KARADENİZ TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ * SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ

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BARRIERS TO READING- COMPREHENSION SUCCESS

OF

ENGLISH-MAJORING PREP STUDENTS

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

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ARALIK- 2004

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Tezin Enstitüye Verildiği Tarih   :

Tezin Sözlü Savunma Tarihi   :

Tezin Danışmanı : Yrd. Doç. Dr. M. Naci KAYOĞLU

Jüri Üyesi   : Prof.Dr. Salih ÇEPNİ

Jüri Üyesi   : Yrd.Doç.Dr. R. Şahin ARSLAN

Enstitü Müdürü : Prof. Dr. Osman PEHLİVAN

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ENGLISH-MAJORING PREP STUDENTS

Fehmi TURGUT

We certify that we have read this thesis and that in our combined opinnion it is fully

adequate in scope and in quality as a thesis for the degree of

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Thesis Advisor   : Asst. Prof.Dr. M. Naci KAYAOĞLU

Committe Member   : Prof.Dr. Salih ÇEPNİ

Committe Member   : Asst. Prof. Dr. R. Şahin ARSLAN

Director of the Institute of Social Sciences: Prof. Dr. Osman PEHLİVAN

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TRABZON

I

ABSTRACT

In the background to this study lie the problems experienced by the researcher and by his high-intermediate level students during a three-year reading comprehension instruction. Considering the three dynamic and complex elements of reading in foreign language instruction; the reader, the text and the context, the curent study was undertaken to investigate mainly the reading comprehension problems of the English- majoring students studying reading skill in prep-classes. The subjects for the study were 45 English major students in the Department of English Language and Literature at KTU. The students, according to their university enterance marks, had upper intermediate level of proficiency. The study used researcher's classroom observations, tasks asigned to the subject students, a short questionnaire as data gathering instruments. The data coming from the instruments were analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The findings of the study indicated that there are a number of problems/challenges and negative factors whinch block the students reading comprehension competency in English. These could be grouped under four main categories: (1) problems with difficult vocabulary; (2) problems with reading strategies; (3) problems with the text itself, and (4) problems with the reader himself. The study attempted to investigate each of these categories very closely with their subcategories. The study suggests that identification and interpretation of potential challenges in the study of reading comprehension and designing the course, the materials, the classroom activities based upon these problems with a "problem solving" characterictic, will be of vital importance in any EFL teaching program.

ÖZET

Bu araştırmanın arka planında, araştırmacını Karadeniz Teknik Üniversitesi Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı bölümü hazırlık sınıflarında 2001-2004 yıllarında vermiş olduğu İngilizce Okuma Becerisi derslerinde edindiği deneyimler, öğrencilerinin karşılaştığı okuma-anlama zorlukları yatmaktadır. İngilizce okuma-anlama problemleri konusu, yabancı dilde okuma becerisinin üç ana dinamiği olan okuyucu, metin ve metin anlamı açısından ele alınmıştır. Bu çalışma her şeyden önce bir öğretici projesi ve bir sınıf içi araştırmadır. Projenin amacı ana branşı İngilizce olan hazırlık sınıfı öğrencilerinin orta okul ve lise yabancı dil programlarından hangi okuma anlama problemleriyle geldiklerini, İngilizce okuma anlamaya karşı eğilimlerini ve alışkanlıklarını tespit etmektir. Her sınıf içi araştırmada olduğu gibi bu çalışmanın hedefi içerisinde yapıldığı sınıf yada kurumdaki eğitim-öğretimin kalitesine katkıda bulunmak ve öneriler sunmaktır. Çalışmada 45 hazırlık sınıfı öğrencisi denek olarak kullanılmıştır. Öğrencilerden veri toplama enstrümanı olarak, sınıf içi incelemeler, küçük ölçekli bir öğrenci anketi ve öğrencilere verilen ödevler kullanılmıştır. Elde edilen veriler kalitatif ve kantitatif analize tabi tutularak, öğrencilerin aşağıdaki okuma anlama problemleri olduğu gözlemlenmiştir:

* karşılaşılan yabancı kelimeleri anlamada bilgi ve beceri yetersizliği
* cümle yapıları ile ilgili problemler
* okuma parçalarının bütünlüğünü kavrama ile ilgili problemler
* okuma parçalarındaki söylem ile ilgili problemler
* kelimelerin fonksiyonlarını anlama ile ilgili problemler
* okuma parçalarının organizasyonu ile ilgili problemler
* çıkarım yapma bilgi ve becerisinin eksikliği
* akıcı bir şekilde okuyamama
* okuma parçalarının türleri ile ilgili problemler.
* okuma esnasında gelecek cümlelere ve bilgi akışına ilişkin tahmin yürütememe.

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CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the fastest growing area of study at universities throughout the world is English and the case is by no means different at Turkish universities. A great number of students enrolled in Turkish universities need to build English language reading proficiency because much of their future success is mainly based upon their ability to read and comprehend in English. It is for this reason that the issue of how to help students develop such proficiency has been of great importance to EFL researchers and teachers.

Reading is a very complex developmental process for foreign language learners. Considering the problems students face in studying reading comprehension in the native language, studying reading comprehension in a foreign language becomes a process that drives the learner under many challenging and unfavorable circumstances. It is just like touching a fire-ball since, for learners of a foreign language, it poses many additional problems. Even to make a list of those probable problems is arduous work, for problems may vary according to different foreign language teaching/learning settings. Despite its challenging nature and complexity, this study attempts to identify and interpret problems and implement solutions for at least some of these problems, as much as possible, in a setting where its subjects major in English.

From beginner to advanced level, readers may have different problems based upon their materials, purpose of reading, needs, and proficiency levels. Not all these problems can be diagnosed and solved within the scope of one single study. It is for this reason that this study aims to focus on reading comprehension problems of the English-majoring prep-class students in the hope that the resulting data will lead us to some solutions.

For some reasons the study of reading in a foreign language remained untouched for along period of time in the history of foreign language studies (Knuth and Jones, 1991; Kamil, Mosenthal and Pearson, 2000). The most important reason was its apparent association with the old fashioned grammar-translation method (Dubin, 1982). Another reason was emphasized by Barnes and Powel (1996), who point out that students

frequently suffer from anxiety when they encounter a difficult text in the target language. Therefore, perhaps what Seidlhofer (2001) called pronunciation in foreign language study would better go with reading also: the *Cinderella* of foreign language study. All these arguments resulted in the negligence of reading in the foreign language, and so reading instructors were more interested only in what happened at the end of the reading process rather than the process itself- the before-reading and during-reading processes. The approach was a read-and-answer-the-questions one, regardless of the fact that what happens during-reading process has profound and primary effects on the end product, namely, comprehension. When students have problems with their reading of English, not only during-reading but also pre-reading and after-reading processes, the outcome of reading will of course be problematic. Reading instructors and FL classroom teachers are the ones who experience the problem most effectively since each of them may have a number of students with problems of reading comprehension in the target language.

The study of reading in a foreign language seems to have changed a lot with the introduction of psychology into the world of science and linguistics. A lot of language programs nowadays attach much prominence to the reading skill, and to many language teachers it is the reading skill that a student needs most because it has turned out to be the most important resource of input in language instruction (Harmer, 2001 ; Urquhart and Weir, 1998). In the field of applied linguistics, for students to improve and benefit from this important skill, there is a great necessity for further research in reading. Yet, the issue of how to design a reading program in parallel with the needs of students remains crucial.

1.1. Statement of the purpose

The main purpose of this study is to identify and interpret reading and comprehension difficulties English-majoring prep-class students commonly face in English. Their attitudes towards reading in English, their motivations bad reading habits also fall into the scope of this research

Apart from the descriptive perspective, the study aims to offer certain strategies to cope with these problems, to prevent reading failure in their classrooms. It also intends to

set up some hints to accomplish instructional objectives and methods to solve reading difficulties in such settings.

The subjects of the study do reading for a variety of purposes ranging from literature to language and linguistics in upper classes. They read and analyze academic texts; therefore, the English used in the department quite naturally is highly academic and advanced. Success in these studies is based on the student's ability to read, to use appropriate reading strategies and to cope with reading comprehension problems. Therefore, the question of what the role of reading in foreign language instruction is or why it is important should be approached from many different perspectives. In fact, on the assumption that EFL students strongly need to build English language reading proficiency as soon as possible to succeed in their academic mainstream, and that this necessity is much more intense with students who major in English language and literature, I have made it an important goal of this study to identify the complexities, challenges and problems, factors which lead to reading comprehension failure.

The study also claims to present a revised perspective for reading instructors to design reading courses in an advanced academic setting where English is the medium and students read a vast variety of materials from linguistics to literature.

When one gets involved in reading studies in academic settings, he can easily understand that academic reading has many sub-units or features/elements hidden inside. For example, in many scientific and educational circles, reading in a foreign language can be more a reason for learning a foreign language than a means. Most students learn a language to read: to access the necessary information in their majors. Foreign learners of English strongly need to acquire the ability and skills to read in English at a reasonable rate and with good comprehension. Likewise, in departments where English is the medium of instruction, and where students study English literature and linguistics, this necessity is felt more strongly because academic reading requires:

   * understanding meaning: deducing the meaning of unfamiliar words and word groups; relations with the sentence/complex sentences; implications-information not explicitly stated, conceptual meaning, e.g. comparison, purpose, cause, effect.

* understanding relationship in the text: text structure, the communicative value of sentences; relations between parts of a text through lexical and grammatical cohesion devices and indicators in discourse.

* efficient reading: surveying the text, parts of a textbook (chapters, articles, paragraphs); skimming for important pieces of information and general impression

* taking notes, drawing graphic organizers. (Goodman, 1975; Faust, Johnson, and Temple, 2003)

1.2. Research Question

The main research question in this study was:

1- What problems and challenges do English-majoring prep-class students commonly have in reading-comprehension in English?

The specific research questions in this study were:

1- What reading habits do EFL students have which can be considered problematic?

2- Do they use any strategies to solve their problems with reading-comprehension in English?

3- If yes, what strategies do they generate and use?

4- Do they base these strategies on some ground and scientific theories and methods?

1.3. Significance of the study

Reading is an essential skill for EFL/ESL learners; perhaps the most important skill to master when we consider Krashen's (1981) input generation theory in which reading appears to be the richest source. With strengthened reading skills, learners of English will make greater progress and attain greater development in all academic areas. Very often we hear some complaints from our students about the difficulty of their reading studies, homework or exams with the claim that their failure results from their problems in reading, or they say they do not get enough understanding of what they read. There are many teachers who do not know how to approach their students' problems with reading comprehension. It is a long-lasting problem because, for a considerable amount of time in

the past, course designers did not focus on the teaching of reading skills and reading process separately.

The role reading played in foreign language instruction was under-estimated in the past. Students were asked to come to a conclusion from the written text without being given any routes, without being told about possible difficulties and problems. So this study is of importance to the field EFL because it is to:

* identify existing problems in EFL reading

* describe the role of reading skill in language learning

* highlight the complexity of reading

* define attitudes of the subjects towards reading

* investigate the training approaches to reading at university level

* discuss reading strategies from different perspectives

* act with the information of academic, critical and strategic reading

* guide reading specialists in their teaching of reading

* help material designers

* provide innovative approaches to curriculum and syllabus developers

* encourage more positive attitude to EFL reading

* offer replacing traditional methods of teaching EFL reading by discovery ones

* provide teachers with management and control over the process and product of EFL reading instruction

As many educational institutions around the world try to promote greater reading ability to have access to information, this study is likely contribute to promoting reading at advanced level at KTU and improve the students' reading comprehension level, which is another point to signify this study. To design and implement an efficient and scientific reading course program, it is of great help to identify the problems students commonly suffer from in their reading of English, what attitudes they have towards reading and whether they are correctly motivated or not. A reading course program designed in the light of the findings of such research will contribute very much to the student success in any department, for much of the student's future success is based upon their efficient, intensive and extensive use of reading skills.

1.4. Method

This study used action research as research tradition as it concentrated on identifications of problems and solving them in a context in which specific problems need solving, and subsequently resulting in innovation and change in EFL reading in an ongoing system. As data collecting instruments, the study used classroom observation, tasks and a student questionnaire. The data gathered were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively.

1.5. Organization

The first chapter deals with the statement of topic, purpose and significance. The second chapter is about definitions of reading and research on EFL reading problems. Chapter 3 concerns with the research tradition, setting, subjects, and data gathering instruments. Chapter 4 is devoted to data analysis. In Chapter 5, the study interprets the data analyzed and discusses the problems with reference to reading research literature. Chapter 6 covers conclusion and implications.

CHAPTER 2

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

Research on EFL reading, especially research on reading comprehension problems of foreign learners of English, remained for a long time like a diamond in an oyster waiting to be discovered. This was before the 1970s, just before what Eskey and Grabe (1988 p. 223) called "the period of the dramatic improvements in EFL reading and practice in the field of Applied Linguistics", and just before what Pearson (1985) called the period of comprehension development. With the introduction of internet in educational institutions and with the need to have access to a variety of materials published in all subject fields, EFL researchers turned their face to reading.

2.2. Definition and nature of reading

It is difficult to define reading with a single word or sentence as it has not got a clear or fixed definition. The following definitions coming from different researchers will help determine the scope of the term reading this study focuses on:

"Reading is the ability to draw meaning from the printed page and interpret this information appropriately". (Grabe and Stoller, 2002 p.9)

"The term reading means a complex system deriving meaning from print and requires the following:
a- the skills and knowledge to understand how phonemes, or speech sounds, are connected to print.
b- the ability to decode unfamiliar words
c- the ability to read fluently
d- sufficient background information and vocabulary to foster reading comprehension
e- the development of appropriate active strategies to construct meaning from print
f- the development and maintenance of motivation to read."
(Leipzig, 2001 p.1)

"People who try to define the term reading will probably use some similar or the same words:

a- decode, decipher, identify, etc
b- articulate, speak, pronounce etc.
c- understand, respond, meaning.

Words in group (a) are related to early reading. Those in group
(b) reflect a common experience: pronunciation, practice,
fluent and expressive speaking. What we are interested in are
the words in group (c), because they express the main reasons
for reading in a foreign language". (Nuttall, 1996 p.2)

Hardly anything has a one-way or a linear shape, whether it be simple or not. Even the simplest things have their own complexities, and to understand these complexities requires scientific, disciplinary studies and approaches. Learning a foreign language is certainly not simple. It has many challenges in itself. Each skill and each process in learning a foreign language has its own complexity. It is made up of various elements such as psychological, physical, linguistic, social or textual (Nuttall, 1996; Goodman, 1967; Grabe and Stoller, 2002; Alderson, 2000), so we need to take an interest in these fields of study if we plan to conduct a study on EFL reading. It is for this reason that we can have various definitions of reading. Ignorance of any of these definitions would result in failure to understand how foreign language learners mature in reading, what techniques or strategies they generate and use while reading, what attitudes and motivations they have, what difficulties they suffer from and how they overcome/cope with these difficulties.

Nevertheless, there have been serious attempts to move from product to process (Nuttall, 1996; Day and Bamford, 1998; Anderson, 1999). With this awakening, learners are encouraged to become aware of the problems on the way to understanding the message seeded by the writer into the text or they attempt to remove obstacles by the help of certain techniques and strategies. From this approach emerges a new and important role for reading in foreign language instruction: critical or strategic reading (National Reading Panel, 2000; Pikulski and Cooper, 1997). It means that critical readers apply certain processes, models, questions, and theories that result in enhanced clarity and comprehension. There is more involved, both in effort and understanding, in a critical reading than in just going over the text. The difference is that critical reading requires a deep understanding of the text.

As to the purposes for reading, there exist a variety of reasons depending on the text type and readers needs described as follows:

1- Reading for Literary Experience:
a- involves reading novels, short stories, poems, plays, Essays, etc.
b- requires exploring the human condition and the interplay among events, motions, and possibilities
c- requires knowing what and how an author might write in a specific genre and expectations of how the text will be organized
d- involves looking for how the author explores or uncovers experiences
e- requires engaging in vicarious experiences through the text

2- Reading for Information:
a- involves reading articles in magazines and newspapers, chapters in textbooks, entries in encyclopedias and catalogs, and entire books on particular topics
b- requires awareness and interpretation of the features found in this type of topographic and visual aids such as charts, footnotes, diagrams, subheadings and tables.
c- requires obtaining general information as when glancing through a magazine article or obtaining information for specific purposes such as is needed in preparing a research project.

3- Reading to Perform a Task:
a- involves reading documents such as bus or train schedules; and directions for games, classroom and laboratory procedures, tax or insurance forms, recipes, voter registration materials, maps, referenda, consumer warranties, and office memos
b- requires understanding of the purposes and structure of documents that guide the selection, understanding, and application of information

(Reading Instructional Handbook, 2003 pp. 7-8)

One, perhaps the most important, obstacle that learners of foreign languages face is lack of vocabulary or of difficult vocabulary. Research has shown that learners are heavily dependent on vocabulary in their study fields (Anderson, 1999; Day and Bamford, 1998; Harmer; Huckin , Haynes and Coady, 1993; Nation, 2001; Nuttall, 1996). Reading is the main source of a solution to this problem. No other skill or activity can expose the learner so much to difficult and varied vocabulary. The learner studies a huge amount of vocabulary in its contextual meanings. In the past vocabulary studies were isolated from

reading studies. Modern foreign language study puts the emphasis on the idea that vocabulary should be taught in context; therefore, learners should be exposed to intensive, extensive, critical and academic reading activities (Barnett, 1989). But there appears another fact: reading is a very long and arduous road to tread, on which a lot of obstacles are waiting for performer of this activity, and this influences their performance and proficiency negatively.

To consider the issue from another point of view, as Bright and McGregor (1985) put it, almost everybody knows what provides learners with the situations and environments and other features in which learning activity occurs: they are books. And where there is a book there will be a desire to exploit that book, and where there is little reading, there is language learning also. Bright and McGregor (1985) propose a series of reasons why reading is the core of the syllabus:

a- Only by reading can pupils acquire speed and skills they will need for practical purposes when they leave school. In our literate society, it is hard to imagine any skilled work that does not require the ability to read. Professional competence depends on it.

b- Further education depends on the quantity and quality of reading. All the important study skills require quick, efficient and imaginative reading. General knowledge depends on reading, as any teacher who has been lumbered with a general knowledge period is painfully aware. The background or cross-cultural problems can only be tackled by wide reading.

c- In most schools there is a desire and need to read texts of literary worth (which is the case also in the department being studied).Experience of literature is an essential part of education; it raises the level at which the mind can function, gives form and meaning to the data of experience, widens and depends experience itself, offers attitudes, sets out moral issues, and deals with matters of truth, goodness, beauty, not as abstractions, but as concrete instances.

d- It is in literature that the student is most likely to find words used memorably with force and point. It is there that he will find words used in the widest range of contexts and there that he will find words passionately and delicately conveying emotions and attitudes. There he may practice sustained efforts of imagination, learn to see wholes greater than the sum of their parts and find joy in the exercise of his mental powers at full stretch.

e-The quality of the mind, the personality, the worthwhileness of the poor, bare animal is important. They depend on the acuteness and exactness of the perceptions, the reinforcement of the feelings, the strength of the imaginations and the ability

of the mind to organize these into patterns, artistic or scientific. Literature sharpens sight and insight, widens sympathy and experience and provides occasions for the exercise of judgment about man and his condition. It helps the main business of education. (pp. 52-53)

All these considerations show us that what many researchers have clearly put to explain the role of reading in foreign language teaching makes reading an urgent necessity. To me it is more than a necessity. Its complex nature and complicated relationships between the reader, the text and the outside world or human experience, make it a form of art.

2.3. Research on EFL Reading Problems

At one time little effort was made to teach the process of reading comprehension because early analyses of reading seemed to assume that once readers could decode accurately and fluently, comprehension would automatically follow (McNeil, 1984). Even when this assumption was found to be false, efforts to improve comprehension were focused more on product than on process. Pupils were asked to answer some questions about directly stated facts and to infer answers from written materials without considering how to achieve such understanding.

Recent research in reading, especially after late 1970s, has represented a shift from traditional instruction based upon behaviorism to new visions of reading and readers (Knuth and Jones, 1991). This development has taken reading research from the idea of focusing just on the end product of the reading activity to that of the reading process itself - namely, the factors that have impact on the product. The term "vision" in Knuth and Jones is all that happens to a reader or all that a reader does during reading, and the term "reader" denotes his problems and difficulties, attitudes, and motivation in reading. We understand that, without studying the reader himself and the reading process, it would be very difficult and perhaps meaningless to conduct research on reading comprehension. Therefore, the present study focuses on the problems and difficulties the English major students encounter in reading English and how they cope with these.

Although it has been a very short period of time since linguists and classroom teachers and researchers started to study reading in a foreign language, they have gone a long way towards removing the cover of incomprehensibility over foreign language reading. For example, Carrell (1998) discusses the issue in terms of the role of what she calls strategy teaching in foreign language reading instruction and claims that strategy teaching is the ideal way to deal with reading problems or difficulties. She comes up with the idea that poor readers do not use strategies often or effectively without help and that good readers are those who have few problems in reading comprehension. What we conclude is that diagnosing the reader's problems and prescribing some strategies and techniques to deal with them is an ideal way of foreign language reading instruction and that strategy instruction in reading comprehension can definitely make a difference in the long term. A good reader's success does not come very easily or in a short period of time; it is the product of some arduous studies of long periods of time. To this assumption, based upon literature in the field of foreign language reading comprehension, it seems to be possible to make an addition: success in strategy instruction starts with the diagnosis of the problematic issues for the learner in the skills of learning the target language.

It is necessary to define the term "strategy" in relation to EFL reading.. Duffy (1993, p. 232) defines the term strategy as *"plans for solving the problems encountered in constructing meaning"*. Some readers are independent readers - that is, they do not need others' help while reading. Some others are dependent readers; these readers are what we call poor readers or readers with reading and comprehension problems. From Duffy's definition it is possible to form the idea that strategy instruction can be designed according to the needs, problems and difficulties of the reader. Hosenfeld (1979) comes up with a similar idea to that of Duffy's and claims that the reading comprehension level of a student can be determined by how well the reader variables (interest in the text, purpose for reading, knowledge of the topic, foreign language abilities, awareness of the reading process, strategy use) interact with the text variables (text type, structure, syntax, and vocabulary). These variables are the possible problematic areas and the problem itself is any dispute, interruption or distortion or gap in the interaction among these variables.

The field of reading in ESL/EFL seems to be very confusing because of its broad tasks and its never-ending discussions. Any researcher who surveys reading research

studies can easily grasp the conclusion that only recently have researchers developed some shared understanding. These points more often focus on the idea that when the causes and the cures of the problems/difficulties are known, it will be more likely to make the FL/SL reading area problem free for learners. Given Duffy's definition of strategy, it is possible to claim that a reading program based upon the purpose of solving students' reading comprehension problems can easily be designed. The first step is to uncover students' needs and problems in foreign language reading. This is the rationale for this study also: to give an insight to reading specialists, especially those who teach English majors in Turkish universities, to help them learn about their target students' reading problems and design an appropriate reading course program and materials.

We can rise an argument for basing one's teaching of reading on a knowledge of students' needs and problems and then on strategy teaching on the work done by Eskey (1997). He claims that teaching models of the reading process help us develop a much clearer sense of what our students do while reading. Here some questions may occur to the minds of the reading instructors: Is it possible or advisable to teach all strategies? Or how can we decide upon what to teach as strategy? On which strategies should we focus more? The answers to these questions may entail further research in reading, but this study at least claims to provide interested people with an overall idea of what can be taken into consideration as problems and barriers to reading comprehension while or before designing a reading program for students of intermediate and upper-intermediate level . And, of course, in this program is included the strategy instruction also.

In a comprehensive study, Barr and Sadow (1985) argue that poor comprehension is often related to inadequate print translation skills and word knowledge. To this they add that sometimes even though students know the important vocabulary, comprehension is still poor, in which case the reading difficulty is specific to comprehension. That means the reader fails to see how ideas fit together. According to Barr and Sadow, there is another reason for the reading comprehension problem: it is that poor readers have difficulty with the integration of text information, both at the intersentence level and at the higher level of the text structure. This study also investigated whether these problems block the subject students' comprehension or not. It appears that not a single study has touched the issue of

foreign language reading comprehension problems on the hearth. Each study deals with some part of the issue. It seems that only when one views studies on different aspects of reading comprehension, which are just like parts of a jigsaw puzzle, can he see the whole problem. Maybe Nuttall (1996) contrasts this dispersion in the study of reading comprehension and refers to reading skills in each chapter of her book, so the book can be said to be a more comprehensive study. Each of these skills can be a solution to a problem, or any reader lacking any of these skills can be considered to have a problem in reading comprehension in English.

Nuttall (1996) first discusses reasons for reading in a foreign language, textual difficulties, the role of the reader, the role of the schema, and the three reading approaches (top-down, bottom-up and interactive). Then she moves to text and discourse - namely the reader's problems with text and discourse. She informs us that sometimes a problem with reading comprehension can derive from the reader's own attitudes towards reading activity. This aspect of reading problem, she says, can be related to "reader motivation". Nuttall also describes "efficient reading", the component parts of which as she describes them give us a lot of insight in our study. We will use some of these criteria to judge our students in their reading of English.

Another problem related to reading comprehension is difficult vocabulary. Most students think that words are the most important ingredients of a language, so they are highly interested in words in their learning activities of a foreign language. It is a fact that words are exciting, essential and inseparable parts of foreign language instruction. Yet it is also a fact that knowledge of lack of vocabulary may create a sense of insecurity and ambiguity in the minds of the readers who overvalue vocabulary. Such readers need assistance and plenty of feedback to cope with their problem of difficult vocabulary.

In order to see what problems a poor foreign-language reader may encounter, one of the ideal ways is perhaps to study the characteristics of a competent reader. Bright and McGregor (1985) mention some skills that a good reader employs while reading. They claim that proficient readers do not use one skill but many and that each skill is acquired

by specific practice. Later they put it that skill-based or problem-solving reading instruction will help students cope with their problems in reading.

It was mentioned above that sometimes problems may result from the reader's attitude towards the reading activity. To support this, McNeil (1984) emphasizes this aspect of reading comprehension, arguing that pupils may fail to become independent and proficient readers because they have schematized reading as a passive activity or an activity in which they must list pieces of information in order to answer a teacher's questions. Later in a similar study, Day and Bamford (1998) take a further step and posit that student attitude is not only a source of the problem but sometimes it may also be the problem itself. They advise foreign language teachers to find out; as a first step, the students attitudes towards reading not only in the foreign language but also in their native language. It is also our aim to investigate whether the subject students' attitudes towards reading is a problem itself or a source of the problem.

It would be a good idea to do an overview study of the nature of reading to have a deep understanding of foreign language reading problems ; but Alderson (2000) claims that it is almost impossible and that each study searches only a part of the subject matter. The various studies of the area never come together to make a coherent and comprehension whole. This makes me a bit relieved because it seems to be very difficult to feel satisfied with what has already been done in this field. Alderson tries to make it more specific and distinguishes between the *process* of reading and the result of this process, the *product*. The process is what the reader does during reading, the problems and difficulties he encounters while reading and the ways he deals with these problems, which is in the center of this study. He puts it that the study of the reading process has given rise to a number of reading skills or sub-skills, each of which may be called "a problematic area" of reading comprehension. Two new terms are referred to in Anderson's book: *micro process and macro process* (Kintsch and van Dijk, 1978). The former is related to the skills a reader uses to understand words, phrases and individual sentences and the latter to those skills we use to understand sentence relationships, paragraphs and longer text organization (Alderson, 2000).

Munby (1978- p.10) recognizes some of what Alderson calls reading sub-skills:

* recognizing the script of a language
* deducing the meaning and use of unfamiliar lexical items
* understanding explicitly stated information
* understanding information when not explicitly stated
* understanding conceptual meaning
* understanding the communicative value of sentences
* understanding relations within the sentences
* understanding relations between parts of text through lexical cohesion
* interpreting text by going outside it
* recognizing indicators in discourse
* identifying the main point or important information in discourse
* distinguishing the main idea from supporting details
* extracting salient details to summarize (the text, an idea)
* extracting relevant points from a text selectively
* skimming
* scanning to locate specifically required information
* transcending information to diagrammatic display (graphic organizers).

Although a reader does not use all of these skills at the same time while reading because he may have several possible purposes for reading each of which requires a different combination of these skills. Lack of any one of these skills required for the reading purpose and so for the reading process may create a problem for the foreign language reader. Of course what we mean by "problem" in reading is readers' weakness(as) or difficulties in the application of these skills. Or the discussion/the issue can be taken to another stage: what is it to be a problem-free foreign language reader? or What are the characteristics of proficient readers? Alderson (2000) answers the questions under the heading "the constructs of reading". He maintains that the good reader possesses: (1) strategic competence; (2) linguistic competence; (3) discourse competence, and (4) sociolinguistic competence in reading and that each of these fields of competence requires specific skills.

Research into reading comprehension problems of foreign language learners turns on the use of correct strategies in correct situations - or rather, on how well and how successfully the reader uses the reading strategies. Grabe and Stoller (2002- p. 16) recognize the following sample strategies:

* specifying a purpose for reading
* planning what to do/what steps to take
* previewing the text
* predicting the contents of the text or section of text
* checking predictions
* posing questions about the text
* finding answers to posed questions
* connecting text to background knowledge
* summarizing information
* making inferences
* connecting one part of the text to another
* paying attention to text structure
* rereading
* guessing the meaning of a new word from context
* using discourse markers to see relationships
* checking comprehension
* identifying difficulties
* taking steps to repair faulty comprehension
* critiquing the text
* critiquing the writer
* judging how well objectives were met
* reflecting on what has been learned from the text.

Inability to perform well in any one of these strategies is, they maintain, a barrier to foreign language learners' comprehension in reading.

Cohen (1998), based upon his experiences at the university of Michigan, posits that the most effective program for foreign language instruction would likely be one of strategy-based instruction - that is, explicit classroom instruction directed at learners regarding their language-learning and language-use strategies, and provided alongside

instruction in the foreign language. In the center of this approach is students' needs - their weaknesses and problems in the use of language skills.

Research on second language has provided a number of other insights for reading development and instruction. Grabe and Stoller (2002 p. 66) claim that research insights into second language reading development have informed some issues; such as

* the importance of discourse structure and graphic representations

* the importance of vocabulary in language learning

* the need for language awareness and attending to language and genre form

* the existence of a second language proficiency threshold in reading

* the need for extensive reading

* the benefits of integrating reading and writing

* the importance of Content-based Instruction

* the importance of metacognitive awareness and strategy learning.

I find these issues significant because some of them are likely to be problematic areas for the subjects in this study. Little progress has been made in translating these second language findings into practice, and there exists a huge gap between research and practice, which can be a topic for a further research.

What is problematic for nonnative readers when they are reading in English in a specialized field? This was a question to which Cohen, Glasman, Rosenbaum-Cohen, Ferrera and Fine (1979) tried to find an answer by referring to a series of studies conducted in Hebrew University. The studies found the following problematic areas in ESP reading of nonnative readers:

1- Heavy noun phrase subjects and objects (a very long clause functioning as the object or the subject of a subordinate sentence).

2- Syntactic markers of cohesion (conjunctive words signaling cohesion).

3- The role of nontechnical vocabulary in technical texts.

In addition to difficult vocabulary, some difficult grammatical uses of the target language appeared, to Cohen et all, to be another problem in reading comprehension of nonnative readers in English.

Research findings coming from different groups of subject students from different levels and instructional settings show us that EFL learners' difficulties in reading English derive from some similar sources. In reading English there are a number of problematic issues, most of which we have mentioned already, and foreign language readers, based upon their study field, level, command of the foreign language, and the text itself, find some of these issues difficult. What Barfield (1999) found also testifies to the above consideration and supports those studies and their findings exemplified so far. He divided his study into three phases. In the first phase he asked their students what they found difficult in graded reading in English. The answers were as follows:

* inferencing/disbelief/comprehending
* vocabulary
* sentence syntax
* sentence meaning
* real-world knowledge
* proper names
* meta-questions, exclamations, discourse markers, pro-forms, ellipses,
* pronunciation and poetry.

It is quite reasonable to predict that as the students progress in reading or in learning reading strategies, the difficulties are likely to shift or the ratings of these difficulties change. Barfield showed this in his second-phase-study, where he found that the students made progress in graded reading. When the students were asked a second time about what they found difficult in reading newspapers and content texts, the difficulties were:

* vocabulary
* syntax

* cohesion and coherence
* real-world knowledge

In the third phase of his study, he asked the same question but concerning academic texts. The students on that occasion gave the following order of difficulty:

* vocabulary
* technical phrases
* sentence length
* background knowledge
* syntax
* cohesion

To conclude this part, it is contended that any modern research study conducted to diagnose nonnative students' reading difficulties in English, whether they be English major or non-major, will take its lead from what Barfield (1999) called 'the main stream claims and evidence about second-language reading'. It can be argued that most of the recent research on reading comprehension itself and problems in foreign language reading has been interested in how good readers set up interactions with the text. It is just like a continuum. On one side there are poor readers. To identify what kind of problems those readers may have, one should look at the other side of the continuum: what proficient readers do? This is why in most parts of this chapter the stress is upon reading strategies. What this chapter has attempted is, under the light of these strategies, to identify poor readers' characteristics.

CHAPTER 3

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

In the first part of this chapter the research tradition, the setting and the subjects of the study are explained. In the second part data collection and data analysis procedures are outlined.

3.2. Methodology

Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used in this study. In order to stay away from personal prejudices resulting from single methodology, a questionnaire was used in the study as a quantitative research method. The purpose for the use of questionnaire was to develop a kind of triangulation, in addition to obtaining standard robust data, triangulation is expected to add richness and full explanation to the study of human behavior, attitudes and problems (Cohen and Manion, 1994). The questionnaire acted to serve to test a certain source of information against other sources to see whether similar findings cross-validate each methodology. The kind of triangulation in this study is the methodological one, which uses more than one method (Cohen and Manion, 1994).

This study is an act undertaken by a teacher to enhance EFL reading instruction in a specific situation in (a) specific institution(s). For this and many other reasons which will be covered in the following part, the study used action research tradition.

3.3. Action Research

For various reasons, this study followed a tradition of action research. One is that it is concerned with what is happening in the classroom. With this research I tried to get to a position to see whether there is a gap between what I teach and what my students learn, how they perform and how they should perform, what they know and what they should know.

Attempting to diagnose and remedy in our situation, and subsequently improving the instruction and offering innovatory approaches to teaching and learning into a present system, this study fits in the tradition of action research.

The study also employs what Morris and Rein (1967 p.196) add to the purposes of action research:

> 1- teaching methods- replacing a traditional method by a discovery method
> 2- learning strategies- adapting an integrated approach to learning preference to a single subject style of teaching and learning improving one's methods of continuous assessment
> 3- encouraging more positive attitudes towards work.

Straus and Corbin (1990) take us to a different characteristic of action research: Theoretical sensivity. In action research, it is that a researcher can come to a research situation depending on experience with an area. This is due to conceptual terms not with concrete terms, which is one of the most important characteristics of this study. I have been teaching Reading Skill courses in the Department of English Language and Literature. What I have learned from my experience is that no material, no course program and no classroom activity can work well without considering the student's needs, problems, learning habits and attitudes. This is why I decided to identify and interpret my students' reading problems in this study. It is what Straus and Carbin call theoretical sensivity which took me to this research area.

The present research also seeks ways to improve the quality of an action, namely reading comprehension skill in an institution, which is one of the characteristics of action research (McCutcheon and Jung, 1990).

What Winter (1982) draws attention to may be a weak point for this study: the problem of interpreting data in action research. He claims that the action research tradition has a methodology for the creation of data, but not an ideal one for the interpretation of data. The present study tried to overcome this challenge by using numerical interpretation of data.

3.4. Setting

The setting of the study was the two prep-classes in the Department of English Language and Literature of Karadeniz Technical University, Trabzon, Turkey.

3.5. Subjects

This study was conducted with 45 English majoring students studying language skills in the prepatory classes in the Department of English Language and Literature. The reading course the students were required to take was designed to teach reading skills and to prepare the students for their future readings of textbooks and other literary texts like novels, short stories, plays and poems. The subjects of the study came to the department from different schools from almost the same programs: the foreign language programs of Anatolian High Schools or Super High Schools. The points they got on English Proficiency in the university entrance exam showed no significant differences to allow any intervention of external variable in the results of the study. The students reported that they did not take a separate reading course but did reading embedded in other courses.

3.6. Data collection procedures

The data required for this study were collected through the following procedures: (1) the student questionnaire, (2) tasks, (3) the researcher's classroom observations.

3.7. Questionnaire

The questionnaire was used to learn what the students were doing before, during and after the reading process. The items in the questionnaire addressed to a problematic area, a certain problem in reading, or use of or lack of use of a correct reading strategy. Another purpose for the use of a questionnaire was to develop anonymity, the possibility of a high return rate of information and some standardized questions (Munn and Drever, 1995). I tried to use some terminology with which the subject students were familiar from their reading courses. Of various types of questionnaire, a closed/restricted questionnaire

that involved item checking (Oppenhaim, 1992) was used in this study. It was adapted from the following sources: (1) Sample Learning Strategies Questionnaire for Reading (http://www.nclrc.org/portfolio/formRussianSample.html), (2) More than Meets the Eye-Foreign Language Reading: Theory and Practice, (Barnett, 1989), and (3) *Reading Comprehension.* (Center for Advancement of Learning. Learning Strategies Database. General-Purpose Learning Strategies, Muskingum College http://muskingum.edu/~ /database/readingcomp.html). In the course of the construction of the questionnaire, reductions of problems with questionnaires were made with reference to Oppenheim (1992), Munn and Drever (1995), and Best and Kahn (1998).

3.8. Piloting the Questionnaire

One of the most important steps to take in designing a questionnaire is the pilot work. It requires the use of a small number of individuals getting involved in the answering process to find out whether such problems as typological mistakes, overlapping response sets, ambiguous instructions might arise or not (Munn and Drever, 1995). The questionnaire used in this study was piloted twice on eight samples. At first it included twenty-two items. Some of the items were found confusing and repetitive by the piloting samples, so I had to exclude them and condense the questionnaire to eighteen items. In the second pilot work, the questionnaire was piloted item by item. With each item, I asked the respondents whether the terminology was understandable or not, whether the statement was clear enough or not, whether they were able to get the purpose of the questionnaire and whether they were able to understand easily the main fieldwork of the questionnaire from the individual items or not.

I also thought ahead about the analysis stage of the questionnaire. According to Oppenheim (1992), a well-phrased and piloted question may be problematic in the analysis stage in that its responses may be hard to quantify. In the analysis of the questionnaire, each item was analyzed separately and responses for each item were represented by numbers, which was clear and easy to understand. The feedback I got from the second pilot work gave the questionnaire its final shape.

3.9. Tasks

Effective teaching is concerned with techniques and strategies to deal with problems that learners suffer from, and the best way of achieving this is to give students tasks which enable them to learn new things, and to practice things which they find difficult (Skehan, 2002). This is what the present study took as rationale as to using tasks as data gathering instrument. Each strategy or technique involves solving a problem. Hence, this study is designed to set up a connection between strategy use and reading problems assigning some tasks. I used tasks as data collecting procedure because tasks are work plans, they make learners get involved in some linguistic activities and they entail much attention and activity, they make students language users rather than learners, and they make students active participants of the teaching/learning process (Ellis, 1994).

Another idea that motivated me to use tasks came from Long and Robinson (1998). They argue that while performing tasks learners signal to their teachers what problems they are suffering from and whether they need any feedback or not. This study, therefore, attempts to use task assignment to see what signals the subject students give the researcher as to their reading problems. It is contended that the task-based part of this study will help the writer observe more clearly what problems the subject students experience while reading in English. By doing this, the present study is carried to a platform where not non-classroom (as in traditional research) but classroom applications are focused on (Long and Robinson, 1998).

The tasks designed for this study to elucidate the information sought to find out whether or how the students go about the following ingredients of successful EFL reading:

Task 1: coping with difficult vocabulary- using word guessing strategies

Task 2: understanding complex sentences

Task 3: identifying points of reference

Task 4: identifying text organization, discourse markers and discourse types

Task 5: inferencing- distinguishing between what a text says and what it means

Task 6: identifying text types

Each of these tasks was performed by the subject students in separate class hours. I came to the classroom with some hand-outs and delivered these to the students allocating enough

time for them to do the task. At the end of the activity, I collected the hand-outs and assessed the student's performance and drop notes and comments on the task sheets. (See Chapter 4 for detailed information about the tasks)

3.10. Classroom Observation

In order not to rely merely on the data coming from the students' self-reports and to construct some kind of triangulation over the data, and to develop prolonged engagement in the research process, the study used the observation method. The classroom observation method has its own advantages and disadvantages: (1) the duration and the frequency of the observation: the investigator will need to visit the same class over an extended period of time if meaningful data are to be gathered, (2) the way the observation is conducted: the presence of the observer in the classroom while the activity is taking place may influence the progress of the activity (Cohen and Scott, 1998).

These, however, did not pose such a problem for this study because the observer in this study was the reading instructor in the classrooms under observation. I observed the subject students for almost an entire academic year. I made a long list of observation topics related to the research questions (see Table 19). Each item was investigated in a specific and separate period of time.

But research critics recognize some advantages in gathering data through classroom observation. Observation may give the research study a more objective, and a more impartial status (Cohen and Scott, 1998). By using observation, I had the opportunity to see problems/issues through my own eyes and to filter the data in order to see whether there were any discrepancies between what the subjects reported and what was performed.

Researchers recognize two types of observation tools: the Immediate Indicators Tool (ITT) and the Observational Prompt Tool (OPT) (Holbrook, Gray and Fasse, 1999). While ITT enables the observer to record quick snapshots of what is happening in the classroom environment, OTT prompts for what to look for during individual, small-group, and whole-class activities, what to look for during particular classroom activities and what to look for when certain goals are active. The most important characteristic of this tool is

that it provides the researchers with guidelines for what to look for in the classroom and structure for their individual field notes (Fasse and Kolodner, 2000).

This research deals with two classrooms, with some particular classroom activities (reading and comprehension in English), and with some certain active goals (diagnosis of reading comprehension problems of the participants in English). Therefore, the OPT tool was the more suitable and helpful one to use in the classroom observations in this study.

CHAPTER 4

4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction

Two types of data were analyzed in this study: qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative data analysis was used only with the questionnaire (Appendix 10). But this analysis was not a set of statistical procedures but one of numerical representations of the responses for each item.

4.2. Analysis of the Questionnaire

All the items in the questionnaire were related directly to problems themselves or some problematic areas in reading skill in English as a foreign language.

Item 1: Before I start reading, I
a - always set a purpose
b- read and then consider my purpose
c- preview the text
d- always empty my mind for new information.

Item 1	Number of Responses
Before I start reading, I	
a - always set a purpose	1
b- read and then consider my purpose	5
c- preview the text	10
d- always empty my mind for new information	29

Table 1: Analysis of the Questionnaire Item 1

The purpose of this item was to see whether the students start reading with some purposes in their mind or not. Setting some purposes in mind makes readers active participants of

the reading process. Descriptive analysis of this item shows that the students do not start reading with some purposes, which means that they take a passive role in reading. Reading starts with the title or subtitle, if any, or the very first sentence. This is a useful strategy which successful readers employ in the-before-reading process. This may not be alone be a problem but is a bad habit of reading and also a source of problem.

Item 2: When I read, I pay most attention to

a- what individual words mean

b- what the sentences mean

c- what the form or grammatical function of the word is

d- what the structure of the passage is

This item aimed to uncover the students attitude towards the text. Some students read word by word, some put much of the emphasis on individual sentences, some on the text itself as a whole. The ideal student is the one who employs all of them at a time but with much of the focus on sentence level with their interrelationships and longer text level (Samuels and Kamil, 1988).

Item 2	Number of Responses
When I read, I pay most attention to	
a- what individual words mean	25
b- what the sentences mean	10
c- what the form or grammatical function of the word is	8
d- what the structure of the passage is	2

Table 2: Analysis of the Questionnaire Item 2

More than 60% of the students reported they focused mostly on words. Such students are so vulnerable to problems with vocabulary that easily get distracted in case of any problematic situation at word level.

Item 3- When I begin reading a text in English, I

a- don't usually consider how it relates to what I already know

b- think about what I know about the topic or source of the text

c-think about what I know about the author's style or point of view.

d- simply begin reading the text itself

The purpose of this item was to investigate whether the subject students use their prior knowledge, real-world knowledge or not. The descriptive representation is shown in the following table.

Item 3	Number of Responses
When I begin reading a text in English, I	
a- don't usually consider how it relates to what I already know	35
b- think about what I know about the topic or source of the text	5
c- simply begin reading the text itself	5

Table 3: Analysis of the Questionnaire Item 3

The table shows that a great majority of the participant students remain as outsiders by not including their real-world knowledge in the reading process. Activating prior knowledge enriches comprehension (Christen and Murphy, 1991). Lack of use of prior knowledge is one of the characteristics of poor readers (Knuth and Jones, 1991).

Item 4- I read different English texts

a- the same way because they are in English

b- the same way because they are usually difficult

c- differently depending on what I need to learn from them.

d- differently depending on text type.

This item aimed to see whether the students tended to read different texts in the same way or not, whether they used different reading styles according to the text types and their purpose of reading. The results were tabulated as follows.

Item 4	Number of Responses
I read different English texts	
a- the same way because they are in English	20
b- the same way because they are usually difficult	17
c- differently depending on what I need to learn from them	3
d- differently depending on text type.	5

Table 4: Analysis of the Questionnaire Item 4

Only 8 (17.5%) of 45 students reported that they determined their reading style according to the text they were reading or their purpose of reading. It is important to adapt reading style to suit the material and purpose of reading. Grow (1996- p.1) categorizes texts which require different reading styles as follows:

> 1- Texts containing one major element, plus supporting information, such as: a) passages describing a single object paragraphs that state a proposition and offer support for it; b) simple arguments (a conclusion supported by reasons); c) definitions of concepts (what is it? what are its attributes?)
> 2- Texts describing a sequence, such as: a) chronological narratives; b) step by step logical accounts; c) step by step descriptions of a procedure or stages in a development, d) other sequential narratives, such as a goal/ action/ outcome report.
> 3- Texts comparing two or more elements: a) comparison and contrast; b) problem/solution; c) cause/effect; d) analysis of interactions (cooperation and conflict).

Proficient readers should distinguish between these texts and employ the appropriate reading style.

Item 5- While reading, I can predict or hypothesize based upon the title

a- often

b- sometimes

c- seldom

d- never

The rationale of this item was to investigate whether the subject students made predictions while reading. Numerical representations of Item 5 are presented in the following table.

Item 5	Number of Responses
While reading, I can predict or hypothesize based upon the title	
a- often	0
b- sometimes	4
c- seldom	10
d- never	31

Table 5: Analysis of the Questionnaire Item 5

Of 45 students, only four students reported that the sometimes made predictions based upon the title while reading in English. Good readers start reading from the title. The subjects ignorance of tittles in reading was a problem in that tittles often tell a lot about the content and any reader who does not start reading from tittles may miss the opportunity to predict the content in advance.

Item 6- When reading, I predict the logical continuation of sentences.
a- often
b- sometimes
c- hardly ever
d- never

Prediction enables the reduction of uncertainty in reading. It also allows the reader to understand the logic of the text. Making good predictions is of vital importance for reading comprehension. Prediction is the ongoing process of using one's prior knowledge along with the text's words, context, and purpose for reading, in order to predict what is coming next. As the reader reads he finds the opportunity to confirm or change his predictions. The greater the knowledge of semantics, syntax, and structure a readers has, the more likely he is to reduce uncertainty as s/he confirms and changes predictions. The analysis of Item 6 revealed that the subject students did not make predictions about what to follow each sentence.

Item 6	Number of Responses
When reading, I predict the logical continuation of sentences	
a-often	0
b- occasionally	0
c- rarely	5
d- never	40

Table 6: Analysis of the Questionnaire Item 6

Item 7- While I read, I periodically check whether the material makes sense to me.

a- often

b- occasionally

c- rarely

d- never

This item was to check whether the students monitored their reading and comprehension or not. The following table represents the results.

Item 7	Number of Responses
While I read, I periodically check whether the material makes sense to me.	
a- often	0
b- occasionally	2
c- rarely	7
d- never	36

Table 7: Analysis of the Questionnaire Item 7

Effective readers constantly check to see if what they are reading makes sense. To appreciate fully the importance of monitoring meaning, consider the many levels at which comprehension might break down (Marinak, Moore, Henk and Keepers, 1997). As Collins and Smith (1980) indicate, readers might fail to understand:

* new words or known words that do not make sense in context;

      * sentences that are vague, ambiguous, or inconsistent with prior knowledge;

      * paragraphs whose sentence relationships are unclear, conflicting, or connected in several possible ways; and

      * how the text fits together as a coherent whole.

The results showed that students did not check whether the text they were reading made sense to them or not.

Item 8- I imagine scenes or draw mental pictures of what I am reading

      a- often

      b- occasionally

      c- rarely

      d- never

This item was designed to learn whether the students consider and practice riding as mental process, and whether they include their power of imagination in their reading process or not.

Item 8	Number of Responses
I imagine scenes or draw mental pictures of what I am reading	
a- often	0
b- occasionally	0
c- rarely	3
d- never	42

Table 8: Analysis of the Questionnaire Item 8

When answering the questionnaire some ten students dropped a note in the margin next to the item. The note said " I cannot do it. I just read, read and read". This quotation and the other responses meant that reading was not a mental process for the students.

The following three items (Item 9, 10 and 11) were designed to investigate how the subject students behaved when they encountered difficult/unknown words in the text they were reading. These items were also helpful to elicit the students' understanding of the role of knowledge of vocabulary in reading. This is why I handled these three items together.

Item 9- When I read in English, I think that

a- all words are of equal importance.

b- I can ignore some words and still understand

c- I don't know which word I should skip or ignore.

d- it is not a good thing to ignore any words

e- I need to look in the dictionary for unknown words.

Item 10- When I read in English, I

a- feel uneasy when I face many difficult vocabulary.

b- look up most of the words I do not know.

c- want to know exactly what is in the passage.

d- try to guess what some words mean.

Item 11- If I come to a word I do not know, I

a- skip it and come back to it later.

b- try to guess the meaning and go on.

c- try to guess the meaning and reread the sentence.

d- look the word up in a glossary or dictionary and reread the sentence.

Item 9	Number of Responses
When I read in English, I think that	
a- all words are of equal importance.	21
b- I can ignore some words and still understand	1
c- I don't know which word I should skip or ignore.	10
d- it is not a good thing to ignore any words	13

Table 9: Analysis of the Questionnaire Item 9

Item 10	Number of Responses
When I read in English, I	
a- feel uneasy when I face many difficult vocabulary	40
b- easily get distracted	35
c- am not influenced very much negatively	5

Table 10: Analysis of the Questionnaire Item 10

In this item 35 students circled both (a) and (b).

Item 11	Number of Responses
If I come to a word I do not know, I	
a- skip it and come back to it later	9
b- try to guess the meaning and go on	11
c- try to guess the meaning and reread the sentence.	10
d- look the word up in a glossary or dictionary and reread the sentence	15

Table 11: Analysis of the Questionnaire Item 11

Vocabulary is central to skilled reading, for that reason, reflective teachers concerned about their students' attitudes towards vocabulary, their problems, and their progress in this area often should ask themselves some practical questions: How well am I facilitating vocabulary learning? Do my students have enough vocabulary to understand classroom assignments? How do they do with respect to vocabulary? (Grabe and Stoller, 2002). Analysis of the Items 9, 10, and 11 showed that the subject students had some problematic attitudes towards vocabulary. They tended to value every word in a text equally. The did not distinguish between active vocabulary, those they knew, receptive vocabulary, those whose meanings they could probably guess based upon what they knew, and throw-away vocabulary, those which had no value in the text.

Item 12- To figure out the meaning of an unfamiliar word, I

a- consider what the rest of the sentence or paragraph says

b- look for some context clues

c- analyze the grammatical form of the word

d- don't do any of the above

e- refer to a dictionary as soon as possible

Item 12 was designed to see what the subject students generally did when they encountered unknown vocabulary.

Item 12	Number of Responses
To figure out the meaning of an unfamiliar word, I	
a- consider what the rest of the sentence or paragraph says	6
b- look for some context clues	3
c- analyze the grammatical form of the word	10
d- don't do any of the above	20
e- refer to a dictionary as soon as possible	20

Table 12: Analysis of the Questionnaire Item 12

20 students circled both (d) and (e). Analysis of Item 10 showed that the informants suffered from lack of skill and knowledge to develop strategies to cope with difficult vocabulary.

Item 13- When I read in English, I

a- often read word by word

b- read sentences and translate them into my native language

c- look for sentence relationships

d- consider the text as a whole

Item 13	Number of Responses
When I read in English, I	
a- often read word by word	21
b- read sentences and translate them into my native language	30
c- look for sentence relationships	10
d- consider the text as a whole	4

Table 13: Analysis of the Questionnaire Item 13

15 Students answered both (a) and (b), and 6 only (a) and 15 only (b). The analysis revealed that 21 informants had a tendency to read word by word, 30 of them tried to translate the text into their native language, only 14 of them reported that they looked for sentence relationships and considered text unity.

Item 14- Do you ever ask yourself questions about the text and your understanding before, during and after reading?

a- often

b- occasionally

c- rarely

d- never

This item was designed to investigate if the students had the skill to question texts. Some readers try to understand text talk and question the text to become an active participant in the process. On the other hand, some take a passive role and try to answer the questions given to them by the writer or the textbook, if any.

Item 14- Do you ever ask yourself questions about the text and your understanding before, during and after reading?	Number of Responses
a- often	0
b- occasionally	3
c- rarely	11
d- never	25

Table 14: Analysis of the Questionnaire Item 14

39 students answered this item. Only three of them reported they questioned the text occasionally. The rest reported they did not have the skill of questioning the text.

Item 15- When I have finished reading, I

a- stop thinking about the text

b- do not realize I have not understood

c- reflect on what I have just read

d- summarize major ideas

e- seek additional information from outside sources

Item 15 was designed to find out what the subject students did when they have finished reading the text. Research on reading recognizes three stages in reading: before-reading, during-reading and after-reading stages (Nuttall, 1996). Proficient readers are those who are active in all the three stages of reading. Poor readers stop thinking about the text when they have finished reading it. This may result in termination of the reading by the brain. Keeping active in after-reading stage enables the reader to correct the information gathered from the text, eliminate the inconsistencies.

Item 15	Number of Responses
When I have finished reading, I	
a- usually stop thinking about the text	25
b- do not realize I have not understood	30
c- reflect on what I have just read	13
d- summarize major ideas	5
e- seek additional information from outside sources	0

Table 15: Analysis of the Questionnaire Item 15

100% of the students answered this item. 25 of the circled both (a) and (b) and 3 of them both (c) and (d). The above item analysis uncovered the fact that a great majority of the students stopped reading and thinking about the text after they finished reading. None of them reported they looked for some additional materials about the subject they just read.

Item 16- I summarize in my mind or in writing important information that I read

a- often

b- sometimes

c- rarely

d- never

This item was designed to see if the students include their power of imagination in the reading process by drawing mental pictures, visualizing the events and scenes in their minds or summarize the information or ides or events in the text in written form.

Item 16	Number of Responses
I summarize in my mind or in writing important information in the text.	
a- often	3
b- sometimes	9
c- rarely	20
d- never	13

Table 16: Analysis of the Questionnaire Item 16

The analysis of Item 14 backed the fact obtained from Item 1, 4, 5, and 12 that they were not active participants of the reading process.

Item 17- Do you ever use graphic organizers to pick up the information in the text?

a- Yes, often

b- Yes, sometimes

c- Yes, but seldom

d- No, never

Item 17 aimed to investigate if and how the students controlled, sorted out and analyzed the upcoming information in the text.

Item 17	Number of Responses
Do you ever use graphic organizers to sort out (analyze) the information in the text?	
a- Yes, often	0
b- Yes, sometimes	1
c- Yes, but seldom	7
d- No, never	37

Table 17: Analysis of the Questionnaire Item 17

Analysis of Item 17 uncovered the fact that the students did not do anything to handle, organize, control, analyze and synthesize the flow of information in the text.

Item 18- It is my belief that, in reading English, success is

a- is a result of luck

b- is a result of effort

c- is a result of vocabulary knowledge.

d- is a result of linguistic knowledge

e- is a result of applying necessary strategies

Item 18 was designed to understand how the students viewed success in reading.

Item 18	Number of Responses
It is my belief that, in reading English, success is	
a- is a result of luck	1
b- is a result of effort	40
c- is a result of vocabulary knowledge	40
d- is a result of linguistic knowledge	43
e- is a result of applying necessary strategies	41

Table 18: Analysis of the Questionnaire Item 18

Of 45 respondents, 40 answered four of the items at a time, these being (b), (c), (d), and (e). 1 informant circled only (a), 3 only (d) and 1 only (e). The subject students were aware of the fact that the key to success in reading was the use of correct strategies, linguistic and vocabulary knowledge.

4.3. Analysis of Tasks

In this study, the students' choices of the use of techniques and tasks were used to expand the researcher's awareness of factors which affect the subject students' success in

reading comprehension (Parrott, 1993). According to Ellis's (1994) hallmarks, a task is a work plan, requires linguistic activity and primary attention to be on message and learners to function primarily as language users rather that learners, and allows learners to select the linguistic resources they use. This section also aimed to make assumptions embodied in this research and investigated through tasks the reading problems and challenges the subject students commonly had in reading English. Influenced by Parrott (1993), I classified and defined the tasks in this study into three variables: (1) aim, (2) focus, and (3) activity. Aim refers to the aim of the task in general terms. Aim of the tasks used in the study were interdependent, which meant they were related to each other in terms of the purpose of the study. Focus was the input given to the students for the activity (a text, a sentence, a picture etc.). The activity is the interaction between the subject and the focus or stimulus.

Task 1. (Appendices 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5)

I divided Task 1 into five parts, each of which aimed to uncover a different word guessing strategy.

Aim: To understand how the students cope with unknown vocabulary and how they accomplish in word-guessing strategies when they face unknown words in a text.

Focus: The students were given sentences including an underlined nonsense word with context clues about the meaning of that word . The sentences included synonym, antonym, example, subject term, and sense-of-the-sentence context clues.

Activity: The students were asked to read the sentences and guess the meanings of the underlined words.

Notes: Out of 45 students, only 10 were able to make correct guesses but not find out the context clues. They reported that they were unaware of word guessing strategies and use of context clues.

Task 2. (Appendix 6)

Aim: To understand how the students cope with long sentences and whether they were able to divide complex sentence into meaningful parts.

Focus: The tasks included some complex sentences. To understand these sentences, they were required to have the skill and knowledge to divided them into meaningful minimal parts.

Activity: The students were asked to read some complex sentences and put them into some meaningful minimal parts.

Notes: They performed poorly. 90% of the students found the sentences challenging. They tried to divide them into minimal parts, but these parts suffered from loss of meaning. They gave almost empty papers.

Task 3. (Appendix 7)

Aim: To understand whether the students were able to identify points of reference in texts. More often sentences are related to each other so than there is clear relationship between what is being said and what has been or is going to be said. This relationship is created by some reference and substitution words. These words include *third-person pronoun, this (these), that (those), one(s), such, so, the former, the latter, there, then.* Sometimes these words refer forward or backward and replace another word, phrase or a whole sentence.

Focus: the students were given some sentences with reference word referring backward and forward.

Activity: the students were asked to identify the reference words and the words they replaced.

Notes: The subject students were easily able to identify the reference words when they referred to individual words. And they did not get difficulty to identify reference words such as third-person pronoun, it, this, that, there. But they got great difficulty in defining words like the former the latter, one, and the reference words referring to a whole sentence.

Task 4. (Appendix 8)

Aim: To understand whether the subject students knew how sentences were related to each other in terms of discourse markers and discourse types.

Focus: The students were given some sentences to read.

Activity: The students were asked to read the sentences and to identify and interpret the discourse markers and discourse types which determined the relationships between these sentences.

Notes: They reported they were unfamiliar the term discourse. I explained them what discourse was. Then they did the activity. Only 15 of the 45 participants were able to identify discourse markers, but none of them were able interpret these markers. The rest remained inactive.

Task 5. (Appendix 9)

Aim: This task aimed to investigate whether the subject students were able to make inferences or to distinguish between what a text said and what it meant.

Focus: The students were given some individual sentences and some short texts.

Activity: The students were asked to answer some questions which required the knowledge and skill of making inference. Some of the statements in the questions were restatements of the sentences and some were inferences.

Notes: They were easily recognized the restatements, which meant they were more interested in what the text said. However, they had problems with inferences.

They were not able to draw conclusions from the text. They could not interpret the text dynamically during and after reading. They could not make connections between conclusions, other ideas, facts, and information.

Task 6. (Appendix 10)

Aim: To understand if the students were able to recognize the text organization. Writers may organize a text in some different ways. They reveal, support, illustrate, and develop their ideas to form one unit of thought. They may formulate a problem, discuss cause and effect relationships, compare and contrast, sequence events, describe things or events, and

exemplify. When students understand these organizations, difficult texts become easier for them to understand.

Focus: The students were given some short texts.

Activity: The students were asked about how the authors organized their ideas or what they did in the texts given.

Notes: None of the students were able to answer the questions satisfactorily. They said the writers revealed a main idea and supported that main idea. But this was a very broad definition of text organization. They were not able to probe into specific text organizations.

4.4. Analysis of Classroom Observation

The observational tool used in this study was, as stated in early chapters, the Observational Prompt Tool (OPT) (Holbrook, Gray and Fasse, 1999). This method helped me focus my field notes. Its aim was to see what and how students did during individual, small-group, and whole-class activities. At the beginning of the study, influenced by Fasse and Kolodner (2000), I prepared and Observation Handbook. The following table shows selections from my Observation Handbook. All the items in the handbook were related to a certain problem itself, a certain problematic area in reading, or a certain characteristic of the poor or the proficient reader. It was very challenging to investigate each of these items by giving tasks, through a questionnaire or using any other research tool, because they were mostly specific to classroom activities. This is why I tried to find answers to these questions by using the observation tool.

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Observation Handbook
Do the students recognize isolated words inaccurately?
Do they read slowly or fluently?
What they do when they face an unknown word?
Do they lack lexical knowledge?
Do they lack syntactic knowledge?
Do they read outside classroom (extensive reading)?
Do they consider sentence length?
If yes, how do they read long sentences?
Do they divide long and complex sentences into meaningful parts?
Do they consider markers while reading?
Do they comprehend important ideas and details?
Do they think critically of author's use of language, style, purpose and perspective?
Do they bring to the act of reading their cognitive capabilities such as attention, memory, and inferencing?
Are they motivated to read?
Do they brainstorm while reading?
Do they scan the text?
Do they do skimming?
Do they recognize logical and chronological sequencing?
Do they consider the universe of texts?
Can they generate questions from the text?
Are they selective while reading?
Do they mark and note only meaningful parts of the text?
Do they take notes while reading?
Do they use visual aids?
While reading a literary text, are they able to place events in their chronological order?
Are they able to use syntactic cues- the type, function and order of the words to come next?
Are they able to use semantic cues- understanding of the meanings of words from the surrounding words?

Table 19: Observation Handbook

The activities through which I observed the items in the Observation Handbook were usual classroom activities, some were individual, some peer, some others small-group and still some others whole-class activities. The characteristics of these activities were as follows:

* reading for sentence comprehension

* reading for vocabulary knowledge

* reading for fluency

* reading aloud

* reading for paragraph comprehension

* reading to identify the main idea

* reading to identify the supporting ideas

* reading for restatement

* reading for inferences

* reading to understand text organization

* literary reading for sequencing events in their chronological order

* reading to understand sentence relationships

* reading to guess meanings of unknown words

* reading to summarize texts

* reading to analyze characters in a short story

* reading to analyze the theme in a short story

* reading to analyze the setting in a short story

* extensive reading

* reading to preview textbook chapters

* reading to make predictions

* reading to use graphic organizers

* reading to use visual aids

4.4.1. Analysis of Observation Handbook

The items in the handbook were observed within some particular time periods based upon their level of difficulty. The students' performances were noted during the observation time.

Table 20: Analysis of Classroom Observation Checklist (1)

Observation Categories	Time	Judgments
1- Do the students recognize isolated words inaccurately?	50min.	Yes. I observed this in many occasions. 43 students have this problem. They have problems of pronunciation and fluency.
- Do they read fluently?	90 min.	They are not fluent readers. They need practice. They could not group words quickly to help them understand what they were reading. They could not read with expression. They could not change their fluency according to what they were reading. They often went backward and reread some parts of the text and this hindered their concentration. They could not read connected texts rapidly, smoothly, effortlessly, and automatically with little conscious attention to the mechanics of reading
- What they do when they face an unknown word?	50 min	Refer to dictionaries, slow down or ignore all. Sometimes get discouraged.
-Do they lack lexical knowledge?	90 min	Yes. They need an intensive vocabulary program
-Do they lack syntactic knowledge?	90min.	Grammar is no problem for them .
-Do they consider sentence length?	90 min	Yes. They think long sentences are always difficult
-If yes, how do they read long sentences?	90 min	They start and finish. No specific strategy use.
-Do they divide long and complex sentences into meaningful parts?	50 min.	No. They have problems with complex sentences.
-Do they consider markers while reading?	50min.	No. They cannon activate their knowledge.
-Do they comprehend important ideas and details?	90 min.	No. when asked about the main idea, they try to summarize the text.
-Do they think critically of author's use of language, style, purpose and perspective?	90 min.	No. They do not consider the writer, his purpose
-Do they bring to the act of reading their cognitive capabilities such as attention, memory, and inferencing?	50 min.	No. They are not attentive, well-motivated readers because they come from a tradition that ignores reading. It is their high school FL program.
-Do they brainstorm while reading?	90 min.	For them reading is a passive activity
-Do they scan the text?	50 min.	They do not know what scanning is
-Do they do skimming?	50 min.	They do not know what skimming is
-Do they recognize text organization?	90 min	They have no idea of what a writer does in a text
-Can they ask questions to the text?	50 min.	They say they only answer the questions
-Are they selective while reading?	50 min.	No. They read more than necessary
-Do they mark and note only meaningful parts of the text?	30 min.	Only a few students do this
-Do they take notes while reading?	50 min.	Very few ss take notes

Observation Categories	Time	Judgments
-Do they use visual aids?	30 min	No. They ignore visual aids.
-While reading a literary text, are they able to place events in their chronological order?	90 min.	No
-Are they able to use syntactic cues- the type, function and order of the words to come next?	90 min.	No. They are very poor. They read word by word
-Are they able to use semantic cues- understanding of the meanings of words from the surrounding words?	180 min.	No. It is a big problem for them
Do they sequence events in their chronological order?	50 min.	They do not consider this aspect of texts.
Do they consider and predict logical continuation of sentences?	90 min..	They tend to consider each sentence isolated from the others. They do not predict what may come next.
Do they recognize linguistic cohesion/ties between sentences?	50 min.	They have problems with linguistic cohesion. While reading they lose track of ideas.

Table 21: Analysis of Classroom Observation Checklist (2)

CHAPTER 5

5. INTERPRETATION OF DATA

5.1. Introduction

This study set out to investigate the problems/difficulties the English-majoring prep-class students usually encounter in reading English. The setting for the present study was the Department of English Language and Literature at Karadeniz Technical University. In its broadest perspective, the study focused on what happens to the English-majoring students before, during and after their reading of English. Nuttall (1996) argues that what happens during reading-comprehension activities may interfere with reading-comprehension rather than promote it. Some reader characteristics such as negative attitudes, and lack of some strategies and techniques to use in reading and some other linguistic and textual factors create a gap between the reader and text comprehension. It appears that sometimes this is so vast a gap that students cannot build bridges to fill it and they strongly need assistance and instruction. It is strongly contended that the findings of this study will be of practical use for reading specialists and program designers studying in the same as or similar settings to that in this study.

The main research question in this study was:

1- What problems and challenges do English-majoring prep-class students have in reading-comprehension in English?

The specific research questions in this study were:

1- What reading habits do EFL students have which can be considered problematic?

2- Do they use any strategies to solve their problems with reading-comprehension in English?

3- If yes, what strategies do they generate and use?

4- Do they base these strategies some ground and scientific theories and methods?

5.2. Definition of Problem in EFL Reading

Problem: a source of perplexity, distress, or vexation, difficulty in understanding or accepting (Merrian-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary). From this general definition of the term "problem", it would not be difficult to assume that any interference which creates perplexity, distress, and vexation in reading and comprehending English can be considered a reading problem. Alderson's view can be said to be a fine-tuning to the definition of problem in reading comprehension in English: a reading problem is one that creates negative impact on the product of reading process (Alderson, 2000). This product is comprehension; therefore, in some certain texts the problem may be referred as "comprehension problem". As is put in various parts of the study, a reading comprehension problem is described as what blocks the reader's comprehension while reading in the target language.

The first instrument employed in this study to collect data was the student questionnaire. The second method was the use of tasks. The third method classroom observation I conducted during usual classroom applications, which can be said to be a long process in terms of time. I cannot claim that one certain method triangulates the others. They are all interrelated to one another, so each of these data collection methods was assigned the responsibility of triangulation.

5.3. Problem 1. Difficult Vocabulary

For many students in their first exposure to an authentic text is a bit of a shock. At first glance, it appears full of unfamiliar and difficult vocabulary. As many teachers of FL reading comprehension will attest, when their students are faced with an unfamiliar text in the foreign language, the first challenge seems to be its vocabulary (Grabe and Stoller, 1997). When the text has many new words, students quickly despair and are discouraged. The connection between vocabulary knowledge and success in reading comprehension tests has been shown in many studies, such as Bossers (1992), Coady (1993), and Grabe and Stoller (1997). When the vocabulary of the text is more familiar, students are more likely to continue with the reading task. The situation was no different with the subjects of the present study.

The students reported that the most important problem they faced in reading English was unknown words. In reading research, the problem is named lack of word-attack skills (Nuttall, 1996 p. 62)

5.4. Nature of the Problem

The importance of vocabulary for reading comprehension is self-evident in academic settings where students do reading in specific fields and where texts are full of content vocabulary, and one of the most important things reading vocabulary research tells us is that there is a strong relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension (Hunt and Beglar, 1998). The answer to the question why such a relationship exists and what its importance is can be that vocabulary knowledge makes it easier for a reader to read and understand a text that contains these words. This aspect of vocabulary knowledge was called instrumentalist hypothesis by Anderson and Freebody (1981 p. 4) and they claim that this is a straightforward notion – that when reader has the vocabulary knowledge, he is ready to understand the text. This has two implications. First, if vocabulary knowledge helps readers comprehend a text, then, with more difficult vocabulary, texts would be more difficult to understand. Other studies have found that readability of a text, however, may depend on more than one factor and that level of vocabulary difficulty, they say, is matched by difficulty of a text (Chall and Dale, 1995). This does not imply that teaching vocabulary will not improve comprehension.

Anderson and Freebody (1981) advanced another hypothesis related to vocabulary study: the knowledge hypothesis. This suggests that word meanings do not lead to readers' understanding by themselves, but readers' knowledge of vocabulary reflects their knowledge of the topic, which is prior knowledge, another issue in reading (to be mentioned in following chapters). If the reader knows a lot about the topic, he also knows most of the words, for words are strongly related elements of that topic. Sternberg (1987) adds another factor to this hypothesis and argues that readers' general ability to learn from context plays an important role in vocabulary learning. Ability to learn from context is a strong focus of modern reading and vocabulary research, along with what makes vocabulary a problem for readers. Readers lacking the ability to learn meanings of words

from context, using the clues presented to them by the writer, are considered to have a vocabulary problem. So, in the observations presented in this study, students self-reports, interviews and in the task-based activities are analyzed from Sternberg's perspective.

5.5. How do the subject students experience the problem?

Based upon the data analysis, it was investigated that the first and most important problem that hindered the subject students' reading comprehension was difficult vocabulary. The data revealed that when they encountered difficult vocabulary in a text they got discouraged and stopped reading or lost control of the reading activity. It was also found that they did not know how to deal with unknown or difficult vocabulary. Clearly the reading process itself, the factors playing major roles on the end product of reading, which is comprehension, were unknown to the subjects and were neglected in their high school program.

Vocabulary knowledge can be said to be the cornerstone of foreign language literacy and also a key to reading comprehension. The interrelationship between reading and vocabulary can best be understood in Krashen's idea that reading is the only way that makes us good readers, develops a good writing style, and rich vocabulary (Krashen, 1993). Classroom instruction cannot, of course, deal with all the words a learner needs to learn or know, but difficult vocabulary is a problem in foreign language reading; therefore, to some certain degree there should be some ways of softening the intensity of this problem (Beck at al, 1987; Calfee and Drum, 1986). However, in many schools foreign language learners do not have the chance to attend intensive vocabulary teaching classes because vocabulary study is embedded in other classes such as coursework. Vocabulary activities in other classes are not sufficient to study effective word meaning, and interactive and communicative vocabulary activities can lead to better word learning (Zimmerman, 1997). From the students' self-reports and from the observations and interviews with the students, it was understood that they have difficulty in what Huckin and Haynes (1993) called automated and attended processing of word guessing. They claim that automated processing is relatively effortless, and based on students' senses. Clark and Gerring (1983) call this processing sense selection. Even the poor readers should at least make guesses when they face a difficult word at automated processing level. More complex and time

consuming, more conscious than sense selection is what Haynes and Huckin call sense creation. The former is the fastest one and the most efficient one, the latter requires knowledge and sub-skills. Huckin and Haynes (1993) suggest some solutions to the problem:

* teaching students the strategies used to make vocabulary guesses

* knowing the context

* studying the context clues

* studying what constitutes the process of guessing words from context

* doing the efficient exercises to help the learner develop expert guessing skills.

From the data analysis related to the problem of difficult vocabulary, it can be concluded that the subject students considered each difficult word they faced as being of equal importance, despite Nuttall's (1996) argument that we should not attach equal importance to all words. She puts vocabulary into three categories: (1) active vocabulary; (2) receptive vocabulary; (3) throw-away vocabulary (pp.62-77). Active words are those students know well enough to use them, but receptive words are the ones students recognize and can respond to, but cannot confidently use. Throw-away vocabulary includes those words which students meet only once when they are reading an unsimplified material. The subjects of this study hardly distinguish between these word categories during reading. Here the problem was that the students could not use necessary strategies to deal with unknown words. Very often they chose the easiest way: to look a difficult word up in a bilingual dictionary. But there are a lot of settings where students are not allowed to use their dictionaries, or looking a word up in a dictionary is time-consuming, not possible or sometimes may not work.

Theories about the nature of reading have attached a great deal of importance to strategies of guessing and predicting (Dubin and Olhstain, 1993). Most theories of word guessing claim that the procedure is dependant on the readers' prior knowledge of the text, subject area and context (Eskey, 1986; Rumelhart, 1977; Haynes, 1993). It is the material designers' responsibility to select texts whose contents their readers are or may be familiar with. But sometimes even when this prerequisite is fulfilled, it is still a problem for readers to recognize the meaning of important words in a text. This is due to readers' inability to

use the textual support presented in the text. These cues are called context cues. Research in reading puts these cues into five main categories:

> 1- Synonym context clues. Sometimes writers explain the meaning of a new word by giving a synonym, another word or phrase with the same or similar meaning. They can use commas, some signal words, parentheses, restatement, or dashes to do this.
> 2- Antonym context clues. Authors employ some markers to explain the meaning a new word with its opposite meaning. Examples of these markers are: *not, rather than, however, while, on the other hand, and but.*
> 3- Defining subject terms. These subject terms more often require textbook definitions.
> 4- Example context clues. Sometimes context may contain examples that illustrate the new words' meanings. There are some special words to fulfill this task: *many types, characteristics, consist of, such as, include, some of, several, and colons(:).*
> 5- Sense-of-the-Sentence Context clue. Readers can often understand new and difficult words when they consider the general context in which they appear, because words derive meaning from their context, the sentences and paragraphs.
> (Krantz and Kimmellmann, 1989 pp.1-25)

All the above word-guessing strategies go along with Goodman's definition of reading as a psycholinguistic guessing game, focusing on so-called top-down, cognition-driven strategies (Goodman, 1967). And they also go with the interactive model of reading which combines top-down and bottom-up processes (Eskey, 1986). According to Eskey, the use of context clues take the readers along the same track as the writer on the way to the comprehension of a given text.

In order to find out how the students experience this problem and whether or not they are aware of these context clues but cannot activate their knowledge, they were assigned a set of tasks, each of which contained one of these five context clues and asked to construct some intelligent and reasonable guesses (see Task1). Different ideas constituted the rationale behind this activity. One was that teaching contextual definitions and clues is a common method of teaching vocabulary (Bright and McGregor, 1985; Nation, 2001) another one was that context clues enable students to make reasonable and intelligent guesses about the unknown words based upon some grammatical and pragmatic context in which the word occurs (Stein, 1993). Considering these points, we

asked the students to perform some the tasks. Very few of them were able to guess the meanings of these words. The first thing they tried to do was to use a sense selection (Clark and Gerring, 1983) – that is; to report the very first meaning occurring to their minds. In fact, they reported that when they encountered the very first difficult word, they stopped reading and did not refer backward or forward to see if there was any clue to catch the meanings of these words. What was surprising for Stein also happened to this researcher: most of the students thought contextual clues or definitions were something quite distinct from both meaning and definition of the words' meanings (Stein, 1993). And the study observed almost the same characteristics as Coady's (1988) definition of students who are poor guessers:

> 1- they do not consider the part of speech of the unknown word
> 2- they do not look at the immediate context of the unknown word to simplify the of deducing meaning.
> 3- they do not look at the wider context of the unknown word – the relationship between the clause containing the unknown word and surrounding clauses or sentences (pp.97-110).

To put the same thing in Nuttall's (1996) words, the study identified the following problems of the students with vocabulary:

> 1- they had problem with lexical items
> 2- they could not distinguish between active, receptive and throw-away vocabulary
> 3- they did not know when to ignore difficult words they did not know what made a word difficult
> 4- they did not know how to use structural clues (grammatical function, morphology)
> 5- they did not know how to make inference from context. (62-77)

Solving problems with vocabulary does not guarantee good reading comprehension. Reading abilities and reading strategies are like the links of a chain. They are strongly related to each other. Problems with one of these trigger other problems. Difficult vocabulary cannot be considered a text problem. Each text has a level of difficulty and inability to use word-guessing strategies to cope with difficult vocabulary is a reader problem.

5.6. Problem 2

Lack of Knowledge and Skill of Recognizing and Interpreting Cohesive Devices

The importance of the relation between syntactic knowledge and reading comprehension is a universal finding, and the role of the readers' ability to utilize cohesive devices to construct meaning from a written text can not be ignored (Nuttall 1996). This relation is called coherence. van Dijk (1980 pp:44- 45).) explains coherence as follows:

> Coherence is a semantic property of discourse, based on the interpretation of each individual sentence relative to the interpretation of other sentences, or the set of conditions determining the relations as pairs- that is, interdependencies between facts, as expressed by composite sentences and sequences, and relative to some possible world and some possible topic.

To Halliday and Hasan (1976), a cohesive device is what makes two or more sentences stand together with some relationships. The concept is similar to that of Van Dijk: it is a meaning-related concept that refers to relations of meaning existing within a text and occurs where the interpretation of some element in the discourse is dependant on that of another. Sometimes these cohesive markers are explicitly displayed in the text while they sometimes remain implicit. In either case, readers may have problems utilizing these devices to fill the semantic gap between facts and ideas.

Considering the above theories, the researcher assigned another task (Task 3) to check whether the subject students had problems with recognizing and interpreting cohesive devices. In the task the students were asked to link some reference (substitute) words to the ones replacing them. From the observations and students' poor performance, it was concluded that most of the students experienced this problem. While performing Task 3, most of the subjects agreed that they did not know what reference or substitute words were. They reported they knew all these reference words as vocabulary items, but when it came to the use of these words as a link between sentences, they failed- in other words, they knew the meanings of these reference words, but not their functions.

This is one of the most commonly identified problems that foreign language readers suffer from in reading: not to be able to activate a certain piece of knowledge in reading

comprehension (Nuttall, 1996; Alderson, 2000; Grabe and Stoller, 2002). This corroborative finding in the current study is an illustrative of the fact that reading process is a complex, active, not straightforward but multi-dimensional one. Even the simplest elements of a target language may have very complex and important roles and learners of this language may experience problems with these elements.

5.7. Problem 3
Problems with Seemingly-Complex Sentences

Through classroom observation conducted during usual classroom activities, the study sought to discover whether the respondents had difficulties with other types of cohesive devices. The aim was to observe the subjects' ability to recognize and interpret cohesive devices under two categories: structural coherence and linguistic cohesion (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). Structural coherence is related to the understanding of the event structure in a text (more often a narrative one), for example how the events are connected with each other (Cain 2003). Linguistic cohesion refers to semantic ties between sentences or clauses, such as 1: *anaphora ; co-reference, substitution* (already studied in this research), *ellipsis and lexical ties*; 2: *conjunctions* (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). Both are text characteristics and reader abilities to recognize these characteristics play a crucial role in text comprehension. The literature includes work to indicate that when readers master structural coherence – overall event structure, they can easily focus on establishing linguistic cohesion or local integration (Shapiro and Hudson, 1991). On the other hand, some other writers argue that some cohesive devices have an interclausal linguistic function and serve a conceptual or pragmatic function in the construction of mental models, and that readers use them to understand the relation between structural elements within the discourse (Cain, 2003). This study did not investigate which of these characteristics facilitated the other, but only whether the subjects were able to make use of these text characteristics while reading in English, or found them problematic.

I observed the subjects' ability to sequence events especially in story-type texts, which was structural coherence. The students were assigned short stories and asked to put the events in their correct chronological order. They came up with a retelling of the story claiming that the correct order was always the linear one presented to them in the text.

Actually, analyzing a text is not retelling of that text. In order to gain a more complex understanding of the text the students have to consider the structural coherence of the text, including the functions of cohesive devices.

I also conducted some task-based studies (Task 2) to gauge whether the respondents were able to recognize the linguistic cohesion/ties between sentences to make a better understanding of the text. A secondary purpose for the assignment of tasks was to check if the students' lack of understanding holistic coherence would show a correlation with the shortage of understanding of conjunctions and lexical ties between sentences. The rationale behind this was that it is commonly supposed that most readers rely on individual sentences while reading and this may indeed be so. The sentence is the basic unit of organization in a language; however, when they occur with other sentences in longer paragraphs or texts, especially when their placement is organized successfully by the writer, a concentration on the meanings of sentences alone may create problems of comprehension. To identify and diagnose potential problems, the students were asked to read some sentences and to show the logical relationships among the parts. In Task 2, the students were told to divide the sentences in the texts into their minimal meaningful parts. Another purpose in assigning Task 2 was to observe whether the students were able to analyze successfully expanded sentences, which may occur in academic texts very often. There is one of the texts used in Task 2:

> *When societies are increasingly dependent for their security on*
> *factors that extend far beyond their boundaries; when*
> *systems of production require raw materials, markets and skills*
> *that no one society can provide; and when social relationships and*
> *cultural institutions overlap national confines- the effect of*
> *organizational controls with which all aspects of human*
> *activity must operate is being concentrated increasingly*
> *at the level of national states.*

The students reported the sentence was too long and difficult for them to understand even if they understood the vocabulary.

In fact, Task 2 comprised seven passages for comprehension, based on similar research instructions, and the data gathered from each were extremely similar. The students were unaware of the fact that even the longest and the most complicated sentence can be an expansion of a simple, basic sentence (Levine, Oded and Stattman, 1985), and so students had difficulty understanding the relationships between the parts; therefore, the sentences became a challenging meaningful unit for the students. They had to organize the information or put the pieces in their correct chronological or natural order so that the information would make sense. In Task 2 the students reported that the texts were difficult to gather information from. For them, the reason was that they were not able to relate sentences one another to organize a unity of meaning.

Another definition of the problem was that they missed the point that made all these sentences occur naturally together to make a meaning. In linguistic terms, according to van Dijk (1989) this was a problem of cohesion. He claims that within compound sentences the interpretation is determined by connectives and that interclausal and intersentential relations are not only based on intentional meanings. The students had difficulty understanding a complex sentence because they could not understand individual sentences and relate them to one another in terms of meaning. The idea is that sentences can be syntactical objects, and connecting sentences with one another is a semantic notion. Our subjects also had problems with this semantic notion.

In short, the problem under discussion was that the subjects in this study experienced problems with identifying the cohesive elements and finding out what each of these referred to, which is a commonly-accepted problem among foreign language readers (see Nuttall, 1996). And this shortage of comprehension leads the subjects to another problematic issue, as their problem with complex sentences snowball: the problem becomes one of identifying coherence, which is the overall unity of a text.

5.8. Problem 4
Lack of Knowledge and Skill to Identify and Interpret Discourse Markers

Communication is generally implicit in language (Mann, 2000), and this notion led me to the investigation of the students' probable problems with discourse markers. In previous chapters, the study identified the subject students' problems with what linguists call cohesion and coherence relations. Although the study of coherence and cohesion has focused on some particular explicit signals, we saw that most of the subjects were not able to identify these markers to set up relationships between sentences or larger parts of a text. In this volume, the focus was on whether the subjects had problems with identifying and interpreting discourse markers, most of which were not directly concerned with signification, but with signaling relationships: between different parts of discourse, between the writer and his message (Nuttall, 1996). According to Nuttall, most of these markers are not difficult in meaning, though it is important that students understand them. The main reason for studying them is their usefulness in helping the reader to work out the meaning of difficult text. They often show the relationship the writer intends between two parts of the text; so if you can understand one part, the discourse marker is a possible key to the other part.

Brown and Yule (1983 p. 223) put the same thing in another way. They say readers understand the meaning of a linguistic message solely on the basis of the words and structure of the sentence(s) used to convey that message . They certainly rely on the syntactic structure and lexical items used in a linguistic message to arrive at an interpretation, but it is a mistake to think that we operate only with this literal input to our understanding. They can recognize, for example, when a writer has produced a perfectly grammatical interpretation, but which they would not claim to have understood, simply because they need more information.

From all these considerations the problem can easily be defined: it is the difficulty of entering the discourse created by the writer. To do this students need to learn the textual conventions , the expectations, habits of mind, and the techniques and strategies that allow them to get into contact with the written text (Nuttall, 1996). From the reader's point of view, Nuttall groups discourse markers into three main classes:

1- Markers which signal the sequence in which reported events occurred.

2- Markers which signal the writer's manner of organizing the discourse.

3- Markers which indicate the writer's view of the facts, etc written about.

All these markers can be categorized according to their functions:

1- Markers that signal the sequence of events. Examples: *then, first, at once, next, the following day*

2- Markers that signal discourse organization. These can be grouped as follows:

Re-expressing : *that is to say, or rather, to put it another way, i.e., etc*

Specifying: *namely, that is to say, viz, to wit, etc*

Referring: *this respect, in that connection, as we said, apart from this, etc*

Resuming: to *resume, to return to the previous point, getting back to the argument*, etc.

Exemplifying: *to illustrate this, thus, for example, etc*

Summarizing: *to sum up, in short, to recapitulate, etc*

Focusing: *let us consider, we must now turn to, I shall begin by, etc*

3- Markers that signal the writer's point of view: *Moreover, incidentally, fortunately, happily, certainly, as a matter of fact, more importantly, doubtless, rightly, surprisingly, strictly speaking, generally, etc.* (pp. 100-124)

For a reader, assessing discourse-organizing words, which are problem and issue words, plays a big part in the process of signaling a text. There is clearly a problem when the writer uses some faulty signaling words which may lead readers in the wrong direction. It is also a problem when the reader ignores, or misses discourse signaling words because that problem prevents him from understanding the message in the text.

To make the situation clearer, the study assigned a task (Task 4) to the subject students designed to find out whether they had problems with using discourse-signaling words to understand texts or to get into the writer's mood to comprehend the message. In any text, writers employ a set of coherent arguments through the text. Locally, they do this using some common referent words between sentences. Good readers are familiar with these referents and understand the text by activating their knowledge of these referents. From the responses to the texts given to the subject students, it was learned that the subject students could not effectively organize the textual information into the situation models

given. The findings based on the data collected here were that the subjects in this research had difficulty not in identifying the discourse markers but in interpreting them.

At the sentence level, there was no problem, but at the longer text level, not identifying but interpreting discourse markers was clearly a problem for them. Literally, they did not know that discourse markers were just like street signs telling them which way to take. Lack of understanding and interpreting discourse markers prevent readers from getting different meanings and ideas from the text. To understand the situation more clearly, it is necessary to answer a few questions:

> 1- Does limited proficiency in a foreign language restrict general reading ability in that language?
> 2- Does limited proficiency in a foreign language restrict readers from using very specific types of textual information such as discourse constraints, when reading in that language?
> 3- Is there a threshold of linguistic competence which readers must reach before they can read successfully in a second language.
>
> (Devine, 1988 pp.260-277).

Based upon the data analysis, the answer to Devine's questions is yes. In the first question, the term proficiency does not refer to proficiency in grammar but in problem solving strategies and techniques in reading (Devine, 1988). Students should learn about reading strategies to excel in reading skill just before starting to read academically in departments of universities like the one in this study. Such strategies can be acquired in prep classes and indeed most departments have prep programs to do this. Most of the subject students participating in the study were not responsive enough to the rhetorical structure of the text. This lack of responsiveness derives from lack of ability to identify an interaction with the text type or the logic of the argument implemented by the writer (Devine, 1988; Nuttall, 1996).

Goldman and Saul (1990) have some considerations to explain the problem. They say that, at local level - at sentence level - students read individual sentences and can go backward and forward through the parts of sentences. At the global level, however, good readers employ a great deal of further flexibility in reading passages. This flexibility has three approaches:

> 1- *Once through*, in which readers read through a text

2- *Review*, in which students go to the passage end and then
review sentences
3- *Regress*, in which they go back to previous sentences
throughout the text. (pp. 181-219)

It is understood that the subject students did not have this flexibility in reading.

5.9. Problem 5
Lack of fluency

There have been many arguments in the literature on foreign language instruction about the definition of "fluency" in reading. Meyer and Felton (1999) define fluent readers as readers with the ability to read connected texts rapidly, smoothly, effortlessly, and automatically with little conscious attention to the mechanics of reading, such as decoding. In *National Reading Panel* (2000), fluency is defined as the ability to read a text quickly, accurately, and with proper expression. To emphasize the urgency reference is made to some important contentions made in National Reading Panel:

1-"...fluent readers group words quickly to help them gain
meaning from what they read." (p.22)
2- " Fluency is important because it provides a bridge
between word recognition and comprehension.(p.22).
3- "To read with expression, readers must be able to divide the
text into meaningful chunks. These chunks include
phrases and clauses. (p.23)

Another definition of fluency comes from *The Literacy Dictionary: The Vocabulary of Reading and Writing*. Fluency is defined as *"freedom from word identification problems that might hinder comprehension* (Harris and Hodges, 1995 p. 85)

These definitions, and many others, appear to establish a strong relationship between fluency and reading comprehension. Le Berge and Samuels (1974) come up with a similar idea. They point out that reading requires at least two activities:
(1) word identification/decoding; and (2) comprehension/construction of the meaning of the text. Fluent readers are those who fulfill both requirements at one time.

Based upon the above definitions and ideas, this study observed the subject students' reading fluency every time they did aloud reading. Throughout those

observations, the intention was to discover and document whether the subject students had the ability to meet the requirements of the above definitions of fluency. In addition to this, the writer tried to find answers to the following questions:

1. Can they decode lexical units while they are reading?

2. Can they decode syntactic structures they encounter in the text?

3. Do they think about and interpret what they are reading? (Eskey, 1997)

The observations were conducted while the subjects were doing aloud-readings assigned to them in reading courses. From the observations made in normal classroom activities it was understood that the subject students have the following problems in terms of fluency in reading:

1- They could not group words quickly to help them understand what they were reading.

2- They could not read with expression.

3- They could not change their fluency according to what they were reading.

4- They often went backward and reread some parts of the text and this hindered their concentration.

5- They could not read connected texts rapidly, smoothly, effortlessly, and automatically with little conscious attention to the mechanics of reading.

The result was that the present study recognized a strong relationship between fluency in reading and text comprehension. Disfluent readers are affected negatively by this characteristic of theirs in EFL reading comprehension. Most of the subject students suffered from disfluency especially while reading aloud in the classroom.

5.10. Problem 6.

Lack of Knowledge and Skill of Making Inferences

Sometimes when readers follow the writer's thoughts from one sentence to the next, they cannot connect them to each other (Nuttall,1996). She recognizes two explanations for this: (1) the writer expects the reader to fill the gap by drawing inferences, and (2) s/he may make mistaken assumptions about the reader's knowledge or point of view.

It is of vital importance for a reader, especially in academic settings, to know how a text develops into a discussion created by its writer, into his own standing point. It is not true that texts have some fixed corner-stones or centers of meanings. Good readers should construct bridges between what is known and unknown or less known, between what is fact and what is opinion, what is present and what is absent, what is stable and what is unstable, what is explicit and what is implicit, what is restatement and what is inference, what is said and what is implied. All these reader-and-text characteristics require the ability to make inferences. Birch (1989 p. 8) explains this problem with the following words: "Texts are ... decentered". Further, the task is to understand the meaning of meaning (Derida, 1979). If this is so, it is possible to suggest that there is no single meaning in a text, but rather different meanings seeded carefully and artistically and stylistically into the text by the writer.

In Task 5, the students were given some sentences and paragraphs, each of which was followed by five statements. Some of these statements were inferences, some were facts/restatements, some were non-facts or false statements according to the text given, and some could not be judged as true or false due to lack of information in the text. The objective was to see whether the subject students were able to distinguish between facts and ideas, or between what the given texts said and what they meant or, in short, what is explicit and what is implicit. The study used the following scoring guideline:

3=The student successfully identifies and explains rhetorical device(s) and arguments used in the text which help him make inferences.

2=The student identifies the rhetorical device(s) and arguments but cannot explain a few of them.

1=The student only identifies the rhetorical device(s) and arguments.

0=The student neither recognizes nor explains the rhetorical device(s).

The analysis of Task 5 showed that almost all of the subject students were not able to meet the criterion (3), which meant that the students could not distinguish between restatements and inferences. They tended to take facts, or concrete information, as inferences. For a deeper understanding of the problem, I find what Keene and Zimmermann (1997) claim to be of great significance:

"Inference can be a conclusion drawn after considering what
is read in relation to one's beliefs, knowledge, and experience.
Inference can be a critical analysis of a text: a mental or
expressed argument with an author, an active skepticism about
what is stated in the text, or recognition of propaganda.
Inference is, in some situations, synonymous with
learning and remembering." (p. 153)

The study also recognized that the subject students have the following sub-problems within the problem of making inferences:

1- They were not able to draw conclusions from the text.

2- They got difficulty in making logical predictions while they are reading.

3- When they made predictions they do not check whether their predictions were right or wrong.

4- They could not interpret the text dynamically during and after reading.

5- They could not combine their real-world knowledge with the information presented in the text. They very often take a neutral position or do not think that they are a party in the process of reading or that they are one of the corner of the triangle- the writer, the reader and the text. In short they keep a low profile in the reading process.

6- They could not make connections between conclusions, other ideas, facts, and information.

7- They often suffered from lack of judgment, both analytical and critical, about the text.

What happens when readers suffer from such problems with making inferences and in what way these problems affect their reading comprehension or learning process? With reference to Keene and Zimmermann (1997), it can be said that when readers cannot infer, they are not able to:

1- remember and reapply what they have read
2- create new background knowledge for themselves
3- discriminate and critically analyze the text
4- engage in conversations and/or other analytical or reflective
responses to what they read. (pp. 162-163)

In conclusion, for most of the subject students, a text provided only facts. They thought that they could gain knowledge just by memorizing the statements within the text.

If so, what is problematic in this situation? It can be said that the problem lies behind the students' inability to go beyond the visible or surface meaning.

5.11. Problem 7. Problems with Reading Strategies

So far the study has focused on the problems of the subject students with regard to decoding the meaning in texts, linguistics, vocabulary knowledge, and fluency. Contemporary research, however, claims that there are many more problem areas ranging across a wide spectrum of language and thinking activities (Swanson and Hoskyn, 1998; Williams, 2000). Findings so far reported in this study broadly concur with those of the two studies cited above. In short it is not enough to master in the mechanics of reading in a foreign language. Readers need an awareness of some other strategic and meta-cognitive skills (Gersten, Williams, Fuchs and Baker, 1998). One of these skills is strategic processing, which is the ability to control and manage one's own cognitive activities in a reflective , purposeful fashion, and involves the ability to do a certain task in reading successfully (Williams, 2000).

Language teachers are typically very much surprised when they see that their students do not transfer their native language reading skills and strategies to reading in a foreign language. Students often seem to start reading from scratch, reading word by word, relying more on words and individual phrases and sentences. This means that foreign language readers develop new habits and approaches to foreign language reading. Research studies in first language reading have observed and contributed much to an understanding of how reading process develops. First language researchers found that readers' purposes and approaches are determined based upon texts and the individual reader, and, with reference to this information, second language researchers found some similarities between L1 reading strategies and L2 reading strategies (Barnett, 1989).

In this chapter the study attempted to determine how the subject students interacted with the text, their mental activities *before, during and after reading*, their approaches, attitudes towards reading and their problems with these issues. The rationale of this chapter was to attempt to establish that reading is viewed as interactive, and because readers interact with the text to create meaning, the reader's mental processes work together at

different levels (Bernhardt, 1986; Carrell, Devine and Eskey, 1988; Rummelhart, 1997). The study attempted to determine whether the subjects experienced any problems with their mental processes, and with these different levels of interaction with the text.

Another objective was to provide the study with a feedback to see whether we missed any point or not. To do this we administered a short questionnaire (Appendix 10). In the questionnaire respondents were asked what they did, how they behaved, what cognitive activities they were involved in the course of the three processes of reading: pre-reading, during-reading and after-reading. The questionnaire described a number of strategies, approaches, and attitudes some of which are typical of proficient readers, and some of poor readers or of readers with reading problems. After the administration of the questionnaire, results were checked and some items were discussed orally in the form of exchanges. The findings of the questionnaire are as follows:

1- Most of the respondents started reading with an empty mind: This meant that they did not think critically about what they were reading.

2- They focused on individual words or individual sentences. They reported when they did not understand an individual sentence they felt the text made no sense to them. Undoubtedly, word knowledge and knowledge of sentence play a crucial role in reading comprehension. Nevertheless, reading researchers generally agree that grammar instruction or knowledge of grammar is not an appropriate means of enhancing competence in reading comprehension (Barr and Sadow, 1985). Focusing on the individual sentences or individual words as well as on the structure may block the reader's understanding the whole passage.

3- They did not look for sentence relationships. This is what Marshall and Glock (1978-1979) put forward concerning with poor comprehension. They claimed that sentence relationships were a major barrier to reading comprehension especially at college level. This backs the idea that poor comprehension goes round the problem with the integrative processes involved in understanding discourse (Barr and Sadow, 1985)

4- They do not make use of their prior or real-world knowledge before and during-reading process. Prior knowledge has been one of the most important reader variables which influences reading process and product (Goodman, 1975; Day and Bamford, 1998). Good readers include their real-world knowledge in the text and

its knowledge. When they read a text, they combine the information they have gathered from the text with their own background knowledge, analyze it, synthesize it, criticize it, and internalize it. In short, as Alderson (2000) puts it, what readers know affects what they read, how they recognize information in the text, and how they internalize it. Prior knowledge can also enable the reader to visualize the scene and the atmosphere in the text, and thus the reader is personally involved in the reading process. Readers who do not use their real world knowledge while reading need help because they have little personal involvement in the reading process. All these considerations drive the writer of this study to the conclusion that while reading a text the subject students stood as an outsider, very little personal involvement they performed and very often, without the activation of real world/prior knowledge, they created a gap between the text and themselves. With the introduction of other problems this gap grows wider and wider.

5- They do not consider the text type. They read any text in the same way. This means that they do not generate strategy according to text differences

6- They very often tend to look up unknown words in dictionaries, which makes them easily get distracted.

7- They feel uneasy when they face difficult vocabulary.

8- They often translate sentences into native language while reading.

9- When they have finished reading, they stop thinking about the text.

10- They think that success in reading comprehension depends on the reader's vocabulary knowledge.

11- They do not make predictions or set expectations based upon the title or the first sentences of the text paragraphs. The ability to predict what might come next in any given text or to make expectations is one of the most important features of reading, which makes a reader an active reader (Barnet, 1989; McNeil, 1984; Knuth and Jones, 1999). Predicting makes the reader familiar with the text even when he cannot use all textual clues. In fact, some reading authorities think that readers do not need to use all context clues (Carrell, 1988). The most striking idea emphasizing the role of making predictions in reading came from Goodman (1967). He described reading as guessing game and later claimed that proficient readers are those who are able to make correct predictions.

12- They rarely ask themselves questions and read to find the answers. Traditionally, students are asked questions by their teachers and they read to find

answers to these questions. This approach keeps the reader inactive, not a performer but a receiver in the process of reading. Singer (1978) recognized this problem and proposed a process for teaching comprehension that differed from the traditional practice of asking students questions before, during, and after reading. Instead, he generated a model that taught readers to formulate their own questions. The purpose was to help readers acquire a schema of the text. This process encouraged a dynamic interaction between the reader and the text. He carried the issue to a platform where it is the students who ask and answer the questions. Considering what Singer proposed, it can be said that the subject students had problems in interacting with the text.

5.12. Problem 8.
Lack of Knowledge and Skill of Identifying Text Type

Poor readers have a tendency to read any text in the same way. They do not change or adjust their reading style, techniques and strategies according to the type of text. To make it clearer, they do not know how to approach different texts. The study showed that the students represented the above characteristics of poor readers. One thing was clear with their problems of the texts: it was that they were not used to expository texts. With narrative texts, the problem was not intense in terms of text organization but of sequencing the events according to their chronological order. However, reading research has proved that different texts entail different reading habits/strategies and techniques and that perception of text organization or text type is viewed a valuable factor in reading comprehension (Niles, 1974; McGee 1982; Tierney, Readence and Dishner, 1985). Niles (1974) views the ability to perceive the organization of a reading material a valuable reading strategy claiming that knowledge of the way writers get ideas together to form a logical unity or a whole makes readers comprehend the text easily. It is for this reason that readers who have this knowledge can easily remember the content of the text to exploit it.

It is known that reading is an individual act. Readers do not need a partner to communicate as in speaking and listening. Cognitive reading theory claims that reading study is a mental/psychological study and that reading almost takes place entirely in the minds of isolated readers who invent meaning in independent and unrelated way (Grow,

1996). But it should not be ignored that reading activity is conducted on a text. Therefore, what readers are reading is as important as why and how they are reading it. In a sense, it can be said that it is the text type which determines the reader's strategy use. Since texts differ in their types and organization, each type of text embodies a different kind of mental/thought process.

This chapter dealt with whether the subject students experienced any problems with text type and/or how knowledge of or lack of knowledge of text type affected their success in reading comprehension. To achieve this the I assigned the students a short text in each type (Task 6). Based upon Grow's idea that good readers should not only interpret the literal meanings of words and sentences, but they should also identify the structure or the type of the text and activate thought processes that help them understand, the students were asked about the types of the texts, *why* it was a certain type, *how* that structure was organized and what signals or cues helped them direct into what the text structure was. The task was administered after the students had learnt about strategies to cope with their problems with reading comprehension such as difficult vocabulary, sentence relationships, discourse markers, reference points, etc. It was done so because I wanted to know whether it was lack of knowledge of text organization or other linguistic and strategic factors blocked their comprehension of the text. The passages were of appropriate difficulty in terms of the students' instructional level. They had little trouble with the above mentioned skills and strategies, but they failed to answer the questions following each text. They were unaware of how information was presented in an text . They did not get difficulty identifying narrative texts, because they reported they were exposed, in their high school readings, mostly to story type texts. They had problems with expository texts. Lack of knowledge of how different texts were structured was a barrier for them to read and comprehend a certain text with appropriate difficulty. This task showed that there were some text features absence of which directly and regularly set barriers to the subject students' reading-comprehension. The subject students were unaware of the differences among the following generic types of text organization:

1- Texts containing one major element, plus supporting information, such as: passages describing a single object, paragraphs that state a proposition and offer support for it, simple arguments (a conclusion supported by reasons), definitions of concepts (what is it? what are its attributes?).

2- Texts comparing two or more elements, such as: comparison and contrast, problem/solution, cause/effect, analysis of interactions (cooperation and conflict) (Jones at all, 1987).

3- Texts which exemplify some general terms or situations.

4- Texts which make classifications.

5- Texts which have some persuasive effects on the reader.

6- Texts which tell the reader about the process of a happening.

7- Texts which discuss cause and effect relationship.

Reading each of these types requires different reading styles, techniques, strategies and thought processes, and readers adjust their reading according to the signal the writer seeds into the text for them to understand the message.

CHAPTER 6

6. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The main emphasis in this study has been on the factors which influence reading comprehension process in English as a foreign language among English-majoring students.. This process has been divided into three parts as being *before*, *during* and *after-reading* stages. In this respect, this study developed a critical investigation of how strategic and critical reading the subject students did in their usual classroom activities, in their extensive reading schedules and in the tasks they were given as data collecting instruments. The analysis of the data demonstrated that the subjects had a number of difficulties in reading comprehension in English. These problems can be classified in relation to the above mentioned sub-stages of reading process.

In the pre-reading process, the study found that the subject students were unaware of the fact that what they already knew might create a positive effect on that they would learn. The problem of not being able to activating real word knowledge is one of the characteristics of poor readers. The real world knowledge is not something to learn in classroom settings, in other words, this is not a problem of lack of knowledge. They, in some way or another, have some of this knowledge in some certain areas of life and sciences. In the study, it appeared to be a problem of activation.

Inability to set up expectations and predictions appeared to be two other problems in the pre-reading stage. In the new view of reading, readers are active from the beginning to the end of the process. Pre-reading stage can be considered as a decision making and activation process. In a sense, they decide what to read, how to read, what to expect and what to find in text (Grow, 1996).

It was found in the study that the during-reading stage was much more problematic and confusing for the subject students, for there are a lot of factors, strategies, elements,

skills and areas of knowledge to consider and use in this stage. The study recognized the following problems of the students with the during-reading stage of the reading process:

* lack of knowledge and ability to cope with difficult vocabulary
* problem of recognizing and interpreting cohesive devices
* problem of interpreting discourse markers
* problem of recognizing functional value
* problem of recognizing text organization
*- problem of recognizing the presuppositions underlying the text
*- inability to recognize implications and to make inferences
* problem of prediction of logical continuations of sentences
* problem of understanding how authors organize and develop ideas
* problem of fluency
* problems with reading strategies
* problems with text types

As problems related to the after reading stage, the study demonstrated that the students stopped thinking and questioning the text as soon as they finished reading, especially if they were not given any questions by the writer. The nature of the problem is that they could not developed a personal perspective, a critical standing towards the text.

It is possible to classify the problems based upon their very nature into two categories. The problems which result from inadequacy of linguistic knowledge and the ability domain. Use of explicit and implicit markers, coping with complex sentences, lack of vocabulary, understanding text organization, recognizing functional value of words, phrases and sentences fall into this category. The reading comprehension problems which derive more from adopting the correct strategy. Guessing the meanings of words from context clues, making predictions based upon tittles, sub-tittles and individual sentences, questioning the text, activating the prior knowledge, monitoring comprehension can be placed into this category.

What I concluded from my review of reading research literature is that effective reading instruction can only be built on a ground with the recognition of the fact that

reading comprehension is the outcome of complex and multifaceted factors. None of these factors by itself seems to be sufficient to solve the problems.

The students of the present study were absolutely beyond the initial level of reading instruction. However, they strongly need adequate progress in reading comprehension in English. Such a program should uncover first its students' problems and needs then design the appropriate materials and activities following a problem solving method.

So far the study have tried to turn the mirror to one side of the issue; the problematic side of reading comprehension in English or the students with reading comprehension problems, though we referred some characteristics of good readers in the literature review chapter. I want to conclude with the ideal EFL student profile in terms of reading-comprehension which the study implies: an EFL reader who:

* previews

* builds a bridge between what s/he knows and what s/he will learn

* categorizes

* decides what is important and what is not

* argue with the text

* analyzes and synthesize the information and evidence

* summarizes, predicts, compares ideas and connects them to each other

* organizes new information and ideas

* makes logical inferences

* comments on what s/he reads

* critiques the text and its writer

* earns new concepts

* combines the information in the text with that of the real world

* reads a variety of texts from different genres easily

* recognize the text structure

* constructs sentence relationships easily

* copes with difficult vocabulary and use strategies to solve his problems (Henry, 1974; Nunan, 1999; Nuttall, 1996)

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Task 1-

Part 1

Deducing the Meanings of Words Using Synonym Context Clues*

Explanation: It is not a desirable for good readers to use a dictionary whenever they encounter a difficult word. There are many reasons for this. Instead, they try to guess the meaning of the unknown word using some clues in the sentence that word occurs.

Read the following sentences and try to guess the meanings of the underlined words and give the context clue(s) that help you do the task.

1- When faced with a difficult decision, many people <u>cillavate</u> between the alternatives; they shift back and forth from one solution to the other.

                        (From Krantz and Kimmelman, Keys to Reading and Study Skills)

"cillavate" means.......................................

context clue(s) ....

2- The jury foreman stated, " Two of our members are totally <u>tinractable</u>. They cannot be moved no matter what evidence is presented.

                        (From Krantz and Kimmelman, Keys to Reading and Study Skills)

"tinractable" means......................................

context clue(s)..

3- Te administration's inflexible stand on a wage increase means that the position of the union will remain just as <u>tinrasigent</u>.

                        (From Krantz and Kimmelman, *Keys to Reading and Study Skills*)

"tinransigent" means......................................

context clue(s)..

4- Since the directions were already repeated twice, there was no need for the professor to terate them.

(From Krantz and Kimmelman, Keys to Reading and Study Skills)

"terate" means...

context clue(s)..

5- People often suffer from different speech defects. The inability to pronounce certain sounds is an example of such a mairment.

(From Krantz and Kimmelman, Keys to Reading and Study Skills)

"mairment" means................................

context clue(s)..

6- People once thought that the barrier to human progress was teracil, the widespread inability to read. But what really slows down human progress is the inability to read properly.

(From Krantz and Kimmelman, Keys to Reading and Study Skills)

"teracil" means ....

context clue(s) ....

* This statement do not appear in students' handouts.

Appendix 2

Task 1

Part 2

Word Guessing Using Antonym Context Clues*

Explanation: In foreign language reading, good readers can predict the unknown words from some context clues.

Read the following sentences and try to identify the antonym context clues and then the meaning of the underlined words.

1- "When I was a boy, there was but one repnial ambition among my comrades in our village on the west bank of the Mississipi River. That was, to be a steamboatman. We had transient ambitions of other sorts... When a circus came and went, it left us all burning to become clowns... now and then we had a hope that, if we lived and were good, God would permit us to be pirates. These ambitions faded out each in turn; but the ambition to be a steamboatman remained"

Mark TWAIN

"repnial" means ....

context clue(s) ....

2- The contrast between the rich, green vegetation of the coastal area and the arpen, brown hills of the desert was striking to the eye.

"arpen" means.................................

context clue(s) ....

From Build it up- A. Levine, B. Oded and S. Stattman

3- Unlike her garious sister, Jane is a shy, unsociable person who does not like to go to parties or to make new friends.

"garious" means ....

context clue(s) ....

4- Apparently the freshmen do not curcon with the majority decision; they disagree with

the rest of the student body on every issue.

"curcon" means ....

context clue(s) ....

<div align="right">From Keys to Reading Study Skill- H. Krantz and J. Kimmellman</div>

5- The major weakness in her writing was her use of <u>neyed</u> expressions rather than
fresh ideas

"neyed" means.............................

context clue(s)....................................

<div align="right">From Keys to Reading Study Skill- H. Krantz and J. Kimmellman</div>

6- The subject of representational artwork is clear and easy to recognize, whereas the
subject of surrealistic artwork is frequently <u>nigmatic</u>.

"nigmatic" means ....

context clue(s) ....

<div align="right">From *Keys to Reading Study Skill*- H. Krantz and J. Kimmellman</div>

7- You can't possibly vote for a senator about whom you know so little. At least wait until
you have been <u>prised</u> of his voting record

"prised" means ....

context clue(s) ....

<div align="right">From Keys to Reading Study Skill- H. Krantz and J. Kimmellman</div>

8- The <u>cipiet</u> stages of a disease can be treated more easily than the latter stages, when
complications usually arise.

"cipiet" means ....

context clue(s) ....

<div align="right">From Keys to Reading Study Skill- H. Krantz and J. Kimmellman</div>

9- Traditionally, California is in the <u>anguad</u> of social legislation while the eastern states
are at the back.

"anguad" means ....

context clue(s) ....

From Keys to Reading Study Skill- H. Krantz and J. Kimmellman

10- A responsive audience encourages me to try harder, whereas an <u>ahetic</u> group turns me off.

"ahetic" means ....

context clue(s) ....

From Keys to Reading Study Skill- H. Krantz and J. Kimmellman

* This statement do not appear in students' handouts.

Appendix 3-

Task 1

Part 3

Guessing Word Defining Subject Terms*

Explanation: When readers understand the meaning of some words related to the subject field of the text they are reading, they easily understand the material and continue reading.

Read the following sentences and try to understand the meaning of the underlined words.

1- Auration occurs when groups having different cultures come into intensive first hand contact, with subsequent massive changes in the original culture patterns of one or both groups.
"auration" is.................................

2- Vetic mobility involves movement from one social status to another of higher or lower rank.
"vetic mobility" is ....

3- Most human groups tend to display etocenirism, the tendency to judge other cultures by standards of one's own.
"etocenirism" is ....

4- Students should read carefully the stated rereuisit and uisites listed with each course description. A prerequisite is a requirement that must have been completed before enrollment in that course. A corequisite to a course is a requirement to be taken at the same time as that course.
"rereuisit" is ....
"uisites" is ....

5- <u>Viance</u> is behavior that a considerable number of people in a society view as reprehensible and beyond the limits of tolerance.

"viance" is ....

6- A group differs from an <u>gregate</u> , a collection of people who happen to be in the same place at the same time , such as the passengers in a bus or a crowd in the street.

"gregate" is..

From Keys to Reading Study Skill- H. Krantz and J. Kimmellman

* This statement do not appear in students' handouts.

Appendix 4

Task 1

Part 4

Understanding Implied Meanings of Words Using Context Clues*

Explanation: Writers frequently imply meanings of words or phrases rather than state them. They do this by using some context clues.

Read the following sentences and try to understand the meanings of the underlined words.

1- Having a shopping center one block away, a park round the corner, and a medical facility on the grounds appeals to the elderly residents who depend on the proity of such services.

"proity": ....

2- The mayor's nadid responses include disclosures of his past problems with drugs, his investments in local contracting firms, and his hopes for the party's nomination as its presidential candidate.

"nadid": ....

3- She chewesed public attention by wearing sunglasses and large hats and by leaving important meetings through back doors.

"chewesed": ....

4- The ability to litebrate life on this planet has increased at a rapid rate. Laser weapons evaporate metals, germ cultures kill living organisms, and in some parts of the world, overpopulation outstrips the food supply.

"litebrate": ....

5- Hoodlums, muggers, thieves, drug dealers and similar regds of society prey on weak victims.

"regd" ....

6- A reduction in federal funding, the elimination of tax incentives for charities, and a scarcity of effective fund raisers are <u>pediets</u> to the growth of creative arts projects.

"pediet" ....

7- There is an <u>eath</u> of workers left on the project; many people have retired, and the management refuses to fill their positions ; also few people are willing to apply for this dangerous type of work.

"eath" ....

From *Keys to Reading Study Skill*- H. Krantz and J. Kimmellman

* This statement do not appear in students' handouts.

Appendix 5

Task 1

Part 5

Understanding Implied Meanings Using Sense-of-the-sentence Context Clues*

Explanation: It is possible to understand many new and difficult words from their general context. General context is the general meaning of the sentence or paragraph in which words appear.

Read the following sentences and try to understand the meanings of the underlined words from the sentence context in which they appear.

1- At the last minute, the governor <u>ommued</u> the prisoner's death sentence to a term of life in prison.

Living outside the countryside, many people <u>ommue</u> to their offices in the city center every day.

ommue in sentence 1 ....

ommue in sentence 2 ....

3- Without looking, the motorist proceeded through the intersection and hit a car. The drive at fault felt it <u>cument upon</u> him to pay all damages, and willingly offered to do so.

cument upon :...........................

4- Parking a car in a small space cannot in any way be compared with the <u>sumate</u> skill involved in guiding an ocean liner into its dock.

sumate: ....

5- You have told so many lies that you'll have a difficult time <u>tricing</u> yourself from this situation.

tricing: ....

6- Great domed patios surrounded by tree-lined avenues dominated the palace grounds. Inside, gold statues, inlaid mosaic floors, and hand-crafted rugs filled each room. Dominating each lounge area was a huge signed master-piece. It is no wonder that today visitors continue to admire the <u>olence</u> of the king's private estate.

olence:................................

* This statement do not appear in students' handouts.

Appendix 6

Task 2

Explanation: Sometimes two or more seemingly easy-to-understand sentences come together and form a complex sentence. In such a circumstance, the reader's success in understanding the sentence and analyzing the information is a result of his ability to break the sentence into smaller, meaningful and manageable parts.

Read the following parts and try to answer the questions that follow.

1- We hope that two features of our approach might make it especially acceptable to teachers. One is that by describing the meaning system in terms that have general validity we provide the teacher with analytic tools to handle the authentic spoken material, however complex, which he judges suitable for a particular learner or group of learners ...

> From Brazil, D., Coulthard, M. and Johns C. Discourse,
> Intonation and Language Teaching

Question 1: What is the main message?

....

Question 2: How can you describe the approach mentioned in the text?

....

2- The presence of organized sport at every level of the educational system is often justified by reference to these values: it is widely believed that participation in sports "builds character" by introducing the young to discipline and competition. Sport therefore becomes a major concern of the schools, as evidenced by the space devoted to it in school newspapers and yearbooks, by the public display of trophies, and by the time and money devoted to coaching and training, to bands and cheerleaders, and to interschool sports...

> Sport in American Society. From Keys to Reading and
> Study Skills, H. KRANTZ and J. KIMMELMANN)

Question 1: What characteristic of sport is mentioned in the text?

....

Question 2: Can you organize the information that puts "sport" in a higher rank in schools?

....

3- The West had sent armies to capture and hold Jerusalem; instead they themselves fell victim to a host of new ideas and subtle influences which left their mark on the development of European literature, chivalry, warfare, sanitation, commerce, political institutions, medicine and the papacy itself.

Question: Can you break the above sentence into smaller meaningful parts?

....

4- In the early ages of the world, we know, it was believed that each territory was inhibited and ruled by its own divinities, so that a man could cross the bordering heights and be out of the reach of his native gods, whose presence was confined to the streams and the groves and the hills among which he had lived from his birth.

From Reading Literature- R. Gower and M. Pearson

Question: Can you break the above sentence into smaller meaningful parts?

....

5- It seemed to him that the power he had vainly trusted in among the streets and at the prayer-meeting was very far away from this land in which he had taken refuge, where men lived in careless abundance, knowing and needing nothing of that trust, which, for him, had been turned to bitterness.

Question: Can you break the above sentence into smaller meaningful parts?

....

6- The landlord of the lodging, who had heard that they were a queer couple, had doubted

if they were married at all, especially as he had seen Arabella kiss Jude one evening when she had taken a little cordial; and he was about to give them notice to quit, till by chance overhearing her one night haranguing Jude in rattling terms, and ultimately flinging a shoe at his head, he recognized the note of genuine wedlock; and concluding that the must be respectable, said no more.

Question: Can you break the above sentence into smaller meaningful parts?

....

7- When societies are increasingly dependent for their security on factors that extend far beyond their boundaries; when systems of production require raw materials, markets and skills that no one society can provide; and when social relationships and cultural institutions overlap national confines- the effect of organizational   controls with which all aspects of human activity must operate is being concentrated increasingly at the level of national states.

Question: Can you divide the above complex sentence into its minimal meaningful parts?

Appendix 7

Task 3

Identifying and Interpreting Reference Words

Explanation: Words and sentences in a text are related to each other in a way that there is clear identity between what the writer says and what he has said. The writer marks this identity using some reference words, the reader recognizes these words and goes backward and forward to organize information presented in the text.

Read the following text and try to find the reference (substitute) words and underline the word(s), phrase(s) or the sentence(s) that they replace.

1- Criteria that are vital to high status in one sphere of society are useless in another. Generally speaking, wealth is an important element of high status in most societies and ages of history. But it will not carry us all the way in any precise location of high status in, say, the American Sociological Association. The status, that is, the professional respect one enjoys there is a function of research eminence for the main part. To be sure, such eminence in our present society very probably caries high annual income, if not great personal wealth, but it is still utterly irrelevant to any status ranking of American sociologists. Similarly with family or origin. This can be crucial in some areas of society but is less so in such spheres as the professions, universities and large businesses".

<div align="center">

"Sources of Status" by Robert Nisbet

from Build It Up by Levine, A., Oded, B. and Stattman, S.

</div>

2- Many more young people acquire a university education today that ever before. They hope it will give them intellectual satisfaction and a well-paying career.

3- To characterize the Romantics, it is necessary to take account not only of the importance of aesthetic motives, but also of the change of taste that made their sense of beauty different from that of their predecessors. Their preference for Gothic architecture illustrates this best.

4- It is not accidental that people in Western societies, with their strong sense of individual personality, express themselves in science and literature together. The one is not a technique and the other is not an entertainment. They are two complementary modes of knowledge that blossom or shrink together. They are also the monuments in which our past culture is fixed and the probes that signal the direction of its future.

Appendix 8

Task 4

Identifying and Interpreting Discourse Markers

Explanation: Discourse markers help writers to clarify the relationships between ideas and different parts of the text. They thus enable the reader to conclude whether an idea is, for example, an addition, a cause, effect, simply an illustration etc. Writers do this, very often, using some explicit markers. Readers should identify these markers and comprehend the ideas based upon these markers.

Read the following sentences carefully and then, identifying discourse markers, fill in the blanks just below each sentence.

1- Effective reading is certainly half the battle, no matter what we are studying. Quite apart from that, effective reading is life-enhancing. It adds new wonders to living.

Discourse marker: ....   **Discourse type:** ....

2- There are some people- even some college graduates- who have difficulty with spelling or pronouncing even the common words in daily discourse.

Discourse marker: ....   **Discourse type:** ....

3- Besides such inherent political problems, public service broadcasting is under serious threat from another direction.

Discourse marker: ....   **Discourse type:** ....

4- Environmental and economic considerations, apart from esthetic design, have dominated modern architecture in recent years.

Discourse marker: ....   **Discourse type:** ....

5- A child learns to talk regardless of whether or not his parents constantly pursue him, correct him, and put him through linguistic drills.

Discourse marker: ....   Discourse type: ....

6- The most distinctive feature of mechanical energy , as opposed to life energy, is that it is dependable.

Discourse marker: ....   Discourse type: ....

7- Advertising is a valuable economic factor because it is the cheapest way of selling goods, particularly if the goods are worthless.

                                                                    Sinclair LEWIS

Discourse marker: ....   Discourse type: ....

8- The more technologically advanced the speakers are, the more equipped the language will be to cope with science, technology, and concepts of industrialized society. Conversely, the languages of such advanced nations as America, Germany and France may and often do lack numerous concepts and nuances referring to the phenomena of nature and to pursuits like herding, hunting, and fishing, which are elaborately present in many tongues of people of a more primitive culture.

Discourse marker: ....   Discourse type: ....

9- Failure is not bad. In fact one good failure can teach you more about success than four years at the best university. Failure can be the best thing that ever happened to you.

                                                                    Robert G. ALLEN

Discourse marker: ....   Discourse type: ....

10- On account of the fact that they are a democracy and run by the people, most countries have to keep their governments four years, no matter what they do.

Discourse marker: ....   Discourse type: ....

11- She was denied a scholarship on the grounds that she was involved in political activities at the University.

Discourse marker: ....   Discourse type: ....

12- Menice's history, read carefully, reminds us too that the practice of medicine has always been, first and foremost, about sustaining, alleviating, easing, and very much secondarily about curing.

Discourse marker: ....   **Discourse type:** ....

13- To the end that justice may be served, the defendant will be offered every opportunity to establish his innocence.

Discourse marker: ....   **Discourse type:** ....

14- We must find ways of avoiding ecological side effects. In other words, we must be able to grow enough food without further degrading our land, water and air.

Discourse marker: ....   **Discourse type:** ....

15- One of the best times to see a great city is early in the morning before the sunrise. With its shops shut, its normally crowded streets quiet and deserted, it looks as though everyone had left in a hurry leaving all their possessions behind him.

Discourse marker: ....   **Discourse type:** ....

16- Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than outright exposure. Life is either daring adventure or nothing.

Helen KELLER

Discourse marker: ....   **Discourse type:** ....

17- The 1960s were designated United Nations development decade and a drive was made to set up aid. Ten years later the results seemed very much disappointing, for the developed countries did not contribute anything like the target had been set, namely, only 1 percent of the gross national income.

Discourse marker: ....   **Discourse type:** ....

18- After the death of Socrates, Plato retired from active life and founded the academy, an institution devoted to research and instruction in philosophy and the sciences. Most of his life thereafter was spent in teaching and guiding the activities of the academy.

Discourse marker: ....   **Discourse type:** ....

19- Science seeks generally only the most useful systems of classification: these it regards for the time being, until more useful classifications are invented as true.

S.I. Hayakawa

Discourse marker: ....   **Discourse type:** ....

20- The role of the father in the traditional family was to provide for his family. Similarly, the father in the modern family is expected to do so, also.

Discourse marker: ....   **Discourse type:** ....

21- It was previously a question of finding out whether or not life had to have a meaning to be lived. It now becomes clear, on the contrary, that it will be lived all the better even if it has no meaning.

Albert CAMUS

Discourse marker: ....   **Discourse type:** ....

22- Among the people whom we like to call savages all knowledge inherited by tradition is shared by all; it is taught to every member of the tribe so that in this respect everybody equally equipped for life.

Discourse marker: ....   **Discourse type:** ....

23- On the whole human beings want to be good, but not too good and not quite all the time.

George ORWELL

Discourse marker: ....   **Discourse type:** ....

24- How is it that we know so little, given that we have so much information?

Noam CHOMSKY

Discourse marker: ....   **Discourse type:** ....

25- The most challenging problems facing national parks result from human impact. Sometimes those problems originate outside the park. Acid rain, plus pollutants in rivers, the sea and the air bring into park environments chemicals against which native life forms have evolved no protection. Consequently, life in lakes, rivers, and bays have been

threatened, damaged, or destroyed.

Discourse marker: .... **Discourse type:** ....

26- Let everybody mind his own business, and there would be no problem

Discourse marker: .... **Discourse type:** ....

27- Apart from such political problems, public service broadcasting is under serious threat.

Discourse marker: .... **Discourse type:** ....

28- In the event that a robbery had occurred, the management would have called the police immediately.

Discourse marker: .... **Discourse type:** ....

29- When a man has pity on all living creatures, then only is he noble.

Discourse marker: .... **Discourse type:** ....

30- Body language transmits ideas and thoughts by certain actions, either intentionally or unintentionally.

Discourse marker: .... **Discourse type:** ....

Appendix 9

Task 5- Making Inferences

Explanation: Each sentence below is followed by five statements. The statements are four types:

1- Some of the statements are restatements of the original sentence. They give the same information in a different way.

2- Some are inferences (conclusions) which can be drawn from the information given in the original sentence.

3- Some are false statements based upon the information given.

4- Some of the statements cannot be judged true or false on the information given in the original sentence.

Read the following sentences carefully and put a cross (x) next to all inferences (Type 2)

NOTE: There may be more than one inference in each set.

1- This organization may succeed marvelously at what it wants to do, but what it wants to do may not be all that important.

a- The organization is marvelous.

b- The organization may succeed.

c- The fact that the organization is successful does not mean that its goals are important.

d- The author questions the goal of the organization.

e- When an organization is not successful, its goals are not important.

2- This book contains a totally new outlook which combines the wisdom of the past with scientific knowledge to solve the problems of the present.

a.- Problems of the past and present are solved in this book.

b- In this book, current knowledge and past wisdom are combined to solve current problems.

c- Only by using knowledge of the past and present can we solve the problems of the present.

d- None of today's problems can be solved without scientific knowledge.

e- This book is different in that it combines the wisdom of the past with scientific knowledge.

3- Like other timeless symbols, flags have accompanied mankind for thousands of years, gaining ever wider meaning, yet loosing none of their inherent and original force.

a- In spite of losing some of their original force, flags are timeless symbols which have accompanied humans for thousands of years.

b- Flags have existed for thousands of years.

c- Timeless symbols typically gain wider meaning while not using their inherent force.

d- Because flags are considered timeless symbols, they have gained continually wider meaning without using their inherent original force.

e- Thousands of years ago flags accompanied men but through time they have lost some of their force.

4- The project of which this book is the result was first suggested in the summer of 1962, in the course of some leisurely conversations at the foot of and occasionally on top of the Alps of western Austria.

a. This book was written in 1962.

b. This book was written in Austria

c. This book is a collection of talks held in 1962.

d. This book is an end result of a project   .

e. This book is about western Austria   .

5- Los Angeles' safety records with school buses is generally a good one, but of course this record is only as good as the school bus drivers themselves.

a- In spite of generally safety record for their school buses, Los Angeles school bus drivers are not very good.

b- If school drivers are not very good, the town's school bus safety will not be very good either.

c- If cities wish to maintain good safety records with school buses, they should hire good school bus drivers.

d- With better school buses, drivers will be able to maintain better safety records.

e- Los Angeles' safety records with school buses is good because bus drivers are good.

5- Taxes being so high, the descendents of the wealthy class of the nineteenth century are being forced to rent out their estates to paying guests.

a- In the nineteenth century the wealthy class used to rent out their estates

b- Because of high taxes, families which were rich one hundred years ago now rent their estates.

c- Guests pay high taxes when they rent old estates.

d- Some families which were once wealthy are having trouble paying their taxes.

e- High taxes have changed the lives of some of the old wealthy families.

6- Like any theory of importance, that of social or cultural anthropology was the work of many minds and took on many forms. Some, the best known of its proponents, worked on broad areas and attempted to describe and account for the development of human civilization in its totality. Others restricted their efforts to specific aspects of the culture, taking up the evolution of art, or the state, or religion.

a- Social anthropology concerns itself with broad areas while cultural anthropology concerns itself with specific aspects of culture.

b- Cultural anthropologists, also known as social anthropologists, may work in either broad or restricted areas.

c- Cultural anthropology is a new field of study.

d- Any important area of study requires the work of many minds and therefore likely to have different approaches.

e- The best known people in cultural anthropology attempted to describe the development of human civilization.

7- In recent years there have been many reports of growing impatience with psychiatry, with its seemingly foreverness, its high cost, its debatable, results, and its vague, esoteric terms. To many people it is like a blind man in a dark room looking for a black cat that isn't there. The magazines and mental health associations say psychiatric treatment is a good thing, but what it is or what it accomplishes has not been made clear.

a- Even mental health associations haven't been able to demonstrate the value of psychiatry.

b- The author believes that psychiatry is of little value.

c- People are beginning to doubt the value of psychiatry.

d- In recent years psychiatry has begun to serve the needs of blind people.

e- Only magazines and mental associations believe the psychiatry is a good thing.

8- Often people who hold higher positions in a given group overestimate their performance, while people in the lowest levels of the group underestimate theirs. While this may not always be true, it does indicate that often the actual position in a group has much to do with the feeling of personal confidence a person may have. Thus, if a member holds a high position in a group or if he feels that he has an important part to play in a group, he will probably have more confidence in his own performance.

a- If a person has confidence in his own performance, he will achieve a high position in a group.

b- If we let someone know he is an important part of a group, he will probably become more self-confident.

c- People who hold a low position in a group often overestimate their positions.

d- People in positions of power in a group may feel they do better than they really do.

e- People with higher positions in a group do better work than other group members.

9- Surveys reveal that most adults consider themselves "well informed about the affairs of the nation and the world." Yet a regularly taken poll that asks, "From where do you obtain most of your information about the world?" has found the percentage of people who reply, "Television" has been increasing steadily over the past decade. The last questionnaire found that well over sixty percent of the respondents chose television over other media as their major source of information. These two facts are difficult to reconcile since even a casual study of television news reveals that it is only a headline rather than a source of information enabling one to shape a world view.

a- Most adults obtain most of their information about world affairs from the newspapers.

b- The author of this passage does not believe that television provides enough information to make people well informed.

c- The number of people answering the question has increased.

d- Sixty percent of the people questioned get all their news from television.

e- Television is a main source of information for most adults.

Adapted from *Reader's Choice*
by Baudoin, Bober, Clarke, Dobson and Silberstein

Appendix 10

Task 6- Understanding Text Types

Read the following texts and answer the questions following each text.

TEXT 1 NARRATION*

A birthday gift I received years ago has become a lasting symbol of love. It was a cold day during my first year in college. My birthday had just passed, and I hadn't heard from my best friend, Linda, who had moved away two years before. A card and a present would have been nice, but what I really wanted from her was a hug. Suddenly the doorbell rang. I ran downstairs and signed the receipt that the letter carrier held out- in return for a package from Linda. I pulled off all the wrappings- and stared. Then, because I didn't know whether to laugh or cry, I ended up doing some of each. Linda's gift was a sweater, but this sweater had something extra. Attached to each cuff was a cutout of one of Linda's hands, and the hands in the box were arranged in a hug around the sweater. I loved the sweater, but I didn't wear for months because I could not bear to unpin the hands, which would have looked pretty silly just dangling from my cuffs. Then I got an idea. I' m not an artist, but I decided to make a collage. I got hours of pleasure painting a background and then cutting , arranging, and pasting photographs and magazine pictures, along with the hands, into what is surely a unique piece of artwork. I eventually wore out the sweater, but the collage has hung in every place I have ever lived. Every time I looked at it, I feel hugged, loved, and comforted.

1- Did you pick out the organization or the type of the text?

....

2- Why do you think it is this type?

....

3- How was this structure type organized?

....

4- What signals and cues helped you?

TEXT 2 PROCESS*

"Luck is preparation of meeting opportunity," it has been said, and this is true for a job interview. Careful preparation before an interview is the key to getting the job you want. The first step is to learn all you can about the employer. Read about the company in its brochures or in newspaper and magazine articles. A reference librarian can point you to the sources of company information. You can also find company web sites and other useful material an the internet. Second, as you read, think about the ways your talents match the company's goals. Third, put yourself in the interviewer's place, and make a list of questions that he or she will probably ask. Employers want to know about your experience, training and special skills, like foreign languages. Remember, every employer looks for a capable and enthusiastic team player who will help the firm succeed. Fourth, rehearse your answers to the questions out aloud. Practice with a friend or a tape recorder until your response sound well prepared and confident. Finally, select and prepare a professional-looking interview outfit well in advance to avoid the last-minute panic. When a job candidate has made the effort to prepare, the interviewer is much more likely to be impressed.

1- Did you pick out the organization or the type of the text?

....

2- Why do you think it is this type?

....

3- How was this structure type organized?

....

4- What signals and cues helped you?

....

TEXT 3 DEFINITION*

Ambivalence can be defined as a feeling or attitude that is both positive and negative at the same time. For instance, a young woman might feel ambivalent about motherhood. She may want to have a child yet fear that motherhood will use up energy she would like to spend on her career. Or a Michigan man who is offered a slightly higher salary in Arizona might be ambivalent about moving. He and his family don't want to leave their friends, their schools, and a city they love. On the other hand, they are tempted by a larger income and by Arizona's warm climate and clean air. Finally, two people may have ambivalent feelings about each other, loving and disliking each other at the same time. It hurts to be together, and it hurts to be apart; neither situation makes them happy. As these examples show, the double tug of ambivalence can complicate decision making.

1- Did you pick out the organization or the type of the text?

....

2- Why do you think it is this type?

....

3- How was this structure type organized?

....

4- What signals and cues helped you?

....

TEXT 4
COMPARISON- CONTRAST*

Although soul and hip-hop both spring from American-African roots, they are very different musical expressions. Soul music borrows from gospel and rhythm and blues. The singer's voice, backed up by live instruments, soars with emotion, with soul. This music captures the optimism of its time- the civil rights movement of the 1960s and hope for social change. There are two types of soul- the smooth Detroit style of Supremes, Stevie Wonder, and the Temptations and the more gritty, gospel-driven Memphis style of Otis Redding and Booker T and the MGs. Soul music is upbeat and often joyful; its subjects are love and affirmation of the human condition. On the other hand, hip-hop (or rap) draws on hard rock, funk and techno. The rapper chants rhymes against a driving instrumental background that may be prerecorded. Rap grew out of the New York ghettos in the late 1970s and the 1980s, when crack and guns flooded "the hood" and many dreams seemed broken. Of the rival East and West Coast rappers, New Yorkers include Grandmaster Flash, LL Cool J, and the murdered Biggie Smalls, while Los Angeles rappers include Ice Cube and the murdered Tupac Shakus. The subjects of hip-hop are racism, crime, and poverty. Both soul and hip-hop claim to "tell it like it is". Hip-hop's answer to the soulful Four Tops is the Furious Four. What's in a name? Perhaps the way the listener experiences reality.

1- Did you pick out the organization or the type of the text?

....

2- Why do you think it is this type?

....

3- How was this structure type organized?

....

4- What signals and cues helped you?

....

TEXT 5

CLASSIFICATION*

Judges can be divided, on the basis of their written opinions, into three categories: conservative, liberal and centrist. Although all judges respect the law, conservative judges have an especially strong belief in the importance of the law and the history surrounding it. They believe that real justice comes only from strictly applying the law to the facts of a case, whether or not the outcome seems fair to an individual. On the other hand, liberal judges look beyond a rigid reading to the "spirit of law" in their search for real justice in a case. They might broadly interpret the law in order to champion individual right. The outcome of the case matters more to them than the law itself. Finally, centrist judges the middle ground between conservative and liberal. They do not apply the law as rigidly as conservative judges, yet they are not as willing as liberal judges to apply the law loosely. Having different types of judges helps balance our legal system; their differing views help protect both the law and individual rights.

1-   Did you pick out the organization or the type of the text?

....

2-   Why do you think it is this type?

....

3-   How was this structure type organized?

....

4-   What signals and cues helped you?

....

TEXT 6

CAUSE AND EFFECT*

Sadly, this college is part of national trend: date rape is on the rise. To stop date rape, college administrators and students must understand and deal with its possible causes. First, some fraternities and male peer groups on campus promote an attitude of disrespect towards women. This mentality sets the state for date rape. Second, alcohol and drugs erode good judgment and self-control. The kegs, barrels, and bags consumed at many parties here put students at risk, including the risk of date rape. A third one is miscommunication between men and women. Men and women often have different ideas of what date rape is or even it exists. We need campus workshops in which we can discuss this issue openly and come to some understanding between the sexes. Date rape is a serious problem that can ruin lives. We can make a difference by addressing the causes of date rape: the male mentality of disrespect, heavy campus use of alcohol and drugs, and differing views of men and women.

1- Did you pick out the organization or the type of the text?

....

2- Why do you think it is this type?

....

3- How was this structure type organized?

....

4- What signals and cues helped you?

....

TEXT 7

PERSUASION*

Passengers should refuse to ride in any vehicle driven by someone who has been drinking. First and most important, such refusal could save lives. The National Council on Alcoholism reports that drunk driving causes 25,000 deaths and 50 percent of all traffic accidents each year. Not only the drivers but the passengers who agree to travel with them are responsible. Second, riders might tell themselves that some people drive well even after a few drinks, but this is just not true. Dr.Burton Belloc of the local Alcoholism Treatment Center explains that even one drink can lengthen the reflex time and weaken the judgment needed for safe driving. Other drivers might feel foolish to ruin a social occasion or inconvenience themselves or others by speaking up, but risking their lives is even more foolish. Finally, by refusing to ride with a drinker, one passenger could influence other passengers or the driver. Marie Furillo, a student at Central High School, is an example. When three friends who had obviously been drinking offered her a ride home from school, she refused, despite the driver's teasing. Hearing Marie's refusal, two of her friends got out of the car. Until the laws are changed a vast re-education takes place, the bloodshed on American highways will probably continue. But there is one thing people can do: They can refuse to risk their lives for the sake of a party.

1-   Did you pick out the organization or the type of the text?

      ....

2-   Why do you think it is this type?

      ....

3-   How was this structure type organized?

      ....

4-   What signals and cues helped you?

      ....

TEXT 8

ILLUSTRATION*

Aggressive drivers not only are stressed out and dangerous, but often they save no time getting where they want to go. Recently I was driving south from Oakland to San Jose. Traffic was heavy but moving. I noticed an extremely aggressive driver jumping lanes, speeding up and slowing down. Clearly, he was in a hurry. For the most part, I remained in one lane for the entire forty-mile journey. I was listening to a new audiotape and daydreaming. I enjoyed the trip because diving gives me a chance to be alone. As I was exiting off the freeway, the aggressive driver crowded up behind me and raced on by. Without realizing it, I had driven in San Jose ahead of him. All his waving, rapid acceleration, and putting families at risk had earned him nothing except perhaps some high blood pressure and a great deal of wear and tear on his vehicle.

<div align="right">Richard Carlson, Don't Swear the Small Stuff</div>

1- Did you pick out the organization or the type of the text?

....

2- Why do you think it is this type?

....

3- How was this structure type organized?

....

4. What signals and cues helped you?

....

Statements with an asterix(*) are not included in the student handouts.

<div align="right">

All passages were taken from *"Evergreen"* by
Fawcett and Sandberg

</div>

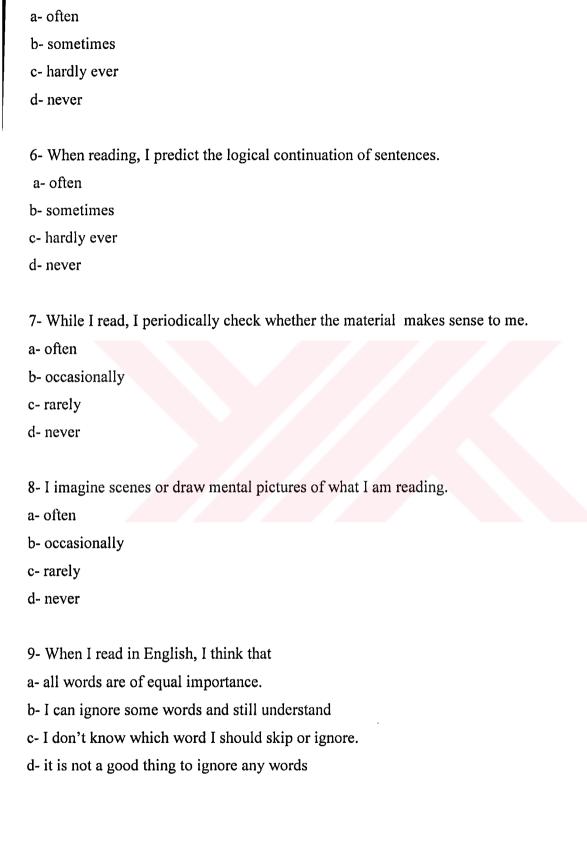**Appendix 11**

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Students,

This questionnaire is to elicit your reading habits and your problems with reading in English. It seeks to answer the questions of what and how you do when you are reading in English.

Mark the letter(s) for each statement which best describe(s) how you read or what you do in your readings of English. You may mark more than one item if meaningful to you.

Thanks a lot for your participation.

1- Before I start reading, I

a - always set a purpose

b- read and then consider my purpose

c- preview the text

d- always empty my mind for new information.

2- When I read, I pay most attention to

a- what individual words mean

b- what the sentences mean

c- what the form or grammatical function of the word is

d- what the structure of the passage is

3- When I begin reading a text in English, I

a- don't usually consider how it relates to what I already know

b- think about what I know about the topic or source of the text

c-think about what I know about the author's style or point of view

d- don't consider the author's style and point of view

4- I read different English texts

a- the same way because they are in English

b- the same way because they are usually difficult

c- differently depending on what I need to learn from them

d- differently depending on text type.

5- When I read in English, I can predict or hypothesize based upon the title

a- often

b- sometimes

c- hardly ever

d- never

6- When reading, I predict the logical continuation of sentences.

a- often

b- sometimes

c- hardly ever

d- never

7- While I read, I periodically check whether the material makes sense to me.

a- often

b- occasionally

c- rarely

d- never

8- I imagine scenes or draw mental pictures of what I am reading.

a- often

b- occasionally

c- rarely

d- never

9- When I read in English, I think that

a- all words are of equal importance.

b- I can ignore some words and still understand

c- I don't know which word I should skip or ignore.

d- it is not a good thing to ignore any words

10- When I read in English, I

a- feel uneasy when I face many difficult vocabulary.

b- look up most of the words I do not know.

c- want to know exactly what is in the passage.

d- try to guess what some words mean.

11- If I come to a word I do not know, I

a- skip it and come back to it later.

b- try to guess the meaning and go on.

c- try to guess the meaning and reread the sentence.

d- look the word up in a glossary or dictionary and reread the sentence.

12- To figure out the meaning of an unfamiliar word, I

a- consider what the rest of the sentence or paragraph says

b- look for some context clues

c- analyze the grammatical form of the word

d- don't do any of the above

e- refer to a dictionary as soon as possible

13-When I read in English, I

a- often read word by word

b- read sentences and translate them into my native language.

c- look for sentence relationships.-

d- consider the text as a whole

14- Do you ever ask yourself questions about the text and your understanding before, during and after reading?

a- often

b- occasionally

c- rarely

d- never

15- When I have finished reading, I

a- stop thinking about the text

b- do not realize I have not understood

d- reflect on what I have just read

e- summarize major ideas

f- seek additional information from outside sources

16- I summarize in my mind or in writing important information that I read

a- often

b- sometimes

c- rarely

d- never

17- Do you ever use graphic organizers to sort out (analyze) the information in the text?

a- Yes, often

b- Yes, sometimes

c- Yes, but seldom

d- No, never

18- It is my belief that, in reading English, success is

a- is a result of luck

b- is a result of effort

c- is a result of vocabulary knowledge.

d- is a result of linguistic knowledge

e- is a result of applying necessary strategies

Thanks again

This questionnaire was adapted from:

1) Sample Learning Strategies Questionnaire for Reading

http://www.nclrc.org/portfolio/formRussianSample.html;

2) *More than Meets the Eye-* Foreign Language Reading:
   Theory and Practice, M. A. Barnett, University of
   Virginia 1989.

3) *Reading Comprehension.* Center for Advancement of
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   http://muskingum.edu/~ /database/readingcomp.html

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CV

Fermi TURGUT was born in Trabzon, 1964. After his secondary education, he attended the Department of English Language, Atatürk University, Erzurum, Turkey. He graduated in 1987. After working in various high schools for ten years, he started to work for the Department of Foreign Languages, Karadeniz Technical University. In the year 2001, he started to work for the Department of English Language and Literature in the Faculty of Science and Letters, KTU. There he delivers Reading Skill, English Poetry, English Drama, Short Story and Teaching Language Skills courses. He is married with two daughters.