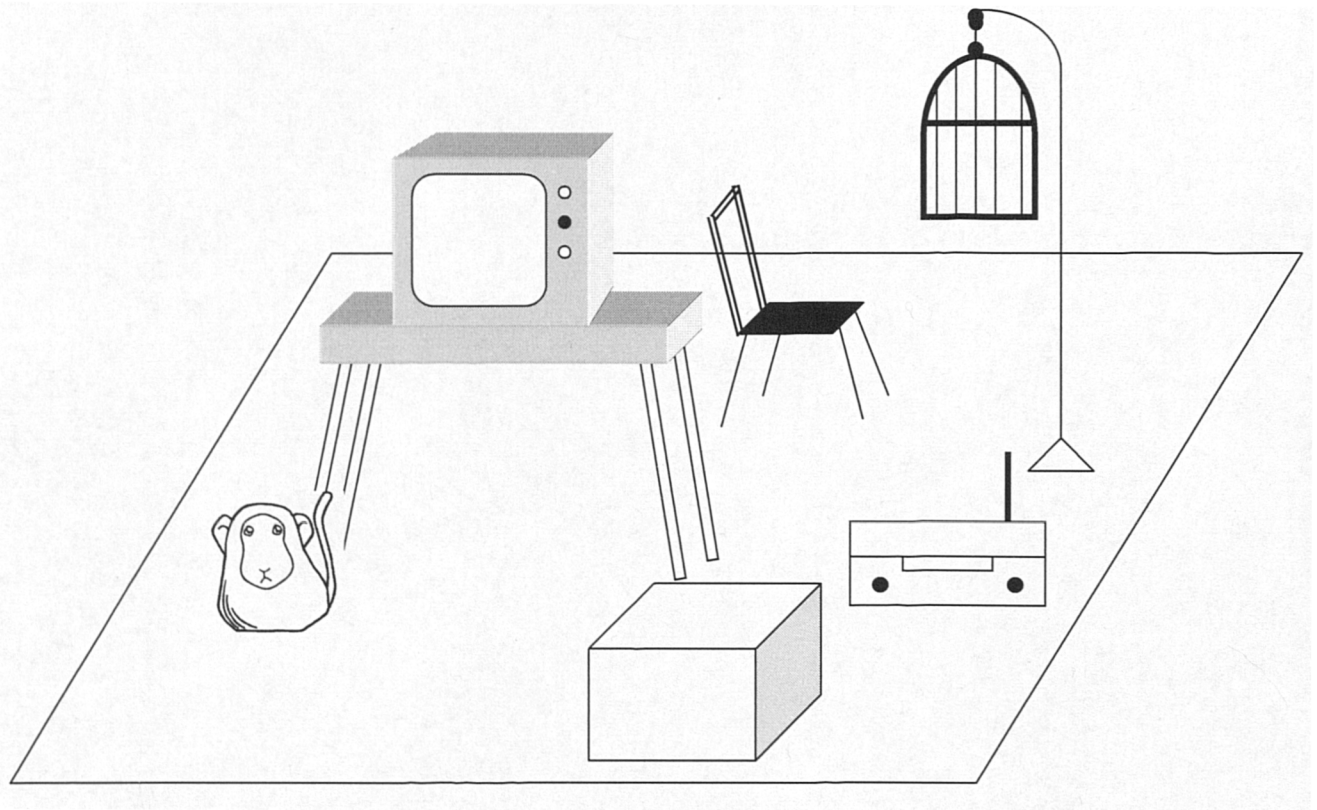
					
					
					
					
					
					



Another example of using pictures is the following.. Students need to read the sentences and must complete the pictures.

#### Understanding Meaning by Using Picture

Look at the Monkey! He is on a chair.  
There's a table. On the table there's a TV set and a lamp.  
Where's the vase? It's on the TV set.  
Where's the flower? It's in the vase.  
Where's the cat? It's on the black chair.  
Here's a box. On the box there are four flowers.  
The radio is on a small table.  
Where's the mouse? It's on the radio!  
Where's the bird? It's in the cage, of course.



## 2-J Identifying paragraph structure

1. We all know about Paul Getty 1, the richest man in the world. He's the one who, in his 72-bedroomed country mansion, used to have a pay phone for his guests. He's also the one who refused to pay the ransom for the release of Paul Getty III, his grandson, until the poor boy's ear was cut off - and even then, the money paid was a loan to Paul Getty II, at an interest rate of four per cent.

2. A magazine recently asked its readers to write in with their tales of miserliness done to or by them. Obviously, this is a subject close to many people's hearts. Many readers said they could hardly bear to remember the tightfisted habits of their parents, while others reported that years of stinginess had either broken up their marriages or had made their lives a misery.

3. One man bought his wife a dustpan for a Christmas present. When his workmates asked him about the brush to go with it, he replied, 'Oh, she's getting that for her birthday.'

4. Every year on her birthday her husband would give her the same birthday card, until one year she hit upon the idea of burning it (one wonders what took her so long). What did her husband do? He bought the cheapest substitute he could find, which happened to be a card for belated birthday greetings, so his wife suffered the added insult of receiving the card late.

5. There's the woman who for birthdays gives delightful home-made cards, with the message written on a separate piece of paper. With the card she'll enclose a short note asking for the card back in a few days' time.

6. His wife wrote, 'He's always charging the family for the things he does around the house. He grows vegetables in the back garden, but I have to pay for them out of my housekeeping money. When he gives our daughter a lift to work, he'll ask her for the bus fare and a little bit more because it's a door-to door service.'

7. Putting out the pilot light on gas cookers and fires is commonplace. Some people refuse to let others open the freezer without their permission. One man unashamedly wrote in to say how he cuts down on his heating bill. His wife never has the central heating on during the day while he's out at work because he's told her that gas is twice as expensive in the day-time so the heating conveniently comes on at six o'clock in time for his return.

6. There were tales of people who scrape salt from dirty plates back into the salt-cellar, retrieve cloves from eaten apple pies, save lemon slices from dirty glasses and preserve them in water to be reused later, or put used paper tissues to dry on the radiator. Life with a Scrooge is not a lot of fun.

Their tasks as follows:

The topic sentences (in this case, the first sentence of each paragraph) have been removed. They are listed here. Match them with the correct paragraph. Write the corresponding paragraph number in the box by the topic sentence.

- ☐ a. When it comes to counting the pennies, how about this charming man?6
- ☐ b. Many of the stories were to do with the giving of presents.3
- ☐ c. The meanness of the rich is legendary.1
- ☐ d. One woman's attempts to reform her husband's meanness were a complete failure.4
- ☐ e. Fuel economies are a widespread form of penny pinching.7

- f. Stories about stinginess over food were plenty.8
- g. But the meanness of more humble people is no less breathtaking.2
- h. Giving with one hand and taking with the other is a common trick.5

Sources: Harmer, J. (1991) *The Practice of English Language Teaching*, Longman, pp.211-212.

## 2-K Examples to develop skimming and scanning skills using authentic materials

### Skimming and Scanning Skills (Slimming Clubs)

Many people worry about losing weight. Some people join health clubs and buy special equipment and videotapes to help them get into shape. Other people go on diets using healthy foods which contain little or no fat. Here are some advertisements for different slimming clubs. Scan them and complete the chart that follows.

Scan means "read quickly to find specific information". Read the chart first.

Any Adjectives you can find	
Address	
Telephone	
Weight loss	
Price	
Name of the club	



**THE HOTTEST SUMMER DEAL EVER AT**

5 ROPER STREET, HULL (BEHIND PRINCES SUITE) ☎223480

**BODY FACTORY**

'HULL'S PREMIERE AEROBICS CENTRE - A STEP ABOVE THE REST'

**ONE YEAR FULL GYM MEMBERSHIP**

**OPEN DAY SATURDAY 10th JULY & SUNDAY 11th JULY 1.00-4.00pm**

**£135.00** (WEIGHTS, CYCLES, TREADMILLS, STEPPERS, BOXES)

SAVE UP TO £160 (2 months free to new members)

### WE HAVE ACHIEVED FANTASTIC RESULTS

Joan weight loss 1st 11lb

"I have lost nearly 2 stone in 10 weeks, my range of movement & mobility has improved 100%. I am starting to enjoy life again"

Andrea weight loss 9lb

"I struggled to lose my last half stone. It was then I found Four Seasons. The help, support & motivation I received was 1st class - I lost my weight! My straggling days are over!"

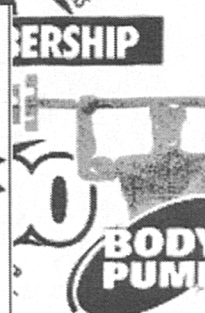
Michelle weight loss 2nd 8lb  
"I cannot wait for my holiday, the first time in years I can wear a swim suit and feel confident"

Karen weight loss 1st 4lb

"My husband works away. When he came home 3 months ago - the first words he said were, 'are you put a lot of weight on?' I cried, I joined Four Seasons to get me into shape & wow! they have done. I have never felt better. THANK YOU FOUR SEASONS. Wait until he comes home next time!"



**Ring 573777 NOW & Book your FREE no obligation guest visit**



RECEIVE A FREE TRIAL  
ITS - NO CONTRACTS!  
IRFT

## Reading for Information (Takeaway)

The following are different restaurants serving food as TAKEAWAY or delivering the food to your home. Scan them and complete the chart that follows.

Scan means "read quickly to find specific information". Read the chart first.

Name of Restaurant	Kind of food they serve	Example of food you can eat
Examples of food you must not eat	Telephone and address	Opening hours

### SOUTHERN FRIED CHICKEN

**FREE LOCAL DELIVERY SERVICE AVAILABLE**  
(Night Time Only)  
(Minimum Order £5)

Otherwise Standard Charge £1.00  
**OPENING TIMES**  
MON - SAT 11.00AM - 2PM  
6 PM - 12 MIDNIGHT  
SUN 5PM - 12 MIDNIGHT

**26 HULL ROAD - ANLABY**  
**TELEPHONE**  
**657317**

Please allow 30 minutes for delivery

	M	L
CHEESE & TOMATO	2.90	3.90
MUSHROOM	2.30	3.30
MILD ONIONS	2.90	3.90
TUNA	3.50	4.50
PRAWNS	3.50	4.50
HAM	3.50	4.50
MUSHROOM & ONIONS	3.50	4.50
HAM & MUSHROOM	3.50	4.50
HAM & KIDNEYAPPLE	3.50	4.50
CHICKEN & MUSHROOM	3.50	4.50
CHICKEN & SHEETCOOK	3.50	4.50
TUNA & MUSHROOM	3.50	4.50
PEPPERONI & MUSHROOM	3.50	4.50
SALAMI & ONIONS	3.50	4.50
BOLOGNESE	3.50	4.50
DONER PIZZA	3.50	4.50

ALL OUR PIZZAS ARE FRESHLY MADE AND HAVE 70% 30%

**TRAJ**  
**TANDOORI**  
178 Kingston Road,  
Wilderby, Hull,  
HU10 6LX  
Tel: 01482 656507

*Specialist In Traditional Indian Cuisine*

**Opening Hours**  
Open 7 Days A Week  
Including All Bank Holidays  
Evenings 5.00 p.m. - 11.30 p.m.

**WE DELIVER TO YOUR AREA**

45. CHICKEN KEBAB	£3.90
46. SHISH KEBAB	£3.90
47. MIXED KEBAB	£4.90

#### CHICKEN MEALS

48. CHICKEN BURGER & FRIES	£3.00
49. CHICKEN FILLET SANDWICH and FRIES	£3.50
50. CHICKEN KIEV SANDWICH & FRIES	£3.50
51. CHICKEN NUGGETS (6 pieces), SALAD & FRENCH FRIES	£2.00

#### SUNDRIES

FRENCH FRIES	90p
PRAWN SALAD	£1.90
COLESLAW	80p
SOFT DRINKS	55p
NIDE SALAD	£1.00
DESSERTS	£1.20
MUSHROOMS & GARLIC	£2.00

**PIZZAS**

	M	L
17. DONER CALZONE	4.00	5.20
Calzone, Mushrooms & Doner Meat with Garlic Butter		
18. CALZONE	4.00	5.20
With your own choice of three toppings		
19. MEAT FEAST	5.20	5.20
With Tasty, Pepperoni, Chicken, Sausage Meat		
20. HOT SHOT	4.20	5.20
Pepperoni, Onion, Green Peppers & Chilli		
21. SPICY BEEP	4.20	5.20
Onion, Peppers, Onions & Spicy Beef		
22. AL CAPONE	4.20	5.20
Ham, Onions, Mushrooms, Chilli & Garlic Butter		
23. VEGETARIAN SPECIAL	4.20	5.20
Onion, Peppers, Onions, Mushrooms, Sausages & Pineapple		
24. SEAFOOD SPECIAL	4.20	5.20
Green Peppers, Onions, Tuna, Potatoes & Anchovies		
25. KID SPECIAL	4.20	5.20
Onions, Tuna, Mushrooms with Garlic Butter Sauce		
26. HOUSE SPECIAL	4.50	5.50
A bit of everything except seafood		

**EXTRA TOPPINGS** 50p 80p

## Reading for Information "AD vouchers"

AD vouchers. Everyone likes to save money. Sometimes, shops and businesses offer special low prices, or even free gifts to attract customers. Here is a book of advertisements from different businesses. Each advertisement tells the customer something about the business and offers a special price or free service. Read the chart below, then look at the advertisements to find the information to fill in the spaces.

The image displays a collection of advertisements and vouchers for various businesses:

- White Heather REDKEN PREMIER SALON:** Features a voucher for "Into the Millennium from the Beauty Professionals" with a £5 OFF discount. The text mentions "Any hair" and provides the phone number Tel: 01482 507060.
- KINGS BEDS:** Specialists in Bed Care & Non Allergenic Beds. Offers a "FREE DELIVERY FREE STORAGE" and "FREE DISCOUNT FREE RETURN". The address is 71-73 WRIGHT ST. HULL. Tel: (01482) 22799.
- OXTLEY:** A voucher for "Secure Your" with a £30 discount. The address is Bostoft Avenue, Hull. Tel: 01482 444000.
- LifeStyle HAIR & BEAUTY CENTRES:** Offers a "FREE KIDS BUFFET" and a "BUFFET MEAL DEAL FOR 2". The price for the buffet is £14.95.
- Pizza Hut:** Offers a "FREE REGULAR SOFT DRINK" for parties of 6 or more.
- FREE:** A voucher for "FREE" with a "FREE" discount.

“AD vouchers”

Name of company	Product	Telephone no.	Offer valid until
Oxley			
White Heather			
Kings			
Pizza Hut			

Can you find: Two places where someone can go free?	Name of company
	1-..... 2-.....
Three places where you could go for a meal?	1-..... 2-..... 3-.....
Two beauty salons?	1-..... 2-.....
Three percentage signs (%)?	1-..... 2-..... 3-.....



## Appendix 3 A Short Questionnaire used in the Exploratory Study

### Part One

How do you feel about the present English courses (English language I & English language II)?

Teaching Methods

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-----  
-----

Content (textbook)

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-----  
-----

Teaching Aids

-----  
-----  
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### Part two:

How well do you think you have learned each of the following reading skills?

Reading Skills	Very Well	Quite Well	Least Well
Letter recognition skill			
Sound recognition skill			
Decoding and encoding skills			
Understanding meaning / Comprehension skill (reading for information)			
Speed reading skill			
Skimming skill			
Scanning skill			
Research and reference skills			
Analysis and interpretation skills			
Expectancy and prediction skills			
Function of words			

### Part Three:

What practical difficulties you and your friends had in learning to read in English?

-----  
-----  
-----

What do you think would be the easiest way to overcome these difficulties?

-----  
-----  
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## Appendix 4 The Reading Comprehension Test.

This Test is about reading Comprehension (how well you understand the English that you read). Do this test quickly but carefully. Choose the correct answer. There are 20 questions.

Example:Linda has a white cat and a black cat.

- She has one cat.
- Linda's cat is black and white.
- She has two cats.
- Linda likes brown cats.

Start here:

**1. . A dog is bigger than a mouse, but smaller than an elephant.**

- A dog is smaller than a mouse.
- A dog is very big.
- A dog is the biggest.
- An elephant is bigger than a dog.

**2. Sangay is English but Teresa isn't; she's American.**

- Teresa is English.
- Sangay isn't English.
- Sangay isn't American.
- Teresa and Sangay aren't English.

**3. He is the oldest man in the world.**

- He is not as old as my grandmother.
- Many men are older.
- There are no older men anywhere.
- He's older than some other men.

**4. You can't come without a ticket.**

- You can come if you have a ticket.
- You mustn't go with a ticket.
- You don't need a ticket to come.

- A ticket is always necessary.

**5. Andrea is looking after the children.**

- She can see the children.
- She is taking care of the children.
- She is looking at the children.
- The children are in front of her.

**6. They only have one car for the family.**

- They only like cars.
- They do not like any other cars.
- They do not have two cars.
- They have a big family.

**7. What does Vonica like?**

- What are her favourite things?
- How is she?
- Does she look like Vonica?
- Does he like Vonica?

**8. He hopes to go home, but he may go to work.**

- He'll be at home before the office.
- It is possible that he will go to work.
- He's allowed to go to work.
- He always goes home after work.

**9. I want you to clean the car when you come back.**

- You want to clean it.
- We will clean it together.
- I don't want you to forget to clean it.
- I want to clean the car.

**10. She used to smoke cigarettes.**

- She is used to cigarettes.
- She smoked before, but she doesn't now.
- She usually smokes cigarettes.
- She used two cigarettes.

**11. Shall I take you to the station?**

- Would you like me to take you to the station?
- Must I take you?
- Will it be necessary to take you there?
- Did I take you before?

**12. They should talk more slowly.**

- They talk too quickly.
- They would like to talk more slowly.
- They might have slower talks.
- Talking is not fast.

**13. Mirana remembered to phone the doctor.**

- She remembered phoning the doctor.
- Mirana forgot to remember to phone.
- She didn't forget to phone the doctor.
- She remembered that she phoned her.

**14. Madame Traiviey has lived nearly 115 years.**

- She was very old.
- She is very old.
- She died when she was nearly 115.
- Madame Traiviey has many more years.

**15. She can hardly see it.**

- She sees very hard.
- She is hard with it.
- She cannot see it very well.
- It is hard to see her.

**16. Yeuk Yee had her house painted white yesterday.**

- She had to paint her house white yesterday.
- Her house was not blue last week.
- They painted her house white for her yesterday.
- She painted her house yesterday.

**17. Either teacher knows the answer.**

- No teacher knows the answer.
- Both teachers know the answer.
- All the teachers know the answer.
- Any teacher can answer.

**18. I'd rather be a millionaire.**

- I've been a millionaire.
- I'd better be a millionaire.
- I'd prefer to be a millionaire.
- You have more millions than me.

**19. You don't have to do this test.**

- You can choose not to do this test.
- You mustn't do it.
- You can't do this test.
- You have no desire to do it.

**20. If Muriel had come, she would have won.**

- If she hadn't won, she'd have come.
- Muriel didn't win because she didn't come.
- When Muriel came she always won.
- She didn't come, but she won anyway.

## Appendix 5 The Affective Questionnaire (English Version).

We want you to tell us about what you think of the current **teaching methods**.

Listed below are some contrasting words or phrases that might be used to describe **teaching methods**. Give your opinion of the teaching methods by circling one of the numbers along each scale.

The numbers between the words or phrases let you show how much you think the teaching methods are like either of them. The closer your choice is to one end of the scale, the more strongly you feel that end best describes the teaching methods. For example, if you feel teaching methods are very closely related to one end of the scale, you should circle the number at that end

Either

Easy ←      2      3      4      5      Difficult

Or

Easy    1      2      3      4      °      Difficult

If you feel teaching methods is quite closely related to one end or the other, circle 2 or 4. Circle 3 to show you think both ends are equally related or equally balanced.

### **Remember:**

Consider both ends before making a decision.

Circle ONE number for each scale.

Boring	1	2	3	4	5	Interesting.
Useless	1	2	3	4	5	Useful
Clear (comprehensible)	1	2	3	4	5	Unclear
Out-of-date	1	2	3	4	5	Modern
Varied	1	2	3	4	5	Repetitive
Relevant to my needs	1	2	3	4	5	Irrelevant to my needs
Long	1	2	3	4	5	Short
Rich explanation	1	2	3	4	5	Poor explanation
Easy	1	2	3	4	5	Difficult
Successful	1	2	3	4	5	Unsuccessful
Unfriendly	1	2	3	4	5	Friendly
Frightening	1	2	3	4	5	Non frightening
Not helpful	1	2	3	4	5	Helpful
Embarrassing	1	2	3	4	5	not Embarrassing
Comfortable	1	2	3	4	5	Uncomfortable
Poorly-prepared	1	2	3	4	5	Well-prepared
Threatening	1	2	3	4	5	Not threatening
Involves many things	1	2	3	4	5	Involves one thing
Unpleasant	1	2	3	4	5	Pleasant
Necessary	1	2	3	4	5	Not- necessary

Now we want to use a similar list in the same way but now we want to ask about the **textbook**. What do you think of the **current textbook**?

Boring	1	2	3	4	5	Interesting.
Useless	1	2	3	4	5	Useful
Clear (comprehensible)	1	2	3	4	5	Unclear
Out-of-date	1	2	3	4	5	Modern
Varied	1	2	3	4	5	Repetitive
Relevant to my needs	1	2	3	4	5	Irrelevant to my needs
Long	1	2	3	4	5	Short
Rich explanation	1	2	3	4	5	Poor explanation
Easy	1	2	3	4	5	Difficult
Successful	1	2	3	4	5	Unsuccessful
Unfriendly	1	2	3	4	5	Friendly
Frightening	1	2	3	4	5	Non frightening
Not helpful	1	2	3	4	5	Helpful
Embarrassing	1	2	3	4	5	not Embarrassing
Comfortable	1	2	3	4	5	Uncomfortable
Poorly-prepared	1	2	3	4	5	Well-prepared
Threatening	1	2	3	4	5	Not threatening
Involves many things	1	2	3	4	5	Involves one thing
Unpleasant	1	2	3	4	5	Pleasant
Necessary	1	2	3	4	5	Not- necessary

Which reading skills do you find most difficult or least difficult?

Reading Skills	Tick the three that you find <b>most</b> difficult	Tick the three that you find <b>least</b> difficult
Letter recognition skill		
Sound recognition skill		
Decoding and encoding skills		
Understanding meaning		
Comprehension skill (reading for information)		
Speed reading skill		
Skimming skill		
Scanning skill		
Research and references skills		
Analysis and interpretation skills		
Expectancy and prediction skills		
Function of words		



The Open Questions (for experimental group only)

What (two things) do you like about the programme?

---

---

---

What (two things) do you not like about the programme?

---

---

---

Do you like the teaching method? Was it too fast, too slow, clear, unclear, too much, enough, or too little?

---

---

---

Which materials were most useful?

---

---

---

Which materials were least useful?

---

---

---

Were the activities too much, enough, or too little?

---

---

---

What would you like to change about the programme?

---

---

---

What would you like to add to the programme?

---

---

---

What would you like to do less in the programme?

---

---

---

**وكيل الكلية  
للدراسات العليا والبحث العلمي**

## وقم المعاملة

منہ

المستقر نوراً الصبي

حالة:  سعيدة: ☐ عميد الكلية

○ وكيل الكلية للشؤون التعليمية والخدمات الطلابية

○ مدير إدارة الكلية

○المشرف على /

○ مدير مكتب وكالة الدراسات العليا

... .. / اندستان

فَحَيْهَ طَيِّبَةً وَبَرِيَّةً :

### الاحراء المطلوب :

□ للاطلاع والإفادة

**□ للمتابعة**

☐ للتعميم

☐ لإكمال اللازم

☐ للعرض على لجنة.

وتقبلوا خالص تحياتي ووافر تقديرتي،،

## للدرايات العليا والبحث العلمى

2

*[Signature]*

أ. د. علي بن حمزة أبو غرارة

**نمودار ۱۵: تصفیه**

## Appendix 7 The Affective Questionnaire (Arabic Version)

### مقدمة:

يهدف هذا الاستبيان إلى معرفة رأيك في طرق التدريس الحالية المستخدمة في تدريس القراءة باللغة الإنجليزية. كذلك معرفة رأيك في كتب اللغة الإنجليزية الحالية. أيضا يهدف إلى معرفة مدى صعوبة مهارات القراءة المختلفة التي تعيقك لتطوير القراءة لديك.

أرجو أن تكون إجابتك صريحة ودقيقة ولا تتردد إذا كان لديك أي استفسار عن أي سؤال. إن الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو البحث العلمي وجميع الإجابات سوف تكون سرية. شاكرًا لكم سلفًا الوقت والجهد الذي استغرق لتعبئة هذه الاستبانة

فيما يأتي ألفاظ أو تعابير متعكسة من الممكن استخدامها في وصف طرق التدريس. ضعي دائرة حول الرقم الذي يمثل رأيك في طرق التدريس على محاذاة كل مقياس.

الأرقام بين الأقواس أو التعابير تترجم مقدار وجهة نظرك في طرق التدريس. كلما كان اختيارك أقرب إلى إحدى نهايتي المقياس كلما دل ذلك على قوة موافقتك على اللفظ الذي يصف طرق التدريس.

على سبيل المثال إذا كنت تشعر أن طرق التدريس عن قرب جدا من إحدى طرفي المقياس، فإنه يجب وضع دائرة حول الرقم إلى جانب تلك نهاية.

إما

سهل 1 2 3 4 5 صعب  
أو

سهل ← 2 3 4 5 صعب

إذا كنت تشعرين أن طرق التدريس قريبة جدا و مرتبطة إلى أحد طرفي المقياس، ضع دائرة حول الرقم 2 أو 4 .  
الدائرة حول الرقم 3 تدل على أنك تعتقدين أن كلا طرفي المقياس متساويان أو متوازنان.

### ملاحظة:

- يجب قراءة الألفاظ جيدا قبل اتخاذ أي قرار.
- ضع دائرة حول رقم واحد في كل مقياس.

أولا  
ما رأيك قي طرق تدريس القراءة باللغة الإنجليزية الحالية؟ (الرجاء وضع دائرة حول الرقم الأقرب إلى رأيك).

ممل	1	2	3	4	5	ممتع (مشوق)
مفيد	1	2	3	4	5	غير مفيد
واضح	1	2	3	4	5	غير واضح
قديم	1	2	3	4	5	حديث
متنوع	1	2	3	4	5	موضوعاته متكررة
له علاقة بحاجاتي وميولي	1	2	3	4	5	ليس له علاقة بحاجاتي وميولي
قصير	1	2	3	4	5	طويل
غني بالشرح والتفسير	1	2	3	4	5	يفتقد الشرح والتفسير
سهل	1	2	3	4	5	صعب
غير ناجح	1	2	3	4	5	ناجح
ودي	1	2	3	4	5	فاتر (غير ودي)
منفر (مرعب)	1	2	3	4	5	غير منفر
مساعد	1	2	3	4	5	غير مساعد
مخرج (مربك)	1	2	3	4	5	غير مخرج
مريح	1	2	3	4	5	غير مريح
جيد الإعداد	1	2	3	4	5	سيئ الإعداد
تهديدي	1	2	3	4	5	غير تهديدي
متعدد الاحتياجات	1	2	3	4	5	غير متعدد
غير مفرح	1	2	3	4	5	مفرح
غير ضروري	1	2	3	4	5	ضروري

والآن نريد أن نستخدم المذكور أنفا بنفس الطريقة ولكن الآن نريد أن نتسأل عن الكتاب المقرر. ما رأيك في

كتب اللغة الإنجليزية الحالية؟ (الرجاء وضع دائرة حول الرقم الأقرب إلى رأيك).

ممل	1	2	3	4	5	ممتع (مشوق)
مفيد	1	2	3	4	5	غير مفيد
واضح	1	2	3	4	5	غير واضح
قديم	1	2	3	4	5	حديث
متنوع	1	2	3	4	5	موضوعاته متكررة
له علاقة بحاجاتي وميولي	1	2	3	4	5	ليس له علاقة بحاجاتي وميولي
قصير	1	2	3	4	5	طويل
غني بالشرح والتفسير	1	2	3	4	5	يفتقد الشرح والتفسير
سهل	1	2	3	4	5	صعب
غير ناجح	1	2	3	4	5	ناجح
ودي	1	2	3	4	5	فاتر (غير ودي)
منفر (مرعب)	1	2	3	4	5	غير منفر
مساعد	1	2	3	4	5	غير مساعد
مخرج (مربك)	1	2	3	4	5	غير مخرج
مريح	1	2	3	4	5	غير مريح
جيد الإعداد	1	2	3	4	5	سيئ الإعداد
تهديدي	1	2	3	4	5	غير تهديدي
متعدد الاحتياجات	1	2	3	4	5	غير متعدد
غير مفرح	1	2	3	4	5	مفرح
غير ضروري	1	2	3	4	5	ضروري

ثالثاً

أي من مهارات القراءة التالية التي تجدونها في غاية الصعوبة أو قليلة الصعوبة بالنسبة لك؟ (الرجاء الإجابة بوضع علامة (√) أمام كل مهارة من مهارات القراءة التالية).

مهارات القراءة	ضع علامة ( √ ) أمام ثلاث مهارات تجدونها أكثر صعوبة	ضع علامة ( √ ) أمام ثلاث مهارات تجدونها أقل صعوبة
Letter recognition skill مهارة إدراك الحروف.		
Sound recognition skill مهارة إدراك الأصوات.		
Decoding and encoding skills مهارة فك وتحليل الرموز.		
Understanding meaning مهارة فهم المعنى.		
Comprehension skill (reading for information) مهارة الإستيعاب في قراءة المعلومات.		
Speed reading skill مهارة القراءة السريعة.		
Skimming skill مهارة التصفح.		
Scanning skill مهارة التدقيق.		
Research and references skills مهارة البحث والمراجع.		
Analysis and interpretation skills مهارات التحليل والتفسير.		
Expectancy and prediction skills مهارات التوقع والإستنتاج.		
Function of words المهارات اللغوية.		

## Appendix 8 Reliability of the Reading Achievement Test in the Pilot Study

### Item-total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance Total Correlation	Corrected Item if Item Deleted	Alpha if Item Deleted
PRETQU1	27.9189	14.6321	.0036	.7596
PRTEQU2	27.8108	14.7132	-.0638	.7679
PRTEQU3	27.1081	13.9324	.2121	.7533
PRTEQU4	27.4865	12.3679	.5742	.7249
PRTEQU5	27.7297	12.7583	.5807	.7283
PRTEQU6	27.7838	13.7297	.2868	.7488
PRETQU7	27.6216	12.6306	.5359	.7293
PRETQU8	27.3243	13.1697	.3509	.7440
PRETQU9	27.5405	13.0330	.3848	.7412
PRETQU10	27.2703	12.4249	.6018	.7239
PRETQU11	27.5946	12.6922	.5038	.7316
PRETQU12	27.5135	12.7568	.4612	.7348
PRETQU13	27.3514	15.1787	-.1967	.7856
PRETQU14	27.1351	14.2868	.0730	.7621
PRETQU15	27.6486	13.2898	.3431	.7446
PRETQU16	27.2703	12.9249	.4435	.7367
PRETQU17	27.4054	13.5255	.2376	.7532
PRETQU18	27.5946	13.3033	.3190	.7465
PRETQU19	27.4595	13.9775	.1133	.7631
PRETQU20	27.4054	12.7477	.4603	.7348

N of Cases = 37.0

N of Items = 20

Alpha = .7562

### RELIABILITY ANALYSIS - SCALE (ALPHA)

#### Item-total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance Total Correlation	Corrected Item if Item Deleted	Alpha if Item Deleted
PRETQU1	26.3243	15.1141	.0294	.7888
PRTEQU2	26.2162	15.2853	-.0837	.7983
PRTEQU3	25.5135	14.3679	.2369	.7831
PRTEQU4	25.8919	12.8769	.5644	.7607
PRTEQU5	26.1351	13.2312	.5841	.7622
PRTEQU6	26.1892	14.1577	.3134	.7790
PRETQU7	26.0270	13.1381	.5277	.7642
PRETQU8	25.7297	13.6471	.3551	.7764

PRETQU9	25.9459	13.4970	.3921	.7738
PRETQU10	25.6757	12.9474	.5874	.7598
PRETQU11	26.0000	13.2222	.4893	.7668
PRETQU12	25.9189	13.1321	.4929	.7662
PRETQU14	25.5405	14.8664	.0505	.7936
PRETQU15	26.0541	13.7192	.3626	.7758
PRETQU16	25.6757	13.3919	.4496	.7698
PRETQU17	25.8108	13.9354	.2619	.7833
PRETQU18	26.0000	13.7778	.3247	.7785
PRETQU19	25.8649	14.5090	.1070	.7943
PRETQU20	25.8108	13.1021	.4980	.7658

N of Cases = 37.0    N of Items = 19    Alpha = .7856

#### RELIABILITY ANALYSIS - SCALE (ALPHA)

##### Item-total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance Total Correlation	Corrected Item if Item Deleted	Alpha if Item Deleted
PRETQU1	25.1892	15.2132	.0351	.8017
PRTEQU3	24.3784	14.4640	.2398	.7965
PRTEQU4	24.7568	12.9670	.5670	.7752
PRTEQU5	25.0000	13.3333	.5833	.7767
PRTEQU6	25.0541	14.2748	.3084	.7929
PRETQU7	24.8919	13.2658	.5190	.7793
PRETQU8	24.5946	13.8589	.3236	.7927
PRETQU9	24.8108	13.6577	.3751	.7892
PRETQU10	24.5405	13.0330	.5916	.7742
PRETQU11	24.8649	13.2868	.5000	.7805
PRETQU12	24.7838	13.2297	.4936	.7807
PRETQU14	24.4054	14.9700	.0513	.8067
PRETQU15	24.9189	13.7988	.3694	.7894
PRETQU16	24.5405	13.4219	.4711	.7826
PRETQU17	24.6757	13.9474	.2869	.7954
PRETQU18	24.8649	13.8423	.3356	.7918
PRETQU19	24.7297	14.5916	.1129	.8073
PRETQU20	24.6757	13.1697	.5073	.7796

N of Cases = 37.0    N of Items = 18    Alpha = .7983 = .80