

**ADDRESSING THE READING PROBLEMS OF
SELECTED LEARNERS OF ENGLISH AS A
FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN THREE SCHOOLS IN
TRIPOLI, LIBYA**

by

NAJLA AL FATHALI

Mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree:

MAGISTER ARTIUM

in

Applied Language Studies in
the Department of Afrikaans at the

**UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA,
PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA**

Supervisor: Prof. V.N. Webb

March 2006

DEDICATION

**This work is dedicated
to my parents
Nourddin and Amall
who loved me
and
supported me all
the
time.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my great appreciation to my supervisor, Prof. V.N. Webb, for his donation of time, effort and helpful suggestions. Without his guidance and support, this study would not have been possible.

I wish also to thank administrators and teachers and students of English as a foreign language at the Ali Seealh, M'teigah and 11 June Secondary School in Tripoli, Libya, who assisted me in carrying out this research.

Thank you to the administrators and lecturers at the High Institute for preparation and qualification of Teachers, Majd Al Arab in Tripoli, Libya, for assisting me in carrying out this research.

I would also like to thank Mr. Bashir Mohamed Abomallassa and Rammadan Alshakshoki for their help in arranging some of the interviews in one of the schools in Tripoli, Libya.

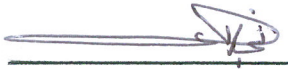
I am very grateful to Mr. Patrick Lenahan for suggesting an adequate list of books about reading in a foreign language. I am also grateful to Mrs. Ethresia du Plessis for her assistance in typing the comprehension test.

A special thank to Prof. Hein Willemse, who helped me in suggesting relevant sources on books research methodology at the early stage of the study.

And lastly, to my family, who have supported me all the time. I express my sincere thanks and love to my sisters Aisha, Soumaya, Faten and Enas and my brothers Mohamed, Ahmed and Zead for their support, love and understanding.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this is my own original work and that all sources and references have, to the best of my knowledge, been accurately acknowledged. This document has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any academic institution in order to obtain an academic qualification.



NAJLA AL FATHALI

March 2006

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF FIGURES	vi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	vii
SUMMARY	viii
CHAPTER 1: PROBLEM STATEMENT.....	1
1.1 BACKGROUND.....	1
1.2 WHY DO EFL LEARNERS IN LIBYA HAVE PROBLEMS IN READING.....	3
1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	4
1.4 THE AIM OF THE STUDY.....	5
1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	5
1.6 METHODOLOGY.....	7
1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN.....	8
1.8 DATA COLLECTION.....	9
1.9 STRUCTURE OF THE MINI-DISSERTATION.....	10
CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	12
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	12
2.2 DEFINITION OF READING.....	14
2.3 SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE THAT EFL LEARNERS NEED FOR EFFECTIVE READING.....	17
2.3.1 The knowledge of the grammar.....	20
2.3.2 How does the reader determine the meaning of the text.....	26
2.4 TEACHING READING TO EFL LEARNERS AND THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN THE CLASSROOM.....	34
2.5 CONCLUSION.....	35
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	37

3.1	INTRODUCTION.....	37
3.2	OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES.....	38
3.2.1	Quantitative research.....	38
3.2.2	Qualitative research.....	40
3.3	TYPE OF RESEARCH THAT IS BEING UNDERTAKEN.....	41
3.4	DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT.....	42
3.5	THE PROCEDURES FOR ANALYZING DATA.....	44
3.6	CONCLUSION.....	45
 CHAPTER 4: DATA DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS		46
4.1	COMPREHENSION TEST.....	46
4.2	OBSERVATION.....	50
4.3	INTERVIEWS.....	53
4.4	CONCLUSION.....	64
 CHAPTER 5: PROPOSED SOLUTIONS.....		65
5.1	OVERVIEW.....	65
5.2	THE PROBLEMS THAT LEARNERS EXPERIENCE WITH READING ENGLISH.....	66
5.3	THE MAIN REASONS OR CAUSES OF THESE PROBLEMS.....	66
5.4	THE POSSIBLE WAYS TO RESOLVE THESE PROBLEMS.....	68
5.5	CONCLUSIONS.....	69
 BIBLIOGRAPHY.....		71
ADDENDUM TO CHAPTER 4.....		73

List of Figures

Figure		Page
Figure 1	Process of reading.....	15
Figure 2	Communication process.....	16
Figure 3	Language knowledge.....	19
Figure 4	The structure of diversity in a language.....	27

List of abbreviations

EFL English as a Foreign Language

FL Foreign Language

SUMMARY

The study aims at investigating the problems that learners of English as a foreign language in three secondary schools in Tripoli, Libya, have in developing English reading skills. The study is conducted within a conceptual framework for the study of reading and the development of reading skills, developed on the basis of a literature study. Information was obtained by requesting 60 Grade 11 learners in the three selected schools to complete an English comprehension test (to determine their ability to interpret a written text), by observing teachers teaching English reading in these schools, by conducting interviews with the learners and by interviewing selected lecturers at a Teachers' Training College in Tripoli.

The information obtained in this way was analysed and interpreted in order to answer the following questions:

- a) What problems do learners in Libyan secondary schools experience with reading in EFL?
- b) What are the main causes of these problems?
- c) Do the curricula for EFL reading and the didactic approaches of educators contribute to the problem?
- d) What are the possible ways to resolve these problems?

Findings include:

- EFL learners in Tripoli cannot recognise sentences and paragraphs.
- They have restricted vocabulary knowledge.
- They are not able to extract correct information from texts. They cannot understand both implied and explicitly stated information.
- They do not understand figurative language.
- They cannot express the technical relations between parts of texts through the use of cohesive devices.
- They cannot determine or identify the main idea of texts.

The reasons for these problems are that the learners do not have a structured knowledge of the English language, their English reading skills are underdeveloped and non-appropriate didactic approaches are used by educators in EFL classrooms.

Possible ways to resolve these problems are that EFL learners must acquire better proficiency in English, their English reading skills must be developed properly, and educators in EFL learners' classrooms must use more appropriate didactic approaches to enable EFL learners to acquire proficiency in English and to develop their reading skills, by following the steps prescribed in the EFL reading curriculum. The curriculum that is used in the Teachers' Training College must be implemented more effectively in teacher training programmes, and lecturers must ensure that teacher trainees have a proper understanding of the curriculum of EFL reading skills when they graduate.

KEYWORDS: reading skills, knowledge of English language, cultural context, process of reading, communication process, the structure of diversity in a language, functional competence, didactic approaches, negotiate meaning, socio cultural communication.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie ondersoek die probleme wat leerders verbonde aan drie skole in Tripoli, Libië, met die ontwikkeling van leesvaardigheid in Engels as vreemde taal ondervind. Die studie is uitgevoer binne 'n konseptuele raamwerk vir die bestudering van lees en die ontwikkeling van leesvaardigheid, ontwikkel op grond van 'n literatuurstudie. Inligting is ingewin deur 60 graad 11-leerders in drie gekose skole te vra om 'n Engelse begripstoets te doen (om te bepaal wat hulle vermoë is om 'n geskrewe teks te kan interpreteer); deur onderwysers wat die lees van Engels in hierdie skole onderrig, dop te hou; deur onderhoude met die leerders te voer; en deur onderhoude met gekose onderwysers wat aan 'n onderwysersopleidingskollege in Tripoli verbonde is, te voer.

Die inligting wat op hierdie manier ingewin is, is ontleed en geïnterpreteer om antwoorde op die volgende vrae te vind:

- a) Watter probleme ondervind leerders in Libiese sekondêre skole met die lees van Engels as vreemde taal?
- b) Wat is die hooforsaak van hierdie probleme?
- c) Dra die kurrikulums vir die lees van Engels as vreemde taal en die didaktiese benaderings van opvoeders tot die probleem by?
- d) Watter moontlike maniere is daar om hierdie probleme op te los?

Die bevindinge sluit die volgende in:

- Leerders van Engels as vreemde taal in Tripoli kan nie sinne en paragrawe herken nie.
- Hulle beskik oor 'n beperkte woordeskat.

- Hulle is nie in staat om korrekte inligting uit tekste te abstraher nie. Hulle begryp nie implisiete óf eksplisiet geformuleerde inligting nie.
- Hulle begryp nie figuurlike taalgebruik nie.
- Hulle kan nie die tegniese verbande tussen dele van die teks uitdruk deur van kohesiemiddele gebruik te maak nie.
- Hulle kan nie die kerngedagte van 'n teks bepaal of identifiseer nie.

Die redes vir die voorkoms van hierdie probleme is dat die leerders nie oor 'n gestruktureerde kennis van die Engelse taal beskik nie, dat hulle Engelse leesvaardigheid onderontwikkel is, en dat opvoeders nie-gepaste didaktiese benaderings gebruik in klasse waar Engels as vreemde taal onderrig word.

Maniere waarop hierdie probleme moontlik opgelos kan word, sluit die volgende in: leerders van Engels as vreemde taal moet groter taalvaardigheid in Engels verwerf; hulle leesvaardigheid in Engels moet behoorlik ontwikkel word; onderwysers wat Engels as vreemde taal onderrig, moet in hulle klasse meer gepaste didaktiese benaderings volg wat leerders van Engels as vreemde taal in staat sal stel om taalvaardig in Engels te word en om hulle leesvaardigheid te verbeter deur die stappe wat in die leeskurrikulum vir Engels as vreemde taal voorgeskryf word, te volg. Die kurrikulum wat aan die onderwysersopleidingskollege gebruik word, moet meer doeltreffend in onderwysersopleidingsprogramme geïmplementeer word, en dosente moet toesien dat onderwysstudente in opleiding die kurrikulum vir leesvaardigheid in Engels as vreemde taal deeglik begryp teen die tyd dat hulle afstudeer.

SLEUTELWOORDE: leesvaardigheid, kennis van die Engelse taal, kulturele konteks, leesproses, kommunikasieproses, die struktuur van diversiteit in 'n taal, funksionele vaardigheid, didaktiese benaderings, die vasstel van betekenis ("negotiating meaning"), sosiokulturele kommunikasie.

CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1 BACKGROUND

The reading skills of learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Libya are not well developed, as is apparent from responses to a very simple comprehension test given to Libyan students (provided below). Questions such as: What are the camels doing? And: Where are the men standing?, were not answered appropriately. The text (including the picture) used in the comprehension test was as follows:



There are three camels. Two camels are drinking water. One camel is eating leaves.

There are two men. They are standing under a tree. There is a girl. She is wearing a green dress. The girl is talking to her mother. She is wearing a blue dress. They are sitting under a tree.

There is a horse. The girl's brother is riding the horse.

The answers of Grade 8 learners to some of the questions in the test are given below:

- What is the girl's brother doing?
Student: he stand under tree.
- Who is the girl talking to?
Student: she is talk to the men.
- What is the camel eating?
Student: he is drink water.

As can be seen, the student found it difficult to answer the questions even though he could read the text under the photograph. The answers show the lack of grammatical knowledge, lack of English vocabulary and the inability to interpret a text. The first answer shows that the student does not know who the girl's brother is and this is because he cannot read effectively. If his reading skills were well developed he would have understood the last sentence in the paragraph: "The girl's brother is riding a horse". The student does not have the necessary knowledge of English words (vocabulary) and he does not understand the meaning of the word "riding". The student is guessing the answers from the photograph without reading the text, which shows that he cannot read the text. He just thought that one of the men standing under the tree may be the girl's brother. And if we look at his answer, we will find it grammatically incorrect. According to the

form of the question the answer had to be in the present continuous tense "He is standing under the tree" not "He stand under the tree". This shows the lack of grammatical knowledge of the student.

The same thing happens with question two: the student is guessing the answer from the photograph because he cannot read and understand the text. The answer is very easy to find. It is in the fifth line: "The girl is talking to her mother".

In the third question the student cannot distinguish between plural and singular. The question was: What is the camel eating? The student thought that the question is about the two camels, the student does not know that "is" is singular. The student is using "is" instead of "are" in his answer to talk about the two camels: In this case even if the student is guessing the answer from the picture, he should have known that the question is about one camel. The student does not understand the meaning of the word "eating", that is why he answered wrongly "he is drink water".

1.2 WHY DO THE EFL LEARNERS IN LIBYA HAVE PROBLEMS IN READING?

- One of the most important reasons for the problems that the EFL learners in Libya have in reading could be the underdeveloped knowledge of English grammar and the lack of knowledge of English vocabulary.

- A second reason for the underdeveloped reading skills may be the didactics that teachers use in teaching reading to the EFL learners in Libya. Teachers may not be using the appropriate strategies that help EFL learners in Libya to improve their reading skills.
- Thirdly, the reading material may also not be appropriate to EFL learners in Libya so as to help them to develop proper reading skills.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to address the problems of EFL learners in Libya, the following questions need to be addressed:

- a) What problems do learners in Libyan secondary schools experience with reading in EFL?
- b) What are the main causes of these reading problems?
- c) Do the curricula for EFL reading and the didactic approaches of educators contribute to the problem?
- d) What are the possible ways to resolve these problems?

1.4 THE AIM OF THE STUDY

This study is directed at investigating problems that the EFL learners in secondary schools in Libya have in reading English text books. The reason for choosing this specific topic is because through my experience in teaching EFL in Libya I have observed that Libyan students cannot read English texts effectively. Libyan students cannot even answer a comprehension test effectively and, worse, they cannot understand the questions that they are required to answer about any reading English that is given to them in class. This study aims to develop proposals for developing Libyan students' reading ability in English effectively. This will be undertaken by investigating the factors that cause Libyan students to experience problems in their reading.

1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to investigate this issue in a scientific way we need to work within a theoretical framework. We first need to ask: What is reading?

In general, reading is defined according to the purposes of reading, is it for general understanding, reading to learn, to integrate information, for pleasure or to evaluate texts critically? The EFL learners need seem to read for two purposes for reading: reading

understanding, and reading to learn. In both cases we can say reading is the process of receiving and interpreting information encoded in language via the medium of print (Urquhart and Weir, quoted in Carrel & Grabe, 1998: 22). Research on reading describes reading as a psycholinguistic process, which starts with what the writer intends to encode and ends with the meaning that the reader constructs from a text. Goodman (1991: 135) describes reading as a psycholinguistic guessing game in which the reader reconstructs, as best as he can, the message that has been encoded by the writer in a graphic display. For the reader to construct the message that the writer wishes to encode the reader has to have the knowledge about what is written. For instance, if the reader reads a text about a computer and he does not have the required background knowledge about it, he will not be able to interpret the text effectively.

A second theoretical issue that needs to be clarified is what skills are needed for effective reading. These can be described as the ability to:

- associate sounds with their corresponding graphic symbols and to recognize words, sentences, paragraphs and texts
- understand the technical relationship between parts of a text through both lexical devices (e.g. repetition, synonyms) and through grammatical cohesive devices (e.g. *he, they, it, the*

former, the latter) and through connectives (e.g. *since, after, because, although, however*)

- understand both implied and explicitly stated information (e.g. I wish Ann had come means Ann did not come)
- anticipate and predict what will come next in the text
- identify the main idea
- understand figurative language.

In order to perform and develop these skills, the reader must have:

- a knowledge of words (vocabulary)
- a knowledge of grammar
- textual competence
- sociolinguistic competence
- functional competence
- background knowledge
- motivation

Finally we need to ask what the proper didactics are that teachers must use in EFL learners' classrooms to teach reading and developing their reading skills?

1.6 METHODOLOGY

The research was be carried out in Libya. Information on the problems that EFL learners in Libya have in reading English

textbooks were collected and the ways in which to address these problems were investigated. The target group for this study were be the eleventh year students at four secondary schools in Tripoli, ranging in age from 15 to 17 years. The information required in this study was be obtained in a qualitative way, through observation, a comprehension test and interviews. This information will be used to deal with the key research questions.

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN

The information required to answer the research questions was obtained in the following ways:

- a) A literature study of reading in EFL was undertaken (Alderson, & Urquart 1984; Hinkel 1999; Justus 1992; Long & Richards 1987)
- b) The main problems grade 11 learners of EFL in Libya have in reading English texts were determined by observation
- c) Information on these reading problems was collected through preliminary discussions with EFL teachers, classroom observation, semi-structured interviews with learners and lecturers at teachers' training colleges, and through the use of a comprehension test for learners.
- d) The current curricula for the development of reading skills in EFL was analysed

- e) The collected data was analysed in order to determine the main factors regarding the EFL reading problems in Libya.
- f) Finally, on the basis of the analysis of the collected data, proposals were developed for addressing the reading problems, particularly regarding appropriate reading materials and didactic approaches.

1.8 DATA COLLECTION

Data was collected in 3 ways:

- Observation

Some time was spent observing the strategies that are used by teachers in classrooms to develop the reading skills of the eleventh year students at four secondary schools. And at the same time I observed what knowledge students have of English language and what mistakes they regularly make in reading.

- Comprehension test

A comprehension test was designed to establish learners' English reading skills. The aim of this test was to determine learners',

- a) knowledge of the necessary English vocabulary and grammar;
- b) ability to grasp the main idea of the text as well as the subordinate ideas;

- c) ability to determine the connection between sentences (cohesion) and between paragraphs (coherence); and
- d) ability to utilize background knowledge to interpret the text.

Remark: The level of the grammatical complexity of the text is, obviously, determined by the level of study the learners have reached. The learners involved in the study are specializing in English at grade 11 level, and they are thus expected to understand relatively complex sentences and “difficult” words.

- Interviews

A sample of 20 EFL learners in secondary schools in Tripoli were interviewed to establish what problems they experience in their reading. They were asked, for example, whether they found/find the material that they are reading interesting and stimulating, in order to see whether they are motivated to read. Lecturers at the teachers' training colleges were also interviewed with the purpose of collecting information about the methods they teach to teacher trainees for use in developing learners' reading skills in secondary schools in Libya.

1.9 STRUCTURE OF THE MINI-DISSERTATION

Chapter One: Problem definition.

Chapter Two: Theoretical framework.

Chapter Three: Methodology.

Chapter Four: Data description and analysis.

Chapter Five: Proposed solutions.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

"In spite of the fact that reading is the most important skill of all for most students of FL throughout the world, it is a skill that has been much neglected in the audio-lingual tradition of language teaching" (Paulsen and Bruden; 1976: 157). They also reported that spoken and written forms of language differ in syntax and in vocabulary, and if we want the student of English FL to read adequately, we must teach them to do so.

Sauvignon (1991:261) emphasizes the importance of reading, reporting the following:

Not long ago, when American structuralist linguistic and behaviorist psychology were the prevalent impact in language teaching method and materials, second and foreign language teachers at that time said that communication can be achieved with four language skills, which were listening, speaking, reading and writing.

These skills were widely used in learner course materials and teacher education programs. They were divided into active and

passive skills. Speaking and writing were seen as active skills whereas reading and listening were seen as passive skills. Sauvignon (1991:261) also reported that today reading and listening are no longer seen as passive, but as active processes in the negotiation of meaning. This means that if one is listening to any speech one is negotiating meaning with the speaker and if one is reading any text one is negotiating meaning with the writer. According to this view we could change the term active skills for writing and speaking to productive skills and the term passive skills for listening and reading into receptive skills, because when one is writing or speaking one is producing information whereas when one is reading one is receiving and interpreting information from the writer and negotiating meaning with him/her. The same happens if one is listening to any speech; one is receiving and interpreting information from the speaker and negotiating meaning with him/her.

As we can see, reading is not less important than any other skill. In this chapter I will discuss the definition of reading, the knowledge and the skills that EFL learners need for effective reading, teaching reading to EFL learners, and the role of the teacher in the classroom.

2.2 DEFINITION OF READING

Reading is defined according to the purposes of reading: The EFL learners need to develop reading for two purposes: reading for understanding, and reading to learn. In both cases we can say reading is the process of receiving and interpreting information encoded in language via the medium of print (Urquhart and Weir;1998:22; quoted in Carrell & Grabe; 1996). Goodman (1991:135) described reading as a psycholinguistic process, which starts with what the writer intends to encode and the meaning the reader decodes or negotiates according to the knowledge and skills the reader has.

Each of these above definitions focuses on different processes of reading. One of these processes is more adequate than the other. This will be clarified in the following paragraphs (2.2.1 and 2.2.2).

2.2.1 The first definition does not indicate the many components of the required cognitive processing or the knowledge bases being integrated during the reading process. According to this definition the process of reading works as follows:

The sender encodes a “message” in a written text, which is then decoded by the receiver, thus determining what the message of the sender was. See Figure 1.

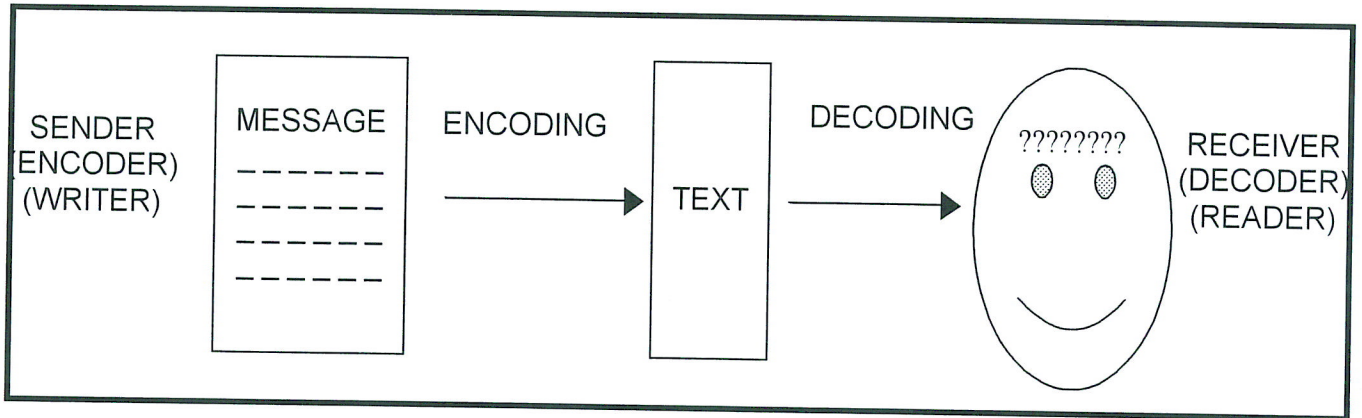


Figure 1: Adapted from Christine Nuttall (1982: 4)

It is clear that this representation of the process of reading is not adequate. The question mark that was put in the reader’s mind shows that we do not know what knowledge and skills the reader has in order to determine the communicative intention of the writer or the encoder.

2.2.2 If we look at the second definition of reading we will predict that the reader must have certain knowledge and skills in order to interpret any text he/she reads. The communication process (Figure 2) represents an adequate process of reading that recognises nine factors, which can be identified as performing a role in co-determining text construction and interpretation.

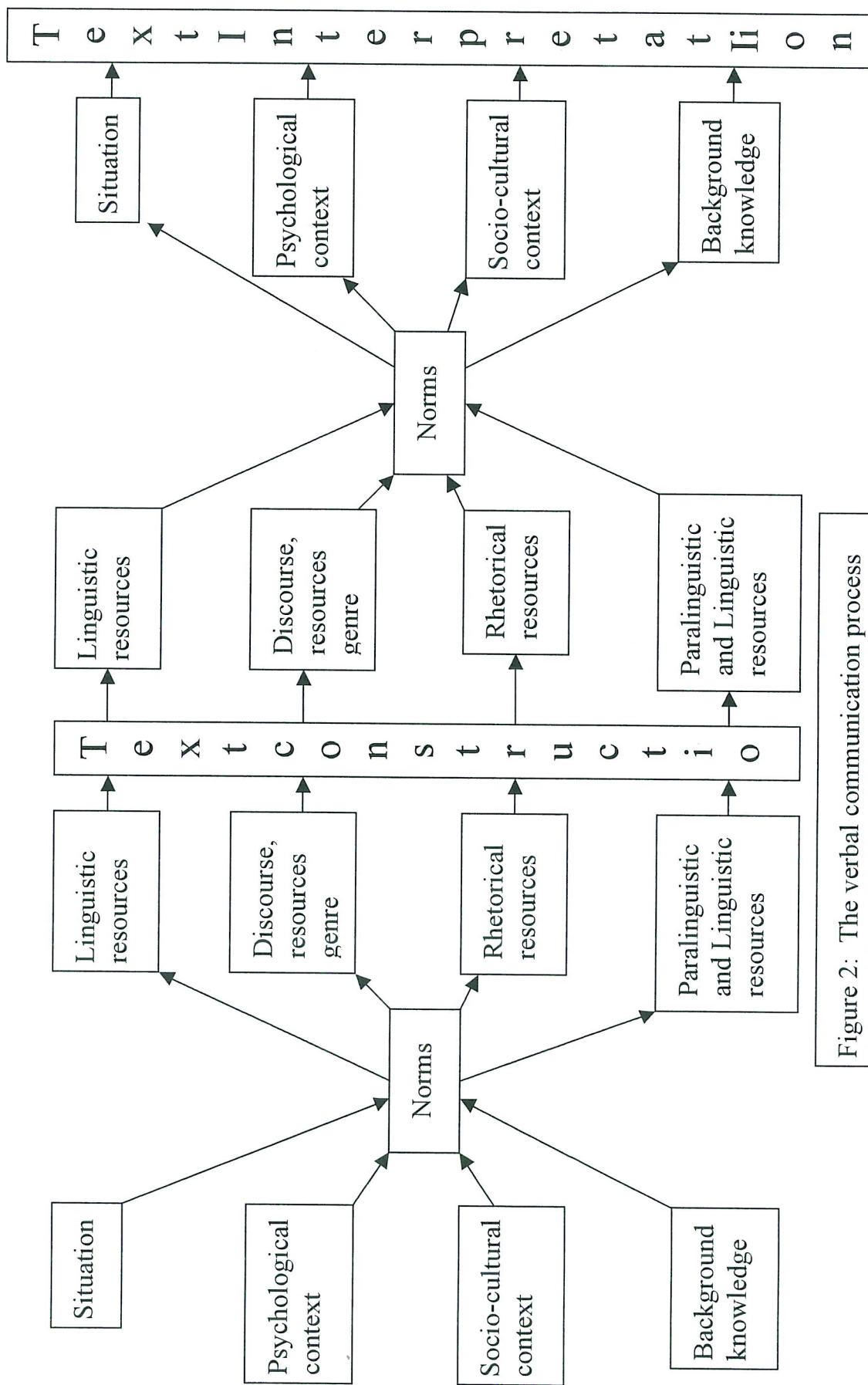


Figure 2: The verbal communication process
Adapted from Webb (2002:8)

According to Webb (2002:8),the process works as follows: “the situation, psychological context, socio-cultural context and background knowledge provide the fundamental contexts in the communication process, since they determine the contexts and, consequently, the norms that the writer will obey. The norms in turn, determine the choices the writer will make from the available linguistic resources, discourse and genre resources, the rhetorical resources and the paralinguistic and non-linguistic resources, thus producing a text”. If one looks at figure 2, one will see a mirror-image of the process which describes the process of interpreting a text, the reader here interprets the text according to the linguistic, discourse, rhetorical, paralinguistic and non-linguistic resources that he/she has.

Each of the nine factors will be discussed when I deal with the question of how the reader determines the meaning of a text (in 2.3.2).

2.3 SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE THAT EFL LEARNERS NEED FOR EFFECTIVE READING

In order to read adequately, EFL learners have to develop certain skills and acquire knowledge of the English language. Yorio (1991) pointed out that the reading problems of foreign learners are often due to their imperfect knowledge of that language. Bachman

(1990) shows that language knowledge is divided into two competencies, organizational and pragmatic competence, each with its own sub-competencies, namely grammatical and textual competencies, also with their sub-competencies, and functional and sociolinguistic competence, with their sub-competencies. Grammatical competence involves a knowledge of phonemes and phonological rules, morphemes and rules for word formation, words, lexical expansion strategies, and syntactic particles and the rules for sentence formation (syntactic rules). Textual competence involves text genres and the rules for constructing and interpreting texts. Sociolinguistic competence involves being able to use language appropriately in different social settings (e.g. when to use formal and informal English). See Figure 3.

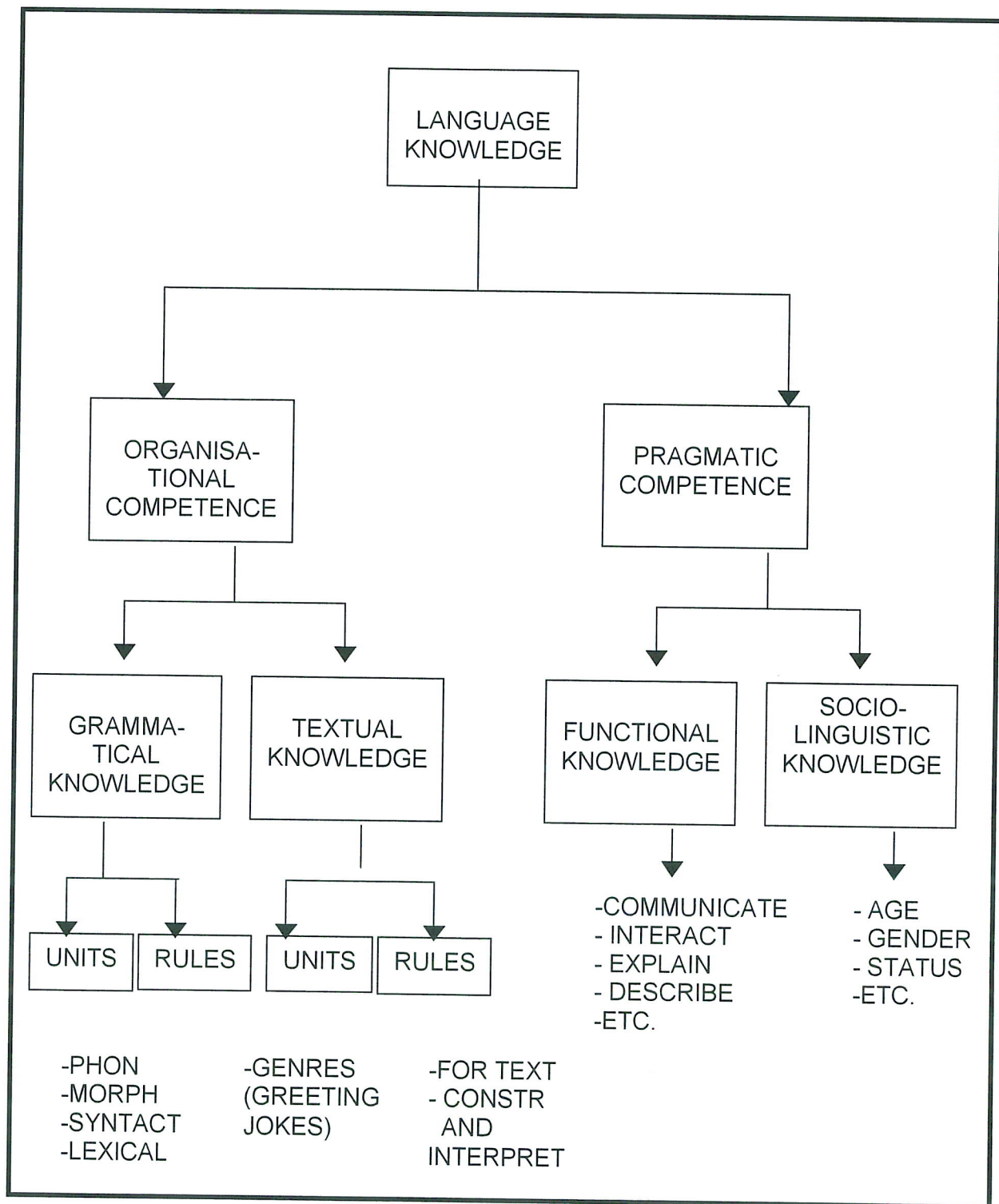


Figure 3: Adapted by Webb; 2002, from Brown (1994: 229)

2.3.1 THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GRAMMAR

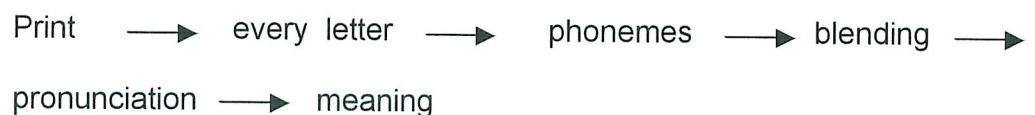
The proficient reader draws on three kinds of information, according to Goodman, 1970 (quoted in Paulsten & Bruder; 1996: 164) “the first is graphonic information, the sound-symbol relationship. The second is syntactic information, the information implicit in the grammatical structures of language. And finally there is semantic information: readers draw on their experiential and conceptual knowledge in order to supply a semantic component to the message. In order to do this, the reader needs access to both lexical and cultural meaning”. Goodman thus says that grammatical knowledge is essential for the EFL learner to have in order to read adequately. They must know the grammatical structures and they must have semantic information to identify words, recognize sentences and paragraphs and determine the meaning of the text they read.

The native speakers already know the grammar of their own language and they draw on this knowledge in their reading. The foreign student needs to be taught how to do this (Goodman 1970 quoted in Paulsten & Bruder; 1996:164).

The skills involved in reading are:

1. Linking letters with sounds

The sounds of words help the reader to identify in print words that he knows in their spoken form, but has never seen written before. The reader interacts with the graphic input (letters) so as to get the message that the writer intended to encode, using the competence he has achieved. According to Combourne (1979) the process works as follows. The reader processes each letter; these letters are then matched with the phonemes (the minimal units in the sound system of the language), which it is assumed the reader already knows, and then the letters and phonemes are blended together to form words. Finally the derivation of meaning in which the language is translated from one form of symbolic representation to another occurs as in the following:



2. Identifying words

EFL learners must have the necessary knowledge of vocabulary in order to read adequately. Paulsten and Bruder (1976) argue that a good reader must have knowledge of words. They claim that there are three major areas of word study.

- a) Learners should be taught function words, which are not taught as grammar, and formal and informal expressions so that they recognize these expressions when they read a text.
- b) A closed list of content words, which do form part of the grammar course, need to be studied. This list may consist of irregular plurals like *men, wives, women*, etc. and irregular verb forms. It is necessary for learners to recognize them and learn them.
- c) Word formation is traditionally the heart of word study. It is the study of prefixes, stems suffixes and their combination into words, as in the following list:

word	prefix
rewrite	re- (back again)
unhappy	un- (not)
disable	dis- (not)
overweight	over- (above)

3. Recognizing sentences

For the EFL learners to read adequately they must recognize where each sentence starts and finishes. And for the EFL learners to do so they must learn certain quotation marks, such as full stop, comma, colon and semi-colon. To read comprehensively, learners must interpret the semantic and pragmatic (discourse) meaning of a sentence they read.

Hubbard, 2001 (quoted in Webb & Kembo-Sure; 2001:215) states that "semantic meaning is the basic meaning of the words and sentences independent of any context". Hubbard also states that "sentences are seldom used independently of context and when we study what they can mean in real context, we deal with a second kind of meaning, called pragmatic or discourse meaning" (251).

For example:

Mr. Al: "Good Morning."

Mr. Ahmed: "Good Morning."

Mr. Ali: "What are you doing?"

Mr. Ahmed: "I am trying to push my car to the garage, it doesn't want to start this morning."

Mr. Ali: "I have a big strong boy."

If we look at the sentence "I have a big strong boy" independently, it will mean simply that the man has a big strong boy, which is the semantic meaning, and it will just function as a statement, but if we look at the sentence within the context it will mean that the man is offering help and that his strong boy can help in pushing the car. This example shows that the reader must interpret sentences within context in order to get to the discourse meaning.

4. Recognizing paragraphs

For the EFL readers to recognize paragraphs, they must learn the coherence of discourse and relational coherence. "Cohesion occurs when the interpretation of some elements in the discourse is dependent on that of another. The one presupposes the other." (Halliday and Hassan 1976:4, quoted in Savignon; 1991: 19). Hubbard, 2001 (quoted in Webb & Kembo-Sure: 2001) discussed five main types of cohesion.

a) Reference

The main reference cohesion elements are the personal pronouns (*I, me, us, you, he, it and they*), the possessive pronouns (*my, our, your, his, hers, its and theirs*), the definite articles and determiner (*the, this, these, that and those*), and the demonstrative adverbs (*here, there, then*). They are used to refer to words or something that is mentioned before them. For example "We went for a drive yesterday, it was really nice. "It" refers to the drive, which is mentioned before.

b) Substitution

In reference cohesion both expressions refer to the same thing. In substitution cohesion, the two expressions do not refer to the same thing but have the same meaning. The verb "do" substitutes for verbs and verb phrases, whereas "one" is the cohesion element

that can be substituted for nouns and noun phrases. For example: in "She was wearing a nice dress. I wish I had one." "one" is not referring to "the same thing", but something similar. "This year students are working much harder. They are working more than they usually do".

c) Ellipsis cohesion

This is similar to substitution cohesion, but there are no words such as "do" or "one"; the meaning is understood from the context. Example: "Teachers think students will be more encouraged to read this year. But will they"? What can be understood from this context is that the writer wants to say, "Will students be more encouraged to read this year?"

d) Lexical cohesion

This is the kind of cohesion where words tend to relate to one another as in synonymy, antonymy and hyponymy.

e) Conjunctions

"This type of cohesion links the meaning of clauses and sentences as wholes, expressing the way in which what is to follow is systematically connected to what has gone before" Halliday and

Hassan, 1976 (quoted in Webb & Kembo-Sure; 2001: 227).

Conjunction can be divided into four main groups:

- Additive (*and, furthermore, namely, for example, similarly*)
- Adversative (*but, yet, however, rather, other hand, instead of, in spite of*)
- Causal (*therefore, thus, as a result, for this reason, because*)
- Temporal (*then, later, after that, before, previously, while*)

Conjunctions are used to establish relational coherence in a paragraph.

2.3.2 HOW DOES THE READER DETERMINE THE MEANING OF THE TEXT

2.3.2.1 By negotiating meaning

The EFL reader negotiates meaning with the writer with reference to the linguistic resources, discourse resources, genre, rhetorical resources and paralinguistic and non-paralinguistic resources that constitute the text. See Figure 2.

- a) Linguistic resources refer to the languages available and the writers' choice of linguistic varieties (see Figure 4 below for a

b) diasgrammatic representation of the different types of varieties), and the grammatical units of a language, which were discussed in 2.3 (see Figure 3).

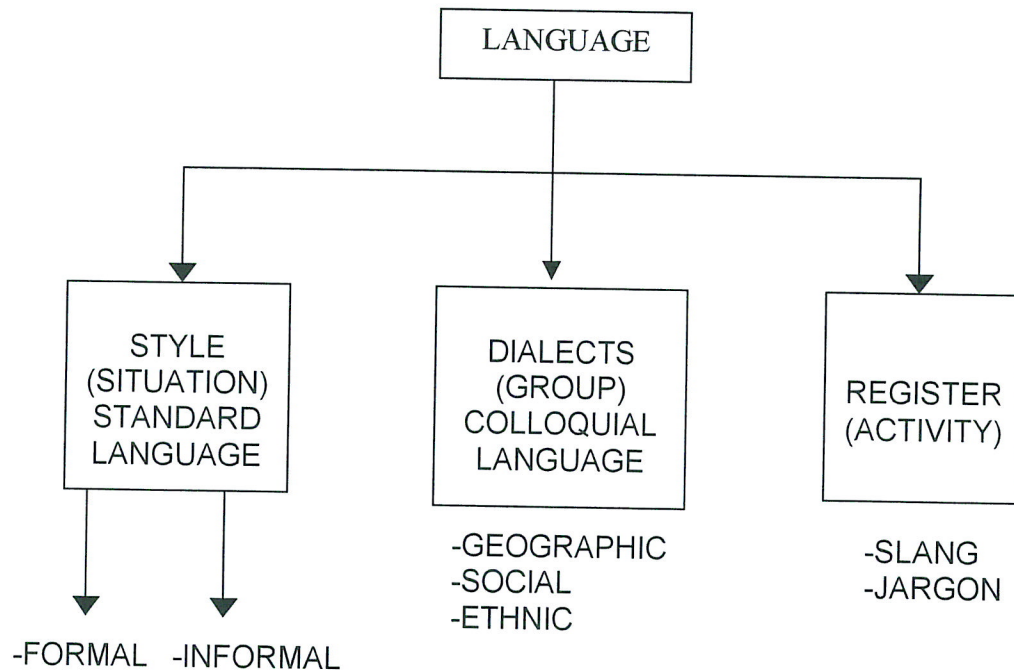


Figure 4: The structure of diversity in a language
Adapted from Webb (2002:22)

b) Discourse resources, genres: The discourse comprises the *principles of discourse, discourse rules* and *discourse elements*. The term *genre* refers to text forms.

- Discourse rules are mainly socio-cultural. Any group of people has a cultural identity and language. Language *use can* be a marker of one of these identities. For example, if we look at English vocabularies that old and young people use, we will find

them to be different. And if we look at the vocabularies that urban and rural people use, they will also be different. This means that when an EFL reader reads an English text he/she must know the discourse conventions, which are part of socio-cultural communication, in order to negotiate meaning (who is the writer, what is he writing about, what are his beliefs and values?).

For example, an Arab reader who is reading a text about an Indian wedding will not understand the text fully if he does not have the required knowledge of Indian culture in this conversational situation. This will be further discussed in section 2 (determining the meaning of the text by interpreting the text), point c.

- Discourse elements are used in a written text. The reader must know these elements in order to understand what the writer intends to inform. For example, if the EFL learner is reading a text and he finds a sentence like “now that I mentioned this subject”, the EFL learner must understand that the writer is going to write about another subject.

c) Rhetorical resources refer to the elements that the writer uses in order to convey his message more effectively. For example, repetition, metaphor, contrast and word play.

2.3.2.2 By interpreting the text

The EFL learner interprets the text by referring to the situational, psychological and socio-cultural contexts, and his/her background knowledge (see Figure 2).

- a) The situational factor can determine the following features of a text:
 - The roles of the discourse participants
 - The choice of language
 - The choice of language variety and linguistic forms

- b) The role of the psychological context is linked closely with the writer's communicative intentions. It refers to issues such as:
 - Cognition, which plays a role in the organization of a text, the selection and the ordering of information into a coherent whole, expressing relationships between sentences and paragraphs by using connectors such as *therefore*, *on the one hand*, etc, as was discussed in 2.3.1 (knowledge of the grammar), points 3 and 4.
 - Attitudes, preferences, worldview, values and beliefs. (Each reader interprets a text according to his values and beliefs.)

c) Socio-cultural context

The term *culture* refers to the way in which people do things, patterns of behaving, norms, values, beliefs and attitudes. A group of people can constitute a cultural community and this community has a particular socio-culture identity. Language is often a symbol of these identities in a community, for example, Arabs speak Arabic. A study in the perception of textual relationships in a cross-cultural context is reported by Steffensen (1981). Steffensen identified relationships signaled by conjunctions in culturally significant sentences in two texts. One of these described an American wedding, and the other an Indian wedding. A sentence was considered to have cultural significance if the relationship contained could not be predicted from everyday knowledge, but which required familiarity with the culture from which it was drawn. Sample sentences from Steffensen's test passages are as follows:

American passage

- (i) Actually it was surprising that the men were in such good shape because they had had a stag party on Thursday and didn't get in until 3am.
- (ii) The ushers seated some of the bride's friends on his side of the church so things wouldn't look off balance.

Indian passage

- (iii) They did not create any problem in the wedding, even though Preema's husband is their only son.
- (iv) Her husband and in-laws picked 'Uma' for her new name since her husband's family calls him 'Shiva'.

Steffensen had American and Indian subjects read the passage and asked them to recall as much of the content as they could. The recall protocols were then analyzed to determine whether the relationships being investigated were signaled. This analysis revealed that Americans did better on the text containing American cultural content and Indians did better in the text containing Indian cultural content.

Steffensen concluded from her study that when readers were exposed to texts, which describe aspects of a culture foreign to them, there would be a breakdown in the perception of textual relationships. A breakdown in relationship at the linguistic level reflects a breakdown in comprehension at the experiential level, that is, at the level of content. Steffensen suggested that what at first sight is a linguistic problem, may in fact be a problem of background knowledge. In such a case, teaching learners the facts about the customs in question would probably be more effective than drilling them in aspects of the language.

(d) Background knowledge

There are three types of background knowledge:

- a. knowledge of the world
- b. knowledge of each other (communicative participant)
- c. contextual knowledge

It would be easier for the EFL learner to read a text about which he has background knowledge. For example, if an EFL learner is reading a text about computers and he has no knowledge about them it will be difficult for him to interpret the text. Research on reading claims that EFL learner's reading problems are due to a lack of knowledge about the text itself. Burt and Daly (1978) pointed out that background information is a factor that must be considered. "In order not to confound linguistic proficiency and knowledge of the world the context of the text must not be outside the experience of the students being tested, nor inconsistent with their cultural customs and values." (188)

Smith (1983) claimed that in order to interpret a text the discourse participants must have knowledge of each other: who is the writer, what is his point of view. The same applies to the reader. If a writer is writing a textbook for EFL learners, he must consider what texts would be suitable for those learners. Contextual knowledge is

important in order for the reader to interpret a text adequately; this issue was discussed previously in par. 2.3.1, point 3 and 4.

2.3.2.3 By determining the main point made by the subject, and determining the subordinate points

I mentioned previously that readers determine the meaning of a text by negotiating meaning on the basis of the linguistic resources, discourse resources, genre knowledge, rhetorical resources and paralinguistic and non-linguistic resources that the reader has in mind; and that the reader interprets the text by referring to the situation, the psychological context, the socio-cultural context and his/her background knowledge, thus determining the main and subordinate points of the text he/she reads.

The reader has to determine the communicative intention of the writer, which is the main point, or main idea of the text. At the same time the reader has to read between the lines and determine the sub points that the writer is trying to convey.

In her book on learning to read in a second or foreign language, Walter (1982) states that good readers use the following strategy when reading a text: first the reader reads the text slowly and stops to think about what he/she has read; then he/she rereads the text, looking from one part of the text to the other parts in order to

determine the connections between these different parts, and makes a mental summary of what he/she has read. She stated that most of the people who read in this way remember both the general point (main point) and the details of what they read (sub points) better than those who use other strategies.

2.4 TEACHING READING TO EFL LEARNERS AND THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN THE CLASSROOM

Teaching a foreign language inside the classroom is described as a difficult job, because teachers are teaching a language that is not used outside the classroom. In order for teachers to facilitate their work successfully in teaching reading to EFL learners they should follow three stages, namely:

a) The presentation stage

This is the stage where the teacher presents a new text in the EFL learners' classroom by explaining the new words, new grammatical structures and then reading the text. In this stage the teacher plays the role of informant. The teacher presents the new reading text in such a way that its meaning becomes clear to learners before they read it. The teachers must make sure that the whole class has understood the text before going on to the next stage.

b) Practice stage

In this stage the teacher asks the learners to read the text by themselves so as to practice it. The teacher will only play the role of conductor.

c) Production stage

This is the stage where the teacher gives the learners the opportunity to work as much as possible on their own. For instance, by asking learners to answer questions about the text, making them guess the main idea of the text, making sure that everyone works productively by encouraging students, promoting text, focusing discussion and providing “scaffolding” to enable them to interpret the text themselves, rather than having to rely on the teacher.

The role of the teachers and the didactics that can be used to help EFL learners to develop their reading skills are will be dealt with more fully in Chapter Five (proposed solutions).

2.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the theoretical framework for the study of the teaching of reading in a FL was discussed. The following issues were dealt with:

- a) A definition of reading
- b) The skills and knowledge that EFL learners need for effective reading
- c) Teaching reading to EFL learners and the role of the teacher in the classroom

In the next chapter, the methodology to be used in the study will be discussed.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is devoted to describe the methods used in the undertaken study.

According to (Morch, Dienert & Gates, 1999:15) research works differ from each other in several ways:

- a. The initial assumptions researchers make about the nature of the world (producing paradigmatic differences).
- b. The organization of the study (producing design differences such as experimental and correctional research), and
- c. The procedures used to collect data (producing methodological differences such as psychometric and interview research). (Moch, Dienert & Gates, 1999:15). Points a. and b. were dealt with in Chapter One. In this chapter, point c. is going to be dealt with, but before describing the type of research that was undertaken in this study, the classification of how the data was collected is going to be dealt with. The questions one has to address are: Who are the respondent participants? How were they selected? And what are the methods that were used to collect data? Finally, what are the

procedures for the analysis and description of the data collected.

3.2 OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

Potter 1996 (quoted in Moch & Gates, 1999) argued that methodologies give us an idea of or set a vision for how research is conducted or done (in qualitative or quantitative approaches) by clarifying the methods, tools, and the techniques used for data gathering, analysis and writing, i.e. interviews, observation and questionnaires.

3.2.1 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Quantitative research deals with things that can be counted, and it often uses the statistical manipulation of numbers to process data and to present the results. The advantages of quantitative research are that it is representative, tests hypotheses, gives precise measurement, uses large datasets, produces reliable observation and uses reliable measures (Bryman, 1988:11, 12; quoted in Silverman: 2000). Bryman, 1988, also discusses the five main methods of quantitative social science research, which are: social survey, experiment, official statistics, structured observation and content analysis.

Glaser and Strauss, 1967, and Cicourel, 1964 (quoted in Silverman: 2000), mentioned the following disadvantages of quantitative research:

1. Quantitative research can amount to a “quick fix”, involving little or no contact with people in the field. (This means that the methods that are used to collect data are much like content analysis, statistical analysis). In this study collecting data involves contacting people in the field, because I am using unstructured interviews, (non-participant) observation and a comprehension test (see addendum to Chapter Four), the data of which is then analyzed.
2. Statistical correlations may be based upon “variables” that, in the context of naturally occurring interaction, are arbitrarily defined. In this study I am not concerned with determining statistical correlations.
3. While it is important to test hypotheses, a purely statistical logic can make the development of hypotheses a trivial matter and fail to help in generating hypotheses from data.

3.2.2. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

According to Silverman (2000) Hammerstey (1992) listed the following features of qualitative research:

1. A preference for the analysis of words and images rather than numbers.
2. A preference for naturally occurring data-observation rather than experimentation, and unstructured rather than structured interviews.
3. A preference for meanings rather than behaviours attempting to document the world from the point of view of the people studied.
4. A rejection of a natural science approach.
5. Generating research rather than hypothesis testing.

Some criticisms of qualitative research can be pointed out. The first is the question of reliability. Kirk and Miller argue that:

Qualitative research can no longer afford to beg the issue of reliability, while the forte of field research will always lie in its capability to sort out the validity of propositions; its result will (reasonably) go ignored minus attention to reliability. For reliability to be calculated, "it is incumbent on the scientific investigator to document his or her procedure" (1986:72).

The argument here is that qualitative research may not be reliable because there is no statistical information about the data and because of the instrument that is used to collect the data. (Silverman 2000:10).

3.3 TYPE OF RESEARCH THAT IS BEING UNDERTAKEN

From the preceding discussion of both qualitative and quantitative research, it is clear that we cannot say that one is more adequate than the other. In other words, there is no best type of research. But there are good questions matched with inquiry procedures that can yield truthful answers.

The present study was performed mainly in the qualitative way and is only superficially quantitative. The study was mainly qualitative because it was undertaken in order to investigate EFL learners' reading problems in three different schools in Tripoli, and the data was collected through a comprehension test, non-participant observation and unstructured interviews. Qualitative research understands people by making contact with them directly, whereas quantitative research involves little or no contact with people or fields, as was mentioned previously in 3.2.1 and 3.2.2. On the other hand, the study was superficially quantitative because

findings were summarised in quantitative terms; for instance, I had to mention how many learners could answer each question in the comprehension test correctly and how many did not, so that the problems they had in reading English could be clarified.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

It was mentioned in the previous section that non-participant observation, unstructured interviews and a comprehension test were used to collect data. In this section these methods are will be discussed in detail, referring, also, to how the respondents were selected.

- a) Non-participant observation: This is an observation technique for gathering data through direct contact with an object, usually a human being (Potter 1996:98; quoted in Moch & Gates 1999) In this study, non-participant observation was used to observe the strategies that are used by teachers to teach reading to eleventh year EFL learners in three schools in Tripoli, (Ali Seealh Secondary School, 11 June Secondary School and the Me'teigah Secondary School), and they ranged in age from 15 to 17 years, both males and females. Two classrooms of the eleventh year EFL learners were selected from each school by the principal of the school. The

time spent observing was one and a half hours a week in each classroom for one month.

- b) Interviewing is another technique for gathering data from humans, by asking them questions and getting them to react verbally. There are several ways of characterizing interviews, for example, interviews can be structured or unstructured (Potter, 1996:96, (quoted in Moch & Gates: 1999) As was mentioned, previously, this study used a qualitative approach, therefore unstructured interviews were used. Marshall and Rossman said that qualitative interviews are much more like conversation than formal structured interviews. This method is used by many researchers, for example Auletta 1991, quoted, in Moch & Gates, 1999) who met with 20 elderly people in their homes to talk with them about their television use. In this study, 60 EFL learners were interviewed to identify the problems that they have with reading English. These learners were selected by their teachers. Five lecturers who are teaching Teaching Methodology, Teaching Strategies and Teaching Practice, were interviewed to discuss the reading problems that EFL learners have with reading English, and the strategies that are taught to trainee teachers to teach reading to EFL learners in secondary schools. The lecturers were selected by the principal of the Higher Institute for the Preparation and Qualification of Teachers in Tripoli (Majd Al Arab).

- c) The comprehension test: A comprehension test was used to assess the learners' reading skills in order to address the problems. The comprehension test was given to the 60 EFL learners. These learners were identified by their teachers, and represented different levels of proficiency in English. The text consisted of 8 paragraphs and of 22 questions, divided into three parts:
1. The first part consisted of 5 questions, which assessed the ability of learners to recognize sentences and paragraphs.
 2. The second part consisted of 16 multiple choice questions, which assessed different skills of reading, which are will be be discussed in the next chapter, and
 3. The last part required a summary of the main idea of the text.

Each question was given a certain mark, totalling 22. The time allowed for the comprehension test was 40 minutes.

3.5 THE PROCEDURES FOR ANALYZING DATA

Each wrong answer to each question in the comprehension test was marked, then the number of the learners who answered wrongly and the number of learners who got the right answer, was determined so as to identify the extent of the problems that learners

have with reading, and what skills they need to develop in order to read adequately.

During the interview with the learners, their answers were recorded and analyzed. During the interview with the lecturers their answers were also recorded and analyzed.

The didactic methods that are used in classrooms to teach reading to the EFL learners were observed and notes were taken about it; then the methods were compared to the methods that are taught in the Teachers Training Colleges in Tripoli.

3.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter described and justified the methods that were used in the study to collect data about the reading problems that EFL learners in three different schools in Tripoli, Libya, have in reading English. These data will be described and analyzed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

DATA DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

This chapter will describe and analyze the data that was collected.

4.1 COMPREHENSION TEST

The test (see addendum) consisted of 22 questions divided into three parts, and each part tested a different reading skill, as was explained in Chapter 3 (see paragraph 3.3.1). Each question was given a certain mark, with the test totalling 22. The time allowed for the comprehension test was 40 minutes. 60 learners participated in this test from the three schools in Tripoli, as was mentioned in the previous chapter. Only five out of the 60 learners could get the full score, which was 22. Of the rest, 5 five scored 16, 5 scored 8, 10 scored 4 and 35 scored 0.

The text consisted of 8 paragraphs dealing with a boy who had an accident that made him blind but he did not give up on life and achieved great success as an oudh player.

Here are examples of learners' answers to the questions in part one, which tested learners' ability to recognize sentences and paragraphs:

Question 1: How many sentences are there in the first paragraph?

Only 20 out of the 60 learners could get the right answer, which is 4 sentences. 25 learners said 5, and 15 learners said 3. This shows that learners do not recognize where sentences begin and end. They do not know that a sentence in English begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop. The learners who answered 5 thought that the last sentence in the paragraph had a comma and a new sentence began after it, so the learners divided the last sentence into two sentences. The learners who answered 3 just counted the lines and said 3.

Question 2: Write down the number of the sentence in which Ali's accident is described.

Again only 20 could get the correct answer, which is sentence 3. 30 of the learners said sentence 1, because they were confused about the difference between sentences and paragraphs. They thought the question was about the paragraph in which the accident was described. 10 learners did not answer the question, because they did not understand it.

Question 3: How many paragraphs are there in the text?

Only 20 learners got the correct answer; others were not able to answer because they do not know what a paragraph is, where it starts, and where it finishes.

Question 4: Write down the number of the paragraph in which Ali's desire to learn to play the oudh is discussed.

Only 20 could get the correct answer, which is paragraph 4. 30 answered paragraph 5, which described how hard Ali worked to learn the tunes. The learners were therefore confused about Ali's desire to learn the Oudh and the hard work he had to do to achieve his wish. 10 of the learners did not understand the question, understanding it as follows: What is Ali's desire? So the answer was: Ali's desire was to learn to play the Oudh.

Question 5: What does "it" refer to in the last sentence of paragraph 1?

Only 5 could get the correct answer, which is the car. 20 learners said Ali, 10 said the parents, and 25 did not answer, presumably because they could not recognize the last sentence in paragraph one.

From the analysis of questions 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, it is clear that learners confused sentence with paragraph and cannot recognise

them. The importance of recognizing sentences and paragraphs in developing reading was discussed in Chapter Two.

Part two questions, which are multiple-choice questions, tested different skills of reading (see the addendum). After the answers of learners to questions 1 to 13 were analysed, I came to the conclusion, firstly, that learners have a very restricted knowledge of vocabulary. Vocabulary knowledge plays a basic role in the development of reading proficiency, as was indicated in Chapter Two. Second, half of the learners were not able to extract the correct information from the text. Third, learners were not able to understand figurative language, as was clear in their answer to question 13b. Finally, I found that learners could not express the technical relation between parts of the text through the use of the required grammatical cohesive devices. For example: the learners' answers to question 12b. Understanding the technical relation between parts of a text through grammatical cohesive devices (e.g. *he, they, it*) is one of the important skills of reading, as was discussed in Chapter Two.

The part three question required a summary of the main idea of the text. I found that this question was the most difficult question for the learners. They did not know how to answer it. They were asking what "main idea" means, and I explained to them that they should write what they learned from the text. Only 5 learners could

guess the main idea of the text. Here are some examples of learners' answers showing that they could not get the main idea of the text.

Learner one: "We should be very carfeul when we are in the street".

Learner two: "If you should have any problem you should go to the doctor."

Learner three: "You should not play in the road."

Learner four: "We should help blind people."

From this I deduce that learners are not able to read adequately and generally cannot grasp the main idea of the text, and this is due to an inadequate proficiency in English, which was discussed in Chapter Two. One of the important features of reading is determining the main point made by the author. I found mor learners at this level cannot do that.

4.2 OBSERVATION

Some time was spent observing the strategies that are used by teachers in classrooms to develop the reading skills of the learners. And at the same time their knowledge of English was determined by analysing their answers to the questions that they had to answer in class after reading the text being dealt with.

a) Teachers' didactic strategies

In the first classroom I observed, the teacher started the lesson by asking the students to read the text aloud, one by one, and then she read the text for them and asked them to underline the difficult words. After she finished reading, she asked the students to guess the meaning of the words. But they could not, so the teacher explained the meaning of the words to them. In the second classroom, the text was about computers. The students were asked by their teacher to read the text aloud, one by one. The teacher explained the words that the students could not understand by translating them into the students' mother tongue. Some students could guess the meaning of the difficult words in the text, but this was not because they had a high level of English, but because they had a background of computers, which was what the text was about. In another classroom I noticed that the teacher did not focus on helping students recognize paragraphs. She did not focus on making students get the main idea of the text that they were reading, and the learners were not encouraged by the teacher to guess the meanings of new words.

In one of the classrooms that I observed I looked at one of the sections in the learners' reading course book, and am of the opinion that it was adequate for the purpose of developing EFL reading skills (see the addendum). I inquired of the teachers why

they do not follow the steps described in the course book, and they replied that the time is too short for them to follow these steps as they have to complete the curriculum within 9 months. (The value of this information is limited as it was not obtained in a systematic survey, but was obtained in personal conversations with teachers in the three schools. This issue will have to be investigated in a systematic way in a follow-up project.)

From my observation, I came to the conclusion that most of the teachers did not work in a systematic way to develop the reading skills of the learners; for example: they did not encourage learners to guess the meanings of the words from the context or by using a dictionary to look up the meaning of the difficult words. They were just translating the words that learners did not know into their mother tongue, but this does not really help learners improve their reading ability. The didactic methods that should be employed at this level will be discussed in the next chapter.

b) Learners' knowledge of the English language

I found that learners had an undeveloped knowledge of English grammar. They could not answer, for example, their teachers' question when she asked them about the meaning of the word *runner* in the following sentence: *Ahmed is a good runner*. This was because "runner" is a derived word through the suffixation of the "er". I also found that learners did not have an adequate voc

knowledge of vocabulary. Learners could often not guess the meaning of a word from the context. For example, the learners were asked to guess the meaning of the word *rest* in the following sentence: *The rest of the team*. The learners answered that *rest* in this context means "to sit and rest".

4.3 INTERVIEWS

I interviewed the 20 EFL learners in the three schools and 5 lecturers at the Teachers' Training College. A tape-recorder was used in order to record their answers. As I mentioned in Chapter Three, the interviews were unstructured.

a) The learners reported that they found it difficult to understand the exact meaning of some words when they are reading a text in their course book, especially if they had not been explained to them by the teacher in the classroom. Learners only found the material in their course book interesting and stimulating if the teacher explained the text by translating it into their mother tongue, because then they could understand the text. Learners could not tell what a text in their course books was about without the help of their teacher, who had to explain the difficult words in the text. Learners found it difficult to describe the main idea of the text they read. This is because learners have to interpret the whole text to get to the main idea, which is difficult for them without the

help of the teacher. Learners reported that answering a direct question about a text they read is difficult for them, but it is easier than to describe the main idea of a text they read. This was clear from the comprehension test. More learners could answer Part One and Two questions than the learners who answered Part Three questions. Teachers in the classroom concentrated on grammar rather than on reading, but even so, learners still found English grammar difficult, which sometimes meant that they found it difficult to understand texts they read in their course book.

The conclusion here is that the learners' knowledge of the grammar of English is totally inadequate, which includes their knowledge of basic English vocabulary.

b) Lecturers at Teachers' Training Colleges reported that they teach reading skills to the teacher trainees in their first and second year, because they found that their English reading skills have to be developed before starting to teach them how to develop EFL learners' reading skills. The reason for that is that these learners' reading skills were not developed in the secondary schools. Lecturers noticed that these teacher trainees, when they first enrolled in the Teachers Training College, had a low level of English language knowledge and a low level of reading skills, and they had to teach them simple words. When I asked about the method they used in developing the reading skills, they answered

that they used different methods in order to improve the teacher trainees' reading skills.

One of these methods is providing a text and making them first read it silently several times. Then the lecturer would read the text for them, sentence by sentence. The lecturer would then pick out the difficult words, which may be very simple but difficult for them. These words would be explained and then learners would read the text aloud, one by one.

Another method lecturers employed is that they used a list of English words and explained the meanings or asked the student to find the meanings themselves from a dictionary. After that they were asked to read the words so as to improve their ability to associate sounds with the corresponding graphic symbols. The lecturers also reported that they concentrate on developing teacher trainees' reading skills in their first and second year. In these two years students are exposed to material which includes a variety of grammatical structures and vocabulary in addition to texts from magazines, newspapers and short stories.

Lecturers reported that Libyan readers have problems in reading English due to underdeveloped reading skills; that Libyan learners were not taught how to read adequately at secondary schools; and that Libyan learners were not motivated to read outside the school

because they concentrated more on completing the curriculum in their academic year in order to pass their exams and to graduate. They only read stories, novels or articles in newspapers if the lecturers ask them to do so for discussion in the classroom.

My last question was whether they taught the teacher trainees how to teach reading to the EFL learners? They responded "yes, we do". After they have developed the learners' English language knowledge and the reading skills in the first and the second year of their study, lecturers started teaching them how to teach reading to EFL learners in the third year. Then I asked about the didactic methods they taught the teacher trainees for teaching reading to EFL learners. They gave me a copy of the curriculum they used. Lecturers stated that they first told the teacher trainees that they must teach EFL learners to recognize words with the association of sound and letters by giving them a list of words to learn; secondly, they teach them to teach EFL learners how to recognize sentences first by teaching them that an English sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop. Then they teach them to read the sentence several times, trying to guess the meaning of the words in the context of the meaning of the sentence.

Here is an example of the lecturers' teaching curriculum which was adapted by them from the Libyan education curriculum and which provided a list of techniques for teaching:

1. Ask pupils to read sentences containing words they already know. This can be practised by cue cards (i.e. cards with a word on each), which pupils place in the desired order, e.g.: a model sentence, an answer to a question, etc.
2. The teacher writes sentences on the chalkboard or on overhead transparencies for pupils to read.
3. Pupils practise reading sentences in the class or in the language laboratory or with cassette/tape-recorder, etc.
4. Songs are used for improving pupils' pronunciation, rhythm and stress. They provide pleasure in the classroom and stimulate the learning of the foreign language. Moreover, they offer a pleasant way of practising or reviewing vocabulary.

Third, lecturers reported that they teach the teacher trainees how to enable EFL learners to recognize a paragraph. Here is an example of the curriculum they use, which was adapted by them from the Libyan education curriculum:

At this stage pupils are introduced to simple narrative or conversational material. Passages do not exceed one printed page. This is done under the guidance of the teacher who often uses the materials provided in the textbook. However, additional selections can be used for guided reading practise.

For reading practice, at this stage, the teacher prepares duplicated sheets of texts which pupils read, or use overhead transparencies on which he/she writes reading selections. This technique is effective as the teacher controls what the pupils are reading. He/she can thus watch their eye movements, or mask certain parts of the passage, or point out certain words, functions and phrases. Pupils can practise guided reading individually, in pairs, or in small groups. He/she may correct reading errors immediately, or the pupils can correct one another.

The following are some reading activities which are suitable for this stage:

1. Reading for structure signals. The teacher draws the pupils' attention to written grammar signals.
2. Techniques of inference. The teacher guides pupils to infer meanings or simple conclusions from paragraph content.
3. Techniques of paraphrase. With this technique pupils try to grasp the meaning of a selection in its entirety.
4. Reading for information. This involves three levels of reading practise:
 - (a) the beginning level, with questions that require a restatement of the text;

- (b) the intermediate level, with content questions that require the pupils to demonstrate their understanding of the entire text;
- (c) the advanced level, with questions initiated by pupils who also provide the answers to their own questions and suggest a suitable title for the whole passage.

After that, they teach teacher trainees how to teach EFL learners to read a long paragraph. As pupils progress in learning the language needed for reading, they read longer selections in addition to guided reading passages. That is, pupils' reading activities may be classed as intensive and extensive. The former is what they have in the text reader or course book, whereas extensive reading is meant for enjoyment or for general information. Pupils are offered a choice of readings and select topics which interest them. They may also be asked to give a summary or an outline of what they are reading, or to rewrite the selection by changing some of the nouns, adjectives, tenses and direct speech. They could then present their version to the others in the class.

Finally, lecturers teach teacher trainees to teach EFL learners to read individually. This is the advanced stage of reading. Students are given the freedom to select from a list of available material what they wish to read. Students depend on themselves in reading, that is, they should feel confident enough to pick up a book or a

newspaper and read it for their own pleasure and enlightenment. Nevertheless, the teacher's guidance is generally needed. The teachers may provide the class with a list of readings from different fields of knowledge: art, science, literature, and so on. The teacher classifies the readings into categories from easy to advanced with a synopsis of each reading. Students review the list and read the synopsis before they make a selection. After that they check their choice with the teacher who either approves of the selection, depending on the level of difficulty, and appropriateness of the subject, or suggests alternatives.

After finishing the selection, a student makes a note of this in the notebook he/she keeps for this purpose. To motivate students, the teacher may ask content questions to ensure understanding of the selection, and may give marks for achievement.

Lecturers at Teachers' Training Colleges also reported that they teach the teachers trainees ten steps to plan a reading lesson for the EFL learners.

The following steps in the planning of reading lesson was given to me by the lecturers at the Teachers' Training College, which they adapted from the Libyan education curriculum:

1. The teacher writes on the chalkboard the day and date, lesson number, part number.
2. The teacher motivates the class by reviewing the material of the previous lesson regarding content, vocabulary, patterns and other language components.
3. The teacher presents some of the new words and structures that will appear in the sections she/he has planned to teach.
4. The teacher tries to arouse the pupils' interest in the reading. Thus, if the reading is part of a longer story, he/she should relate it to the whole story. If the lesson is new, he/she should brief the class on the main theme, and so on. If there is a picture, she/he can ask pupils questions about it. The more interesting the teacher makes the reading topic, the easier it will be for learners to read.
5. Now the pupils are ready to read the passage silently.
6. After silent reading, the teacher asks a few comprehension questions on the passage content to evaluate their ability to comprehend what they have read.
7. The next step is model reading. The teacher can read the passage aloud with pupils listening or repeating to give them an example they should imitate. The teacher may use typed material recorded by native speakers of English.
8. After model reading, pupils may read the passage aloud and individually. The teacher, however, should not overuse

reading aloud as the usefulness of this skill is limited. Its main function is to practise special pronunciation problems.

9. The class may then do some of the exercises on words or patterns usually included in the reading textbook.
10. The lesson ends with the teacher assigning new homework on material done orally in the class.

These steps are systematic but the teacher is free to omit some of them if time does not allow him/her to do all of them, or if he/she wants to emphasize certain points.

In addition to the above procedures, the teacher may:

- (a) clarify the purpose of the reading passage;
- (b) highlight language functions and their context in the passage;
- (c) help pupils read words in logical groups, that is, small groups of words which make sense;
- (d) help pupils to guess the meaning of words from context;
- (e) if time allows, do a paragraph-by-paragraph analysis, i.e. engage pupils in discourse analysis.

It is clear that the curriculum used in the Teachers' Training College is adequate for training teachers for teaching reading to the EFL learners (see, 4, 3(b)). The curriculum concentrates on developing EFL learners' reading skills. However, it was also clear that EFL

learners' reading skills are not developed adequately (see 4.1). For this reason I had to ask: If this curriculum is adequate for developing EFL learners' reading skills, why are these skills not developed satisfactorily, this could be because of one of the following reasons:

1. The curriculum is not used effectively by the lecturers in the Teachers' Training College.
2. Teacher trainees do not have the required knowledge of the English language to benefit from the curriculum as was reported by the lecturers (see 4.2(b)).
3. Reading is not taught effectively in the schools (see 4.2(a)).

Regarding point 1 and 2, I would like to add information obtained from a personal conversation (thus not obtained in a systematic survey) with a British EFL teacher, who come to Libya to train Libyan EFL teachers (who had just graduated and teachers who had graduated 3 years previously) to teach reading to EFL learners. When inquiring from the British teacher about the level of teachers' training skills, she answered: "I came here to train them how to teach reading to the EFL learners' by using the curriculum in EFL learners' text book, but I had to teach them how to read themselves."

From the above remarks it is clear that this issue has to be more thoroughly investigated.

4.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a description and analysis of the data which was collected by comprehension test, interviews and observation in three different schools in Tripoli, Libya, in order to find a solution to the reading problems that EFL learners have in reading English. These problems and the causes of these problems will be listed in the next chapter and it will propose solutions for this problem.

CHAPTER 5

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

5.1 OVERVIEW

This study aimed at investigating the problem that EFL learners in three secondary schools in Tripoli, Libya, have in developing English reading skills. Using a conceptual framework for the study of reading and the development of reading skills developed on the basis of a literature study, the study was conducted by requesting 60 Grade 11 learners in the three selected schools to complete an English comprehension test to determine their ability to interpret a written text; by observing teachers teaching English reading in these schools; by conducting interviews with the learners; and by interviewing selected lecturers at teacher training colleges. The information obtained in this way was analysed and interpreted and the reasons for the poor reading skills of the learners were identified.

This chapter aims wants to propose answers to the research questions (stated in Chapter One) by clarifying the problems that EFL learners experience with reading English, establishing the reasons for these problems, determining whether the curricula for EFL reading and the didactic approaches of educators contribute to

the problems, and suggesting possible ways to address these problems.

5.2 THE PROBLEMS THAT LEARNERS EXPERIENCE WITH READING ENGLISH

- a) Learners cannot recognize sentences and paragraphs.
- b) Learners have restricted vocabulary knowledge.
- c) Learners are not able to extract correct information from the text.
- d) Learners do not understand figurative language.
- e) Learners cannot understand both implied and explicitly stated information.
- f) Learners cannot express the technical relation between parts of the text through the use of the required cohesive devices.
- g) Learners cannot determine or identify the main idea of a text.

5.3 THE MAIN REASONS OR CAUSES OF THESE PROBLEMS

First, the learners do not have the necessary structured knowledge about the English language:

- knowledge of words
- knowledge of grammar

- textual knowledge
- sociolinguistic knowledge
- functional knowledge

These types of knowledge were discussed in Chapter Two (see 2.3).

Second, the undeveloped reading skills were:

- linking letters with sounds
- identifying words
- recognizing sentences
- recognizing paragraphs
- understanding figurative language
- understanding both implied and explicitly stated information
- identifying the main idea

These skills were discussed in Chapter Two, (see 2.1 and 2.3.2) and Chapter Four, (see 4.1 and 4.3(b)).

Finally, the curriculum for EFL reading is adequate, and does not contribute to the EFL learners' reading problems in the selected secondary schools in Tripoli. However the didactic approaches of educators used in these classrooms do seem ineffective.

The EFL learners' course book and the reading curriculum seem adequate from developing EFL learners' reading skills (see addendum). From the observation it seems that the problems that EFL learners experience with reading English is not due to the curricula for EFL reading, but to the didactic approach of the educators. Teachers never worked on developing the reading skills of the EFL learners (see 4.2 (a)). And as mentioned previously in 4.2 (a): educators were asked why they do not use the EFL learners' course book reading curriculum they answered that they want to finish the curriculum before the end of the year and that if they went step by step through the EFL reading curriculum, they would not finish on time. This information however was not obtained in a systematic way, but was obtained through personal conversations with the teachers. It is clear that this issue will have to be investigated in a systematic way.

5.4 POSSIBLE WAYS TO RESOLVE THESE PROBLEMS

- a. Teachers in the EFL learners' classroom must use the appropriate didactic approaches to enable EFL learners to acquire proficiency in English language and to develop their reading skills by following the steps of the EFL reading curriculum in the learners' course book in an effective way.

- b. The curriculum that is used in the Teachers' Training College must be implemented more effectively in teacher training programmes.
- c. Lecturers at the Teachers' Training College must ensure that teacher trainees have a proper understanding of the curriculum for EFL reading skills development in order to use it in EFL classrooms when they graduate.

5.5 CONCLUSION

After analysing the data it is clear that there are aspects not covered in the study. The curriculum that lecturers at Teachers' Training College provided (see 4.3 (b)) seems adequate for training teacher trainees to teach reading to EFL learners, however it was also found that teachers teaching in EFL classrooms do not use the curriculum that was taught to them in the Teachers' Training College (see 4.2 (a)) to develop EFL learners' reading skills, and it was clear from the result of the comprehension test that EFL learners' reading skills are not developed (see addendum). This can be because one of the following reasons:

1. The curriculum is not followed adequately by lecturers in the Teachers' Training College classrooms.
2. Teacher trainees do not have the required knowledge of English language to understand the curriculum.

However, this cannot be stated with certainty because systematic observations were not undertaken in the Teachers' Training College to determine whether the lecturers used the curriculum adequately. Tests were not conducted to see if they had an adequate knowledge of English language. However, lecturers did report that the teacher trainees did not have the necessary knowledge of English language (see 4.3 (b)).

In personal conversations with EFL teachers in secondary schools it was reported that teachers do not follow the prescribed steps in the curriculum for EFL reading, because the available time is too short: they only have 8 months to finish the curriculum so they teach reading as was described in 4.2(a). In another personal conversation with a British teacher who came to train graduated teachers in reading skills, it was reported that the teachers had to be taught how to read themselves. From these remarks it was clear that these issues will have to be investigated in a systematic way in a follow up research project.

- Kilfoil, W.R., van der Walt, C. 1989. *Learn to teach*. Pretoria: Academica.
- Long, M. H. and Richards, J. C. 1987. *Methodology in Tesol: a book of readings*. Boston, Mass: Heinle and Heinle.
- Moch, Susan Dienert & Gates Marie, F. 1999. *The research experience in qualitative research*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Nuttall, Christiane. 1984. *Teaching reading skills in a foreign language*. Oxford: London.
- Nunan, David. 1991. *Language teaching methodology*. Hemel Hempstead: Prentice Hall International (UK) Ltd.
- Savignon, Sandra.J. 1991. *Communicative Language Teaching*. Urbana Champaign, Chicago: University of Illinois.
- Silverman, D. 2000. *Doing qualitative research*. London: SAGE Publication. London.
- Paulsen. & Bruder. 1976. *Teaching English as a second language: techniques and procedures*. London: Longman.
- Webb. V.N. 2000. *Introduction to cross-cultural communication*: Unpublished study guide.
- Vic Webb. & Kembo-Sure. (eds) 2000. *African voices: An Introduction to the languages and linguistics of Africa*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

ADDENDUM TO CHAPTER 4

COMPREHENSION TEST

Read the passage and answer the questions.

THE STORY OF ALI

Ali was very happy when his parents bought him a bicycle for his eleventh birthday. He rode the bicycle to school every day. One day however he had a bad accident. A car was driving on the wrong side of the road and when it hit Ali, he went straight through the windscreen.

Ali was taken to hospital. He was very badly injured and for some time the doctors thought he would die. Then Ali began to recover very slowly, but the world that was once so bright and alive for Ali was now completely dark. "I am afraid Ali will never see again," the doctor told his parents.

Ali was blind. His parents were heart-broken and wondered what they could do to help him. They listened to the advice of the hospital and arranged for Ali to attend a special school for blind children at Ganzor, not far from their home. As soon as Ali was strong enough to leave the hospital, he was sent to the school.

The school helped Ali to cope as a blind person. The Principal – Mr Omar – encouraged Ali to learn something new and Ali chose the oudh. "I have always wanted to play the oudh," he told his parents, when they visited him. "Now is my chance."

Ali worked hard to learn all the tunes. Gradually he mastered them. After eighteen months he could play the instrument effortlessly.

Together with some other students at the school, Ali formed a band, which they called "The Sun Light". The principal agreed to let them organise a public concert. Ali was very nervous when the day of the concert arrived. He had never performed in public before. But the concert – and especially Ali – was a roaring success.

"I am very proud of him," his father told the principal.

After the concert a strange man came up to Ali and his parents. He was wearing a tight-fitting suit and dark glasses. He gave Ali a great smile. "Hi, my name is Ahmed Sassi. I manage musicians. I want to be your manager."

After a lot of talk Ali and his parents agreed. Ahmed soon arranged for Ali to record his first music. It was called "Dark is my world". Within a week it was top of the list of popular music. The blind boy oudh player became a success.

QUESTIONS

1. How many sentences are there in the first paragraph?
2. Write down the number of the sentence in which Joe's accident is described.
3. How many paragraphs are there in the text?
4. Write down the number of the paragraph in which Ali's desire to learn to play the guitar is discussed. -----
5. What does the "it" refer to in the last sentence of paragraph 1? -----

CHOOSE THE CORRECT ANSWER

1. When you are blind you cannot
a) Hear b) speak c) see d) sing
2. When the boy had the accident he was
a) 12 years old b) 11 years old c) 14 years old
d) cannot be sure
3. He was sent to the special school by
a) the doctor b) the hospital c) the principal
d) his parents
4. Who encouraged Ali to play the oudh?
a) the principal b) his parents c) the students

- d) he himself
5. How long did it take him to master the tunes?
- a) 6 months b) eighteen weeks c) one and a half year
d) one year
6. Who was proud of Ali's success?
- a) the principal b) his parents c) his father
d) Ahmad Sassi
7. The school for the blind was at
- a) Ganzor b) Gergaresh c) The town d) the city
8. The name of Ali's first song was
- a) The sun light b) Dark is my world c) My world is dark
d) The blind boy.
9. Who was wearing the tight-fitting pink suit?
- a) the Principal b) members of the band c) pop group
d) Ahmed Sassi
- 10 "I'm afraid Ali will never see again" means
- a) he was blind b) he was afraid c) he was deaf d) he
d) was scared
- 11 Ali was happy because
- a) he became a star b) he recorded his first song c) he got a
bicycle c) we cannot be sure
- 12a "The doctor thought he would die" means
- a) he is going to die b) he is not going to die c) he could
possibly die d) he will die sometime in the future.
- 12b The word "he" in the statement above refers to.....

a) the boy b) the doctor c) the driver of the car d) we
are not sure

13a Whose parent's were heart-broken?

a) the blind boy b) the manager c) the friends
d) Mr Omar

13 b What does the word "heart-broken" mean?

a) poor b) sympathy c) organ of the body d) unhappy

13c Why were they heartbroken?

a) because of the accident b) he went to a special school c) he
was blind d) he was in hospital

Tell me in your own words what the main idea of the passage is.

Comprehension test result:

Part one question:

1. How many sentences are there in the first paragraph?

20 out of 60 learners could get the answer correct.

2. Write down the number of the sentence in which Ali's accident is described.....

20 out of 60 learners could get the answers correct.

3. How many paragraphs are there in the text?

20 out of 60 learners could get the answer correct.

4. Write down the number of paragraphs in which Ali's desire to learn to play the ouhd is discussed.....

20 out of 60 learners could get the answers correct.

5. What does the "it" refer to in the last sentence of paragraph

1?

5 out of 60 learners could get the answer correct.

Part two questions:

Question 1: When you're blind you cannot ...

- a) hear
- b) speak
- c) see
- d) sing

20 out of 60 learners chose the correct answer.

Question 2: When the boy had the accident he was ...

- a) 12 years old
- b) 11 years old
- c) 14 years old
- d) not sure

30 out of 60 learners chose the correct answer.

Question 3: He was sent to a special school by ...

- a) the doctor
- b) the hospital
- c) the principal
- d) his parents

30 out of 60 chose the correct answer.

Question 4: Who encouraged Ali to play the oudh?

- a) the principal
- b) his parents
- c) the students
- d) himself

30 out of 60 chose the correct answer.

Question 5: How long did it take him to master the tunes?

- a) 6 months
- b) 18 months
- c) one and a half year
- d) one year

15 out of 60 chose the correct answer.

Question 6: Who was proud of Ali's success?

- a) the principal
- b) his parents
- c) his father
- d) Ahmed Sassi

15 out of 60 chose the correct answer.

Question 7: The school for the blind was at ...

- a) Ganzor

- b) Gergaresh
- c) the town
- d) the city

30 out of 60 chose the correct answer.

Question 8: The name of Ali's first song was ...

- a) The sunlight
- b) Dark is my world
- c) My world is dark
- d) The blind

15 out 60 chose the correct answer.

Question 9: Who was wearing the tight fitting pink suit?

- a) the principal
- b) member of the board
- c) pop group
- d) Ahmed Sassi

15 out of 60 chose the correct answer.

Question 10: "I'm afraid Ali will never see again" means...

- a) he was blind
- b) he was afraid
- c) he was deaf
- d) he was scared

10 out of 60 chose the correct answer.

Question 11: Ali was happy because ...

- a) he became a star
- b) he recorded his song
- c) he got his first bicycle
- d) we are not sure

10 out of 60 chose the correct answer.

Question 12a: "The doctor thought he would die" means ...

- a) he is going to die
- b) he is not going to die
- c) he could possibly die
- d) he will die sometime in the future

10 out of 60 chose the correct answer.

Question 12b: The word "he" in the sentence refers to ...

- a) the boy
- b) the doctor
- c) the driver
- d) we are not sure

5 out 60 chose the correct answer.

Question 13: What does the word "heartbroken" mean?

- a) poor

- b) sympathy
- c) organ in the body
- d) unhappy

10 out of 60 chose the correct answer.

Part three question:

Tell me in your own words what the main idea of the passage was.

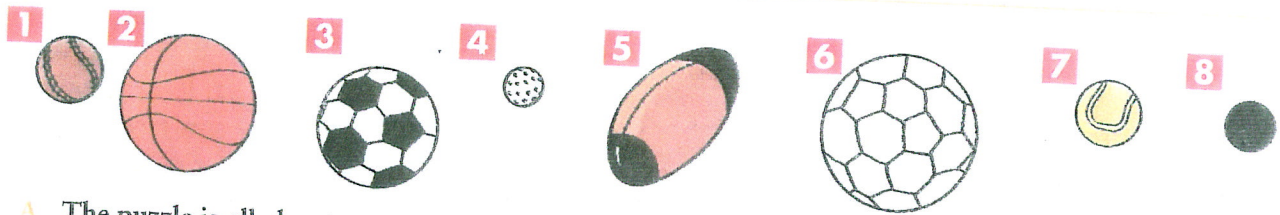
5 out of 60 learners could get the correct answer.

ADDENDUM TO CHAPTER 4

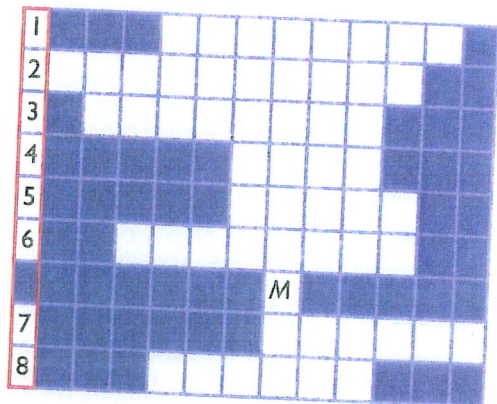
3 sections in the learner's reading course book

The skill of reading

Lesson 5: Guessing words from context (1)



- A The puzzle is all about games.
- 1 Name the sports from the pictures.
 - 2 Find the hidden phrase which connects all the words.



1 You play this sport on a diamond-shaped pitch. You use a small hard ball and a long wooden bat. There are four bases, one at each corner of the pitch. Each side takes it in turns to bat. The pitcher throws the ball to the batsman. He must not throw the ball above the batsman's shoulder or below his knee. The batsman must hit the ball as far as possible and try to run around the bases. If he succeeds, he scores a run. After a number of turns, the winning team is the one with the most runs.

- B Which of these sports can you play?
- C Scan the mini-texts and identify the sport in each case.
- D Whenever you read a real English text, you will probably find new words, or old words with new meanings. Try to guess the meanings from the context.

2 You play this sport on a court. You use a large, soft ball. There is a tall post with a circular hoop at either end of the court. There is a net under each of the hoops. You can throw the ball to a team member and you can bounce the ball while you are running, but you must not run and carry the ball at the same time. You must not kick the ball. When the players of one team get the ball, they must try to score in their opponent's net. You get one or, sometimes, two points if you get the ball in the net. The team with the most points at the end of a period of time, wins.

Read the texts and guess the meanings of the underlined words.

E Read the texts again and complete the table.

	Sport 1	Sport 2	Sport 3	Sport 4	Sport 5
What's it called?	baseball				
Where do you play it?					
What are the parts of the playing area called?					
What equipment do you play the sport with?					
How do you win?					

Lesson 6: Focus on grammar – modals

3

You play this sport on a court. You use a racquet and a small soft ball. There is a net which divides the court in half. Players take it in turns to start the game by hitting the ball over the net. The opponent must return the ball before it has bounced twice. The ball can hit the net, but it must not stay on your own side of the net. In addition, the ball must not go out of the court without bouncing. You get points every time your opponent puts the ball into the net or fails to return the ball. The points help you to win games and the games help you to win sets. The player with the most sets at the end of the game, wins.

4

You play this game on a pitch. You use a large, soft, egg-shaped ball. There are two tall posts with a crossbar at either end of the pitch. You can run with the ball and you can kick the ball. You can throw the ball to a team member but you must not throw it forwards. When the players of one team get the ball, they must try to score by carrying the ball over their opponent's line or kicking the ball over their opponent's crossbar. You get three points if you get the ball over the line, and one point if you get it over the crossbar. The team with the most points at the end of a period of time, wins.

5

You play this sport on a course. You use a club and a small, hard ball. There are tees or starting places, and holes or finishing places at various places on the course. You must hit the ball with the club from each tee, and try to get it into one of the holes. You must not pick up the ball until it has gone into the hole. You count one shot for every time you hit the ball. The player with the lowest number of shots at the end of the game, wins.

A As we have seen, the modals *can/can't* have two main meanings:

I can/can't play tennis = ability

I can/can't come tomorrow = possibility

We also use *can* to talk about things which are allowed, in the rules of a game, for example.

In this case the opposite is usually *must not*.

Example: *The ball can hit the net, but it must not stay on your own side of the net.*

1 Find more examples of *can/must not* sentences in the texts in Lesson 5.

B As we have seen in other lessons, we use *must/must not* for orders. We also use these modals in the rules of a game.

Example: (In baseball) *the batsman must hit the ball as far as possible.*

(In basketball) *you must not kick the ball.*

1 Find one thing you must do, and one thing you mustn't do in golf.

C We also use *can* and *must* to ask about the rules of a game.

Examples: *Can I pick up the ball in golf?*

Must I hit the ball with the racquet in tennis?

1 Ask and answer questions about the sports in the texts in Lesson 5.

The skill of reading

Lesson 5: Understanding a narrative

A Look at these different problems.

- 1 Which is the most serious?
 - You need more money to buy something special.
 - You have an important test and haven't studied.
 - You have to think of a good name for your school newspaper.
 - You borrowed a friend's CD and lost it.
 - You can't do your maths homework.
 - You want to give your friend a special present, but you can't think what to buy.
- 2 Which of these methods is the best way to solve each problem in Exercise 1?
 - a) writing down a list of possible answers
 - b) asking your friends
 - c) getting the answer from dreams
 - d) using a step-by-step, logical approach
 - e) reading books and doing research
 - f) thinking of unusual ideas and using a creative approach

B You are going to read a page from a teenage magazine. You can get a lot of information from the title and introduction.

- 1 Look at the title. Is this:
 - a) an article about the brain?
 - b) a quiz to test thinking skills?
 - c) an examination?
- 2 Read the first paragraph. Underline the best answer.
 - a) A brainteaser is probably a test of your intelligence / a test of your thinking skills.
 - b) 'To solve' means to find the answer to a problem / to read a problem.
 - c) The best way to find the answers is to think normally / to use your imagination.

C Read the first brainteaser.

- 1 Work in pairs. Can you guess the problem?
- 2 Ask your teacher questions to find the answer.

D Read the second brainteaser.

- 1 Work in pairs. Can you answer the question?
- 2 Ask your teacher questions to find the answer.

E Remember that in stories with two characters, we must understand which character is speaking or doing the action. Study the first story again.

- 1 All the underlined words refer to the second character. Circle all the words which refer to the first character.
- 2 Which words do we use for both characters? How do you know which character they refer to in each case?

F Study the second story. Circle the words which refer to the first character. Underline the words which refer to the second character.

G Read this brainteaser.

- 1 Complete the text with a phrase from the box.

his friend	the younger man	the second man
	the young man	they both

Two men were in a café. One was young and the other was older. ① _____ had coffees in front of them, which they had bought earlier. 'Do you like brainteasers?' said ② _____. 'Yes, I can usually solve them very quickly,' said the older one. 'OK, listen to this,' said the first man. 'A woman lives on the twentieth floor of a building. Every day she takes the lift from her flat to the ground floor, and then she gets out and goes to work.' ③ _____ sat back in his chair and sipped his coffee. 'Go on,' he said. 'When she comes home again she gets in the lift,' continued ④ _____, 'and sometimes she goes all the way to the twentieth floor, but sometimes she gets out at the fifteenth floor and then takes the stairs to the twentieth floor.' ⑤ _____ leaned forward. 'Maybe she likes the exercise,' he said. The young man smiled. 'No, it isn't a choice, she has to get out at the fifteenth floor.' *Why does she get out at the fifteenth floor on the way up?*

- 2 Work in pairs. Can you solve the brainteaser?
- 3 Ask your teacher questions to find the answer.

Lesson 6: Focus on grammar – past tenses

TEST YOUR
BRAINPOWER!

Do you enjoy brainteasers? Try to solve these problems. Remember, you must think in a creative way. Good luck! (Answers next week.)



1 A young man with a problem walked into a shop. The old shopkeeper smiled at him. 'Yes, sir,' he said. 'Can I help you?' The man explained his problem to the shopkeeper and asked for a glass of water. The old man looked at the younger one, scratched his head and thought for a moment, then disappeared into the back of the shop. A few moments later he returned with a gun. He pointed it at the young customer. The man looked terrified and put his hands up, then he smiled. 'Thank you very much,' he said, 'you've solved my problem,' and he left the shop. 'You're welcome,' said the shopkeeper, and put the gun away again in the back of the shop. Another satisfied customer.

What was the young man's problem?

2 Two men were walking along a country lane one day. It had rained for days and the ground was very wet. They had mud all over their shoes. They opened a gate and went into a field. 'Look,' said one. 'What's that?' The other one took a step closer. 'It's a dead body,' he said. They walked over and took a closer look. No one had been in the field, there were no footprints around the man, the ground was completely clear. 'I wonder what happened?' said the first man. 'It's very strange that there are no footprints.' His friend went to have a closer look. 'Look at this,' said the second man, and pointed to a package. 'Ah ha!' said the first, 'so that's how he died.'

How did the man die?

A We often use past tenses when telling stories.

- 1 Complete these rules about the past tense.
- 2 Check your answers with the rules in Unit 3 Lesson 6.

We use three main tenses when we are telling stories in the past.

- 1 The ___ for events in order.
- 2 The ___ for interrupted events, or events at a particular time, or for 'setting the scene'.
- 3 The ___ for events out of order.

B Cover the text. Complete the second story using the correct past tense form of the verb in brackets.

Two men ① _____ (walk) along a country lane one day. It ② _____ (rain) for days and the ground ③ _____ (be) very wet. They ④ _____ (have) mud all over their shoes. They ⑤ _____ (open) a gate and ⑥ _____ (go) into a field. 'Look,' ⑦ _____ (say) one, 'What's that?' The other one ⑧ _____ (take) a step closer. 'It's a dead body,' he ⑨ _____ (say). They ⑩ _____ (walk) over and ⑪ _____ (take) a closer look. No one ⑫ _____ (be) in the field, there ⑬ _____ (be) no footprints around the man, the ground ⑭ _____ (be) completely clear. 'I wonder what ⑮ _____ (happen)?' ⑯ _____ (say) the first man. 'It's very strange that there are no footprints.' His friend ⑰ _____ (go) to have a closer look. 'Look at this,' ⑱ _____ (say) the second man, and ⑲ _____ (point) to a package. 'Ah ha!' ⑳ _____ (say) the first, 'so that's how he ㉑ _____ (die).'

The skill of reading

Lesson 5: Skimming for information

A What would you expect to see in an informal letter? Choose from the list below.

- 1 the writer's address
- 2 the address of the person receiving the letter
- 3 the date
- 4 Dear Sir/Madam
- 5 a reference number
- 6 handwriting
- 7 typing
- 8 one paragraph
- 9 several paragraphs
- 10 Yours faithfully
- 11 Best wishes

B When we read a text, we often look for particular pieces of information first. We *scan* a letter for the writer's address, the signature, the reference number, etc.

- 1 Scan the letter on the page opposite. Find the features you ticked in Exercise A.
- 2 Tick any other features you find in the letter.

C After scanning, we often look at the whole text quickly to find out the subject and the main points. We *skim* before reading it in detail. Skim the letter and decide if the letter is:

- a) formal or informal.
- b) from a woman to a woman or from a woman to a man.
- c) from Scotland or from England.
- d) about one thing or about several things.

D Skim the letter again.

- 1 Look for 30 seconds – all over the letter, not just the first paragraph!
- 2 Cover the letter when your teacher tells you.
- 3 Write down any words or phrases you can remember.
- 4 Compare with your partner. Add any extra words or phrases your partner is sure about.
- 5 Repeat the process for another 30 seconds.

E Work in pairs. Without looking again at the letter, answer these questions.

- a) Where did Nabila go for New Year?
- b) Who did she see?
- c) What was the weather like?
- d) What happened to her car?

F Read the letter carefully. Check your answers to Exercise E.

G Tick the subjects that Nabila writes about.

Subjects	In the letter?	Order
1 her birthday	✓	7
2 her cat		
3 relatives		
4 the landscape		
5 Scotland		
6 her journey		
7 shopping		
8 New Year		
9 the weather		
10 a problem with the car		
11 a party		

H Number the subjects from the list in Exercise G in the order they come in the letter.

I At Hogmanay – New Year's Eve in Scotland – people go 'first footing'. What do you do in your country on New Year's Eve?



Lesson 6: Focus on grammar –
past perfect

25 Burns Avenue
Colehill
Melford
MF7 3QQ
ENGLAND
January 9th 2000

Dear Margaret

How are you? Thank you for your birthday present and card I had a lovely birthday, but I can't believe I'm so old now! I'm sorry I haven't written for so long, but things have been very busy here and as you know, I have just got back from spending New Year in Scotland.

I got a wonderful welcome from all my relatives when I arrived, and they all remembered me. I saw all my aunts, uncles and cousins and looked at lots of photographs of the family. I look just like my grandmother when she was younger!

New Year was fantastic – it's a great big party in Scotland, called Hogmanay. There's lots of singing and dancing and lovely food. We went out 'first footing', which means you visit friends and family in their houses just after midnight. You must carry a small present. It can be a piece of coal (yes, really, it brings good luck) or some Scottish shortbread – that's a kind of biscuit. It's best if the 'first foot' is a dark-haired man, as that is supposed to be luckiest!

It snowed a lot while I was there and I almost had a little disaster with the car. I parked it in town and went shopping. I bought loads of things and had a great time, but when I got back, the car had gone! I looked everywhere but I couldn't see it. Then someone shouted, 'Excuse me, is this your car?'. I looked around and there, at the bottom of the hill, was the car. It was right in the middle of the road! I had parked it on quite a steep hill, and the road was very icy. I hadn't put the handbrake on very well and while I was shopping, the car had rolled down the hill. I was really lucky that no one was hurt. People were going very slowly because of the ice and so they just sort of drove around it. I was very lucky, though.

Well Margaret, I must finish now. Thanks again for the lovely jumper. It goes beautifully with my blue trousers. Write to me soon.

Best wishes
Nabila

A We make the past perfect from the past of the auxiliary *have* and the past participle of the verb.

Example: The car *had gone*.

Find and underline three more examples of the past perfect in the text.

B When we talk about events in the past, we often use the past simple tense.

Example: I **parked** the car in town and **went shopping**. I **bought** loads of things and **had** a great time.

When we write about past events in the order they happened, we call it *chronological order*. When we use chronological order we only need the past simple to tell the story.

Example: First ... I **parked** the car in town.

Then ... I **went shopping**.

In the shops ... I **bought** loads of things.

But when we write about events out of chronological order, we need the past perfect.

Example: First ... I **bought** loads of things and **had** a great time.

Then ... I **got** back to the car park.

But ... the car **had gone**. (i.e. before I got back.)

The sentence starts at a moment in the past – I **got** back to the car park ...

The car went *before* that moment – ... the car **had gone**.

Number these events from the story in the order they happened.

- She went shopping.
- She parked the car on a hill. **1**
- She came back from shopping.
- The car was not there.
- She looked everywhere.
- She didn't put the handbrake on. **2**
- She found the car in the middle of the road.
- The car rolled down the hill.