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Utilising fiction to promote english
language acquisition

Suhair Al-Alami

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**UTILISING FICTION TO PROMOTE ENGLISH LANGUAGE
ACQUISITION**

SUHAIR EYAD JAMAL AL-ALAMI

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Aston University
Utilising Fiction to Promote English Language Acquisition
Suhair Eyad Jamal Al-Alami
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Thesis Summary

Towards the end of the university stage, students residing in the United Arab Emirates and specialising in subjects other than English are expected- amongst other university requirements- to have acquired adequate communicative competence as well as a repertoire of critical thinking skills. Despite the efforts made within the field of teaching English to EFL university students in the country, the output gained in terms of acquired skills and competencies is still below expectations. The main concerns of the current thesis are, therefore, a) to investigate the factors which inhibit EFL university students' progress in the areas of acquiring adequate communicative competence as well as critical thinking skills, and b) to propose a course book and pedagogic methods to improve students' progress in the areas of acquiring adequate communicative competence as well as critical thinking skills.

Believing in the essential role literature plays in enhancing critical thinking and promoting communicative competence on the part of EFL learners, the current study introduces a course, designed and implemented by the researcher: **LEARN AND GAIN**. The proposed course is fiction-based language teaching, adopting the view that literature is a resource rather than an object, thus advocating the use of literature as one of the main resources in foreign/second language acquisition. Investigating whether or not the proposed course was effective in promoting EFL university students' communicative competence as well as enhancing their critical thinking skills, a study sample taken from the study population was selected. Adopting an experimental design, the research project involved two groups: experimental and control. The experimental group students were exposed to the proposed course whilst the control group students were exposed to a general English language course. To examine treatment effectiveness, the researcher set and administered a pre-post test. Divided into two main parts, communicative critical reading competence and communicative critical writing competence, the pre-post test measured subjects' communicative critical reading competence and subjects' communicative critical writing competence. In addition, a pre-post questionnaire was administered and a semi-structured interview was conducted involving the experimental group students, to gain an awareness of students' attitudes towards learning literary texts in general, and the proposed course in particular. To examine issues of interest and relevance, gender differences: male vs. female, and university major: science vs. non-science, were also examined for enrichment purposes.

For the purpose of gathering sufficient data about subjects' achievements on the pre-post, the following statistical tests were conducted: Mann-Whitney test, and paired data t-test. Based on the statistical findings, the experimental group students' performance on the communicative critical reading competence pre-post test and the communicative critical writing competence pre-post test was significantly better than their counterparts of the control group students. Speaking of gender differences in relation to language performance on the communicative critical reading competence pre-post test and the communicative critical writing competence pre-post test, no significant differences were cited. Neither did the researcher cite any significant performance differences between science/non-science students on the communicative critical reading competence pre-post test and the communicative critical writing competence pre-post test. As far as the questionnaire's findings are concerned, the experimental group students' responses to the post-questionnaire's items were more positive than those of their responses to the pre-questionnaire's, thus indicating some positive attitudes towards literature, which students possibly gained throughout the course of implementation. Relating the discussion to the interview's results, students conveyed their satisfaction with the proposed course, emphasising that promoting English language skills through the use of literary texts was rewarding.

In the light of findings and conclusions, a number of recommendations as well as implications have been proposed. The current study aimed to arrive at some appropriate suggestions to a number of enquiries, yet concluding with some areas of enquiry to be explored for further research.

Key Terms

Communicative Competence in EFL/ESL
Critical Thinking in Relation to EFL/ESL Instruction
Novels and Short Stories within EFL/ESL Contexts

Dedication

To the greatest father: Dr. Eyad Al-Alami, and most wonderful mother: Mrs. Da'ad Al-Alami, who have TAUGHT me what millions and billions of books could never do.

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List of Abbreviations and Definitions

The following terms are used throughout the current dissertation. This part defines each term, based on factual data and/or the researcher's viewpoint.

Communicative competence in EFL

Communicative competence in EFL is a repertoire of language knowledge and skills required for effective communication in English as a foreign language. Looked at from the researcher's definition, this competence is split into language receptive and productive skills. Four components make up the construct of receptive skills: linguistic competence, discourse competence, strategic competence, and socio-linguistic competence. Productive skills, on the other hand, incorporate functional performance, discourse production, strategy application, and socio-linguistic response.

Critical reading

Critical reading reflects higher order thinking skills, referring in particular to both analytical thinking and investigative enquiry. For the purpose of the current study, the following critical reading skills have been identified:

- Distinguishing facts, opinions, and reasoned justifications.
- Grasping feelings, opinions and attitudes implied.
- Deducing meaning of unfamiliar lexical items from context.
- Making judgments based upon personal knowledge and experience.

Critical writing

Critical writing refers to higher conceptual skills of synthesising stretches of written discourse. For the purpose of the current study, the following critical writing skills have been identified:

- Employing cohesion devices in a written piece, as appropriate.
- Producing coherent pieces of written discourse.

Dependent Variable

The variable which a researcher observes and measures to determine the effect of the independent variable.

EFL

English used as a foreign language.

ESL

English used as a second language.

ESP

English for special purposes.

Independent variable

The major variable which a researcher hopes to investigate. Therefore, it is the variable which is selected and measured for study and research purposes.

Institutional TOEFL course

An English language course which EFL/ESL learners study to enable them to write the Institutional TOEFL: American standardised test which non-native speakers of English sit for to achieve a certain purpose such as university admission, immigration, post-graduate requirement, and so on. This

Institutional TOEFL course is taught for Al Ghurair University's students following the Upper Intermediate English course.

Literary competence

Literary competence reflects the abilities and skills employed whilst dealing with a literary piece- oral and written. Considered from the researcher's point of view, this competence is split into receptive and productive skills. Four components make up the construct of receptive skills, namely, literary awareness, linguistic awareness, cultural awareness, and aesthetic awareness. Productive skills, on the other hand, incorporate literary application, linguistic performance, cultural appreciation, and aesthetic response.

Moderator Variable

A special type of independent variable which a researcher selects for study to examine whether it modifies the relationship between the dependent and the main independent variables.

Non-science colleges

The College of Business Studies and the College of Interior Design belonging to Al Ghurair University in Dubai, where the current research has been conducted.

Null-Hypothesis

The word null means of being or concerning *zero*. A null hypothesis is a hypothesis which assumes no differences between/among a study's groups, conditions, consequences, and/or domains, when exposed to a course of treatment.

Science colleges

The College of Electrical and Electronic Engineering and the College of Computing belonging to Al Ghurair University in Dubai, where the current research has been conducted.

Upper Intermediate English course

A general English course taught for Al Ghurair university's students prior to the Institutional TOEFL course.

Chapter One: Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction and Key Theoretical Issues

Towards the end of the university stage, undergraduate students residing in the United Arab Emirates and specialising in subjects other than English are expected- amongst other university requirements- to have acquired adequate communicative competence in English, as well as a repertoire of critical thinking skills. Despite every effort made in the field of teaching English to EFL university students in the country, the output gained in terms of acquired skills and competencies is still below expectations (Al Alami: 2008).

The teaching of English in the United Arab Emirates is based upon the communicative approach, which aims at equipping students with sufficient communicative competence, so that in the long-run they will employ language skills for communication purposes, as appropriate (see Al Ghurair University: 2008). Personal experience and the researcher's colleagues' observations, however, show that some EFL university students fail to achieve adequate communicative competence, which in turn does not qualify them to exploit the foreign language of English as required by their curricula as well as by today's world.

Another issue which the researcher would like to raise in this context is the gap existing between the declared aims of university education in the United Arab Emirates on the one hand, and the output gained in terms of acquired critical thinking skills on the other. Bearing in mind that critical thinking is central to university education in the United Arab Emirates (Al Ghurair University: 2008), it seems reasonable then to assume that all EFL university students are well-equipped to tackle a reading text and to handle a writing task, demonstrating through such activities an adequate repertoire of critical thinking skills. Personal experience and the researcher's colleagues' observations, however, indicate that this does not apply to all EFL university students.

What are some of the major factors which inhibit EFL students' progress in the areas of communication and critical thinking skills? Seen from the researcher's point of view, a variety of factors contribute, the most prominent of which being students' insufficient exposure to literary texts. The language courses usually offered to EFL university students in the United Arab Emirates are General English, and in some cases, ESP courses as well, with little or no reference to literature.

Seeking an *effective* remedy, the researcher argues that utilising literature in the EFL classroom would be beneficial in terms of many essential aspects. This belief is in harmony with many specialists' suggestions for utilising literature to promote communication and critical thinking skills. McRae (2008), for example, believes that the use of stories in language teaching has an extremely positive effect in that stories encourage students to read for pleasure. Eager to know what will happen next, keeps the reader interested as well as keeps the reader reading. Hall (2007) states that in EFL as well as ESL contexts, utilising literary texts can be seen as a means of promoting one's proficiency in vocabulary and reading, as well as enriching cultural knowledge. Processing literary texts is often considered difficult, yet worth the effect as a rich source of relevant language data from which one can acquire language. What is more, a growing interest in affect in foreign/second language acquisition proposes that, pleasure and involvement of the type that literary reading creates can significantly contribute to language acquisition.

As far as utilising novels for teaching purposes is concerned, Shaw (2007) discusses the rationale behind choosing novels for teaching EFL students. Accessibility of language, engaging and true to life nature of characters/relationships/events, developing imagination, visualising settings and characters, as well as being emotionally evocative, are amongst the most prominent reasons for utilising a novel in EFL contexts. Chen (2006) explains that narrative is one of the two modes of our thinking. Whilst communicating with others, regardless of culture and background, one can describe an incident as a way of explaining thoughts or a part of an argument. Accordingly, narration can be regarded as an essential prose genre which can be included in a university composition course for EFL learners. Literature, in general, represents various uses of the language-both conventional and literary, displays a broader range of communication strategies

than any other single teaching component does, and extends linguistic knowledge on the levels of both use and usage. When a student reads a literary piece, he/she learns the foreign language in context rather than memorising rules and words. Literature provides an informal, yet supportive environment for EFL students to normally develop their linguistic system. In addition to the linguistic benefit, literature opens the door for EFL students to the foreign culture.

According to De Naples (2002), when students learn how to understand fiction in the form of drama and poetry and engage in characters' lives, asking questions about the worlds authors create, they very often ask questions about their own lives and issues they encounter. Vocabulary, sentence structure, and patterns of organisation offer students many points from which to learn or to broaden understanding. De Carlo (1999) is also of the opinion that literary narrative has the capacity to reconcile seemingly contradictory aspects of experience: the particular and the universal, near and far, strange and familiar, as well as expressible and ineffable. This richness of subject-matter and the multiplicity of possible levels of interpretation, allow the reader to identify with others and to identify others with him/her.

Concerned with its effect upon cultural awareness, Hock (1999) explains that a story can be an appropriate model for forming identity, and therefore, the value of story as an effective educational means should be stressed. The information a reader gains through story reading helps him/her identify patterns and themes that will re-appear in their own works. Looked at from Booth's point of view (1998), it is in stories; in narratives large and small rather than in coded commandments, that students absorb lessons in how to confront ethical complexity. It is in dealing with narrative conflicts that students imbibe the skills required when our real values, values that are not merely social constructs, clash.

It would be reasonable to conclude then, that literature in EFL contexts plays an essential role not only in promoting language skills, but also in enhancing critical thinking on the part of learners. The current study, as such, seeks to investigate the extent to which this viewpoint is valid and reliable, through presenting a fiction course-designed and implemented by the

researcher. The proposed course is fiction-based language teaching, adopting the view that literature is a resource rather than an object in itself, thus advocating the use of literature as one of the main resources in foreign/second language acquisition (see Baba 2008).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The problem of the current study can be stated as follows: Despite the stated aims of university education in the UAE, and in spite of the efforts EFL practitioners have made in implementing the curriculum, a number of EFL university students' academic achievement in English remains below expectations.

The main concerns of this thesis therefore are: a) to investigate the factors which inhibit EFL university students' progress in the areas of acquiring adequate communicative competence as well as critical thinking skills, and b) to propose a course book and pedagogic methods to improve students' progress in the areas of acquiring adequate communicative competence as well as critical thinking skills.

1.3 Purpose and rationale of the Study

The current study aims to explore the effectiveness of utilising a fiction course in enhancing communicative critical language competence on the part of EFL university learners, residing in the United Arab Emirates. Under this wide umbrella, two related issues necessitate some exploration and examination. Firstly, the issue of gender: male vs. female, as to whether or not the proposed treatment has any significant differences on the two categories. Female and male subjects' language performance has been examined for study purposes. Secondly, the issue of specialisation: science vs. non-science students, as to whether or not the proposed treatment has any significant differences on language performance of the two categories. The paragraphs to follow deal with the rationale behind designing a fiction course as a means of treatment rather than any other means and genres.

The English language has been playing an increasingly remarkable role in a world where almost all countries have become a small town, communicating through English. Speaking of the United Arab Emirates' universities' context, English proficiency is a university requirement as the medium of instruction at both government and private universities is English. Generally speaking, however, EFL learners' achievement in English is not satisfactory enough, which can be due to a number of factors amongst the most prominent of which is lack of exposure to literary courses. Presently, literature is being regarded as a written form far removed from every day communication, and as such, literature courses are being mainly taught for English language/literature specialists in the country (see Al Alami: 2008).

A large number of specialists advocate the idea that literature plays an essential role in promoting communicative competence and enhancing critical thinking skills on the part of EFL/ESL learners. In Savvidou's view (2004), for example, communicative competence is more than mastery of form and structure. It also involves acquiring the ability to interpret discourse in its social and cultural contexts. Utilising literature, therefore, can provide a powerful pedagogic tool, ensuring learners' linguistic development. Reese (2002) argues that it is through literature that we can launch our students on a voyage of discovery, exploring other ways of thinking and living. Through careful, guided enquiry and by linking disciplinary study to the world at large, we are preparing students to be well-informed about a variety of issues around the world.

In Rafei's view (1996), literature offers a bountiful and extremely varied body of written material, in the sense that it touches upon fundamental human issues. A literary work can transcend both time and culture to speak directly to a reader in another country, or a different period of history. According to Appiah (1995), literature teaching should be prioritised for the following reasons: to develop students' scope of literary understanding and critical judgment for aesthetic purposes, to present a broad spectrum of the ideals and values as expressed in the world's great works, and to present the cultural ideals and social values relevant to the needs and interests of students. Based on the study he carried out to question the potential place of fiction writing in college writing pedagogy, McClure (1993) argues that writing fiction creates

potentials for students who choose to engage in their own self-creative work, as well as increases their capabilities as writers and thinkers.

Nada (1993) emphasises that the study of literature not only supports and enriches the study of language, but also helps the student to think in this language. In a literary study, the analysis of characters helps students in developing their way of thinking and building up a personal point of view based upon the reading and understanding of the work of art, to get as close as possible to the way the writer is thinking. Through the teaching of literature, we are exposing the learner to language within a meaningful as well as purposeful context. In Abou-Seif's view (1990), literature offers significant potential benefits for students of English as a foreign language. It can serve as a unit of linguistic study in the classroom, with several activities involving the application of the four language skills. Providing students with engaging literature experiences is, then, central to effective instruction. When students interact with interesting literature selections, they are developing each aspect of the comprehension process: affective consideration, readiness consideration, decoding knowledge, vocabulary knowledge, and discourse knowledge. Literature, therefore, is a unique and powerful instructional tool which can be used to promote all aspects of the comprehension process (see Hyland 1990).

Collie and Slater (1987) describe the benefits gained whilst dealing with short stories. For the teacher, a short story offers many immediate and striking advantages; for example, offering a greater variety than longer texts, being of value for continuous intake adult classes, as well as being practical when considering the time factor. Concerned with promoting writing skills, Sterns (1987) explains that literature serves as a model for writing, whether guided or controlled. Controlled model-based exercises are primarily designed to give contextualised activities in using grammatical structures. Used mostly in beginning-level writing, they entail the rewriting of passages in various arbitrary ways, depending on the structure or grammar point being studied. With regard to guided writing, literature can first become a regular model for writing during the guided stage, which usually corresponds with intermediate-level writing. Last but not least,

Byram (1980) states that the teaching of literature can help students go beyond immediate information, improve their writing ability, enrich their judgment and choice of reading, and change their thinking about the world in general and their society in particular.

To end with, the viewpoints mentioned above highlight the essential role literary texts play in relation to enhancing language skills and elements, promoting critical thinking, shaping mentality, and enriching knowledge for life-long learning. Based on her experience as an EFL practitioner, the researcher's viewpoint is in support of the aforementioned viewpoints. It is this personal experience as well as the desire to verify other researchers' beliefs, therefore, that has led the researcher to pursue this research.

1.4 Study Questions

The current study seeks some convincing answers to the following enquiries.

Question One

What are the components and specifications of a fiction course, proposed for promoting EFL university students' communicative competence, and enhancing their critical thinking skills?

Question Two

To what extent is the proposed fiction course effective in promoting EFL university students' communicative competence, and enhancing their critical thinking skills?

Within these two major questions, a number of sub-questions have been addressed to investigate some issues of relevance and interest to the field in general and the current research project in particular (see Chapter Four for details).

1.5 Scope of the Study

The study is limited and confined to EFL under-graduate students, studying in the United Arab Emirates and specialising in subjects other than English language, as the study population. Readers may enquire why EFL English language specialist students have been excluded. This is

because such a category of students would normally enhance English language skills throughout their four-year university study journey. What is more, the researcher's workplace has no faculty of arts where English is taught as a study major. For ease and practicality of research conduct purposes then, this category of students has been excluded.

Out of the study population, a number of students studying at the Al Ghurair University in Dubai- where the researcher works- were selected as a representative sample. The piloting and re-piloting of the study involved different groups within the academic years 2008-2009 and 2009-2010. Implementing the study was then conducted involving different groups within the academic year 2011-2012. Rather than covering the whole content of the proposed course which was quite impossible to attain, a number of texts were used for implementation purposes. The implementation, which the current research bases the findings and conclusions on, is limited to one academic semester, that is to say, fifteen teaching weeks amounting up to forty-five hours. Lastly, the university course which the researcher replaced her proposed course with is the Communication Skills ENL 102 course, as this course seeks to promote students' communicative competence in English, using general texts.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The current study is hoped and expected to be of use and interest to the following categories:

- Applied linguists and researchers within the field of EFL/ESL as the study proposes a model for integrating the teaching of language, literature, communication and critical thinking, with the ultimate purpose of promoting communicative competence and enhancing critical thinking on the part of EFL/ESL learners.
- Curricula designers because the study introduces a course for the enhancement of communicative competence and critical thinking on the part of EFL/ESL learners.
- EFL/ESL instructors since the study offers instructional material which can be adopted or adapted when teaching EFL/ESL learners.
- Specialists in language assessment due to the study's inclusion of some assessment materials, which can be both entertaining and useful.

- EFL university students for the study offers some language input, which is likely to serve as cognitive and affective inspiration.

1.7 Organisation of the Thesis

Excluding Chapter One, the thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter Two is a detailed review of related literature, including the areas involved: literary texts, i.e. novels and short stories in perspective, reading skills, writing skills, critical thinking skills, communication skills, research within the field of applied linguistics, and gender differences in relation to language acquisition and performance. These seven areas are all discussed within the context of EFL with the main aims of both expanding the researcher's study vision as well as exposing the researcher to adequate related material to benefit from whilst carrying out the research work. Chapter Three is a detailed presentation on the conduct of the study, discussing the *what*, *why* and *how* issues. The treatment; that is, the proposed course, is discussed in relation to the following points: general aims and target attainments, principles of selecting literary texts for inclusion, content organisation along with specific objectives for each section, teaching methodology and approaches, suggested instructional procedures for each section, instructional tips and proposed ways of examining novels and short stories in the EFL classroom, recommended activities for teaching-learning contexts, proposed strategies to extend learner thinking, and language assessment. The main aim of including the aforementioned points is to shed light on the treatment the researcher proposes, so that readers can be convinced by its adequacy and effectiveness.

Concerned with the study design as well as methodology, Chapter Four is a detailed description of the current research, presenting the following points: study questions, study hypotheses, study design, subjects of the study, setting of the study, study variables, current research's ethical considerations, and current research's data collection methods. The main purpose of including the aforementioned points is to adequately discuss the current study in relation to both research methodology and design. Chapter Five is a detailed analysis of the statistical analyses conducted for the purpose of the current research. Including the study hypotheses along with the statistical treatment implemented for each and every case, Chapter Five aims to represent the statistical findings objectively and comprehensively, so that the

reader can be persuaded that the results are both valid and reliable. Last but not least, Chapter Six is a detailed discussion of the current research's findings, conclusions, implications as well as recommendations for further studies. The main aim of this last chapter, therefore, is to reflect upon what the researcher arrives at, concludes and recommends.

Chapter Two: Review of Related Literature

2.0 Review of Related Literature: Introduction

Chapter Two sheds light on seven main areas involved in the current research, presenting a number of related theories and approaches, opinions and suggestions, as well as studies and researches. These are: firstly, entering the world of fiction: elements and features of fictional texts-novels and short stories, theories and approaches, methods and strategies, activities and procedures, as well as a number of related studies. Secondly, reading skills: what reading comprehension entails, points to consider, theories and approaches, strategies; activities and procedures, as well as a number of related studies. Thirdly, writing skills: theories and approaches, strategies; activities and procedures, as well as a number of related studies. Fourthly, critical language skills: critical thinking, critical reading, critical writing, strategies; activities and procedures, as well as a number of related studies. Fifthly, EFL/ESL communication skills: promoting communication skills in the EFL/ESL classroom, teaching in the communicative classroom, as well as a number of related studies. Sixthly, research within the field of applied linguistics: definition, main design types, ethical considerations, and data collection methods. Seventhly, gender differences in relation to language acquisition and performance: food for thought.

2.1.1 Entering the World of Fiction: Introductory Word

The current study project seeks to investigate the effectiveness of utilising fictional texts: novels and short stories, in promoting communicative competence and enhancing critical thinking, on the part of EFL learners. The researcher, as such, believes that for her to cover all the related areas would be fruitful and enriching. Amongst the areas the current study involves and therefore, the current part includes are: main elements and language features in relation to fictional texts, theories and approaches, proposed methods and strategies, suggested activities and procedures, as well as a number of studies and researches within the context of the current study.

2.1.2 Elements and Features of Fictional Texts: Novels and Short Stories

Each genre has its elements and features which usually distinguish it from other genres. Such elements and features require a reader's careful study. What elements and features should we focus on whilst examining a novel/short story in the EFL/ESL classroom? This part of Chapter Two points out the elements and features, which should be highlighted throughout the reading and discussion stages of a novel/short story.

To begin with, it is agreed that the main elements of a novel/short story are: point of view, character, plot, setting, theme, and style (Al Alami: 2008). As far as point of view is concerned, Shen (2010) points out that first-person narration as well as third-person narration can use different modes of point of view. The 'I' in terms of first-person narration can be the protagonist in the story or an observer, for example. In discussing point of view, therefore, it is essential to realise the difference between two dichotomies. Firstly, 'internal' point of view: the viewing position being inside the story, versus 'external' point of view: the viewing position being outside the story. Secondly, inside view: penetrating into a character's consciousness, versus outside view: observing a character's outward behavior. Point of view, Simpson states (2010: 294), extends from the likely limited viewing position of a participating first-person narrator to the much wider point of a third person omniscient narrator. Speaking of this element, we need to differentiate between what is delineated in the fictional world on the one hand, and the perspective from which it is delineated, on the other. Clark (2007), on the other hand, believes that point of view can be used in different ways. It can refer to a visual perspective. In addition, it can refer to the ideological framework of a text. Moreover, it can be used to differentiate between the various kinds of relation of the teller to the tale in the narrative.

According to McRae (2007), the issue of point of view and narration goes further than speech and thought presentation, free direct and free indirect speech. It requires decisions about time, realistic perspectives, narrative distance, as well as the wider aims of narration as much as they can be assessed. Durant, et al. (2000) explain that in a fictional text, the choice of events and the

way events are described can be governed by one single point of view. This point of view could be explicitly a narrator—a character involved in the events and as such, has his/her particular perspective as well as angle on the events. The use of a narrator is an aesthetic strategy which can be employed in different ways for a variety of purposes. The simplest distinction that can be made in point of view is between two kinds of narration; namely, a first person: I narration, and a third person: the third person narration.

First person narration can be found in a wide range of novels and short stories where the narrative is told by the central protagonist. First person narration can also be told by a character other than the central protagonist—the viewpoint of a minor character for example. Whatever the case, first person narration projects us inside the consciousness of a character in the novel/short story, providing the events from one defined observer's position. On the other hand, third person narration can be used in such a way that a reader is unaware of the role of the narrator, who acts as an outsider observer. Hence, the narration process seems to be operating as a window on the events taking place in a novel/short story. Equally important is the fact that there are contrasting options within third person narration which can be summed up as follows: internal versus external, and restricted versus unrestricted knowledge. External third person narration refers to observing events and characters from outside. Internal third person narration, by contrast, provides access to the internal consciousness of characters by telling readers the way they think as well as feel. Another difference can be made in third person narration, that is, the difference between narration with no restrictions on the knowable (omniscient narration) and narration with restrictions on the knowable (see Durant, et al. 2000).

Seen from Jacobus's point of view (1989), we cannot have much of a narrative without a point of view, characters, a setting, a dramatic situation, and a shaped action. Point of view refers to a writer's method of reporting events - either in the third-person narrative using the pronoun he/she, or in the first-person narrative using the pronoun I. Character is created in terms of description, action and dialogue. Setting is the geographical space in which the story takes place.

The dramatic situation has to do with some kind of action. And the shaped action is the narrative purpose manifested in careful shaping of actions.

In studying a short story/novel, Roberts (1988) recommends, we should consider the issues of point of view, characterisation, plot, setting, and theme. Point of view refers to first-person narrators who may have complete understanding, partial understanding, or no understanding at all; second-person narrators where the pronoun you is used when speaker has more authority on a character's actions than the character himself or herself; and third-person narrators where he, she, or it can be used to either report actions and speeches, explain the inner workings of the minds of any or all characters, or focus on thoughts and responses of one major character limitedly. As far as characterisation is concerned, there are two main types of characters: namely, round and flat. The flat character is undistinguishable from other persons in a particular group or class. Therefore, a flat character is not individual but representative. The round character, on the other hand, stands out totally identifiable within the class, occupation, or circumstances of which he or she is a part. Plot may be analysed in terms of things such as impulses, goals, ideas, values, issues, and historical perspectives. Setting is the total of references to physical and temporal objects and artifacts, which can be examined in relation to characters, organisation of the work, and the atmosphere or mood of the story. Theme refers to a major idea which runs throughout a story and ties things together much like a continuous thread.

So far, focus has been made on the elements point of view, character, plot, setting, and theme. The remaining paragraphs of this part pinpoint the element of style which usually tends to characterise the language features of novels and short stories.

A genre of literature, fiction normally manipulates the sort of language which other genres of literature normally manipulate to impress readers; namely, figurative language. Durant et al. (2000) explain that figurative language refers to a kind of literalness. The words of a language

always have a literal meaning; that is, the meaning which is related to each word as part of the vocabulary of the language. In constructing a non-literal meaning, a sentence should be interpreted as having meaning other than its literal one. The reader has to invent a meaning which is plausible for the sentence, relying on a number of factors. The meaning must be capable of being true; it must fit with the rest of the work to have some relation with what is actually said. The processes of working out the literal meaning and the non-literal one of a text are very different from one another. While working out the literal meaning of a text, one decodes the text. On the other hand, working out the non-literal meaning requires making a guess, as well as making use of appropriate pieces of evidence.

According to Durant, et al. (2000), figurative language entails using, amongst other devices, metaphor, simile, and irony. As far as metaphors are concerned, they can be classified according to the types of transference of meaning they employ. A concreative metaphor uses a concrete term to talk about an abstract thing. An animistic metaphor uses a term usually associated with animate things. A humanising metaphor uses a term which is usually associated with human beings to talk about a non-human thing. In addition, metaphors can be divided into extended and mixed metaphors. An extended metaphor is a common literary device referred to in a piece of language where several vehicles based on the same area of thought are used. A mixed metaphor, by contrast, refers to the combination of two or more metaphors the vehicle of which comes from different areas.

Some specialists believe that metaphor is an integral part to be considered when examining literary language. Littlemore (2006), for example, emphasises that metaphoric competence has an important role to play in all areas of communicative competence. It can highly contribute to textual competence, grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, illocutionary competence, and strategic competence. Metaphor is; therefore, relevant to second language learning, teaching and testing, from the very beginning to the most advanced phases of language learning. Cameron and Low (1999) explain that metaphor takes a range of various forms; it is

ubiquitous and has a surprisingly large number of functions-cognitive, social, affective, rhetorical, and interaction-management. It is crucial in relation to acquiring a language, yet, there has been very little research into metaphor in second language acquisition, and very little into teaching control over metaphor.

According to Deignan, et al. (1998), more attention should be given to the teaching of strategies for comprehending and generating metaphors in the second language. Awareness-raising through discussion and comparison of metaphors in the native language and the target language would be a useful approach to helping learners understand and produce metaphors. Low (1988), on the other hand, is of the opinion that metaphor should be given a more important place in language teaching than it has been in the past, for three reasons. Firstly, it is central to the use of language. Secondly, it pervades large parts of the language system. And thirdly, enough is known to make such reconsideration a feasible proposition. It is proposed that a reinterpretation of some of this knowledge in skill terms is a helpful pre-requisite to the design of instructional programs.

Simile is a subdivision of metaphor in the sense that it draws our attention to a similarity between two terms. In metaphor; however, the link between the terms is implied whereas in simile, it is made through an explicit signal. In a simile, there may only be a literal meaning, and the parts of the simile which correspond to vehicle and tenor may both be parts of the literal meaning of the sentence. Irony is a somewhat indirect method of communication; it is a way of using language in which what is said or written is different from what the speaker or writer really means, even though there is a relation between what is said/written and what one means. Two main types of irony are: verbal and situational. Understanding how verbal irony works involves considering the composition of the meanings we convey. A communicated meaning can be analysed into two parts: a proposition and an attitude towards the proposition. Situational irony can be analysed into the two components of proposition and attitude; however, the people who disbelieve the proposition are removed from the text. In other words, the situational irony focuses on the character that does not have the correct attitude of belief (Durant, et al.: 2000).

To sum up, the main elements which we need to examine while dealing with a novel/short story are: character, setting, point of view, theme, plot, and style. Character can be described as the personages of a text, interrelated in different ways, and built up of different traits of personality. This area requires analysing characters in terms of their function within the structure of the narrative text. Setting-time and place-involves the physical surrounding that is described in the narrative text, within which characters live their lives. Point of view-type of narrator-requires examining from whose point of view the story is told and what effect it has on the reader. Theme-text's prominent topic/issue-necessitates careful examination of the text as a whole whilst considering other areas involved. Plot – a series of actions leading to the climax and resolution - entails a chronological arrangement of events whilst considering other contributing elements such as character. Style-writer's manipulation of language including choice of diction; grammatical structures; literary devices; as well as overall organisation, requires deep analysis of the text in terms of language norms and standards-both literary and non. Since literal interpretation of fictional language may sometimes be misleading, it is recommended that learners read between and behind the lines. Some of the major questions which EFL/ESL instructors can raise to help students read between and behind the lines would be: how do literary devices work in the text to contribute to a coherent piece of writing? How is the work an exceptional piece of writing? What are the relationships between various types of symbols and motifs in the text? What are the dominate characteristics of major and minor characters? What kinds of myths and stories are embedded in the text?

2.1.3 Theories and Approaches

Language acquisition is a complicated human process whereby a variety of variables are involved, contributing either positively or negatively. Amongst the most prominent variables is the quality of instruction a practitioner possesses as well as exhibits whilst carrying out tasks and fulfilling requirements. This part of Chapter Two seeks to delineate a number of related theories and approaches within the field of EFL/ESL literature.

A number of specialists recommend employing a stylistics approach in the EFL/ESL classroom. What does a stylistics approach mean and entail? Both Busse and McIntyre (2010: 6) explain that stylistics in its most general sense refers to ‘the study of style in language and how this results from the intra-linguistic features of a text in relation to non-linguistic factors such as author, genre, historical period, and so on.’ According to Leech (2010: 17), stylistics can simply be defined as a ‘way of using language.’ When we examine language style, we talk about the style used in a certain textual domain, corpus for example, or the style of a particular text or an extract from a particular text. Busse (2010) proposes that new historical stylistics should be considered as a combined discipline of ‘linguistic description and literary interpretation’, characterised by being functional and formal. What is more, this inter-discipline offers theoretical explorations along with practical applications. A new historical stylistic analysis of a text presumes an adequate knowledge of the context, the period, and the language in which the text is/was produced. Some context-related information guides our reading of a text, generic knowledge for example.

Depicting stylistics in today’s world, Carter (2010) thinks that it has a significant role to play in relation to methodology in the instruction of literature, and accordingly, in pedagogy developments in both first and second language teaching contexts. Amongst the most prominent developments is focus on ‘textual transformations’ whereby comparative text analysis can be used through rewriting a literary text from different positions, hence translating the text from textual to dramatic, verbal to visual, or spoken to written. Looked at from Prieto’s point of view (2010), a stylistics-inspired pedagogy of both literary and non-literary texts has the advantage of providing learners with genuine chances for enhancement. Speaking of real-life language functions, such genuine chances are of great benefit in relation to enriching/expanding knowledge: creative, analytical as well as critical.

Warner (2010) discusses how pragmatic stylistics-an interdisciplinary branch of literary linguistic study that deals with literary texts as ‘social acts of interactive communication’- can function as a methodological basis for a pedagogical strategy of what can be referred to as

‘contact pragmatics’. According to Warner, contact pragmatics can be defined as the literary work’s relation to both ‘intended’ and ‘non-intended readers’ as well as the convergence of these universes of expectation. Contact pragmatics stresses the relations between linguistic function and form, and as such, can be employed to promote learners’ sensitivity to the use of linguistic choices, enabling them to recognise interpretation in certain social and historical contexts.

Zyngier and Fialho (2010) explain that one of the problems with literature instruction and pedagogical stylistics is their divorce from theories of education. Of great importance for instructors to consider are both the instructional content and the context in which it is conducted; the social conditions in which they teach. Critical pedagogy is likely to help enhance literary awareness in an EFL stylistic context. If learners’ voices can lead to informing effective instructional strategies, both instructors and learners reflect on what is taking place in class, considering what has gone wrong or has not been implemented effectively, as well as how and what action to take instead. What is more, the relationship between instructors and learners has to be based on mutual understanding and respect rather than superior to inferior relations. Thus, there has to be some intimate bonds between both parties. Lastly, the class has to be a healthy environment encouraging autonomy learning of major types: cultural, critical, and emotional.

The role of emotion in education has taken on more and more importance in the field, particularly as it relates to the teaching of literature in English in different cultural contexts, where the experiences recounted in novels, short stories and poems can be far removed from the day to day experiences of students in a context such as that of the United Arab Emirates. Proponents of the importance of emotion in literature testify to an underlying universality of experience we all share, regardless of differences in cultural and social contexts. A number of specialists state that, understanding and managing our emotions has impacted the educational sphere (Dawson, 2007; Brearely 2000). Stressing the significant role emotion plays, Dawson (2007) introduces a reading theory for the teaching of World Englishes Literature. The proposed reading theory emphasises the universality of human emotion, and is based on affective responses to literary works. According to the researcher, happiness; fear; anger; and sadness are

what make up the embodiment of a universality of human emotion, and therefore, should be viewed as the main vehicle for engagement with a literary piece. The theory is referred to as emotion tracking pedagogy, and has been initiated as an approach for the teaching of World Englishes literature. The role that emotion plays in reading is significant; it is the primary resource a reader holds to make text mean. While decoding a text at various levels, a reader strives for the text to mean. Affect plays a primary role in this meaning construction. When discussing the role of affect, attention should be given to the importance of response, affective response in particular.

Believing in its beneficial effects in relation to both language and literature, a number of researchers and practitioners advocate the use of an integrated approach whilst teaching literature. Savvidou (2004), for example, believes that adopting an integrated approach to teaching literature in EFL contexts offers learners the opportunity to develop not only their linguistic and communicative skills, but also their knowledge about the foreign language in all its discourse types. Based on an integrated approach to teaching language and literature, O'Brien (1999) proposes an integrated model. The proposed model integrates linguistic description with interpretation of the text, including the following stages:

Stage one: Preparation and anticipation to elicit learners' real or literary experience of the main theme and context of text.

Stage two: Learners focus on specific content.

Stage three: Preliminary response to the text being discussed.

Stage four: Working at it (1)-Focus is on comprehending the first level of meaning.

Stage five: Working at it (2)-Focus is on analysis of the text at a deeper level exploring how the message is conveyed.

Stage six: Interpretation and personal response to increase understanding, and enable learners to come to their own interpretation of the text.

Considered from a different perspective, Zafeiriadou (2001) presents a pedagogical approach to the teaching of literature based on learner-centredness approach. The overall philosophy of this pedagogic approach can be summarised as follows:

- * Literary texts should appeal to the students' interests, concerns and age.
- * The teaching of literature in an EFL context should aim to elicit the students' responses to the text, and to guide them to a personal discovery.
- * Literary texts should be approached as a resource and a fruitful opportunity for students' education and their personal growth.
- * Literature in the language classroom should be explored in the light of a learner-centred pedagogy, and as such, teaching should focus on students' communicative needs.
- * This global perspective of learner-centredness on language teaching is implemented through the learner-centred curriculum, which is expressed by the view that language education should aim to establish the conditions for autonomous learning.
- * A new role and responsibilities for the teacher should be established. The teacher is not anymore the unquestionable authority in the language classroom.
- * Regarding the implementation of this approach in the language classroom, this is attained through a language-based classroom practice where literary texts are explored as a resource for literary and linguistic development.
- * The exploration of texts comes closer to the students' personal experiences and to what relates to their life through teaching techniques and practices, and is divided into pre-reading, while-reading, and after-reading activities.

With the advent of creative reading approach, Carter and McRae (1999) and Carter and McCarthy (1994), and the heightened importance of reader-response theory, two major principles have been stressed; namely, process and activity. According to the process-based principle, the reader is involved in the reading of literature in the form of a process. It is argued that the reader is more likely to appreciate the literary text as he/she is experiencing it directly as a process. The activity-based principle, on the other hand, signifies the reader's active role in approaching the literary text. Traditional teacher-led literature interpretation classes have no role to play in this respect. Besides the researchers mentioned above, both Giroux and McLaren (1994) believe that the reader-response approach has initiated a decentralisation of the literature classroom as the reader is considered the potential knower. Techniques employed in reader-response, it is argued, help the reader realise his /her active role as a reader, thus becoming more involved.

As Close (1992) explains, literature can be understood in different ways. Adopting a critical approach; therefore, would move students away from searching for the all-important right answer. Getting students to stretch their minds helps them discard the notion that only teachers have the right answer, and that they are too inexperienced or dumb to know the answer. Balabanis (1991) proposes using a learning-experience approach to create a class story. The learning-experience approach follows three basic steps: a common experience is shared in the class, students contribute sentences to develop a class composition based on the experience, and teacher as well as students review the class-produced text together for content and language. Creative writing becomes creative learning experience.

Based on language as well as culture based approaches, Carter and Long (1991) describe three models which can be adopted when dealing with literary texts. These are:

- **The cultural model.** This model requires learners to explore and interpret the social, political, literary, and historical context of a specific text. Using such a model encourages learners to understand different cultures and ideologies in relation to their own.

- **The language-based model.** This model enables learners to access a text in a systematic and methodical way to exemplify specific linguistic features. This model lends itself to the repertoire of strategies used in language teaching.
- **The personal growth model.** This model attempts to bridge the cultural model and the language model by focusing on the particular use of language in a text and placing it in a specific cultural context. Learners are encouraged to express their opinions and make connections between their own personal and cultural experiences and those expressed in a text. Another aspect of this model is that it helps learners develop knowledge of ideas and language through different themes and topics.

Carter and Long (1990) advocate the use of a language-based approach to the teaching of literature, in the sense that it promotes closer integration between language and literature as well as supports this integration through classroom procedures which foster an activity-oriented, student-centred, and language-sensitive approach. The main aim is to assist students to develop independent, interpretive and critical skills by reading through language to the wider meanings literary texts convey.

In his study, El-Sherify (1987) discusses a number of approaches which can be adopted whilst dealing with literature. These are:

- **The analytic approach:** This approach places little focus on information about the work of literature. It is concerned with analysing and interpreting the text. In this approach, lecturing is rarely used.
- **The experiential approach:** Through this approach, the student is exposed to as many literary experiences as possible. Both the form and the content are essential. The students are invited to connect the theme in the work of literature to their personal experiences.

- **The attitudinal approach:** This approach depends on the belief that positive attitudes towards learning a foreign language play a major role in developing reading skills. According to this approach, students are encouraged to select the texts and to express their appreciation to what they have read.

- **The eclectic approach:** No one established approach can always be adopted for all teaching situations. The adoption of any approach/approaches depends on the teaching context itself.

- **The translation approach:** This approach employs many different techniques; namely, using one version of the same text (an English version and the L1 version), using L1 for commentary and critical notes while reading the text only in English, and using one edition in which the English version as well as the L1 version are included.

- **The cultural approach:** According to this approach, literature is treated as a cultural subject. It usually presents literature courses chronologically.

- **The communicative approach:** According to this approach, students practise the four language skills while working on a piece of literature, so that in the long-run, they will acquire adequate communicative competence.

- **The explication de text approach:** This approach is similar to the analytic approach; it dissects the structure of the text.

- **The semantic approach:** In the semantic approach, students are after the meaning in the literary text. Because it is literary, the text usually says something when it is about something else. This double meaning is conveyed through figures of speech.

- **The stylistic approach:** This approach focuses on observing, classifying and characterising the style manipulated in a literary work.

Amongst other researchers who describe literature approaches, Hawthorn (1986) discusses a number of approaches which can be of use when dealing with literature. These are:

- **Textual approaches:** Textual approaches refer to those critical discussions which restrict themselves to information gained from the actual texts of stories, concentrating on the actual words of the stories being studied rather than bringing what is called extrinsic information.
- **Generic approaches:** Generic approaches emphasise that we cannot begin to read or understand a story until we are clear as to what sort of story it is.
- **Biographical approaches:** Upon reading a story that we really like, our natural tendency would usually be to look for other works by the same author. Such an interest in an author may encourage us to know more about him/her, and then to use any insights gained to shed fresh illumination on the writer's work.
- **Psychological approaches:** A psychological approach concerns itself with analysing characters in a story, or analysing the reader in the light of his responses to it. A literary character is thus treated as if he or she were a real person.
- **Reader-oriented approaches:** The reading of a story is a process. To treat a story as an object may obscure the fact that we experience a story as a set of responses over time. Critics talk of different conceptualisations of the reader: the implied reader, the original reader, and the empirical reader. The implied reader is the one suggested by the text itself, most obviously when a narrator addresses comments directly to a reader. The original reader is obviously a sort of fictive construct. It involves an attempt to understand the text in its historical context by asking what a sensitive, well-informed and intelligent reader would have made of the text when it was first published. The empirical reader entails that we, as readers, approach the text from different backgrounds.
- **Feminist approaches:** According to these approaches, women are typically portrayed in relation to men, and as such, are often seen in certain stereotyped ways-as passive, hysterical, emotional, and so on. The goal of this theory is to promote gender equality.

In brief, this part describes a variety of theories and approaches which can be adopted in EFL/ESL contexts. These are: stylistics, emotion tracking pedagogy, integrated approach,

learner-centredness, creative reading approach and reading theory, reader response, language-based approach, critical approach, cultural language-based approach, learning-experience approach, genre-based approach, literary criticism, analytical approach, experiential approach, linguistic approach, eclectic approach, translation approach, communicative approach, explication approach, semantic approach, textual approach, biographical approach, psychological approach, reader-oriented approach, and feminist approach. Some of these approaches are concerned with the instructional aspect, some with the reading and response processes, and some with both. Some of these approaches view literature from a semantic point, some from a critical perspective, some from an analytical aspect, and some from a pedagogical concern. Some are mainly concerned with a student's need as a springboard for any type of instruction, while others are mainly related to the text as a springboard for any type of instruction. Whatever the case is, all these approaches can be adopted in accordance with the teaching situation and requirement. If the main aim is for the learners to acquire critical thinking, then approaches stressing criticism such as the critical approach would be the main one to employ. If the main aim is for learners to develop communication skills, then the communicative approach would be highly appropriate for instructional settings. If the main aim is for learners to raise cultural awareness, then the cultural approach would be the one to adopt, and so on (Al Alami, 2010).

To end with, therefore, all of the approaches outlined above testify to eclecticism when it comes to choosing an appropriate methodological approach to take with a group of students. As Carter (2010:117) says: '...the appropriate method is very much a hands-on approach taking each text on its own merits, using what the reader knows, what the reader is aiming for in his or her learning context, and employing all of the available tools, both in terms of language knowledge and methodological approaches.' Carter goes on to say that such a methodology is process-based, in that it encourages learners to be both active participants and explorers of linguistic and cultural processes. Consequently, the approach taken in the current study has been based very much upon the principles as outlined by Carter above.

2.1.4 Methods and Strategies

Interested in upgrading the quality of teaching/learning literature-novels and short stories in particular- a number of strategies have been proposed by different specialists from all over the world. This part of Chapter Two presents some of these strategies within the context of EFL literature.

In Afzali's view (2010), training students in asking appropriate questions while reading a literary text can be helpful. When students adopt the role of questioners, it is more likely for them to develop the necessary understanding to criticise, analyse and interpret information. The initial questions often lead to additional questions and a deeper understanding. It is through students' questions, not just their answers, that instructors can assess students' understanding of texts. To promote literary reading experience, Peplow (2010) advocates using book groups. The book group context provides reader learners with the chance to work in groups for the purpose of interpreting a literary text. Reader learners share literary experiences. Each group is expected to discuss interpretations that have been arrived at collaboratively. In so doing, reader learners not only take literary readings seriously, but also discuss the text orally, with the effect of promoting literary experiences as well as reading and oral skills.

In preparing a lesson for teaching a literary text, Beach (2004) explains, a teacher needs to consider the kinds of students' interpretive strategies to focus on in his/her instruction. To devise tasks, a teacher needs to define the purpose for each task, relying on what he/she wants students to learn from performing that task. In formulating tasks, a teacher needs to think about the best sequence of tasks, so that each task will prepare students for subsequent ones whilst considering the seven types of intelligences; namely, intra personal, inter personal, logical-mathematical, linguistic, visual/spatial, musical, and bodily-kinesthetic. In devising a literature unit, a teacher will be developing a series of tasks organised around a topic, theme, issue, ideas, text, genre, literary period, and so on. A teacher then needs to formulate his/her objectives in terms of specific interpretive strategies or critical lenses he/she wants students to learn. The following are some examples of objectives based on some interpretive strategies:

- **Emotions.** Students identify the emotions they experience and reasons for associating those emotions with different characters or text worlds.
- **Defining narrative development.** Students define the causal relationship between unfolding story events and predict outcomes.
- **Character actions as social practice.** Students infer characters' social practices based on inferences about patterns in characters' actions.
- **Constructing social and cultural worlds.** Students judge characters' actions in terms of the purposes, roles, rules, beliefs, traditions or history operating in social cultures.
- **Elaborating on connections to other texts.** Students reflect on connections between the current text and similar images, characters, storylines, or themes from previous texts.
- **Positioning/Stances.** Students define how they are being positioned to respond according to certain invited stances.

To help students and teachers read, talk about, and appreciate trade books, Dugan (1997) advocates using transactional literature discussions. Transactional literature discussions are cycles of literary events that include getting ready, reading and thinking aloud, wondering on paper, talking, thinking on paper, and looking back. According to Richards (1993), young and at-risk students become more interested and involved in reading stories, when they are provided with opportunities to respond personally to story characters. A strategy which the researcher finds to be of use and effectiveness is to create and adopt games that encourage students to share their opinions and thoughts about story characters, using information in stories to substantiate and support their ideas.

To end with, an experienced instructor's knowledge and skill regarding strategies and methods of instruction may be compared to a technician's toolbox. The instructor's tools are teaching methods. Just as the technician uses some tools more than others, the instructor will employ some methods and strategies more often than others. As is the case with the technician, there are times when a less used tool will be the exact tool needed for a particular situation. The instructor's success, the researcher believes, is determined to a large degree by the ability to

organise material as well as select and utilise a teaching method/strategy appropriate to a particular teaching situation. The variety of methods and strategies proposed within the field of literature instruction should provide language instructors with an insight into what tool is needed for a particular situation and why a particular tool is needed rather than any others.

2.1.5 Activities and Procedures

Interested in upgrading the quality of teaching/learning literature-novels and short stories in particular-a number of activities as well as procedures have been proposed by different specialists from all over the world. This part of Chapter Two describes a number of related activities and procedures, within the context of the current research.

Believing in its effectiveness, Bullard (2010) proposes that, in a literature circle, each class can be divided into even groups. Each member of a single group reads the same book, but each group reads a different book. Once a group has finished with their book, they have to discuss it as a group, in class. Each student should be given a specific role in such discussions, focusing for example on character, vocabulary, and so on. Then, they need to exchange sets with another group. Omara (2009) is of the opinion that reading of literary texts is eventually expected to create active language learners in general and good learner writers in particular. To help achieve this aim, Omara proposes performing a number of purposeful activities in class. These are: sequencing the story, mapping the story, changing the story-using the ideas and structures to create a new story, guided writing activities, shared writing activities, and retelling the story from a different point of view.

According to Gajdusek (2007), literature is not referential; that is, a literary text is not read to refer to a physical fact. Instead, a literary text is representational, representing a self-contained reality that comes into being when the author writes it. It detaches language from its concrete, physical, and social setting. To empower readers, a teacher needs to adopt the following sequence whilst reading and discussing literary texts in class: pre-reading, initial reading to

establish surface-level comprehension, interpreting and finding meaning through analysing character; articulating theme; clarifying structure and exploring linguistic features, and carrying out extended activities to enter “the world of the text”. To ensure effective instruction, Gajdusek proposes the following principles:

- Make the reading process conscious.
- Teach for empowerment.
- Be disciplined and respect the teaching sequence.
- Build schema by providing information that is essential for comprehension.
- Use questions and invite readers to respond.
- Spend enough time.

Beach (2004) states that in teaching fictional texts, a teacher should create web sites based on similar topics, themes, issues, or genre features. While analysing the storylines in fantasy, science fiction, or adventure literature, students should examine the use of certain storylines. In devising mythology, fantasy, or science-fiction units, students should be encouraged to learn to define their own connections between texts in an inductive, bottom-up manner. In addition, students should be helped to suspend disbelief. Reading fantasy and science fiction requires students to suspend their disbelief, so that they can accept an alternative version of reality. Much of the contemporary science fiction, Beach believes, addresses current social, political, technological, or ecological problems. To help students understand these problems, it would be useful to collaborate with a social studies/science teacher. In studying heroes and anti-heroes, for example, students need to study the topic of heroes and anti-heroes, examining characteristics of what contributes to being a hero in different historical periods and cultures. Moreover, a teacher should encourage his/her students to study the uses of double-voiced language that represent a variety of speech worlds. In so doing, students can study how different narrative versions of myths, fables, or fairy tales reflect differences in cultural models. For the study of characters to be effective, Beach stresses that a teacher should assess the degree to which main and minor characters are developed through the use of subjective first person versus third person point of view, dialogue, descriptions by other characters, and use of setting/cultural contexts. When it

comes to genre study, Beach suggests that a teacher should select one literature genre: adventure, romance, fantasy, and so on. and research authors who write within this genre, describing the specific features of this genre in terms of prototypical character types/roles, settings, storylines, and themes /value assumptions.

Ali (1999) recommends the use of literature circles. In a literature circle, Ali explains, students select their own literary materials; small temporary groups are formed based on book choice and meet on a regular schedule to discuss their reading with the aim of discussing related topics. In newly formed groups, students play a rotating assortment of task roles. The teacher's role is that of a facilitator. Evaluation is based on a teacher's observation as well as a student's self-evaluation. Upon finishing books, students share their readings, and new groups are formed around new reading choices. If applied appropriately, literature circles can bring together, the cognitive and social aspects of learning to read and write.

Interested in promoting writing skills through fiction, Morris (1999) recommends the use of story pops to different levels of EFL learners. Through this activity, students create a story that includes a character, plot, setting, and detail, describing these elements according to their developmental level in writing. The materials required are: craft sticks, red and green food colouring, and permanent felt tip pen. As far as implementation is concerned, a teacher is advised to make three columns on the board or on chart paper headed: character; problem; setting, and then to soak some sticks in a red and green food colour dye, and copy character ideas on the plain sticks, setting ideas on green sticks and problem ideas on red sticks. When students are ready to write, they pull one stick of each colour and use those elements to create a story. Added detail will depend on the age of the student and discretion.

Both Boyle and Peregoy (1993) recommend using literature response groups and literature response journals. Literature response groups refer to discussing the work of published authors.

Each group may consist of three to six students who have read a piece of literature and are ready to discuss together. Teachers can provide groups with response sheets to scaffold their initial response to literature. Literature response journals, on the other hand, are personal notebooks in which students write informal comments about the stories they are reading, including their feelings and reactions to characters; setting; plot; and other aspects of the story. Students are usually allowed to decide how often they will write in their response journals. To help students get started in their response journals, it is useful to provide sample questions which they can consider while reading.

According to Hansson (1992), readers of literature are no longer implied readers, ideal readers, or other kinds of imagined readers; instead, they are real readers. This recognition of the reader's role has major consequences for the theory, research, and teaching of literature. There is thus a need to include the reader's role when the history of literature is written, a need to develop a partly new language for the description of the meanings and significances of literary works, and a need to develop new models for the analysis and evaluation of literature.

In Martin's view (1992), when teaching a course of literature; there are a number of points which are worth considering. Firstly, experience of literature is more important than information about literature. Secondly, our teaching of literature should lead to life-long reading of literature rather than life-long avoidance of literature. Thirdly, our teaching of literature should be about relations between texts and readers rather than between extracted meaning and readers. A technique which may serve to keep the experience of the text present in the discussion is to begin the discussion with a text rendering. Another way to focus on the experience of the text is to make the reading of the text the object of study instead of the text itself. A third way is using a literature portfolio on selected texts. Fourthly, talk in the classroom should not be dominated by the teacher; students should listen to each other. Lastly, students should support each other rather than compete with each other.

Believing that it can be of use whilst dealing with a literary text, Keegan and Shrake (1991) suggest a think-aloud activity. The think-aloud activity helps readers clarify their thinking by teaching them to verbalise their thoughts as they read. Techniques which are important to incorporate into meaningful discussions include attending to topic, participating actively, asking questions for clarification, piggybacking off others' comments, learning to disagree constructively, giving all students opportunities for input, supporting opinions with evidence, and practicing classroom etiquette. Abou-Seif (1989) thinks that literature plays a significant role in teaching composition writing for students of English as a foreign language, both as a model and as a subject matter. The following activities, Abou-Seif believes, can be implemented when integrating literature into the teaching of writing to promote both literary and writing skills:

- Before the students read the text, the teacher can present a theme derived from the text, and have students write about this theme from their own personal experience.
- After the students have read the text, they may be asked to write answers to comprehension questions about it.
- After the work has been read, discussed, and written about in shorter assignments, the formal composition can be assigned.
- Extension activities can be implemented, including the following: adding to the work, changing the work, re-writing a short story or part of it, and re-writing a scene by changing the outcome of the work.

To end with, works of literature are created by writers with an intent, which is not always clear to the reader, but structure and form hold essential keys to unlocking meaning and understanding, for example, imagery and tone are essentials in discovering. The instructor's first aim of teaching literature should be teaching students to be flexible as readers; not to see texts as mirrors of themselves, nor to see them all as embodiments of formal critical abstractions, but rather to recognise the particular qualities of the text in front of them. For the instructor's work to be functioning effectively, using a variety of appropriate activities and procedures would be

supportive. How we judge appropriateness is largely dependent on the instructional aims, learner's needs, time allotted, physical surrounding, and learning pace.

2.1.6 Related Studies

This part of Chapter Two presents a number of studies which have been carried out within the field of EFL/ESL literature contexts. The aim of including such studies is for the researcher to base the current study on what has been carried out so far. Including a large number of related studies, therefore, is mainly for enrichment purposes.

Concerned with the notion of awareness and how to promote it, Zyngier and Fialho (2010) conducted a programme including a number of literary awareness workshops. The workshops aimed to investigate what it meant to become aware. Awareness was seen to have three levels: absence of awareness, signal of awareness, and presence of awareness. Absence of awareness refers to students excluding their responses to describing the text, class activities, and/or the teacher's explanations and/ or their classmates' responses. Signal of awareness refers to students acquiring the abilities of self-reflecting on texts in hand, their learning experiences, and so on. Presence of awareness refers to students possessing the abilities to create relations of cause and sequence comparisons which were not stated directly in the text, to formulate concepts, as well as to transform the acquired knowledge, apply it to new situations, and respond to the texts being discussed, as appropriate.

Chen (2006) conducted a project with the aim of utilising children's literature to enhance EFL university students' narrative thinking as well as their writing ability, through a task of story reading and writing. The project was conducted in a required composition course for English majors. The task of reading and writing stories in the project was one of the course requirements. The task was arranged to develop students' narrative thinking, and inspire their creativity as well as imagination. It lasted for four weeks: the first week focused on reading stories; the second,

drafting stories; the third, peer review and revising; and the fourth, conference and revising. To help students perceive the characters' voice, the researcher asked the participants to read out the dialogue to their peers, or role-play the characters. The project has the following implications for today's practitioners. Firstly, sharing and publication with the assistance of computer technology can empower student writers. Secondly, children's literature, if carefully chosen, can be a useful resource for integrative EFL learning. Thirdly, time; support; and practice can provide scaffolds for low self-esteemed writers. Fourthly, narrative genre knowledge gained through explicit instruction can promote students' narrative thinking, as well as facilitate the task of reading and writing stories.

Exploring ways of organising literary instruction, Herrero (2006) carried out a study with the aim of raising the skill levels of low-achieving, language minority students. The study involved two teachers and twenty-two students. The literary activities were organised around culturally relevant literature and patterns of discourse. The students were provided with tasks of researching, collecting and committing community-generated narratives to memory. In the classroom, they were asked to present, critique, edit, and revise the narratives. The findings revealed that community-generated oral narratives were useful in helping the students engage in critical literary discussion. In addition, the students' writing in both their first language and English, was both more elaborate and richer when they were allowed to draw upon those patterns of language used in their everyday interactions.

Interested in differences between first and second languages, Yusun (2005) investigated how linguistically determined Korean discourse strategies for establishing textual cohesion and marking written register in the Korean language, could help explain the differences between the native English speakers' and the Korean English learners' written narratives in English. The findings indicated that specifically Korean linguistic strategies were evident in the Korean English learners' English narrative discourse rather than the preferred discourse style of the target knowledge. In addition, the Korean English learners' English stories tended to diverge

from their Korean stories in the direction of the target language norms. The study holds important implications for L2 writing pedagogy and L2 training in discourse production.

Kim (2004) explored how literature circles worked in the context of second language instruction. The study the researcher conducted scrutinised classroom interactions in an ESL class, where nine adult learners read fictional pieces and then discussed the readings. Based on the reader-response theory, the study examined the characteristics of student interactions with the literary work and with other group members. Analysis of the discourse of the classroom discussions revealed that the subjects developed diverse, insightful responses in relation to comprehension of the language of the text, cross cultural themes, personal connections, interpretation, and literary evaluation. The findings suggested that literature discussions helped the subjects intellectually and emotionally in engaging with the literary work, offering a chance for enjoyable L2 reading experience. Moreover, the discussions contributed to developing L2 communicative competence by providing chances for producing extended output.

Interested in dialogue journal writing, Kim (2003) examined its implementation in a South Korean literature-based EFL classroom. The study was mainly concerned with what would happen in terms of the learners' language development and literary responses, when a teacher responded to the students through dialogue journal writing in an EFL literature based classroom. Data collection included interviews, a survey, analysis of written samples from dialogue journals, teachers' journal and field notes, along with other classroom documents. Data analysis showed that subjects viewed dialogue journal writing as a good way to improve English writing skills. In addition, dialogue journal writing served as a way of maintaining ongoing communication between the teacher and each subject, and of extending subjects' experience of the world through responding to the teacher as well as the literary texts they read. With the impact of dialogue journal writing through a literature based approach-as proposed by the study-the researcher recommended further implementation of dialogue journal writing.

Coming to know that both L1 and L2 teachers had been using related pedagogical procedures without realising that they all had been encountering similar challenges, the PEDSIG group of the Poetics and Linguistics Association determined to add a theoretical perspective to research carried out in stylistics classrooms (Clark and Zyngier: 2003). The group explained that the main aim of stylistics-when it came to a classroom setting- was to raise learners' awareness of language use within selected texts. In addition, what characterised pedagogical stylistics were the classroom activities leading to effective interaction between the student (reader) and the text. Based on a pilot study, the findings indicated that the process of enhancing learners' linguistic sensibilities had to give greater emphasis to the text as action. The implication of the study for today's practitioners is that, they have to emphasise the mental processing which is an integral part of reading and interpretation, as well as explain how the elements: linguistic, cognitive, and pragmatic, act within quite identified cultural and social contexts.

Lemmon (1999) carried out a study investigating the use of dialogue journals in senior high schools as a central feature of literature studies. The study was conducted to shed light on the nature of secondary students' responses to literary texts, the degree of development dialogue journals showed in secondary students' responses to literary texts, and what dimensions that development could reveal. The responses to the literary texts-both early and late- were separated into thematic units and then analysed in terms of the guidelines outlined in the resource book, which the researcher provided. It was found that students' responses generally followed the categories outlined in the handbook; personal reaction was the most common as well as the most diverse of all the responses. In addition, students rarely used categories of response such as asking questions of the text or using quotes. Moreover, the average length-in words-of students' responses increased over the period of the study. Students seemed to become more accustomed to using literary terminology as an integral part of their responses. They, however, did not seem to judge the merits of a literary text until they had had a chance to the meaning of the literary work. The conclusion drawn was that, while the dialogue journal might be of use in senior high school English studies, there ought to be established criteria to determine the value of journals.

Fuller (1998) conducted a study, aiming to explore the nature of students' cognitive operations as they read narratives for three purposes; namely, to report, to explore, and to create. The results suggested that; firstly, the cognitive operations of translating story schemata into text, planning, hypothesising while planning, recalling, questioning, and linking varied in accordance with changes in the purpose of the writing assignment. Secondly, students orchestrated a "complex array of cognitive operations" when writing a narrative piece. Thirdly, while writing imaginative narratives, students used a greater number and richer array of cognitive operations than while writing narratives to report and explore. Based on the study, it would be essential for teachers to view narratives as a dynamic tool for thought rather than as a static product.

In an attempt to initiate novel ideas, Gonzales (1998) conducted a whole language project as a set of classroom procedures. The project consisted of the following steps: reading narratives, filling in a story grammar map for each story, retelling each story, giving and receiving feedback, writing summaries of each story, writing a big book in pairs, presenting the big book to the whole class, and completing self-evaluation and reflection reports. Based on the results, the researcher recommended the use of the whole language project as an effective teaching procedure.

Chamberlain (1997) conducted a study to test the hypothesis that students enrolled in an oral-proficiency focused course, who received specific instruction in reading literary texts from the onset of foreign language study, would be more sophisticated readers and language learners than those students who followed the typical oral-proficiency course. The comprehensive results of the study indicated that pilot-group students, who engaged in extensive reading practice of literary texts throughout the semester, were better readers and language learners than control-group students were.

Ferree (1996) implemented a study, the purpose of which was to examine from multiple perspectives, current literature teaching in selected middle-grade classrooms in England and the United States. Participants were four middle-grade teachers and their students in two classrooms in England and two in the United States. Data collection mainly focused on the influences that guided the teachers' teaching, the subject matter and the methods the teachers used, the teachers' aims in literature teaching, and the students' perception of the teaching. Based on conclusions, the study suggested the existence of similarities and differences between classrooms and countries. For example, the teachers' selections of literature were related to personal preferences, the interests of students, along with the external policy guidelines. Besides, certain aspects of teaching were cross-national such as collaborative learning, while others were specific to each country, the nature of assessment for example.

Ackerman (1995) examined how teenage readers interacted with young adult novels. In the study the researcher implemented, the original responses of teenage readers were described while reading three different young adult novels. The teenagers described their reading experiences to other students. After discussing the literature in groups, the subjects were involved in an individual teacher-student conference about each novel they had read. The data collection procedure comprised of three parts for each of the three novels: the individual student reading journals, the group discussions, and the teacher-student conferences. The findings indicated that teenagers personally identified with literature that was related to their interests and needs. Furthermore, teenagers had a personal identification with adolescent literature, paramount engagement response, response in the aesthetic stance, development of self, and sense of community.

Involving a context of literature discussion groups, Dashiell (1995) carried out a study examining adolescent girls' literary responses to modern high fantasy with strong female protagonists. A working model of engagement with characters was included, comprising the aspects of role models, choices, and what ifs. While the girls exhibited a range of literary responses to the

novels, most responses reflected their engagement with the characters on a personal level which centred on issues of self. The findings suggested that adolescent readers be given the opportunity to read stories with strong female protagonists as well as compare characters to each other and with themselves, before arriving at any final conclusions.

Agee (1994) conducted a qualitative meta-case study focusing on students of literature who were studying to become teachers of literature. The researcher followed two undergraduate students, an African-American female and a Euro-American female, through a nine-month secondary pre-service English education programme at a large university, investigating their family histories, experiences with literature at school and at home, responses to literature, and perspectives on the pre-service experience. Component cases on the pre-service professors along with their courses offered important contextual information on the socialisation into teaching. The researcher found that personal history and prior experiences with literature, strongly influenced participants' perspectives on their pre-service education courses and their selections of and approaches to literature in their pre-service classrooms. The culture of the field centre schools, issues of power in relationship with cooperating teachers, and concerns about control and authority had crucial effects on these pre-service teachers' field experiences and their approaches to literature in their respective high school classrooms.

To integrate knowledge of linguistic and literary theory through classroom activities as well as theoretical description, Zyngier (1994) explored the extent to which awareness of linguistic construction would prepare students for producing literary interpretations. The role of literary awareness in relation to linguistics and stylistics was described and emphasised. Stylistic patterns were suggested as an integral component of a course on literary awareness in an EFL context. A pilot project was implemented in a Brazilian university, taking into consideration the responses of EFL readers. The proposed course emphasised the ability to discriminate formal stylistic features, highlighting the place of creative writing. The results of the pilot project indicated that a

stylistics-based course on literary awareness could be an effective means for teaching literary skills to university students of English as a foreign language.

To end with, the aforementioned studies are of use to practitioners and researchers in the sense that they touch upon reality *on-site*, enquiring, investigating, and proposing. In relation to the current research, such studies add a touch of enrichment, expanding the researcher's knowledge of what has been conducted within the related areas. We, practitioners and researchers, should seek to resort to what previous researchers have implemented and concluded, for guidance and enlightenment purposes.

2.1.7 Entering the World of Fiction: Concluding Word

Briefly speaking, literature is representational rather than referential, requiring negotiation of meaning to make sense of language by referring it to other parts of the text in which it occurs. Figurative uses of language are ones in which what is said is different from what is meant. The relationship between what is said and what is meant cannot be arbitrary. It is differences in the type of relationship between what is said and what is intended that give rise to the different kinds of figures of speech.

The variety of approaches, theories, and activities proposed within the field of literature teaching should provide language instructors with an insight into what tool is needed for a particular situation and why a particular tool is needed rather than any others. This, of course, makes demands of teachers' confidence and ability in being able to select the most appropriate methods from the range available, to take account of their students' background and knowledge, as well as to adapt and review teaching in the light of experience; a rather daunting task, given contemporary society's predilection for prescribed curricula in English, as everything else is, in today's world (Al Alami and Clark).

Speaking of the current research, it is the researcher's aim to focus on approaches intended to equip learners with a repertoire of critical thinking skills as well as adequate communicative competence. In the researcher's opinion, criticism within the field of language/literature teaching is like filters through which ideas about culture, art and society are argued about. Literature ought to be linked to a criticism of life, and literary works should be criticised according to the author and society's moral position. What is more, since the ultimate purpose for learning English in EFL/ESL contexts is to promote communication skills, employing a communicative teaching-based approach would be highly recommended. With these two issues in mind, the researcher has initiated her own approach to the field of second/foreign language acquisition. The approach the researcher has initiated: communicative critical language competence, is based upon a number of related approaches within the field. These are: stylistics, literary criticism, communicative approach, attitudinal approach, dialectical approach, multiple intelligences-based approach, process-writing approach, eclectic approach, and student-centredness approach. Seen from the researcher's point of view, a combination of the aforementioned approaches will yield in fruitful results: mastery of EFL/ESL skills, acquisition of communication competencies in English, as well as enrichment of critical thinking skills. For details about the communicative critical language competence, refer to Chapter Three.

To end with, it would be appropriate to view literature, novels and short stories in particular, as an effective device which university instructors of English can utilise, to enhance not only language skills, but also cultural awareness and critical thinking. The skills learnt through literary experience associated with, for example, critical judgement, can impact upon not only students' own subsequent engagement with the English language, but also upon their general critical thinking skills. To meet challenges; satisfy demands; as well as fulfil curriculum requirements, the selection process of appropriate literary texts, the adoption of effective approaches and strategies, and the implementation of purposeful curriculum, all contribute to an exciting and productive learning experience for EFL/ESL learners to gain.

2.2.1 Reading Skills: Introductory Word

The current research recognises the profound value of reading to both English language development and to higher education in general. This part of Chapter Two is allotted to discussing reading skills in terms of EFL/ESL contexts. The points to be discussed are: what reading comprehension entails, points to consider in relation to reading instruction, theories and approaches, activities and procedures, as well as related studies. The main aim of including this part is to highlight a number of essential points in relation to EFL/ESL reading contexts, for enlightenment, enrichment and guidance purposes.

2.2.2 What does Reading Comprehension Entail?

What is it that reading comprehension entails? The process of reading, according to Dawson (2007) and Durant, et al (2000), goes beyond literacy skills, syntax, grammar, and semantics. Our ability to cognitively and culturally process what we read is equally important. Examining a reading text without its cultural and social content will not guarantee adequate comprehension of the text being dealt with. For effective reading to take place, two complementary dimensions are required: making sense of various aspects of the language, and continually constructing possible models of the related historical and social context.

Reading fluency, Blevins (2005) believes, is an essential component of any language curriculum. Emphasising both speed and accuracy with which students identify letters, sound-letter correspondence, and words can help students in promoting their English reading skills. Six ways are proposed to build fluency; namely, modelling reading, providing direct instruction and appropriate feedback, doing repeated readings of one text, providing reader supports, using phrase-cues texts, and engaging in wide reading.

When readers approach a text, Langer explains (1990), there are four broad stances they adopt to carry them through the experience. These are: being out and stepping into an envisionment where readers make the connections necessary to begin to construct an envisionment, being in

and moving through an envisionment where readers use their envisionment to inform their growing understandings, stepping back and rethinking what they know where readers use their envisionment to reflect on personal experiences, ideas, or knowledge, and stepping out and objectifying the experience where readers look critically at their envisionment, their reading experiences, and the text itself. Across the reading of an entire piece, reading is an act of becoming where readers use their past experiences, the text, and their local envisionment in different ways whilst moving in and out of the various stances as their understandings grow and develop.

According to Goodman (1988), reading is a psycholinguistic process beginning with a linguistic surface representation encoded by a sender-writer, and ending with meaning constructed by a receiver-reader. The approach proficient readers adopt is efficient in that they continually construct a meaning which they can assimilate, bearing some agreement with the original meaning. Maintaining focus on the construction of meaning whilst manipulating a variety of strategies for reducing redundancy, a proficient reader uses the least amount of effort and time to ensure effectiveness.

Ward (1980) argues that reading is perhaps the most difficult language skill to teach, for it involves so many different elements: mechanical eye movement, grammar, vocabulary, phonetics, spelling, and intellectual comprehension. It is also one of the most fruitful skills to teach; the majority of students of English as a foreign language may never speak much English, but most of them will have to read English in order to complete their university studies.

In conclusion, Reading comprehension is essentially an active process, whereby a student is expected to understand the reading text to achieve some particular purpose. To achieve this understanding, a student has to be involved both cognitively and affectively in the reading process.

2.2.3 Points to Consider

As earlier stated, reading comprehension is an active process whereby a variety of variables may be involved at a time. Some of these variables may be within control while some may not. What are some of the points which EFL/ESL practitioners need to consider for the instruction of reading to be effective? This part seeks to present some convincing answers to this issue.

Both Salaz and Smallpeice (2010) stress a number of points for instructors to consider. Firstly: ensuring students' attention and interest. Secondly: providing the *right* environment by creating a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere. Thirdly: providing students with what they want to read even if they are still unaware of it would be a good idea. Fourthly: appealing to students' technological savvy by asking them to make podcasts about their reading, for example. Fifthly: encouraging a spirit of competition through running purposeful competitions involving as many students as possible.

Fernandez Toledo (2005) emphasises the need to include the notion of genre in schema research, research on formal schemata in particular. The notion of genre brings up a pragmatic dimension. A distinction should be made between textual and generic typology. Comprehension of textual macrostructure does not necessarily indicate comprehension along essential dimensions such as the text's communicative function. As far as reading skills and curricula are concerned, Jeffries and Mikulecky (2005) emphasise the importance of including the following reading skills: previewing and making predictions, scanning, making inferences, building vocabulary, looking for the topic, understanding paragraphs, finding patterns of organisation, skimming, and summarising. Considered from Obeidat's point of view (2002), reading tasks in the EFL classroom should ultimately enable students to read authentic materials. Thus, we need to ensure that both the task and the materials are as authentic as possible, while pursuing the reading skills and sub-skills we wish our students to develop.

One of the primary goals of second language reading instruction, Janzen and Stoller (1998) state, should be to help students develop as more strategic readers. Integrating strategic reading

instruction into ESL classrooms requires advance planning on the part of the teacher. Four steps are important in this planning process. The first step involves the choice of a text at an appropriate level of difficulty for the students. The second step requires the selection of strategies for instruction; a choice that is dependent on a variety of factors including student characteristics, the demands of the text, and the goals of reading instruction. The third step in planning necessitates the structuring of lessons and the writing of scripts to guide the presentation of strategies. And the last step involves the adaptation of instruction in response to student needs.

To sum up, for the instruction of reading to be carried out efficiently, practitioners need to ensure a number of factors. This part discusses some of these essential points for pedagogical purposes. These are: physical surroundings, students' needs, students' background knowledge, students' language proficiency, logical sequence of tasks beginning with the easiest and ending with the most demanding, topic choice, language input, interest factor, text and task authenticity, and strategic reading.

2.2.4 Theories and Approaches

Reading in a second/foreign language is a demanding process whereby a variety of variables are involved, contributing either positively or negatively. Amongst the most prominent variables is the quality of instruction a practitioner possesses as well as exhibits whilst performing tasks and meeting needs. This part of Chapter Two seeks to delineate a number of reading theories and approaches within the field of EFL/ESL.

To begin with, Gajdusek (2007) discusses two theories of reading in EFL contexts: the receptive paradigm and the interactive paradigm. The receptive paradigm comprises of three areas: a text containing meaning, a reader seeking meaning, and the meaning as resided in the text. Similarly, the interactive paradigm comprises of the components of text, reader, and meaning. However, the approach is totally different in that a reader is expected to have purpose, expectations, as well

as experience and knowledge to handle a text. The text is seen as a graphic representation of a meaning, which is the result of active interaction between a text and a reader, and as such, becomes part of the reader's knowledge influencing subsequent interaction.

Some specialists discuss the role of genre approaches in relation to reading. Muncie (2002) for example, explains that genre approaches focus on the reader as well as the conventions that a piece of writing needs to follow, to be successfully accepted by its readership. Generally speaking, the philosophy of genre approaches is that all texts conform to certain conventions. If students are to be successful in joining a particular English-language discourse community, they will need to be able to produce texts which fulfil the expectations of the readers in terms of content, grammar, and organisation. Hicks (1997), on the other hand, mentions that genre instruction has emerged as both a set of pedagogies rooted in linguistic theory and a critical response to some of the tenets of whole language instruction. Shedding light on the history of genre approaches, Hyon (1996) explains that genre theories have developed in three research areas; English for specific purposes, North American New Rhetoric Studies, and Australian systematic functional linguistics.

Concerned with schema theory application in relation to reading, Nelson (1995) explains that reading is an interactive process involving what the reader already knows-the reader's background knowledge- and the words in the text. It is necessary, therefore, to reconsider the reading passages we ask students to read. Reading is not just a matter of decoding the words. The content of the reading needs to be placed in a data structure in the brain. Kern (1991) also discusses the nature of reading comprehension, relying on schema theory research. According to Kern, readers must in some way be able to relate the written symbols they perceive to their past experience and world knowledge if they are to bring meaning to a text. The schema theory represents one attempt to explain how a reader's knowledge interacts with a text to produce meaning. Basic to this theory is the idea that a given text does not contain meaning per se, but rather guides the reader in applying his own prior knowledge to reconstruct the author's intended meaning. This prior knowledge is organised into networks of schemata. Mention of Nelson

(1995) and Kern (1991) should not be made without mention of Horiba (1990), who also highlights the role schema theory plays in relation to reading comprehension. In Horiba's view, the more familiar a text is, the more likely it will be remembered. ESL students will better comprehend and recall when they have access to schema relevant to the content.

Hill (1985) describes some reading approaches which can be of use in the EFL/ESL classroom; namely, holistic approaches, Individualised reading approaches, and targeted competency approaches. Holistic approaches emphasise that learning and application of reading processes are most effective when derived from successful, purposeful, and realistic print message situations. Individualised reading approaches involve the collection of a library of reading materials of varied readability, topic, and genre; student self-selection of materials to read; and individual teacher-student conferences once or twice a week, to resolve difficulties and monitor progress. Targeted competency approaches are related to the use of accompanying instructional software and hardware, which can be appropriate in terms of individual student's language abilities.

In summary, this part portrays a number of theories and approaches which can be employed when teaching EFL/ESL reading skills. The aforementioned approaches and theories are: receptive and interactive paradigms, genre approach, schema theory, holistic approach, individualised reading approach, and targeted competency approach. It is left to the instructor to select what suits whom and how, in the light of given circumstances. If the instructor's aim, for example, is to raise students' awareness of text type as a focal point of comprehending and dealing with a text, then the genre approach would be helpful. If the instructor's aim is to base his/her initial teaching of the text on what students already know as well as on the theoretical background of the reading text, then the schema theory would be beneficial, and so on.

2.2.5 Strategies, Activities, and Procedures

Interested in upgrading the quality of teaching EFL/ESL reading skills, a variety of strategies, activities as well as procedures have been proposed by different reading specialists from all over

the world. This part of Chapter Two delineates a number of related strategies, activities and procedures, within the context of the current research.

Carter (2010) stresses the effectiveness of transformative text analysis. Based on a methodology of active reading, transformative analysis is derived from the assumption that close reading may result in a more passive reception of the text. Instead, putting the reader into a more active role by forcing the text into a different generic or linguistic design, will lead to more active engagement with the text. If textual organisation and language features are drawn to readers' attention, noticing is more likely to take place. The process here requires that readers compare an original text with one that has been rewritten, transformed and reregistered. Rewriting involves using a variety of linguistic choices; transformation refers to the manipulation of some key design feature of the text; and re-registration requires a distinctive shift to ensure that the same content is expressed in another genre. To promote reading skills, Seelleur (2010) advocates setting an English reading club. According to Seelleur, the main purposes for setting an English reading club can be summed up as follows: setting up an area to support the development of English skills, providing a study area for students with supported learning, helping students develop the skills needed for independent learning, developing a reading habit, and complementing the curriculum.

Why do we want learners to read extensively? According to Hattle (2010), learners who read extensively increase their vocabulary and gain intrinsic understanding of grammatical structures. They also have the advantage of becoming autonomous learners. Opening a new world of culture, learners enjoy extensive reading as a useful habit. Three ideas for encouraging EFL learners to read extensively are: help learners set off on the right foot, foster learners' success, and exploit the learning context. Prowse (2010) argues that, for instructors to find their students a way for improving their English effectively whilst saving some time and effort in class, extensive reading has to be stressed. Extensive reading results in successful reading through time. Successful reading makes successful readers; the more students read the better they get at it. The better they are at it, the more they read and the more they will be able to improve their

language proficiency. Clarity (2007) also advocates adopting an extensive reading programme. According to Clarity, extensive reading is reading a number of texts over a sustained period; reading for pleasure at a comfortable level for the student with the main goal being that of creating fluency as well as arousing motivation. A proposed implementation plan comprises of six main steps: orientation to extensive reading, finding student level, teacher/student/text interaction, reading in class, ensuring purposeful reading, and offering adequate support.

Considered from a different perspective, Burch and Gebril (2000) support the idea that using a shared reading text achieves many benefits for students such as allowing them to become familiar with language patterns, allowing opportunities for concept and language expansion, and increasing motivation. A suggested sequence which can be adopted is: deciding on the focus, selecting an appropriate book, setting the scene, reading the text, re-reading the text, and interacting with the text by extending the experience, enriching the language, investigating the patterns related to vocabulary and grammar, and exploring further.

The use of reading journals, Martinez (1995) argues, provides a means for students to actively engage in second-language text and reflect on it. Students should be encouraged to move beyond the simple decoding of words by calling on their native-language reading skills to create meaning and enter into an interactive dialogue with the text. A suggested form for the journal consists of three sections covering expectations prior to reading, reactions during reading, and thoughts after completing the text. Entries can be written in the native or second language, depending on the proficiency of the students, with equally valuable results. Feedback from journal entries can provide important insights into both the students' progress and the effectiveness of the instructional material.

To end with, this part of Chapter Two presents a number of strategies, activities and procedures which practitioners can employ and consider in an EFL/ESL reading context. These are: transformative text analysis, English reading club, extensive reading, shared reading, reading

journals, and reading-in-depth-procedure. All these strategies, activities and procedures-if implemented when needed and as appropriate-are expected to ensure better outputs. If the instructor's aim is for learners to improve their reading skills-partly through their own readings outside the classroom, then extensive reading activities would be helpful. If the instructor's aim is to promote learners' reading skills-partly through cooperative work in class, then the shared reading text would be of great support, and so on.

2.2.6 Related Studies

This part of Chapter Two presents a number of studies which have been carried out within the field of EFL/ESL reading contexts. The aim of including such studies is for the researcher to base the current study on what has already been concluded and recommended by other researchers within the same field. Including a large number of related studies is mainly intended for enlightenment purposes.

Atkinson (2010), in cooperation with her colleagues at Zayed University, carried out a project with the main aim of enhancing students' vocabulary and reading. Believing in the power of vocabulary acquisition in relation to language skills in general and reading skills in particular, a team of instructors assembled three hundred lessons for students to take home to work their way through the British National Corpus: first three thousand words. The researcher then set the ZUVL (Zayed University Vocabulary lists) lessons for homework, asking students to complete five lessons weekly which totalled fifty words. At the end of each week, the researcher tested the words. The researcher also exposed the participating students to graded readers which contained words that they had learnt that week. Despite the project's short duration, students who went on to the next English language level emphasised that they found reading much easier than they had found it in the past.

Seeking to create awareness of reading on the part of EFL learners studying at a high school in Saudi Arabia, Khan (2010) introduced a complete programme of reading, followed by a

complete reading methodology which was initiated and implemented by the researcher herself. To improve the process of learning for the students, the researcher created a methodology including four stages. The first two stages were: read, read-which included guided reading, group reading, and independent reading activities. The third stage was: think, which referred to further thinking of what students had learnt. Intended to gain awareness of what students had learnt from a book, the fourth stage was: write. This last stage consisted of a book review on the books students had read.

Ellinger (2000) carried out a study involving seventy-five university students enrolled in an EFL reading comprehension course. Subjects were asked to write questions based on the texts being dealt with, for the purpose of improving reading skills. It was found that good readers-in addition to asking more sophisticated questions-focused on important information when asked to write text-based questions. The researcher, therefore, suggested that EFL students be trained in the skill of formulating text-based questions to promote understanding of the text.

Interested in lexical processing strategies, Fraser (1999) investigated the lexical processing strategies (LPSs: ignore, consult, infer) used by ESL learners when they encountered unfamiliar vocabulary while reading, and the impact of these strategies on vocabulary learning. Analyses of overall LPS use (changes in patterns and effectiveness of strategy use with LPS-focused instruction) and word retention rates demonstrated the potential for vocabulary learning through reading, and indicated that some LPSs could lead to higher retention rates than others. This research increases our understanding of the role of LPSs use in vocabulary learning and suggests some reevaluation of current pedagogic practice.

A number of specialists believe that vocabulary has a significant role to play when it comes to comprehending a reading text. Qian (1999) for example, explored the relationship between depth and breadth of vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension in English as a second language. Using multivariate analyses, the study examined the role of depth of vocabulary

knowledge in assessing the performance of a group of young adult ESL learners with a minimum vocabulary size of 3,000 word families in carrying out general academic reading comprehension tasks. The results supported the hypotheses that scores on vocabulary size, depth of vocabulary knowledge, and reading comprehension were highly and positively correlated, and scores on depth of vocabulary knowledge could make a unique contribution to the prediction of reading comprehension level. The implications of this study for today's practitioners stress the importance of improving depth of vocabulary knowledge on the part of EFL/ESL learners.

Hayes (1998) carried out a study to examine the interaction of prior knowledge, text design, and reading purposes. Subjects for this study were a number of community college students who were randomly assigned to groups: one group with prior knowledge and the other with little or no background knowledge. The materials developed for the study consisted of three versions of the same reading passage. A comparison of the mean scores of the immediate delayed posttests proved that subjects with prior knowledge could recall more of the information they read than subjects with little or no prior knowledge could. Based on this study, today's instructional text designers are recommended to consider the background of their audience in selecting instructional texts.

Briefly speaking, the aforementioned studies are of use to practitioners and specialists in the sense that they investigate reality, enquiring and suggesting. In relation to the current research, such studies add a touch of enlightenment, guiding the researcher towards the right track. Wherever we are, whoever we are, and whatever we do, it would always be helpful to be enlightened by what other practitioners within the related fields have proved, concluded, and recommended.

2.2.7 Reading Skills: Concluding Word

To conclude, reading is a developmental, interactive, and global process. The process of reading often incorporates linguistic knowledge, topic knowledge, vocabulary knowledge, and so on.

What is more, there is no right way to read or teach a reading comprehension text. Each of the approaches, methods and procedures discussed in this part of Chapter Two has its own intrinsic value as a filter, through which to sift and sort through what an author is attempting to communicate to us. Speaking of EFL/ESL contexts, practitioners should seek to encourage reading in students as a lifelong habit, for it is through reading that learners can improve their language a great deal. The large number of related studies carried out by researchers, as well as the variety of approaches, activities and strategies proposed by reading specialists have guided the researcher throughout her study journey, and are also expected to facilitate instructors' task in the field.

2.3.1 Writing Skills: Introductory Word

The current study project seeks to investigate the effectiveness of utilising fictional texts: novels and short stories, in promoting communicative competence and enhancing critical thinking, on the part of EFL learners. The researcher, as such, believes that discussing all the related areas would be both informative and useful. Amongst the areas the current study involves and as such, the current part includes are: theories and approaches, proposed strategies; activities and procedures, as well as a number of studies and researches within the context of the current study.

2.3.2 Theories and Approaches

Based on her field experience as an EFL practitioner for a number of years, today's generation do not write properly in their native language, what about the second/foreign language then?! Second/Foreign language writing is usually a challenging process whereby a number of factors are involved, affecting the writer learner either positively or negatively. Amongst the most prominent factors is the quality of instruction a practitioner possesses and exhibits throughout the instructional process. This part of Chapter Two seeks to present a number of related theories and approaches within the field of EFL/ESL writing.

Bruton (2005) mentions that both communicative task-based instruction and process writing assume prompt self-expression to motivate students. In addition, communicative task-based instruction and process writing both have similar foils, common rationales, comparable procedures, and common justifications. However, they also have a number of both inherent and circumstantial limitations. The circumstantial limitations are due to their being hatched for EFL/ESL instruction settings, whereas the inherent limitations largely reflect a lack of equilibrium between planning; teacher intervention; and student initiative. Bruton emphasises that there should be a progression from more to less teacher intervention or support, as well as from less to more student autonomy; initiative; and peer interaction.

A number of specialists discuss the process approach to teaching writing. Hyland (2003) for example, explains that according to the process approach, the writer is as an independent producer of texts. The teacher; therefore, should allow students time and opportunity to develop their abilities to plan, define a rhetorical question, as well as propose and evaluate solutions. Response is crucial in helping students move through the stages of the writing process, and various means of providing feedback are used, including peer response, audio-taped feedback, teacher-student conferences, and reformulation. Raimes (1991), on the other hand, explains that the process-oriented approach to teaching writing is an idea that began to flourish as a result of viewing the writer as language learner and creator of text. A concern with the process approach is how writers generate ideas, record them, and later on, refine them to form a text. In a process-writing context, classroom tasks are characterised by the use of journals, peer collaboration, invention, revision, and attention to content before form.

Despite the fact that the process approach emphasises the writer's independent self, it has its drawbacks. Amongst the main disadvantages of writing process approaches are: firstly, they give insufficient importance to the kind of texts writers produce and why such texts are produced. Secondly, they offer learners insufficient input -particularly in terms of linguistic knowledge- to write effectively. Thirdly, they often regard all writing as being produced by the same set of processes (Badger and White, 2000).

Besides the writing process approach, a number of specialists discuss the genre approach to teaching writing. O'Brien (2004), for example, believes that although genre studies do not aim to build models of the writing process and are often seen to be product rather than process, their place in writing research is important. The approaches to genre study are: work based on a Hallidayan Systemic Functional view of language where genre is defined as a staged, goal-oriented social practice which involves the interaction of participants in a conventional, step-wise structure; and work within an ESP perspective where genre comprises a class of communicative events linked by shared purposes. An argument, however, has been raised at times that teaching genres would degenerate into teaching arbitrary models and textual organisation, with little connection to a student's learning purposes. Sometimes, misunderstanding of the meaning of explicit teaching causes this argument to arise. This means that students are encouraged to reflect on how language is used for a range of purposes and with a range of audiences, and that teachers focus explicitly on these aspects of language. Another limitation of the genre approach is about students' role in this approach (Gibbons, 2002). Similarly, Badger and White (2000) emphasise that the main negative aspect of genre approaches is that they undervalue skills needed to produce a text, and see students as largely passive.

Badger and White (2000) also describe what they refer to as the process genre approach in terms of a view of writing and a view of the development of writing. In this approach, writing is viewed as involving knowledge about language, knowledge of the content in which writing happens-especially the purpose for writing, and skills in using language. Five features of a process genre model are proposed: purpose, situation, consideration of mode/field/tenor, consideration of planning/drafting/publishing, and text. Teachers need to replicate the situation as closely as possible, and then provide sufficient support for learners to identify the purpose and other aspects of the social contexts, such as tenor and field. After experiencing a whole process of writing, the students can use the skills appropriate to the genre.

To summarise, the aforementioned approaches and theories are: communicative-task based, process approach, genre approach, and process-genre approach. If the instructor's aim is for learners to improve communication skills, then the communicative-task based approach would

be highly appropriate. If the instructor's aim is for learners to gain awareness of text type through writing, then the genre as well as process-genre approaches would be of use. If the instructor's aim is for learners to improve writing skills through experiencing the writing stages of brainstorming, drafting, proofreading and editing, then the process approach would be the one to employ, and so on. The instructor's task, therefore, is to select which approach/approaches suit/suits which type of learners considering their learning styles, language proficiency level, as well as other main factors such as learning aims and learners' needs.

2.3.3 Strategies, Activities, and Procedures

In the researcher's view, strategies; activities; and procedures for teaching writing skills should be selected upon careful consideration of different factors and variables. The paragraphs to follow, deal with a number of proposed strategies; activities; and procedures, which can be of use to the English language instructor.

According to Burke (2010), there are three main stages to producing a stylistics paper. These are: investigation and selection, analysis, and writing. The first stage should take up a considerable time of thorough readings, considering both a stylistics perspective and an interpretive perspective. The second stage requires deep analyses of the text being dealt with. As far as the interpretive task of the analyses is concerned, the analyses could be either the learner's or an already existing one to which learners can refer for enrichment purposes. The third stage is normally the writing-up stage whereby learners are expected to have finalised their writing.

Technology, O'Brien (2004) states, can be implemented in the classroom using different ways. The way new technologies are implemented in the classroom has been influenced by the particular beliefs of each individual teacher as well as by the general institutional context. A salient theme in research on the use of computers in writing instruction is the need to question the success stories that characterise many contributions in the professional literature. As far as word processing is concerned, it is common to assert that it is the ideal tool for a process writing approach, allowing many different kinds of modifications before or after saving; deletion and

insertion for example. Network-based language teaching is another area where technology has been implemented. It refers to language teaching that involves the use of computers connected to one another in either global or local networks.

Interested in developing summary skills, Mishriki (2002) explains that when teaching summary writing, a teacher should make sure that students are able to recognise the outline, the organisation, the main ideas, the main supporting ideas as well as how they are related to each other. Moreover, students should be able to analyse the passage in an attempt to gain a better understanding of it, which will give them a clearer insight into what to include, exclude, focus on, marginalise, or even omit when writing their summaries. Advocating the idea that cooperative learning is of great importance, Hirvela (2000) recommends adopting writing groups—small groups of students working together on a writing task which normally occurs in the form of peer review where students working in groups, offer authentic audience feedback from which they learn to revise their papers. Through collaborative group production, students experience valuable opportunities to improve their ability to read and write, because the on-going community orientation of this approach enables them to draw upon the strengths and resources of their peers, while sorting through their own growing knowledge of ESL reading and writing.

A large number of researchers and specialists advocate the use of portfolios in EFL/ESL contexts. McCullough (1999), for example, states that a portfolio is a meaningful collection of student work which can give a fuller picture of what a learner has achieved in writing. Callahan (1997) also believes that a portfolio serves a number of goals: to improve the amount and kind of writing produced by students, to train teachers to assess individual student writing in order to provide better instruction, and to hold schools accountable for the progress of all students. Examined from a different perspective, Enginarlar (1994) emphasises that experimentation on the portfolio seems to address itself directly to validity and reliability problems since it requires several samples of student writing, preferably produced on two or three genres. The real strengths of the portfolio seem to lie in its potential in providing good backwash effect on the teaching of writing, which is achieved through encouraging revision, peer-feedback, and

collaboration towards producing and choosing better essays to be invested in the portfolio. In addition to the specialists mentioned above, Herter (1991) also advocates using portfolios, where learners become engaged continually in thinking about those reflective acts of interpreting interpretations which language makes possible. Besides seeing themselves as writers, students can move slowly through a progression of emerging awareness linking form and content. The addition of self-reflective writing of the kind included in portfolios, gives both the student and the teacher an opportunity to look at more subtle questions which inform the teaching of writing.

To end with, this part of Chapter Two presents a number of strategies, activities and procedures which practitioners can use in the EFL/ESL writing class. These are: suggested stylistic writing procedure, technology as an effective instructional procedure, proposed pedagogy focusing on the text; the writer and the reader, summary writing activities, group activities, and portfolios. All these strategies, activities and procedures-if implemented when needed and as appropriate-are expected to yield in quality instruction. There is no single right way neither is there one best activity through which writing skills can be taught. Each of the above strategies, activities and procedures has its own intrinsic value as a stimulus for eliciting some good responses.

2.3.4 Related Studies

For English as a second/foreign language student, learning to write academically effective essays is an immense challenge, because the student has to obey linguistic conventions, write for unfamiliar audience, and employ rhetorical strategies that the audience expects. This part deals with a number of studies and researches within the field of teaching writing in the EFL/ESL classroom.

Abdel-Latif (2009) conducted a study with the main aim of examining the pausing of Egyptian university students while composing their texts, and the reasons for such pauses. Thirty students took part in the study, all of whom were attending a four-year pre-service English language teaching programme at an Egyptian university. The study revealed that both text quality and

linguistic knowledge correlated positively with inter-sentential pausing, and negatively with intra-sentential pauses. One major implication for EFL/ESL instructors is the need to consider the linguistic knowledge levels of their students, and that the instruction of both EFL/ESL writing should vary depending on students' language proficiency or linguistic knowledge.

Concerned with teaching English writing to Korean university students, both Kim and Kim (2005) conducted a study pointing out four problems in university writing classes: the lack of genre-specific writing across the curriculum, the heavy emphasis on grammatical form, the overemphasis on final product, and the need for more diverse types of feedback. To help solve the problems, the researchers proposed utilising the balanced instructional and curricular approach of the process and genre-based approach to teaching writing. Bearing these two teaching approaches in mind, the researchers provided four principles that could be applied to Korean university writing classes; namely, balancing form and function, scaffolding language and learning to create active interactions between a teacher and students as well as among students themselves, providing meaningful response and formative assessment, and extending the writing curriculum.

Interested in co-operative learning, Storch (2005) investigated the effectiveness of collaborative writing in ESL settings. The study involved twenty three participants who were given a choice to write individually or in pairs. The research compared texts produced by pairs with those produced by individual participants, investigated the nature of the writing processes evident in the pair talk, and elicited the participants' reflections on the experience of collaborative learning. The results indicated that pairs produced shorter but better texts in terms of grammatical accuracy, complexity, and task fulfillment. Collaboration offered participants an opportunity to pool ideas as well as provide each other with feedback. Most participants expressed positive attitudes towards the experience of collaborative writing.

Using portfolios for teaching the writing skill has been examined by a number of researchers and specialists. Yang (2003) for example, investigated the effectiveness of integrating portfolios into

a learning strategy, and explored the effects of portfolios on helping EFL college students become more effective autonomous learners. After two semesters of learning strategy-based instruction, proficiency tests revealed that participants made progress to a passing rate of over eighty percent, compared to fifty percent before training. The study recommends integrating portfolios into English language courses, introducing the concept of autonomous learning to students, implementing frequent portfolio's checking and sharing, and developing guidelines and mini-lessons to help students improve their output.

Examined from a different aspect, Castelline (1996) explored the effect that portfolio assessment had on teachers' expectations for their students. Teachers used portfolio assessment in a consistent manner engaging students in selecting work to be included in the portfolio, written self assessment and reflection, and portfolio conferences with their teacher which included goal setting activities for future work. The teachers in this study used portfolio in a comprehensive manner that created a portfolio culture, which strengthened the interpersonal relationship between students and teachers. In these classrooms, teachers used a variety of student self-assessment activities on a daily basis. Because these teachers respected and valued students' responses, the results were satisfactory to all concerned. Similarly, McClelland (1996) investigated the effects of using portfolios. The researcher presented a study of high school English students who developed writing portfolios and conducted writing self-assessment. The study indicated that the students were effective in assessing their own writing to the point of being able to articulate clearly their uses of process writing activities to develop their writing, as well as state how their writing improved through participation in the workshop writing activities.

Examined from an evaluation perspective, Sims (1995) explored the effects of portfolio evaluation on locus of control, writing apprehension, and student rating of teacher encouragement of first semester composition students in a community college setting. Race, age, and gender were examined as well. Students were tested and re-tested, and were then divided into two groups: experimental and control. A significant difference was found in the locus of control between the two groups. Student rating of teacher encouragement and locus of control were predictors of writing apprehension; race and writing apprehension were predictors of locus

of control. Writing apprehension was a predictor of student rating of teacher encouragement. Based on the results, portfolio evaluation did not lessen writing apprehension; for some students, postponement of evaluation might increase writing apprehension. Moreover, students in portfolio classes where the instructor involved in mentoring practices did not perceive the instructor to be more encouraging than students in traditional classes did. Portfolio evaluation, however, empowered students by increasing their internal locus of control orientation; a significant relationship was found to exist between locus of control and writing apprehension. In addition to the aforementioned researchers, Roemer and Schultz (1991) introduced the use of portfolios to a number of EFL students in an attempt to improve the quality of language assessment. The results indicated that many teachers could have a direct hand in shaping and reshaping the assessment scheme. A second effect was that portfolios became a powerful teacher training and professional development tool. For the beginning teachers, the portfolio provided an opportunity to see student writing and to share in standard-setting discussions.

As far as cooperative learning (CL) techniques are concerned, Ismail (2000) carried out a study to examine the effectiveness of utilising some cooperative learning (CL) techniques in developing essay writing. The study involved first year university students, English majors, at an Egyptian university. Seventy students participated and were assigned randomly to the experimental or control group. The results of the pre/post achievement composition test revealed significant effects in the post administration, in favour of the experimental group. The experimental group also showed satisfaction towards CL. They also acquired and practised different academic and social skills. Recommendations for consideration included incorporating CL in all educational stages and all subject matters, as well as paying more attention to the social/affective aspects and psychological attitudes to be developed.

To gain a deep understanding of both the product and process of writing in a foreign language, Angelova (1999) investigated how a number of factors influenced the quality of EFL writing. The factors were: use of cohesive devices, writing strategies, EFL proficiency writing competence, writing characteristics, and meta-cognitive knowledge about the writing task. The study sample included one hundred and twenty students from an EFL school in Bulgaria, who

were asked to write argumentative essays. The results indicated that, EFL writing was a multifaceted process which was affected by a number of social as well as linguistic factors. The quality of the product was influenced mostly by the participants' lexical knowledge as well as application, their meta-cognitive knowledge about the conventions of writing, their method of planning the content of the product, and their attitude to writing. The findings suggest the need for a model of EFL writing incorporating social, linguistic, as well as cognitive features.

Exploring the experience of being a basic writer, Cullum (1998) conducted a study showing how the experience differed for males and females, as well as demonstrating the ways in which such differences manifested themselves in language. The study involved eighteen students-twelve males and six females- taking basic writing at a state college. The findings indicated that gender differences existed in all contexts for classroom discourse, with females contributing more of the talk related to the aims of the class as well as doing most of the procedural talk, that these differences were inductive of how the females and males viewed themselves and their responsibilities in relation to the class, that small group work was an essential component of the success of the class, and that there was a positive correlation between the type and amount of verbal participation and students' level of confidence in their writing.

Seeking to improve students' writing performance, Rooney (1998) examined whether students' writing performance could be improved if the methods of writing instruction-rewriting strategies-were integrated into a single approach and presented to learners. Upon the completion of two instructional phases of four weeks each, the writing performance of two groups of ninth graders was compared. While the control group students did not receive any direct instruction, the experimental group received direct instruction in the rewriting processes of revision and editing. This was followed by written revision suggestions from their teacher for first-drafts of a writing assignment, and then written editing suggestions from the teacher for revised second-drafts of the same assignment. During the second phase of instruction, the experimental group generated their own written revision strategies for first-draft a second writing assignment, which was followed by less-explicit editing suggestions from their teacher than they received in the first phase. The findings indicated that, students' writing performance improved when they received a

combination of: written prompts reminding them of the rewriting strategies they had been trained in before, direct instruction in the process of writing and rewriting, editing feedback, and practice in self-generating their own revision as well as in becoming more self-sufficient in their editing.

Way (1998) investigated the effect of three different writing prompts: vocabulary; bare; and prose model, and three different writing tasks: narrative; expository; and descriptive, on nine hundred and thirty seven writing samples. To assess fluency; quality; accuracy; and syntactic complexity, the researcher used four evaluation methods: length of product; holistic scoring; mean length of T-units; and percentage of correct T-units. The results showed that, while the descriptive task was the easiest, the expository task was the hardest. In addition, the process prompt produced the highest mean scores, whereas the bare prompt produced the lowest mean scores. The results; therefore, indicated that both writing prompt and writing task could influence fluency, quality, accuracy, and syntactic complexity.

Roughly speaking, the aforementioned studies are of use to practitioners and specialists in the sense that they investigate a problem, addressing the what, why, and how questions. In relation to the current research, it is the researcher's belief that they are of both use and inspiration. This is because we, practitioners and researchers, are inclined to digging out the unknown out of professionals' knowledge and experience.

2.3.5 Writing Skills: Concluding Word

In conclusion, learning the process of writing is a difficult skill for students to develop, especially in EFL/ESL contexts where exposure to English as well as practice of some input in English are both limited. Students, learning writing as a second or foreign language, struggle with many structural issues including selecting proper words, using correct grammar, generating ideas, as well as developing ideas about specific topics. More importantly, students have trouble developing functional language skills such as proper natural language use in different social contexts.

It is important; therefore, to note the directions being undertaken by EFL/ESL scholars as we look forward to a less compartmentalised academic world. Amongst the main points to consider in this context are, how practitioners can help students express themselves freely and fluently to be more autonomous writers, and how practitioners can help students become more successful writers of academic and workplace texts.

2.4.1 Critical Language Skills: Introductory Word

The current research project seeks to investigate the effectiveness of utilising fictional texts: novels and short stories, in promoting communicative competence and enhancing critical thinking, on the part of EFL learners. To equip the researcher with adequate insight and vision, resorting to the studies and researches within the current research's context would be of support and contribution. Amongst the areas the current study involves, and as such, the current part includes are: critical thinking, critical reading skills, critical writing skills, proposed strategies; activities and procedures, as well as a number of related studies.

2.4.2 What does Critical Thinking Require?

Several types of thinking are necessary for students to make sense of what goes on in class, of what they are hearing when they attend classes, of the kind of assignment they get, and of the language task they are required to perform in their classes. What is it, then, that critical thinking refers to? And in what sense is this type of thinking different from other types?

Gorden, et al. (1993) suggest that there are several kinds of thinking which are necessary for students, to make sense of what goes on in their classrooms. One kind is analytic-which refers to the sort of thinking that allows students to appreciate the nature of a proof when it is offered to them, and enables them to see the things in terms of their categories as well as the implications of the things they are learning about. A second kind of thinking is dialectical, which allows students to see the position in relationship to another, to see from different perspectives, to respond to different contexts, to tolerate ambiguity and multiple meanings, and to appreciate

complexity; controversy; challenge, and dialogue. A third kind of thinking can be termed figurative or metaphorical, which refers to seeing particular events or things as pointing to something else. In Collins's view (1991), a number of thinking domains should be developed while utilising a textbook in class. These are: basic thinking skills, decision-making tools, fundamental thinking processes, meta cognitive strategies, problem-solving strategies, thinking more effectively when working in groups/alone, and innovative thinking processes.

Briefly speaking, there are a number of criteria which an educationalist should ensure when seeking to promote critical thinking on the part of his/her learners. Amongst the most essential criteria are: clarity, accuracy, precision, relevance, depth, breadth, logic, age group, topic familiarity, and language proficiency. In addition, it should be borne in mind that the more practice and training students have, the more they are expected to acquire a repertoire of critical thinking skills, which will ultimately enable them to encounter the challenges of the current century.

2.4.3 What does Critical Reading Entail?

What is it that critical reading in EFL/ESL contexts requires? The answer to this question requires a lot of discussion. Briefly but adequately, this part seeks to discuss this addressed question, in the paragraphs to follow.

Wallace (2003) explains that critical reading involves questioning what is being read, not accepting the printed words at face value, but adopting an attitude of waiting and skepticism. Critical reading does not privilege an author's communicative intent, but is concerned with effect. The aim is not to converge with the author but to challenge the schemas called up by the text. Critical reading emphasises communally negotiated responses by which texts are jointly interpreted through talk around text. There is a need, Wallace believes, to shift focus constantly between the micro features of texts to the macro features of the contexts in which texts are interpreted. Attention to detail allows us to offer plausible interpretations of texts as well as

provide warrant for our views. Meta-level awareness of literacy practices and texts is more readily achieved when students are provided with linguistic tools to articulate, more precisely, impressions which may be noticeable to them at a fairly high level of generality. Wallace proposes a framework for a critical analysis of texts. The framework is based on three main aspects: field of discourse (ideational meanings), tenor of discourse (interpersonal meanings), and mode of discourse (textual meanings).

Considering the concept of genre, critical reading requires examining generic conventions in a text. Adequate awareness of the role genre plays in forming what we refer to as textual content means, recognising that the particular meaning a text creates is not original but is constructed by exploiting conventional resources. This element of convention exists at the level of individual sentences. It also exists in terms of ideas as well as overall schemas (Durant, et al.: 2000). According to Dooley (1993), critical reading requires analysis and evaluation before, during, and after reading. Students are required to make judgments about the validity, authenticity and accuracy to prove they are critical readers. Chikalanga (1992) explains that in making inferences a reader must perform two operations, namely, text-connecting and slot or gap filling. Text-connecting requires the reader to find logical relations between propositions or events expressed in a text, while slot-filling requires the reader to fill in missing information by recourse to knowledge about the world. There are, thus, two broad categories of inferences: text-based and non-text based inferences.

In brief, critical reading includes a number of skills amongst the most prominent of which are: text analysis skills, reasoning, inference, deduction, and decision-making. Critical reading is an advanced stage of reading comprehension, requiring the reader to read between and behind the lines, whilst avoiding literal interpretations of written pieces. Learners cannot read and think critically if they do not have the background knowledge about the key concepts, ideals, and issues in the text. The ultimate goal of critical reading, the researcher believes, is to enable students to read for pleasure as well as help them become independent learners.

2.4.4 What about Critical Writing?

EFL/ESL writing in itself is demanding for the majority of learners (Al Alami: 2008), yet, it is still the genuine challenge of the current study to equip EFL/ESL learners with the highly valuable skill of critical writing.

An essential component in the teaching of critical academic writing is ensuring a critical perspective (Paltridge, 2004). In a critical perspective, classroom tasks aim to make visible, the social construction and transmission of ideologies; power relationships; and social identities as a way of helping students make choices in their academic writing that reflects who they are, and who they want to be. Critical academic writing classrooms engage students in the types of activities they are likely to perform in their academic classes, inviting them to question and in some cases, transform these activities.

Bell (1995) explains that, in a composition classroom based on critical theory; both teaching and learning are seen as constructs: rhetorical, political, and often oppressive representations of social relations. Students are asked to explore as well as interrogate these implicit constructs in their local environments, engaging in intellectual interrogation of those constructs through reading and writing texts. This type of writing pedagogy, Bell states, is often unsettling for students, as it requires active involvement in exploration that does not fit exactly into the objective, product-oriented classrooms which students are usually familiar with.

What is it that a critical writing course should include? Abou-Bakr (1994) thinks that a practical writing course to focus on critical writing can be envisioned to include the following parts: firstly, learning the tools of criticism (literary terms, stylistic devices, genres, forms, modes, and other descriptive means necessary to draw up a critique). Secondly: learning the basic difference between paraphrasing, explicating, and describing a text on the one hand, and critical analysis and enquiry on the other. Thirdly: experimenting with the reader-response essay through asking

students first to write their own accounts of experiences or reflections about the subjects, and then introducing the literary works that deal with these subjects or themes.

Referring to the point mentioned at the outset of this particular part, EFL/ESL writing in itself is highly demanding to both learners and instructors. For a writer learner to write fluently and accurately in his/her mother tongue might sometimes be a challenging task. What, then, if we refer to writing in the EFL/ESL classroom? Yet, if we do not go through a struggle trip to realise our challenging aims, hardly can we enjoy the tasty seeds we plough!

2.4.5 Strategies, Activities and Procedures

In the researcher's view, strategies; activities; and procedures for enhancing critical language skills should be selected upon careful consideration of different factors and variables. This is, if not for any other considerations, for the very fact that the task of shaping learners' thinking is quite challenging to attain. The current part presents a number of proposed strategies; activities; and procedures within the context of the current study.

Critical discourse analysis views discourse as a form of social practice whereby language use is regarded at the same time as socially influential and influenced. Another characteristics of critical discourse analysis is that it is committed and engaged, thus intervening in social practice. The critical approach to language study prioritises the development of the students' capacities to examine as well as judge the world carefully and, if possible, to change it (Zyngier and Fialho: 2010, Cots: 2006). Students, therefore, should be trained in the skill of judging the world around them thoughtfully.

Intended as a practical and pedagogical classroom tool for the critical analysis of texts, Hyatt (2005) presents a critical literacy frame. The critical literacy frame allows analysis of text from both a micro lexico-grammatical and a macro semantic and societal levels. The following criteria are glossed: time-tense and aspect; pronoun use; evaluative adjectives/adverbs/nouns/verbal

processes; metaphor; medium; visual images; age; class; disability; gender; race and ethnicity issues; audience, presupposition/implication; as well as reference to other texts, genres, discourse and individuals. The critical literacy frame, Hyatt states, has the potential to develop teachers' own concepts of curriculum. Similarly, Kim and Na (2003) explain how critical literacy is related to such issues as identity, power, critical awareness and empowerment in EFL education, and suggest a pedagogical framework for empowering EFL students. The researchers believe that adopting a critical theory can enlighten EFL educational practices in the following areas: helping students celebrate their multiple identities as well as understand the changing face of the world, empowering students by challenging unequal power relations, and helping develop awareness in students to reflect critically on the world and the word.

Schema theory, Pike-Paky (2005:1) believes, occupies the centre of the current understanding of cognition. According to Pike-Paky, schemata receive, sort, classify as well as hold information. Schemata are acquired and extended as the result of vicarious and direct experiences. Two kinds of knowledge reside in schemata: text knowledge referring to the information accumulated through a reader's experience, and world knowledge referring to the information accumulated through day-to-day experience. To be in an excellent position to bridge the schema gaps as well as prepare students for increased independence and success, a teacher has to know each and every student, as well as design activities around these gaps. A "say, mean, matter," strategy, Pike-Paky believes, can be employed to enhance critical language skills. The material required is a three-column chart with the three headings: say, mean, matter.

A successful class in literature, Esplugas and Landwehr (1996) argue, is the one in which the instructor enables the students to exercise their critical reading skills in interpreting a text. By applying specific cognitive strategies in a systematic manner when analysing literary works, students learn not only to substantiate their interpretations through well-reasoned arguments, but also to become aware of the reasoning process itself. Through character analysis, theme analysis, and narrator analysis, a teacher should seek to integrate critical thinking skills into a linguistic and literary analysis of a literary work.

In Coles's view (1995), traditional methods of instruction do not provide the conditions necessary to encourage students to think critically. A focus on fostering critical reading skills implies a type of classroom interaction that is very different from the one commonly practised. Dialogue within a community of enquiry setting should, therefore, be emphasised. As far as literature instruction is concerned, Collins (1993) believes that when literature is approached from a problem-solving perspective, students should be asked to evaluate evidence, draw conclusions, make inferences, and develop a line of thinking. In order to become critical language learners, it is essential that students learn to value their own thinking, to compare their thinking and their interpretations with others, and to revise or reject parts of the process when it is appropriate.

Seeking to promote critical language skills, Commeyras (1993) introduces a critical-thinking reading lesson format to use with stories in the basal reader: a dialogical-thinking reading lesson (DTRL). The format aims to engage students in reasonable reflective thinking, in order to decide what they believe about a story-specific issue. A "DTRL" encourages students to return to the text to verify information, consider multiple interpretations, identify reasons to support interpretations, and evaluate the acceptability and relevance of competing or alternative interpretations.

Shannon (1993) is of the opinion that conflict within and among voices in a classroom is a fact of life because we are not a homogeneous society with one set of interests. Voice, then, is a social not a personal matter for individuals. When developing democratic voices, teachers and students should place their experiences at the centre of the curriculum and ask how they wish to live together. This question should enable all parties to examine the linguistic, historic, scientific, social, artistic, economic, spiritual, and emotional factors. Clark, et al. (1991) think that a number of elements should be included in a critical language awareness syllabus, to ensure that students acquire adequate critical skills; namely, social awareness of discourse whether spoken or written, critical awareness of diversity related to language varieties, as well as consciousness

of and practice for change; how change in language results from social struggles and changing power relations. Valuing the role novels play, Bagford (1990) emphasises introducing novel strategies to enhance critical reading, relying on re-examination of fundamental questions. Critical reading must be clearly defined, methods for teaching in terms of the definition must be developed, and methods of testing in terms of the definition must be created.

To end with, this part of Chapter Two presents a number of strategies, activities and procedures which EFL/ESL practitioners can use for the enhancement of critical language skills, reading and writing in particular. These are: critical discourse analysis applications, critical literacy frame, schema theory's implications, problem-solving techniques, DTRL strategy, voice enhancement strategy, and suggestions for critical/social awareness of discourse. If the instructor's aim is for learners to gain awareness of text type as a pre-requisite for critical reading and writing, then the critical discourse analysis applications would be helpful. If the instructor's aim is for learners to enhance voice and open-dialogue skills, then the voice enhancement strategy would be of great use. If the instructor's aim is for learners to problem-solve different issues handling each critically, then the problem-solving techniques would be useful, and so on. All these strategies, activities and procedures-if implemented appropriately in accordance with instructional aims-are expected to yield in acquisition of life-long critical thinking skills.

2.4.6 Related Studies

This part presents a number of studies which have been carried out within the field of critical thinking contexts. The aim of including such studies is for the researcher to relate the current study's findings to what has been concluded and recommended by other researchers. Including a large number of related studies is, therefore, intended for enrichment purposes.

Assuming that critical reading could be associated with students' abilities to draw inferences, both Cain and Oakhill (1999) conducted a study to investigate the direction of this relation as well as explore possible sources of inferential failure. Three groups of students participated:

same-age skilled and less skilled participants, and a comprehension age match group. The pattern of performance indicated that the ability to make inferences was not a *by-product* of good reading comprehension; instead, inferences skills were a plausible cause of good reading comprehension ability. Failure to make inferences could not be attributed to lack of relevant general knowledge; the pattern of errors indicated that differences in reading strategy were the most likely source of these groups' differences.

Both Barry and Lazarte (1998) tested how domain-related knowledge, syntactic complexity, and reading topic, influenced inference generation in the written recalls of English-speaking participants after they read Spanish texts. Three types of inferences were examined: within-text inferences, elaborative inferences, and incorrect inferences. Two groups of students, high-knowledge and low-knowledge groups read three Spanish passages, each on a different topic and at a different level of syntactic complexity. The results revealed that high-knowledge readers generated a richer and more accurate mental model than low-knowledge readers. In addition, the level of complexity and the reading topics indicated a complex pattern of influence on the generation of inferences.

Interested in creative writing, Blankenship (1998) introduced a pedagogy and theory of polyphonic voice in writing to the beginning creative writing classes. The researcher introduced the term polyphonic in application to literary voice in order to describe its multiple natures. To develop polyphonic voice in writing, the researcher suggested a sequence of exercises that helped learners move from the one-sided dominant voice to a voice that was capable of representing a variety of textual voices and textual selves, by ensuring distance from "true self" of the writer. To achieve the intended aim, the researcher investigated the development of the concept of voice in writing through three major periods: Expressionism and Romanticism in the arts as well as composition studies, and Postmodernism. The researcher proposed a postmodern critique of authenticity of any single voice in writing, offering a concept of polyphonic voice, which aimed to undermine the concept of privilege and dominance of any true writing voice. Employing assessment theory in writing, the researcher attempted to theorise the assessment

practice in the area of creative writing, calling for polyphonic portfolio assessment to become the focus of creative writing pedagogy and theory.

Gelven (1998) carried out a study investigating whether there were any significant differences in the development of the ability to think critically and the positive perception of the ability to solve problems, by students who had completed an applied communications course as compared to students who had completed one of two other English courses. A significant difference was found between problem solving self-efficacy and critical thinking abilities of students assigned to the three different English courses. A significant interaction was found between critical thinking abilities of students for the three English courses and time. And a positive relationship was found to exist between the problem solving self-appraisal of students and their critical thinking abilities.

Involving a first-year composition class, Mathison-Fife (1998) dealt with pedagogies of critique, using the theme of utopia to involve students in cultural critique. The description of the class was framed by the distinction between rhetorical positioning: how the course encouraged participants to orient themselves in terms of the audience as well as purpose for writing, and critical positioning: how the course encouraged participants to orient themselves towards the focus of their critique and the critical discourse they used. The structure of the class resulted in the ability to reflect on one's own involvement with contradictory discourses, the articulation of questions that reflected intellectual engagement, and critical positioning for some participants that included a deep awareness of discourse. The discussion of rhetorical positioning included: participants' perceptions of how discourse might influence social change, whether they recognised connections between classroom discourse and public discourse, and whether they considered themselves as able to affect change through discourse. The researcher offered suggestions for classroom discourses of critique that could not only be internally persuasive for students, but also prepared them for discursive practices that extended beyond the purposes and audiences usually defined for writing.

Rotta (1998) examined the combined fields of critical thinking and textbook usage in the secondary English classroom. The reliance of the English curriculum on the content of the literature anthology had been documented. A need for critical thinking to be promoted in class had been established and resulted in descriptions of instructional techniques. The questions the study raised were:

- What proportion of the activities found in the secondary literature anthologies allowed for the development of the ability to think critically?
- What were the distinguishing characteristics of those activities which allowed for critical thinking?

A content analysis of six secondary literature anthologies was performed to answer the questions addressed. In the first stage of the analysis, activities were divided as being capable of promoting empirical knowledge only, empirical/methodological knowledge, or critical thinking. The second stage of the analysis examined the activities found capable of promoting critical thinking. The study concluded that, although the percentage of activities which required critical thinking was low, the data suggested that it would be possible for teachers to use the aforementioned characteristics to choose the activities, which were capable of enhancing critical thinking from among the many activities offered in textbooks.

Interested in strategy use, Saito (1998) examined the learning effect of unknown word inference strategy among Japanese high school students. The control group was given the lists of unknown words before reading, while the experimental group was asked to infer the meanings of unknown words while reading. After the reading comprehension task, all the subjects took the unknown word tests. The results showed that the unknown word strategy was more effective in retaining the unknown words than the word list learning strategy.

Manning (1997) investigated the relationship between critical thinking and attitudes towards reading, involving a number of community college students enrolled in a critical reading course. The study was conducted with two sections. One class was taught the regular curriculum plus

instruction in five critical thinking skills, and the other class was taught the regular curriculum. The questions addressed were:

- Was there a significant relationship between gain scores on a measure for attitude towards reading and a measure for critical thinking skills?
- Was there a significant difference in the means of the gain scores between pretest and posttest measures for critical thinking skills of community college students enrolled in a critical reading course?

The students in both groups were given a pre-treatment reading attitude assessment and critical thinking test to determine if reading attitude and critical thinking skills were comparable. Post-treatment measures of reading attitude and critical thinking were analysed to check if there was a relationship between reading attitude and critical thinking. The results indicated that no statistically significant correlation existed between attitude towards reading and critical thinking. A statistically significant difference was found; however, between the gain scores for critical thinking for the control group and treatment group. This experiment, therefore, established the need for more research on reading attitude and critical thinking skills of community college students.

All in all, the aforementioned studies are of use to practitioners and specialists in the sense that they touch upon reality, enquiring and proposing. In relation to the current research, such studies add a touch of enrichment as well as expand the scope of the study. Resorting to what previous researchers have conducted and concluded would always be supportive and enlightening.

2.4.7 Critical Language Skills: Concluding Word

The current part of Chapter Two discusses critical thinking in general terms, critical reading and critical writing within EFL/ESL contexts, along with proposed activities; procedures and strategies, as well as a number of related studies. To encounter the challenges of the twenty-first century, the researcher concludes, critical thinking education should be amongst academic institutions' top priorities. Today's critical thinkers are tomorrow's great leaders!

2.5.1 EFL/ESL Communication Skills: Introductory Word

Communicative language teaching has evolved over the past several decades in response to changing views on the nature of communicative language use and the abilities that underlie it. This part of Chapter Two discusses one of the current study's main elements: communication skills within EFL/ESL domains. The points this particular part includes are: promoting communication skills, teaching in the communicative classroom, as well as a number of related studies.

2.5.2 Promoting Communication Skills in the EFL/ESL Classroom

With its expansion across the globe, English has naturally diversified into a proliferation of forms, varying in intonation, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, spelling, as well as conventions of use. How, then, can we help students cope with all the variety and uncertainty they are likely to encounter whilst communicating in the second/foreign language?

Stelma (2010) mentions that describing communication as the aim of language teaching since the 1970s, has involved the development of communicative competence definitions. Understanding communicative competence, therefore, is one way of understanding communicative language teaching. It is worthwhile mentioning that, societies constantly change, and so do ways of communicating. The principal goal of language teaching, as such, may constantly be subject to change. For practitioners in the field, three issues would help decide the limitations and appropriateness of communicative language teaching. These are: what communication processes learners may meaningfully carry out, what kind of communicative competence learners need, and what characteristics-if any-communication activities conducted in class share with real life communication situations; that is to say, situations outside the artificial environment of class.

Developing communication skills has been receiving the attention of specialists in the field. Dornyei and Thurrell (1991), for example, argue that the component of communicative competence which is most neglected by language course books and teachers, is that of strategic competence. Strategic competence is relevant to both L1 and L2, since communication breakdowns occur and must be overcome not only in a foreign/second language, but also in one's mother tongue. Because strategic competence involves strategies which can be used when communication can no longer be maintained, it is of crucial importance for foreign language learners to receive adequate training in this area.

Talen (1989) suggests that the development of communicative competence in EFL instruction requires tasks and activities in the classroom that would approximate the real communicative situation and problems students encounter in target-language communication. The traditional approach within which communication drills are viewed as operations on the language rather than activities in the language should be abandoned, and drills need to be constructed that view language as a pragmatic medium for achieving a communicative goal. Central to the development of models of communicative competence, Cziko (1984) proposes, is the notion of components. Essentially, most theoretical and empirical work in this area has been concerned with identifying and defining components and describing how these components are interrelated. The researcher suggests two very different ways of going about this task. Depending on one's perspective and purpose, one may wish to consider these components to be representative of all the knowledge and skills necessary to communicate effectively and appropriately in a given language.

Communicative competence, Gisele (1983) explains, is comprised of the following elements: situational competence which refers to one's ability to decode the specific social, cultural and psycho-cultural context; interaction competence which includes the ability to understand and practise the interactive rituals appropriate to the culture; linguistic competence which represents mastery of the grammatical and phonological system; and interpretive competence which refers to understanding the communicative intentions of participants involved in real-life situations.

Greater emphasis should be placed on the interpretive aspect of communication, and on the enjoyment to be derived from expressing oneself in a foreign language. For EFL/ESL learners to acquire adequate communicative competence, Jakobovits (1982) argues that authentic pedagogic procedures lead to such a desirable result. For language production to be authentic, teachers are recommended to offer authentic tasks for students to work on and have practice in, whether inside or outside the classroom.

All in all, for EFL/ESL students, acquiring a repertoire of communication skills is an immense challenge as the students have to obey linguistic conventions, address audience expectations, and act spontaneously without any prior preparations in response to a given situation's requirement. The more students are exposed to language in its genuine communication contexts, the more they are expected to enhance communication skills. Furthermore, the more meaningful situations students are offered to practise English, the more they are expected to promote communication skills.

2.5.3 Teaching in the Communicative Classroom

What features usually characterise communicative language teaching? Stating it in general terms, Gilmore (2007) emphasises that we need to present language which is solidly contextualised, as well as sensitise students to the ways in which the discourse presents its context. However, since each culture is unique, each classroom is also unique not only all over the globe but also within the same country. This requires the need to adopt an elective approach, in order to meet individual students' needs. Gilmore goes on to stress that practitioners need to promote all components of communicative competence on the part of EFL students. The component of discourse competence refers to the ability to produce unified, coherent and cohesive spoken as well as written texts. Pragmatic competence may come from the friction of students' daily interactions. It refers to one's ability to make himself/herself understood, as well as establish and maintain smooth relationships. EFL students' pragmatic awareness can be enhanced by increasing the amount of pragmatic input, along with placing a genuine emphasis

on this aspect of communicative competence. Linguistic competence refers to the linguistic knowledge of grammar, structure, and so on.

According to Hiep (2005), communicative language teaching can be applied through information gap activities, pair and group work, as well as a variety of other practices that are likely to suit each local context by itself. Depending on the cultural and even physical setting, a practitioner can use tasks set for small groups, or/and for a whole class format. Generally speaking, a combination of the two is usually appropriate. On the other hand, Leung (2005) argues that it is essential for English language teaching practitioners to take notice of real-world cultural, social and language developments in contemporary conditions, as well as re-engage with a set of ethnographic sensitivities and sensibilities.

Disappointment with both grammar translation and audio-lingual methods, for their inability to prepare learners for fluent use of language for genuine purposes in real-life situations, has resulted in what communicative language teaching is and how it should be characterised by. According to Savignon (2005), communicative language teaching is not only concerned with face-to-face oral communication. The principles of communicative language teaching also cover reading and writing activities that involve learners in explaining, negotiating, and conveying meaning. Pair work and group work are both essential, yet they are not necessarily required for class tasks and activities. With the notion of context of situation in mind, communicative language teaching can be seen as an approach or theory of intercultural communicative competence, to be stressed when developing methods and materials appropriate to a given instructional situation.

Savignon (2002) argues that communicative language teaching is not exclusively concerned with oral communication. The principles of communicative language teaching also apply to reading and writing activities that engage readers and writers in the interpretation, expression, and negotiation of meaning. Communicative language teaching does not always require small group

or pair work. Group tasks have been found helpful in many contexts as a way of providing increased opportunity and motivation for students. However, classroom group and pair work should not be considered an essential feature, for they may be inappropriate in some contexts. Finally, communicative language teaching does not exclude a focus on meta-linguistic awareness or knowledge of rules of syntax, discourse, and social appropriateness.

Both Wesche and Skehan (2002) explain that communicative classrooms are generally characterised by use of authentic texts and communication activities requiring frequent interaction among learners, and learner-centred approaches prioritising above all learners' language needs. Generally speaking, communicative language teaching stresses provision of: opportunities for learners to focus on the learning process in contextualised settings, cooperative learning tasks for learners to exchange ideas in life-like situations, and substantive content for learners to learn as a means for language enhancement. Kleinsasser and Sato (1999) believe that, communicative language teaching is derived from a multi-disciplinary perspective that includes; at least, language, psychology, philosophy, sociology, and education research. It focuses on all the components of communicative competence, where language techniques are designed to engage learners in the pragmatic, authentic, functional use of language for meaningful purposes. Fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles underlying communicative techniques, and students ultimately have to use the language productively and receptively.

Seen from Shih's point of view (1999), communicative reading and writing tasks involve exchanging information and opinions through the written medium, in situations with which readers and writers are not personally acquainted, as well as in situations with which they are. In communicative approaches, skills and linguistic knowledge are developed in accordance with the purpose of a task and the type of text. Language teaching can be reactive as well as predictive. In Lynch's view (1996), practitioners should utilise tasks which aim to encourage the active negotiation of meaning. Such tasks provide students with opportunities to practise the strategies they need for sorting out problems in real-life situations, as well as give them a realistic view of what to expect in real-life encounters. To ensure effective negotiation, tasks should encourage

two-way communication tasks. By including interaction tasks in which students can take the communicative initiative, we can provide them with a richer experience of speaking. The key to successful interaction is flexibility, which results from a combination of adequate command of the language, and confidence from practice in dealing with comprehension problems.

According to Hutchinson and Waters (1993), the communicative approach is concerned with three sets: the nature of language, the process of learning, and the context within which learning takes place. Communication is usually based upon interaction, performance, purpose, and context. The language forms used in real-life situations vary in accordance with features of role, status, and formality. According to Hutchinson and Waters, the following principles underlie a communicative approach to language teaching:

- People learn best when they are interested in and can identify with the content of what is being dealt with.
- A major role of education is to enable all learners to achieve their maximum potential. Amongst the best means to attain this is emphasising learners' successes rather than their failures.
- No two learning situations are the same. The content of any lesson; therefore, is best negotiated between the teacher and the learner.
- A crucial aspect of any kind of teaching a foreign language is the social context within which it occurs.
- Integrating all four skills should be stressed.

All factors considered, communication is the transmission of meaning and information from one person/group to another. The process of communication is successful only when the receiver understands an idea as the sender has intended it. Both parties have to agree not only on the information transmitted but also on the meaning of that information. Communication, therefore, can be considered a highly refined human process whereby a number of factors may be contributing, either positively or negatively. It is, then, of great importance to investigate all the factors which may hinder and impede the communication process inside and outside the class.

Practice makes perfect, the researcher recommends, should be within a practitioner's top priorities for his/her students.

2.5.4 Related Studies

This part of Chapter Two presents a number of studies which have been carried out within the field of EFL/ESL communication domains. The aim of including such studies is for the researcher to base the current study on what has been carried out so far, adopting and adapting. Including a number of related studies is, therefore, for guidance purposes.

Taguchi (2005) conducted a study aiming to identify class activities, assessment methods, and communicative teaching practice in a number of oral communication classes in Japanese secondary schools. The researcher concluded that, for an educational reform to be successful, promoting changes in practitioners' attitudes should be ensured. Interested in oral communication, Nakatani (2005) examined patterns of oral communication strategy use, as well as the extent to which such strategies could be explicitly taught, in order to ensure improvements in oral communication ability. In an EFL programme based on a communicative approach, participants were divided into two groups: meta-cognitive strategy training group and a control group. The results indicated that participants in the strategy training group significantly improved their oral proficiency, while improvements in the control group's oral proficiency were not significant. The experimental group's success, the researcher explained, was partly due to an increased awareness of oral communication strategies, the use of specific oral communication strategies, negotiation of meaning, as well as maintenance of fluency to solve interaction difficulties.

According to Wider (2000), strategic competence, or the ability to use communication strategies in the target language, is a component of the well-known construct of communicative competence, which is rarely integrated into EFL/ESL syllabi. Urged by this belief, the researcher explored the effect of communication strategy instruction by introducing the experimental group

to a training course in strategy use, and then comparing strategy use influences on the experimental and control groups' performance. The findings indicated that those who received the training could use higher-level strategies more effectively than those who did not receive the treatment. The study, as such, suggests that direct instruction in communication strategy use might lead to the development of strategic competence on the part of EFL/ESL learner.

Focusing on various activity types and interaction patterns, Kwon (1999) explored the effectiveness of the opportunities provided for high school ESL students, to gain communicative competence inside and beyond the classroom. The aim of the study was to describe as well as analyse the activity types and the patterns of the interaction within the activities. The analysis of interaction patterns within the activities showed that several characteristics were associated with the opportunities that enabled students to acquire communicative competence: group discussion, cultural awareness, autonomy, and two-way communication. The following situations, on the other hand, seemed to block the students from developing communicative ability: a focus on form rather than content and context, teacher-regulations, limitations placed on the suggested topics of interaction, and passive participation. This study revealed that the pattern of interaction within the activity influenced a student's development in becoming communicatively competent. Practitioners, therefore, need to consider both interaction and activity type in theory as well as practice.

Sung (1998) examined the concept of communicative competence, investigating relationships between the concepts of communicative competence and ESL students' communicative performance. The participants were twenty eight students coming from eight countries in an ESL setting in the U.S.A. The researcher's role was a participant observer for thirty two weeks. The results of the analyses revealed that, in spite of well-rounded knowledge on the concept of communicative competence and commitment towards a communicative approach, the instructor depended more on mixing as well as matching teaching methods. The study therefore proposed that, frameworks of proficiency tests and communicative competence should be reconsidered to validate the construct of communicative competence. Moreover, more refined theories of

communicative performance would be needed to portray the complex nature of interaction and other components of communicative performance in different socio-cultural contexts of communication.

Highlighting the role of culture in relation to communication, Stephens (1997) conducted a study in an attempt to consider the problem of cultural stereo-typing in work on intercultural communication. Participants were twelve Chinese scholars who were given the opportunity to reflect upon and respond in writing to some comments from the earlier related studies. It was argued that the results supported the view of culture as a contested area of discourse, suggesting that communication problems might be more economically explained in terms of aspects of language proficiency rather than cultural differences.

Interested in communicative competence, Benander (1994) explored the role of individual awareness and choice in the acquisition of second language communicative competence, focusing on what students could notice concerning culturally appropriate language use through participating in social interactions. The results revealed that culturally appropriate performance of expected speech acts was more essential for active social interaction than accurate grammar was. In addition, communicative breakdown could result from not having cultural expectations met. Believing that students could be taught to notice culturally appropriate speech acts, the researcher emphasised the importance of training students to notice appropriate language use.

Both Raphael and Ross (1990) implemented a study involving a number of EFL secondary students, with the aim of investigating the relation between student communication and student achievement in settings in which the frequency of cooperation was increased by implementing a highly structured cooperative learning method. There were three main findings: students in the class which faithfully implemented a highly structured version of the cooperative learning programme did not learn as much as the students in the class that rejected the researchers' directions for task structure did, there were large group differences in communication patterns between the two classes, and there were strong correlations between achievement and

communication; only certain kinds of communication occurring in cooperative groups affected student learning.

Ali (1987) conducted a study seeking to develop in the learners, the ability to communicate effectively in the settings they found themselves, by designing an English curriculum for the secondary school students based on the communicative approach. The questions addressed were related to the characteristics of the communicative approach, the design of a curriculum for the secondary school students in the light of those characteristics, and the effect of this curriculum on the performance level of the students. Emphasising the importance of sufficient practice in listening and speaking, the results of the study revealed that oral interaction tests had to be developed to meet the standards, teachers had to be trained in how to set these tests, and schools had to be provided with sufficient audio-visual aids to help in improving EFL students' listening skills.

In brief, the aforementioned studies are of use to practitioners and specialists in the sense that they investigate reality on-site, examining and proposing. In relation to the current research, such studies add a touch of guidance, expanding the scope of the researcher. Wherever we are, and no matter how we feel we can manage to do it the proper way, being enlightened by professionals' vast experience is a blessing; the pleasure of which we ought to enjoy.

2.5.5 EFL/ESL Communication Skills: Concluding Word

The communication process begins when the sender has an idea. The form of the idea may be influenced by complex factors surrounding the sender. These factors include, amongst others, the sender's background, mood, culture, physical surrounding, as well as the context of the situation itself. The way a professor greets people on campus, for example, depends on a number of factors such as culture, type of relationship, and so on. Relating the discussion to EFL/ESL contexts, it would be essential to bear in mind the most essential factors contributing to the effectiveness of the communication process. This entails that, the procedures, activities, and

tasks a practitioner carries out in the EFL/ESL classroom, should all be geared towards promoting communication skills in the long-run.

2.6.1 Research within the Field of Applied linguistics: Introductory Word

This part of the second chapter presents an overview of applied linguistics as it pertains to EFL/ESL field of study, along with research definition and characteristics. Research within the field of applied linguistics is then discussed in relation to major design types as well as ethics. Reflecting on some data collection methods, the current part provides adequate theoretical background relating to the data collection methods of tests, questionnaires, and interviews. The discussion is excluded to these three methods as they are the ones the researcher has employed for the sake of the current study's purposes.

2.6.2 Research within the Field of Applied linguistics

The current research is related to the field of applied linguistics as it pertains to second/foreign language acquisition; hence this part presents an overview of research within the field of applied linguistics. Such an overview is expected to further enrich the reader's knowledge of the study field of applied linguistics.

Before starting to discuss the term research, it would sound more logical to commence the discussion by discussing the term applied linguistics. What is applied linguistics then? Both Davies and Elder (2007) believe that applied linguistics deals with sorting out social problems involving language. The problems applied linguistics deals with are possibly concerned with; firstly, how we can teach languages more effectively. Secondly, how we can enhance the training of translators and interpreters. Thirdly, how we can diagnose speech pathologies more efficiently. Fourthly, how we can evaluate a bilingual programme. Fifthly, how we can set a valid language test. Sixthly, how we can help discuss the language used in a text. Seventhly, how we can decide on the literacy levels of a population study. Eighthly, how we can compare and contrast the acquisition of different languages, European and Asian for example. Ninthly, what

recommendations we can offer to the parties involved such as ministries of education and higher education.

Grabe (2002: 10) defines applied linguistics as a ‘practice-driven discipline that addresses language-based problems in real-world contexts.’ However, Grabe goes on to say that to many critics, applied linguistics is not a discipline. Covering many fields, requiring knowledge in too many areas, and lacking a set of unifying research paradigms, are amongst the main reasons why critics would not agree with Grabe’s definition. According to Schmitt and Celce-Murcia (2002), applied linguistics is using what we know about language, how it is learned, and how it is used, in order to achieve some purpose or solve some problem in the real world (2002: 1). Both researchers believe that applied linguistics covers eighteen topic areas as a minimum. These are: language and its acquisition, language and culture, language and cognition, language and the brain, language and media, language and assessment, language and interaction, language and ideology, language and listening, language and instruction, language and reading, language and policy, language and writing, language and speaking, language and society, language and research methodology, language and technology, and language and translation/interpretation. Out of these areas, the researchers state, the dominant area has been the teaching and learning of second/foreign languages, which is the area the current study is concerned with.

Looked at from the researcher’s perception and conception, applied linguistics is mainly concerned with the purposeful applications of researchers’ proposed solutions to existing problems within the field of language application studies. As far as the current research is concerned, the major area it involves is second/foreign language acquisition. Within the context of this major area, the following areas are discussed thoroughly: EFL literature, EFL communication skills, critical thinking skills, reading skills, writing skills, and language assessment.

That the term applied linguistics has been shed light on so far, how can we define research within the field of applied linguistics, based on what we already know about this discipline? Grant (2010) explains that research in applied linguistics is a process of arriving at answers to questions situated in current understanding, employing a methodologically rigorous way. Research is not about truth but about explanation and utility, that is to say, there is no absolute truth. We do not need to trust the creditability of all previous studies within our areas of specialisation and concern. Instead, we need to gather sufficient data and check it out. Anything we claim to be true should be falsifiable. Research is inspired by enquiry; a question/a number of questions about which the researcher is curious and eager to find logical answers. Research questions, therefore, need to be measurable, answerable, well-formulated, investigative, and appropriate to the field of enquiry as well as to today's requirements and aspirations. Five main characteristics of research within applied linguistics are: empirical, logical, reductive, planned and imaginative. Empirical refers to investigating research issues and checking out data accuracy. Logical refers to carrying out research and drawing inferences in such a logical manner which will ensure research creditability. Reductive refers to reducing the data we gather to include manageable pieces which a researcher needs for achieving main aims. Planned refers to having a clear plan which can show the way and thus guide the researcher throughout the whole process. Lastly, imaginative refers to powers of imagination which will broaden the researcher's vision and enrich his/her intuition.

The approaches to defining research in applied linguistics, according to Brown (2007), vary in systematic means: definitions that list the topics of research, definitions that list the types of research, definitions that enumerate the steps taken throughout the process of research, and definitions that cover the aim of research. Accordingly, it would be so challenging to come up with one single definition which will cover the four areas mentioned above. As far as major types of research in applied linguistics are concerned, Brown believes that they fall into two categories out of which others are derived: secondary and primary. Both library research and literature reviews are subsumed under the heading of secondary research. Primary research, on the other hand, is divided into three sub-categories, out of which other sub-types are also derived: survey, qualitative, and statistical. Survey research includes both interviews and

questionnaires. Qualitative research includes both traditions and techniques. And statistical research includes descriptive, quasi-experimental, experimental, and exploratory.

What is it that makes a good applied linguist researcher? Dornyei (2007) argues that becoming a good applied linguist researcher does not necessarily require decades. While working experience and academic experience undoubtedly help, they are not the main prerequisites to being a successful researcher. Dornyei goes on to emphasise that there are four fundamental features which will help to achieve excellence: genuine curiosity, common sense, good ideas, and a combination of discipline; reliability, and social responsibility. Serious research will inevitably require some hard work and the only way to maintain creativity is to be driven by our passion for the topic. A high level of common sense helps to keep a researcher's feet firmly on the ground. No amount of sophisticated research design or complex technique can be a substitute for creative thinking that is grounded in reality. Finally, a good researcher needs to be disciplined and responsible, which is normally related to the systematic nature of research.

According to McDonough and McDonough (2005), research in language teaching-branch of applied linguistics- is systematic, uses experimental methods, and involves a hypothesis which has to be tested. Research in language teaching can be divided into two types: basic and applied. Basic research often has no immediate practical utility, whereas applied research requires some kind of applicability. According to McDonough and McDonough (2005), what makes good language teaching research can be summed up in four features: interest, originality, specificity, and dissemination of both research questions and findings. When designing a research project, researchers have to address the questions of method(s) choice, research main focus, research topics, timeline, time allotment, participating individuals, scope, review of previous studies in the field, and outcome. As far as both research design and research methodology are concerned, the criteria of objectivity, validity, and reliability should be met. Both McDonough and McDonough (2005) believe that typical research methods include amongst other methods:

questionnaires, observations, think-aloud techniques, interviews, field notes and documents, case studies, numerical analyses, and experiments.

In Nunan's view (2005: 2), research in the field of applied linguistics is mainly concerned with enquiry. Research has two components: process and product. The process is about an area of enquiry and how it is pursued, while the product is the knowledge generated from the process and the initial area to be presented. The process component involves: defining a problem, stating an objective, formulating a hypothesis, collecting data, classification, analysis, and interpretation. Research requires undertaking structured investigation, in order to result in a greater understanding of the chosen area. To conduct a research project efficiently, Nunan (2005: 226-227) argues, a researcher needs to keep in mind a set of questions to be used as a guide whilst carrying out his/her research. These are:

- **Question:** Is the research question worth investigating as well as feasible? Does the research question imply a strong causal relationship between two or more variables? What are the constructs underlying the question, and how are these to be operationalised?
- **Design:** Does the question suggest an experimental or non-experimental design?
- **Method:** What methods are available for investigating the question? Which of these methods are feasible? Is it possible to use more than one data gathering method? What threats are there to the internal and external reliability of the study?
- **Analysis:** Does the study entail statistical or interpretive analysis, or both? Is it necessary to quantify qualitative data, and if so, what means suggest themselves?
- **Presentation:** How can the research be presented?
- **Results:** What are the outcomes of the research? Does the investigation answer the main question the research addresses? Does the research answer other questions? Are the results consistent with the findings of similar studies?

Pica (2005) mentions that second language acquisition research-branch of applied linguistics- is thought to enrich as well as expand insight into the process of language learning compared to the

study of children acquiring their mother tongue. A common theme throughout second language acquisition research has been the need for longitudinal data. Such data, in Pica's view, make an impressive effect in the field of applied linguistics. The contribution classroom practice makes to second language acquisition research necessitates cooperation and coordination between the two main parties concerned: second language acquisition practitioners and second language acquisition researchers. This cooperation and coordination will be expected to yield in better outcomes. Last but not least, both Hatch and Farhady (1982) emphasise that the three key words in research definition are: questions, systematic approach, and answers. As far as research questions are concerned, both curiosity and interest are amongst the most prominent factors in deciding on research questions. Looking at previous research will be reflected positively on researchers, in the sense that they will have a better understanding of the topic, which thus will lead to hypotheses formulation. A hypothesis, according to Hatch and Farhady (1982: 3) is a tentative statement about the outcome of the research.

To conclude, applied linguistics is mainly concerned with the purposeful applications of researchers' proposed solutions to existing problems within the field of language application studies. As far as the current research is concerned, it deals with a problematic issue within the field of foreign language acquisition. Research within the field of applied linguistics is not done for its own sake, but to generate knowledge and to further our understanding. Anything we claim to be true should be the outcome we gain following detailed exploration, investigation, experimentation, and/or examination. Absolute truth is a relative issue constantly influenced by factors such as time, culture, context, setting, and so on. Research cannot be about arriving at absolute truth then, but about seeking answers to questions and issues of concern scientifically. To answer research questions scientifically necessitates the ability to observe purposefully, analyse thoroughly, and respond carefully whilst taking account of previous studies as a guide prior to, throughout, and following the conduct of a research project. What is more, one of the best ways to begin doing something is to fully understand what that thing is. If we want to conduct a research project, for example, then we have to identify what we are going to investigate, why, how, where, when, and for how long. Furthermore, we need to anticipate the problems we are likely to encounter while we try to carry out our research and how to sort out

such problems. We need to consider our aims carefully before we commence our research. In brief, to be logical and sound wise, researchers should be knowledgeable of reality, people's perception of reality, and processes as well as products. Ignoring one aspect is unlikely to yield in valid and reliable data.

2.6.3 Research in Applied Linguistics: Main Design Types

This part presents main design types of research as seen by a number of specialists within the field of applied linguistics. To begin with, Copland, Garton, and Richards (2010) argue that the choice between qualitative and quantitative research is more than a choice of research design; it represents a fundamental difference in ways of seeing the world. The researcher's world view accounts for the kind of research question as well as for the way he/she will be conducting the research. What qualitative research is good for, in brief, is discovering something about the world with the ultimate aim of basing our finding on evidence. A qualitative research is good for the kind of investigations and explorations that many applied linguists are interested in carrying out. A qualitative research gives us a philosophical base, a rationale, and a set of techniques for examining a phenomenon about which we already know something.

Grant (2010) differentiates between two main types of research in applied linguistics: experimental and descriptive. Experimental research refers to conducting an experiment which requires investigating the areas concerned within the assigned field. This type of research involves devoting a considerable amount of time as well as effort to ensure credibility. Descriptive research, by contrast, requires understanding as well as describing a research topic without having to respond with a field action. Grant goes on to explain differences between some further aspects of research: perception and reality. Perception refers to how people interpret phenomena and findings which in reality may not be accurate. Reality normally refers to what is real in terms of phenomena, findings and so on. Another research aspect contrast which Grant discusses is concerned with process and product. Process is related to how something is performed while product is related to the outcome of (a) certain action(s). Last but not least, Grant differentiates between qualitative and quantitative research. Quantitative research is

connected with counting, for example, grades on language tests. Qualitative research, on the other hand, is related to comparing and contrasting different qualities, for example, the processes of learning new EFL/ESL vocabulary. Grant recommends that researchers should not adopt one particular type and neglect others for no justifiable reasons.

Dealing with the different research types in the field of applied linguistics, Brown (2007) presents two major paradigms along with the resulting data types. The two main paradigms are: pure and mixed. The pure paradigm is comprised of exploratory interpretive and analytical-nomological. The exploratory interpretive type requires a non-experimental design and results in qualitative data, while the analytical nomological type requires an experimental or quasi-experimental design and results in quantitative data. The mixed paradigm, on the other hand, includes six types: experimental-qualitative-interpretive, experimental-qualitative-statistical, exploratory-qualitative-statistical, exploratory-quantitative-statistical, exploratory-quantitative-interpretive, and experimental-quantitative-interpretive. The experimental-qualitative-interpretive type requires an experimental or quasi-experimental design and results in qualitative data. The experimental-qualitative-statistical type also requires an experimental or quasi-experimental design and results in qualitative data. The exploratory-qualitative-statistical type requires, in contrast, a non-experimental design and results in qualitative data. The exploratory-quantitative-statistical type also requires a non-experimental design but results in quantitative data. The exploratory-quantitative-interpretive type requires a non-experimental design and results in quantitative data, as well. Lastly, the experimental-quantitative-interpretive type requires an experimental or quasi-experimental design and results in quantitative data.

Dornyei (2007), on the other hand, mentions two types of research: library and empirical. A library research, also called secondary or conceptual, necessitates examining what other researchers have said about a particular issue, and is considered an essential form of enquiry because it would be a waste of time to ignore other researchers' findings and recommendations. Empirical research, also called primary, requires conducting one's own data-based investigation, involving the collection of some sort of data and drawing conclusions based on the gathered data.

In applied linguistics, Dornyei believes, we can find three main types of primary data: quantitative data which is most commonly expressed in numbers, qualitative data which usually involves recorded spoken data that is transcribed to textual form as well as written notes and documents of various types, and language data which involves language samples of various length, elicited from the respondent primarily for the purpose of language analysis.

Commenting on experimental research, Dornyei (2007) believes that the increased use of structural equation modelling makes it possible to make quasi-casual claims about outcomes based on non-experimental, correlation research. Experimental studies in applied linguistics research have also been called intervention research. In applied linguistics, there was a steady stream of intervention studies in the 1960s as part of the methods comparison studies in classroom research, but over the subsequent decades experiments have become less popular for at least two reasons: many of the topics applied linguists are concerned with are not directly related to treatment or intervention, that is, they do not easily lend themselves to manipulation, and experimental research is rather narrow in scope as only one, few or a few variables can be altered at a time. Typical applied linguistic venues such as language classrooms are complex environments whereby many factors play a role simultaneously. An experimental design, concerning one or two variables, may be inadequate to address multivariate patterns and issues. While these limitations are valid, in many situations experimental studies would be feasible and superior to the less-intensive or survey studies that are conducted. A welcome recent trend in this direction has been the emergence of longitudinal investigations of second/foreign language instructional effectiveness.

In Nunan's view (2005:4), the two main types of research in the field of applied linguistics are: qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative research is concerned with understanding human behaviour from the actor's own frame of reference. It can be described as being subjective, discovery-oriented, inductive, valid, and process-oriented. Quantitative research, by contrast, seeks facts without regard to the subjective states of the individuals. It can be described as being objective, verification-oriented, hypothetical-deductive, reliable, and outcome-oriented. Mention

of Nunan should not be made without mention of Duff (2002) and Freeman and Long (1994), who also differentiate between quantitative and qualitative types of research within the field of applied linguistics. Duff (2002) explains that quantitative research includes a variety of designs, approaches, and tools such as surveys and correlations. To many researchers, quantitative research is more scientific, robust, theoretical, and generalisable. Qualitative research, on the other hand, encompasses a broad, expanding assortment of approaches including amongst others, narrative research, life history, content analysis, and so on. Duff goes on to explain that while qualitative research has gained a major foothold in applied linguistics for years, quantitative approaches are still looked at as mainstream. According to Freeman and Long (1994), both quantitative and qualitative research types have a role to play in enhancing our understanding of second language acquisition. What second language acquisition research seeks to ensure is how language teaching can be promoted to enhance learners' language acquisition. To obtain sufficient data for second language acquisition researchers to benefit from, we need to ensure the design of a research methodology which has the ideal combination of attributes to address research questions.

Last but not least, both Hatch and Farhady (1982) think that research in applied linguistics can fall into one of these five major designs: pre-experimental design, true experimental design, quasi-experimental design, ex post facto design, and factorial design. A pre-experimental design is not really considered a model experiment because it does not account for extraneous variables which may have influenced the results. A true experimental design has three characteristics: a control group is present, the students are randomly selected and assigned to the groups, and a pre-test is administered to capture the initial differences between the groups. A quasi-experimental design is a practical compromise between true experimentation and the nature of human language behaviour which a researcher wishes to investigate. An ex post facto design is often used when the researcher does not have control over the selection and manipulation of the independent variable. The researcher in such a case looks at the degree of relationship between the two variables rather than at a cause-and-effect relationship. A factorial design is the addition of more variables to the other designs. There are a number of independent variables and the variables may have one or many levels (for further details, see Hatch and Farhady 1982: 18-30).

To conclude, a research design type is highly determined by one's research questions. Some designs are simple and others are complicated. If we can narrow our topic down, we may be blessed with a fairly simple design. However, for most researches in applied linguistics, especially those conducted in classroom settings, the design may be complex due to settings' circumstances and impositions. In claiming good design, researchers need to justify the choice of the specific research methods logically. An applied linguist researcher also needs to choose a design that allows him/her to share findings as being relevant to other practitioners and other similar settings. In classroom studies, we need to be sensitive to the problems of external and internal validity. A careful choice of research type and design will, therefore, help us avoid many problems and misinterpretations.

2.6.4 Research in Applied Linguistics: Ethical Considerations

Speaking of research basic requirements, this part pinpoints research ethics within the field of applied linguistics. According to many specialists, an essential factor for researchers to consider is research ethics. Lowe (2010), for example, explains that research ethics were first developed around medicine. Later on, different disciplines have introduced their own codes. Relating the discussion to social sciences and humanities, specialists use principles to guide good research practice. These principles can be divided into three areas: respect, justice, and beneficence. Respect entails protecting individual's autonomy as well as ensuring confidentiality, justice ensures participants' safety under all circumstances, and beneficence necessitates maximising good outcomes for all research participants. Different research methods raise different ethical questions. Interview studies, for example, may invade the privacy of participants while action research studies often raise more ethical dilemmas than other forms of studies do. Conducting research can lead to taking increased risks. Even studies which seem safe may not be what they seem. Research ethics should always be considered whether during the research design, during the research process, or during the publishing. In other words, ethical conduct legitimates the entire process. Different disciplines and methodologies face different dilemmas. When it comes to applied linguistics research, harm is not likely to exist throughout the conduct process.

However, it is always essential to ensure the safety of both the researcher as well as the participants throughout the entire process.

Brown (2007) emphasises that, with subjects' ethical considerations in mind, it would be important to avoid subjects' abuse, whatever kind of abuse it is. In addition, rewarding subjects for their participation would be essential as well. As far as analysing responsibilities is concerned, it would be necessary to ensure reporting on the gathered data transparently. Moreover, selecting an appropriate research method would always be crucial. In addition, it would be essential to choose the most appropriate interaction of standards in terms of the purpose of the research project concerned. Research within applied linguistics concerns people's lives in the real world, and therefore, it certainly involves ethical issues. Such issues are more noticeable in qualitative than in quantitative approaches because qualitative research often deals with human private issues; it is concerned with people's views and usually discusses sensitive or critical issues. We cannot deny that ethical issues can often be a hindrance to our investigation. Yet, as human beings, we never accept that research matters more than privacy does. A key ethical dilemma to address, for example, is how seriously we should take the various ethical issues in applied linguistics contexts.

Certain research practices, especially qualitative ones, include elements that muddy the ethical waters. Some examples of such sensitive aspects of research are: the amount of shared information, that is to say, how much information should be shared with the participants about the research so as to avoid causing any response bias or even non-participation. Secondly, relationships, qualitative studies may result in an intimate relationship between researchers and participants, with the former seeking to establish empathy to gain access to the participants' lives. Thirdly, data collection methods, certain methods may remove the participants from their normal activities. Fourthly, anonymity, although ideally participants should remain anonymous, researchers often need to identify the respondents to be able to match their performances on different tasks. Fifthly, handling the collected data, some data collection methods may be a threat to anonymity such as audio recordings and video-taping. Sixthly, ownership of the data, who

owns the collected data and who has complete control in releasing information are amongst the very basic questions to address and consider. Seventhly, sensitive information, participants may reveal some sensitive information which is not concerned with the main aim(s) of the study. Eighthly, testing, the misuse of test scores leads to misinterpretations and problems (Brown: 2007).

Similarly, Dornyei (2007) argues that social research concerns people's lives in the social world and therefore, it inevitably involves ethical issues. Such issues are more acute in qualitative than in quantitative approaches for qualitative research often intrudes more into the human private sphere; it is concerned with people's opinions and often targets sensitive intimate matters. Researchers cannot deny that ethical issues are often a hindrance to investigation. As human beings though, we cannot deny that there is more to life than research. Some of the key ethical dilemmas and issues Dornei discusses are: relationships between the researchers and participants, data collection methods, anonymity, handling the collected data, ownership of the data, sensitive information, and informed consent.

It seems difficult to conduct much research without running into ethical arguments (see Burns: 2000; Cohen, et al.: 2000; and Glesne: 1999). Many participants, for example, may feel obliged to volunteer, for different reasons. Therefore, sorting out all ethical-related problems should be kept in mind at the very outset of implementing research. Seen from Burn's point of view (2000: 18), informed consent is the most fundamental ethical principle; participants must understand the nature and purpose of the research and must consent to participate without coercion. Similarly, Cohen, et al. (2000), and Glesne (1999) think that informed consent can contribute to the empowering of research participants. Through informed consent, study participants are made aware that participation is voluntary and that they may freely choose to stop participation at any point in the study. To avoid ethical problems, Burns (2000) and Glesne (1999) -amongst other researchers- stress the necessity of codes of conduct. Such codes will ensure that: risks to participants are minimised, the rights and welfare of participants are protected, participation is voluntary, and the subject has the right to know the purpose, nature and duration of the study.

To summarise, research integrity is amongst the most essential aspects to consider. Ethical problems can relate to both the subject matter as well as the conduct of the research. Ethical problems can result from conflicting values, and may involve both professional and personal elements. This necessitates emphasising a number of issues. Participants, for example, have the right to be informed about the aims of the study, the tasks they are expected to perform, and the potential consequences of participating in the study. Participants' privacy as well as anonymity should also be stressed, for it is a basic ethical principle that the participants' right to privacy be respected and that participants are within their rights to withdraw from the study. In addition, the right to confidentiality should always be respected. However, we need to make sure that we avoid promising a higher degree of confidentiality than what we can achieve. Referring to participants as numbers rather than names will ensure result confidentiality. Another essential point to consider is the participants' protection from harm, whether mental or physical, that may come to the participants as a result of participating in the research. Not only must we prevent our investigation from causing any harm, but we should also try to ensure that the participants benefit from our research in some way. In some cases, saying a warm *thank you* may be enough; in some other cases researchers can offer the participants some feedback on the results if needed.

2.6.5 Research in Applied Linguistics: Data Collection Methods

As far as data collection methods are concerned, Lumley and Brown (2005), amongst other researchers, describe three main methods: observations, interviews, and questionnaires. Observations can be an end or can be used side by side with follow-up interviews. Interviews have much in common with open-ended questionnaires and are usually used where qualitative descriptions of learning and assessment are needed. Depending on the objective of the research, they can be free, semi-free, semi-structured, or structured. Questionnaires are used as a means of collecting quantitative background information. Open-ended questions, for example, allow respondents to reflect a clear picture of reality. According to a number of researchers, some of the effective data collection methods which can be employed in the field of applied linguistics are: case studies, classroom observations, diary studies, sample studies using introspection, questionnaires, tests, and interviews (see for example Nunan: 2005, Burns: 2000, and Cohen et

al.: 2000). As seen by Cohen, et al. (2000: 44), method and methodology refer to the range of approaches used in research to gather sufficient data for inference and interpretation, as well as for explanation and prediction.

Commenting on qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, both Weir and Roberts (1994) think that qualitative methods are often guided by a search for patterns rather than by hypotheses. They can be described as being descriptive, exploratory, and discovery oriented in terms of purpose. They seek to describe events, attitudes and sets of behaviour in both detail and depth. On the other hand, quantitative methods depend on asking for fixed responses. Quantified data inform us of the frequency with which certain responses are ascribed to the study sample, allowing us to determine whether or not these frequencies are reflected in sub-samples within the data set.

As the researcher has employed the data collection methods of tests, questionnaires, and interviews, the next sub-parts: *A*, *B*, and *C* deal with these three data collection methods in relation to research within the field of applied linguistics in general and second/foreign language acquisition in particular.

A.1 EFL/ESL Language Assessment

The current study project seeks to investigate the effectiveness of utilising fictional texts: novels and short stories, in promoting communicative competence and enhancing critical thinking, on the part of EFL learners. An essential requirement of conducting the current study involves awareness of language assessment. Accordingly, this part of Chapter Two aims to discuss EFL/ESL language testing, including the following points: what language assessment entails, what essential points practitioners should consider, what characteristics a language test has to have, and how practitioners can evaluate EFL/ESL language skills appropriately.

A.2 What does Language Assessment Entail?

Language assessment is an essential requirement for practitioners to meet. In the absence of this component, much of what is done could be missing and/or misinterpreted. This particular part deals with what language assessment entails within the domains of EFL/ESL. To begin with, Ali (2007) explains that the main purposes of assessment are: administrative, placement, exemption, certification, promotion, diagnosis, evaluation of teaching, curriculum and/or research. Coombe et al. (2007) emphasise that assessment is an integral part of the entire curriculum cycle, not something tacked on as an afterthought. Language assessment includes a number of steps, namely, planning, writing test specifications, constructing the assessment, preparing students, and analysing the assessment. According to Chapelle and Brindley (2002), two types of analysis form the basis for quantitative test analysis. These are: correlation analysis and difficulty analysis. Correlation analysis refers to the ways through which test writers can obtain a statistical estimate of the strength of the relationship between two sets of test scores. Difficulty analysis, by contrast, refers to the type of analysis in which the test writer's main concern is determining how difficult each test item is. Both types of analyses are straightforward. The genuine challenge would be to design a study where the analysis results can be used to inform the examiner of the questions that are relevant to the validity of test use.

In terms of language knowledge, both Bachman and Palmer (1996) classify the areas of language knowledge required to gain proficiency into six categories. The list below gives a brief description of their classification.

- **Organisational knowledge:** How utterances/sentences and texts are organised.
- **Grammatical knowledge:** How individual utterances/sentences are organised. This category requires knowledge of vocabulary, syntax, as well as phonology.
- **Textual knowledge:** How utterances/sentences are organised to form texts. This type necessitates knowledge of both cohesion and rhetorical or conversational knowledge.
- **Pragmatic knowledge:** How utterances/sentences and texts are related to the communicative goals of the language user and to the features of the language use setting.

- **Functional knowledge:** How utterances/sentences and texts are related to the communicative goals of language users. The functional knowledge includes knowledge of ideational, manipulative, heuristic, as well as imaginative functions.
- **Sociolinguistic knowledge:** How utterances/sentences and texts are related to features of the language use setting. Sociolinguistic knowledge includes knowledge of dialects/varieties, registers, natural /idiomatic expressions, along with cultural references and figures of speech.

In brief, language assessment is an essential requirement which has to be considered as an integral part of the teaching-learning process. Identifying who, what, why, and how to assess should be amongst the major issues to address throughout the instructional process. The question who necessitates bearing in mind learners' individual needs and differences, the question what requires content analysis of instructional materials, the question why highlights the rationale behind assessment type, while the question how involves assessment methodology.

A.3 EFL/ESL Language Assessment: Points to Consider

What is it that a language practitioner should consider to evaluate a test? Lantaigne (2007) states that, it is crucial for classroom teachers to consider what the implications are for effective teaching and assessment in their choice of assessment type. Traditional tests as well as online tests, with their many questions, allow teachers to sample content from many chapters in the textbook, and the answers for multiple-choice, true/false, matching, and fill-in-the-blank- test questions can be determined in advance, which makes grading easier and less time-consuming than open-ended questions such as essays. On the other hand, performance-based projects such as portfolios, speeches, or other tasks require preparing directions for the tasks as well as rating scales for evaluation, and can be more time-consuming to implement than traditional and online tests.

Seen from Jones's point of view (2005), a test of language should consider the theories prevailing in the field. A communicative perspective; for example, would reflect corpus linguistics; lexical form and meaning; systematic functional linguistics; speech act theory; as well as communicative competence. Practitioners; therefore, are encouraged to consider this issue when administering a language test. When a researcher devises a test, Cohen, et al. (2000) argue, he/she has to consider the purpose of the test, the type of the test, the objectives of the test, the content of the test, the nature of the piloting of the test, the construction of the test, the validity and reliability of the test, and the provision of a manual of instructions for the administration; marking; and data treatment of the test. Cohen, et al. (2000) go on to explain that, the construction and administration of tests is an essential part of the experimental model of research, where a pretest and a posttest have to be devised for the experimental and control groups. The pretest and posttest must adhere to several guidelines: the pretest and posttest must test the same content, the pretest must be the same for the experimental and control groups, and the posttest must be the same for the experimental and control groups.

In conclusion, a language test-if set and conducted properly- is a powerful method of data collection which would enable researchers to collect data of a numerical rather than verbal kind. A researcher has to bear in mind several issues, amongst the most prominent of which are: test type, test method, rubrics, and feedback. Ensuring effective language assessment requires the inclusion of rubrics that have been set properly, considering all factors involved. In addition, highlighting points of strength as well as those of weakness for each individual learner in class is an essential component of language assessment. There is no one best means through which practitioners can provide learners with sufficient feedback. It is, instead, left to each practitioner to act in accordance with the given circumstances. What should matter, however, is that feedback be offered to students both regularly and adequately.

A.4 Characteristics of Effective Language Tests

This part aims to present the main characteristics of effective language tests. To begin with, tests have to be both valid and reliable (McNamara: 2007). Language tests are conducted to reach a

conclusion about the possible general state of a learner's knowledge or ability. To ensure accurate results, therefore, a language test requires technical expertise in terms of both construction and application. Davies and Elder (2005) explain that the reliability of a test refers to its consistency. If the scores on a test are steady, they are then reliable apart from what we test. To ensure accurate test measures, reliability is essential but not adequate; adequacy depends on validity as well. Validity is what gives a test its uniqueness as a measure, but for testers to ensure this test entity, a test requires reliability.

Brown (2004) believes that the aspects of practicality, reliability, validity, and washback should be considered whilst evaluating a test. Practicality is important for instructors who are always busy. Time is always scarce, and teachers need to be able to write, administer, and grade tests in the limited time available. Reliability is a second area of concern for instructors to consider. This aspect necessitates consistency in grading by a particular instructor when evaluating students in speaking and writing, or other areas where measurement tends to be less objective. When grading students' essays, what criteria are used to determine the difference between an *A* paper and a *B* paper? What is done to ensure that the same standards are followed for all students? Such questions address the issue of reliability (Lanteigne, 2007; Bailey, 1998). Validity is a third area of concern for instructors. It does not only consider whether or not the assessment instrument is evaluating the material presented in class (content validity), but it also involves how fully the attribute in question is being measured (construct validity).

The validation of a language test refers to the process of collecting evidence in support of the interpretations we need to make of test scores. Validity is concerned with the extent to which the test tests what it is supposed to test. This devolves on face, content, construct, criterion-related, and concurrent validity. Reliability, on the other hand, is related to the degree of confidence that can be placed in the results and the data, which is often a matter of statistical calculation as well as subsequent test redesigning (Cohen, et al.: 2000). According to Teunissen (2000), typical questions that a tester has to address should be concerned with how to check validity, how to search for errors, and how to locate undetected errors so that final results are not affected by such

errors. As to the detection of errors, the general steps require that a tester: starts with a model which is believed to reflect an adequate description of reality, checks the validity of the null hypothesis once it has been selected, as well as looks for an alternative hypothesis.

In summary, language tests have to be trustworthy, credible, and transferrable. For the language test to enjoy the aforementioned characteristics, it has to meet the requirements of validity and reliability. Validity refers to the extent that we can depend on the instruments which we use. Three main types of test validity are: face validity, content validity, and construct validity. Reliability, on the other hand, refers to the degree to which our claims correspond to the way things are. For example, if a test is re-conducted shortly after it has been conducted first, to what extent are candidates' scores on both tests similar? Logically speaking, the more similar scores are, the more reliable the test is. Besides validity and reliability, the test has to be authentic in terms of text and task. Focus has to be made on test activities that are more relevant to the demands of real-life settings and situations. Moreover, the test has to be practical in terms of time, effort, and money. An extremely long test which would cost much money and require much effort to set and correct might be a burden rather than a key to successful assessment.

A.5 How to Assess EFL/ESL Skills Effectively

Concerned with assessing EFL/ESL students' language performance, this part describes how the skills of reading and writing can be assessed in such a way that quality is ensured. Without such theoretically practical background, this part of language assessment would lack an essential ingredient. The oral language skills, however, are not included in this part since they have not been examined in the current study.

As far as the skill of reading is concerned, Wiens (2007) discusses a number of essential points for examiners to consider. The first principle of writing a good reading test is to follow good testing practice and test what has been taught, considering the way the material has been taught. A second important point to consider is setting test specifications. Test specifications are the

framework of the test, including the length of the exam, the number of sections or reading passages the test will have, the number of questions, and the question types to be used. Another point to take into consideration is the topic of the reading passage. As a general rule, the topic should be related to the topics covered in students' course material. Once a text has been chosen, the next step to consider is to begin writing questions, keeping in mind that the questions need to come equally from all parts of the text, and that they should represent all of the text content. It is also important to remember that the questions should appear in the same order as the text, beginning with an easy question to reduce test anxiety and putting harder questions towards the end. Last but not least, an examiner has to make sure that his/her test includes clear instructions or directions, allocation of marks, word count, and a source citation.

Concerned with literary texts, Beach (2004) proposes a number of steps to be taken by EFL/ESL instructors whilst evaluating students' reading performance. Firstly, formulate aims for teaching literature; ensuring students' needs be met. Secondly, give reader-based feedback to student writing. Thirdly, provide dialogue-journal feedback, training peers for dialogue journal interactions. Fourthly, train peers to give reader-based feedback. Fifthly, conduct a conference with the student about his/her writing. Sixthly, formulate reasons for student difficulties in their response. Seventhly, formulate reasons for judgments of student interpretation. Eighthly, record changes in students' interpretations over time. Ninthly, record changes in students' free/voluntary reading. Instructors are then advised to develop a literature test or exam as well as a portfolio assessment, and analyse a standardised literature achievement test, along with the relationship between the state standards on the one hand, and the state-wide assessments on the other. Lynch (2003), on the other hand, mentions that the testing of reading is most often discussed in terms of skills and sub-skills that define the reading process. Reading theory, along with its models of the reading process, shapes the way such skills should be conceptualised.

Speaking of writing, Paltridge (2004) believes that the history of second language writing assessment comprises of four phases: direct testing such as using essays as a means of writing assessment, multiple-choice testing, portfolio assessment, and the most current phase of focusing

on technological; political; humanistic and ethical aspects of writing assessment. According to Lynch (2003), examiners of the writing skill should consider several aspects of the test situation. When formulating writing tasks, for example, conditions such as length of time, medium of response, and prompt attributes, have to be specified.

As far as the marking of written work is concerned, Huot (1990) thinks that there are three main procedures for directly assessing writing quality: primary trait, analytic, and holistic. Primary trait scoring involves the identification of one or more traits relevant to a specific writing task. These traits are related to the specific rhetorical situation created by the purpose, audience and writing assignments. Analytic scoring focuses on several identifiable qualities germane to good writing. These qualities of good writing are identified, and a paper's quality is judged by how many components of good writing it contains. Holistic scoring reflects a rater's general impression of the quality of a piece of writing. In most holistic rating procedures, scoring guidelines detail which general characteristics represent writing quality for each score of the scale being used.

Briefly speaking, assessment is important not only because it shows us what students know and do not know, but because it also provides teachers and students with feedback. It is essential that students be trained in the skills of test-writing, covering all types of tests and skills. Within each test context, there may be a number of disturbing factors and conditions. Loud noise, for instance, may be a disturbing factor when a test is conducted. Putting all disturbing factors under control, along with adequate examinees' training and preparation, will for certain lead to effective language assessment. We need to look at means of evaluating language other than the traditional quizzes and tests. We should promote meaningful involvement of students with material that is central to our teaching objectives. We also have to construct assessment instruments, based on their primary function: instructional, administrative, and research oriented. To assess effectively, we also need to provide students with feedback on their performance, so that they can be fully aware of their areas of weakness. We cannot simply choose tasks at random. Each assessment situation has demands to be addressed. The idea is to give students the

opportunity to shape their skills in order to see what they are really capable of and, accordingly, maximise their potential and emphasise their success.

B. Questionnaires

How can we define questionnaires as a study tool within the field of applied linguistics research? To begin with, Bloomer (2010) believes that questionnaires are a very popular means of gathering research data. Questionnaires vary in terms of their purpose. Some questionnaires, for example, are intended to find out about some behavioural aspects on the part of study population. Others are intended to test attitudes. Questionnaires may include a mixture of open and closed questions, or may be exclusive to one of these two formats. Open questions require that informants write a sentence/a number of sentences in response to a given question such as indicating personal opinions. Closed questions, by contrast, require that informants give a very specific answer in response to a given question. Speaking in general terms, closed questions are of an objective type or require a very specific answer such as writing gender type. In Bloomer's view, open questions provide masses of data. Closed questions such as multiple choice questions limit the possible responses, but ought to be written very carefully to make sure that one answer to the given question is only possible. Whatever questioning type is employed, questionnaires should be clear and simple. To ensure effective results through utilising questionnaires, three points should be emphasised: conducting a pilot study prior to the distribution of the questionnaire to avoid pitfalls, providing some covering information for informants to know what the researcher is investigating and why, and addressing ethical issues in such a way that informants' rights are stressed.

According to Copland, Garton and Richards (2010), a questionnaire is an instrument designed to gather information by means of analysing responses to a number of questions. Questionnaires can be used to gather objective and subjective data as well as quantitative and qualitative data. According to the three researchers, a questionnaire is the process of eliciting responses to a set of questions, whether spoken or written. In preparing a questionnaire, the researcher needs to identify his/her aim, generate ideas, select appropriate sample, pilot the questionnaire, distribute

the questionnaire to the study sample, analyse informants' responses, and draw conclusions in the light of data analysis. McDonough and McDonough (2005) also believe that questionnaires can serve many research purposes, for example, clarity and precision of data as well as practicality in terms of where to use a questionnaire and how to gather data. Questionnaires can be used in all sizes and shapes. What to include in a questionnaire depends on the kind of information needed, and the kind of analysis proposed. Speaking in general terms, a questionnaire's questions can be: factual-yes/no for example, ranked indicating informants' order of preferences, open-ended requiring some written responses such as conveying one's opinion, and scaled asking for degrees of agreement with certain issues.

Seen from Nunan's point of view (2005), using questionnaires would enable researchers to collect data in field settings, and the data themselves are more amenable to qualification than discursive data such as participant observers' journals and free-form field notes. As far as questionnaire items are concerned, Nunan (2005) classifies them into two categories; namely, open-ended items and closed-ended items. An open item is one in which subjects can decide what to say as well as how to say it. A closed item, on the other hand, is one in which the range of possible responses is determined by the researcher. Questionnaires can consist entirely of open questions, entirely of closed questions, or a mixture of open and closed questions. Burns (2000) as well describes questionnaire items, classifying them into three rather than two categories. These are: open-ended items, closed items, and scale items. Open-ended items provide a frame of reference for respondents' answers, coupled with a minimum of restraint on their expression. Closed items usually allow respondents to choose from two or more fixed alternatives. Scale items are sets of verbal items to which respondents respond by indicating degrees of agreement or disagreement. To avoid pitfalls in questionnaire writing, Cohen, et al. (2000) recommend avoiding: leading questions, complex questions, irritating questions or instructions, and questions that use negatives and double negatives. What is more, for a questionnaire to *function* effectively, it has to be valid and reliable. To ensure valid and reliable results, piloting the questionnaire would be of great importance. A pilot has several advantages such as increasing the reliability, validity, and practicality of the questionnaire. A central issue to be considered

prior to the official distribution of the questionnaire then, is that of involving a representative sample for piloting purposes.

To sum up, a questionnaire is a common means of collecting data. There are different purposes for utilising questionnaires as a study tool in the field of applied linguistics. If set and conducted properly, a questionnaire can be a powerful method of data collection. To ensure questionnaire effectiveness, a researcher has to bear in mind several issues, amongst the most prominent of which are: purpose, length, item type, sequencing, instructions, politeness, validity, reliability, practicality, distribution procedures, and data analysis.

C. Interviews

Interviews have always been one of the most common ways of collecting data in the social studies (Garton and Richards: 2010). Generally speaking, a distinction can be made between directive and non-directive interviews (also known as structured and unstructured). In a structured interview, the interviewer follows a specific agenda as well as controls the flow of the interview along with single details. In an unstructured interview, however, the interviewer does not exclude the interview conduct and details to a number of set issues and questions; instead, interviewees are allowed freedom to discuss related issues and concerns. In almost all cases though, the interview will be based on a specific agenda which has been designed to discuss particular topics, and the interviewer often has a number of set questions prepared in advance. Although structured interviews may not be structured as they seem, the very fact that the interviewer decides the agenda indicates that chances to investigate emerging issues and points may not be possible. Garton and Richards (2010) move on to explain that the most effective interview approach might be that of the semi-structured interview in which the interviewer has a number of questions to guide the discussion towards a certain topic, yet also leaves the interviewees adequate space to convey what may be appropriate to them (see also Baker: 2004, and Schiffrin: 1994).

What are some of the practical considerations to be borne in mind whilst conducting interviews? Garton (2010) argues that timing is an essential factor to consider; it is important that the timing of interview conducts is relevant and convenient to both parties: interviewer and interviewees. Duration is another factor to consider; allowing for considerations such as the scale of the interview, the time available and the concentration span of the two parties involved should all be taken into consideration. A third factor to add is that of the setting: place of interview conduct. Privacy, comfort as well as physical surrounding are amongst the main points to consider in relation to setting. Preparation is also an essential factor contributing to the effective conduct of interviews. In order to make the most of the interview, interviewers have to spend sufficient time in preparing the ground and anticipating any issues/problems that may arise. Further, confidentiality is an important ethical factor to be considered throughout the whole process. There has to be a way of ensuring anonymity. Another fundamental consideration is that of interview-interviewee relationship. The relationship between the two parties involved need not be complicated. Whatever the relationships involved, an interviewer certainly needs to establish and maintain a relationship of trust and respect (see also Holstein and Gubrium: 2004, Silverman: 2001).

To end with, interviews require both data collection and data generation. Interviews can also be seen as jointly constructed events involving both interviewers and interviewees. Depending on a researcher's aim as well as study design, an interview has to be constructed considering all essential practical factors for effective conduct and data collection and data generation.

2.6.6 Research within the Field of Applied Linguistics: Concluding Word

To end with, it is the researcher's profound belief that at the heart of research ethics lies the moral character of the researcher. Researchers within the field of applied linguistics should not falsify or misrepresent evidence, findings or conclusions to prove what they would love to see, neither should they make use of their professional roles for fraudulent purposes. Roughly speaking, then, it is essential to avoid each and every factor that is likely to cause an ethical problem or violate the essence of research ethics throughout the whole process. Research is a

highly dignified mission and task, which researchers should enjoy the blessing of whilst being *ethically pure*.

2.7.1 Gender Differences in Relation to Language Acquisition and Performance: Introductory Word

Gender differences in relation to language performance-reading and writing-is one of the issues that have been tackled for the sake of the current study. Specialists' opinions are generally in favour of females' better language performance, the researcher feels. This section, as such, includes some theoretical background of relevance and use to this issue. It is worthwhile mentioning that gender differences are not amongst the main points of focus in relation to the current study project. Consequently, this section presents some theoretical background briefly, yet informatively.

2.7.2 Gender Differences in Relation to Language Acquisition and Performance: Food for Thought

Research tells us that the way boys and girls use their left and right hemispheres, is markedly different. Many girls have an advantage by being able to use their left-hemisphere strengths in the early grades with speaking, reading, and writing. On the other hand, boys tend to have an advantage in their left hemisphere by being able to recall rules and categories. New technologies that allow researchers to look closely into the brain and observe its activities have shown that there are differences between the sexes in the size of various brain structures and in the parts of the brain men and women use when performing different tasks (Cameron: 2010, Mead: 2006).

Commenting on the main assessment findings of the NAEP (The National Assessment of Educational Progress, USA), Mead (2006) mentions that in general, women have higher scores than men do on most tests of verbal abilities (verbal analogies being an exception), while men have higher scores on tests of visual-spatial abilities: that is, the ability to think in terms of nonverbal, symbolic information. Mathematical abilities are more even, with men performing better on some types of problems such as statistics, while women perform better on others such

as computation, and both genders perform equally well on still others. Much of this research, Mead (2006) adds, is based on studies with adults, college students in particular, but we know that gender differences in cognitive abilities vary with development. Differences in verbal abilities are amongst the first to appear. Vocabulary differences, for example, are seen before children are even two years old, and by the time they enter school, girls are more likely than boys to know the letters and be able to associate letters with sounds.

Stereotypically, girls are good at language, boys at science. Interested in examining this issue of gender-stereotyping, both Pajares and Valiente (2001) conducted a study aiming to establish the degree to which gender differences in the writing achievements and motivation of a mixed group of middle school students were determined by their own underlying stereotypes of gender ability. Based on statistical findings, Pajares and Valiente (2001) concluded that students' attitudes to, and achievements in, writing might have very little to do with gender itself, but much to do with gender stereotypes held by the individual student. This conclusion implies that girls may generally be better motivated, have stronger self-belief and achieve more highly than boys do. This is because their beliefs are generally *feminine* and good achievement in writing is stereotypically a feminine ability. Boys' motivation alters when their beliefs encompass stereotypically feminine understandings.

Coates (1993) mentions that, in sociolinguistic research, gender has emerged as an important variable. One robust finding of sociolinguistic research is that women, like middle class speakers, use proportionally more standard forms, while men, like working class speakers, use proportionally more non-standard forms. Relating the issue of gender differences to that of communicative competence-speaking skill in particular- Coates (2004) thinks that men and women develop differential communicative competence. Such differences have urged researchers to discuss different female and male styles in conversation. Girls acquire linguistic skills at a faster rate than boys do, and develop patterns which differentiate them from boys. In the past, researchers believed that such differences arose from biological differences, but now differences in linguistic usage are usually explained by differences in the linguistic environment

of girls and boys. Language is an essential part of the socialisation process, and children are socialised into culturally appropriate gender roles through language. Learning to perform femininity or masculinity entails amongst other things learning to use gender-appropriate language.

2.7.3 Gender Differences in Relation to Language Acquisition and Performance: Concluding Word

To conclude, gender differences may be the result of culture that emphasises different skills for men and women, and provides both genders different opportunities to develop their abilities. Students' beliefs about their own academic capabilities are very important factors in motivation and influence their academic achievement. Gender differences may arise from biological differences between males and females. Gender differences may be related to the linguistic environment of females and males whereby each gender has to perform either femininity or masculinity.

Educationalists, we need to be aware of such differences and seek to ensure a supportive classroom environment accordingly. All students need to feel psychologically safe and motivated. Our role in this regard is, therefore, to make the classroom an inspiring environment for male and female students, where they can be themselves without putting up a false front.

2.8 Review of Related Literature: Closing Word

The current study project seeks to investigate the effectiveness of utilising fictional texts: novels and short stories, in promoting communicative competence and enhancing critical thinking on the part of EFL learners. The researcher, as such, believes that for her to cover all the related areas would be fruitful, informative and enriching.

Chapter Two, therefore, attempts to discuss all the related areas, highlighting and pinpointing issues and topics of relevance and use to the researcher. The related areas discussed in this chapter are: part one, entering the world of fiction: what main elements and language features to highlight, what theories and approaches to adopt, what activities and procedures to implement, as well as what previous studies to relate to. Part two, reading skills: what reading comprehension entails, points to consider, theories and approaches, proposed activities; procedures and strategies, as well as a number of related studies. Part three, writing skills: theories and approaches, activities; procedures and strategies, as well as a number of related studies. Part four, critical language skills: critical thinking, critical reading, critical writing, strategies; procedures and activities, as well as a number of related studies. Part five, EFL/ESL communication skills: promoting communication skills, teaching in the communicative classroom, as well as a number of related studies. Part six, research within the field of applied linguistics: definition, main design types, ethical considerations, and data collection methods. Part seven, gender differences in relation to language acquisition and performance: food for thought. All these seven areas have been dealt with in relation to the current study's aims and concerns.

The literature review has helped the researcher to identify authors and works in related topic areas, enabling her to evaluate the state of research in the field and giving the current research a conceptual framework. Speaking of the current research's main concerns, the literature review has both constructed and shaped the researcher's image of what it is that would make an effective treatment. Enlightened and guided by the current literature review, the researcher has proposed a course book as well as pedagogic methods to improve EFL students' progress in the areas of acquiring adequate communicative competence as well as critical thinking skills (see Chapters Three and Four for details).

Based on her current research experience in relation to literature review preparation, the researcher recommends two main types of reading for researchers to go through whilst preparing for the literature review chapter, namely, reading for comprehension and critical reading. Reading for comprehension ensures our understanding of the author's aims, study methods,

findings and implications. Critical reading, on the other hand, ensures that we have not only grasped the different readings we have done, but that we are also skeptical towards our own criticism. When it comes to the writing-up of the literature review chapter, researchers have to present major contributions within the field, summarise major agreements and disagreements in the literature, and draw conclusions, demonstrating how the review is related to their main research concerns.

The researcher does not make claims as to have covered all the ground. What the researcher hopes she has done in relation to the current chapter is having provided a clear idea about some of what goes on within the field of second/foreign language acquisition. There are still some other related areas which the researcher discusses in other chapters of the thesis. These are: statistical tests, criteria for selection of literary texts, rationale for utilising fictional texts, and data collection methods (see Chapters One, Three, Four, and Five for literature review relating to the aforementioned areas).

Chapter Three: Conduct of the Study

3.1 Introduction

With the aim of reflecting on the researcher's study treatment- the proposed course- in mind, Chapter Three presents and discusses a number of points and issues to do with the proposed course. The chapter is comprised of seven sections, inclusive of this introduction section. Section two of this chapter introduces the proposed course to the readers, whilst section three moves on to give a theoretical background regarding which literary texts to select and why. Section four reports on the implementation of the proposed course: who, what, why, when, where, and how. Section five presents the proposed course, covering the main aims and targets, principles of selecting novels and short stories for the proposed course, content organisation, some major instructional issues relating to the proposed course such as the researcher's proposed approach, implemented procedures and co-curricular activities and project work used throughout the course. Section six is a comprehensive view of novels and short stories in EFL contexts: what aspects should be examined throughout the reading process as well as oral discussions, what activities can be highly beneficial for learners, what critical reading and writing strategies ought to be stressed, and what language assessment essential issues have to be considered. The last section makes brief comments in conclusion of the main points highlighted.

3.2 The Proposed Course at a Glance

Introducing it with the title **LEARN AND GAIN**, the researcher designed and implemented the proposed fiction course. Initiating a slogan-love it, live it-the proposed course includes fifteen short stories and two novels, which have been selected to illustrate various modes of narration as well as a variety of settings; characters and plots, and to provoke reflection on a range of issues. All texts illustrate how great writers can with their insight and gift for words; help us to see the world we live in, in new probing and exciting ways.

What characterises the proposed course, the researcher believes, is its integration of the skills of literary competence, communicative competence, and critical thinking within the same mould. This essentially combined input incorporates the two receptive skills of listening and reading, and the two productive skills of speaking and writing. Going in harmony with researchers' studies within the field, communicative competence is seen to be made up of four components: grammatical, socio-linguistic, discourse, and strategic (see Chapter Two for theoretical background).

Literary competence, according to the researcher, is made up of four components: linguistic competence, literary appreciation, cultural awareness, and critical response. Critical thinking, roughly speaking, refers to higher order thinking skills which university graduates are required to acquire, in order to ultimately cope with the challenging requirements of today's (see Chapter Two for theoretical background).

3.3 Theoretical Background: Criteria for Selecting Literary Texts

This section sheds light on a highly related area to the current study: which literary texts to select. The aim of discussing this area is for the researcher to show what theoretical background she has based the current research on.

What points should be taken into account when selecting a literary text for teaching purposes in EFL contexts? Carter (2010: 56) mentions that there is a continuing argumentation over the issue of literary-text selection, for the teaching of literature in class. Two views have been prevailing. Firstly, the study of literature is the study of a select number of great authors evaluated according to the enduringly serious nature of their examination of the human condition. Secondly, the concept of literature is relative and as such, attributing value to texts is a non-stable process which depends on the prevalent values and norms of a specific time.

Christopher (1995) suggests that the following points be considered when choosing literary texts for adaptation as well as for self-access basis:

- Linguistic level-in lexical terms.
- Cultural level-in cultural, historical, and social terms.
- Pedagogic role-links with other literatures and life experiences.
- Genre integration and exploration-short stories, novels and novellas, drama, poetry.
- Literary status and conventions-level of adaptability of text.
- Length.

In Hortkorn's view (1988), culture information transfer, and the enhancement of learners' language skills are the principal criteria to be considered in the selection of literary texts for teaching purposes. In addition, two considerations should be taken into account; namely, students' linguistic level and relevance of the text in terms of culture and language. To enable learners to better understand the qualities of good fiction as well as incorporate them in their own writing, Taberski (1987) stresses the importance of topic selection when dealing with fiction. Moreover, stories should be reality-based, or grounded in the students' own experiences. Buckton (1983), on the other hand, believes that when selecting literary texts, the material chosen should be something which the student can grasp fairly readily, and should not be of too great a length. Furthermore, language difficulty must be considered. A glossary of archaic or unusual words or complex phrases can be helpful. The students' own background, interests, and culture need to be considered, to enable students to relate to the subject matter, relying on their own experience.

Brumfit (1981) is of the opinion that the following criteria be taken into consideration when selecting a literary text: linguistic difficulty level which refers to the vocabulary and structure items used in the text, cultural level which refers to the role the target culture plays in terms of content, and length which is also a crucial pedagogical factor especially when an instructor is limited by time constraints. Looked at from Marckwardt's point of view (1981), at the initial stages of reading literature and for some time thereafter, the literature that is read should be contemporary. In addition, it would be helpful to include literature written in as many of the English-speaking countries as possible. With these two principles of selection established, the contemporary and the worldwide, we may proceed to consider other factors that will influence the choice of literature to be taught in the EFL classroom, along with the questions of where it should begin and how it should be presented.

To sum up, it would be safe to state that factors such as language input difficulty, cultural considerations, and interesting content be considered whilst selecting novels and short stories for teaching purposes in the EFL classroom.

3.4 Implementation of the Proposed Course

Seeing this proposed course as her *newly born academic baby*, the overriding question which the researcher has always raised is: 'Why do I implement *what* I implement the *way* I implement?' To ensure quality implementation, therefore, the researcher herself conducted the study in her workplace: Al Ghurair University in Dubai, UAE. The implementation of the current study can be divided into two parts: two essential pre-implementation stages, and three on-site implementation stages. This part of the third chapter reports on these stages in detail.

The first pre-implementation stage was a thorough reading of many related references within the current research's context. This thorough reading has empowered the researcher with both insight and vision as to the what, why, and how questions in relation to the current study. The second pre-implementation stage was designing the proposed course. Initiating the slogan-*love it*,

live it-the designing process of the proposed course was an interesting yet challenging process. The designing and setting process of the proposed course resulted in the following outcomes: setting the main aims and attainment targets, initiating an approach to the field of EFL whilst considering a large number of highly appropriate theories and approaches as seen from the researcher's point of view, selecting two novels and fifteen short stories for inclusion as language input, organising the content of the whole course considering which activities could serve certain objectives for each of the seven sections included in the proposed course, and lastly, setting the course as a whole.

The first on-site implementation stage was piloting the proposed course, which took place in class with two different groups during the academic year 2008-2009. Two short stories were selected for implementation purposes. The implementation was carried out during the first semester with a group of students who were having the Upper Intermediate English course and the TOEFL course successively, and during the second semester with another group of students who were also having the Upper Intermediate English course and the TOEFL course successively (see List of Operational Definitions for details of these two courses). Implementing the pilot study twice was intended to ensure valid, reliable as well as credible results. With reference to the students' comments then, both groups expressed satisfaction with the literary texts as well as language tasks and activities provided. However, the majority expressed concern about the high number of new words used in the two texts.

Involving two different experimental and two different control groups, the second on-site implementation stage of the course was a re-piloting study which took place during the academic year 2009-2010. Prior to and following implementation, the experimental group students were exposed to a pre-post test as well as a pre-post questionnaire set by the researcher. The control group students, on the other hand, were exposed to the pre-post test but were not exposed to the pre-post questionnaire as the questionnaire was concerned with some points relating to the treatment, which the control group students were not exposed to. The two experimental groups were taught the proposed course along with the Upper Intermediate English course and the

TOEFL course during the first and second academic semesters, while the two control groups were only taught the Upper Intermediate English course and the TOEFL course during the same period. The duration of implementation was three hours a week, lasting for fifteen weeks each.

In the light of three English language specialists' recommendations in the UK, the researcher decided to re-conduct the research project introducing a number of modifications; the pre-post test conducted earlier was felt to be in favour of the experimental group as it has a touch of literature. Accordingly, the researcher set and administered another pre-post test which can be seen as a neutral general English language proficiency test in favour of no specific group. Speaking in general terms, EFL tests can gain status in a number of ways, including being based on established tests such as TOEFL, by being trialled extensively, and by analysis of the items and weeding out poor ones. The researcher, therefore, based her pre-post test on TOEFL for its being internationally recognised. Soon after trialling the pre-post test extensively throughout the fall academic semester 2011-2012, the researcher made slight modifications and then administered the test twice-prior to and following implementation-throughout the winter academic semester 2012. Besides introducing a new pre-post test, the researcher conducted a semi-structured interview, seeking some qualitative data. Further, the researcher implemented the proposed course involving the students who registered for the course Communication Skills ENL 102 throughout the winter academic semester 2012. In other words, the students who registered for the Communication Skills course were two sections, one of which was experimental and as such was taught the proposed course, while the other was control, hence was taught the general English course used for teaching Communication Skills at Al Ghurair University. The implementation process lasted for one academic semester, that is to say, forty five hours distributed over fifteen weeks.

Speaking of the main positive points which the researcher enjoyed throughout implementation, they could be summed up as follows: subjects involved positively in the learning process which was reflected in their active responses and participation, and subjects engaged cognitively and affectively with the texts and tasks which was reflected in their noticeable enjoyment and

interest. Some subjects, for example, emphasised that within four months, they could add to their English vocabulary repertoire what they had never been able to, throughout long times of learning English. Some emphasised that they gained the skill of speed reading which they had been in bad need for. Some emphasised that they could further understand English grammar, recognising the what and how and why in meaningful contexts. Some emphasised that they had improved their reading skills in general, and the skills of making judgements, and grasping opinions; facts; and feelings in particular. Some emphasised that they had enhanced their writing skills, summary writing in particular. And some emphasised that they had enjoyed acquiring the skill of appreciating *the beauty of language*. As far as the researcher is concerned, she enjoyed some profound feelings of introducing meaningful instructional input as well as initiating purposeful pedagogical steps, which was thus reflected effectively in her performance as a whole.

Recalling the negative points which the researcher encountered throughout the implementation process, they could be summarised as follows: subjects encountering a number of unfamiliar lexical items while reading, subjects feeling they ought to know each word used in the text, subjects slow reading speed habit, subjects slow writing speed habit, and subjects lacking knowledge of the basic literary concepts and terms in their mother tongue.

In response to each problem, the researcher addressed the what, why, and how questions, taking a number of purposeful actions. Firstly, the researcher provided a glossary including the most difficult words/key words right after each literary text given in the proposed course, so that the problem of encountering a large number of unfamiliar lexical items, which would impede comprehension and slow reading speed, be solved. Secondly, the researcher explained that word-by-word reading would be detrimental, and guided subjects towards employing a number of appropriate guessing strategies whilst reading, so that they would no longer feel low towards unknowing the meaning of each single word in the text. Thirdly, the researcher emphasised the importance of speed reading skills, offering adequate practice in this skill and assigning a time limit for each task subjects carried out, so that the problem of slow reading habit be sorted out.

Fourthly, the researcher asked for performing the writing tasks included in the proposed course both inside and outside class, assigning a time limit for each task and offering subjects a bonus mark for having submitted the task assigned on time, so that the problem of slow writing habit be minimised. Fifthly, the researcher ensured adequate explanations be given to the subjects regarding the main literary concepts and terms. She, on more than one occasion, had to resort to the subjects' native language-Arabic-giving an example and then relating it to English, so that subjects lacking sufficient knowledge of the basic literary terms and concepts be worked out. Sixthly and most importantly, the researcher sought to offer much and much practice in all four language skills, making sure that subjects could involve in and identify with what was offered throughout the implementation process.

As far as the taught texts are concerned, the two texts presented to the pilot study's groups were: Eveline by James Joyce and The Far and the Near by Thomas Wolfe. The texts presented to the experimental group students were: Eveline by James Joyce, The Far and the Near by Thomas Wolfe, The Lady or the Tiger by Frank R. Stockton, The Necklace by Guy de Maupassant, The Pieces of Silver by Karl Sealy, Three is a Lucky Number by Margery Allingha, and the first three chapters of the novel Animal Farm by George Orwell. It is worthwhile mentioning in this context that the selection of the aforementioned literary texts is due to the fact that these texts belong to a variety of genres, language styles, settings, as well as themes which would thus indicate exposing subjects to a variety of literary experiences.

The course syllabus below portrays, in brief, what the researcher taught and conducted in class along with the related course data. All the texts which were discussed throughout the winter semester 2012 are provided below, along with dates of implementation and types of assessment carried out then.



COURSE SYLLABUS

Academic Year 2011 – 2012, Semester - Winter

COURSE INFORMATION

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Course Title: | Communication Skills |
| Course Code: | ENL 102 |
| Course Credit: | 3 Credit Hours (3 Hrs Theory and 0 Hrs Lab/Project Work) |
| Course Pre-requisite(s): | Nil |
| Course Co-requisite(s): | Nil |

FACULTY INFORMATION

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Instructor's Name: | Suhair Al Alami |
| Office Location: | DFGS/2 nd Floor |
| Office Telephone: | 04-4200223 Ext. 428 |
| Office Hours: | Sunday, Tuesday & Thursday: 10:00-12:00, Monday & Wednesday: 18:00-19:30 |
| E-mail: | alami@agu.ac.ae |

COURSE DETAILS

Course Description

Designed for contexts in which students from a variety of disciplines are enrolled, the course *Communication Skills* addresses a wide range of interests. Adopting the slogan *nothing in life is more important than the ability to communicate effectively*, the course aims to promote students' communicative competence in English. In so doing, focus is made on enhancing socio-linguistic competence, strategic competence, discourse competence, and linguistic competence whilst reflecting the latest trends in today's world.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

On successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate adequate knowledge of language norms and conventions.
2. Communicate orally with native and non-native speakers of English, manipulating language as appropriate.
3. Read for a range of purposes, demonstrating adequate comprehension of written texts.
4. Write for a range of purposes to convey meaning in language appropriate to purpose and audience.

TEACHING SCHEDULE

| Week(s) | Topic | Reference in the Textbook/ Course Material | Course Assessment | |
|---------|----------------------------------|---|---|----------|
| | | | Assignment/ Test/Project | Due Date |
| 1 | Course orientation | Course syllabus | | Week 1 |
| 2 | Introductory Unit | Learn and Gain | Pre-post test Pre-post questionnaire | Week 2 |
| 3 | The Necklace | Learn and Gain | Portfolio | Week 3 |
| 4 | Eveline | Learn and Gain | Portfolio | Week 4 |
| 5 | Three is a Lucky Number | Learn and Gain | Portfolio | Week 5 |
| 6 | The Pieces of Silver | Learn and Gain | Portfolio | Week 6 |
| 7 | The Pieces of Silver (continued) | Learn and Gain | First test | Week 7 |
| 8 | The Far and the Near | Learn and Gain | Portfolio | Week 8 |
| 9 & 10 | The Lady or the Tiger | Learn and Gain | Portfolio Semi-structured interview | Week 10 |
| 11 | Animal Farm: Chapter One | Learn and Gain | Portfolio | Week 11 |

| | | | | |
|----|----------------------------|----------------|---|---------|
| 12 | Animal Farm: Chapter Two | Learn and Gain | Portfolio | Week 12 |
| 13 | Animal Farm: Chapter Three | Learn and Gain | Portfolio | Week 13 |
| 14 | Assessment of the course | | Pre-post test Pre-post questionnaire Semi-structured interview Second test | Week 14 |
| 15 | Project Work | | Project submission and presentation | Week 15 |

TEACHING PEDAGOGY

The lecturer employs an eclectic approach, thus adopting what seems appropriate in relation to the teaching situation itself. The approaches which the lecturer adopts for teaching the course are: stylistics, literary criticism, communicative approach, semantic approach, multiple-intelligences approach, process-writing approach, student-centeredness approach, cultural approach, and communicative critical language approach.

TEXT/REFERENCE BOOK/COURSE MATERIAL

Textbook

- Al Alami, S. *Learn and Gain* (for research implementation purposes).

Recommended Book

- Brook-Hart, G. (2006). *Business Benchmark*, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Recommended Websites

<http://a4esl.org>

http://english_page.com

<http://eslus.com>

<http://www.johnsesl.com>

<http://eslgold.com>

<http://www.speak-read-write.com>

<http://www.enn.com>

<http://www.manythings.org>

<http://www.englishskills.com>

<http://www.english-corner-online.com>

LEARNING RESOURCES

- Lectures delivered by the instructor throughout the semester
- AGU blackboard
- AGU language laboratory
- AGU library

COURSE ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

The student's performance is assessed through a number of evaluation methods such as homework, class assignments, projects, tests, end-of-semester examination, and so on. The information concerning the appropriate distribution of grade weight amongst various assessment items and their corresponding linkage with the stated CLOs is provided in the following table.

Assessment Items, Grade Weight, and Corresponding Linkage with CLOs

| Assessment Tool/Component (planned to be used in course) | | Grade Weight | Course Learning Outcomes | | | |
|---|---|--------------|--------------------------|---|---|---|
| No. | Category | % | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 1. | On-going assessment: attendance, homework and class participation | 10 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2. | Tests: First test | 15 | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |

| | | | | | | |
|----|--|----|---|---|---|---|
| | Second test | 15 | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| 3. | Projects and presentations | 20 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 4. | Final test | 40 | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| 5. | Pre-post test (for research implementation purposes) | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES

The students are required to fully understand and observe the following policies of the university.

Attendance Policy

AGU students are required to attend and participate fully in the classes, laboratories, workshops and other sessions scheduled for their respective course(s). The students should avoid being late in the classes as four occasions of lateness will be counted as one absence in the course. In accordance with the University's Attendance Policy, the instructor shall enforce the following penalties in case a student misses his/her classes frequently.

| Number of Absences | Penalty |
|---|----------------------------|
| 5 % of the total number of classes in the semester (without a legitimate reason) | Documented Verbal Warning |
| 15 % of the total number of classes in the semester (without a legitimate reason) | Written Warning |
| 25 % of the total number of classes in the semester (for any reason) | Withdrawal Fail "WF Grade" |

In case the students miss a class, they are responsible to complete any missing assignment or task assigned during that particular class with the permission of their instructor(s). The students are also required to explain the reason for missing a particular class. In case, a student shows a lack of interest in participation the instructor may refer the student to his/her academic advisor. The students must also read and comprehend the “Attendance Policy” (*Student Handbook 2008-2009, Section 2.16*) which is published in the Student Handbook 2009-2010.

Academic Integrity Policy

AGU is committed to enforce strict code of academic integrity in its academic pursuits. The academic integrity code of the university prohibits all forms of academic dishonesty that include cheating and plagiarism and applies to all courses, assignments, projects reports/dissertations or exams completed by its students. The University does not tolerate any violation of academic misconduct and shall impose a strict system of penalties. The details of these penalties are given below.

| | | | | |
|--|--|--------|---|---|
| Offences Relating to Plagiarism | Minor Offence | First | Faculty may deduct marks or award ZERO CREDIT or give a verbal warning telling the consequences of repeating the offence and ask the student to either complete the same task again or re-submit another assignment with some changes in the questions or nature of the required work | Faculty |
| | For an instance of plagiarism in the class tasks such as assignment, lab report etc. having a minor contribution (less than 10%) to the course grade | Repeat | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Award ZERO CREDIT (0 marks) in this particular course task and assign extra work if appropriate (such extra work does not make up for the zero credit on this course element) and refer this student to the College Dean/HOD 2. The College Dean/HOD will counsel the student and issue a written warning and may also impose a penalty of reducing 5 marks in the final course grade | For action 1 (Faculty) For action 2 (HOD/Dean) |
| | Major Offence | First | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Award ZERO CREDIT (0 marks) in this particular course task and refer this student to the College Dean/HOD 2. The College Dean/HOD will counsel the student and issue a written warning | For action 1 (Faculty) For action 2 (HOD/Dean) |

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|--------|--|---|
| | project report etc. having a significant contribution (more than 10%) to the course grade. Any offence committed after a written warning has been issued or a penalty has been imposed, should be treated as a repeat major offence. | | | |
| | | Repeat | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Award 0 marks in the task and refer this matter to the College Dean/HOD who may impose a penalty of 10 marks reduction in the final course grade or refer this matter to the Academic Honesty and Integrity Committee for further consideration and action. 2. Academic Honesty and Integrity Committee may award an “F” grade for repeat offenders. | <p>For action 1 (Faculty/HOD/Dean)</p> <p>For action 2 (Academic Honesty and Integrity Committee)</p> |
| Offences Relating to Cheating | Minor Offence For an instance of cheating in the class test/quiz/exam (this includes the possession and use of unauthorized material or aid) | First | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Award 0 marks in the test/quiz/exam and refer this student to the College Dean/HOD 2. The College Dean/HOD will counsel the student and issue a written warning | <p>For action 1 (Faculty)</p> <p>For action 2 (HOD/Dean)</p> |
| | Major Offence For an instance of cheating in the semester-end or final examination (this includes the possession and use of unauthorized material or aid or any violation of exam regulations). Any offence committed after a written warning has been issued or a penalty has been imposed, should be treated as a repeat major offence that should be referred to the Academic Honesty and Integrity Committee through respective Dean or HOD | First | Impose a penalty of “F” grade in that course and/or suspension from the university for one semester | Academic Honesty and Integrity Committee |
| | | Repeat | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Award 0 marks in the test/quiz/exam and refer this case to the Academic Honesty and Integrity Committee through College Dean/HOD 2. Academic Honesty and Integrity Committee may award any one or a combination of the following penalties: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Penalty of ‘F’ grade in the course. • Penalty of “F” grade in the course together with suspension from classes for one semester • For repeated violations a student may be dismissed permanently from the university. | <p>For action 1 (Faculty)</p> <p>For action 2 (Academic Honesty and Integrity Committee)</p> |
| | | | | |

Candidate must bring his/her valid identity issued by the university (i.e., student ID card) and present it to the instructor or invigilator to sit for all examinations (including the tests/examinations conducted in the class during the semester). Any student who will fail to present a valid ID in a particular test/examination shall not be allowed to sit for that test or examination. The students must also read and comprehend the “Academic Integrity Code” (*Student Handbook 2009-2010, Section 2.17 & 2.18*) and “Examination Rules” (*Student Handbook 2008-2009, Section 2.19*) of the University which are published in the Student Handbook 2009-2010.

Grading System

The University uses the relative grading system which is based on a four-point scale. An overall grade will be assigned on the following grading scale.

| Description | Excellent | Very Good (high) | Very Good | Good (high) | Good | Fair | Fair | Fail | Withdrawal Failure |
|-------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|----------------|------|------|------|------|-----------------------|
| Letter Code | A | B+ | B | C+ | C | D+ | D | F | WF |
| Points | 4 | 3.5 | 3 | 2.5 | 2 | 1.5 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

The academic performance in any semester is indicated by the Grade Point Average (GPA). The GPA is calculated as follows: $GPA = \text{Total Credit Points in a semester} \div \text{Total Credit Hours in a semester}$. The overall academic performance in all semesters is given by the Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA). This CGPA is calculated as follows: $CGPA = \text{Overall Total Credit Points} \div \text{Overall Credit Hours}$. The students must also read and comprehend the “Grading System” (*Student Handbook 2009-2010, Section 2.10*) of the University which is published in the Student Handbook 2009-2010.

3.5 The Proposed Course in Perspective

This section aims to portray a transparent picture of the researcher's proposed course: **LEARN AND GAIN**. Intended to achieve this aim, the present section presents the proposed course in terms of the general aims and main targets, content organisation, criteria for selecting short stories and novels, points for practitioners to consider, recommended approaches, the researcher's initiated approach: communicative critical language competence approach, implemented procedures, and co-curricular activities used throughout the semester. Table one below reveals the steps which the researcher took for the purpose of setting the components and specifications of the proposed course.

Table One: Steps Taken for Setting the Components and Specifications of the Proposed Course

| Number | Step |
|--------|---|
| One | Identification of students' needs. |
| Two | Thorough readings of pertinent literature. |
| Three | Setting attainment targets and main aims. |
| Four | Selection of skills for enhancement. |
| Five | Deciding on criteria for selecting novels and short stories. |
| Six | Choosing <i>raw material</i> : fifteen short stories and two novels, in the light of set criteria. |
| Seven | Adopting a number of approaches for teaching purposes, besides introducing the researcher's approach. |
| Eight | Designing instructional activities to go with the material. |
| Nine | Highlighting appropriate means of assessment for course evaluation. |

3.5.1 The Proposed Course: General Aims and Main Targets

Upon the completion of the proposed course, learners are expected to:

- Read to find and handle information for a range of purposes, as well as read to enjoy and respond to a variety of texts.
- Write for a range of purposes, to convey meaning in language appropriate to purpose and audience.

Learners as such will be able to:

- Identify the theme, diction, plot, writer's attitude, character's mood, conflict, and genre.
- Recognise variations in vocabulary according to the theme, purpose and situation.
- Recognise symbolism, irony and cohesion devices.
- Differentiate between denotations and connotations used.
- Shape chronological writing using appropriate cohesion devices.

In addition, learners are required to develop their abilities in reading critically. In so doing, they will be able to:

- Distinguish facts, opinions and reasoned justifications.
- Grasp feelings, opinions and attitudes implied.
- Deduce meaning of unfamiliar lexical items from context.
- Make judgements based upon personal knowledge and experience.

Moreover, learners are supposed to improve their abilities in writing critically. In so doing, they will be able to:

- Write coherent pieces of written discourse.
- Utilise cohesive devices in a written piece appropriately.

3.5.2 The Proposed Course: Content Organisation

LEARN AND GAIN is comprised of seven main sections. This part presents the sections in sequence, along with the specific aims for each section.

- I. **Warm-up.** The aim of this section is to arouse learners' motivation. This section includes two instructional activities: brainstorming and advance organisers.

- II. **Reading in Action.** The aim of this section is to promote foreign language reading skills with particular emphasis on critical reading. This section includes the following:
 - **As you read find out** (speed reading for literal comprehension).
 - **Keeping track** (reading for detailed comprehension).
 - **Close study** (focus on story elements – character, plot, setting, style, theme, and narrator).
 - **Reader's response** (responding to literary texts making critical judgements).
 - **Follow up** (enrichment activities such as cultural connections and reading games).

- III. **Language Practice.** The aim of this section is to expand learners' knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, as well as instil in them an appreciation sense of literary devices used in the text. This section includes the following:
 - **Word finder:** vocabulary in context.
 - **Grammar focus:** grammar in context.
 - **Literary qualities:** literary devices in context.

- IV. **Oral Production.** The aim of this section is to enhance listening and speaking skills through creating life-like situations in class.

- V. **Writer's Workshop.** The aim of this section is to improve writing skills by focusing on a variety of writing purposes and styles.

- VI. **Self-Evaluation.** The aim of this section is for learners to reflect on their progress in English, using the charts provided for this section.

VII. Building up Your Portfolio. The aim of this section is to offer further practice in all four language skills, whilst emphasising learner's autonomy. The ultimate aim in the long-run is to equip EFL learners with language proficiency, communication competencies, and critical thinking.

3.5.3 The Proposed Course: Criteria for Selecting Short Stories and Novels

Reading for pleasure, motivation increase, and the enhancement of learning fun are amongst the principal requirements to be met when dealing with the proposed course. To meet such requirements; therefore, the overriding question in selecting a short story/novel for the proposed course is, how this short story/novel can improve the learning process and increase its effectiveness.

A number of criteria are being considered when selecting a novel/short story for the proposed course. These are:

- **Language complexity.** A text has to be of the *right* language- complexity level, that is to say, it should be neither too difficult nor too easy, or else, it will be either too challenging or too simple to deal with. Language complexity, the researcher believes, can be measured in terms of the vocabulary; grammar; and structure used in a text, considering the extent to which such language elements are frequent/infrequent; standard/colloquial; familiar/unfamiliar; and modern/archaic. Normally, the more frequent; modern; familiar as well as standard a piece of language is, the easier for an EFL learner to deal with.

- **Cultural appropriateness.** Opening the door for EFL students to the foreign culture, a literary text can be used to enrich cultural awareness (Hall: 2007, Chen: 2006, and Reese: 2002). To maximise the effectiveness of using literary texts -the researcher believes- a text has to be appropriate in terms of cultural content; it should not be culturally offensive. Furthermore, "cultural allusion" where unfamiliar cultural content can be one of the contributing factors which leads to learners' failure in understanding a literary text, has to be avoided (see Baba: 2008).

- **Length.** A text has to be practical in terms of length; it should not be too long a text, or else, it may be time-consuming in contexts where the time factor is really crucial.

- **Variety.** Variety in terms of theme, setting, and style exposes students to different experiences, and as such, is expected to be of use and interest.

- **Relative contemporary.** Considering EFL contexts where learners are mainly interested to learn English for communication purposes, language familiarity has a role to play. Part of what makes language familiar is the era during which it is used. Old English, in such a situation, may not be of genuine support.

- **Authenticity.** A text has to be authentic rather than simplified, to expose learners to language used for genuine purposes.

- **Age group.** A text has to suit the target group, in terms of both theme and content. An eighteen-year old learner, for example, is unlikely to be interested in reading a text dealing merely with early childhood concerns.

- **Moral/Values.** A text has to highlight/pinpoint/touch upon a human value-whether explicitly or implicitly- so that in the long run, readers will internalise a set of values.

To end with, the researcher would like to make it clear that, the proposed course includes short stories and novels which were selected ensuring that the criteria described above had been considered. Table two below is provided in this part for documentation purposes.

Table Two: The Researcher's Criteria for Selecting Short Stories and Novels

| Text | Variety in Terms of Setting and Style: Author | Relative Contemporary: Year of Publication | Length: Word Count | Language Complexity | Cultural Appropriateness | Authenticity | Age Group | Moral/Values |
|-----------------------|--|---|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Among the Dahlias | William Sansom-British | 1957 | 3,083 | Reasonable | Appropriate | Authentic | Appropriate | Relevant |
| Animal Farm | George Orwell-British | 1946 | 30,061 | Reasonable | Appropriate | Authentic | Appropriate | Relevant |
| Eveline | James Joyce-Irish | 1914 | 1,837 | Reasonable | Appropriate | Authentic | Appropriate | Relevant |
| Great Expectations | Charles Dickens-British | 1862 | 186,944 | Reasonable | Appropriate | Authentic | Appropriate | Relevant |
| How's Your Mother | Simon Brett-British | 1983 | 2,415 | Reasonable | Appropriate | Authentic | Appropriate | Relevant |
| The Budget | Mario Benedetti-Uruguayan | 1949 | 2,568 | Reasonable | Appropriate | Authentic | Appropriate | Relevant |
| The Escape | Millie Murray-Jamaican | 1986 | 3,406 | Reasonable | Appropriate | Authentic | Appropriate | Relevant |
| The Far and the Near | Thomas Wolfe-American | 1935 | 1,437 | Reasonable | Appropriate | Authentic | Appropriate | Relevant |
| The Gold Cadillac | Mildred D. Taylor-American | 1998 | 4,984 | Reasonable | Appropriate | Authentic | Appropriate | Relevant |
| The Lady or the Tiger | Frank R. Stockton-American | 1976 | 2,942 | Reasonable | Appropriate | Authentic | Appropriate | Relevant |
| The Lottery Ticket | Anton Chekhov-Russian | 1884 | 2,406 | Reasonable | Appropriate | Authentic | Appropriate | Relevant |
| The Necklace | Guy de Maupassant- | 1885 | 2,731 | Reasonable | Appropriate | Authentic | Appropriate | Relevant |

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------|-------|------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|----------|
| | French | | | | | | | |
| The Pieces of Silver | Karl Sealy-Barbadian | 1976 | 2,550 | Reasonable | Appropriate | Authentic | Appropriate | Relevant |
| The Reward | Lord Dunsany-Irish | 1912 | 1,370 | Reasonable | Appropriate | Authentic | Appropriate | Relevant |
| The Steel Windpipe | Mikhail Bulgakov-Russian | 1919 | 3,765 | Reasonable | Appropriate | Authentic | Appropriate | Relevant |
| Three is a Lucky Number | Margery Allingham-British | 1954 | 2,255 | Reasonable | Appropriate | Authentic | Appropriate | Relevant |
| Through the Tunnel | Doris Lessing-British | 1955 | 4,240 | Reasonable | Appropriate | Authentic | Appropriate | Relevant |
| Woodrow Wilson's Tie | Patricia Highsmith-American | 1972 | 2,930 | Reasonable | Appropriate | Authentic | Appropriate | Relevant |

3.5.4 The Proposed Course: Points to Consider

This part discusses a number of essential points for EFL practitioners to consider, in case they are interested in adopting/adapting the proposed course. It is worthwhile mentioning that the researcher herself devoted and directed her efforts towards the realisation of the points discussed in this part.

For the proposed course to be *functioning* effectively, EFL instructors should provide structured and stimulating opportunities to use language with increasing precision in contexts appropriate to the needs of learners and the world in which they live. Providing such opportunities involves the following:

- **Thinking:** for example, speculating, hypothesising, discovering.
- **Feeling:** for example, describing, reflecting on and describing their feelings.
- **Communicating:** for example, receiving and expressing ideas and information.
- **Making:** for example, stories, letters, projects.

There are then three broad aims instructors are advised to achieve. These are:

- Develop learners' knowledge and skills so that they can realise to the full their ability to understand English and use it accurately.
- Support learners' personal development through language and literature, including intellectual, emotional, aesthetic, social and moral development.
- Develop in learners a range of positive attitudes towards their own language development.

In order to realise these aims, instructors are encouraged to:

- Provide experiences for developing students' capacities to think, feel, communicate, and make.
- Extend students' understanding of the nature, structures and conventions of language.
- Help students develop confidence and pleasure in their own use of language.
- Take full advantage of teaching cultural tolerance and knowledge about language.
- Take advantage of the rich contexts for language development provided by the mass media, computers and drama.

3.5.5 The Proposed Course: Recommended Approaches

The proposed course adopts an eclectic approach, thus selecting what would be appropriate for a particular teaching situation. The researcher, throughout implementation, stressed the employment of the following approaches due to her belief in their effectiveness.

-Stylistics. The linking of the language of linguistics and the analysis of literary texts is essentially the domain of stylistics.

-Literary criticism. Literary criticism produces a distinctive relationship, though not the only one, a text may produce. A short story, for example, becomes a work when it is seen from an interpretive perspective.

- **Attitudinal approach.** The motivation of the reader plays a major role in developing reading skills. Learners, therefore, should be involved in the work, expressing enjoyment and appreciation.

-**Communicative approach.** Learners are encouraged to practise language skills in life-like situations in order to ultimately transfer such skills to real life situations.

-**Semantic approach.** Learners should be after the meaning in the literary text. Because it is literary, the text often says something when it is about something else.

- **Dialectical approach.** Each learner meets the literary text in his/her own way. When teacher and students share their expectations, all participants will emerge with a broader repertoire for appreciating literature, and also, with a more personal and autonomous voice in the target language.

- **Multiple intelligences – based approach.** According to this approach, a teacher should seek to develop all kinds of intelligences: linguistic, logical, spatial, intrapersonal, kinesthetic, interpersonal, naturalist and musical in order to cater for individual differences in class.

- **Process-writing approach.** In process writing, one of the major aims is to develop the learners' autonomous language. The teacher is there to help the learner develop his / her written personal voice in correct language. Literature serves as a model and inspiration for language awareness.

- **Student - centred approach.** Stressing autonomous learning, learners should always be the focal centre of the teaching-learning process.

3.5.6 The Proposed Course: Communicative Critical Language Competence Approach

Aiming to integrate language; literature; communication; and critical thinking within one frame to ensure better academic outcomes, this approach has been proposed and initiated by the researcher. The approach is based upon a number of previous approaches related to the areas involved. The linking of the language of linguistics, the analysis of literary texts, the skills of communication and interaction, and the skills of critical thinking; is essentially the domain of

this approach. Within this domain, listeners and speakers, readers and writers, are all partners. According to this approach, a literary text becomes a work when it is examined from an interpretive perspective. A short story, for example, is extremely valuable in broadening a reader's perspective and empowering him/her with an appreciation vision.

Of paramount concern for this approach is the impact a literary text has on learners as listeners, speakers, readers, and writers. Aesthetic response is conceived in terms of interaction between a text and a learner. Critical discussions of a literary text which restrict themselves to information gained from the text can never be absolute, and should serve as a step ahead of intrinsic insight. This approach assumes that it is the context rather than the individual words that should be an area of concern, for no utterance can properly be absorbed and internalised apart from the context it is originally made within. The language used in a literary text is multi-dimensional. Any word has the potential to function on at least two levels. Although a literary text does communicate, the message is sometimes multi-dimensional, and in many cases there is no one single interpretation. The pre-requisites for the effective study of novels and short stories include amongst others: willingness to entertain risks rather than avoid them, flexibility and openness to diverse cultures and views, and recognition of literary techniques.

To end with, the approach assumes that it can serve four aims: mastering language skills, acquiring communication competencies, appreciating literary techniques, and meeting critical thinking requirements.

3.5.7 Implemented Procedures

This part presents the general procedures which the researcher employed whilst teaching each section throughout the implementation process.

1. Warm up: This section is intended to arouse students' motivation. A suggested procedure for instructors to consider would be:

- Set the task.
- Elicit an example of the kind of answer you expect.
- Ask students to work in pairs / groups.
- Elicit answers from different students asking them to justify their answers.
- Avoid any indications of whether students' predictions are correct.
- Use this stage to introduce / elicit some key vocabulary when appropriate.

11. Reading in Action: For the teaching of the reading section to be conducted effectively, it is essential that practitioners consider the following sequence: cognitive and affective interaction with the story as a whole (as you read find out), exploration of details (keeping track), reconstruction and reshaping of ideas (close study), reflection; evaluation; and appreciation (reader's response reading stage), and further association and reflection (follow-up).

As you read find out: The task set here is reading the story quickly in order to check the answers to the assigned questions. A suggested procedure for instructors to consider would be:

- Allow silent reading of any questions.
- Set a time limit for the reading task.
- Students read silently during the task.
- Elicit the correct answers asking students to indicate where they have found them.
- Write up the answers as you go along.

Keeping track: This activity checks whether or not learners have understood the story in detail. A suggested procedure for instructors to consider would be:

- Students do the task either individually or in groups.
- Elicit answers and comments from the class.
- Develop any ideas and answer any questions they have.

Close study: This activity is intended to focus on one story element at a time: character, plot, setting, theme, style and narrator. Follow the procedure suggested for *keeping track*, allowing time for more detailed and focused reading.

Reader's response: Allow sufficient time for students to relate the story to their own experiences. Accept students' responses encouraging them to express their personal opinions freely.

Follow up: This activity is meant to enrich what has been dealt with before. Encourage students to demonstrate their talents, relating the task to their life and personal experience.

111. Language practice: This section is intended to promote students' learning of vocabulary and grammar in context, as well as enhance their appreciation of language styles used in literary texts. A suggested procedure for practitioners to consider would be:

- Encourage students to guess the meaning of vocabulary items from contexts, and then to use the new vocabulary items in meaningful sentences of their own.
- Encourage students to derive the grammatical/structural rule from the given context, and then to apply it to new contexts giving meaningful examples.
- Encourage aesthetic sense of literary texts by offering students sufficient chances for thorough reading and analysis of the text in hand.

IV. Oral Production: This section includes activities intended to promote oral language skills. A suggested procedure for instructors to consider would be:

- Explain the task.
- Revise key language to be used in the discussion.
- Divide learners into groups, appoint a discussion director and assign roles.
- Give learners a time limit, monitor carefully, and provide adequate feedback.

V. Writer's Workshop. This section handles one writing purpose at a time. A suggested procedure for instructors to consider would be:

- Tell the learners who they are writing for and why.
- Divide class into groups.
- Encourage revising and proofreading by using the revising checklists the course provides.
- Guide students to contribute to the classroom journal to be published by each group during class work.
- Read work aloud only sparingly.
- Offer sufficient encouragement and praise.

VI. Self-Evaluation: This section is for students to self-evaluate their progress in English. Make sure learners fill out the charts provided for this section, objectively and regularly.

VII. Building up Your Portfolio: This section is intended for autonomous learning purposes. Offer support whenever needed.

3.5.8 Co-Curricular Activities Used throughout the Teaching of the Proposed Course

This section presents a number of the co-curricular activities carried out throughout the teaching of the proposed course followed by some recommended websites for different stages.

-Summarise the story

Use a *Story Pyramid* to write an eight-line summary of a story you have read.

Line Direction

1. Name of Character
2. Two words describing one of the main characters
3. Three words describing the setting
4. Four words stating the main problem/issue
5. Five words describing an event at the beginning of the story
6. Six words describing an event in the middle of the story

7. Seven words describing one event at the end of the story
8. Eight words describing the solution to the problem or the end of the story

-Make a jolly postman book

Write different types of letters to stories' main characters.

-Develop point of view by thinking like one of the main characters

Write a specific event or quotation from the story you have chosen, and then depict what the character(s) is/are thinking at that time by either writing the thoughts or drawing pictures inside the outline of the head.

-Compare/Contrast using graphic organisers

After reading two different versions of the same story, create a *Compare and Contrast Diagram* to state both main similarities and differences.

-Write acrostic poems

Choose a key word from one of the stories you have read and write it down the left hand side of a blank paper. You need then to write a poem about the key word, in which each line begins with a letter of the key word.

-Write limerick poems

Limericks are humorous poems which begin by introducing a person and a place. Limericks rhyme *A A B B A*, and have a strong rhythm.

-Write riddles about main characters

Having chosen a number of the stories you have read, write some clues about the main characters belonging to each, in a *Guess Who*.

Recommended websites for different activities and stages

Pre-reading tasks

A. Read-before-you-read

Socio-historical and literary background of author and text:

Web Quest: WebQuest.org

Wiki (PB works): <http://pbworks.com/using-pbworks-individual-classrooms>

B. Write-before-you-read

Write some ideas or events based on your experience.

C. Speak and listen-before-you-read

Record personal experience *Voice boards*: <http://clear.msu.edu/teaching/online/ria>

While-reading tasks

A. Conversations: <http://clear.msu.edu/teaching/online/ria>

B. Audio assignments: <http://clear.msu.edu/teaching/online/ria>

Post-reading tasks

A. Multimedia project: <http://clear.msu.edu/teaching/online/mashup/index>

B. Collaborative non-linear story writing: <http://www.novlet.com/>

C. Communication and interaction: <http://www.english-corner-online.com>

3.6 Novels and Short Stories in EFL/ESL Contexts: Points to Consider

Based on the researcher's experience as a language instructor within the field of EFL for long, this section offers some proposed suggestions, tips and recommendations for language practitioners to consider, so that quality education is ensured in the long-run. The proposed suggestions, tips and recommendations are concerned with short stories and novels in relation to reading, oral discussion, critical thinking, instructional activities, and language assessment within EFL/ESL contexts.

3.6.1 Examining a Story throughout the Reading Process: Questions to Raise

Considering her working experience in the field of EFL, the researcher believes that sufficient comprehension of a novel/short story would require, amongst other examinations, adequate examination of the following areas:

- Language.** Does the language strike readers as unusual in any way?
- Repetition.** Is anything repeated again and again? What is the effect?
- Literal vs. metaphorical.** What literal details are given? What is the effect of that?
- Silence.** What relevant information is not given? What is the effect of that?
- Setting.** What use (if any) is made of the physical setting?
- Narrator.** What kind of narrator is used? Is the narrator a character in the story?
- Perspective.** Through whose eyes is the story told? What is the effect of that?
- Characterisation.** How is a character portrayed?
- Speech.** Does the narrator use direct speech, indirect speech, or some other method?

3.6.2 Instructional Tips for Discussing Novels and Short Stories in the EFL/ESL Classroom

Considering her working experiences within the field of EFL, the researcher advocates exposing learners to as many purposeful reading tasks as possible. To activate this exposure, it would be helpful for practitioners to consider the following points:

- Using the inherent power and natural flow of the story itself as a guide to teaching it.
- Identifying and drawing in students' past experiences through discussion.
- Encouraging students to seek and observe interconnections between aspects of the story.
- Providing preparatory background before approaching difficult vocabulary and allusion.
- Making sure that everyone has a clear understanding of the story line and of the basic relationships among the characters.
- Defining literary terms as necessary, to facilitate student discussion.
- Demonstrating the poetic side of the story.
- Relating the details to the overall pictures.

- Relating the story to other stories and life.
- Relating the story to cultural background, highlighting similarities and differences between the native and non-native cultures.
- Stressing the enjoyment of reading and discussing short stories and novels as a goal.

3.6.3 Short Stories and Novels: Recommended Activities for EFL/ESL Instructional Contexts

Pedagogical activities, when carried out effectively, yield in positive results. It is essential, therefore, that practitioners be aware of what activities to perform, when to perform, why to perform, and how to perform. Based on her experience in the field of EFL teaching for a number of years, this part discusses a number of activities which EFL/ESL practitioners can carry out to emphasise quality teaching of novels and short stories.

Speaking of the language element of syntax, activities which can be carried out to improve students' control of syntactical patterns through short stories include amongst others: dividing sentences into shorter ones followed by recombining the smaller sentences and comparing the result with the original, having students rewrite parts of a story in another tense, and using when and synchronising past tenses to point out cause and effect relationships. Speaking of the language element of vocabulary, activities should not be excluded to explaining the unfamiliar words. Pointing out denotations and positive / negative connotations is no less important.

Oral activities should be devised in such a way that each student has a role to play. Creating pre-discussion activities such as listing is expected to guide student discussions. Conducting a micro-teaching discussion activity would be helpful as well. Creating some story-club discussions would also be beneficial. For these story-club discussions to be functioning effectively, a practitioner is advised to observe students' participation in their discussions, recording both successful and less successful instances of involvement in their discussions. What is more, devising criteria for evaluating students' participation in discussions would be helpful and enlightening.

Whilst focusing on story organisation, one useful activity is compiling a chart of opposite or opposing elements in a story. Another is modifying the ending of the story and discussing the effects alternate endings would have on the story as well as on the reader, or drawing a map of the geographical movement of the story. Considering real-life situations when we read and on many occasions respond in writing, activities which simulate these situations should be devised. Keeping a class journal and contributing in writing to this journal with many writing task-based activities would be useful provided that each student contributes to the journal, and all contributions are read and discussed both thoroughly and positively.

3.6.4 Critical Thinking: Proposed Strategies and Tips for Discussing Literary Texts

This part is concerned with how to enhance students' critical thinking skills. The aim of including this part has to do with the researcher's integrating critical thinking as an essential component of the current study.

To begin with, maintaining students' cognitive engagement is essential for the enhancement of critical thinking skills. Lack of such engagement would, for certain, result in negative outcomes. To maintain students' interest and engagement, it is essential that practitioners call on students randomly, not just those with raised hands. Allowing students sufficient time following a higher level question is also important. Withholding judgement, responding to students' answers in a non-evaluative fashion should be considered as well. Surveying the class, asking how many students agree with the writer's view and why, is no less important. Asking students to unpack their thinking and describe how they arrive at their answers would help in knowing why a particular mistake has been made. Encouraging student questioning, that is to say, allowing students to develop their own questions, is also expected to help promote students' critical thinking skills.

As far as effective instruction in strategic reading is concerned, it is essential to bear in mind the steps it requires. These are: general strategy discussion, teacher modelling, student reading, analysis of strategies used by the teacher or students when thinking aloud, explanation, and discussion of individual strategies on a regular basis. The following paragraph describes two strategies which EFL/ESL students can be trained in, while reading novels and short stories.

The first strategy necessitates that students analyse the whole overview, set purpose, preview, recall and question. Then for each paragraph, they preview and recall, and read and recall. Lastly, they need to reorganise the whole, remembering and reviewing. The second strategy requires that students preview the story, make predictions, set a purpose for reading, check or change predictions while reading, ask themselves questions while reading, look for answers, try to figure out unfamiliar lexical items, and retell the story using their own words.

3.6.5 Novels and Short Stories in EFL/ESL Contexts: Language Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of any instructional course. This particular section discusses two major points which EFL practitioners should consider to ensure quality assessment. These are: appropriate language assessment strategy, and on-going assessment.

A well-thought of assessment strategy would be of great help to practitioners throughout the teaching-learning process. For an assessment strategy to be functioning effectively, it should be manageable, assist the teaching / learning process, employ a variety of techniques, reinforce what students can do, and ensure that students are aware of the criteria used to assess their work. An assessment strategy, as such, should consist of five key elements:

- **Planning:** knowing and sharing what is to be learned.
- **Teaching and learning:** assessment as an essential part of effective teaching and learning.
- **Recording:** summarising success and progress.

- **Reporting:** providing useful feedback to the parties concerned such as parents, students and principals.
- **Evaluating:** using assessment to evaluate teaching and learning, which in effect, will affect the planning process for the next step.

Instructors should be able to judge the effectiveness of their planning and teaching by reconsidering what the learners are learning effectively, the pace of learning of each learner, the relevance of teaching for each learner, and the appropriateness of resources (Al Alami: 2008).

To ensure quality on-going assessment, on the other hand, it is recommended that EFL practitioners consider the following essential points.

- On-going assessment is not a series of tests.
- Assessment activities occur all the time in the normal work of the class; they do not have to be special extras.
- The progress of the learners should be monitored constantly.
- Noting how a learner manipulates the language in any part of class activity can be made as simple as making a tick on paper exercise as the teacher goes round the class. It does not have to take up extra time.
- Having on-going notation of learners' performance gives better motivation to the learners to pay more attention, which therefore, will have a formative effect on their learning as well as on the teaching process (formative assessment).
- The existence of such a log helps the instructor to diagnose how effective he/ she is at giving all the learners chances to participate. It reduces the risk of weaker or more reticent students being overlooked and of brighter and more willing students being dominant (diagnostic assessment).

3.7 Concluding Word

To end with, the aim of the current chapter is to reflect adequately on what has been implemented, why it has been implemented, and how it has been implemented. True it is that we

should seek perfection and look for idealism. Due to variables usually beyond control, however, it is normal not to implement each and everything, the perfect way.

Seeing it her *newly born academic baby*, as mentioned at the outset of this chapter, the researcher would like to state that she is quite satisfied with what she has implemented in relation to the current research project. Perfection on earth is quite impossible to attain!

Chapter Four: Study Methodology and Design

4.1 Introduction

Aiming to offer a comprehensive idea about the current research's methodology and design, the current chapter discusses a number of major points in relation to these two essential research areas. The current chapter, as such, reports on the following points in detail: design, population and sample, setting, variables, sub-questions, hypotheses, ethical considerations, and data collection methods. Bringing the chapter to a logical conclusion, the chapter concludes with a summary of the main points discussed throughout the chapter.

4.2 Current Study: Design

The design a researcher adopts is highly determined by the research's aims and questions. Based on her readings within the area of research design in the field of applied linguistics, the researcher has selected an experimental design for the current research purposes. This particular part discusses the current study's design, along with justifications for using the current study's design instead of any others.

At the outset of the discussion, it would be appropriate to revisit the major aims of the current research project so that the main aims and concerns are re-shed light on, which in turn, would give the reader adequate justification as to why the experimental design has been selected and adopted rather than any others. As stated earlier in Chapters One and Three, towards the end of the university stage, undergraduate students residing in the United Arab Emirates and specialising in subjects other than English are expected- amongst other university requirements- to have acquired adequate communicative competence in English, as well as a repertoire of critical thinking skills which would enable them to encounter the challenges of today's world. Nevertheless, and despite the efforts made in the field of teaching English to EFL university students in the country, the output gained in terms of acquired skills and competencies is still below expectations (Al Alami: 2008). Considering the benefits gained through exposing EFL learners to literary texts, it is the mission of the current research to offer an appropriate *remedy* to

EFL students' disappointing achievements in English, by presenting a fiction course, designed and implemented by the researcher in her workplace. To address questions and realise aims effectively, the current research has adopted an experimental research design, thus incorporating an experimental group and a control group. Prior to and following treatment, both groups were exposed to the same test. The experimental group was exposed to the proposed fiction course mentioned above, while the control group was not. Instead, the control group was exposed to a general English course normally taught to EFL university students residing in the UAE and specialising in subjects other than English. The purpose of including a control group was to compare the two groups' performance prior to and following the teaching of the two courses, to see whether there were any statistically significant differences between the two groups' achievements.

The main strength of experimental research designs, the researcher believes, is that they could be the best and possibly the fully compelling method of establishing cause-effect relationships and evaluating educational innovations. A full pre-post test involving experimental and control groups' design does an excellent job at controlling for the various threats to the validity of the experiment. Using a control group in a study for comparison purposes would be extremely useful; it would ensure the internal validity of the research and allow the researcher to interpret his/her findings confidently. To ensure effective results though, the control group students have to be exactly the same as the experimental group students except that they do not receive the experimental treatment. If the experimental and control groups are equivalent, then we can be fairly confident that any difference(s) between the groups after instruction can be due to the treatment.

On the other hand, the price that has to be paid for adopting experimental research designs might sometimes be high. In order to control all the variables firmly, we may end up with artificial frameworks or environments which in turn will reduce study validity. Experimental studies can sacrifice external validity for enhancing internal validity, which is one reason why the merits of their use in applied linguistics might be questioned. Another drawback is that even though experimental studies can examine only one or two target variables at a time, we often have a

whole range of potential independent variables to test, and in such cases, experimental designs may not be feasible. Reflecting on reality, however, we can rarely control all the factors and variables involved in a situation-whether educational, academic, social, or economic. What is more, to ensure valid, reliable and credible results, it would be more practical to focus on and examine one or two target variables rather than the *whole scenario* of target variables simultaneously. This is because the more closely we examine an issue of concern, the more effective. And the more realistic we tend to be in terms of examination, the more transparent.

To end with, as Pochhacker (2001) explains, choosing one's theoretical framework for a PhD or a research project is not necessarily a matter of objective selection. Some personal, sociological and cultural forces may 'push and pull' the researcher towards or away from a particular approach. However, the researcher should seek to select a theoretical framework which best fits the needs of the study to be conducted. Influenced by her research aims and questions as well as the surrounding academic atmosphere and work requirements, the researcher has realised and estimated that an experimental research design would best fit the needs of the current study, provided that adequate control of all disturbing factors be emphasised.

4.3 Current Study: Population and Sample

The study population is EFL university students residing in the United Arab Emirates and specialising in subjects other than English. Readers may enquire why EFL English language specialist students have been excluded. This is because such a category of students would normally enhance English language skills throughout their four-year university study journey. What is more, the researcher's workplace has no faculty of arts where English is taught as a study major. For ease and practicality of research conduct purposes then, this category of students has been excluded.

We cannot study the whole research area we are interested in; therefore, we need to be selective when it comes to involving study participants. Sampling is seeking to ensure that we have the

proper amount of data and that our data are representative. Roughly speaking, there are two options which we need to weigh: how much data we need to collect and where the data should come from (see Grant: 2010, Nunan: 2005, and Hatch and Farhady: 1982 for details). Speaking of the current research, the study sample is a number of EFL university students studying at Al Ghurair University in Dubai where the researcher works. There were two sections doing the Communication Skills course throughout the winter semester 2012. The section the researcher taught was assigned as an experimental group, while the section taught by one of the researcher's colleagues was assigned as a control group. As explained in chapter one earlier, choosing the Communication Skills course instead of any other English courses is related to the fact that this course is the only English language course at Al Ghurair University which mainly seeks to promote communicative competence on the part of students.

At the outset of the winter academic semester 2012, the researcher explained what she was planning to implement, offering students who registered for her Communication Skills course section the chance to withdraw the course whilst maintaining their money as a student fee deposit. The students who had registered for the researcher's Communication Skills course section and decided not to withdraw, therefore, joined the study with full willingness apart from their previous academic achievements in English. Table three below reveals the composition of the two groups. For confidentiality purposes, students were referred to as numbers rather than names. The letter M stands for male and the letter F for female. In addition, the letter S stands for science colleges and N for non-science colleges.

Table Three: Composition of the Study's Groups

| Number Allotted | University ID Number | Remarks | Number Allotted | University ID Number | Remarks |
|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|---------|
| 1MN | 052122111 | Didn't attend the post-test | 2.1 | 201120231 | |
| 2FN | 062193004 | | 2.2 | 201120006 | |
| 3MS | 064291055 | | 2.3 | 201110233 | |
| 4FN | 072191314 | | 2.4 | 201110159 | |
| 5FN | 072192316 | Didn't fill in the pre- | 2.5 | 20111004 | |

| | | | | | |
|------|-----------|---|------|------------|--|
| | | post questionnaire | | | |
| 6FN | 20080027 | Didn't fill in the pre-post questionnaire | 2.6 | 20112001 | |
| 7MN | 20101229 | | 2.7 | 20101126 | |
| 8MN | 20101280 | | 2.8 | 20101025 | |
| 9MS | 20101354 | | 2.9 | 20090031 | |
| 10MN | 20101509 | | 2.10 | 20080952 | |
| 11MS | 201040004 | | 2.11 | 20090346 | |
| 12MN | 201110003 | | 2.12 | 20080977 | |
| 13MN | 201110023 | | 2.13 | 20080936 | |
| 14FN | 201120110 | | 2.14 | 20080311 | |
| 15MN | 20080687 | Didn't write the post-test | 2.15 | 20080260 | |
| 16MS | 20101026 | | 2.16 | 20080006 | |
| 17MS | 201110057 | | 2.17 | 0811111003 | |
| 18FN | 201110075 | | | | |
| 19MN | 20105013 | | | | |

It is worthwhile mentioning in this context that the control group students who wrote the pre-test were twenty-three. However, six of them did not turn up for the post-test which was due to the fact that some withdrew from the course later, while others were absent on the post-test day. As the researcher is not concerned with the gender and college variables in relation to the control group, the students' numbers were assigned excluding the variables of gender and college.

4.4 Current Study: Setting

The study was conducted by the researcher herself at the Al Ghurair University in Dubai where she works. Study implementation was conducted, going through the following stages:

- Piloting the study's instruments and treatment during the first and second semesters of the academic year 2008-2009, with two different groups who were taking the Upper Intermediate English course as well as the Institutional TOEFL course successively, during the first and second semesters of the academic year 2008-2009.
- Re-piloting the experimental study during the first and second semesters of the academic year 2009-2010, with two different experimental and two different control groups.

- Implementing the experimental study during the winter semester of the academic year 2011-2012, involving one experimental group and one control group.

4.5 Current Study: Variables

It is essential to identify research variables so as to ensure smooth, flexible and proper research conduct and findings. What does the term variable mean though? Grant (2010) divides variables into three types: internal, ordinal, and nominal. Internal variables are conveyed in numbers where there is a 'fixed interval' between each variable. Ordinal variables are conveyed as a position or a number on an ordered scale where using a fixed difference between each value is not necessary. Nominal variables are conveyed through the use of names rather than numbers. Variables can be classified in five main ways: control, intervening, dependent, independent, and moderator. Control variables are variables under control, and as such, they do not influence the study. An example of control variables is gender. Intervening variables are variables which affect our study but a researcher cannot examine properly. An example of intervening variables is state of health. Dependent variables are variables which a researcher wants to study and he/she can put under control throughout the research process. An example of dependent variables is participants' achievement on a test which depends on and varies according to language complexity. Independent variables are variables which do not depend on other variables, but may affect them. An example of independent variables is a literary text used for testing learners' language proficiency. Moderator variables can be found in a study project which involves examining a number of variables to expand research vision through examining how one particular variable may affect another/other variable(s) and to what extent this effect is significant. An example of moderator variables is examining direct and indirect factors which contribute to a person's income such as education, winning a lottery and wealthy parents (for further details, see Nunan: 2005, Hatch and Farhady: 1982, and List of Terms and Abbreviations).

As mentioned previously in the current chapter, the experimental and control groups include males and females; some of whom belonging to non-science colleges: College of Business

Studies and College of Interior Design, and some to colleges of sciences: College of Computing and College of Engineering. The study variables can thus be summed up as follows:

- Independent variable: the proposed course-**LEARN AND GAIN**.
- Dependent variable: students' achievement on the communicative critical competence pre-post test.
- Moderator variables: gender- male/female, college- science/non-science.

4.6 Current Study: Sub-Questions

As described earlier in the current chapter, it is important to formulate research questions in such a way that getting answers would be manageable and practical. A research question has to be measurable, answerable, well-defined, investigative, and appropriate to the concerned field of enquiry as well as to today's world. With this in mind, the current research's questions have been formulated. Within the two major questions mentioned in Chapter One, the following sub-questions have been raised to further investigate the main issues discussed in the current research, whilst at the same time examining the variables mentioned in *part 4.5* above:

I. What differences are there between the experimental and control groups' performance, on the communicative critical reading competence pre-post test?

II. What differences are there between the experimental and control groups' performance, on the communicative critical writing competence pre-post test?

III. What differences are there between the performance of male and that of female experimental group students, on the communicative critical reading competence post-test and on the communicative critical writing competence post-test?

IV. What differences are there between the performance of experimental group students belonging to colleges of science and that of experimental group students belonging to non-science colleges, on the communicative critical reading competence post-test and on the communicative critical writing competence post-test?

4.7 Current Study: Hypotheses

For researchers to analyse data, hypotheses play a significant role. What does a hypothesis refer to in the field of applied linguistics research? Briefly speaking, a hypothesis is the expectation a researcher has regarding what will happen as a result of introducing a novel procedure/treatment to the field. When we gather and analyse data, we can check whether or not our expectations have been true as well as to what extent our expectations have been met. How we analyse the data we have collected requires identifying the items we are concerned with, sorting data out, and finally, marking up the data we have sorted out. These steps are all essential to ensure quality research conduct (Grant: 2010, Hatch and Farhady: 1982).

For the purpose of the current study, a number of hypotheses have been formulated in accordance with the questions given above. These are:

Hypothesis One

There is no statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups' performance on the communicative critical reading competence pre-post test.

Hypothesis Two

There is no statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups' performance on the communicative critical writing competence pre-post test.

Hypothesis Three

There is no statistically significant difference between the performance of male and that of female experimental group students, on the communicative critical reading competence post-test and on the communicative critical writing competence post-test.

Hypothesis Four

There is no statistically significant difference between the performance of experimental group students belonging to non-science colleges and that of experimental group students belonging to science colleges, on the communicative critical reading competence post-test and on the communicative critical writing competence post-test.

4.8 Current Study: Ethical Considerations

Researcher students studying at Aston University need to consider what ethical issues are raised by the research project they are conducting. The *Student Research Ethics: Approval Form (REC1)*, Aston University, requires that all researcher students consider the following points: research aims, research methods, type of informants, methods of access and sampling, and location of fieldwork. In addition, researcher students are required to give full details of all ethical issues which arise from their research such as the: steps taken to address all ethical issues, issues for personal safety of all involved, and steps taken to minimise risks of all types. A researcher student has to include sufficient details about all the aforementioned points, certifying that the information he/she has provided reflects nothing but reality. As far as the current research is concerned, the researcher has filled out Aston's research ethics form, certifying that all the information she has provided is true. This part is intended to sum up the current research's ethical considerations as submitted to the School of Languages and Social Sciences, Aston University.

Details of the type of informant, the method of access and sampling, and the location of fieldwork:

- **Type of Informants:** EFL university students; some of whom are males and some are females; some belong to science colleges and some to non-science colleges. Informants were taking part in the study, with full willingness to participate.
- **Method of Access:** The researcher always had access to informants because they were her students in her workplace.
- **Sampling:** The study population is EFL university students residing in the UAE and specialising in subjects other than English. Subjects are a number of students studying at Al Ghurair University.
- **Location of Fieldwork:** Al Ghurair University in Dubai, UAE.

Details of all ethical issues which arise from this research:

The nature of this current research is academic; it entails no physical dangers or threats. However, the research requires that subjects attend the proposed course, sit for the pre-post test,

respond to the pre-post questionnaire, and take part in the semi-structured interview conducted for the purpose of the current study. In other words, they had to show some commitment and be honest while responding to the questionnaire items. Based on these two requirements, therefore, the study subjects should be willing to participate, in order to ensure effective, valid, and reliable results.

Steps taken to address related ethical issues:

- Prior to implementing the study, subjects were exposed to a detailed orientation during which the researcher explained the aims; requirements; procedures as well as nature of the study.
- Subjects were offered the opportunity to remain anonymous.
- Subjects were offered the right to withdraw from the course at any time whilst retaining the right to claim their money as a student fee deposit.
- Rights and welfare of participants were protected.
- All information was treated with the strictest confidentiality.
- For encouragement and motivation purposes, subjects were offered a *recognition of participation letter*, towards the end of implementation (see Appendix Five).

Issues for the personal safety of the researcher arising from this research:

The nature of the study did not involve any issues to do with the researcher's personal safety.

Steps taken to minimise the risks of personal safety to the researcher:

No steps were required to be taken in this regard.

4.9 Data Collection Methods Utilised in the Current Study: Introduction

Going through many books and magazines within the related areas, the researcher has thought that for her to employ the three data collection methods of tests, questionnaires, and interviews would be sufficient and appropriate. Intended to measure the effectiveness of the proposed course, the instruments of the current study are: a pre-post test conducted involving the experimental and control groups, a pre-post questionnaire administered to the experimental group students, and a semi-structured interview involving the experimental group students. This

part discusses the pre-post test in relation to aims, contents, evaluation criteria, as well as validity and reliability. Furthermore, this section presents the pre-post questionnaire in terms of aims, contents, as well as validity. Last but not least, the current section sheds light on the interviews conducted for the purpose of the current research including questions and responses.

4.9.1 Data Collection Methods Utilised in the Current Study: The Pre-Post Test

A pre-post test was administered to the experimental and control groups, prior to and following implementation. The test incorporated two parts: communicative critical reading competence and communicative critical writing competence (see Appendix Two for details).

I. Aims: The test aimed to measure students' communicative critical language competence, in an attempt to investigate whether or not, the proposed course was of any significant effectiveness, whilst at the same time examining the effects of the other variables involved: gender and college types.

II. Contents: Based on TOEFL, the test incorporated two parts: communicative critical reading and communicative critical writing. The reading part consisted of six passages, all of which were followed by a number of multiple-choice questions. The test was mainly concerned with measuring the following skills:

- Distinguishing facts, opinions, and reasoned justifications.
- Grasping opinions, feelings, and attitudes implied.
- Making judgements based upon personal knowledge and experience.
- Deducing meaning of unfamiliar lexical items from context.

The writing part was comprised of three essay writing tasks: argumentative, descriptive, and process. The test aimed to measure the following writing skills in particular:

- Producing coherent pieces of written discourse.
- Employing cohesion devices in a written piece appropriately.

Each part was allocated thirty marks and allotted forty-five minutes. Prior to conducting the test, the researcher set a table of test specifications. Table four below shows the pre-post test specifications.

Table Four: Pre-Post Test Specifications

| Skill | Question type | Ability measured | Time allotted |
|----------------|----------------------|--|----------------------|
| Reading | Multiple-choice | Distinguishing facts, opinions and reasoned justifications | |
| | Multiple-choice | Deducing meaning of unfamiliar lexical items from context | |
| | Multiple-choice | Grasping opinions, feelings and attitudes implied | |
| | Multiple-choice | Making judgements based upon personal knowledge and experience | |
| | | | 45 minutes |
| Writing | Essay writing | Producing coherent pieces of written discourse | |
| | Essay writing | Employing cohesion devices in a written piece appropriately | |
| | | | 45 minutes |

111. Evaluation criteria: As far as the correction of the reading part is concerned, it is worthwhile mentioning that all the questions were multiple-choice where no writing was involved at all. The correction of the writing part, by contrast, was mainly concerned with topic development relevancy and language use accuracy (see Appendix Two for details).

VI. Validity and Creditability: Prior to conducting the test, the researcher sought the consultation of: her PhD supervisor, Dr. Chinyere Nzekwe-a teaching and learning advisor based in Aston’s Learning Development Centre- and the study’s jury members, so that validity would

be ensured (see Appendix One for names of the study's jury members). Emphasising test creditability, item analysis was conducted to ensure poor test items be deleted or modified. It is worthwhile mentioning that no items were found to be poor. It was only the writing tasks' length that students found to be demanding, and accordingly, each writing task's length (word limit) was made less.

4.9.2 Data Collection Methods Utilised in the Current Study: Student's Questionnaire

A student's questionnaire was administered to the experimental group students, prior to and following the implementation of the proposed course. For further details, see Appendix Three.

I. Aims: The questionnaire aimed to: gather sufficient data about how subjects rated their abilities in dealing with the short story and novel in English, get a clear idea about what story genres subjects preferred most, and form a clear picture about what reading and writing activities subjects practised most, prior to and following treatment.

11. Contents: The questionnaire was comprised of three parts: part one asked for rating one's abilities in dealing with the short story and novel in English, part two required mentioning one's preferences of story genres, and part three necessitated identifying one's reading and writing activities.

11.1. Questionnaire Validity and Reliability: Prior to distributing the questionnaire, the researcher sought the consultation of the supervisor as well as the study's jury members, for the purpose of ensuring questionnaire validity (see Appendix One for names of study's jury members). To ensure questionnaire reliability, ten students were selected randomly during the piloting period, and were asked to fill in the questionnaire twice within two weeks (see Chapter Five for details relating to questionnaire's reliability).

4.9.3 Data Collection Methods Utilised in the Current Study: Semi-Structured Interview

To gather adequate qualitative data, the researcher conducted a semi-structured interview twice; the first one was conducted during the tenth teaching week and the second during the fourteenth

week. Even though it would have been ideal to conduct more interviews, it was the researcher's concern though that her students might not feel comfortable being interviewed many times. Based on the researcher's experience at Al Ghurair University, students usually feel they are over-loaded, and as such, may not welcome the idea of having a lecture extended by, at least, twenty minutes for the purpose of being interviewed, examined, or any other reasons.

The interview the researcher conducted involved the experimental group students, including the following items:

- Which part of the proposed course is the most difficult/demanding? Give reasons.
- Which part of the proposed course is the easiest/least demanding? Give reasons.
- Which part of the proposed course do you enjoy the most? Justify your answer.
- Which part of the proposed course do you enjoy the least? Justify your answer.
- Would you recommend the proposed course to other students? Why/Why not?
- Any comments?

4.10 Concluding Word

Research within the field of applied linguistics is seeking answers to questions and issues of concern. The answers cannot be seen as absolute truth, but as relatively true answers, the creditability of which should be enquired when speaking of different settings, situations, cultures, and so on. Researchers need to begin with identifying their philosophy, methods, approaches, and techniques. What is more, research is not excluded to researchers as it involves other people. When we involve other people, a whole range of considerations arise: how we will involve other people, how we will protect other people, and how we will report on findings.

As far as research design types are concerned, we need first to consider our aims, questions, variables, population as well as sample before adopting a research design. If we do not, then we may endanger the whole research by selecting a design which might not suit the purpose. We need to consider the rationale for the selection of a particular research design. Each and every

research design, as is the case with everything else in life, has its positive as well as drawback points. Highlighting both sides in the light of research priorities and requirements would be enlightening. Once we have identified the groups, we need to consider the most appropriate research design that will allow us to feel confident in discussing findings and generalising them beyond our limited study. Relating the discussion to data collection methods, the researcher has realised that the usefulness of information derived from a data collection method depends largely upon the amount of care that is taken in preparation.

In conclusion, for research to be effective, valid and reliable, it needs evidence. Such evidence can be provided in terms of statistics, variables and quantified data by a quantitative research, which the researcher hopes, she has achieved throughout this current research conduct. Research has to start somewhere; all researchers have to begin with a problem. If the research is to be practicable, it should have a precise focus. Table five below reveals the steps, which the researcher believes, an applied linguist researcher should go through.

Table Five: Research within the Field of Applied Linguistics-Essential Steps

| Step | Action |
|-------------|--|
| One | Identifying research problem/concern |
| Two | Formulating research questions |
| Three | Going through the pertinent literature, comprehending, analysing, and evaluating |
| Four | Proposing appropriate treatment |
| Five | Selecting an appropriate research design |
| Six | Stating study hypotheses in the light of research questions, treatment, and design |
| Seven | Conducting the study |
| Eight | Collecting research data by means of appropriate methods |
| Nine | Analysing data |
| Ten | Arriving at study findings |
| Eleven | Making recommendations |
| Twelve | Suggesting related area(s) of concern for further research |

To end with, the researcher would like to emphasise that the current research project has been conducted, whilst keeping in mind what it is that makes a successful research. The points

detailed in this chapter have all been considered to ensure a successful research achievement within the field of applied linguistics.

Chapter Five: Data Statistical Treatment and Analysis

5.1 Introduction

As explained earlier in Chapters One, Three, and Four, the current study aims to explore the effectiveness of utilising a fiction course in enhancing communicative critical language competence on the part of EFL university learners residing in the United Arab Emirates, and specialising in subjects other than English. The current research adopts an experimental design, thus incorporating an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group was exposed to the proposed course mentioned earlier, while the control group was not. The purpose of including a control group was to compare and contrast the two groups' performance prior to and following the implementation of the proposed treatment, to see whether there were any statistically significant differences. The study tools the researcher used for the sake of the current research project were a pre-post test, a pre-post questionnaire, and a semi-structured interview.

This chapter seeks to achieve two aims; namely, to report on the statistical treatment carried out for the present study purpose, and to comment on the statistical findings based on the statistical treatment. Conclusions, recommendations, and implications are all discussed in Chapter Six. Part two presents some theoretical background of relevance to the current study. Part three reports on the statistical treatment which was conducted for the purpose of the current study and part four deals with the pilot study implemented for the purpose of ensuring study reliability. Relating the findings to the study hypotheses, part five discusses the statistical analysis findings in relation to each of the study hypotheses stated earlier in Chapter Four.

The main purpose for conducting the statistical treatment is to examine the effectiveness of utilising the proposed course in promoting communicative critical language competence, on the part of EFL university students in the United Arab Emirates. Under this wide umbrella, two related issues necessitate some exploration and examination. Firstly, the issue of gender: male vs. female, as to whether or not it has any significant influences on EFL learners' language performance. Secondly, the issue of specialisation: science majored vs. non-science majored, as to whether or not it has any significant impacts on EFL learners' language performance. The

affective domain-learners' attitudes towards literary texts- is partly investigated for enrichment purposes; no hypotheses have been formulated as such.

5.2 Theoretical Background within the Context of Statistical Treatment in Humanities

Statistical tests help with the making of judgements and decisions during the development of tests as well as when they are being used. This part of Chapter Five presents some theoretical background of relevance to the current research project. The rationale behind presenting such theoretical background is to highlight the theoretical background areas upon which the researcher has based her statistical treatment of the current research. To ensure study credibility, the researcher has referred to a number of statistics books, and sought statistics specialists' consultation as well.

The field of statistics-the researcher believes- is rich with its variety of tests which can be implemented for a variety of purposes. For example, some statistical tests can be carried out to reveal students' progress in a particular area. Some can be used to analyse students' responses to a questionnaire's items arranged from best to worst, and so on. Brace et al. (2006) differentiate between two major types of statistical analysis: descriptive and inferential. Descriptive statistics are procedures used to summarise large volumes of data in order to provide the reader with an understanding of what the data look like. Inferential statistics, by contrast, are procedures which allow researchers to go beyond simply describing the data, raising questions about the what, why, and how.

This part of Chapter Five is excluded to the statistical tests of relevance to the current study. These are: *t*-test, and *Mann-Whitney test*. These types of tests belong to two main areas of statistical testing: parametric and non-parametric. Field (2009) differentiates between both types of tests. A parametric test, according to Field (2009), is a test that requires data from one of the large catalogue of distributions that statisticians have described. This term is normally based on the normal distribution that must be met for the test to be accurate: a normal distribution, homogeneity of variance, interval or ratio data, and independence. *T-test* is a good example of

parametric tests. A non-parametric tests, on the other hand, makes fewer assumptions about the type of data on which they can be used. Most of these tests work on the principle of ranking the data; that is, finding the lowest score and giving it a rank of 1, then finding the next highest score and giving it a rank of 2, and so on. Two common non-parametric tests are: the *Mann-Whitney test*, and the *Wilcoxon signed-rank test*.

Which research designs require using parametric tests and which do not? An important aspect of the research design is a consideration of whether the research lends itself to parametric or non-parametric testing. According to Wilcox (2005), the *t-test*, is accurate when distributions are skewed, yet it still can be biased when the assumption of normality is not met. What is more, we need to bear in mind that the shape of the sampling distribution matters as well, not the sample data. One option then is to use a large sample, relying on the central limit theorem. According to the central limit theorem, the sampling distribution should be normal when study samples are large in number. Another useful solution is to use non-parametric tests. These tests, Wilcox (2005) believes, have fewer assumptions than their parametric counterparts and consequently, are useful when our data violate the assumptions of parametric data. The non-parametric counterpart of the *dependent t-test* is called the *Wilcoxon-signed rank test*. The *independent t-test* has two non-parametric counterparts (both extremely similar) called the *Wilcoxon rank-sum test* and the *Mann-Whitney test* (see Wilcox 2005 for details).

So far, mention has been made of *t-test* without explaining what it refers to, in practice. Field (2009: 324) describes the *t-test* as a very *versatile* statistic which can be used to test whether a correlation coefficient is different from 0. It can also be used to test whether a regression coefficient, b , is different from 0. In addition, it can be used to test whether two groups' means are different. Field and Hole (2003) believe that the simplest form of experiment that can be done is one with only one independent variable that is used in only two ways and only one outcome is measured. This involves having an experimental condition and a control group. There are two different *t-tests*, both of which depend on whether the independent variable is manipulated, using the same or different subjects. These are: independent-means *t-test* which is used when there are two experimental conditions involving different subjects who have been

assigned to each condition, and dependent-means *t-test* which is used when there are two experimental conditions involving the same subjects in both conditions of the experiment. Both *t-tests* have a similar rationale in the sense that two samples of data are gathered and the sample means estimated. In addition, under the null hypothesis we assume that the experimental treatment has no effect on the subjects (see List of Terms and Abbreviations).

As far as the *Mann-Whitney test* is concerned, Field (2009: 548-549) explains that this test is conducted by examining differences in the ranked positions of scores in different groups. The first part of the output, therefore, gives a summary of the data after they have been ranked. The *Mann-Whitney test* depends on scores being ranked from lowest to highest. Accordingly, the group with the lowest mean rank is the group with the biggest number of lower scores. The group with the highest mean rank normally has a bigger number of high scores within it. Two tables are provided for this test: the first is used to ascertain which group has the highest scores. This table is useful when we need to interpret a significant result. The second table is used to provide the actual test statistics for the *Mann-Whitney test*, the *Wilcoxon procedure* and the corresponding *z-score*. The important part of the table is the significance value of the test, which gives the two-tailed probability that a test statistic of at least that magnitude is a chance result. This significance value can be used as it is when the researcher has made no prediction as to which group would be different and in what sense. If, however, the researcher has made such a prediction, then we can calculate the one-tailed probability by taking the two-tailed value and dividing it by 2 (see Field 2009 for details).

5.3 Statistical Treatment within the Context of the Current Study

Our understanding about the focus of our research and collecting useful data for analysis is an essential springboard. What is more, it is important to plan, as we collect our data, for the sorts of statistical treatment we should implement. This part deals with two points: how to ensure test reliability using proper statistical treatment, and what statistical tests should be implemented for the sake of the current study purposes. Discussing the appropriate required tests covers two main types of testing: firstly, *t-test*, and secondly, the *Mann-Whitney test*.

To ensure test reliability, a number of researchers recommend administering the same test to a sample of examinees twice within a short time, and then calculating the difference between examinees' scores on the first and second tests. Baker (1992) argues that test unreliability may result from factors and variables outside the test designer's control such as ill health or poor administration conditions. To estimate test reliability, however, Baker advocates using the measurement of correlation coefficient. If a candidate scores highly on both the first and second tests conducted for the sake of testing reliability, then the two sets of scores are correlated, and vice versa.

For the purpose of gathering adequate as well as appropriate data, both the *Mann-Whitney test* and the *t-test* were conducted. In statistics, the *Mann-Whitney test* is a non-parametric statistical hypothesis test for assessing whether one of two samples of independent observations tends to have larger values than the other. On the other hand, a paired samples *t-test* is used when we test the same people twice-prior to and following treatment- to see if there are any significant differences between the two scores. Aiming to compare the experimental group students' achievement on the communicative critical reading competence pre-test and the communicative critical reading competence post-test, as well as to compare the experimental group students' achievement on the communicative critical writing competence pre-test and the communicative critical writing competence post-test, a *paired data t-test* was carried out. This is because this test involves using equal numbers of groups which can be of different sizes. For this particular case, comparisons were made between each student's achievement on the communicative critical reading pre-test and the communicative critical reading post-test, besides each student's achievement on the communicative critical writing pre-test and the communicative critical writing post-test. What we need to do first is to compare the difference between the sample means that we collect to the difference between the sample means that we would expect to obtain if there were no effect. If the standard error is small, then we assume that most samples would have similar means. If the standard error is large, large differences in sample means are more likely. If the difference between the two samples is larger than our initial expectations of differences, we can expect then that there is no effect or that the two samples come from different populations but are typical of their respective population. In such a case, we still need to

examine whether the effect is important in practical terms. To find out whether the effect is substantive, we should use what we know about effect sizes (see Field & Hole 2003 for details).

5.4 Reliability Measurement

For the purpose of ensuring credible as well as reliable outcomes, the researcher conducted a pilot study during the academic year 2008-2009, focusing on three major elements: the proposed course, the pre-post test, and the pre-post student's questionnaire. Based on the subjects' comments on the proposed course, the researcher responded by amending the course in the light of their comments. To ensure test reliability, ten students were chosen randomly during the piloting period, and were tested and re-tested within two weeks. The reliability coefficient was 0.88. This percentage indicates that the test can be considered reliable.

To ensure questionnaire reliability, ten students were selected randomly during the piloting period, and were asked to fill the questionnaire out twice within two weeks. The correlation coefficient was calculated for all items. Table six below shows the results.

Table Six: Correlation Coefficient between Students' Responses to the Items Incorporated in the Student's Questionnaire

| Part | Item | Correlation Coefficient |
|------|------|-------------------------|
| 1 | 1 | .904** |
| 1 | 2 | .720** |
| 1 | 3 | .944** |
| 1 | 4 | .883** |
| 1 | 5 | .953** |
| 1 | 6 | .868** |

| | | |
|---|----|--------|
| 1 | 7 | .863** |
| 1 | 8 | .944* |
| 1 | 9 | .905** |
| 1 | 10 | .944** |
| 1 | 11 | .777** |
| 1 | 12 | .748** |
| 1 | 13 | .949** |
| 1 | 14 | .874** |
| 1 | 15 | .929** |
| 2 | 1 | .729** |
| 2 | 2 | .944** |
| 2 | 3 | .919** |
| 2 | 4 | .824** |
| 2 | 5 | .820** |
| 2 | 6 | .887** |
| 2 | 7 | .918** |
| 2 | 8 | .629* |
| 2 | 9 | .903** |
| 2 | 10 | .902** |
| 2 | 11 | .820** |
| 2 | 12 | .751** |
| 2 | 13 | .827** |
| 3 | 1 | .523* |
| 3 | 2 | .706** |
| 3 | 3 | .662** |
| 3 | 4 | .432 |
| 3 | 5 | .758** |
| 3 | 6 | .956** |
| 3 | 7 | .849** |

| | | |
|---|---|--------|
| 3 | 8 | .785** |
| 3 | 9 | .819** |

Based on table six, we can conclude that the questionnaire's items are highly correlated, thus indicating questionnaire's reliability.

5.5 Statistical Treatment: Study Hypotheses

Aiming to portray the statistical findings of the current study transparently, this part presents each of the study hypotheses mentioned earlier in Chapter Four, along with the statistical treatment conducted for the purpose of testing each hypothesis.

Hypothesis One

There is no statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups' performance on the communicative critical reading competence pre-post test.

To test the first hypothesis, both paired samples *t-test* and *Mann-Whitney test* were conducted to gather sufficient statistical data. Tables seven, eight, and nine below show the statistical results.

Table Seven: T-Test Experimental Group-Communicative Critical Reading Competence Pre-Post Test

| Test | Mean | N | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|----------|---------|----|----------------|-----------------|
| pretest | 14.0000 | 17 | 4.86056 | 1.17886 |
| posttest | 18.0000 | 17 | 2.85044 | .69133 |

| Test | N | Correlation | Sig. |
|----------------------|----|-------------|------|
| Pre-test & post-test | 17 | .645 | .005 |

Paired Samples Test

| Test | Paired Differences | | | | | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|---|----------|--------|----|-----------------|
| | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | | | |
| | | | | Lower | Upper | | | |
| pretest – posttest | -4.00000 | 3.72492 | .90342 | -5.91518 | -2.08482 | -4.428 | 16 | .000 |

Table Eight: T-Test Control Group-Communicative Critical Reading Competence Pre-Post Test

Paired Samples Statistics

| Test | Mean | N | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|-----------|---------|----|----------------|-----------------|
| Pre-test | 13.4118 | 17 | 4.75735 | 1.15383 |
| Post-test | 15.4706 | 17 | 7.30683 | 1.77217 |

Paired Samples Correlations

| Test | N | Correlation | Sig. |
|----------------------|----|-------------|------|
| Pre-test & Post-test | 17 | -.128 | .624 |

Paired Samples Test

| Test | Paired Differences | | | | | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|---|---------|-------|----|-----------------|
| | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | | | |
| | | | | Lower | Upper | | | |
| Pre-test Post-test | -2.05882 | 9.21595 | 2.23520 | -6.79723 | 2.67958 | -.921 | 16 | .371 |

Table Nine: Communicative Critical Reading Competence Pre-Test & Communicative Critical Reading Competence Post-Test Comparison

Pre-Test

Hypothesis Test Summary

| | Null Hypothesis | Test | Sig. | Decision |
|---|---|---|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | The medians of score are the same across categories of group. | Independent-Samples Median Test | .731 | Retain the null hypothesis. |
| 2 | The distribution of score is the same across categories of group. | Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test | .948 ¹ | Retain the null hypothesis. |

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

¹Exact significance is displayed for this test.

Post-Test

Hypothesis Test Summary

| | Null Hypothesis | Test | Sig. | Decision |
|---|---|---|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | The medians of score are the same across categories of group. | Independent-Samples Median Test | .493 | Retain the null hypothesis. |
| 2 | The distribution of score is the same across categories of group. | Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test | .948 ¹ | Retain the null hypothesis. |

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

¹Exact significance is displayed for this test.

Based on the statistical results, both groups could achieve progress towards the end of the academic semester, as indicated by their performance findings. However, the experimental group students could achieve a significant progress. As the *p-value* for the experimental group (*Sig.*=*.000*) is less than *0.05*, while the *p-value* for the control group (*Sig.*=*0.371*) is greater than

0.05, then it is evident that there is a significant difference between the performance of the two groups on the communicative critical reading competence pre-post test, in favour of the experimental group students.

Hypothesis Two

There is no statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups' performance on the communicative critical writing competence pre-post test.

To test the second hypothesis, both paired samples *t*-test and *Mann-Whitney test* were conducted to gather sufficient statistical data. Tables ten, eleven, and twelve below reveal the statistical results.

Table Ten: T-Test Experimental Group-Communicative Critical Writing Competence Pre-Post Test

| Test | Mean | N | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|-----------|---------|----|----------------|-----------------|
| Pre-test | 13.0588 | 17 | 5.16715 | 1.25322 |
| Post-test | 16.7794 | 17 | 5.58659 | 1.35495 |

| Test | N | Correlation | Sig. |
|---------------------|----|-------------|------|
| Pretest & Post test | 17 | .864 | .000 |

| Test | Paired Differences | | | | | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|---|----------|--------|----|-----------------|
| | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | | | |
| | | | | Lower | Upper | | | |
| Pre-test Post-test | -3.72059 | 2.83516 | .68763 | -5.17829 | -2.26288 | -5.411 | 16 | .000 |

Table Eleven: T-Test Control Group-Communicative Critical Writing Competence Pre-Post Test

Paired Samples Statistics

| Test | Mean | N | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|-----------|--------|----|----------------|-----------------|
| Pre-test | 5.2647 | 17 | 5.90846 | 1.43301 |
| Post-test | 7.5000 | 17 | 1.69097 | .41012 |

Paired Samples Correlations

| Test | N | Correlation | Sig. |
|---------------------|----|-------------|------|
| Pretest & Post test | 17 | .376 | .137 |

Paired Samples Test

| Test | Paired Differences | | | | | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|---|--------|--------|----|--------------------|
| | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | | | |
| | | | | Lower | Upper | | | |
| Pre-writing Post-writing | -2.23529 | 5.50033 | 1.33403 | -5.06331 | .59272 | -1.676 | 16 | .113 |

Table Twelve: Communicative Critical Writing Competence Pre-Test & Communicative Critical Writing Competence Post-Test Comparison

Pre-Test

Hypothesis Test Summary

| | Null Hypothesis | Test | Sig. | Decision |
|---|---|---|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | The medians of score are the same across categories of group. | Independent-Samples Median Test | .016 | Reject the null hypothesis. |
| 2 | The distribution of score is the same across categories of group. | Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test | .001 ¹ | Reject the null hypothesis. |

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

¹Exact significance is displayed for this test.

Post-Test

Hypothesis Test Summary

| | Null Hypothesis | Test | Sig. | Decision |
|---|---|---|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | The medians of score are the same across categories of group. | Independent-Samples Median Test | .000 | Reject the null hypothesis. |
| 2 | The distribution of score is the same across categories of group. | Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test | .000 ¹ | Reject the null hypothesis. |

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

¹Exact significance is displayed for this test.

Based on the statistical findings, both groups could achieve progress towards the end of the academic semester, as indicated by their performance findings. However, the experimental group students could achieve a significant progress. As the *p-value* for the experimental group (*Sig.=.000*) is less than *0.05*, while the *p-value* for the control group (*Sig.=0.113*) is greater than *0.05*, then it is evident that there is a significant difference between the performance of the two groups on the communicative critical writing competence pre-post test, in favour of the experimental group students.

Hypothesis Three

There is no statistically significant difference between the performance of male and that of female experimental group students, on the communicative critical reading competence post-test and on the communicative critical writing competence post-test.

To test the third hypothesis, *Mann Whitney U test* was conducted. Table thirteen below reveals the results.

Table Thirteen: Mann-Whitney Test for Hypothesis Three

| Hypothesis Test Summary | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--|---|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| | Null Hypothesis | Test | Sig. | Decision |
| 1 | The medians of prereading are the same across categories of gender. | Independent-Samples Median Test | .620 ^{1,2} | Retain the null hypothesis. |
| 2 | The distribution of prereading is the same across categories of gender. | Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test | .525 ¹ | Retain the null hypothesis. |
| 3 | The medians of postreading are the same across categories of gender. | Independent-Samples Median Test | .644 ^{1,2} | Retain the null hypothesis. |
| 4 | The distribution of postreading is the same across categories of gender. | Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test | .961 ¹ | Retain the null hypothesis. |
| 5 | The medians of prewriting are the same across categories of gender. | Independent-Samples Median Test | 1.000 ^{1,2} | Retain the null hypothesis. |
| 6 | The distribution of prewriting is the same across categories of gender. | Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test | .961 ¹ | Retain the null hypothesis. |
| 7 | The medians of postwriting are the same across categories of gender. | Independent-Samples Median Test | 1.000 ^{1,2} | Retain the null hypothesis. |
| 8 | The distribution of postwriting is the same across categories of gender. | Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test | .301 ¹ | Retain the null hypothesis. |

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

¹Exact significance is displayed for this test.

²Fisher Exact Sig.

Examining the *p-value (Sig.)* from the table, we cannot reject the null hypothesis. In other words, we have insufficient evidence to conclude that the performance of male subjects is significantly different from female subjects', on the communicative critical reading competence post-test and on the communicative critical writing competence post-test.

Hypothesis Four

There is no statistically significant difference between the performance of experimental group students belonging to non-science colleges and that of experimental group students belonging to science colleges, on the communicative critical reading competence post-test and on the communicative critical writing competence post-test.

To test the fourth hypothesis, *Mann Whitney U test* was conducted. Table fourteen below reveals the results.

Table Fourteen: Mann-Whitney Test for Hypothesis Four

| Hypothesis Test Summary | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| | Null Hypothesis | Test | Sig. | Decision |
| 1 | The medians of prereading are the same across categories of college. | Independent-Samples Median Test | .620 ^{1,2} | Retain the null hypothesis. |
| 2 | The distribution of prereading is the same across categories of college. | Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test | .383 ¹ | Retain the null hypothesis. |
| 3 | The medians of postreading are the same across categories of college. | Independent-Samples Median Test | .593 ^{1,2} | Retain the null hypothesis. |
| 4 | The distribution of postreading is the same across categories of college. | Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test | .130 ¹ | Retain the null hypothesis. |
| 5 | The medians of prewriting are the same across categories of college. | Independent-Samples Median Test | 1.000 ^{1,2} | Retain the null hypothesis. |
| 6 | The distribution of prewriting is the same across categories of college. | Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test | .442 ¹ | Retain the null hypothesis. |
| 7 | The medians of postwriting are the same across categories of college. | Independent-Samples Median Test | .294 ^{1,2} | Retain the null hypothesis. |
| 8 | The distribution of postwriting is the same across categories of college. | Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test | .104 ¹ | Retain the null hypothesis. |

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

¹Exact significance is displayed for this test.

²Fisher Exact Sig.

Examining the *p-value (Sig.)* from the table, we cannot reject the null hypothesis. In other words, we have insufficient evidence to conclude that the performance of science colleges' students is significantly different from that of non-science colleges' students, on the communicative critical reading competence post-test and on the communicative critical writing competence post-test.

To end with, this part of Chapter Five seeks to present the statistical findings in relation to the study hypotheses transparently. Based on the statistical analyses and findings, conclusions; implications; and recommendations are discussed in Chapter Six.

5.6 Statistical Analysis: Student’s Questionnaire

As mentioned earlier in Chapter Four, a pre-post questionnaire was administered to the experimental group students, prior to and following the implementation of the proposed course. The questionnaire included three parts in an aim to: gather sufficient data about how subjects rated their abilities in dealing with the short story and novel in English, get a clear idea about what story genres subjects preferred most, and form a clear picture about what reading and writing activities subjects’ practised. Before proceeding to presenting any statistical findings, it is worthwhile re-mentioning that the current research project is not concerned with attitudes. Including a student’s questionnaire in the study tools aims to enrich as well as expand the scope of the current research. Consequently, no formal hypotheses have been formulated in this regard.

Part one asked for rating one’s abilities in dealing with the short story and novel in English. To analyse this part of the questionnaire, a paired *t-test* was conducted. Table fifteen below portrays the results.

Table Fifteen: Part One of the Student’s Questionnaire-Subjects’ Rating of Their Abilities prior to and following Treatment

| Paired Samples Statistics | | | | | |
|---------------------------|------|------|----|----------------|-----------------|
| | Pair | Mean | N | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
| Pair 1 | pr1 | 2.18 | 17 | .951 | .231 |
| | po1 | 2.76 | 17 | .752 | .182 |
| Pair 2 | pr2 | 2.29 | 17 | .920 | .223 |
| | po2 | 2.47 | 17 | .717 | .174 |

| | | | | | |
|---------|------|------|----|-------|------|
| Pair 3 | pr3 | 2.76 | 17 | .752 | .182 |
| | po3 | 2.76 | 17 | .903 | .219 |
| Pair 4 | pr4 | 2.47 | 17 | .874 | .212 |
| | po4 | 2.94 | 17 | .827 | .201 |
| Pair 5 | pr5 | 2.29 | 17 | 1.213 | .294 |
| | po5 | 2.65 | 17 | .786 | .191 |
| Pair 6 | pr6 | 2.06 | 16 | .854 | .213 |
| | po6 | 2.38 | 16 | .957 | .239 |
| Pair 7 | pr7 | 2.71 | 17 | .849 | .206 |
| | po7 | 2.82 | 17 | .951 | .231 |
| Pair 8 | pr8 | 2.24 | 17 | .752 | .182 |
| | po8 | 2.88 | 17 | .781 | .189 |
| Pair 9 | pr9 | 2.06 | 17 | 1.249 | .303 |
| | po9 | 2.71 | 17 | .920 | .223 |
| Pair 10 | pr10 | 1.88 | 17 | .993 | .241 |
| | po10 | 2.71 | 17 | .920 | .223 |
| Pair 11 | pr11 | 2.18 | 17 | 1.131 | .274 |
| | po11 | 2.65 | 17 | .931 | .226 |
| Pair 12 | pr12 | 2.13 | 16 | .885 | .221 |
| | po12 | 2.63 | 16 | .885 | .221 |
| Pair 13 | pr13 | 2.41 | 17 | .870 | .211 |
| | po13 | 3.12 | 17 | .697 | .169 |
| Pair 14 | pr14 | 2.41 | 17 | .870 | .211 |
| | po14 | 3.00 | 17 | .791 | .192 |
| Pair 15 | pr15 | 1.94 | 17 | 1.144 | .277 |
| | po15 | 2.47 | 17 | .874 | .212 |

Paired Samples Test

| | Paired Differences | | | | | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|------------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|--|-------|--------|----|-----------------|
| | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | | | |
| | | | | Lower | Upper | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Pair 1 pr1 - po1 | -.588 | .507 | .123 | -.849 | -.327 | -4.781 | 16 | .000 |
| Pair 2 pr2 - po2 | -.176 | .529 | .128 | -.448 | .095 | -1.376 | 16 | .188 |
| Pair 3 pr3 - po3 | .000 | .612 | .149 | -.315 | .315 | .000 | 16 | 1.000 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---------|-------------|-------|-------|------|--------|-------|--------|----|------|
| Pair 4 | pr4 - po4 | -.471 | .717 | .174 | -.839 | -.102 | -2.704 | 16 | .016 |
| Pair 5 | pr5 - po5 | -.353 | .931 | .226 | -.832 | .126 | -1.562 | 16 | .138 |
| Pair 6 | pr6 - po6 | -.313 | 1.014 | .254 | -.853 | .228 | -1.232 | 15 | .237 |
| Pair 7 | pr7 - po7 | -.118 | .857 | .208 | -.559 | .323 | -.566 | 16 | .579 |
| Pair 8 | pr8 - po8 | -.647 | .862 | .209 | -1.090 | -.204 | -3.096 | 16 | .007 |
| Pair 9 | pr9 - po9 | -.647 | 1.169 | .284 | -1.248 | -.046 | -2.281 | 16 | .037 |
| Pair 10 | pr10 - po10 | -.824 | .883 | .214 | -1.277 | -.370 | -3.846 | 16 | .001 |
| Pair 11 | pr11 - po11 | -.471 | .624 | .151 | -.792 | -.150 | -3.108 | 16 | .007 |
| Pair 12 | pr12 - po12 | -.500 | .730 | .183 | -.889 | -.111 | -2.739 | 15 | .015 |
| Pair 13 | pr13 - po13 | -.706 | .985 | .239 | -1.212 | -.199 | -2.954 | 16 | .009 |
| Pair 14 | pr14 - po14 | -.588 | .939 | .228 | -1.071 | -.105 | -2.582 | 16 | .020 |
| Pair 15 | pr15 - po15 | -.529 | .943 | .229 | -1.014 | -.044 | -2.314 | 16 | .034 |

Examining the *p-value (Sig.)* reveals that there are significant differences between students' responses to items 1, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 prior to and following treatment, in favour of the post-questionnaire.

Part two of the pre-post questionnaire required mentioning one's preferences of story genres. Examining students' responses, the researcher could form a clear idea about which story genres subjects preferred most, as indicated in their responses to the second part. Table sixteen below reveals students' preferences of story genres, sequenced from the most to the least preferences.

Table Sixteen: Part Two of the Student's Questionnaire-Subjects' Preferences of Story Genres, Arranged from the Most to the Least Preferences

| Genre(s): Pre-Implementation | Genre(s): Post-Implementation |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Romance, Action | Action |
| Drama | Romance, Comedy |
| History, Crime, Nature | History |
| | Drama, Detective |
| | Crime, Nature, Fantasy, Horror, Science Fiction |

As table sixteen reveals, the most preferable genres are those of action, romance, and comedy, while the least are those of crime, nature, fantasy, horror, and science fiction.

Part three of the pre-post questionnaire necessitated identifying one's reading and writing activities. To analyse this part of the questionnaire, a *paired t-test* was conducted. Table seventeen below shows the results, prior to and following treatment.

Table Seventeen: Subjects' Responses to Part Three of the Student's Questionnaire

| | | Paired Samples Statistics | | | |
|--------|-----|---------------------------|----|----------------|-----------------|
| | | Mean | N | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
| Pair 1 | pr1 | 2.88 | 17 | .928 | .225 |
| | po1 | 2.88 | 17 | .928 | .225 |
| Pair 2 | pr2 | 3.59 | 17 | .939 | .228 |
| | po2 | 3.53 | 17 | .874 | .212 |
| Pair 3 | pr3 | 3.06 | 17 | 1.298 | .315 |
| | po3 | 3.18 | 17 | 1.074 | .261 |
| Pair 4 | pr4 | 3.29 | 17 | 1.213 | .294 |
| | po4 | 3.82 | 17 | .951 | .231 |
| Pair 5 | pr5 | 1.53 | 17 | .800 | .194 |
| | po5 | 1.65 | 17 | .862 | .209 |
| Pair 6 | pr6 | 2.12 | 17 | 1.269 | .308 |
| | po6 | 2.24 | 17 | 1.200 | .291 |
| Pair 7 | pr7 | 1.81 | 16 | 1.109 | .277 |
| | po7 | 2.31 | 16 | 1.078 | .270 |
| Pair 8 | pr8 | 2.18 | 17 | 1.015 | .246 |
| | po8 | 2.76 | 17 | 1.147 | .278 |
| Pair 9 | pr9 | 2.06 | 17 | 1.298 | .315 |
| | po9 | 2.35 | 17 | 1.367 | .331 |

Paired Samples Test

| | Paired Differences | | | | | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|---|-------|--------|----|-----------------|
| | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | | | |
| | | | | Lower | Upper | | | |
| Pair 1 pr1 - po1 | .000 | .500 | .121 | -.257 | .257 | .000 | 16 | 1.000 |
| Pair 2 pr2 - po2 | .059 | .827 | .201 | -.366 | .484 | .293 | 16 | .773 |
| Pair 3 pr3 - po3 | -.118 | .600 | .146 | -.426 | .191 | -.808 | 16 | .431 |
| Pair 4 pr4 - po4 | -.529 | .717 | .174 | -.898 | -.161 | -3.043 | 16 | .008 |
| Pair 5 pr5 - po5 | -.118 | .485 | .118 | -.367 | .132 | -1.000 | 16 | .332 |
| Pair 6 pr6 - po6 | -.118 | .781 | .189 | -.519 | .284 | -.621 | 16 | .543 |
| Pair 7 pr7 - po7 | -.500 | .730 | .183 | -.889 | -.111 | -2.739 | 15 | .015 |
| Pair 8 pr8 - po8 | -.588 | .939 | .228 | -1.071 | -.105 | -2.582 | 16 | .020 |
| Pair 9 pr9 - po9 | -.294 | .686 | .166 | -.647 | .059 | -1.768 | 16 | .096 |

Examining the *p-value* (*Sig.*), we conclude that there are significant differences between students' responses to items 4, 7 and 8 prior to and following implementation, in favour of the post-questionnaire.

5.7 Semi-Structured Interview

With the purpose of gathering sufficient qualitative data in mind, the researcher conducted a semi-structured interview twice: throughout the implementation process and towards the very end of implementation. Using the simple statistical method of estimating percentages, the researcher could highlight both areas of weakness and areas of strength in relation to the proposed course, as conveyed by the experimental group students' responses and comments. Table eighteen below delineates students' responses to the interviews, in evaluation of the proposed course.

Table Eighteen: Semi-Structured Interview-Students' Responses to and Comments on the Proposed Course

| Question | Reading | Writing | Vocabulary | Grammar | Other Skills/Areas |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|---|
| Which is the most difficult part? | 15% | 15% | 55% | 5% | Summary writing 5% Speed reading 5% |
| Which is the least difficult part? | 15% | | 5% | 10% | Warm up 25% Oral production 20% Language practice 25% |
| Which part do you enjoy the most? | 25% | 15% | 10% | | Language practice 15% Speed reading 10% Reader's response 25% |
| Which part do you enjoy the least? | | 20% | 40% | 15% | Summary writing 5% Self evaluation 5% Literary qualities 5% Speed reading 10% |
| Would you recommend the course to other students? | Yes (100%) | Yes (100%) | Yes (100%) | Yes (100%) | To promote thinking skills To enrich knowledge about life |
| Any comments? | | | | | The course is ideal for hard workers. (5%) The course is ideal for those who love stories. (5%) The course is ideal for those who want to |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | <p>improve reading skills in particular. (5%)</p> <p>The course is ideal for those who are doing a TOEFL/IELTS preparation course. (10%)</p> <p>No comments. (75%)</p> |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

As table eighteen reveals, the most difficult/demanding part was that of vocabulary (55%), followed by both general reading and writing skills (15% each), and grammar, summary writing, and speed reading (5% each). The easiest parts, by contrast, are those of warm up and language practice activities (25% each), followed by oral production activities (20%), reading (15%), grammar (10%), and vocabulary (5%). The parts students enjoyed the most are general reading skills and reader’s response questions (25% each), language practice and writing (15% each), and speed reading and general writing skills (10% each). The parts students enjoyed the least are vocabulary (40%), general writing skills (20%), grammar (15%), speed reading (10%), and summary writing, self evaluation, speed reading and literary qualities (5% each).

All the students responded that the course could be recommended to other university students for the purpose of promoting EFL skills. A number of students explained that the course would be ideal for students who: are interested in promoting reading skills in particular, love stories, can or like to work hard, are interested in enhancing thinking skills, and want to enrich their knowledge about life, culture and human nature. Moreover, a number of students suggested teaching the proposed course along with IELTS/TOEFL courses, due to its significant focus on reading and writing skills which all TOEFL/IELTS candidates are expected to acquire.

5.8 Concluding Word

To avoid both foreseen and unforeseen problems and obstacles, a researcher has to have adequate knowledge about what types of statistical treatment can be conducted and why.

Understanding the focus of our research is an essential springboard. Moreover, it is important to gain sufficient awareness of the types of statistical treatment we need to conduct, prior to research implementation.

As far as the current research project is concerned, a number of statistical techniques were implemented, ranging from the simple method of estimating percentages to the more and more complicated types of treatment: *t-test*, and *Mann-Whitney test*. As explained earlier in this chapter, the *t-test* can be used to test whether a correlation coefficient is different from 0 . It can also be used to test whether a regression coefficient, b , is different from 0 . In addition, it can be used to test whether two groups' means are different. An alternative approach to violations of parametric assumptions is to use tests based on ranking the data, *Mann-Whitney test* for example. Such tests can be used for comparing two independent groups, allowing us to look in some detail at the process of ranking data.

To end with, Chapter Five seeks to report on the statistical treatment conducted for the purpose of the current research project. Based on statistical findings, conclusions, recommendations as well as implications are all presented and discussed in Chapter Six.

Chapter Six: Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

Relating different areas to the same focal point highlighting; pinpointing; and arguing, are amongst the very essence of a dissertation's requirements for *entity*. This is what the current chapter seeks to achieve. Chapter Six has three main purposes, the first of which is to shed light on the statistical findings obtained, relating each to the study questions. In light of the statistical findings arrived at, a thorough discussion involving all the related areas is presented. Secondly, final conclusions are drawn, from which implications for researchers and practitioners within the field of applied linguistics are derived. Finally, recommendations for further studies and investigations are made; and outlooks for a brighter future and better outcome are portrayed.

6.2 Main Concerns of the Current Study

As stated in Chapter One, the teaching of English in the United Arab Emirates is based upon the communicative approach, which aims at equipping students with sufficient communicative competence, to ensure that they will employ language skills for communication purposes, as appropriate. Personal experience and the researcher's colleagues' observations, however, show that a number of EFL university students fail to acquire adequate communicative competence, which in turn does not qualify them to exploit the foreign language as required by their curricula as well as by today's requirements. This is due to a number of factors, amongst the most prominent of which-the researcher believes- is lack of exposure to literary courses; the language courses usually offered to EFL university students in the United Arab Emirates are General English, and in some cases, ESP courses as well.

Another issue which the researcher would like to re-state in this context is the gap existing between the aims of university education in the United Arab Emirates on the one hand, and what happens in reality on the other. Bearing in mind that critical thinking is central to university education in the United Arab Emirates (Al Ghurair University: 2008), it seems reasonable then to

assume that EFL university students are well-equipped to tackle a reading text and handle a writing task, demonstrating through such activities an adequate repertoire of critical thinking skills. Personal experience and the researcher's colleagues' observations, however, indicate that this does not apply to a number of EFL university students. This is due to a number of factors, amongst the most essential of which-the researcher thinks- is students' insufficient exposure to literary texts. It is, therefore, this personal experience as well as the desire to verify the researcher's beliefs that has led the researcher to pursue this research. Proposing a *remedy* to this EFL undesired output, the current study introduces a course designed and implemented by the researcher. The proposed course is fiction-based language teaching, adopting the view that literature is a resource rather than an object as well as advocating the use of literature as one of the main resources in foreign/second language acquisition.

In brief, the main concerns of this thesis are: a) to investigate the factors which inhibit EFL university students' progress in the areas of acquiring adequate communicative competence as well as critical thinking skills, and b) to propose a course book and pedagogic methods to improve students' progress in the areas of acquiring adequate communicative competence as well as critical thinking skills.

6.3 Study Questions and Findings

The current study seeks some convincing answers to a number of questions within the field of EFL/ESL language acquisition. This part aims to present the findings in relation to the questions the study addresses. Further discussions are also provided in the subsequent parts of this chapter.

6.3.1 Question One: Components and Specifications of the Proposed Course

As mentioned earlier in Chapter One, question one has been stated as follows: What are the components and specifications of a fiction course, proposed for promoting EFL university students' communicative competence, and enhancing their critical thinking skills?

No hypotheses have been formulated in relation to this question. To gain a deep insight into what could make up the components and specifications of such a challenging course, the researcher sought the wealth of knowledge offered by authors' writings within the pertinent literature. Reading through many valuable references, **LEARN AND GAIN** has been designed for study purposes.

The starting point with which instructional courses are planned for is meeting students' needs. Specifications and components of the proposed course were based upon students' needs which, later on, were translated into attainment targets and main aims. Setting aims and identifying components necessitate the inclusion of some *raw material*, that is, literary texts such as novels and short stories. To ensure effectiveness, it is essential that selecting raw materials-novels and short stories-be carried out with care and thought. Specifications of selecting novels and short stories for the proposed course can be summed up in the following eight points: language complexity, cultural appropriateness, length, variety, relative contemporary, authenticity, age group, and human values.

Mention has been made of the proposed criteria for selecting raw material-literary texts-without referring to the *atmosphere* element. What are the specifications and components of *effective surrounding* in terms of instructional contexts? The answer could take pages and pages; however, it still would be sufficient to exclude it to merely the main surrounding factor involved: pedagogical practices. Pedagogical practices should provide structured and stimulating opportunities to use language with increasing precision in contexts appropriate to the needs of learners and the world in which they live. Providing such opportunities involves the following aspects: thinking, feeling, communicating, and making. In order for these aspects to be *interacting* effectively, pedagogical practices should provide genuine experiences for enhancing students' abilities in thinking, feeling, communicating, and making.

Pedagogical practices reflect the approaches instructors adopt. Speaking of the proposed course, an eclectic approach has been adopted, employing what would be appropriate for a particular

teaching situation. The approaches adopted for the sake of the proposed course specifications are: stylistics, literary criticism, attitudinal approach, communicative approach, semantic approach, dialectical approach, multiple intelligences – based approach, process writing approach, student-centred approach, and communicative critical language competence approach.

An integral component of a course, instructional activities play an essential role in realising pedagogical aims. Speaking of instructional activities in relation to the proposed course, a number of specifications have been considered in both designing and devising activities. These are: promoting skills in learning how to learn, involving students in risk taking, relating directly to the aims of the course, activating psychological/psycho-linguistic processes of learning, being appropriate for the age and language level of students, allowing students to rehearse communicative skills they need in real life situations, and inviting students to think critically.

Last but not least is the language assessment aspect. According to the proposed course specifications, providing students with opportunities to exhibit their understanding as well as their performance through authentic texts and tasks is an essential factor. Ensuring valid, reliable, credible, and practical measurements is amongst the very essential specifications of the proposed course.

6.3.2 Question Two at a Glance

As presented previously in Chapter One, question two has been articulated as follows: To what extent is the proposed fiction course effective in promoting EFL university students' communicative competence, and enhancing their critical thinking skills?

Investigating whether or not the proposed course was effective in promoting EFL university students' communicative competence as well as enhancing their critical thinking skills, a study sample taken from the study population-EFL university students residing in the United Arab Emirates and specialising in subjects other than English- was selected. The research project

involved two groups: experimental and control. The experimental group students were exposed to the proposed course whilst the control group students were exposed to a general English language course. To test the effectiveness of the proposed course, the researcher set and administered a pre-post test. Divided into two main parts, communicative critical reading competence and communicative critical writing competence, the pre-post test measured subjects' communicative critical reading competence and subjects' communicative critical writing competence.

In an aim to investigate question two thoroughly, a number of sub-questions have been derived, each of which dealing with one particular area at a time. To examine some issues of interest, the study involved the following variables: independent variable- the proposed course (**LEARN AND GAIN**), dependent variable: students' achievement on the communicative critical competence pre-post test, and moderator variables: gender- male/female, college- science/non-science. *Part 6.3.3* presents the answers to the sub-questions. Later on, the answers are all presented and discussed in relation to this major question, in *part 6.3.4*.

6.3.3 Study Sub-Questions

Within the two major questions mentioned above, the following sub-questions have been addressed to further investigate the main issues discussed in the current research.

I. What differences are there between the experimental and control groups' performance, on the communicative critical reading competence pre-post test?

Seeking a convincing answer, a hypothesis was formulated stating that there would be no statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups' performance on the communicative critical reading competence pre-post test. Based on statistical findings, there is a significant difference between the performances of the two groups in favour of the experimental group students.

II. What differences are there between the experimental and control groups' performance, on the communicative critical writing competence pre-post test?

Investigating the answer, a hypothesis was formulated stating that there would be no statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups' performance on the communicative critical writing competence pre-post test. According to statistical results, there is a significant difference between the performances of the two groups in favour of the experimental group students.

III. What differences are there between the performance of male and that of female experimental group students, on the communicative critical reading competence post-test and on the communicative critical writing competence post-test?

Interested in coming up with a convincing answer, a hypothesis was formulated stating that there would be no statistically significant difference between the performance of male subjects and that of female subjects, on the communicative critical reading competence post-test and on the communicative critical writing competence post-test. As statistical findings reveal, there is no significant difference between the performances of male and female students on both tests.

IV. What differences are there between the performance of experimental group students belonging to colleges of science and that of experimental group students belonging to non-science colleges, on the communicative critical reading competence post-test and on the communicative critical writing competence post-test?

To arrive at an appropriate answer, a hypothesis was formulated stating that there would be no statistically significant difference between the performance of subjects belonging to colleges of science and subjects belonging to non-science colleges, on the communicative critical reading competence post-test and the communicative critical writing competence post-test. The statistical results indicate the absence of any significant differences between the performances of science and non-science colleges' students.

6.3.4 Question Two in Focus

As mentioned earlier in this dissertation, question two has been articulated as follows: To what extent is the proposed fiction course effective in promoting EFL university students' communicative competence, and enhancing their critical thinking skills? To answer this question adequately, a number of sub-questions have been formulated-each of which dealing with one particular area at a time. This part aims to present the answers to the sub-questions, relating them all to question two.

To measure the effectiveness of the proposed course in enhancing EFL university students' communicative critical reading competence, the first sub-question is concerned with measuring differences between the experimental and control groups' performance, on the communicative critical reading competence pre-post test. The statistical findings reveal that there is a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups' performance on the communicative critical reading competence pre-post test, in favour of the experimental group.

On the other hand, the second sub-question measures differences between the experimental and control groups' performance, on the communicative critical writing competence pre-post test. The statistical results show that there is a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups' performance on the communicative critical writing competence pre-post test, in favour of the experimental group.

Raising the issue of gender differences in relation to reading and writing performance, the third sub-question measures the differences between female and male subjects' performance on the communicative critical reading competence post-test and on the communicative critical writing competence post-test. Based on statistical findings, there is no significant difference between the performance of male subjects and that of female subjects, on the communicative critical reading competence post-test and on the communicative critical writing competence post-test.

Interested in gaining awareness as to whether or not there are any statistically significant differences between science and non-science students in relation to reading and writing performance, the fourth sub- question lends itself to addressing this issue. According to statistical results, we have sufficient evidence to conclude that the performance of subjects belonging to colleges of science is not significantly different from that of subjects belonging to non-science colleges, on the communicative critical reading competence post-test and on the communicative critical writing competence post-test.

To conclude, the proposed course has been effective in promoting both students' communicative critical reading competence and students' communicative critical writing competence. As far as gender differences in relation to reading and writing performance are concerned, no significant differences have been cited. Speaking of science/non-science students' performance differences, no statistically significant differences have been located in relation to the communicative critical reading competence and the communicative critical writing competence, as proved by the statistical treatment conducted for study purposes.

The answer to the second question, therefore, would be: The proposed fiction course: **LEARN AND GAIN**, has been effective in promoting EFL university students' communicative competence, and enhancing their critical thinking skills. Further discussions of this point are presented in the subsequent sections.

6.4 Student's Questionnaire

As mentioned earlier, a pre-post questionnaire was set and administered to the experimental group students, in an attempt to expand the scope of the current study. This current research project is not mainly concerned with attitudes; therefore, no formal hypotheses have ever been formulated in this regard. The questionnaire included three parts aiming to: gather sufficient data about how subjects rated their abilities in dealing with the short story and novel in English, gain a clear idea about what story genres subjects preferred most, and form a transparent picture of what reading and writing activities subjects practised most.

Examining the statistical findings, it is evident that subjects' responses to the items of the questionnaire are more positive following treatment. In addition, there are significant differences in favour of some post-treatment responses. As far as part one is concerned, the items include those relating to students' abilities in identifying theme, characters' attitudes and moods, conflict, and genre, as well as students' abilities in recognising irony and symbolism, appreciating figurative language, going beyond stories predicting possible outcomes, summarising stories, and writing short stories. Relating the discussion to part two, the statistical results reveal that the genres students prefer most are action and romance and the genres students prefer least are crime, nature, horror and science fiction. Commenting on part three, it is also clear that students' responses following treatment are more positive. Further, there are significant differences in favour of some post-treatment responses. The significantly different responses are related to the habits/activities of enjoying talking about what one has read, enjoying writing non-literary texts, as well as enjoying talking about what one has written.

To conclude, students' responses are more positive if not significant for some items following treatment. Normally speaking, this is an indicator that the proposed course has been effective in: modifying students' attitudes towards literary texts and their abilities in dealing with literary texts, and affecting students' habits and activities as EFL learners.

6.5 Discussion of Semi-Structured Interview

To gain sufficient qualitative data about the proposed course as seen and judged by participants, the researcher conducted a semi-structured interview involving the experimental group students. Speaking of difficulty level, the statistical findings indicate that the most demanding part is vocabulary, while the easiest parts are warm up and language practice activities. Relating the discussion to the interest factor, the most interesting parts are felt to be those of general reading skills and reader's response questions whereas the least is vocabulary.

As far as participants' comments are concerned, they can be summed up in the following points: the course would be ideal for students who are interested in promoting reading skills in particular, love stories, can or like to work hard, are interested in enhancing their thinking skills,

and/or want to enrich their knowledge about life, culture and human nature. The participants stated that the course could be recommended to other university students for the purpose of enhancing EFL skills. In addition, a number of students recommended introducing the proposed course along with IELTS/TOEFL courses, due to its significant focus on reading and writing skills which are emphasised and required from TOEFL and IELTS candidates.

In brief, it is safe to claim that the study subjects found the course to be of support and use in terms of promoting EFL skills. The most demanding, boring part was that of vocabulary which could be due to the fact that their repertoire of English vocabulary items is very limited, according to what the majority explained. Some of them found grammar to be interesting and easy, while others found it either difficult, boring, or both. Some of them emphasised that they enjoyed activities such as those of speed reading and reader's response, adding that they had benefited a great deal. On the other hand, others felt that reader's response and speed reading activities were both demanding in the sense that they entailed much effort and that they had not been trained earlier.

To end with, students' responses varied in a way or another, yet, they all felt the need to improve their vocabulary and language skills. Varied responses should be seen normal as they generally reflect students' different learning styles, language proficiency levels and personal academic needs.

6.6 Discussion of Study Conclusions

As discussed earlier, despite efforts made in the field of teaching English to EFL university students residing in the United Arab Emirates and specialising in subjects other than English, the output gained in terms of communicative competence and critical thinking acquisition is still below expectations. This could be due to a number of factors, amongst the most prominent of which-the researcher thinks- is students' insufficient exposure to literary texts. Proposing a *remedy*, a fiction course was designed, set, and taught to a sample taken from the study population. To measure course effectiveness, a pre-post test was conducted, and to expand the scope and enrich the vision of the current study, a pre-post questionnaire was administered, and a semi-structured interview was conducted. Towards the end of treatment implementation, a

number of statistical tests were conducted to arrive at appropriate statistical findings. This part of Chapter Six presents the conclusions drawn from the gathered data.

To begin with, the proposed course: **LEARN AND GAIN**, aims to promote what the researcher refers to throughout this thesis as communicative critical reading competence. This kind of competence-the researcher proposes- is a combination of both EFL/ESL basic reading skills and critical thinking skills. Some may wonder why the word communicative is there, misunderstanding the very basic fact that reading is communication rather than merely reception. Some may enquire why critical thinking when we, EFL/ESL practitioners, should prioritise language acquisition above any other aspects. The researcher's justification is simply that readers are thinkers and thinkers are readers. Besides, today's *reader thinkers/thinker readers* are tomorrow's leaders. To be able to meet the challenges of the current century, it should never be the case of teaching students what skimming is and why we use the passive form of the verb, whilst neglecting the teaching of how to make judgements, how to analyse, how to *feel* and appreciate beauty. Speaking of the proposed course within the context of communicative critical reading competence, the statistical findings give evidence that **LEARN AND GAIN** has been effective in promoting communicative critical reading competence on the part of participants. This evidence is true of all the tests conducted for study purposes (refer to *chapter five* for details).

LEARN AND GAIN has also been launched to enhance what the researcher refers to in this dissertation as communicative critical writing competence. Looked at from a writing perspective, some may enquire why the term communicative and the term critical are both there. Discussing the same points of communication and critical thinking in relation to writing, we clearly conclude that writing is definitely communication, which on many occasions, requires analysing and synthesising and judging, that is to say, critical thinking. Speaking of the proposed course within the context of communicative critical writing competence, the statistical findings prove that **LEARN AND GAIN** has been effective in promoting communicative critical writing competence on the part of participants. This proof is true of all the tests conducted for study purposes (see Chapter Five for details).

Another issue which the current study has investigated is that of gender differences in relation to reading and writing performance. According to the current study's findings, there are no statistically significant differences between the performance of female students and that of male students on the communicative critical reading competence post-test. Moreover, there are no statistically significant differences between the performance of female students and that of male students on the communicative critical writing competence post-test. Female students according to the findings of this study, therefore, cannot be declared as being superior in language performance to their counterparts of males. While debate about the validity of gender differences continues, it should be apparently clear that there may be social pressures for children to conform to the sex role stereo-type accepted by their cultures. It is important to understand the power of sex role stereo-typing because it can act to constrain or to nurture development.

The researcher has not come across any studies on differences between science and non-science students in relation to language performance. Relating the issue of science/non-science major to the current study's findings, it is evident that no statistically significant differences between the performances of the two types of students on the communicative critical reading competence post-test as well as on the communicative critical writing competence post-test have ever been cited. What the researcher could sense throughout course implementation though, was that female students seemed to enjoy reading and writing more than their male counterparts did.

To expand the scope of the current research, the study tools included, amongst others, a three-part pre post student's questionnaire. Generally speaking, the aim was to gain adequate awareness of students' attitudes and preferences towards novels and short stories. The statistical findings for both parts one and three prove that in general, students responded more positively to the items of the post-questionnaire, which could thus be attributed to the proposed course effectiveness. A success factor upon which researchers tend to evaluate research effectiveness positively is participants' positive responses to a questionnaire's items following a course of treatment. Discussing part two of the questionnaire necessitates story genre discussions, as this part of the questionnaire is concerned with story genres students would rather choose for their

readings. The simple statistical means of working out percentages reflects that the most preferable genres are action, romance, and comedy while the least preferable are crime, nature, fantasy, horror and science fiction. This finding could be of interest when selecting literary texts for instructional purposes, whether for intensive or extensive readings. It could also be of use to curriculum and text-book designers. However, it might be inappropriate to generalise such a finding, due to the small size of the study sample on the one hand, and cultural differences on the other.

6.7 Study Implications

The current study is an attempt to diagnose as well as to address some problematic issues within the field of applied linguistics, second/foreign language acquisition in particular. Relying on study findings and conclusions, a number of implications are presented in this part for researchers, practitioners and specialists within the field.

Firstly, utilising literary pieces in the contexts of EFL/ESL has proved to be of great value in terms of many aspects such as developing language skills, promoting communication competencies, and enhancing critical thinking. Through the utilisation of a novel/short story for example, we can launch students on a voyage of discovery, exploring ways other than ours of viewing things. A literary piece offers potential benefits of a high order for English as a second or foreign language. Linguistically, a literary piece can help students master the vocabulary and grammar of the language besides the main language skills. Culturally, a literary piece provides exposure to the culture of its speakers by examining universal human experience within the context of a particular setting and the consciousness of particular people. Aesthetically, a literary piece offers a unique experience that provides perceptive insight into man's existence within the artistic and intellectual bound of a literary framework.

The aforementioned implication goes in harmony with many specialists' ideas within the same area. Hall (2007), for instance, states that in EFL as well as ESL contexts, utilising literary texts can be seen as a means of promoting one's proficiency in vocabulary and reading. Processing

literary texts is often considered difficult, yet worth the effort as a rich source of relevant language data from which one can acquire language. Seen from Reese's point of view (2002), it is through literary texts that we can enhance enquiry and analysis skills. Through careful, guided enquiry and by linking disciplinary study to the world at large, we are preparing students to be well-informed about a variety of issues around the world. Hock (1999) is also amongst other researchers who explain that literary texts enable students to be well-informed about different global issues. We can talk about learning for understanding not only in the context of subject area, but also in the realm of showing compassion and respect towards other people and cultures.

Concerned mainly with promoting communicative critical reading competence and communicative critical writing competence in EFL/ESL contexts, the second implication stresses the role literary texts-novels and short stories in particular- play in this regard. The knowledge students gain through reading a novel/short story serves them by offering a breadth of experiences and ideas, by developing creative thinking, and by providing skills in communication. Whilst reading a story, students engage in characters' lives and raise enquiries about the worlds authors create. When students make comparisons with their own lives, they embark on a life-long journey of critical thinking that could make their lives rich and rewarding. Novels and short stories represent various uses of the language-both conventional and literary. As students read a novel/short story, they learn the foreign/second language in meaningful contexts which require active interaction with the text, communicating and analysing. What is more, novels and short stories are an immensely important area of writing that covers a vast terrain. Studied as a product, novels and short stories can be considered as models of writing to be emulated. Seen as a resource, novels and short stories are valuable tools for focusing on language knowledge and developing language skills, through encouraging learners to actively construct a novel/short story rather than simply to respond to an existing canon.

This second implication supports the suggestions of those of many specialists who advocate the idea that novels and short stories contribute to promoting both reading and writing skills. McRae (2008), for example, believes that the use of stories in language teaching has an extremely positive effect in that stories encourage students to read for pleasure. Eager to know what will

happen next, keeps the reader interested as well as keeps the reader reading. Shaw (2007) discusses the rationale behind choosing a novel when dealing with EFL students. Accessibility of language, engaging and true to life nature of characters/relationships/events, developing imagination, visualising settings and characters, as well as being emotionally evocative, are amongst the most prominent reasons for utilising a novel in EFL contexts. Similarly, Booth (1998) argues that it is in short stories and novels that students imbibe the skills required when our real values; values that are not merely social constructs, clash.

Speaking of the role literary texts play in promoting communication skills, the second implication is also in support of a number of specialists' arguments. For example, Chen (2006) explains that narrative is one of the two modes of our thinking. Whilst communicating with others, regardless of culture and background, one can describe an incident as a way of explaining thoughts or a part of an argument. Literature provides an informal, yet supportive environment for EFL students to normally develop their linguistic system whilst improving their communication skills. According to Savvidou (2004), communicative competence is more than mastery of form and structure. It also involves acquiring the ability to interpret discourse in its social and cultural contexts. Utilising literature, therefore, can provide a powerful pedagogic tool, ensuring learners' linguistic development.

Integrating the teaching of reading and writing is what the third implication calls for. For EFL/ESL students to acquire adequate communicative critical reading/writing competence, such integration is essential. This implication is in support of a number of researchers' suggestions. De Naples (2002), for example, argues that many of us have become good readers by reading works of good writers; we have learned to speak well because we have read well-written sentences. This implication also corresponds to the findings of Khater (2002) which necessitate integrating the teaching of critical reading and critical writing within the same course. Jabr (1998) also argues for integrating the teaching of reading and writing due to a number of reasons such as increasing motivation, maximising interest in content and product, and assisting students to think logically. Reading and writing skills are interconnected. Writers read and re-read their own drafts to improve them. Readers, on the other hand, paraphrase and summarise in writing

what they have read. Last but not least, Shanahan (1997) emphasises that reading and writing overlap. Students need to know meanings of items in order to read and write. Students also need to have some ideas about how literary texts relate to the world at large.

For EFL/ESL students to acquire adequate communicative critical reading/writing competence, the fourth implication stresses instructors' role in this regard. The instructor is no more the unquestionable authority in class. His/her role is that of a catalyst, a coordinator, and a facilitator rather than that of a director or a dominator. This implication goes in harmony with a number of specialists' beliefs, the most recent of which-according to the researcher's knowledge-is that of Zyngier's and Fialho's (2010). According to the two researchers mentioned in this context, both instructors and learners need to reflect on what is taking place in class, considering what has gone wrong or has not been implemented effectively. The relationship between instructors and learners has to be based on mutual understanding and respect rather than superior to inferior relations. Thus, there has to be some intimate bonds between both parties. Lastly, the class itself has to be a healthy environment encouraging autonomous learning.

As far as employing appropriate approaches is concerned, adopting an eclectic approach would be of great support. Each approach has its positive and possibly negative effects under certain circumstances. An experienced instructor's knowledge and skill regarding selection of instructional methods may be compared to a technician's toolbox. The instructor's tools are teaching methods. Just as the technician uses some tools more than others, the instructor will use some methods more often than others. Based on this implication, the researcher would like to include her own approach, so that it may be considered as one of those approaches to which practitioners in the field resort, when needed. The following paragraphs present the researcher's approach: communicative critical language competence approach to the teaching of EFL.

The linking of the language of linguistics, the analysis of literary texts, the skills of communication and interaction, as well as the skills of critical thinking, is essentially the domain of the communicative critical language competence approach. Within this domain, listeners and

speakers, readers and writers, are all partners. According to this approach, a literary text becomes a work when it is examined from an interpretive perspective. A short story, for example, is extremely valuable in broadening a reader's perspective and empowering him/her with an appreciation vision. Of paramount concern for this approach is the impact a literary text has on a student as being a reader and a writer. Aesthetic response, as a hall mark of this approach, is to be conceived in terms of interaction between a text and a reader. Critical discussions of a short story or novel which restrict themselves to information gained from the text can never be absolute, and should serve as a step ahead of intrinsic insight. This approach assumes that it is the context rather than the individual words that should be an area of concern, for no utterance can properly be absorbed and internalised apart from the context it is originally made within. The language used in a literary text is multi-dimensional. Any word has the potential to function on at least two levels. Although a literary text does communicate, the message is sometimes multi-dimensional, and in many cases there is no one single interpretation.

The communicative critical language competence approach incorporates two main components: an extrinsic component and an intrinsic one. The extrinsic component refers to external factors such as culture, history, and philosophical background, whilst the intrinsic component includes internal factors such as analysis of syntax, lexis, and discourse. A story is believed to be a great creative means of communicating the emotional, spiritual, and intellectual concerns of mankind. The act of reading/listening is a process of exposure to other cultures. A story is a window to culture which immerses a reader into the world it depicts, surrounding him/her with its language and setting, and involving him/her with its characters, theme, plot, and so on.

The pre-requisites for the effective study of a story can be summarised as follows: capacity for sustainable attention, willingness to entertain risks rather than avoid them, tolerance for mistaken responses; paradox and uncertainty, flexibility and openness to diverse cultures and views, as well as appreciation of literary techniques. Whilst dealing with a story, the following analyses are proposed:

- **Conceptual analysis:** analysis of major elements of a story like theme and characterisation.
- **Comparative analysis:** seeking similarities in stories of the same genre, theme, or even written in the same era.

- **Contrastive analysis:** identifying differences amongst stories considering areas like genre, theme, era, style, and so on.
- **Critical analysis:** judgements reflecting upon main points/views stated or otherwise implied.

Being a sort of artistic writing, a story serves as a model and inspiration for language awareness, contributing to the development of writing skills. Once established, a story is the property of the reader. When in class, an instructor has his/her own interpretation which may be different from that of students. When instructors and students share their expectations and interpretations within a well-planned lesson, all will emerge with a broader repertoire for appreciating the story in focus and a more autonomous voice in the target language.

The communicative critical language competence approach emphasises the role meta-cognition plays in relation to comprehension processes, the role of co-operative learning in arousing students' motivation, the role of self-assessment in raising learners' awareness of their capabilities, and the role of learning strategies in meeting individual needs. Speaking in general terms, the processes of handling a short story/novel can be summarised as follows:

- **General awareness:** gaining an overall idea of the text.
- **Detailed examination:** locating information requiring detailed comprehension.
- **Interpretation:** figuring out the theme of the text.
- **Comparison:** identifying similarities within the text itself, story characters for example, or amongst different texts.
- **Contrast:** locating differences within the same or amongst different text(s).
- **Relation:** relating the main points to one's life experiences.
- **Evaluation:** valuing the worth of a text as a highly dignified input.
- **Creativity:** initiating/making/introducing novel ideas, suggestions, and so on.

Briefly speaking, the communicative critical language competence approach assumes it can serve four aims: mastery of EFL/ESL skills, acquisition of communication competencies, enrichment of literary appreciation, and enhancement of critical thinking. The ultimate result would normally be *pleasure* reading, creative writing, voice, and openness.

6.8 Study Recommendations

Upon the completion of discussing both findings and conclusions, this part aims to present a number of recommendations in the light of findings and conclusions arrived at. To begin with, in order to promote EFL/ESL skills, focus should be made on both prioritising communication skills and promoting critical thinking. This is because in EFL/ESL contexts, a learner's major aim is usually that of acquiring communicative competence. Furthermore, our aim in the long run is to ensure quality education, offering a generation of thinkers who can adopt and adapt, respond and react, analyse and initiate, rather than receive and neglect. It is essential, therefore, to emphasise what the researcher calls communicative critical language competence rather than merely teaching the four language skills at a vacuum, away from the essence of our dignified mission as educators in the field.

For EFL/ESL practitioners to realise the intended aims, it is essential to integrate the teaching of language and literature when designing a curriculum and whilst carrying out instruction. Utilising fiction would be of great use in this regard. To ensure effective instruction whilst utilising literary texts, practitioners should firstly seek to cater for learners' individual needs—language, academic, social, affective, and professional. Secondly, the selection process of appropriate literary texts has to be stressed. Practitioners and specialists may argue over the issue of what it is that makes an appropriate literary text. Seen from the researcher's point of view, factors such as language complexity, age group, variety, cultural appropriateness, length, authenticity, relative contemporary and human values are to be considered throughout the selection process. Whilst selecting literary pieces for teaching purposes, practitioners need to bear in mind that an impressive literary text should appeal to students' interests, concerns and age. In so doing, a literary text has the potential to arouse motivation and instil in students a love for literature which goes on beyond class and lasts for long. Thirdly, practitioners need to acquire a repertoire of methods and approaches, seeking to employ what may work most efficiently with a particular type of learners under certain circumstances. Using a variety of purposeful methods and techniques is necessary to meet students' different learning styles and requirements.

With promoting communicative critical language competence in mind, assessment has to be carried out effectively. Characteristics such as reliability, validity, practicality, and credibility

should be what a practitioner's assessment is characterised by. Assessment does not merely entail practitioners' assessment of their students. Self-assessment should be an integral part of EFL/ESL curricula as it serves a number of purposes. Some of these have to do with self assessment as being a pre-requisite for self-directed learning, for raising learners' awareness of language, as well as for increasing motivation and goal orientation in terms of learning. Self-assessment, however, should not be excluded to learners. Instructors are also recommended to self-evaluate their instructional performance regularly in order to ensure quality performance.

Last but not least, a literary text should be approached as a valuable resource and a fruitful opportunity for an EFL/ESL student's personal growth on his/her own. To fulfil this requirement, it is essential for all parties involved-whether curriculum designers, instructors, students, examinees, or researchers, to bear in mind that the key solution to any single problematic issue within the field of EFL/ESL is summed up in two key words: *exposure* and *practice*. The more students are exposed to adequate input as well as have meaningful practice, the better the outcomes will be. To maximise the effectiveness of exposure and practice, *involvement* has a significant role to play; cognitive involvement involving thinking skills, affective involvement requiring a spirit of motivation and emotion, and interactive involvement necessitating some action of reaction and performance.

6.9 Suggestions for Further Studies

The current research project-the researcher feels-has been promising in a number of ways, beginning with some enquiries and ending with some more issues for researchers and specialists to investigate. Based on the current study, the researcher's outlooks as well as ambitions for future research work can be briefly summarised in the following points:

- Conducting a similar research project with a larger sample, for a longer duration, and/or at a different setting.
- Setting a fiction course to investigate students' attitudes towards language/literature learning.
- Applying the same course with some modifications in terms of instructional and/or assessment activities, for example, assigning reading activities as extensive reading tasks throughout the whole teaching/learning phase.

- Initiating a fiction-course, the main aim of which is to promote oral language skills.
- Designing a similar course using literary genres other than novels and short stories.
- Implementing a fiction course to further explore which genres students prefer most.
- Raising the issue of gender differences in relation to language performance through conducting similar studies, for further examination.
- Investigating differences between science/non-science students on language performance through carrying out similar projects, for further investigation.
- Introducing a similar course to further investigate which skills students generally achieve most progress in, through the study of literary texts.
- Making use of technological facilities as a major means of instruction whilst doing courses with similar aims, settings, and so on.
- Using the proposed course to teach English language courses other than that of the Communication Skills at Al Ghurair University, any other UAE's universities, or even at universities within the EFL world.

6.10 Concluding Word

It is the researcher's pleasure at this stage to state that this current research has been of genuine use, enjoyment, and support to her. It has been of genuine use to the researcher as well as the study field in the sense that she has investigated a problematic issue, initiated a remedy, and obtained some fruitful results; satisfactory output in terms of subjects' acquired skills and competencies. It has been of genuine enjoyment due to the fact that when we truly seek to achieve a challenging target, we, throughout the race, obtain the pleasure of *sweet suffering* which ultimately would yield in gathering the desired seeds; a *sweet seed-gathering process* entailing some genuine pleasure of its own kind. One cannot feel it unless he/she goes through *a journey of similar sort*. It has been of genuine support to the researcher for a number of reasons. Throughout the whole process beginning with identifying the study problem and ending with gaining some promising output, the researcher has read, written, investigated, consulted, diagnosed, analysed, examined, communicated, and criticised a great deal! A very normal outcome resulted from reading and writing and investigating and consulting and diagnosing and analysing and examining and communicating and criticising would be improving the skills of reading, writing, investigating, consulting, diagnosing, analysing, examining, communicating

and criticising. In brief, this is what the current research project seeks to achieve on the part of EFL learners, and similarly, this is what the researcher herself, a non-native speaker of English, has gained as such.

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Appendix One: Study Jury Members

Appendix one presents the names of the jury members, along with their job designations and affiliations. These are:

Dr. Christine Coombe, Professor in English Language Assessment, Dubai Men's College, Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Dr. Ayub Sheik, Assistant Professor in English Studies, Head of the English Language Centre at Al Ghurair University (2007-2009), Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Ms. Trish Seapy, Writing Consultant, Texas A& M University, Doha, Qatar.

Appendix Two: The Pre-Post Test

The pre-post test was administered to the experimental and control group students, including two sections: reading and writing. Appendix two presents the test, along with the test specifications and evaluation criteria for both sections. As far as section one is concerned, it is comprised of six short reading passages all based on TOEFL. Students were required to read all the passages and circle the correct answer to each question. The writing section, by contrast, is comprised of three essay writing tasks mostly based on TOEFL. For each essay writing task, three topics were given so that each student would choose the topic which he/she would feel comfortable writing about. Each essay was required to be of approximately two-hundred and fifty words long.

SECTION ONE: READING (30 MARKS)

Questions 1-4

For any business, the cost of transportation is normally the largest single item in the overall cost of physical distribution. It does not necessarily follow, though, that a manufacturer should simply pick the cheapest available form of transportation. Many companies today use the total physical distribution concept, an approach that involves maximising the efficiency of physical distribution activities while minimising their cost. Often, this means that the company will make cost tradeoffs between the various physical distribution activities. For instance, air freight may be much more expensive than rail transport, but a national manufacturer might use air freight to ship everything from a single warehouse and thus avoid the greater expense of maintaining several warehouses.

When a firm chooses a type of transportation, it has to bear in mind its other marketing concerns-storage, financing, sales, inventory size, and the like. Transportation, in fact, can be an especially important sales tool. If the firm can supply its customers' needs more quickly and reliably than its competitors do, it will have a vital advantage: so it may be more profitable in the long run to pay higher transportation costs, rather than risk the loss of future sales. In addition, speedy delivery is crucial in some industries. A mail-order distributor sending fruit needs the promptness of air freight. On the other hand, manufacturer shipping lingerie from one country to another may be perfectly satisfied with slower and cheaper transport.

- 1) The underlined phrase 'cost tradeoffs' means that companies
 - A. sometimes engage in bartering goods.
 - B. may choose an expensive form of transportation if costs can be cut in another area.
 - C. prefer warehouses to air transportation.
 - D. rarely use rail transport.

- 2) It can be inferred from the passage that transportation is
 - A. important to continued successful sales.
 - B. independent of other business concerns.
 - C. not used effectively by business.
 - D. too expensive for most mail-order industries to use.

3) We can conclude from the passage that a business that deals in perishable goods would probably choose to ship by

A. rail. B. truck. C. air freight. D. any type of cheap transport.

4) In which of the following academic courses would this passage probably be assigned reading?

A. Marketing. B. Statistics. C. Mechanical engineering. D. History.

Questions 5-8

Noise is a given in our everyday lives. From the moment the alarm clock buzzes or the garbage trucks rouse us, to the time we fall asleep despite the neighbour's stereo, we accommodate noisy intrusions.

Studies suggest that we pay a price for adapting to noise: higher blood pressure, heart rate, and adrenaline secretion-even after the noise stops; heightened aggression; impaired resistance to disease; a sense of helplessness. In terms of stress, unpredictability is an important factor. Studies suggest that when we can control noise, its effects are much less damaging.

Although there are no studies on the effects of quiet in repairing the stress of noise, those who have studied the psychological effects of noise believe that quiet provides an escape. Most people who work in a busy and fairly noisy environment love quiet and need it desperately.

We are so acclimated to noise that complete quiet is sometimes unsettling. You might have trouble sleeping on vacation in the mountains, for example, without the background sounds of traffic. But making the effort to find quiet gives us a chance to hear ourselves think, to become attuned to the world around us, to find peacefulness and calm. It provides a serene antidote to the intrusively loud world we live in the rest of the day.

5) For which group of people can we infer from the passage that the author is writing?

A. People who live in the country. B. Vacationers. C. City-dwellers. D. Doctors.

6) What is the author's attitude towards noise?

A. Humorous. B. Critical. C. Emotional. D. Indifferent.

7) The underlined phrase 'pay a price for' could best be replaced by which of the following?

A. Suffer from. B. Lose money because of. C. Work hard. D. Indulge in.

8) The underlined word 'unsettling' could best be replaced by which of the following?

A. Rewarding. B. Necessary. C. Unavoidable. D. Disturbing.

Questions 9-14

Medical research on the prevention of strokes has recently made several breakthroughs. The researchers studied strokes that are caused by an irregular heart rhythm that produces blood clots. When those clots get lodged in an artery that supplies blood to the brain, they reduce blood flow

and produce a stroke. Up to 75,000 Americans who have strokes each year suffer from irregular heart rhythms. The use of the blood-thinning drug warfarin cuts the risk of a stroke by 67 percent. The data also suggest that aspirin is effective and is a reasonable alternative. Doctors might feel more comfortable prescribing aspirin because of the slight possibility that warfarin may lead to internal bleeding.

In separate studies with patients with severe narrowing of the carotid artery, one of the most common causes of a stroke, a form of surgery now exists which effectively prevents strokes. The surgery involves the removal of a portion of the carotid artery in the neck when it is partially blocked by cholesterol deposits. When the blocked portion has been removed, the artery is reconnected with an artificial tube or a vein from elsewhere in the body.

The research on stroke prevention has showed such dramatic results that doctors have abruptly halted the studies in order to make the information immediately available to all patients.

9) The underlined word ‘breakthroughs’ is closest in meaning to
A. publications. B. advances. C. awards. D. operations.

10) It can be inferred from the passage that strokes are a result of
A. reduced blood flow to the brain. C. taking too much aspirin.
B. expansion of the carotid artery. D. internal bleeding.

11) The underlined word ‘cuts’ is closest in meaning to
A. severs. B. interferes. C. illustrates. D. reduces.

12) We can conclude from the passage that the attitude of doctors towards the results of the stroke prevention research is
A. cautious. B. positive. C. frustrated. D. indifferent.

13) The underlined word ‘abruptly’ is closest in meaning to
A. carefully. B. suddenly. C. quietly. D. temporarily.

14) Based on the passage, which of the following do you think is not true of the drug warfarin?
A. It might possibly lead to internal bleeding.
B. It has been effective in preventing strokes.
C. It has been used in research studies on people with irregular heartbeats.
D. It eliminates cholesterol deposits in arteries.

Questions 15-19

People have been playing with marbles for thousands of years. The first marbles were probably either river stones that happened to be naturally round enough to roll on, or more likely, rounded globs of clay that were baked for hardness. Such very old clay marbles have been found in both Greek and Roman ruins, and quartzite spheres have been dated at around 6000 B.C.

Harder and more durable marbles tend to inspire different kinds of games than soft clay marbles, which crack very easily. So with the advent of hand-rounded and polished marbles made of agate or some other rugged, igneous rock, the 'golden age' of marbles and marble play flowered.

Stone marbles began to appear in the early 1800s in what is now the southern part of Germany. Shortly after, handmade glass marbles appeared in the same part of Europe. For the next 120 years, marbles and marble playing flourished in both Europe and America.

Marble players developed their own vocabulary for different sizes and materials of marbles, as well as for the many kinds of games to be played and the way marbles were used in the games. For example, if you were going to play a game of Ring-Taw, one of the most popular and enduring marble games, you would lag for the first shot, and then knuckle down from the baulk, trying your best to get a 'mib' or two with your opponent or two your opponent's 'immie'.

15) The underlined word 'durable' is closest in meaning to
A. sturdy. B. colourful. C. economical. D. massive.

16) It can be inferred from the passage that the use of marbles became very popular in Europe and America
A. in the 18th century. B. in 6000 B.C. C. in the 1970s. D. after glass marbles were developed.

17) The word underlined word 'enduring' is closest in meaning to
A. developed. B. long-lasting. C. engaging. D. challenging.

18) We can infer from the passage that marble playing
A. is a game only for children.
B. has many variations in games.
C. is played according to one set of rules.
D. uses only one kind of marble.

19) It can be concluded from the passage that the terminology of marble playing is
A. specialised. B. easy to understand. C. used only by children. D. derived from an ancient language.

Questions 20-25

Insect control is one of the problems being addressed by cooperative agricultural research teams. Besides the problem of pests, great quantities of food are lost by improper threshing methods and by poor handling, storage, and food preservation.

Fermentation and mold during wet-season crop harvesting and badly organised drying and milling facilities lose much grain. Grain dryers that work for some areas in the world may be useless in other parts with different climates. Grain bins designed for gentle prairie winds are no good for Africa's blazing sun, but can be used effectively in some other geographical areas with different climate types. Developing the right storage facilities for local conditions is, therefore, a great need.

- 20) The underlined word ‘addressed’ is closest in meaning to
A. dealt with. B. mailed to. C. neglected. D. marketed.
- 21) What did the paragraph preceding this passage most probably discuss?
A. Proper threshing methods.
B. Food preservation.
C. Insect control.
D. Agriculture today’s world.
- 22) It can be inferred from the passage that
A. agricultural facilities used in a certain country are not necessarily appropriate in all parts of the world.
B. drying food is easy in tropical climates.
C. African storage facilities are the best worldwide.
D. pest control is the biggest problem facing agricultural research today.
- 23) The author implies in the passage that agricultural research
A. disregards climate conditions in its studies.
B. is making insignificant contributions to tropical agriculture.
C. will continue to investigate storage facilities for food.
D. is primarily taking place in Africa.
- 24) According to the passage, one problem leading to crop loss is
A. poor planting methods.
B. damage from vandals.
C. proper transportation of food products.
D. harvesting procedures during rainy seasons.
- 25) The underlined word ‘Besides’ means
A. in addition to. B. in response to. C. in recognition of. D. in favour of.

Questions 26-30

For several decades, psychologists have been doing extensive research on a subject that affects millions of us: hobbies. According to their findings, a person’s choice of hobby can be almost as revealing as his reaction to an inkblot.

Investigators found that a clearly distinguishable pattern exists between hobby preferences and personality. Scientists now say that they are in a position to study your hobby and come up with a fairly accurate estimate of your emotional maturity, level of intelligence, and distinguishing personality traits.

This is because people generally pick a hobby of their own free will. As a parallel, a person choosing a mate employs a method of selection that reflects his or her intellectual and emotional maturity; the same process is at work in choosing a hobby.

A hobby is never a task, but a form of living expression that complements and augments one's own personality.

26) The underlined word 'findings' is closest in meaning to
A. inventions. B. decisions. C. interests. D. results.

27) It can be inferred from the passage that a reaction to an inkblot
A. is used to reveal a person's personality.
B. is one kind of hobby.
C. is being extensively investigated today.
D. is the author's favourite hobby.

28) The author implies in the passage that hobbies are
A. only for the emotionally mature.
B. something most people have.
C. as important as a mate is.
D. very time-consuming endeavours.

29) The underlined word 'augments' is closest in meaning to
A. reveals. B. misconstrues. C. extends. D. affects.

30) According to the passage, a person's choice of hobby can tell scientists about all of the following except
A. level of intelligence.
B. probable choice of mate.
C. emotional maturity.
D. special personality traits.

SECTION TWO: WRITING (30 MARKS)

Question One (10 Marks)

Write an *argumentative* essay on *one* of the following. Your essay should be of approximately 250 words.

A. The culture which portrays models/good looking people as slim and trim is really teaching ordinary people to hate and harm themselves. Do you agree or disagree? Justify your opinion providing adequate justifications.

B. Some people think that studying a foreign language in the country where the language is spoken is the best way to learn the language. Others think that learning a foreign language whilst living in your own country is preferable. Which point of view do you agree with? Discuss your reasons.

C. Some people think that cities are the best places to live. Others prefer to live in a rural area. Compare the advantages of living in the city to living in the country. Where would you prefer to live? Give reasons for your choice.

Question Two (10 Marks)

Write a *description* essay on *one* of the following. Your essay should be of approximately 250 words.

A. A popular children's TV programme has asked its viewers to send in a description of a relative of theirs, commenting on how this person has influenced them positively. The best description will win a prize. Write your description for the competition.

B. A travel magazine is running a competition and has asked its readers to submit descriptions of a place they think is ideal for holidays. Write your description for the competition.

C. The town council is running a competition entitled 'The house I like most in my neighborhood.' Write a description for the competition.

Question Three (10 Marks)

Write a *process* essay on *one* of the following. Your essay should be of approximately 250 words.

A. A cookery magazine is running a competition, asking its readers to submit a recipe for a typical dish from their country. Write your recipe.

B. How to deal with a nosy friend of yours.

C. How to study for an important test you need to score a high grade on.

Table Nineteen: Test Specifications for the Reading Section

| Question No. | Question Type | Ability Measured | Answer | Mark Allotment | Allocation of Time |
|---------------------|----------------------|---|---------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | M.C. | Deducing meaning of unfamiliar lexical items from context. | B | 1 | |
| 2 | M.C. | Distinguishing facts, opinions and reasoned justifications. | A | 1 | |
| 3 | M.C. | Distinguishing facts, opinions and reasoned justifications. | C | 1 | |
| 4 | M.C. | Making judgments. | A | 1 | |
| 5 | M.C. | Making judgments. | C | 1 | |
| 6 | M.C. | Grasping feelings, opinions and attitudes implied. | B | 1 | |
| 7 | M.C. | Deducing meaning of unfamiliar lexical items from context. | A | 1 | |
| 8 | M.C. | Deducing meaning of unfamiliar lexical items from context. | D | 1 | |
| 9 | M.C. | Deducing meaning of unfamiliar lexical items from context. | B | 1 | |
| 10 | M.C. | Distinguishing facts, opinions and reasoned justifications. | A | 1 | |
| 11 | M.C. | Deducing meaning of unfamiliar lexical items from context. | D | 1 | |
| 12 | M.C. | Grasping feelings, opinions and attitudes implied. | B | 1 | |
| 13 | M.C. | Deducing meaning of unfamiliar lexical items from context. | B | 1 | |
| 14 | M.C. | Distinguishing facts, opinions and reasoned justifications. | D | 1 | |
| 15 | M.C. | Deducing meaning of unfamiliar lexical items from context. | A | 1 | |
| 16 | M.C. | Distinguishing facts, opinions and reasoned justifications. | D | 1 | |
| 17 | M.C. | Deducing meaning of unfamiliar lexical items from context. | B | 1 | |
| 18 | M.C. | Distinguishing facts, opinions and reasoned justifications. | B | 1 | |
| 19 | M.C. | Making judgments. | A | 1 | |
| 20 | M.C. | Deducing meaning of unfamiliar lexical items from context. | A | 1 | |
| 21 | M.C. | Making judgments. | C | 1 | |
| 22 | M.C. | Distinguishing facts, opinions and reasoned justifications. | A | 1 | |

| | | | | | |
|--------------|------|---|---|-----------------|-------------------|
| 23 | M.C. | Grasping feelings, opinions and attitudes implied. | C | 1 | |
| 24 | M.C. | Distinguishing facts, opinions and reasoned justifications. | D | 1 | |
| 25 | M.C. | Deducing meaning of unfamiliar lexical items from context. | A | 1 | |
| 26 | M.C. | Deducing meaning of unfamiliar lexical items from context. | D | 1 | |
| 27 | M.C. | Distinguishing facts, opinions and reasoned justifications. | A | 1 | |
| 28 | M.C. | Grasping feelings, opinions and attitudes implied. | B | 1 | |
| 29 | M.C. | Deducing meaning of unfamiliar lexical items from context. | C | 1 | |
| 30 | M.C. | Distinguishing facts, opinions and reasoned justifications. | B | 1 | |
| Total | | | | 30 Marks | 45 Minutes |

Table Twenty: Test Specifications for the Writing Section

| Question No | Question Type | Abilities Measured | Answer | Mark Allotment | Allocation of Time |
|--------------------|---------------------------|---|--------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | Essay writing (250 words) | Producing coherent pieces of written discourse. Employing cohesion devices in a written piece appropriately. | See <i>Evaluation Criteria</i> | 10 | |
| 2 | Essay writing (250 words) | Producing coherent pieces of written discourse. Employing cohesion devices in a written piece appropriately. | See <i>Evaluation Criteria</i> | 10 | |
| 3 | Essay writing (250 words) | Producing coherent pieces of written discourse. Employing cohesion devices in a written piece appropriately. | See <i>Evaluation Criteria</i> | 10 | |
| Total | | | | 30 | 45 Minutes |

Table Twenty-One: Evaluation Criteria of Writing Skills

| Score | Topic development | Language use |
|--------------|--|--|
| 30 | | |
| 27-30 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effectively addresses the topic. - Displays unity and coherence. - Well developed. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Well organised. - Effective and adequate use of structures, grammar and vocabulary. - Wide range of structures, grammar and vocabulary. - Minor errors. |
| 23-26 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Generally addresses the topic. - Generally displays unity and coherence. - Generally well-developed. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Generally well-organised. - Adequate use of structures, grammar and vocabulary. - Adequate range of structures, grammar and vocabulary. - A few errors. |

| | | |
|-------|--|--|
| 19-22 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fairly addresses the topic, as appropriate. - Fairly displays unity and coherence, as required. - Fairly well-developed. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fairly well-organised. - Relatively limited control of structures, grammar and vocabulary. - Relatively limited range of structures, grammar and vocabulary. - Some inaccurate use of structures, grammar and vocabulary. |
| 13-18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does not address the topic adequately. - Limited connection of ideas. - Limited development in response to the topic. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lacks organisation in places. - Limited control of structures, grammar and vocabulary. - Limited range of structures, grammar and vocabulary. - Frequent inaccuracy of structures, grammar and vocabulary. |
| 8-12 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mostly irrelevant. - Lacks unity and coherence. - Serious underdevelopment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Serious disorganisation. - Severely limited control of structures, grammar and vocabulary. - Severely limited range of structures, grammar and vocabulary. - Mostly inaccurate structures, grammar and vocabulary. |
| 1-7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Irrelevant. - Incoherent. - Severely serious underdevelopment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Severely serious disorganisation. - No control of structures, grammar and vocabulary. - Too limited range of structures, grammar and vocabulary. - Inaccurate structures, grammar and vocabulary. |
| 0 | No attempt to write. | No attempt to write. |

Appendix Three : The Pre-Post Questionnaire

The pre-post questionnaire was administered to the experimental group students, prior to and following the implementation of the proposed course. Incorporating three parts, the questionnaire aimed to: gain an awareness of how subjects rated their abilities in dealing with short stories/novels considering different aspects so that any significant changes could be observed, get an idea about what story genres subjects preferred most so that such preferences could be considered when teaching the proposed course, and form a picture of subjects' attitudes towards novels and short stories so that any significant changes could be cited.

Appendix three presents the pre-post questionnaire, administered for the sake of the current research project.

Dear Student,

This questionnaire is comprised of three parts. In part one, you are required to rate your abilities in dealing with short stories and novels. In part two, you need to write down the genre(s) which you prefer most when reading short stories and novels. In part three, you should classify your preferences and habits as a foreign language learner of English.

Your cooperation in this regard is highly appreciated.

Part One

Use the following scale to indicate your abilities in dealing with short stories and novels, by ticking the box which applies to you most.

0 = Poor 1 = Fair 2 = Good 3 = Very Good 4 = Excellent

| No. | Aspect | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|-----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Identifying the theme. | | | | | |
| 2. | Identifying the plot. | | | | | |
| 3. | Identifying the narrator's attitude and opinion. | | | | | |
| 4. | Identifying the characters' attitudes and moods. | | | | | |
| 5. | Recognising variations in vocabulary according to the theme and situation. | | | | | |
| 6. | Deducing the meaning of unfamiliar lexical items from context. | | | | | |
| 7. | Making judgements based on personal experiences. | | | | | |
| 8. | Identifying the conflict. | | | | | |
| 9. | Identifying the genre. | | | | | |
| 10. | Recognising the symbolism used. | | | | | |
| 11. | Recognising the irony conveyed. | | | | | |
| 12. | Appreciating the figurative language manipulated. | | | | | |
| 13. | Going beyond the short story/novel, predicting possible outcomes. | | | | | |
| 14. | Summarising a whole story or specific events. | | | | | |
| 15. | Writing a short story, establishing an opening; characters and one or more events. | | | | | |

Part Two

On the line provided below, write down the genre(s) you prefer most when reading short stories and novels.

Part Three

Use the following chart to indicate your habits and preferences as a foreign language learner of English, by ticking the box which applies to you most.

| Habits and Preferences | Never | Seldom | Someti mes | Often | Always |
|---|--------------|---------------|-----------------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1. I like to read novels. | | | | | |
| 2. I like to read short stories. | | | | | |
| 3. I like to read non-literary texts on different topics. | | | | | |
| 4. I enjoy talking about what I have read. | | | | | |
| 5. I like to write novels. | | | | | |
| 6. I like to write short stories | | | | | |
| 7. I like to write non-literary texts on different topics. | | | | | |
| 8. I enjoy talking about what I have written. | | | | | |
| 9. I keep a personal diary to remind me of what I have read as well as written. | | | | | |

Appendix Four: The Proposed Course-LEARN AND GAIN

The proposed courses **LEARN AND GAIN** incorporates two novels and fifteen short stories. Appendix four is excluded to presenting the texts that were discussed throughout the piloting, re-piloting and implementation stages. These are: *Introductory Unit*, *Among the Dahlias* by William Sansom, the first three chapters of the novel *Animal Farm* by George Orwell, *Eveline* by James Joyce, *The Budget* by Mario Benedetti, *The Far and the Near* by Thomas Wolfe, *The Lady or the Tiger* by Frank R. Stockton, *The Necklace* by Guy de Maupassant, *The Pieces of Silver* by Karl Sealy, and *Three is a Lucky Number* by Margery Allingha.

Introductory Unit

Introduction

What do you enjoy most about reading stories-meeting unique characters, visiting fantastic places? Stories, it is believed, are wonderfully versatile. Like a necklace, a story can take many shapes while always needing a firm thread or structure to link one end to the other. In reading the selections included in this course, you may find that one of the most delightful things about reading stories is that anything can happen. The selections all seek to illustrate how great writers can with their insight and gift for words; help us to see the world we live in, in new probing and exciting ways.

General Aims and Attainment Targets

On the completion of this course, you are expected to:

- Read to find and handle information for a range of purposes, as well as read to enjoy and respond to a variety of texts.
- Write for a range of purposes, to convey meaning in language appropriate to purpose and audience.

You, as such, will be able to:

- Identify the theme, diction, plot, writer's attitude, character's mood, conflict, and genre.
- Recognize variations in vocabulary according to theme, purpose and situation.
- Recognize symbolism, irony and cohesion devices.
- Differentiate between denotations and connotations.
- Shape chronological writing using appropriate cohesion devices.

In addition, you are required to develop your abilities in reading critically. In so doing, you will be able to:

- Distinguish facts, opinions and reasoned justifications.
- Grasp feelings, opinions and attitudes implied.
- Deduce meaning of unfamiliar lexical items from context.
- Make judgments based upon personal knowledge and experience.
- Recognize the adequacy and effectiveness of employing literary devices for appreciation purposes.

Moreover, you are supposed to improve your abilities in writing critically. In so doing, you will be able to:

- Write coherent pieces of written discourse.
- Utilize cohesive devices in a written piece appropriately.

- Employ literary techniques in writing effectively.

Language Concepts Discussed throughout the Course

•Cause/Effect

What makes something happen is its cause. What happens is the effect.

•Character

The development of a character depends on the importance of the character to the story. In a short story, usually only one or two characters are developed very fully. In a novel, by contrast, more than three characters are usually developed.

•Character's Presentation: Direct

The author *tells* the reader exactly what the character is like.

•Character's Presentation: Indirect

The author *shows* the reader what the character is like, and the reader should interpret the character from: what the character says, what the character does, what the character thinks, and what other characters say about the character

•Character's Role: Antagonist

An antagonist character is the protagonist's opponent, for example in a fight or competition. Antagonists are usually intended to portray wickedness.

•Character's Role: Protagonist

A protagonist is the main character in a story who is attempting to solve the major conflict and/or trying to introduce helpful ideas.

•Character's Type: Dynamic

A dynamic character undergoes a permanent change in personality or attitude. It is important to evaluate the plausibility (believability) of the change a dynamic character goes through. Two questions should be considered: was the situation or experience that the character went through strong enough to cause him or her to change, and was it within the character's capabilities to undergo the change?

•Character's Type: Flat

Only one or two traits are usually revealed. Generally speaking, we see them in only one or two situations in the story. They are not developed. Flat characters are not always unimportant. They can be used as part of the setting, or they can advance the plot in significant ways.

•Character's Type: Round

Round characters are complex and many faceted. The reader sees them in variety of situations. Because they are well developed, they are realistic and therefore, it is difficult to describe them in definite terms. When describing the traits of a round character, it is important to back up your understanding with reference to behavior, events and description in the story. Other people may interpret these characters in different, but equally valid ways.

•Character's Type: Static

A static character does not undergo any basic personality change, or a significant change in attitude in the story. They are essentially the same at the end of the story as they were at the beginning. Flat and stock characters are always static. Round characters may be static or dynamic.

•Character's Type: Stock (Stereotype)

These characters have occurred so often in literature that their nature is immediately known. They do not exist in real life, because they are predictable and follow a set pattern in their behavior.

•Classify/Categorize

When you classify, you look for ways things are alike.

•Compare/Contrast

When you compare, you tell ways things/characters/ideas/aspects are alike. When you contrast, you tell ways things/characters/ideas/aspects and different.

•Conflict

Conflict arises from the difficulties the protagonist encounters when trying to achieve his or her goal.

•Conflict: Person vs. Environment

The protagonist is against a facet or belief of society, or against any outside force that is not necessarily a person.

•Conflict: Person vs. Him or Herself

The protagonist is in conflict with something within him or herself-physical, mental, emotional, moral or spiritual. This type of conflict is also called an internal conflict.

•Conflict: Person vs. Person

The protagonist is pitted against one or two other characters.

•Context Clues

If you come to a word you do not know, look for clues in the sentence or paragraph. These context clues can help you figure out what the word means.

•Inferences /Drawing Conclusions

Authors sometimes give hints in a story instead of telling you everything. When you figure out what the author mean, you draw conclusions.

•Inferences/Predicting Outcomes

When you predict outcomes, you use clues and what you know to figure out what will happen next.

•Irony

Irony is a literary technique by which an author can express a meaning contradictory to, or opposite from, the one literally stated. Something is not as it appears to be. The main types of irony are: *verbal irony* meaning that a speaker knowingly states the opposite to what he or she means, *situational irony* meaning that the opposite happens to what is expected, and *dramatic irony* meaning that a speaker unknowingly says or does something that is the opposite of what he or she would say or do if they were aware of the circumstances.

•Main Ideas/Details

The important ideas in a story are called the main ideas. Details tell more about the main ideas.

•Plot

Plot is the series of events that take place in a story.

•Plot: Linear Outline

Not all stories begin at one point in time, and continue forward through time to a conclusion at a later date. To understand the basis of plot, you need to have a clear idea about linear plot outlines. A linear plot outline consists of the following developments:

Exposition: The exposition provides you with background information about which you must be aware in order to understand or receive full benefit from the story. It is not always revealed at the beginning, though this is common. The exposition may include any or all of the following: a description of the setting, antecedent action which is the action or events that occur prior to the opening of the story, and atmosphere or mood which is the feeling the story conveys to the reader.

Initial Incident: The initial incident is the incident that first begins the conflict.

Rising Action: The series of events and crisis that lead up to the climax.

Crisis: An individual event within the rising action that creates tension and pushes the conflict toward a resolution at the climax.

Climax: The highest point of interest, at which the reader learns the outcome of the conflict.

Denouement: A wrapping up of “loose ends.” The unanswered questions about characters’ lives or sub-plots in the story may be answered. A denouement is not always present.

•Point of View

Point of view is important because it can set both the tone of the story and amount of information which the author can give about the thoughts and feelings of the characters. It also influences the degree to which you identify with the protagonist.

•Point of View: First Person

The narrator is a character in the story. Therefore, the story is written in first person (using *I/my/me/mine* and *we/our/us/ours*). In this case, the author is limited to revealing only the thoughts and feelings of the narrator, and to being only in places the narrator is able to be. If the narrator is the protagonist, strong identification on the part of the reader with the protagonist is more easily achieved.

•Point of View: Limited Omniscient

The narrator is able to reveal the thoughts and feelings of only one character (usually the protagonist). This point of view attempts to combine the advantages of both omniscient and first person since narrator is able to be in places this character is not, while there is also a strong identification with the protagonist since we can see only into this character’s mind and heart.

•Point of View: Objective

The narrator only reveals what is seen and heard, and cannot reveal any character’s thoughts or feelings. The narrator has the ability to move from place to place and time to time, but simply records the action much like a camera.

•Point of View: Omniscient

The narrator is able to reveal the thoughts and feelings of more than one character. He or she is able to move from place to place, as well as through time, as is needed.

•Sequence: The sequence is the order of events in a story. One event happens first then another happens, and so on.

•Setting

Setting refers to both the time when and location where a story takes place. The amount of description depends on the importance the setting has to the story. In some cases, the setting may have a great influence on other elements of the story, thus bearing on the characters or their development, on the mood, or on the theme of a story. In other stories, the setting is only important in that it must take place somewhere at some time, but has little influence on the other elements of the story.

•Summarize

To summarize means to retell in as a few words as possible. A summary gives only the most important information.

•Synonyms/Antonyms

Synonyms are words that have the same or nearly the same meaning. Antonyms are words with opposite meanings.

•Theme

Authors use stories to send messages to readers.

Examining a Story throughout the Reading Process: Questions to Raise

-**Language.** Does the language strike readers as unusual in any way(s)? What is the effect?

-**Repetition.** Is anything repeated again and again? What is the effect?

-**Literal vs. metaphorical.** (a) What literal details are given? What do they bring to the text? (b) Are there any comparisons or associations? Are they between people, animals, things, ideas? What do they bring to the text?

-**Silence.** What relevant information is not given? What is the effect of that?

-**Setting.** What use (if any) is made of the physical setting?

-**Narrator.** What kind of narrator is used? Is the narrator a character in the story? Can the narrator get into anyone else's thoughts?

-**Perspective.** Through whose eyes is the story told? What is the effect of that?

-**Characterization.** How is a character portrayed?

-**Speech/Thoughts.** To render a character's words, does the narrator use direct speech, indirect speech, or some other method(s)?

Writer's Workshop: A Short Checklist of Questions for Global Revision of Written Work-

-Does the draft meet the requirements of the assignment? Is it the appropriate length? Does it address an appropriate topic? A brilliant paper that fails to meet the assignment is probably going to get a poor grade.

-Does the draft have a clear thesis or purpose? If so, what is it?

-Does each paragraph relate to and support the thesis? Which paragraphs, if any, do not?

-Are ideas coherently arranged so that one paragraph follows clearly and understandably from another?

-Does the essay include adequate evidence or examples to support and illustrate the various points?

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GLOSSARY

- conformed : accepted the need to behave like other people
- writing them off : dismissing them
- impracticable : not suitable for carrying out in reality
- went through : performed
- baby-fat : rolls of fat like those on a baby's wrists and ankles
- richly-sober : of good quality and dark in colour
- tawny : light brown
- like a stuffed dummy : uselessly
- trousered : covered with thick feathers looking like trousers
- clicked heels : brought their feet together with a sharp noise
- puss : pet name for a cat
- Likes mice like puss : the owl , like the cat , likes to eat mice
- in the flesh : in reality
- deserted : left
- consortium : gathering
- bird-runs : enclosures for birds
- lizard lids : wrinkled eyelids like a lizard's
- flashed : passed as quickly as a flash of lightning
- dahlia balls : the rounded heads of a variety of dahlias called "pompon"
- underbrush : the lower part of the hedge
- Bath Chairs : chairs on wheels for the use of invalids
- animal instinct :instinct which man shares with other animals

WARM UP

Brainstorming

What should a zoo be characterised by? Explain.

Advance organiser

What does the word “dahlias” mean?

READING IN ACTION

As you read find out

- A. why the zoo was almost empty ,
- B. why Doole liked visiting the zoo ,
- C. why Doole’s body was never found ,
- D. how many human characters are there in the story .

Keeping track

- A. What made Doole feel uneasy before seeing the lion?
- B. On seeing the lion, Doole stood still. Why?
- C. Why were there no more than a few lines about the incident in the evening newspapers?
- D. What was a greater ill for Doole than being killed?

Close study: Focus on plot

Fill in the missing information.

Main character:

Setting:

Main events:

Beginning:

Middle:

End:

Conclusion: We are made aware of Doole’s sensation and then with an ironical twist the terror subsides. Support the statement with reference to the story.

Reader's response

- A. How do you like the ending of the story? Explain.
- B. What moral does the story teach us?
- C. Upon seeing the lion, what would you do if you were Doole? Give reasons.
- D. Would the story have been more interesting if the lion had attacked Doole? Justify your answer.

Follow up

Draw a portrait of the zoo as described in the story.

LANGUAGE PRACTICE

Word finder

Find the words which are similar in meaning to each of the following:

- A. ways of behaving (paragraph 3)
- B. hanging down and dripping with blood (paragraph 6)
- C. meet (paragraph 7)
- D. turned up to one side (paragraph 8)
- E. impenetrability (paragraph 13)
- F. guilt (20)
- G. risky (paragraph 25)
- H. formed the habit of (paragraph 29)

Grammar focus – present simple tense

Read paragraph 3 and underline the verbs used in the present simple tense, explaining what meaning each conveys.

Literary qualities

- A. What literary device is used in each of the following?
 - “It stood and jerked its head backwards and forwards, like a little lady in a spring hat practising the neck movements of an Indonesian dance”.
 - “How bright, like a consortium of national flags, the dahlias!”
- B. Is the wording effective in each of the following? Explain.
 - “But it was never again, the ever was ever”.
 - “ certainly worse for his peace of mind , which would have been properly at peace had his body gone”,
 - “it smelled inwards with its eyes”.

ORAL PRODUCTION

Act with a fellow-student, a dialogue between the peacock and his mate about what they saw. Suppose that like all animals in books, they could speak.

WRITER'S WORKSHOP

Know your purpose – Working from facts to inferences to hypotheses

To infer means to draw the meaning/information required by reasoning. A hypothesis, on the other hand, is a theory that can lead to new facts and discoveries but it is not necessarily a certainty.

- A. **Pre-writing.** Skim through a book that lists facts, so that you can later draw inferences and form a hypothesis.
- B. **Drafting.** Now that you have skimmed through the book, find a group of related facts on one subject and write them down, drawing all the inferences that would explain what these facts mean. Then select one conclusion that seems to be the most likely hypothesis and list what further facts you need to determine whether or not it is true. When you are ready, make this a short essay assignment.
- C. **Revising.** Refer to the checklist provided in the Introductory Unit to ensure cohesion.
- D. **Proof-reading.** Check for mistakes in word choice, spelling and punctuation.
- E. **Publishing for your classroom journal.** Use clothes pins to hang your essay on a line in your classroom. Remember to exchange reading the essays in order to ultimately choose the best.

SELF EVALUATION

Use the *PM Chart* to reflect on your progress in English.

| Plus | Minus |
|------|-------|
| | |

BUILDING UP YOUR PORTFOLIO

Write an account of the events in the story as they might appear in a newspaper.

ANIMAL FARM BY GEORGE ORWELL



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GLOSSARY

- pop-holes: holes chickens use to enter the hen house
- scullery: a room used for rough kitchen work
- ensconced: settled comfortably
- tushes: small tusks
- cynical: always believing the worst about people and things
- knacker: someone who buys and slaughters old horses for meat
- tyranny: cruel and absolute power harshly administered
- resolution: determination
- dissentients: people who disagree
- tyrannize: to act like a tyrant
- “Clementine,” “La Cucuracha”: popular and catchy tunes
- clime: old-fashioned word for weather
- mangel-wurzels: a type of root vegetable
- Hearken: to listen attentively to something
- preliminary: preparing for the main attempt
- unison: singing in the same pitch

WARM UP

Based on the title of the novel, what do you think the text discusses?

READING IN ACTION

As you read find out

- A. why Major was highly respected by the animals.
- B. what Major urged the animals to do.

Keeping track

- A. According to Major, why should the animals get rid of Man?
- B. Describe the different ways in which the animals behaved as they came into the barn? What does this tell us about them?

Reader's response

- A. "Beasts of England" was sung very enthusiastically by the animals. Why do you think it was easy to remember for even the stupidest of them?
- B. Who do you think Major symbolises? Justify your answer.
- C. What do you think will happen next?

Close Study: Focus on character

Complete the following character log.

| Character: Old Major | | | |
|----------------------|---------|-----------|------------------|
| Key points | Reasons | Key lines | Short quotations |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Follow up

Have you ever read any novels by Orwell? If yes, give a brief summary of what you have read. If not, search the Internet to write a brief summary about Orwell's publications.

LANGUAGE PRACTICE

Words in context

What does each of the following underlined words mean?

- A. “As soon as the light in the bedroom went out there was a stirring and a fluttering all through the farm buildings.”
- B. “and the very instant that our usefulness has come to an end we are slaughtered with hideous cruelty.”
- C. “Comrades, you have heard already about the strange dream that I had last night. But I will come to the dream later.”
- D. “Old Major cleared his throat and began to sing.”
- E. “Rings shall vanish from our noses,”
- F. “Unfortunately, the uproar awoke Mr. Jones, who sprang out of bed, making sure that there was a fox in the yard.”

Grammar practice: irregular Verbs

Read the first chapter again and underline all the irregular verbs used in the past and past participle forms.

Literary qualities

How do you like the language style Orwell uses in the first chapter of the novel? Justify your answer.

ORAL PRODUCTION

Divide into groups to summarise the first chapter of the novel. The group to perform the best will be declared *winner of the day*.

WRITER’S WORKSHOP: SUMMARY WRITING

Using your own words, summarise the first chapter as appropriate. Your summary should be of about 100 words.

SELF EVALUATION

Use the *PM Chart* to reflect on your progress in English.

| | |
|-------------|--------------|
| Plus | Minus |
|-------------|--------------|

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
|--|--|

BUILDING UP YOUR PORTFOLIO

List the reasons Major suggests to the animals for getting rid of Man? Do you agree with them? Write an essay justifying your answer.

CHAPTER TWO



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GLOSSARY

- pre-eminent: the most important
- Berkshire boar: a type of male pig
- vivacious: lively
- elaborated: gave more detail
- expounded: explained
- apathy: lack of interest
- counteract: act against
- linseed cake: a type of feed for sheep and cattle
- Windsor chair: a strong, plain, polished wooden chair
- carpet bag: a large bag made of carpet material
- degrading: making someone less dignified
- knoll: small hill
- reproached: told off in a mild way
- unanimous resolution: decision made with no one disagreeing

WARM UP

What characteristics do you usually associate with wise leaders? Explain your answer.

READING IN ACTION

As you read find out

- A. what *Animalism* refers to.
- B. why the Rebellion happened.

Keeping track

- A. How had Major's teachings been elaborated into a complete system of thought?
- B. The Rebellion was achieved much earlier than anyone had expected. Does this tell us anything about the influence of Animalism on the animals? Explain.

Reader's response

- A. Do you think the questions asked by the animals in the education classes are "foolish"? Justify your answer.
- B. What do you think Sugarcandy Mountain symbolises?
- C. What do you think will happen next?

Close Study: Focus on character

Complete the following character log.

| Character: Mr. Jones | | | |
|----------------------|---------|-----------|------------------|
| Key points | Reasons | Key lines | Short quotations |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Follow up

Search the Internet to gather some sufficient data about Orwell's life, and then write a brief of the data you have gathered.

LANGUAGE PRACTICE

Words in context

What does each of the following underlined words mean?

- A. “but having once accepted the pigs as their teachers, they absorbed everything that they were told,”
- B. “their first act was to gallop in a body right round the boundaries of the farm,”
- C. “Jones was expelled, and the Manor Farm was theirs.”
- D. “Then they filed back to the farm buildings and halted in silence outside the door of the farmhouse.”
- E. “But at this moment the three cows, who had seemed uneasy for some time past, set up a loud lowing.”

Grammar practice: passive voice

Read the second chapter again and underline all the verbs used in the passive voice.

Literary Qualities

How do you like the language style Orwell uses in the second chapter? Justify your answer.

ORAL PRODUCTION

Divide into groups to summarise the second chapter of the novel. The group to perform the best will be declared *winner of the day*.

WRITER’S WORKSHOP: SUMMARY WRITING

Using your own words, summarise the second chapter as appropriate. Your summary should be of about 100 words.

SELF EVALUATION

Use the *PM Chart* to reflect on your progress in English.

| Plus | Minus |
|------|-------|
| | |

BUILDING UP YOUR PORTFOLIO

The writer gives the animals both human and animal characteristics. For each main character, draw up a two-column chart headed animal characteristics and human characteristics. Fill in the chart and add to it as you read through the novel.

CHAPTER THREE



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GLOSSARY

- implements: farm tools
- chaff: outer covering or husk of corn that is useless and must be blown away
- threshing machine: machine to remove husks from the grains of corn
- bushels: an old-fashioned word for large measures of corn
- cryptic: puzzling
- indefatigable: never getting tired
- instituting: establishing
- literate: able to read and write
- exercised his faculty: used his ability
- forelock: the lock of hair on a forehead
- maxim: motto
- whelped: given birth

WARM UP

How would you define *clever people*? Provide examples.

READING IN ACTION

As you read find out

- A. what problems the animals had in gathering in the harvest.
- B. which animals could learn how to read and write without much difficulty.

Keeping track

- A. How did Squealer justify to the other animals what the pigs were doing?
- B. What does the behaviour of Mollie tell us about her attitude towards the Rebellion?
- C. “All through that summer the work of the farm went like clockwork.” Write down two examples.

Reader’s response

- A. Do you think the pigs’ action with the milk and apples is important to the story? Justify your answer.
- B. Who do you think Mollie represents?
- C. What do you think will happen next?

Close Study: Focus on character

Complete the following character log.

| Character: Snowball | | | |
|---------------------|---------|-----------|------------------|
| Key points | Reasons | Key lines | Short quotations |
| | | | |

Follow up

Search the Internet to gather some sufficient data about the Communism Revolution in Russia, and then write a summary of the data you have gathered.

LANGUAGE PRACTICE

Words in context

What does each of the following underlined words mean?

- A. “How they toiled and sweated to get the hay in! But their efforts were rewarded.”
- B. “With their superior knowledge it was natural that they should assume the leadership.”
- C. “And the behaviour of the cat was somewhat peculiar. It was soon noticed that when there was work to be done the cat could never be found.”
- D. “The mystery of where the milk went to was soon cleared up.”

Grammar practice: past perfect tense

Read the third chapter again and underline all the verbs used in the past perfect tense.

Literary Qualities

How do you like the language style Orwell uses in the third chapter of the novel? Justify your answer.

ORAL PRODUCTION

Divide into groups to summarise the third chapter of the novel. The group to perform the best will be declared *winner of the day*.

WRITER’S WORKSHOP: SUMMARY WRITING

Using your own words, summarise the third chapter as appropriate. Your summary should be of about 100 words.

SELF EVALUATION

Use the *PM Chart* to reflect on your progress in English.

| Plus | Minus |
|------|-------|
| | |

BUILDING UP YOUR PORTFOLIO

The incident with the milk and the apples can be seen as the turning point of the story. Do you agree? Write an essay justifying your answer.

EVELINE BY JAMES JOYCE



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GLOSSARY

- clacking : making sudden quick sounds
- brown houses : brown because they were built of brown stone
- Still : nevertheless
- weigh : consider carefully
- anyway : at least
- a fellow : this is a colloquial use of the word to mean a man with whom a girl is in love
- Look lively : be quick
- palpitations: violent beatings of the heart , in this case caused by fear

- she had no head : she was not careful about the money
- elbowed : pushed through the crowds using elbows
- The Bohemian Girl : a light opera about gipsy life by a nineteenth-century Irish composer , Joaquim Balfe
- laid up : ill in bed
- Derevaun Seraun : these two words , apparently Irish , do not in fact mean anything
- passage : sea voyage
- baggage: luggage
- portholes : the windows in a ship , usually round
- pain : sorrow
- nausea : a feeling of sickness , in this case caused by strong emotion
- A bell clanged upon her heart : a bell rang to warn passengers that the ship was about to leave , and its sound made her agitated
- amid : among , used normally in poetry
- set : turned , but in a fixed motionless position

WARM UP

Brainstorming

Describe what you would miss and how you would feel if you had to move away from where you feel you belong.

Advance Organiser

The story takes place in Ireland. For many years, Irish people emigrated to other lands to seek a better living than they could hope for at home .What other information have you got about Ireland and the Irish?

READING IN ACTION

As you Read Find out

- A. how many children had been left to Eveline's charge following her mother's death.
- B. with whom Eveline was going to escape.

Keeping Track

- A. What were the circumstances of Eveline's life that had changed?
- B. What urged Eveline to escape?

Close Study – Focus on Plot

- A. Make a list of clues given in the story which hint at what happened at the end.
- B. The story is carefully planned in terms of :
 - the situation.
 - the trigger or incident that makes the story take an interesting turn.
 - how the author chooses to end the story.Identify these elements in the story.
- C. “He would save her”. “He would drown her”. Comment on the consequences of both actions.

Reader’s Response

- A. Had Eveline escaped as planned, what do you think she would have missed most? Justify your answer.
- B. What lesson(s) does the story teach us?
- C. Based on the ending of the story, what do you think would happen next?

Follow up

Have you ever read any publications written by Joyce? Search the Internet to gather some data about the publications, and then write one page discussing what you have found.

LANGUAGE PRACTICE

Word Finder

Find the words which are similar in meaning to each of the following:

- A. in addition (paragraph 2).
- B. discovered (paragraph 9).
- C. continuously (paragraph 14).
- D. among (paragraph 20).

Grammar Focus: Passive voice

Read paragraphs 8, 13, 16, & 22 and write the statements used in the passive voice.

Literary Qualities

- A. “Then she would be married – she, Eveline”.

What literary device is used in this sentence? What effect does it have on you?

- B. “All the seas of the world tumbled about her heart. He was drawing her into them: he would drown her.”

What literary device is used here?

ORAL PRODUCTION

Divide into two groups. Group A should support the idea that Eveline sacrificed, a great deal. Group B should defend the idea that Eveline was a coward.

WRITER’S WORKSHOP

Know your purpose – compare /contrast. When you compare and contrast two people / things / etc. you tell ways they are alike and different. Some of the expressions that can be used for this purpose are: similar to, like, compared with, different from, but, whereas, while, unlike, in contrast, on the contrary, on the other hand.

- A. **Pre-writing.** Choose an aspect of everyday life, e.g. food; entertainment etc. and compare / contrast what you know of the life in Britain with the life in the UAE, in relation to the aspect you have chosen.
- B. **Drafting.** You should be ready now to draft your article.
- C. **Proof-reading.** Check your article for mistakes in using linking words, spelling, and punctuation.
- D. **Publishing for your classroom journal.** Use pins to hang your article on a line in your classroom. Read your classmates’ articles. Tell the writers what you like most about their articles.

SELF EVALUATION

Use the *SS Chart* to self-evaluate your progress in English.

| Skills I have acquired recently | Skills I still need to acquire |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | |

BUILDING UP YOUR PORTFOLIO: ACROSTIC WRITING

Write *an acrostic* on one of the characters or places mentioned in the story Eveline.

THE BUDGET BY MARIO BENEDETTI



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GLOSSARY

- in operation : in use
- dangling : not touching the floor
- immaculate : pure
- the horizon : the line in the distance where the land or sea meets the sky
- progressive : in gradual stages
- a fountain-pen : a pen that can be filled with ink
- contemplating : looking at something and thinking about it
- an outlet for : a way of expressing
- pending : waiting for
- relief : happiness after a period of worry
- suspended : did not do anything about
- misgivings : fears
- a rib : one of the bones that protect your lungs
- tacked on : fixed with small nails
- strictly confidential : very private
- rehearsing : practising something
- petition : formal , written request
- stammered: spoken with
- indistinct : not heard clearly
- croaking : the voice over the phone sounds like a frog croaking

WARM UP

Brainstorming

Do you agree that an employee should have a regular increase in his salary? Give reasons.

Advance Organiser

How would you define *budget*?

READING IN ACTION

As you read find out

- A. why the office workers hadn't received a new budget for a long time,
- B. who paid for the newspaper which the office workers all read,
- C. who the narrator suggested they should see as to act upon the whole issue .

Keeping track

- A. How did the office workers reduce their expenditure?
- B. The office workers were not really hard workers. Give examples.
- C. "Really our life wasn't a bad one". Support this statement with reference to the story.
- D. Was the main problem solved? Explain.

Close study: focus on theme

- A. One theme of the story has to do with what generally characterises government employees and government departments. What one thing do the office workers share?
- B. It is believed that a short story portrays life as it really is. To what extent does this apply to the story in hand? Justify your answer.
- C. List the advantages and disadvantages of working in such an office, as you perceive them.

Reader's response

- A. Do you expect the office workers would ever receive a new budget? Why / Why not?
- B. How do you view what the Secretary did as the story approached the end?
- C. How would you solve the problem of not having a new budget if you were the narrator?
- D. How do you like the story?

Follow up

Have you ever read a story similar to the story you have just read? If yes, give a brief summary of it. If not, summarise a story you have read recently.

LANGUAGE PRACTICE

Word finder

Find the words which are similar in meaning to each of the following:

- A. in an easy , friendly manner (paragraph 1)
- B. greatest (paragraph 2)
- C. not in the correct shape (paragraph 9)
- D. a disease that makes breathing very difficult (paragraph 11)
- E. fears (paragraph 13)
- F. with pauses of varying length (paragraph 22)

Grammar focus – negative forms

Read paragraphs 2, 4, &12 and then write down the negative forms used in each.

Literary Qualities

What literary device is used in each of the following?

“We observed them from our own little administrative island...”

“we suddenly felt that something was already changing in our seventy-peso lives , as if some invisible hand had at last tightened the screw that had been slack” ,

ORAL PRODUCTION

Imagine the Chief had met the Minister. In pairs, act out the roles of the Minister and the Chief. When you are ready, present it to your classmates.

WRITER’S WORKSHOP

Know your purpose – using inferences /drawing conclusions

The word *infer* means to derive by reasoning; to conclude; to guess. When we infer we use imagination or reasoning to provide explanations for situations when all facts are either not available or not yet determined. Responsible report writing or descriptive writing lets the facts speak for themselves as much as possible. Writing that offers specific detailed support for its conclusions makes interesting writing.

- A. **Pre-writing.** Describe a problem you solved by inferences that led to facts.
- B. **Drafting.** Now you should be ready to draft your piece. Be careful about the use of appropriate words to describe the obvious inferences drawn too hastily that cannot be supported.
- C. **Revising.** You are advised to refer to the Checklist provided in the Introductory Unit.
- D. **Proof-reading.** Check for mistakes in sentence order, spelling, and punctuation.
- E. **Publishing for your classroom journal.** Use clothes pins to hang your piece on a line in your classroom. Read your classroom mates' pieces and tell the writers what you have liked most about the work.

SELF EVALUATION

Use the *SS Chart* to self-evaluate your progress in English.

| Skills I have acquired recently | Skills I still need to acquire |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | |

BUILDING UP YOUR PORTFOLIO

Imagine you are the narrator of the story “The Budget”. Re-write the story making the end as interesting as possible.

THE FAR AND THE NEAR BY THOMAS WOLFE



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GLOSSARY

- outskirts : outer areas
- thrift : care about money
- cars : railway coaches
- tempo : rhythm
- receding : going away
- drowsy : sleepy
- ghastly : frightening
- converging : coming together
- stunned : shocked
- enduring : lasting
- grief : great sorrow
- sorcery : magic
- disquieting : disturbing

WARM UP

A. Brainstorming

Do you think that travelling by train is enjoyable? Give reasons.

B. Advance Organiser

In what ways is the near different from the far?

READING IN ACTION

As you read find out

- who the word engineer refers to in American English,

- how the engineer felt when he met the two women.

Keeping track

- A. The engineer's work was sometimes full of danger. Give examples.
- B. "The sight of the little house and of these two women gave him the most extraordinary happiness he had ever known". Give justifications.
- C. According to the story, how is the far different from the near?

Close Study: Focus on narrator

- A. From whose point of view is the story told?
- B. Imagine you are the engineer. Tell the part of the story starting from the moment you had retired until the end.

Reader's Response

- A. Do you think the man was foolish in paying a visit to the two women? Justify your answer.
- B. What do you think made the two women wave to the engineer throughout 20 years?
- C. How do you like the story? Justify your answer.
- D. Many critics believe that Wolfe's best work is to be found in his short stories. In these, he displays acute psychological insight and a talent for vivid evocation of people and places. Do you think the story displays such talents? Explain.

Follow up-Library/Internet Link

Have you ever read any stories written by Wolfe? Arrange for a visit to a library or search the Internet to gather sufficient data about Wolfe's publications. Then, write up a paragraph of about 100 words mentioning what you have found.

LANGUAGE PRACTICE

Word Finder

Find the words which are similar in meaning to each of the following.

Care about money (paragraph 1).

Going away (paragraph 2).

Gathered together (paragraph 4).

Looked closely (paragraph 12).

Frightened (paragraph 14).

Grammar focus-relative pronouns

Relative pronouns are used to join pairs of sentences together. The following sentences are taken from the story. Re-write each sentence using appropriate pronouns or nouns to replace the relative pronouns. Remember to make the necessary changes when required.

- “On the outskirts of a little town upon a rise of land that swept back from the railway...”

- “Before the house there were three mighty oaks which sheltered it in their clean and massive shade in summer...”

- “He would go and find these people and speak at last with them whose lives had been so wrought into his own” .

- “and now, schooled by the qualities of faith and courage and humbleness that attended his labor”,

Literary Qualities

A. What literary device is used in each of the following?

“and four times he had seen before him on the tracks the ghastly dot of tragedy converging like a cannon ball to its eclipse of horror at the boiler head”.

“And at length the picture of their lives was carved so sharply in his heart...”

B. What significance does the phrase “the green luring sorcery of April” (paragraph 6) have in the story?

C. Explain how the following statement is used to effectively suggest and anticipate some points.

“And the man plodded on slowly in the heat and the dust.”

ORAL PRODUCTION

Divide into two groups. Group A should support the idea that the engineer was foolish in his view of the house and its occupants, as well as in visiting them. Group B should defend the idea that the engineer was not foolish in his view of the house and its occupants, as well as in visiting them.

WRITER’S WORKSHOP

Know your Purpose –Main Ideas/Supporting Details

The important ideas in a piece of writing are called the main ideas. Details tell us more about the main ideas.

A. **Pre-writing.** The sentence below states a main idea. Discuss four details you can use to tell more about it.

There are many choices you can make to help you stay healthy.

B. **Drafting.** Now write a draft of about 400 words stating the main idea; and providing appropriate supporting details.

C. **Proof-reading.** Check for mistakes in sequence links, spelling and punctuation.

D. **Publishing for your classroom journal.** Use pins to hang your piece on a line in your classroom.

SELF EVALUATION

Use the following chart to reflect on your progress in English.

| Skills I have acquired recently | Skills I still need to acquire |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| | |

BUILDING UP YOUR PORTFOLIO

In the poem “Ode on a Grecian Urn” Keats says:

“Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter!”

To what extent does the meaning conveyed above apply to the story “The far and the near”?
Justify your answer.

THE LADY OR THE TIGER BY FRANKS R. STOCKTON



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GLOSSARY

- semi : half
- barbaric : like that of a barbarian
- fancy : the power of creating imaginative ideas
- withal : besides
- bland : not showing strong feelings
- hitch : a difficulty which delays something for a while
- arena : an enclosed area used for public shows
- valor : great bravery
- rhapsodies : great praises
- gladiators : (in ancient times) armed men who fought against men

- inevitable : which can't be prevented from happening
- amphitheater : a theater built in ancient times for competitions and performances
- impartial : fair
- incorruptible : which can't be destroyed
- accused : charged with doing wrong , a crime , etc.
- emanated : came originally from
- allegiance : loyalty
- assembled : gathered together
- solemnized : performed a formal religious ceremony of marriage
- portals : a very grand entrance
- personage : a famous or important person

WARM UP

Brainstorming

How do you like tigers? Justify your answer.

Advance Organiser

Based on the title, what speculations can you make about the content of the story?

READING IN ACTION

As you read find out

- A. what pleased the king most.
- B. who the king loved above all humanity.
- C. which door the princess's lover opened – the one on the right or the one on the left.

Keeping track

- A. Describe the king's character.
- B. What happened when a subject was accused of a crime of sufficient importance?
- C. What entertained the people when they gathered together on one of the great trial days?
- D. Why did the princess hate the lady trembling beside the door?

Close study – focus on plot

- A. Identify the main conflict.
- B. What is the point of highest intensity- the climax?
- C. Would the main conflict ever be resolved? Explain.
- D. How important is the element of character to the element of plot in this story?

Reader's response

- A. What would you do if you were the princess?
- B. Many readers think that this story is incomplete. What do you think?
- C. Which do you think came out of the opened door- the lady or the tiger? Why?
- D. Of the four main elements of the story- character; setting; plot; & theme – which do you think is most important here? Why?

Follow up

Have you ever read any other stories written by the same author? Search the Internet to gather sufficient data about the author's life as well as his publications.

LANGUAGE PRACTICE

Word Finder

Find the words that are similar in meaning to each of the following:

- A. ideas (paragraph 2)
- B. gathered (paragraph 5)
- C. at once (paragraph 7)
- D. appear (paragraph 13)
- E. suffering of mind (paragraph 21)
- F. moment of time (paragraph 24)

Grammar focus – passive voice

Read paragraphs 1, 2, 3, & 4 to write the sentences used in the passive form used in each paragraph.

Literary qualities

Describe the author's writing style commenting on his choice of words and structures.

ORAL PRODUCTION

Each group should choose one scene from the story and act it out. Discuss what techniques are used to make the scene work. Then use these techniques to make the scene into a T.V. episode. Work out details, choose tasks, and put the scene together. Get ready to perform it for your classmates.

WRITER'S WORKSHOP

Know your Purpose – Creating a Weird Story

Just imagine! You're driving cross country, and no matter how far you go you keep passing the same hitch-hiker. Weird? Unreal? Sure. But wouldn't it make a good story?

A. Pre-writing: Discuss the following questions.

- What makes a story weird?
- Why is it fun to imagine strange events?
- How do weird stories affect you?

Now discuss how the following techniques can be used to make a weird story.

- Suspense: anticipation about the outcome of the plot.
- Exaggeration: a description that magnifies the quality of something.
- Surprise twist: an unexpected plot development.
- Mood: the feeling or atmosphere of a story.

B. Drafting. You should be ready now to draft your story bearing in mind the points raised above.

C. Proof-reading. Check for mistakes in verb tenses, spelling, and punctuation.

D. Publishing for your classroom journal. Use pins to hang your story on a line in your classroom. Read your classmates' stories. Tell the writers what you like most about their stories.

SELF-EVALUATION

Use the *PM Chart* to reflect on your progress in English.

| Plus | Minus |
|------|-------|
| | |

BUILDING UP YOUR PORTFOLIO

Choose a classic tale you have read and rewrite it from a non-traditional point of view.

THE NECKLACE BY G. DE MAUPASSANT



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GLOSSARY

- **blundered:** made a mistake
- **artisans:** workers (i.e. not middle or upper class)
- **her tastes:** the things she liked

- **caste:** fixed social status
- **delicacy:** refinement; gentleness
- **nimbleness:** quickness
- **the slum girl:** a girl born in the poorest, worst parts of a town
- **delicacy:** here, expensive clothes, foods, etc.
- **mean:** poor; unpleasant-looking; undecorated
- **tormented her:** made her constantly unhappy

WARM UP

Brainstorming

Suppose you borrowed something from a friend of yours, and then you lost it. What would you do? Explain.

Advance organiser

In the two columns given below, list three reasons why people may like to attend parties, and three reasons why they may not.

| Why? | Why not? |
|------|----------|
| | |

READING IN ACTION

As you read the story find out

- A. the only things Madame Loisel loved,
- B. who invited the Loisels to the party,
- C. who lent Madame Loisel a necklace.

Keeping track

- A. Did Madame Loisel enjoy the party? Explain.
- B. What do you think urged Mr. Loisel to give his wife the money required for buying a suitable dress?
- C. “How little is needed to ruin or to save”. Support this statement with reference to the story.

Close study: Focus on character

- A. Name the main characters.
- B. Who are the minor characters?
- C. Complete the following *character log*.

| Character: Mathilde Loisel | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------|-----------|------------------|
| Key points | Reasons | Key lines | Short quotations |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Reader’s response

- A. Do your feelings for the Loisels undergo a change as the story develops? Explain.
- B. We may say that the end of the story is full of irony. What do you think this means?

LANGUAGE PRACTICE

Word finder

Find the words which are similar in meaning to each of the following:

- A. hurt (paragraph 3)
- B. didn’t accept (paragraph 6)
- C. decide (paragraph 41)
- D. provided (paragraph 84)
- E. apartment (paragraph 93)

Grammar focus-reported speech

Rewrite the following conversation between Mr. and Mrs. Loisel, using reported speech as appropriate.

One evening her husband said to her: “What’s the matter with you? You’ve been very odd for the last three days”.

“I’m utterly miserable at not having any jewels, not a single stone to wear”, she replied, “I shall look absolutely no one, I would almost rather not go to the party.”

“Wear flowers,” he said. “They’re very smart at this time of the year. For ten francs you could get two or three gorgeous roses.”

Literary qualities

‘It was Madame Forestier, still young, still beautiful, still attractive’.

What literary device is used in the statement given above? Do you think it is an effective device? Explain.

ORAL PRODUCTION

In your groups, act out some of the dialogues and situations which you find most interesting in the story, and then act them out in front of the class.

WRITER’S WORKSHOP

Knowing your purpose: You are going to write an essay entitled *Mathilde Loisel*. Your purpose is describing people in terms of physical appearance as well as personality traits. Describing is using details to paint word pictures. Adding details helps highlight what we want to convey in words. Moreover, adding details can make an idea more interesting.

A. Pre-writing-choose your strategy. Here are two strategies which may help you gather sufficient ideas before you write. Read both of them, and then choose one to help you plan what you are going to write.

Choice One: Reread the story extracting salient points and jotting down appropriate notes as you read.

Choice Two: Discuss orally what you think would appropriately reflect a clear picture of Mathilde Loisel.

B. Drafting. As you write, don’t worry about making errors. You can go back later to make changes. Bear in mind that we can know about characters’ from what they say about themselves, what they say about other people and events,

how they react to what people say to them, and what other people say about them.

C. Proof-reading. Check for mistakes in word choice, spelling and punctuation.

D. Publishing for your classroom journal. Use pins to hang your essay on a line in your classroom. Read some of your classmates' essays. Tell the writers what you like about their essays.

SELF EVALUATION

Evaluate your understanding of the story by circling the appropriate answer.

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| A. I know the main idea of the story. | Yes | No |
| B. I know the main characters of the story. | Yes | No |
| C. I know the events of the story. | Yes | No |
| D. I know the moral the story intends to teach us. | Yes | No |
| E. I can write an essay commenting on the story. | Yes | No |

BUILDING UP YOUR PORTFOLIO

Respond to the following statement, providing examples whenever appropriate:

A person should live within his means.

THE PIECES OF SILVER BY KARL SEALY



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GLOSSARY

- abandoned: gave up
- odd: unusual
- inspection: the act of examining
- emitting: sending out
- submitted: offered for consideration
- supplication: the act of begging for help
- purse: an amount of money collected for some good purpose
- retiring: stopping work at one's job
- receipt: a written statement that one has received money
- fierce: violent
- scorn: angry feeling of disrespect
- ingratitude: ungratefulness
- coop: a cage for small creatures
- scratching: making a sound or movement
- sax: saxophone (a metal musical instrument)

WARM UP

Brainstorming

Imagine you are asked to pay a sum of money in a contribution to your retired teacher's gift, but you don't have the amount required. What would you do?

Advance Organiser

You are going to read a story entitled “The Pieces of Silver”. Based on the title, what speculations can you make about the content of the story?

READING IN ACTION

As you read find out...

- A. how much money each student was supposed to contribute to Mr. Megahey’s purse.
- B. how many sisters Clement had.

Keeping track

How could Clement contribute to Mr. Megahey’s purse?

Close study: Focus on plot

- A. Write a character profile of Mr. Chase describing his physical appearance and personality traits.
- B. There is a double twist in the plot, and the children get double satisfaction. Explain how this double twist works.

Reader’s response

- A. If you were an acting head, would you ask all the students to contribute to a retired teacher’s purse? Give reasons.
- B. If you were Clement, what would you do to contribute to Mr. Megahey’s purse?
- C. What lesson(s) does the story teach us?

Follow up

Have you ever read other stories written by Sealy? Search the Internet to find some of the author’s publications.

LANGUAGE PRACTICE

Word finder

Find the words which are similar in meaning to each of the following:

- A. unwillingly (paragraph 2)
- B. a written statement that someone has received money (paragraph 15)
- C. gave warning (paragraph 23)
- D. friendly company (paragraph 45)
- E. suggested (paragraph 57)
- F. cruel (paragraph 69)

Grammar focus – verb tenses

Read paragraphs 2, 17, & 26 and write down the verbs used in the past simple, past continuous, past perfect, and past perfect continuous tenses.

Literary Qualities

A. What literary devices are used in the following sentences?

“Clement leaned against her so that he could feel the cheering warmth of her arms, warm as the still warm ground beneath him.”

“His voice struck through the silent school, clear and thrilling as a star’s light.”

B. “Returning, he slumped down beside his mother’s chair and rested his head against her bony thigh.” What do you think *bony thigh* symbolises in this particular context?

ORAL PRODUCTION

Divide into three groups. Each group should sit in a row, with the two rows facing each other. One of you should start summarising the story “The Pieces of Silver”, saying up to five words. Another student then should continue summarising the story adding five words to what the first student has said and so on until the end. The group to give the most appropriate and coherent summary will be declared the winner.

WRITER’S WORKSHOP

Knowing your purpose – narrating past events

A. **Pre-writing.** Prepare a story map to write some statements/phrases narrating an important event in the history of your country.

B. **Drafting.** Now turn your statements into a historical narrative using the chronological order of events appropriately.

C. **Proof-reading.** Check for mistakes in verb tenses, spelling and punctuation.

D. **Publishing your classroom journal.** Use pins to hang your narrative on a line in your classroom. Read your classmates' narratives and tell the writers what you like about their narratives.

SELF EVALUATION

Use the following chart to reflect on your progress in English.

| Skills I have acquired recently | Skills I still need to acquire | Remarks |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

BUILDING UP YOUR PORTFOLIO

Story reproduction. One approach to language exploration involves you in recreating the meaning of the story through a variety of formats. A story reproduction may be as simple as creating new characters, or as elaborate as producing a dramatic version of the story. *Reproduce* the story "The Pieces of Silver" making the changes which you feel would ensure an effective as well as interesting reproduction.

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GLOSSARY

- murder : a crime of killing unlawfully
- funeral : a ceremony of burying a dead person
- background : a person's family , experience , & education
- valuable : worth a lot of money
- property : that which is owned
- sensible : having or showing good sense
- bubbles : balls of liquid containing air or gas
- drawer : a sliding boxlike container with an open top
- lock : an apparatus for closing and fastening something by means of a key
- realise : understand
- duty : what one must do either because of one's job or because one thinks it's right
- guilty : having broken a law or disobeyed a moral or social rule

WARM UP

Brainstorming

Why is it important to be careful about the use of electricity in a bathroom?

Advance Organiser

Based on the title, what speculations can you make about the content of the story?

READING IN ACTION

As you read find out

- A. how many times Torbay got married.
- B. why Edyth was a suitable lady for Torbay's purpose.

Keeping track

Question-Generating Strategy. Think of an "*I wonder*" question. Write it down, and then read the first three paragraphs to answer your question. Write the answer when you have found it. Ask yourself another "*I wonder*" question, and then read the next three paragraphs to answer your question. Continue to read small segments making sure that you ask yourself a question before starting to read again. When you have finally finished, write the most important ideas.

Close study – focus on setting

- A. Complete the *setting log* provided below.

| Sequence of Events | Time | Place |
|---------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Beginning: | | |
| Main event: | | |
| Main event: | | |
| End: | | |

B. How important is the setting to the plot of the story “Three is a Lucky Number”? Justify your answer.

Reader’s response

- A. What do you think would happen next?
- B. Do you think Ronald Torbay was a partner in an engineering company? Justify your answer.

Follow up

Have you ever read other stories written by Margery Allingham? Search the Internet to find some of the author’s publications.

LANGUAGE PRACTICE

Word finder

Find the words which are similar in meaning to each of the following:

- A. lately (paragraph 2)
- B. an event after a person's death (paragraph 5)
- C. caused to flow a liquid (paragraph 26)
- D. connected with money (paragraph 37)

Grammar focus – past perfect

Read paragraph five and then write the verbs used in the past perfect tense in the paragraph.

Literary qualities

“It was the most pleasant of his marriages”.

In what way does the story “Three is a Lucky Number” have a touch of irony? Justify your answer referring to the statement given above.

ORAL PRODUCTION

Act out:

- the conversation between Ronald and Edyth when they first met in the hotel.
- Edyth's conversation with a police officer after escaping from the bathroom.

WRITER'S WORKSHOP

Know your Purpose – Offering Advice

- A. **Pre-writing.** What advice would you give to a friend of yours about how to succeed in life? Make a list of the points which you think would be of use to him/her.
- B. **Drafting.** You should now be ready to draft your piece.
- C. **Proof-reading.** Check for mistakes in word choice, spelling and punctuation.
- D. **Publishing for your classroom journal.** Use pins to hang your writing piece on a line in your classroom.

SELF EVALUATION

Use the *PM Chart* to reflect on your progress in English.

| Plus | Minus |
|------|-------|
| | |

BUILDING UP YOUR PORTFOLIO

Write an account of the main events in the story “Three is a Lucky Number” as they may appear in a newspaper.

Appendix Five: Recognition of Participation

Following the conduct of the study, the researcher presented the participants with a *thank you word letter*, issued by both the researcher's supervisor Dr Clark and the researcher. Appendix five presents the letter.

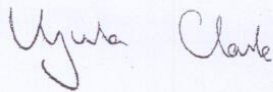
16th May 2012

Recognition of Participation

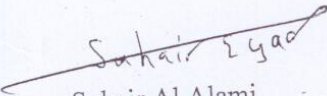
Dear 

It gives us pleasure to thank you for your active participation in the study research:
Utilising Fiction to Promote English Language Acquisition.

Keep up the GOOD WORK.



Dr Urszula Clark
Reader in English Project Supervisor
Aston University



Suhair Al Alami

Lecturer in English Language
Al Ghurair University

Appendix Six: Student Research Ethics Approval Form (REC1)

Appendix six presents the *Student Research Ethics Approval Form (REC1)*, which the researcher submitted to the PhD supervisor, Dr. Urszula Clark, prior to introducing the proposed treatment.

Student Research Ethics Approval Form (REC1)

PLEASE NOTE: You MUST gain approval for any research BEFORE any research takes place. Failure to do so could result in a ZERO mark

| | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| Name | Suhair Al Alami |
| Student Number | 079907277 |
| Module Name | ----- |
| Module Number | ----- |

Please type your answers to the following questions:

1. What are the aims of your research?
 - A. Investigating the factors which inhibit EFL university students' progress in the areas of acquiring adequate communicative competence as well as critical thinking skills.
 - B. Proposing a course book and pedagogic methods to improve students' progress in the areas of acquiring adequate communicative competence as well as critical thinking skills.
2. What research methods do you intend to use?
 - A. Qualitative methods
 - B. Survey methods
3. Please give details of the type of informant, the method of access and sampling, and the location(s) of your fieldwork. (see guidance notes).

Type of Informants: First-year university students; some of whom are males and some are females, some belong to colleges of sciences and some to colleges of humanities, and some have met the English language university entrance requirement (the Institutional TOEFL) and some have not.

Method of Access: I work as a lecturer at Al Ghurair University where I intend to carry out my research, and as such, I always have access to informants because they are my students.

Sampling: The study population is EFL university students residing in the UAE and specialising in subjects other than English. Subjects will be chosen randomly from the study population, and then, a representative sample of the subjects will be exposed to the treatment prior to the formal implementation, so as to ensure reliability.

Subjects will be selected according to the following criteria:

- Their previous achievement in English.
- Their desire to participate in the study, with both willingness and enthusiasm.

Location of My Fieldwork: Al Ghurair University in Dubai, UAE.

4. Please give full details of all ethical issues which arise from this research.

The nature of my research is academic; it entails no physical dangers or threats. However, my research requires that subjects attend the proposed course, sit for the tests, and respond to the questionnaires prepared for the purpose of the study. In other words, they have to show some commitment and be honest while responding to the questionnaire items. Based on these two requirements, therefore, the subjects of my study should be willing to participate, in order to ensure effective, valid, and reliable results.

5. What steps are you taking to address these ethical issues?

- Prior to implementing the study, subjects will be exposed to a detailed orientation during which the researcher will be explaining the aims; requirements; procedures as well as nature of the study.
- Participants will be offered the opportunity to remain anonymous.
- Participants will be offered the right to discontinue at any time.
- Rights and welfare of participants will be protected.
- All information will be treated with the strictest confidentiality.
- For encouragement and motivation purposes, participants will be offered a *certificate of appreciation*, towards the end of implementation.

6. What issues for the personal safety of the researcher arise from this research?

The nature of my study does not involve any issues to do with my personal safety, as a researcher.


7. What steps will be taken to minimise the risks of personal safety to the researcher?

No steps will be required in this regard.

Statement by student investigator(s):

I/We consider that the details given constitute a true summary of the project proposed

I/We have read, understood and will act in line with the LSS Student Research Ethics and Fieldwork Safety Guidance lines.

| Name | Signature | Date |
|----------------|---|---------|
| Suhair ALAlami |  | 28.7.08 |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Statement by module convenor or project supervisor

I have read the above project proposal and believe that this project only involves minimum risk. I also believe that the student(s) understand the ethical and safety issues which arise from this project.

| Name | Signature | Date |
|-------------|-------------|---------|
| Lynna Clark | LYNNA CLARK | 28.7.08 |

This form must be signed and both staff and students need to keep copies.

Appendix Seven: Sample Material from the Textbook the Control Group was Taught

Appendix Seven presents a unit from the Communication Skills course textbook which was used to teach the control group students. The book is entitled *Business Benchmark* and is authored by Guy Brook-Hart. The book was published by Cambridge University Press, UK in the year 2009.

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Appendix Eight: Samples from Students' Daily Work

Appendix Eight presents the project work the experimental group students were assigned along with samples from experimental group students' daily work.

ENL 102: PROJECT WORK-CLOs 1, 2, 3 & 4

Theme Selection: To be decided by the student himself/herself, depending on one's main interests.

Length: Between 1100 and 1200 words

Content

The project should include the following:

- 1) Cover page
- 2) Table of contents
- 3) Introduction
- 4) Body
- 5) Conclusion
- 6) References
- 7) Appendix (optional)

Project Submission Deadline

The project will have to be submitted by May 21, 2012. Both hard and soft copies must be submitted.

Project Presentation in Class

The project will have to be presented on May 16.

Project Writing: Points to Consider

- 1) Writing mechanics and conventions
- 2) Reliability
- 3) Unity
- 4) Support
- 5) Coherence
- 6) Accuracy
- 7) Appropriateness
- 8) Validity

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Animal farm

chapter two :-

Three nights after the beasts song ~~the~~ ^o old major ~~was~~ passed away. Pigs are the most intelligent animals on the farm. They ^{had} been working ^{an} activities for three months for one ~~is~~ reason. Rebellion. Snowball and Napoleon and squealer were ~~the~~ brilliant. They used to ^{hold} secret meetings as the name of Animalism after Mr. Jones goes to bed. He used to get drunk and be unfair and harsh with the but all that was alright to them. Till the day came and he ~~was~~ wait to bed without feeding them. A very uneasy cow broke in the door of store-shed and the animals began to do the same. ~~The~~ The Rebellion finally happend ^e and successfully they got rid of the first enemy Mr. Jones. They went out to ^{???} streets ^{to get} got rid of clothes and got totally naked. They named their farm as ~~Manor farm~~ ^f animal farm. They agreed ^{an} seven valuable Commandments which were written in white letters. But ^w when they came back ~~at~~ all the milk that ^f these three cows produced were gone.!!

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Appendix Nine: Semi-Structured Interview

To gather adequate qualitative data, a semi-structured interview was conducted involving the experimental group students. Appendix Nine presents a list including subjects' names, gender, college, email, mobile number, university ID number, and signature, followed by subjects' responses to the interview's items.

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