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**THE RELEVANCE OF CULTURAL CONTEXT
TO THE READING COMPREHENSION OF
ADVANCED ARAB LEARNERS OF
ENGLISH**

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirement
of Liverpool John Moores University for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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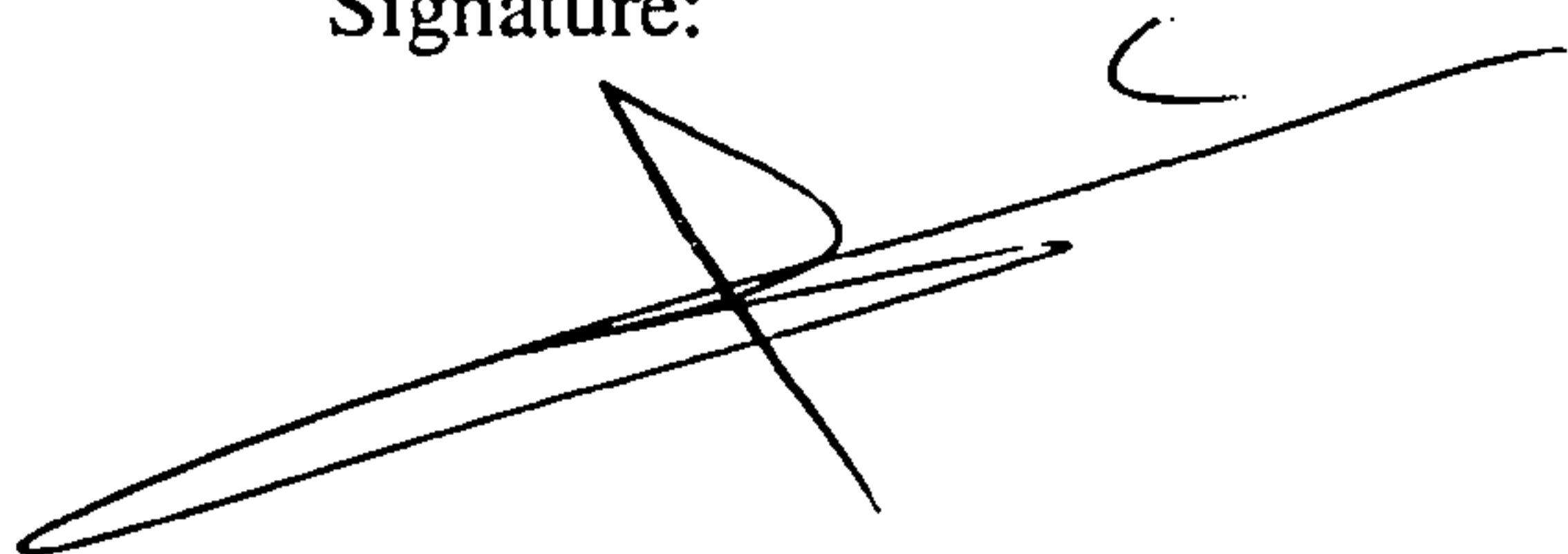
PhD

January 2002

DECLARATION

I, Abdul Kareem Awad, hereby declare that the study presented herein is my original work and has not been submitted for the award of a degree to any university heretofore.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a long horizontal stroke with a loop and a cross, followed by a small 'C' shape.

January 2002

THE RELEVANCE OF CULTURAL CONTEXT TO THE READING COMPREHENSION OF ADVANCED ARAB LEARNERS OF ENGLISH.

ABSTRACT

This study addresses the issue of English reading comprehension among advanced (pre-university) students from various Arab countries. These countries are categorised into two groups (A & B) according to their educational, historical and political systems. A brief explanation of this grouping is provided. The main issue here is to question the validity of the assumption that Arab learners can acquire reading skills without reference to English culture which, in the eyes of many Arab governments, is alien and incompatible with Islamic traditions. Educational systems in the Arab world are described focusing on ELT, methods, objectives and materials in relation to the teaching of reading skills. Theories about the complex nature of the reading comprehension process are highlighted and 'bottom-up', 'top-down' and 'interactive' models are analysed. This study offers an 'eclectic' model. It is a pedagogical approach to teaching reading in the Arab world, which incorporates positive features from various reading models and combines different sources of knowledge. The relation of background knowledge to reading comprehension ability is discussed and the importance of cultural awareness to the reader is examined.

The methodology of the study has covered (a) the framework for evaluating the textbooks that are used to teach English in students' home countries. The cultural content of the texts has been examined to ascertain whether they illustrate 'international culture', 'Arab culture', 'English culture' or a combination of these, (b) the development of the tests used in the study.

Two reading tests were designed to examine the comprehension process in two settings – A with English/Liverpool cultural bias and B with neutral cultural content. They were developed to measure whether lack of cultural knowledge would hinder the subjects' reading comprehension ability. The subjects were male and female Arab learners divided into groups A & B according to their country of origin. The tests were followed by interviews to elicit the types of information used to answer the questions, the problems encountered and the reading strategies adopted.

The test findings suggest that a link may exist between the students' country of origin and their ability to use cultural knowledge in reading comprehension tests. Although Arab students' reading difficulties may be imputable to a combination of factors such as unfavourable learning environments, traditional teaching methods, ill-motivated learners, etc. their main reading comprehension problems derive from a poor cultural grasp of English. Textbook content and students' reading weaknesses are closely linked. The argument is that students' problems are mainly caused by English textbooks, which should be redesigned to integrate English cultural items. If these textbooks represent the only experience of Western culture that students are exposed to, then this may be considered as a causative factor in students' observed weaknesses in reading tasks that require cultural awareness.

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DEDICATION

To my wife Badera and beloved children in particular my cheerful son Mohammed for their moral support and encouragement: this thesis is dedicated to them.

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Chapter One

Background to the research: Arab Learners of English

1.0. Introduction

The role of background knowledge in reading has been acknowledged by several researchers and material writers (e.g. Goodman 1967, 1988, Smith 1988, Carrell and Eisterhold 1988, Alderson and Urquhart 1988, Bugel and Buunk 1996, Barry and Lazarte 1998, Carrell and Wise 1999). Smith (1988: 81) for example, has indicated that:

Whenever readers cannot make sense of what they are expected to read - because the material bears no relevance to any prior knowledge they might have - then reading will become more difficult and learning to read impossible.

Likewise, Anderson and Pearson (1988) point out that to comprehend a text the reader's background knowledge must interact with the text itself. This argument is supported by Adams and Collins (1979: 3) who write:

... spoken and written text does not in itself carry meaning. Rather, a text only provides directions for listeners or readers as to how they should retrieve or construct the intended meaning from their own previously acquired knowledge.

A number of researchers and writers have discussed the influence of specific types of background knowledge (cultural, linguistic, specific and world background knowledge) in reading comprehension. Stevens (1982) for instance, confirms that the greater the familiarity with the specific area of a text, the greater the comprehension and recall of that text. There are conflicting views over the importance of each one in relation to the other. Some writers (e.g. Bernhardt 1986, Nelson 1987, Steffenson 1988, Seidl 1998, Byram 1997) advocate the

cultural emphasis in language learning. They are of the opinion that cultural background knowledge has more effect on reading comprehension and recall of L2 readers than the level of prior linguistic knowledge.

On the other hand, the importance of linguistic background knowledge in reading has been emphasised by a number of writers and researchers (e.g. Goodman 1967, Smith 1988, Barnett 1986, Eggins 1994, Klein 1991, Hedge 1991, Barry and Lazarte 1998). They claim that linguistic deficiencies can be considered the main factor that hinders reading comprehension. They have stressed the view that the teaching of linguistics is a sufficient method for learning a language. Hedge (1991) for instance found that most of the breakpoints are a result of linguistic processing difficulties. Smith (1988) stresses the significance of syntactic aspects that the reader brings to the text from his knowledge of the word order or grammar of the language. Klein (1991: 29) states that 'It is now generally accepted that both first and second language reading are linguistic activities'.

This research starts from the assumption that there is a close relationship between culture and language. This intimate relationship is strikingly illustrated in the literature, which confirms the view that language and culture are intrinsically linked. The central argument of the study is that, for comprehension skill to be developed, it needs to be both culturally attuned and culturally accepted. Reading depends largely on the processing of cultural items and if Arab learners cannot process such information, they will have difficulty in understanding tasks that emphasize cultural differences. It seems that Arab students' problems in reading comprehension derive from the textbooks used in English lessons. These textbooks represent the primary teaching resources and thus play a significant role in the process of language learning. Socio-political attitudes towards the English-speaking world in many Arab countries are exemplified in textbooks, which may represent the students' only experience of Western culture. Then this may be presented as a causative factor in students' weaknesses in reading tasks that depend on appreciations of differences between cultures. In this way, it is suggested that the nature of what is taught in the classrooms in many Arab countries relies on textbooks which need to be redesigned to include cultural specific items from the target language.

It then becomes appropriate to address the issue of cultural context and its relevance to reading comprehension from the perspective of Arab learners and examine textbooks adopted in various Arab countries to find out the extent to which reading materials have a bearing on language comprehension of learners. To grasp the nature of the pedagogical aims of the textbooks used in the Arab world, it is useful to have a clear picture of the government policies that these books often reflect. This, in turn, requires an overview of major factors that inform government policies in the Arab world.

1.1. The Arab world

In order to gain a better understanding of the Arab world, some of its characteristics in terms of location, peoples, geography, history, culture, economy, politics, etc. need to be briefly discussed. This may help to explain the peculiarities of the educational systems in the Arab countries, especially with regard to the teaching and testing English language.

1. Geographical and historical background

The Arab world is situated in the Middle East, bordering the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf from the east, the Atlantic from the west, the Mediterranean sea from the north, and the Arabian sea as well as some neighbouring African countries from the south.

The Arab world is categorised according to geographical and historical location into three distinct areas; North Africa, the Gulf countries and Bilad Asham (see the map below). Throughout Arab history and Islamic literature (e.g. Hikal 1989, Ajami 1980, Ali 1996, Al-Amari 1998) these areas have consisted of the following Arab countries:

- Northern Africa: Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Sudan, Somalia and Mauritania.
- Gulf countries: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and Yemen.
- Bilad Asham: Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq.

The Arab world



The Arab world is rich in history. It is the home to some of the earliest human settlements and farming villages in the world. It represents the crossroads of the ancient world, where human beings first organised themselves into communities, cities and eventually, civilisations. The Ottoman Empire ruled most of the Arab world until the First World War when it was defeated by signatories of the Sykes-Pico treaty in 1916. Accordingly, Britain governed Iraq, Palestine, Egypt and Jordan. France ruled Algeria, Morocco, Lebanon and Syria. Italy governed Libya, and so on. Nevertheless after independence, Arab countries are governed by Arab leaders who have the constitutional power to declare war, make peace and sign treaties and agreements.

2. Population

The population of the Arab world is approximately three hundred million. The inhabitants are predominantly Arabs with small Western communities in major metropolitan areas. Some Arab countries such as Sudan, Yemen, Syria, etc. have acute problems with overpopulation (see Ba-Abad 1984, Al-Qudsi 1998). This has a

direct bearing on education - overcrowded classrooms, poor resources, poorly trained staff, etc.

3. Social and cultural characteristics

Arabic has been singled out by many scholars and writers (e.g. Yasin 1996, Ali 1996, Lisa 1995, Al-Amri 1998) as the pre-eminent element in the definition of an Arab. It is the language of the Holy Qur'an, and practising Muslims recite or listen to the Qur'anic verses more than once a day. According to Ali (1996: 6) with its '...phonetic, beauty, richness of synonym, imagery and majesty, Arabic language arouses people's passion and produces an intense and emotional impact'. The religion of the Arab world is predominantly Islam. However, in some Arab countries like Egypt, Palestine and Jordan Christian, Jewish and other smaller religious communities do exist. Although the official language is Arabic in some countries, English and French are also widely used. English is often taught at school as a second language. In some countries, Algeria and Tunisia for example, most of the inhabitants use French in their daily lives. Some countries like Jordan, Algeria, Egypt, UAE, Qatar, etc. are conservative in nature, although, Western thought and technology have affected different segments of the population in different ways. For example since the late 1980s, the social relationships and values held by the youth of these countries have changed radically from those of their forefathers. The new generation tends to adopt new values, attitudes and customs that are different and sometimes contradictory to those traditional in the society. Above all, the revolution of globalisation has led to more interactions between cultures through satellite television, the Internet and other advanced means of communication. Women in these countries have begun to demand more freedom and equality than in the past. In Jordan and Egypt for instance, men have started to accept, and sometimes encourage their wives, sisters and daughters to work outside the home mainly because there is a need for dual incomes. According to Al-Amri (1998: 2):

A number of men recognised the financial advantage of a household with two incomes, and for this reason they support the idea of a female relative or wife working

outside the home. In some instances, as a matter of fact, the female salary may be the only income for the family.

4. International relations

There have been a number of studies (e.g. Ajami 1980, Bashir 1990, Kassicieh 1983, Quandt 1993, Fouad 1997, Barbara 1999) discussing the relationships between Arab countries and their dealing with the rest of the world, both East and West. The relationship amongst Arab countries can generally be said to be harmonious. After the Gulf crisis this stability and harmony was affected with problems between some states such as Iraq, Jordan, Sudan and Yemen with the Gulf states of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, but, gradually, this 'climate' has improved. In terms of international relations some countries (Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Kuwait, Qatar, UAE, etc) have good open policies with Europe and the West. There is good business, educational and cultural exchange. Other states, such as Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Yemen and Oman are more conservative and have limited relationships with the West. Countries like Libya, Syria and Iraq have very restricted and strained relations with the West generally. However these states have a good relationship with the East, notably Russia and China.

5. Political and economic environment

Some Arab countries such as UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, etc. have open economies with some of the world's highest incomes per capita and with sizeable annual trade surpluses. They have rich oil-based economies with strong government control over major economic activities. The fortunes of their economies fluctuate with the prices of the oil industry, including trends in international oil prices and the ability of the OPEC members to agree on output quotas. These countries have undergone a profound transformation from impoverished regions of small desert principalities to modern states with a high standard of living. Economic as well as political ties with Western countries and the USA are especially strong. Some countries such as UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, etc. present an attractive investment opportunity for foreign investors since it provides a strategic location with access to

foreign markets. They also offer a free market-oriented economy with experienced and skilled labour (see Suroor 1989, Bolbol 1998, Quandt 1996). However, the economic development of most Arab countries such as Jordan, Yemen, Tunisia, etc. depends heavily on Western-assisted development of the countries' moderate natural resources such as phosphates, dates, copper, iron ore, etc. The low levels of domestic industry and agriculture have made them dependent on imports for practically all of their essential needs. Other countries such as Algeria, Somalia, Lebanon, Sudan, etc. are buffeted by civil war, chronic political instability, high inflation, a drop in revenues from abroad and counterproductive economic policies. The natural resources of these countries are limited and they depend heavily on agriculture, fishing and trade. A large foreign debt and growing international isolation continue to cause difficulties. Their economies are still saddled with a large number of poorly performing state run firms.

All these geographical, historical, political, economic and social environments interact to produce a certain type of culture that influences individuals' behaviour. The following section will discuss the educational systems in Arab countries, which seem to be influenced and shaped by the above factors.

1.2. Systems of education in the Arab world

In order that the relevant issues pertaining to the teaching of reading in schools in many Arab countries may be clearly understood, a short description of the educational system in the Arab countries is necessary (see Abdulaziz 1991, Al-Subahi 1991, Kharma 1987, Ibraheem 1986, Abdel Bakri and Abubaker 1988). In the Arab world, education is free and is the responsibility of the national governments. The priority of educational policies in many Arab countries is to ensure educational development is closely related and geared towards the needs of the nation, in its social planning, economic progress and the advancement of political aspects. In Arab countries the educational systems consist of:

1. Primary/intermediate education which starts from the age of 5/6 and extends to age 10/11. At the end of each stage students sit exams to proceed to the next stage.

2. Secondary education starts from the age of 11/ 12 and finishes at the age of 17/18. The subjects of study include maths, science and art: literature, history, geography, English, Arabic, Islamic studies, home economics, physical education, etc. At the end of their studies students of secondary education sit for a general exam. Those who successfully complete the secondary stage, which is roughly equivalent to 'A' level, are entitled to enter into either universities or institutes (depending on their average mark in the secondary exam).
3. Higher education provides the teaching manpower needed to supply the high demand for school education. It can be classified into two major sectors: universities and institutes:
 - Universities, both public and private universities in Arab countries offer Bachelor degrees. However, Master and Doctorate degrees are limited to the public universities. The academic year is divided into two semesters plus a summer session. Some of these universities still offer all traditional subjects, while others are specialised in technical and scientific subjects.
 - Other institutes include non-university level colleges for post-secondary education. They are established to offer specialised career-oriented training, usually with concentration on the practical side of education. The duration of study at these institutes is two academic years, each year divided into two semesters. At the end of the two-year course, students sit for an exam and those who pass are awarded a 'Diploma'.

1.3. Status of English language in the Arab world

English as a lingua franca is perceived as a high status language, and one which may give individuals access to jobs, a chance of further education and an invaluable insight into other cultures. The rapid growth of science and technology and the wide use of the English language in this and various other professional fields such as industry, business, education, medicine, politics etc. have encouraged the learning of the language and developed a strong drive to use it. The universality of English makes it an invaluable tool for communication when travelling abroad. This enhances willingness among people all over the world to learn English, since they

realise that a good command of English is an essential requirement to future development in most fields.

English holds an important position throughout the Arab world. It is the first foreign language taught and learned in most of the Arab world. Aware of the importance of English and as a medium of instruction in various schools and colleges in many Arab universities as well as for general communication (e.g. media, travel, IT etc.) where English, rather than Arabic is used, Arab governments have invested in the teaching of English. The expansion of industries, the progress Arab countries are making and the presence of foreign companies participating in this process of development, necessitates English as a medium of instruction in the programme for training the manpower who will staff the technical and vocational positions created by these industries. Furthermore, a large number of Arab learners study abroad in Britain, the United States etc., where English is used as a medium of communication and academic instruction. A great emphasis is therefore placed on the need for people to learn English as a vehicle of communication with speakers of English within the Arab world or abroad.

In order to understand the systems of English education in the Arab world and the background of Arab learners more fully, there follows a brief description of English language teaching in various Arab countries, objectives of teaching English, teaching and learning approaches, language textbooks, language teaching and learning facilities, as well as testing procedures and the characteristics of Arab learners.

1.3.1. English language teaching

In most Arab countries English teaching occupies a principal place in the school curriculum. It is taught in all Arab schools as a compulsory subject. In many Arab countries it is taught from the intermediate stage and continues to the end of the secondary stage. There is, however, a contradiction in the use of English across the Arab world. The need for English varies from one Arab country to another depending on its relationship with the English-speaking world. In some Arab countries where there is a strong relationship with the Western world, the need to educate people to

be competent in English has increased. However, in countries where national culture is sheltered from outside influences, the teaching of English remains superficial. This is possibly because in such Arab countries the emphasis lies in other fields or areas such as Arab-Islamic history, maths, science, etc., to the detriment of teaching English, which is taught just as another subject, or as a means of completing the school curriculum. Many Arab countries show conflicting attitudes towards the English language, people and culture. Some enjoy and respect it, others are dubious about it (see Abu-Taleb 1982, Al-Khuli 1981). Unfortunately, this is reflected in textbooks designed for teaching English. It seems that they do not always use realistic and natural materials where the culture of the target language is reflected, and the designers of such textbooks often seem to overlook the problems which Arab learners encounter as a result. In general, these textbooks do not seem to achieve the desired objectives of English language teaching, which will be highlighted in the next section.

1.3.2. Objectives of English language teaching

The stated objectives of teaching English throughout the Arab world reflect the philosophy of teaching English at different levels of education and meet the general requirements set by the Arab governments. These objectives have been highlighted by various studies (e.g. Al-Mutawa and Kailani 1989, Kharma 1987, Al-Subahi 1991) that have been conducted to look at the teaching and learning approaches to English in Arab countries. They are also extracted from different teachers' books (e.g. Jayyusi et al., 1996, Al-Qurashi et al., 1994, O'Neill and Snow 1995) which provide an outline of the principal aims of teaching English in these countries. These objectives can be summarised as follows:

1. Developing learners' understanding and use of the language in its spoken and written form within particular cultural contexts, allowing them to express personal views, ideas and feelings, using the correct English forms.
2. Building up learners' communicative competence so that they can use the language in future situations.

3. Fostering in students an interest in reading so that later on they are able to read reference books, periodicals and pamphlets relating to their future fields of specialisation.
4. Stressing the functional view of learning a foreign language as a useful tool for cultural, social and economic activities.
5. Enabling pupils to become well informed about the life and culture of the countries, which use English as a means of expression.
6. Enabling advanced Arab learners to understand, speak, read and write English with a measure of ease on a variety of topics in an effective and appropriate manner. They should be able to understand the words of others, spoken or written and be understood in return.

These general objectives of English language teaching are common, shared and stated by most educational authorities within Arab countries. Although nearly all Arab countries share these objectives, they differ in the application and in the design and selection of English language textbooks. For instance in countries like Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Libya, and others it seems that for all their good intentions and efforts, their education system contradicts the stated objectives. Text writers in such countries claim that they design communicative textbooks, but in reality if one assesses the content of the reading texts, it may be said that there is little evidence of communicative tasks, as will be demonstrated, and these contradictions will be highlighted in chapter four.

1.3.3. Teaching and learning approaches

Studies conducted to investigate English language teaching in the Arab world (e.g. Kharma and Hajjaj 1989, Al-Zaid 1988) show that the teaching of English relies frequently upon rote learning. In many schools the traditionally-oriented system is heavily emphasised. Students are, on the whole, exposed to a teacher-centred approach, i.e. students are passive receptors of language. There is hardly any participation or classroom interaction. The teacher delivers the lesson to docile and submissive learners. It ends in the situation, so common in many classrooms, where the teacher just “pours knowledge into the learners’ heads”, and the learners remain

passive, or even reluctant to learn. Mok (1990) regards such learning activities as representing a type of classroom English which does not help students to apply what they have learnt in real-life situations. Most students are demotivated by the emphasis placed on difficult and abstract declarative knowledge in school. As a result, they tend to find learning in school uninteresting, or irrelevant to their daily lives and so lack of attention, passivity, 'off-task' attitudes, and other disruptive behaviour have become commonplace in classrooms. Since this form of English does not function like a language for meaningful and purposeful communication, the creative and critical thinking abilities of students are poorly developed. Fundamentally, this is due to the structure of the educational system and the inadequate training of many teachers.

Learners study English for an average of 6-8 years. There are between four and six 45-minute sessions per week and the duration of the school year is between 24 and 30 weeks. The amount of time spent, therefore, studying the language should in theory enable a learner to communicate adequately. This is rarely the case. The majority of teachers are Arabs whose experience of English is limited. Activities like role-playing, problem-solving, simulations, dialogues, small group interaction and language games seem to be almost neglected in most Arab schools because teaching conditions do not allow it (see Ibraheem 1986, Abu-Taleb 1982). In addition, the main difficulty of teaching English in most of the Arab world may be the actual teaching materials, and the limited exposure to the culture of the target language. There may also be a problem of fit between the materials and the teachers' experiences. Giving communicative materials to teachers who are more familiar with grammar-translation methods (both as learners and teachers) may not lead to communicative lessons. Learner-centred approaches and learner training may not be properly exploited by teachers who see language learning in terms of the transfer of knowledge from teacher to learner.

Many Arab teachers are unfamiliar with the principles that underlie the design of new teaching materials. They are less aware of two recent trends in English textbooks: cross-cultural awareness and cross-curricular development. Making a connection between different subjects in the school curriculum can validate the role of the

foreign language. It should be noted that communicative language teaching is just beginning to be accepted in some secondary schools within Arab countries such as Jordan, Palestine, Egypt and Kuwait, and they offer considerable promise (see Al-Jarash 1993, Al-Khuli 1981). The basic features of teaching approaches of English language in most of the Arab world can be summed up as follows:

- the teaching approaches given are often manifested in practising isolated words or sentences inside the classrooms and often translated in Arabic
- students are rarely encouraged to attempt free speech or creative reading or writing in which they have the chance to express themselves
- linguistic elements are taught in isolation and introduced within an Arab context illustrated with examples taken from local culture
- there is limited exposure to authentic English material. In many Arab schools there is no real use of English outside the classroom. Indeed, not only are there few opportunities for communicative use of the target language outside the classroom, but even within many classrooms, target language use may be surprisingly low.

1.3.4. Language textbooks

In most of the Arab world the system of education is governed by the country's political and religious attitudes. This has implications for designing and selecting textbooks. In theory, in most of these countries English textbooks have been designed to bring English culture closer to Arab learners in order to develop cultural awareness. In practice, some of these countries focus heavily on national or Islamic-Arab culture.

In many schools the language used in materials for teaching differs greatly from that used by native English speakers. The language used by such speakers is a means of communicating needs, ideas etc. whereas the teaching materials in many Arab countries exist for purely pedagogical purpose i.e. as a means of teaching the language. The language of the materials is often dissimilar to that used by speakers in everyday situations. These arguments will be discussed in detail in chapter four.

1.3.5. Language teaching and learning facilities

Appropriate teaching aids are required to help students practise the language by means of communicative activities and materials. The learning and teaching facilities are often rudimentary in many Arab secondary schools. Facilities such as well-stocked libraries, videos, satellite, TV, computers, overhead projectors, language laboratories, etc. are often rare or absent (see Al-Mutawa and Kailani 1989, Al-Ahydib 1986). There are of course, the TV, video and cinema in certain Arab countries that help improve listening skills but most English language films are dubbed into Arabic.

1.3.6. Testing procedures

Testing plays an integral role in language teaching and learning. It enables teachers and students to evaluate the achievement of their objectives. Teachers can measure strengths and weaknesses of their students and make necessary modifications in the lesson planning. Tests can also provide students with valuable feedback on their performance. However, an investigation of tests adopted in many Arab countries indicates that this process of evaluation are misused by many Arab teachers (see Suroor 1989, Awad 1995). Schools in the Arab world judge the students' progress entirely on the basis of marks achieved in written tests (Al-Zaid 1988). Such a system of evaluation is difficult to justify from a practical point of view because it does not tell us what level of communicative competence the learners have attained.

The testing techniques that are currently used in various Arab schools tend to stress specific features of the language (e.g. vocabulary, grammar, spelling, translation etc.) overlooking the communicative competence of the students. Most of the exercises and questions presented in the tests do not represent communicative situations but exemplify language structure. The result is that when learners are exposed to natural situations where they are asked to read, write or speak they often fail to do so correctly. Arab students suffer from several other learning hostilities such as the learning environment, materials used, shortage of facilities, lack of openness, etc. which may have a negative effect on the students' interest and motivation to learn English and to practise it effectively.

1.3.7. Arab learners of English

During the course of a literature review on the area of reading it was found that most studies (e.g. Ulijn and Strother 1990, Nelson 1987, Harding 1984) investigating the impact of cultural knowledge focused on native performance in an L1 situation. Even those studies, which involve L2 learners (e.g. Bernhardt 1986, Barnett 1986, Alderson and Urquhart 1988), are far too general in their scope and do not address differences between L2 learners. The reality is that each category of learners is different. The experiences of Arab learners, learning resources, their cultural, historical and social backgrounds, etc. are different from other L2 learners, French, Japanese or Jews for example, for various reasons. These include the advancement and accessibility of technology within these countries that are utilised in the educational system and are lacking or insufficient in Arab countries (Al-Ahmadi 1983, Yin 1985, Simpson 1997, Lavy 1998). There are also extra-curricular activities such as exchange visits between pupils from British schools and other developed countries (e.g. France, Japan etc.) to consolidate their spoken and communicative skills, which are missing in Arab schools (Ba-Abad 1984, Saskaki 1997). However, certain Arab countries which are more western-oriented (e.g. Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, etc.) in comparison to other Arab countries (e.g. Saudi Arabia, Libya etc.) tend to use teaching materials and ideas used by developed countries such as Germany, Spain, France, etc. (see Abdulaziz 1991).

Having outlined the general features of English language education in the Arab world, issues related to reading skills and the potential factors which may hinder effective reading comprehension amongst Arab learners are discussed in the following section.

1.4. Reading skills in the Arab world

Interest in second language reading has developed in the last few years in various Arab countries (see Zaki 1989, Al-Jarash 1993). Several reasons appear to account for this growth. Firstly, reading seems to occupy a special place in the language skills of which the other components are listening, speaking and writing. Reading develops

productive skills within the learners and enables them to achieve cultural awareness. In other words reading provides the opportunity to learn about other civilisations and ways of life. It reinforces the learners' background knowledge of the language they intend to learn and use. It also provides learners with transferable and communicative skills. Secondly, Arab learners have become more interested in economic, social, cultural and political issues raised by the media and foreign literature. Through reading, learners may attain functional literacy skills in a language other than their native one, which might help them to obtain employment. In addition, a large number of learners today seek advanced degrees at foreign universities. They require content instruction in the foreign languages, and are, therefore, dependent on reading and writing skills in a language other than their own for ultimate educational attainment. Thirdly, reading comprehension is acknowledged to be essential in many educational systems where English is taught as a second/foreign language. According to Carrell (1988:1) reading in a second language is critical. She states:

... without solid reading proficiency, second language readers cannot perform at levels they must in order to succeed, and they cannot compete with their native English-speaking counterparts.

In Arab countries most reading programmes contain a variety of activities that claim to improve reading. However, most of these seem not to be functionally related to reading achievement (Al-Khuli 1981:56). This may be attributed to a lack of authentic materials, which reflect the culture of the target language as well as shortcomings inherent in the teaching and learning methods. For most students from countries like Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Libya etc. the only contact with English in its written form is in the classroom. Access to written English language materials for learners outside the classroom in the form of, for example, English language newspapers, books, magazines and so on may be hard to come by - while others from countries like Jordan, Egypt, Algeria etc. can have extensive contact with print outside the context of classroom learning. Despite all the efforts and all the money that is invested for the enhancement of English in general and of reading comprehension ability, large groups of students are unable to understand what they read (Sutuhi 1985, Al-Zaid 1988). It is also necessary to point out that despite its importance as an essential language learning skill, in many Arab countries,

comprehension is probably the least stressed skill in the language classroom (see Abdulaziz 1991). Even when it is taught this skill is often taught or practised by using conventional methods and traditional techniques. This will be illustrated later in section 1.4.2.

1.4.1. Purposes of teaching reading

Although there are four language skills that are needed for language comprehension, they can be ranked in order of importance. The primary skill is that of speaking, closely followed by listening and then reading and lastly the skill of writing. Speaking and listening are considered the two most important language skills of the four, because of their inherent communicative nature (see Al-Ahydib 1986, Benzian 1994, Amer 1997). Through reading, learners can discover other cultures, broaden their horizons and gain more general or specific knowledge, hence facilitating and improving their ability to communicate effectively. These purposes of reading seem to be neglected in many schools within the Arab world where most reading is required for examinations. The main purposes of teaching reading in the Arab world as stated by textbook writers (see Al-Subahi 1991, Al-Qurashi 1994, Ba-Abad 1984, Gusbi 1979, Alexander 1987, Benzain 1994) are:

- to train learners to read efficiently
- to extract information from written texts with full comprehension
- to develop the learners' awareness of vocabulary and language expressions
- to enrich the learners' cultural knowledge of the target language and to broaden their general and specific knowledge
- to reinforce and build on previously learnt language items

However, this is not the case in some of Arab countries where learners are exposed to reading texts, which often emphasise linguistic features at the expense of cultural aspects or rarely provide learners with real-life situations. Most reading activities fall short of achieving the above stated reading objectives because students in some Arab countries are:

- rarely encouraged to interpret what they read or to write (i.e. redraft) certain paragraphs so that they can present their own versions

- not often encouraged to depend on themselves in reading so they feel confident enough to pick up a book and read it for their own pleasure
- individual readers lack motivation. Teachers rarely provide classes with a list of reading materials from different fields of knowledge: science, literature, sport, history, etc. and resources are inadequate.

Reading objectives can be achieved, in other Arab countries where:

- communicative practice is encouraged. Group discussions (pairs or small groups) consider text questions and their answers
- students are trained to find out for themselves undertaking language tasks
- students are exposed to English culture to stimulate interest and motivation
- students are taught whenever possible to work in groups. This enables them to interact with each other freely with minimum guidance from the teachers.

1.4.2. Approaches to teaching reading

Despite the importance of reading as an essential language-learning skill, in many Arab countries reading is not taught or practised adequately in English classes, especially where traditional methods are still used. This causes problems in comprehension on the part of the learners. In most of the reading tasks, the ultimate aim is to translate the text and ask the students to mechanically answer questions about the text (see Al-Ahmadi 1983, Al-Jarash 1993). Thus, after spending six or eight years of learning English, advanced Arab learners find it difficult to retrieve information from a written text of the target language, though many of them have a good grasp of grammar and vocabulary (Kharma and Hajjaj 1989). This may be attributed to (a) a lack of cultural knowledge of the target language represented in the materials used for teaching English, (b) inadequate usage of the linguistic features as they are taught only structurally, not communicatively.

Two approaches to reading can be distinguished in many Arab countries:

1. Linguistic approach: this refers to the textlinguistic concept in which the teaching of grammar items is heavily emphasised.

2. Translation approach: it is mainly concerned with direct translation to Arabic. It involves focusing upon new words and sentences during the reading process. This approach can be divided into:

- student-centred approach: where in their actual reading, students translate unknown words into Arabic and treat a reading text as a search for difficult vocabulary items and their translation
- teacher-centred approach: this refers to the questions related to the reading tasks which are translated and answered by the teachers

Having said this, some Arab countries are endeavouring to use a 'communicative approach', where learners are exposed to real life situations and linguistic items are taught in several authentic situations which can be found and associated with the target culture, as will be discussed later.

1.4.3. Assessment of reading comprehension

Comprehension assessment is fundamental to good teaching. Teachers can build up their knowledge of individual students' strengths and weaknesses, which will help them plan their teaching. In many Arab countries, reading comprehension tests often incorporate passages copied from the textbooks, which have already been studied by all the students (see Awad 1995, Al-Mutawa and Kailani 1989). The tests items rarely change and to a great extent do not provide clear evidence of the students' ability to extract information from the text. The questions can often be answered by matching wording or answered from previous knowledge about the subject.

1.4.4. Potential factors which may hinder reading comprehension

There are, of course, many factors that can contribute to poor reading comprehension, including lack of motivation, low expectations, fear of failure and hostility to the school or to the teacher. It is not possible to provide an account of all prevailing issues regarding comprehension failure. Instead, the intention is to concentrate on broad areas that apparently may, singly or in combination, constitute potential

difficulties for many advanced Arab learners. These are described in detail as follows:

1. Inadequate reading materials

One of the main factors why most Arab learners do not perform well in the understanding of what they read is that the text types selected are often irrelevant in relation to the learners' needs, interests and levels. Reading texts rarely seem to conform to today's world experiences such as information about modern technology, industry, world events, politics or social and cultural subjects of the target language. This argument will be further illustrated and discussed in chapter four.

2. Repetitive comprehension exercises

Reading exercises in various textbooks in many Arab countries are to a great extent unproductive. Most of them are basically followed by comprehension questions, which are answered mechanically. Learners can obtain marks by random answers as all the questions can be answered directly word for word from the texts (Abdulaziz 1991, Sutuhi 1985). Such types of reading exercises do not encourage learners to think for themselves; they hinder the learners' creative, productive and analytical ability. This can be very misleading since such exercises do not show accurate measurement of the learners' ability in comprehension. Weir (1993: 95) states that:

Answers should have to be worked out from the passage and not already known because of their world knowledge or easily arrived at by matching wording from the question with wording in the text.

3. Reading assessment techniques

One of the factors that may present problems to Arab students while reading for comprehension is the testing technique used for measuring comprehension. Al-Subahi (1991) and Suroor (1989) believe that reading tests in many Arab countries are not directed at assessing comprehension as they often include easy types of questions, which do not really test students' comprehension skills or discriminate

between the better and the weaker students. They focus heavily on memorisation of information from the course books rather than on the students' ability to manipulate, comprehend and produce meaning in the target language. They are not an accurate measurement of students' ability of comprehension. Weir (1993, p.67) argues that:

A text should not be so arcane or so unfamiliar as to make it incapable of being mapped onto the reader's existing schemata. Neither should it be too familiar as then there is a danger that the candidate will be able to supply some or all answers from his existing knowledge store.

Thus test results in many Arab countries are often misleading and inadequate for students wishing to assess competence in reading comprehension.

4. Inadequate reading strategies

Another major factor, which apparently results in many comprehension difficulties among Arab learners, is lack of adequate strategic processes. Johns (1988: 80) points out that:

When students have insufficient assistance with orientation and processing reading strategies, they can become confused about how to approach the task, and thereby do so inadequately.

This underlines one of the major problems of reading comprehension, which is the absence of efficient strategies for teaching reading comprehension. Furthermore, Hudson (1988) has discussed one of the main reading problems of L2 readers, which is the inability of the reader to activate appropriate knowledge to assimilate the schemata contained in a given text. This clearly suggests that distortions can appear when there is lack of agreement between the background knowledge and the schemata contained in the text and the type(s) of strategy by which the readers process the text.

5. The schools' reading environment

There are factors, too, within the school, which may play a role in generating and sustaining failure in reading comprehension. The literature review has shown that

school libraries can play a vital role in the development of the students' reading skills, particularly when they include suitable reading materials, such as popular magazine and newspapers, as well attractive textbooks to suit the needs and purposes of the students, which in turn would assist and support the development of reading skills. Lewins (1990: 159) for example claims that 'The school library has a role to play in developing reading skills and motivating this development... Not only does there have to be books on varying subjects, but also at various reading and interest age levels'. It has been noted (e.g. Al-Subbahi 1991, Ba-Abad 1984) that in most schools where English is taught as a second/foreign language, school libraries do not include sufficient and appropriate reading materials and textbooks which encourage students to practice reading in order to improve their reading ability.

6. Reading without purpose

In many Arab countries students are taught to read or practice reading without purpose. Reading is just related to school activities and school context. Students are generally taught to read to fill in the time and earn marks (see Al-Jarash 1993).

7. Language problems

Some of the factors for the failure in reading comprehension among Arab learners may be attributed to the linguistic discrepancies connected with inconsistency between Arabic and English systems. These are described below.

- A. The reading process in Arabic occurs from right to left, whereas English is read from left to right. This may cause confusion and form a hindrance for Arab readers.
- B. The habit of reading the Qur'an using a slow and careful word-by-word approach will cause a longer eye fixation on individual words, and this may subsequently inhibit reading fluency in English, and could result in failure to get the general meaning of the text.
- C. The difference of certain linguistic features of the target language (English) and the readers' mother tongue (Arabic) may cause problems for Arab learners in

reading comprehension. For example, in English word-order, the sentence starts with the doer or subject of the action whereas in Arabic the sentence starts with the verb. For example:

English: Ali eats an apple

s v o

Arabic: Eats Ali an apple

v s o

The study so far has shown that there are several weaknesses in the educational systems of many Arab countries, which have affected the learning of English in general, and reading comprehension in particular.

1.5. Statement of the research problem

It is commonly accepted that culture and language are inseparable. Language is a part of culture, and plays a very important role in language learning (see, Halliday, 1997, Mughan 1999, Jiang 2000). McEldowney (1994: 1) for example holds the view that:

There is a need to train all learners to communicate effectively in language which is completely neutral, unmarked in any form by creed, race, culture, social status and the like ...the language of successful international communication.

Similarly, Nida (1998: 29) asserts that:

Language and culture are two symbolic systems. Everything we say in language has meanings, designate or sociative, denotative or connotative. Every language form we use has meanings, carries meanings that are not in the same sense because it is associated with culture and culture is more extensive than language.

Language simultaneously reflects culture, and is influenced and shaped by it. In the broadest sense, it is also the symbolic representation of a people, since it includes their historical and cultural backgrounds, as well as their ways of living and thinking.

Drawing upon research studies conducted by a number of specialists, linguists and theorists into reading comprehension processes (e.g. Urquhart 1987, Harrison 1996, Nunan 1998, Jullian 2000), it was found that the relevance of cultural context to the reading comprehension from the perspectives of advanced Arab learners has not really been explored. Most studies investigated the impact of culture on reading comprehension focused on the L1 situation. Other studies, which do target L2 learners, focused mainly on European second/foreign language learners and do not address differences between L2 learners. The reality is that each category of learners has inherent differences. This research investigates the relevance of the cultural context of English to the reading comprehension of advanced Arab learners. It also identifies learners' difficulties in reading comprehension and puts forward a framework, which aims to minimise the learners' problems in reading comprehension.

From the point of view of language teaching and learning, an important factor which seems to contribute to the poor reading performance and which therefore needs to be addressed, is the content of English language textbooks chosen by many Arab governments to use in the teaching and learning of reading skills. Most textbooks used in Arab countries heavily emphasise linguistic features, providing students with texts that do not help the understanding of English culture. The assumption is that some Arab learners can acquire reading skills without reference to English culture which, in the eyes of the authorities, is alien and incompatible with Islamic traditions. This study emphasises that knowing language rules does not mean that learners will be able to communicate and interact. This has long been apparent to language teachers and language learners. Teachers have always observed that students can do well on a test but still fail to use the same features when they engage in spontaneous conversation.

Therefore, the aim of the present investigation is to test the hypothesis that limited knowledge of English culture hinders the development of the comprehension skills of Arab learners of English. An investigation into the cultural content of texts used for teaching reading skills in various Arab countries may be a key to highlighting the

problem areas and suggesting ways of improving the students’ reading comprehension skills.

1.6. Classification of Arab countries

There are twenty Arab countries in total, which are classified into two groups of ten; A and B see below.

Table 1: Classification of Arab countries into group A & B

A	B
Saudi Arabia	Palestine
Yemen	Egypt
Oman	Jordan
Iraq	Morocco
Libya	Tunisia
Syria	Algeria
Lebanon	Kuwait
Sudan	UAE
Somalia	Qatar
Mauritania	Bahrain

The reasons for this classification are as follows:

1. The literature review showed that although there are common features among all Arab countries in terms of teaching and learning English, it is realised that there are also differences in these countries in terms of their political, social and ideological aspects which can have an impact on the educational system. Therefore two broad categories were established. Group A comprises the countries that could be considered ‘anti-Western’ with a centralised power and economy and which are conservative and hostile to foreign culture. Group B countries can be classified as ‘pro-Western’ and have a balanced cultural approach.
2. After examining the textbooks used in the various Arab countries, common features among group A countries in terms of content, presentation and approaches of teaching can be identified. However there are also specific-distinguishing features in some of them as well, which will be discussed in detail in chapter four.

3. Although there are similarities in the objectives of teaching English among Arab countries, there are significant differences between the above two groups in terms of their application and implementation of these objectives. These are too numerous to be fully documented here, although they were particularly apparent in the teachers' textbooks and other English language programmes of these countries.

For the purpose of this study, five countries from each group of ten were selected.

A	B
Saudi Arabia	Palestine
Yemen	Egypt
Oman	Kuwait
Libya	Jordan
Syria	Algeria

This selection was based on the following reasoning:

1. Students from certain countries are much easier to contact compared to students from Somalia, Iraq, Sudan, Lebanon, Mauritania, etc. because of a) their political situation, and b) the much smaller number of students from these countries studying in Liverpool.
2. Having initially looked at the textbooks it became clear that for the purpose of this study five countries from each group could be chosen, which are representative of the diversity of the Arab countries in that group, ensuring a variety of Arab learners could be discussed and comprehensive results attained.

1.7. Objectives of study

The objectives of the research are as follows:

1. Assess the problems that advanced Arab learners face while performing a reading comprehension task with regard to cultural obstacles.
2. Explore how lack of cultural knowledge hinders the subjects' reading comprehension ability.

3. Determine whether the integration of cultural specific items in textbooks allows better reading comprehension amongst learners.
4. Outline strategies, which propose opportunities for Arab students to learn about English culture, thereby improving reading skills.
5. Apply cultural strategies in the context of the Arab educational system.

1.8. Concluding remarks

The hypothesis set here is that Arab readers have no difficulty with the initial stages of reading i.e. when reading and understanding grammatical structure in isolation. Arab readers are able to perform matching and filling the gaps without too much difficulty – but encounter difficulty when required to interpret a piece of discourse based on the target language context. The fact that Arab readers cannot make sense out of English cultural items in context is evidence that the teaching of the target language culture should be integrated gradually in the textbooks to develop the required communicative skills. This study argues that the use of English and international cultural items must be integrated in textbooks for effective teaching and learning. This approach will prove effective in motivating students to learn English. Hence, there is a need to develop strategies for reading skills and adequate text materials.

The problems of English teaching/learning in the Arab world are many, and teachers who have worked in these countries are well aware of them. For instance, large classes are still common, exacerbated by the lack of resources in the classroom and absence of visual aids except for the blackboard. Syllabuses may have changed throughout the years but they either tend to be ‘traditional’, or are used by teachers who prefer to use them in ‘traditional’ ways. Out-of-date, locally produced textbooks, are reprinted regularly in many Arab schools without change. In this particular context, this introductory chapter has highlighted several issues:

1. A country’s political, social, economic and religious perspectives may have either a direct or indirect influence on education.

2. There is a problem with the teaching and learning of reading comprehension skills in many Arab countries, which begs the question whether students' prescribed textbooks are a cause of the problem.
3. Although Arab students' reading difficulties may be the result of a combination of factors, the students' weaknesses in reading tasks may be attributed to a poor cultural grasp of English. Textbooks, which exclude cultural items of the target language, may be presented as a causative factor that hinders the development of comprehension skills of Arab learners of English.

Before embarking on the actual fieldwork, it is of paramount importance to establish the theoretical foundations of the study. These will be presented and described in chapters two and three.

Chapter Two

Reading Comprehension Process: Models of Reading

2.0. Introduction

There has been considerable interest among educational psychologists, linguists, reading specialists and researchers (e.g. Smith 1988, Anderson 1991, Bernhardt 1991, Hedge 1991, Davies 1995, Harrison 1996, Fotos 1998, Zyngier 1999, Liu 2000) in reading. They not only consider reading as being of prime importance in gaining any sort of cultural, social or economic success, but also as essential for progress into higher education. This chapter deals with the complex nature of reading comprehension and looks into studies, which have investigated the processing skills used by skilled and less-skilled readers.

2.1. The significance of reading

Reading as a significant skill of language can serve several purposes and needs (see Carrell et al., 1988, Barnett 1988b, Markell and Deno 1997, Day and Bamford 1998). These can be summarised as follows:

1. Reading for pleasure

This reading activity aims at providing the learners with an opportunity for association with any field in which they are interested - science, sports, media, etc.

2. Reading for information and extending knowledge

It is a response to particularly specific situations associated with personal needs or wishes. It could be daily life situations, street signs, advertising, etc. This type of reading can also be used to find a job, be informed about current affairs, political,

social, economic issues, etc. The objective of this type of reading is to broaden the learners' knowledge of specific subjects and reinforce the basic knowledge they have acquired.

3. Reading for support, consolidation or clarification of ideas

This activity entails looking or moving between texts, references, magazines and other sources in order to support or argue or learn about facts or opinions. For instance, if someone has been diagnosed with a rare disease, an individual may further his/her knowledge on the condition via the reading of some journals or articles on the subject.

In modern life, reading can also serve as a means of personal and social development, expanding international understandings, improving academic work and a fundamental tool of communication (see Wallace 1992a, Williams 1986, Paran 1996). These aspects of reading can be summarised as follows:

1. Personal development

Reading sometimes gives insight into personal problems and often provides individuals with ideas to gain a deeper understanding of themselves, identify aspects of their characters and make appropriate adjustments throughout life. The inability to read may deprive one of valuable insights and perspectives differing from one's own and may in turn give rise to feelings of inferiority among individuals.

2. Social progression

It can be assumed that the end result of reading is personal and social progression because it produces valuable changes in points of view, attitudes, feelings and behaviour. The inability to read can negatively influence all aspects of education and in turn impede the progress of society.

3. International understanding

Reading provides experience through which individuals may gain understanding about other nations of the world. It takes individuals out of their own country to explore the culture, traditions and all other aspects of the lives of other human beings.

4. A tool of communication

Reading provides individuals with access to literature and thereby an opportunity to explore and understand the history and civilisation of the peoples with whom they are communicating.

For the purpose of this study, particular aspects of the nature of reading comprehension will be discussed. Reading strategies and their contribution to the comprehension process will be identified as well. Before talking about comprehension - which is an integral component of reading – it seems appropriate to review a number of studies addressing the nature of reading comprehension.

2.2. The nature of the reading comprehension process

Constructing meaning is a prerequisite of all reading; however, reading is more than seeing the printed words clearly, more than recognising the meaning of isolated words, more than getting meaning from the printed text. Reading is a form of thinking and reasoning, involving skills such as interpreting the main ideas, perceiving relationships, recognising sequences of ideas, evaluating and sensing the writer's intention and constructing meaning. Theories and research into reading (e.g. Carrell et al., 1988, Alderson and Urquhart 1984, Barnett 1988b, Goodman 1967,1988, Widdowson 1979b, Nuttall 1996, Carrell and Eisterhold 1988, Kern 1989, Amer 1997, Rivas 1999, Dlugosz 2000) attempt to define reading. Their definitions often involve word recognition, word perception, meaning, comprehension, decoding, interpretation, understanding, reaction, evaluation,

interaction, problem solving etc. In the literature, reading is viewed as both a product and a process, and it is recognised as an active process of predicting what is likely to come next.

Reading is a complex process, which requires both physical and mental activities. The physical side of the process includes perception of the written materials on the retina of the eye and transferring these perceptions to a certain centre in the brain. As Rumelhart (1980: 573) states, reading is:

...the process of understanding written language. It begins with a flutter of patterns on the retina and ends (when successful) with a definite idea about the author's intended message. Thus reading is at once a "perceptual" and "cognitive" process.

What is particularly involved here is not merely the perception process, but the ability to translate visual symbols into meanings i.e. the ability to derive semantic meaning from visual signs and make sense out of printed symbols, which is often called comprehension. Thus, comprehension is not just answering questions, but it can be described as the process of making sense of the text, relating written language to what we know already and to what we want to know. This notion is stated by a number of researchers. Smith (1978: 230) for example, provides a good operational view of comprehension:

Comprehension entails putting together the message of the text with what the reader already knows, retaining this product in a form accessible to recall, and being able to use it in constructive thinking.

Vogely (1995: 41) agrees that comprehension is not just a question of understanding, it is viewed and recognised as:

...a process of constructing meaning based on multidimensional relationships between the learner and all of the internal and external influences and the intrinsic and extrinsic elements involved in that learner's reality.

Comprehension involves the mental process of recognising, associating meaning, evaluating suggested meaning, selecting the correct meaning and anticipating meaning. Comprehension goes beyond decoding individual words and sentences and includes information constructed in the mind of the author and in the mind of the readers.

Research in the field of psycholinguistics (e.g. Goodman 1967, Smith 1988) indicates that reading is primarily a knowledge-based process. In his essays Goodman (ibid.) rejects the idea that reading is a definite process of decoding from a written to a sound representation of language. Instead, he views reading as a process, which involves prediction from a minimum of processed cues. This view of reading which shows that a reading theory must be built on a psycholinguistic base, emphasises that the readers start with a graphic display, printed or hand-written, and if they are successful, they end with meaning and a reconstruction of the writer's message. Goodman perceives reading as a language-based skill where anticipation and prediction are emphasised in preference to accurate decoding of texts. Smith (1988: 2) sees reading as a creative and constructive activity having five distinctive and fundamental characteristics: (a) it is purposeful because without purpose the reading activity is bound to be meaningless, (b) it is selective since the readers only attempt to read what is related to their purpose at the given moment, (c) it is anticipatory since the purpose(s) define the readers' expectations. We anticipate what we are to read, on a macro level by building assumptions about overall content, and on a micro level by predicting what is likely to come next in the text, (d) it is based on comprehension since understanding is the basis, not the consequence, of the reading process, and (e) it is a process which always involves a combination of visual and non-visual information.

Goodman and Smith both view perceptual capability as important for accurate deciphering of a written passage. In addition, cognitive competence is also seen to be essential to enable the readers to integrate new information from the passage into their existing knowledge structures. It seems that these two processes operate together to enable the readers to achieve a successful interpretation and comprehension of a written passage. The psychological process of reading includes

all that goes between intake - the stimulus of the printed word - and output - the reader's response in thought, written or spoken words. Thus, reading is seen as the processing of information. The reader brings to the text his own store of general information deriving from cultural aspects and normally, some specific knowledge of the topic. At the same time, the reader also brings a linguistic knowledge, including knowledge of lexical items and syntactic features to the written text. Reading is also defined as a form of problem-solving in the sense that the reader tries to grasp or activate the sender's message in terms of words, phrases or sentences (see Daneman and Carpenter 1980, Beech and Colley 1987).

The main issues so far discussed can be drawn together as follows:

- the reading process is seen as an active communicative process through which readers acquire the meaning of the text in an interactive approach
- reading involves an active process of predicting what is likely to come next
- comprehension is a necessary condition of reading

The aim of this section, therefore, is to review two main issues: strategies of reading by which learners should be taught and discuss models or theories of reading in relation to the needs of Arab learners.

2.3. Perspectives on reading strategies

The term “strategy” has been defined by a number of researchers, educators and teachers. (e.g. Rubin 1975,1987, Wenden and Rubin 1987, Moore and Wade 1995, Jones 1998, McDonough 1999). Wenden and Rubin (1987: 6-8) for example, define strategies as consisting of six components: (a) language learning behaviours that contribute directly to learning - what learners do to control and/or transform incoming knowledge about the language (e.g. guessing from context, outlining a reading); to retrieve and use this knowledge (e.g. practice strategies); and to regulate learning, (b) what learners understand about the strategies they use, i.e. their strategic knowledge, (c) what learners know about aspects of their language learning other than the strategies they use, (d) specific actions or techniques, (e) what learners

utilise to respond to a learning need, and (f) behaviours that are amenable to change. These six components help define what goals strategies should accomplish and provide an important insight into what strategy is.

In the literature, it is noted that alternative formulations of the term strategies include 'techniques', 'styles', 'ways', 'behaviours', 'learning skills', 'cognitive steps', 'models', 'language processing skills', 'problem solving procedures' and 'conscious operations'. By combining them, we arrive at a more comprehensive definition of the term. From this unifying point of view, strategy becomes a fundamental framework from which any programme can assert its vital continuity. Accordingly, the term strategy as it is used in the present study can be defined as a number of deliberate or emergent physical or mental activities adopted by an individual in order to (a) use the prior knowledge and experience, (b) understand the present, (c) predict the future, and for most (d) achieve results. The term 'deliberate' here implies intentionally getting the desired things done, whereas 'emergent' means an action performed without prior intention. While the above discussion touches on many aspects of strategy, further characteristics will be highlighted, as it is felt that they are necessary to convey the full implications of the term.

2.3.1. Levels and dimensions of strategy

It is assumed that every strategy includes three dimensions: process, content, and context. In brief each dimension of strategy refers to the following:

- A. Process: refers to the manner in which strategies are worked out. This indicates when undertaking a task, how one must proceed through a number of steps before arriving at a strategy.
- B. Content: looks at the output of the strategy process (what) which is achieved by the number of actions taken when undertaking a task.
- C. Context: refers to the set of circumstances under which both the process and the content were determined (where, when, who, and why). It relates to the individual, the environment, the time, and the purpose(s).

2.4. Models or Theories of reading

Models of the reading process are classified into three broad categories: the 'bottom-up' reading models proposed by Gough (1972) and Laberge and Samuels (1974); the psycholinguistic models of the reading process 'top-down' models presented in the work of Goodman (1967,1988) and Smith (1978, 1983, 1988); and the 'interactive' models of reading presented in the work of Rumelhart (1977), and Stanovich (1980) and others. These models are believed to offer valuable insights into the processes actually involved in reading; none of them has been widely accepted as comprehensive, yet each attempts to show what is known and how the different aspects of reading may fit together. It is for this reason that researchers need to gain some understanding of different models and of their implications. Without an overall view, the research may be inconsequential. Therefore, this section is devoted to review the reading models. The historical background to these models is detailed and the reason why these models have been discussed is explained.

2.4.1. 'Bottom-up' processing

'Bottom-up' reading processing relies initially on textual information, and specifically the graphophonic and syntactic features of the text. One of the leading 'bottom-up' reading models for the first language is that of Gough (1972). Gough proposes that when readers begin looking at a text, a series of events is set in motion and runs, in sequence, starting from where a visual stimulus is reflected on the eye until it arrives at a sensible structure.

Another 'bottom-up' view which regards decoding processes as predominant in the reading models was developed by Laberge and Samuels (1974). Their theoretical contribution was to emphasise the role of a central mechanism, called an attention centre, which is necessary for processing information and activating certain codes. They see highly practised and automatic decoding processes as a prerequisite for adequate comprehension. Moreover, they suggest that fast and automatic decoding are the fundamental elements under most circumstances of good reading

comprehension. Laberge and Samuels propose that the reader's understanding of a text depends upon what can be seen in it.

2.4.1.1. Assessment of 'bottom-up' models

Although 'bottom-up' theories have offered researchers some potential insights into the reading process, one could argue that bottom-up models might be inadequate as models of the reading process because by adopting this model some readers might be stuck when they come across unfamiliar words, sentences and phrases they do not understand. Furthermore, they have to work hard in order to discern the structure of the text. One could also argue that to adopt a bottom-up model in the first place may prove to be inadequate since the text itself sometimes does not contain enough context within which to interpret words, phrases and sentences. This notion is explicitly stated by Cornish (1992: 723) who argues that:

The comprehension of a written text cannot be exhaustively accounted for in terms of a process of 'bottom-up' processing, though clearly bottom-up processing has a fundamental role to play in comprehension.

Word recognition or word decoding is actually a skill which readers need to acquire. However, it cannot be assumed that once the learners have obtained word recognition skills they will then become better readers. Reading comprehension involves more than retrieving the meaning of individual words since a word can sometimes have multiple meanings.

The meanings of individual words are not the problem; rather, the difficulty lies in understanding the content of what is read: understanding text structure, applying inference skills and knowledge of English and international culture are essential factors to comprehend implicit points in the text. Understanding and recognising these different levels of language comprehension are of vital importance in reading comprehension. The meanings of individual words, sentences and paragraphs must be integrated and the main ideas of the text identified. Therefore, the identification of

words in a text without understanding what is read cannot be considered successful reading.

2.4.2. 'Top-down' processing

In contrast to the view of the 'bottom-up' models of the reading process, 'top-down' reading models place attention on the reader's activation of prior knowledge to decipher the author's intended meaning. This is demonstrated when readers generate hypotheses or predictions and then seek confirmation for these from the text they are reading. In this model, the reader is considered to be an active participant in the reading process, making predictions and processing information (see Carrell et al., 1988). This process refers to knowledge-based or schema activation. Working within this framework, Goodman (1967) argues that reading ought to be seen as a 'psycholinguistic guessing game'. The term 'psycholinguistic' is defined by Goodman (1967) and Smith (1988) in relation to reading studies where anticipation and prediction are emphasised. Goodman proposes that the basis of fluent reading was not word recognition i.e. the readers do not read every word, but sample the text, form hypotheses about the next word, sample the text again to confirm their predictions, and so on.

The key feature of Goodman's argument is essentially knowledge-based since he refers to the ability of the readers to extract meaning from the text and understand the message intended by the writer by using their background knowledge of the various linguistic levels (syntactic and semantic). According to Goodman (1988: 16) the reader reconstructs meaning from written texts by using the following processes:

- prediction, where readers employ the language knowledge they have to make predictions about the grammatical structure of the text and draw upon semantic sources of information to extract meaning from the structure
- sampling and confirmation, where readers sample the printed words to confirm their prediction. This process depends upon the extent of visual and syntactic information the readers have which is seen to help readers to be selective in their sampling

- correction, where readers tend to reprocess when they find the initial predictions are unconfirmed
- termination, where the brain terminates the reading when the reading task is completed

Working in the same orientation, Smith, (1978) emphasises the importance of the predictions readers need to create while reading. Like Goodman, Smith considers prediction as the core or the basis of the reading process for comprehension. Smith (ibid: 18-22) defines the process of prediction and its function as follows:

Prediction brings potential meaning to texts, reducing ambiguity and eliminating in advance irrelevant alternatives. ...We predict to reduce our uncertainty and therefore to reduce the amount of external information that we require. ...Predictions are questions that we ask the world, and comprehension is receiving relevant answers to those questions.

‘Top-down’ reading processes have had a strong influence on ESL reading theory and practice as evidenced by a number of second language reading specialists and researchers (e.g. Carrell 1983a, Johnson 1982, Grabe 1988, Hudson 1988). Grabe (1988) for example, states that ‘Goodman’s approach has led to extensive research on how conceptual knowledge, inference, and background information all affect the reading process, particularly in ESL reading’. Furthermore, Carrell (1988: 3) notes that Goodman’s model introduces the idea that reading, far from being passive, is an active process. She states that:

... the impact that Goodman’s psycholinguistic theory had on both first or native language reading, and later on second or foreign language reading, was to make the reader an active participant in the reading process, making and confirming predictions, primarily from his or her background knowledge of the various linguistic levels (graphophonic, syntactic, and semantic, in the broadest sense of that term).

2.4.2.1. Evaluation of 'top-down' models

While positive aspects of the 'top-down' models of reading have been pointed out, a significant number of educationalists, theorists and researchers have raised doubts about its influences on reading. Among those who may be regarded as the most authoritative and convincing are Samuels and Kamil 1988, Eskey 1988, Adams 1990. There are, for example, questions about how and to what degree literate second language readers employ lower-level processing strategies, and how these skills interact with higher-level 'top-down' strategies. Goodman's model, in fact, is vague on details concerning how prior knowledge can be used and how semantic and syntactic information is integrated during reading. Furthermore, one can argue that 'top-down' models of reading seem to lay emphasis on higher-level skills with little attention given to the lower-level skills. The 'top-down' models of reading suit skilled and fluent readers whose skills have become automatic and who are able to predict meaning using contextual clues or certain types of background knowledge. Goodman's argument that skilled and fluent readers have automatic word recognition, make better use of context and use less visual information than poor readers who cannot instantly recognise a word and so need to use context to aid word recognition holds true in relation to comprehension. However, Goodman (1967) seems to have overgeneralised in his argument about the word recognition of fluent readers. It is indeed the case that fluent readers are more efficient than poor readers, but it is not the case that fluent readers use less visual information. It is a currently held view that fluent readers fixate nearly every word, but they do so very rapidly. Harrison (1996: 76) points out that fluent readers not only fixate most words but appear to process the individual letters in each word, even when the word is highly predictable.

Another serious problem of Goodman's (1967) and Smith's (1988) reading models is that they emphasise that the reading process makes intensive use of predictions and hypotheses. Comprehension and integration of meaning could occur in the ways Goodman and Smith described, but readers could also use conscious processing to recognise a word when they meet a comprehension problem. In that, they use

deliberate strategies to work out the meaning by associating words in the text or by taking notes, or by underlining certain phrases etc. Sometimes it is not easy for the reader to form prediction or to know which cues will be most productive or when or where to confirm guessing.

2.5. An alternative to ‘bottom-up’ and ‘top-down’ models

As a result of the debate over ‘bottom-up’ and ‘top-down’ models, some see reading as best taught in a bottom-up model, and others prefer the top-down approach. Researchers who are interested in seeking to account for both models of the reading process stress the role of the interaction between ‘bottom-up’ and ‘top-down’ processing which influences text comprehension. Thus, the interaction between the two models of reading is assumed to be essential for establishing a more accurate picture of the process of reading.

2.5.1. ‘Interactive’ models of reading

Rumelhart (1977) has proposed the first of a number of ‘interactive’ models of reading. According to Rumelhart, direct models which pass information along in one direction only and which do not permit the information contained in a higher stage to influence the processing of a lower stage contain a serious deficiency. For Rumelhart, comprehension necessitates the utilisation of existing knowledge sources, schemata that are the abstract cognitive units that control, manipulate and cater for all types and stages of processing. Here the words of Samuels and Kamil (1988: 24) concerning Rumelhart’s interactive model demonstrate a clear vision about its basic concept. They note that

Rumelhart’s interactive model, which emphasises flexible processing and multiple information sources, depending upon contextual circumstances, provided convincing evidence that the information processing perspective was here to stay within the reading field

Rumelhart (1984) further developed his 'interactive' model. He concentrates on the impact of the semantic level and proposes a schemata theory account of the comprehension process. The principal function of schemata is to form an interpretation of events and to identify objects in the process of comprehension.

Stanovich (1980) proposes the 'interactive compensatory' model which is an extension of Rumelhart's (1977) interactive model of reading. It presumes that both 'bottom-up' (data-driven) and 'top-down' (concept-driven) models operate alternately. Stanovich's model added a compensatory hypothesis to Rumelhart's interactive model to explain individual differences in reading. Stanovich argues that fluent reading is an interactive process in which information is used from several knowledge sources (letter recognition, word recognition, vocabulary, knowledge of linguistic cues and meaning). Stanovich claims that because of the deficiencies of the 'bottom-up' models which neglect the role of background knowledge of text topic as facilitating variables in word recognition and comprehension on one hand, and the limitations of 'top-down' models which emphasise higher-level skills on the other hand, he suggests the 'interactive-compensatory' model where poor readers are provided with facilities to compensate for weaknesses in one area of knowledge by heavy reliance on another area of knowledge without any consideration of the level of the processing stage.

A model which is described as a 'bottom-up interactive' model, is proposed by Rayner and Pollatsek (1989). This process emphasises the importance of the processing of visual information. Carter and Nunan (1995: 69-72) describe it as a model that seeks to account in detail for the utilisation of all sources of information. They claim that:

... this more recent bottom-up model is an example of recent and current models which aim to be as bottom-up as possible but nonetheless incorporate 'interactive' features: 'our model is primarily bottom-up, but top-down processes do interact with bottom-up processes'... Their model does provide a rich source for hypotheses, serving to fill in some of the aspects of reading not accounted for in either the Goodman or

the Gough models, and at the same time being compatible with Rumelhart's interactive model.

2.5.1.1. Appraisal of the 'interactive' models

Despite the merits mentioned earlier about the interactive models, some limitations of these models can be summarised as follows:

1. Selection towards targeting of skilled L1 readers, at the expense of unskilled readers.
2. The interactive models do not consider other factors, which might affect the reading process such as the learning environment, reading experience, etc.
3. This model requires a very high level of cultural and linguistic skills, which not all L1 readers possess, let alone L2.
4. There is very little room in the model for use of other techniques when processing texts, such as sensible matching, adequate elimination, contextual guessing, etc.

2.6. Reading models and their relevance to Arab learners

Although the reading models mentioned above provide interesting views and useful insights into the nature of the reading process, 'bottom-up' models might be insufficient as models of the reading process. To adopt this model in the first place may lead to comprehension difficulties if the text itself does not contain enough context within which to interpret words, phrases and sentences. In addition, doubts have been raised about 'top-down' models concerning their influences on reading performance in at least three respects:

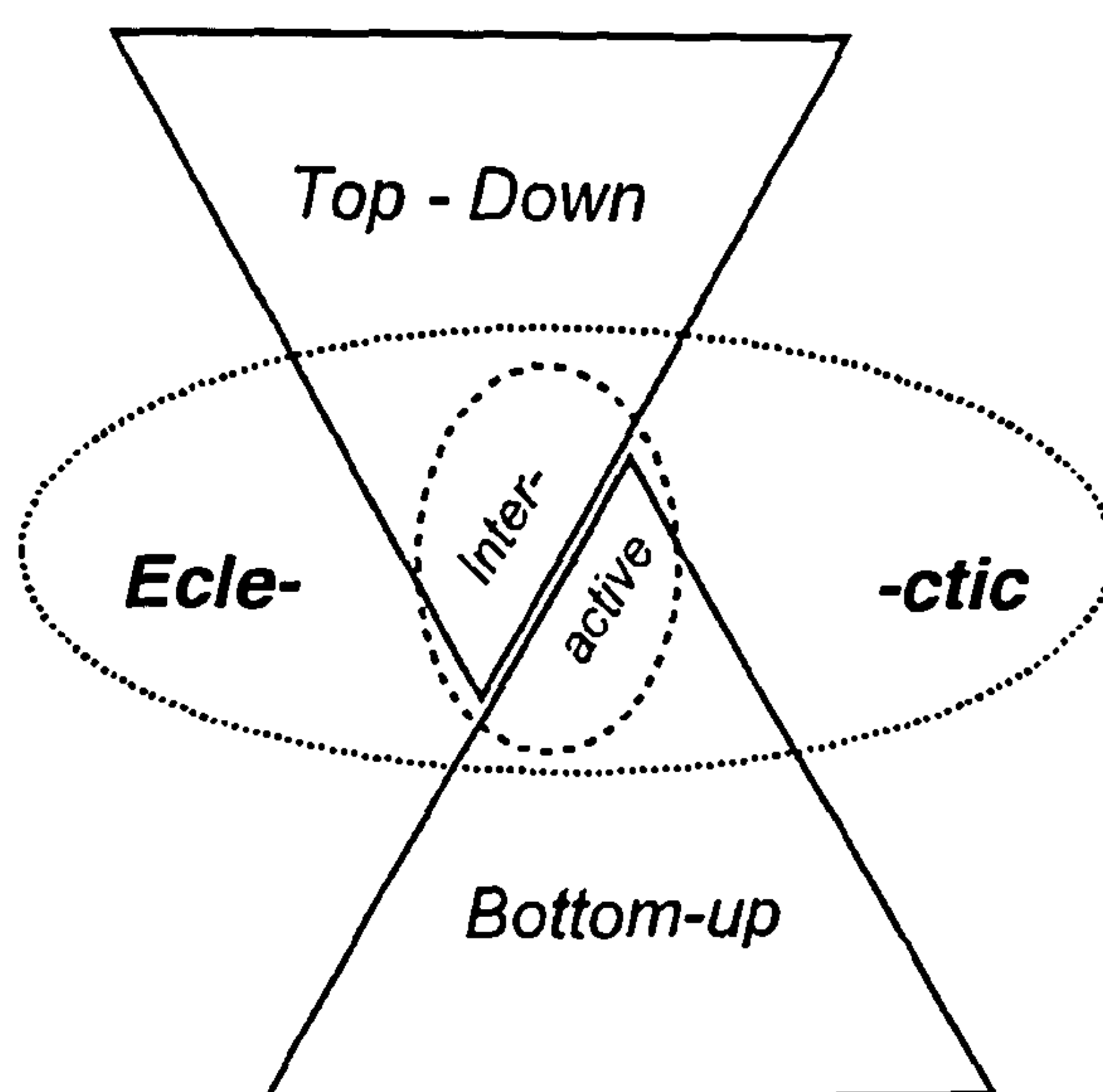
- they seem to provide only vague criteria as to what constitutes text comprehension among Arab learners
- they focus mainly on the psycholinguistic guessing approach and emphasising the learners' mental ability to process textual information, during reading comprehension. These are fine for skilled readers as descriptive models, however,

they fail to incorporate any other teaching technique by which learners can be taught to read.

2.7. Towards an integrated model of teaching reading

Drawing extensively on theoretical work and empirical research on reading models, a pedagogical approach to comprehension of written texts called the 'eclectic' model is proposed. Current reading models are not absolute values that can be transplanted unmodified, which can then be used by Arab learners. Therefore, to rely on a single model may not be sufficient. Arab learners need to adopt integrated processes while reading for comprehension rather than using one model - prior knowledge as Goodman (1967) suggested or text-based as Gough (1972) recommended.

The proposed model incorporates positive features from the different models that exist in reading practice. It also combines various sources of knowledge and strategies as elements for successful reading comprehension. It encompasses prescriptive items, which indicate how students should be taught to read. It also takes into consideration the Arab learners' experience of reading and their level of reading skill. Furthermore, it will help to train Arab students to use a variety of reading strategies whilst processing the text (such as contextual guessing, sensible matching, scanning or adequate elimination).



This model makes a number of assumptions:

- after examining several other models of reading, it is noted on the whole that there is no consensus or unified approach amongst theorists. These models seem to focus on one aspect or strategy of reading, i.e. psychological models of how people read, and thus have been criticised by various researchers because of their limitations. The 'eclectic' model provides reasonable scope for Arab learners' needs and may be useful in addressing these limitations.
- rather than rely on a single source of information processing, Arab readers need to focus on a variety of integrated processes while reading for comprehension. This stems from the view that 'top-down' models need higher-level skills i.e., the predictions of meaning using contextual clues and certain types of background knowledge with which advanced Arab readers might not be familiar. They could therefore have less ability to draw on the range of cues - both external and within the text - which are available to readers in L1. On the other hand, Arab readers may not rely on the 'bottom-up' models to process the text and interpret information through the analysis of the visual input without having sufficient prior knowledge.
- the 'interactive' models have many positive features, although they too have limitations. The 'interactive' models tend to aim at specific learners in particular L1, and also only targeting skilled readers. The 'eclectic' model not only takes into consideration the 'bottom up' and the 'top down' as the 'interactive' models have done, but also incorporates, as mentioned earlier other factors which combine to affect Arab learners.

Other types of reading strategies, which are found to be useful in reading comprehension, are described by a number of researchers (e.g. Moyle 1968, Munby 1978, Grellet 1981, Bialystok 1981, McEldowney 1996/97). Moyle (1968: 32) for example, clarified three principal groups of reading strategies - skimming, scanning and careful reading:

1. Skimming involves looking quickly through a text, the chapter of a book, an article from a journal etc., to identify the overall topic without paying attention to

detailed information to decide whether or not it is suitable for your purpose. According to Klein (1991: 32) 'skimming serves the purpose of effecting the comprehension of the essential pieces of information in a text'. Skimming may be described as an organised search to rapidly achieve a general idea of what the text is about, focusing on certain key words or phrases.

2. Scanning: involves again looking quickly through a text. However, unlike skimming, scanning involves looking for specific words, phrases and pieces of information as quickly as possible. In other words, scanning involves rapid reading for the specific rather than general, for particular details rather than the overall idea.
3. Careful reading: refers to the process of figuring out every word to understand the text. It concerns the understanding of the main ideas by deducing the meaning of lexical items and understanding the syntactic structure of a sentence or a clause. Although it seems that meaningful reading cannot take place unless we know the meaning of words, yet trying to decode every single word may hinder comprehension rather than facilitate it.

McEldowney (1996/97: 12-13) offers some practical ideas for effective reading comprehension which might be applied to all reading tasks and specifically those based on information texts. She proposes seven broad categories of comprehension skills. These are:

- selecting or identifying information that is to be of use in one way or another;
- distinguishing between or sorting out information selected as perhaps being important or not important, familiar or unfamiliar, etc.;
- classifying or gathering together all the pieces of information that belong to the same categories or concepts;
- sequencing or ordering pieces or collections of information according to their importance;
- synthesising into a whole pieces of information gathered from a range of sources;

- translating information from one medium to another - visual to aural, verbal to non-verbal, spoken to written and so on

The above skills can be useful in text comprehension and reading tasks should be designed in a way to encourage students to use them while reading for comprehension.

2.8. Concluding remarks

On the basis of the literature review, it can be seen that adopting effective reading strategies is essential to enable learners to cope with a reading text. It has been acknowledged that reading processing strategies exist and influence comprehension. However, whatever strategies are adopted, all must be mastered and employed to allow learners to demonstrate more fully their comprehension and help them to be aware of the way(s) they comprehend as well as becoming effective readers.

This chapter has also examined past and present trends in reading studies with particular reference to reading models or theories. Three models have been identified as forming the core knowledge of second/foreign language reading programme. These models attempt to provide theoretical basis for the reading skill. Each of these models/theories embodies a different view about the nature of the reading process. For example,

1. 'Bottom-up' models of reading are based on the belief that reading is primarily concerned with text knowledge and is regarded as an information-gathering activity. 'Bottom-up' models view comprehension as proceeding linearly from the isolated units in the lower levels (e.g. letters, words) to higher levels of comprehension (e.g. integrating propositions).
2. 'Top-down' models, in contrast, put forward a non-linear view of the process. They stress the influence of the higher levels on the processing of words and letters. Comprehension begins with the reader's own contribution, and proceeds to use the lower levels selectively.

3. The 'interactive' views, on the other hand, hold that there is a necessary interaction between text content and the reader's prior knowledge.

It is well documented that these reading models/theories of text processing are controversial. Some observe that skilled readers are those who are better able to engage in 'top-down' processing whereas others maintain that they are better able to engage in 'bottom-up' processing. This study, which stresses that what is suitable for some countries is not necessarily so for others investigated the kind of processing skills that might affect Arab learners' reading comprehension and indicates that the processing strategies underlying effective reading have much in common. Therefore an 'eclectic' model, which comprises a variety of comprehension skills, is proposed as an alternative solution. In the following chapter, a supplementary investigation on the importance of prior knowledge in reading will be discussed, and then more specifically, a discussion of the concepts of culture, examining its relevance to the comprehension process.

Chapter Three

A Reader's Prior Knowledge

3.0. Introduction

This chapter seeks to elucidate the role played by background knowledge in reading comprehension. The discussion starts by clarifying the various notions of background knowledge, then attention has been turned to review in detail the concept of cultural knowledge and its relation with language learning. It ends with a review of the theoretical framework and empirical evidence that have been offered in support of the importance of cultural background knowledge to the reader.

3.1. Dimensions of background knowledge

Knowledge is described as 'information' stored in the head that enables individuals to make sense of the print that comes through the eyes. Bernhardt (1991), Bisanz and Voss (1985) for example, define knowledge as information held by the writer and assumed to be known by the reader. Background knowledge plays an essential part in the reading process. There are, in fact, various types of knowledge that contribute to text comprehension. According to Chapman 1984, Anderson et al., 1983 and Yin 1985 three dimensions of background knowledge have been identified: (a) General world knowledge which relates to the sum total of experiences acquired by any individual. This covers the whole range of information of the world from everyday matters to very specialised knowledge about nuclear physics or knowledge of social relationships, causal structures which are common to many specific situations and domains, (b) domain/content - specific knowledge which refers to the information about the specific topic area of the text which has been read or discussed at a given time and (c) formal/textual knowledge which is described as the individual knowledge of the organisation of written texts such as what is covered in text linguistic features, for instance grammatical items, notions of coherence and

cohesion, sentence structure, etc. It provides a framework in the readers' mind in which they anticipate that the organisation of information will follow a certain pattern and this contributes to understanding the relationships that exist between the propositions. Text-processing knowledge can also be included with the above dimensions. It refers to accessing and using appropriate techniques for processing and understanding a written text. In other words, it involves the reader's ability to know how information is organised in a text and what prior knowledge should be activated to retrieve it.

A number of studies (e.g. Valdes 1986, Yasin 1996, Kaikkonen 1997) have emphasized the links between culture and background knowledge. Culture is part and parcel of the world knowledge which can be acquired through reading or interacting with people from all over the world. It has also been affirmed that culture is an integral part of language (see King 1990, Byram 1997, Hofstede 1994, Hayness 1998). Cultural knowledge is essential as language is the reflection of culture (the two are inseparable). In other words socio-cultural knowledge combined with the experience of using language in authentic contexts will contribute to the development of competence. The understanding of cultural aspects will help grasp the full meaning or function of the linguistic forms of the target language because they are often associated with the situation in which they occur. Byram (1997: 51) states that:

Without the cultural dimension, successful communication is often difficult: comprehension of even basic words... comparison between the learner's own way of life and that of the other language community are an essential means to better understanding of both.

3.2. The schema theory of reading

The schema theory of reading has been discussed by a number of studies (e.g. Adams and Collins 1979, Hudson 1988, Rumelhart 1980). The view underlying any schema-based concept is that texts as visual input do not carry meaning but guide the process of comprehension or of interpretation by all aspects of the existing knowledge which readers have. Thus, the starting point of the schema theory is the reader's experience

in which schemata are considered to be building blocks on which information processing depends (Rumelhart 1980). In fact definitions of a schema theory vary only slightly from author to author. For Anderson and Pearson (1988) schema theory means the abstract knowledge structure that is already stored in the schemata built up through experience and used in the processing of new information in a given text. Carrell (1985) demonstrates that the schema has two components: (a) content which includes the knowledge itself; and (b) function which includes information about how this knowledge works. Similarly, Rumelhart (1980) who presents a detailed account of a schematic-theoretical model of reading, describes a schema as a package of knowledge from a given domain which contains both the knowledge itself and the rules about how that knowledge is to be used. This schema interferes with the interpretation of the new information given in a text and helps the reader to fill in the missing parts of a text.

The process of understanding a text, is the process of finding various aspects of schemata that offer an adequate account of the passage in question. Schemata can thus be used to (a) build an interpretation of an event or a situation in the process of comprehension, and (b) help the reader to manipulate comprehension by constructing a harmony between knowledge known and the given information in the text. Hence, it is through the use of the reader's schemata that the writer's intended message is interpreted. It seems that comprehension could be better and uncertainty can be reduced for a given reader when background knowledge more closely matches that represented in the text.

3.3. The function of background knowledge in reading comprehension

In addition to the different theoretical viewpoints (see Smith 1988, Anderson and Pearson 1988, Wenden and Rubin 1987, Barry and Lazarte 1998,) which have emphasized the role of background knowledge in reading comprehension, there have also been some studies conducted by a number of researchers on the role of various types of prior knowledge (cultural knowledge, linguistic aspects, specific knowledge, knowledge of the world, etc.) in reading comprehension. Alderson and Urquhart (1988) for example, investigated the influence of the subject specific background

knowledge on reading comprehension. Alderson and Urquhart (ibid.) hypothesised that EFL learners' background knowledge of a specific academic field would affect their performance in reading comprehension tests. They argued that an engineering student's performance on approaching an engineering text would be better than an economics student approaching the same text. They conducted their research on texts used for proficiency tests. Their subjects were non-native speaking postgraduate students studying in Britain. The students were categorised according to their field of study for example: science, engineering, economics, mathematics and arts. Five texts were used in the study and the test used was gap filling. The findings of their study confirmed their hypotheses. They found that a student's performance was better on texts taken from their field of specialisation than that of students from different subjects.

Other research emphasises the importance of world knowledge. For example Yin (1985) conducted a study with 60 non-native speaker students from the National University of Singapore. The students were divided into three groups and categorised according to their disciplines. Four texts were used in the experiment. The texts were different in content, but were all typically academic/expository, focusing on a single theme. The texts were classified generally as neutral or domain-related. Cloze was used as a test instrument for the experiment. The results showed that specific subject knowledge has an effect on the performance of the readers and on their scores.

Because one of the central aims of this study is to assess the relevance of cultural content to the reading comprehension, it is necessary for the research purpose to lay the foundation for a basic understanding about the primary features of cultural knowledge. Consequently, in order to have a solid understanding, at least of the area under investigation, a broader background and understanding of related disciplines in the field is needed.

3.4. The importance of cultural context

Culture is, of course, a vast topic. It ranges from art, literature, etc., to issues of beliefs, family life, customs, attitudes, social habits, and conceptual systems

produced or shared by a particular society. It is within societies that individuals obtain their background knowledge about their environment and the world at large.

The main objective of language teaching syllabus is to develop the ability of the learners to understand and communicate information in the target language. In the case of advanced Arab learners, how English is taught was discussed in chapter one and the absence of target language culture was highlighted. It was shown that English is mostly taught in terms of grammatical structures using local Arab cultural and religious contexts. The assumption is that the teaching of English structure and a stock of vocabulary will enable students to read and speak English. On the evidence of Arab learners' test performance, this assumption is shown to be ill-founded because the teaching of English without an adequate language framework of form and content using authentic material means that learners will be unable to understand and produce language. As Widdowson (1975: 89) states:

The aim of all teaching must be to develop communicative strategies, or cognitive procedures, whereby the language user is able to recognise in a situation or a context just those conditions, which operate to provide linguistic elements with their specific value. It is not enough simply to bring bits of language into association with contexts and situations.

The nature of the relationship between language and culture or language and the way of thinking about the world shared by a particular social group, has been discussed by a number of studies (see Reid 1987, Stebbins 1995, Ellis 1996, Byram 1997, Flowerdew 1998, Jiang 2000). Together their views suggest an inescapable relationship between language and culture, or language and thought. Byram (1997: 52) for instance asserts that:

As learners become more advanced and independent in their learning, it is above all in the acquisition of new vocabulary in new areas of cultural and linguistic experience.

This statement indicates that language acquisition requires careful attention to the specificity of each language and the thought and culture it expresses. It can also be understood that between culture and language there is always an interactive influence: the two cannot exist without each other. Language can be considered as the mirror of culture, in the sense that people can see a culture through its language. People of different cultures can refer to different things using the same language forms.

3.5. Cultural awareness in language learning

The term 'cultural awareness' has gained prominence in foreign/second language teaching/learning in many parts of the world. The cultural dimension is recognised by authors, researchers, linguists and language teachers alike as having an important role to play in the language learning experience. Byram (1997:51) for instance stresses the importance of learners having the opportunity to access other cultures. He argues that 'a growing awareness of the culture of the people who speak the language of study is intrinsic to the learning of it'. Many are looking for means of systematically incorporating information about the foreign culture into syllabus and materials design. If language is divorced from its cultural context it may be seen as leading to communication breakdown. Wringe (1989: 14) states:

It would certainly be possible to speak French, German or Spanish with mechanical perfection yet to constantly be at cross-purposes with native speakers of those languages if we had no understanding of their daily concerns or the way in which life in their countries is organised.

This view is supported by a number of teachers and linguists who would agree that in order to apply language skills successfully and effectively a knowledge of culture is essential (see Met and Byram 1999, Jullian 2000). They would also argue that culture is ultimately best accessed via its language, because language is the prime vehicle for its expression. This relationship between culture and language may therefore be a source of enrichment in language learning materials. Not only language skills but

also cultural awareness and adaptability are essential elements of international understanding.

Just as Kramsch (1993) considers cultural knowledge in language learning as an essential feature of communicative competence, in this study a case has been made for treating cultural awareness from a teaching perspective as a key factor in a successful language course. In this respect, knowledge of target language culture should be an essential requirement and an integrated part of language teaching and learning. In terms of language learning and teaching it would seem reasonable to design material to cater for this. Recognising the importance of cultural influences on learning style modalities, Reid (1987: 100) advocates developing a 'cultural-sensitive methodology', which should be an inherent aspect of a learning-centred approach to syllabus design. Learning language forms is inadequate for the acquisition of communicative competence unless learners know their appropriate use within each situation (see Simpson 1997, McEldowney 1996/97, Mugham 1999, Cheung 2001), i.e. when to use these forms, how to use them and under what circumstances they are appropriate. Cultural items such as ways of thinking, customs, conventions, idioms, etc. are important to comprehend the concepts and meanings that often occur in a written or spoken language. Ignorance of such items can create misunderstanding between the author and the reader or the speaker and the listener. It also indicates an incapacity to use the language efficiently.

Teaching the culture of any foreign country involves informing students of various concepts about its geography, political history, religious aspects, economics, governmental organisations, music, famous people, etc. This study argues that unless the Arab learners can see direct personal benefits and a relevance to their lives in what they are taught in school, they have no clear goal to aim for. As learning is a goal-oriented activity, the teacher's task is to motivate their students in a search for meaning and importance in learning materials, and to make that search a pleasurable experience. Students today are more exposed to global and international cultures than any time before. Television, movies, music, comics, fashion, computer games and the Internet form a major psychological part of the lives and the life styles of students.

White (1985) claims that for most students, global cultures serve as a valuable tool that helps them to cope with the difficult task of building and maintaining an identity.

It can be argued that understanding of international culture would enable Arab students to engage with the way of life, values and ideas of the West, in a form of cultural exchange. This involves the use of the Internet, for example and the appreciation of Western movies through the English medium. Teachers who are able to integrate this sort of culture into classroom sessions can provide a valuable bridge between formal and informal education. If teachers like their subjects and take care to present them with a high level of interest and excitement, students are much more likely to like those subjects, too and to be anxious to find out what is so interesting. When students see that the work they do can meet their needs, learning is more likely to occur. Domoney and Harris (1993) stated that international culture is one way of involving learners and their teachers in meaningful, enjoyable and collaborative classroom tasks' in the EFL classroom.

English or international culture can be built up by daily reading of newspapers, watching and listening to current events and programmes about geographical, and historical documentation, etc. Instead of blaming English culture for the negative influence it might have on students, it may be better to keep pace with the progress of the world and see life as it is.

3.6. The relevance of cultural knowledge to the reader

The role of cultural specific knowledge in reading comprehension has been studied by a number of researchers (e.g. Johnson 1982, Nelson 1987, Barnitz 1985, Stefensen 1988). The results of these studies, showed that the subjects performed better when the reading passage reflected their own cultural background. Bernhardt (1986) suggests that the issue of misreading in L2 is often a cultural rather than a language problem. She used a passage dealing with ecological issues unfamiliar to American students. The medium used in the passage was the German language, hence many points within the passage caused confusion to the students because of their lack of cultural knowledge in relation to these specific ecological issues. Similarly,

Steffenson (1988: 193) states that 'when cultural background assumptions and constructs are missing, reading can become a time-consuming, laborious and unsatisfactory enterprise'. Steffensen points out that cultural background knowledge can influence reading comprehension and she claims that a significant problem for ESL students is reading texts in which the cultural background knowledge and assumptions are different from their own. Steffenson's study was conducted on a class of intermediate ESL students enrolled on a composition course at a large Midwestern university. The students were asked to read the novels selected for their cultural content and to write about them in their journals, which were collected weekly. The results of Steffenson's study (1988: 201) indicate that:

When ESL students read a text with a heavy cultural loading, they are not able to attain as high a level of comprehension as the native speakers because they lack some of the generalized cognitive structures which underlie the materials.

Working in the same orientation Johnson (1982) investigated the influence of prior cultural knowledge in comprehension among L2 readers. He gave the subjects a text about 'Halloween' and asked them to illustrate what they comprehended after reading it. According to the results, Johnson indicated that cultural familiarity had a greater influence on comprehension than the pre-teaching of vocabulary. Johnson's study also demonstrated that the cultural aspect had more effect on reading comprehension and recall of ESL readers than the level of syntactic and semantic complexity.

The above theoretical and practical views show the relevance of cultural background knowledge to the reader. Knowledge of culture is a valuable aid to improving general reading ability by helping the reader to make sense of what he reads. If a reader finds places, persons or events of which he is unaware referred to in what he reads he should try to do some background reading in the areas encountered. For example some non-native readers may not understand the following cultural specific references:

Next Monday is a bank holiday, Ash Wednesday, Easter egg, Boxing day, Halloween, Bed and Breakfast, etc.

Although the skill of reading the above language items is relatively easy, understanding them is quite difficult. The problem of comprehension arises because these items are deeply rooted in English culture. In order to grasp the different meanings these items imply, readers need to be familiar with what *bank holiday*, *Ash Wednesday*, *etc.* mean within English culture. This depends on the cultural connection. For example if a learner belongs to a multi-cultural society e.g. Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, etc. (see earlier comments on group A and group B) where many faiths co-exist and where you have more than one community each with a different culture, they may have less difficulty in understanding the above items. On the other hand in the case of Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Libya etc. where the majority of the population are Muslims, you may find that most of the people have never come across the above cultural specific items, which will obviously cause comprehension difficulties.

3.7. Concluding remarks

In this chapter the influence of cultural background knowledge has been investigated. However, it seems that there has been little research carried out to investigate the relevance of cultural context to the reading comprehension of advanced Arab learners of English. In chapter four the methodology the researcher adopted to test what is considered essential to reading comprehension, as shown in chapters two and three, is described and discussed.

Chapter Four

Design of fieldwork: Materials and Methods

4.0. Introduction

There have been many changes in language teaching over the past twenty years. These changes are usually summarised within the framework of a shift from a form-focused, or structural approach, to a meaning-focused, or communicative approach. These new approaches have entailed changes in the way language is described, from structural syllabuses to notional-functional syllabuses and, more recently, to content/topic-based syllabuses. It has been evident to anyone who has been working in the educational field in the Arab world during these years that these changes have seldom been easy to adopt or even attempt. The problem that motivates this study is that most advanced Arab learners find it difficult to use English productively and receptively in understanding contexts. Their performance in reading has persistently remained less than satisfactory. This study investigates the extent to which textbook materials and the methods adopted for teaching English affect students' prior knowledge, reading strategies and levels of comprehension. This chapter outlines the methodology of the study in terms of:

- A. the frame work for evaluating the textbooks currently used for teaching English in group A and B Arab countries and
- B. the development of the tests used in the study.

A. The framework for evaluating the textbooks

As was pointed out in previous chapters there is a problem with the teaching of reading comprehension in many schools within Arab countries. It was observed that, although there are many possible factors that can be considered to be accountable for students' poor comprehension (e.g. schools' libraries, facilities, environment,

methods of teaching and comprehension assessments, attitudes, economic, political, and religious and social factors), an extremely important factor which needs immediate reappraisal concerns the question of reading materials that are presented to the students. (see Al-Jarash 1993, Al-Subahi 1991, Crawford 1995, Wallace 1997). Section A examines the basic concepts of text, classification of written texts, the concept of authenticity and the function of textbooks in language teaching. It also discusses the different approaches for analysing and evaluating texts. This provides the basis of a practical framework for analysing and evaluating reading texts used in groups A and B Arab countries.

4.1. Towards a definition of text

Linguists, researchers and psychologists (e.g. Halliday and Hasan 1989, Hoey 1983, Swan 1992, Michaels 1987, McEldowney 1996/97) who study how readers make sense of written language state that texts are not simply a collections of facts and other kinds of information presented in English. Each kind of text has its own content, structure, conventions of layout and style, communicative purpose and so on which distinguish it from other genres or kinds of text. Halliday and Hasan (1989) consider texts solely in terms of the unity of their structure (i.e. logical sequence of sentences) and the unity of their texture (i.e. linguistic links between sentences). Texts cannot be considered according to their size or simply isolated words or sentences but according to their content and function (referring to the broad social and communicative goals of the text such as descriptive, persuasive, argumentative etc.) and context (source of text: geographical, historical, academic paper, etc.). This approach views text as language that is functional and fulfilling a purpose.

4.2. Classification of written texts

As was indicated one of the main problems of syllabuses and textbooks used in the Arab world is its presentation of materials in an inadequate or situationally inappropriate context. This has implications for the selection of cultural items and their integration gradually in the textbooks. McEldowney (1982: 8) outlines language types and their communicative purposes. She states that the three broad divisions

'can equip the child with the tools of learning any subject including literature'. She divides texts according to their purposes into three main types: (1) instructive, (2) narrative and (3) descriptive. According to McEldowney (1996/97: 5-6) the distinguishing features of each text are as follows:

1. Instructive texts. These can be either sequenced instructions (telling us how to make something, how to get from A to B) or non-sequenced instructions (giving us rules for safety, maintenance of appliances, etc.). For example:

Use only three heaped dessertspoonfuls to a pint of water. Do not use the normal four. Measure the coffee into a warmed jug. Add the correct amount of boiling water and stir well. Let it stand for a minute and draw the edge of a spoon across the top. Stand the pot in a warm place for four minutes. Strain and serve.

The distinctive features of the above text are basically illustrated by the use of stem form of verbs which are dynamic in that each refers to a step to be carried out - use, do, measure, etc. It can be noted that the verbs used for instructions have no doer of the actions and these actions have to be carried out – Use / Do / Let, stand. It is also noted that information in the text is organised according to a sequence of occurrence – measures, adds, stir, do not use.

2. Narrative texts. These relate to a sequence of events, experiences, etc. governed by verb forms appropriate to the narrative framework. Narrative is important in the writing up of reports of various types and in the development aspects of most subjects. For example:

Vernon arrived home from work and made his usual cup of coffee. He poured it out and sat down to enjoy it. He took a sip. It was strong and bitter which was just the way he liked it. He smiled and began to relax.

The above text represents one of the functions of language, which is to convey what happened to people, societies, etc. Such language is used to keep a record of social and religious developments within societies, to demonstrate the stages in the development of various world conflicts and so on. The basic feature of narrative text is the use of the stem+ed form of dynamic verbs related in the order in which the

events occurred - arrived, made, poured and the like. In the case of narrative texts the verbs have doers of actions and have already been carried out – He / poured; He smiled.

3. Descriptive texts. The general function of such texts is (a) to describe the properties, appearance or distinctive features of a particular subject, (b) to describe a manufacturing process, (c) to describe a natural process, etc. Descriptive texts are perhaps the most frequent of all communicative purposes. For example:

There are many different types of coffee. They have different flavours. The coffees of Africa have a strong flavour. They are often very bitter. Blue Mountain coffee comes from Jamaica. It is a mixture of coffees and has an unusual taste. There is a wide range of Brazilian coffee. It is not all good and it all has a harsher taste than other coffees. Colombian coffee is strong and rich with a slightly bitter taste.

In the above text the information is essentially descriptive in purpose. It can be noted that the text uses stems (e.g. is, are, have) and stems+s (e.g. comes) forms of stative verbs. The verbs do not refer to actions and, as such, can be said to be stative. In a descriptive text, the sentences are arranged according to concept. Thus the first sentence states a generality about coffee and the rest of the text describes the classification of coffees. Besides free-standing stative description and stative which occurs in narrative McEldowney (1996/97: 7) has identified other two types of sequenced description: the description of natural processes and processes which occur through the intervention of man are of relatively lower frequency.

This study proposes to distinguish text types according to their communicative purposes as suggested by McEldowney. It also suggests that texts should include authentic materials, which contain contemporary real-life themes that relate information in natural contexts of occurrence.

4.3. The concept of authenticity

Although the term authenticity remains controversial, it has been defined by a number of writers (e.g. McEldowney 1996/97, Peacock 1997, Johnson 1982, Klein

1991). Authenticity is viewed as written or spoken language which is accrued naturally and could be accepted by the readers as an act of communication and which provides a meaningful context for learning aspects and patterns of language. The term 'authentic' can be defined as materials, which include multi-cultural values i.e. a mixture of national and foreign themes or topics selected to provide learners with knowledge to be able to perform a variety of language tasks. For the purpose of this study 'authenticity' is discussed with regard both to topic and the way text is written. In terms of topics, authenticity can be examined through the extent to which they involve less of native culture (Islamic-Arab beliefs and values) and bring learners closer to the target language culture, making learning more appealing and therefore more motivating. It also considers the extent to which textbooks provide the learners with new knowledge and increase their awareness of various themes (political, economic, social, human rights, etc.). With regard to the way texts are written authenticity is seen through the type of language learners are exposed to and the unity of their structure. The text's organisation should be composed of a number of sentences organised to carry a coherently structured message which has a communicative function i.e. permits the learner to perceive a specific purpose or meaning on the part of the author, for instance, to argue, to narrate, to describe and so on.

4.4. The function of textbooks in language teaching

Although there are alternatives to textbooks as a source of information in language teaching e.g. teachers, tapes, videos, and other educational teaching aids, textbooks can be considered the primary source of language teaching and learning. For many educationalists textbooks are seen as having a positive impact on teachers, teaching and thus fostering language learning. Richards (1998: 125) for example observes that:

If one wants to determine the objectives of a language program, the kind of syllabus being used, the skills being taught, the content the students will study, and the assumptions about teaching and learning that the course embodies, it is often necessary to look no further than the textbooks used in the program itself.

Textbooks are also seen as a fundamental element that influences the quality of language programmes, classroom interaction and language use. Davies (1986: 102) describes the special importance of textbooks to learners as a source of information in relation to teachers, stating that:

... First, the textbook has the advantage of being permanently available for reference, for questioning, sifting and testing. Precisely because it is distanced from pupils and teachers, a text may be approached critically, evaluated, and reappraised. By contrast, teacher exposition, being spoken, is transitory; and because the teacher is also a controller of pupil behaviour, teacher exposition cannot be questioned and challenged in the way that the text can.

The text material is given central importance for many reasons:

- textbooks are an important source, probably more important than any other source of information currently used in the teaching and learning process at advanced school levels in the Arab World because other teaching aids are lacking
- textbooks are considered to be the main resources for teaching reading skills and the basis for designing reading activities and language exercises
- reading text is seen to be the main variable that most strongly influences the learners' prior knowledge, motivation to read, way of reading and the types of strategies adopted

In the context of the Arab world, the role of textbooks as a vital source of information, which can be exploited for effective teaching and learning reading skills assumes even greater significance. This is because other teaching materials like videos, T.V, labs, etc. in the classroom are often rare. In discussing the teacher's role with regard to textbooks it was noted that the greatest challenges teachers in the Arab world face are not owing to a lack of theoretical knowledge, but rather to the constraints imposed on them within the social, cultural, economic, and educational contexts of the classroom. Teachers mainly follow the instructions and the guidelines set in the teacher's book. It is important to note that more often than not teachers have little if any chance to question the quality of textbooks, adapt or change

textbook-based tasks, add new texts or delete some, change task inputs or expected outputs and so on. They often execute government policies and are not expected to challenge them. There is not room for initiative, as the textbooks do not allow for individual and creative ability.

There have been surprisingly few attempts to carry out evaluations of reading texts used in Arab countries. Although teachers in many Arab schools are, of course, constantly assessing their own work and that of their students, this evaluation has not always been formalised. There is little, if any, research on texts used to teach reading skills, and very little research conducted to assess the outcomes of such materials. Under these circumstances, the need to empirically evaluate the effectiveness of course materials in language learning, and consider which type of reading texts will best suit students' needs in Arab countries takes on special importance. Having considered the type of texts involved in communicating information in education and society in general, the role of textbooks in language teaching and learning (see McEldowney 1996/97), it is important to consider the approaches for evaluating text materials

4.5. Approaches for evaluating text material

In reviewing the literature on issues relating to evaluation of language courses, the field of discourse analysis and the work of Barnard and Randall 1995, Low 1987, Hoey 1983, Allen et al., 1988, Alderson 1992, Blue and Grundy 1996, Rifkin 1998, Campbell et al., 1998 in particular, offer significant insights into evaluation of text materials. The overview of literature indicates that, to date, most text materials have been evaluated productively i.e. using checklists or questionnaires to determine their suitability for use in a particular teaching context. This kind of evaluation relies on traditional criteria that identify guidelines for teachers to evaluate textbooks available to them in order to determine which are best suited to achieve the course objectives. These guidelines are often hypothetical and remain fairly inadequate since it is only once the teachers have used the textbook that problems are ascertained and then they need to undertake further evaluation. The literature also shows that text materials evaluation is a complex process and there are often limits to how appropriate such

evaluation can be, as Sheldon (1988: 245) notes, 'coursebook evaluation is fundamentally a subjective, rule-of-thumb activity, and no neat formula, grid or system will ever provide a definite yardstick'. However, a number of studies (e.g. McDonough and Shaw 1993, Chambers 1997, Ellis 1997) provide some practical ways for conducting an empirical evaluation.

4.6. Evaluation criteria and options

Various dimensions have to be considered when evaluating textbooks. Chambers (1997) identifies three broad procedures for evaluating materials:

1. Identification of essential features, for instance: level, quality, type of methodology and language activities (e.g. communicative, structural, etc.), suitability for learners in terms of cultural appropriateness, gradual linguistic complexity, etc.
2. Identification of desirable features, which involves the teacher's, book, cassettes, etc.
3. Additional features including the layout of the book, use of colour, illustration and so on.

Although Ellis (1997) covers similar ground, his approach is rather different. In particular he identifies two types of empirical evaluations:

1. A macro-evaluation that calls for overall assessment of the textbook to find out whether the entire set of materials has worked.
2. A micro-evaluation which calls for selecting particular materials of the course book and assessing them.

4.7. A framework for text analysis

In the light of the above mentioned studies, the purpose of the present evaluation is to examine the way cultural knowledge is presented and distributed in language textbooks in the Arab world. It will particularly look at how different textbooks treat

English culture. In evaluating textbooks, the approach identified earlier by Ellis (1997) will be adopted for a number of reasons:

1. It can serve as a practical and legitimate way of conducting an empirical evaluation of course materials and can make it manageable.
2. A macro-evaluation will be done in order to assess the textbooks as a whole, so as to find out information such as the designers, the content, the presentation, the teaching aids etc.
3. A micro-evaluation where the evaluation of course materials in this study will be carried out in relation to texts used particularly for teaching reading skills to advanced Arab learners within groups A and B countries.

Samples of reading texts from the course books of each country will be evaluated in terms of the content of these texts. The term content refers to the cultural content presented in the materials of different texts to which learners are exposed. Thus the source of these texts will be analysed and this will ascertain the nature of cultural items used - whether they illustrate 'universal/international/global/neutral culture', 'native culture' (themes related to Islamic-Arab culture) or 'English culture' or a combination. The frequency of topics such as women, human rights, social, political and economic themes, etc. will also be assessed. It is an attempt to collect information and conduct an empirical evaluation in order to

- identify the outcomes: the extent to which such materials influence learners in terms of background knowledge, reading strategies and level of comprehension
- determine whether such materials have accomplished the objectives set

4.7.1. Selection and presentation of analysed texts

Ten textbooks prescribed for Arab students to learn English at secondary schools and which are currently used in groups A and B countries were the source of the text extracts that were analysed. There follows a detailed description of certain specific features of text materials used in the selected countries (see below).

Table 2: Description of text materials used in the selected Arab countries

Country	Text materials	Author(s)	Publication	No. of Units	Teaching aids
Saudi Arabia	<i>English For Saudi Arabia. Third Year Secondary Textbooks and Teachers' Book.</i>	Al-Qurashi, K.O., Watson, M., Hafseth, J. & Pond, R.	Dhahran: King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals. Ministry of Education (1994)	18	Teacher's book & cassettes
Yemen	<i>English for Yemen. A course for 3rd year Secondary Schools</i>	Ramsden, C. & Hubbard, B.	Sanna: Ministry of Education and Research Centre (1984)	12	Teacher's book & cassettes
Oman	<i>English for Oman. Third Secondary</i>	Smith, B. & Smith C.	London Group UK Limited. Ministry of Education (1987).	10	Teacher's book & cassettes
Libya	<i>Living English for Libya. Third Year Secondary.</i>	Gusbi, M.	Tripoli: General Publication, and Distribution. Co. Ministry of Education (1979).	30	Teacher's book
Syria	<i>English for Secondary school.</i>	Syrian Arab Republic,	Damascus: Abdul Kader Amaout LTD. Syria. Ministry of Education (1994).	25	Teacher's book
Palestine	<i>Excel in English. Student's Book. Secondary School.</i>	Alexander, L.G.	London: Longman. Ministry of Education (1987).	20	Teacher's book & Cassettes
Egypt	<i>Excel in English. Student's Book English for Arab Republic of Egypt.</i>	Alexander, L.G.	Cairo: Akhbar el-Yom Press. Ministry of Education (1985).	20	Teacher's book & cassettes
Kuwait	<i>Crescent English Course. Language Teaching for the Arab World. Third Year Secondary.</i>	O'Neill, T. & Snow, P.	Oxford: OUP Ministry of Education (1995)	16	Teacher's book & cassettes
Jordan	<i>English Course for Jordan. General English 2 Secondary.</i>	Jayyusi, S.H., Farkouth, S. & Mukattash, L.	Amman: Ministry of Education. (1996).	24	Teacher's book & cassettes
Algeria	<i>Comet: A Communicative English Teaching Course Book for all Streams.</i>	Benzian, A.	Algeria: Al-Diwan Al-Watani lilmatbuat. Ministry of Education (1994).	12	Teacher's book

The method of selecting the extracts from the textbooks was to choose texts at random intervals. To select the illustrative texts which are presented in the next chapter, two extracts were picked out of each of the textbooks of each group (see Appendix H: 239 for group A and Appendix I: 254 for group B). An important organisational feature of the analysis is that the presentation follows a two-step order.

Firstly, an overall idea of each textbook in terms of the author(s), number of units, lessons or chapters, etc. will be described, followed by an investigation of the text to determine the nature of its content.

4.8. Evaluation of textbooks

It was pointed out in Chapter one that Arab countries are classified into two groups (A and B). The following describes and assesses the textbooks used by these groups focusing on the reading texts that the students are presented with. These texts will be examined with a view to establish what implicit references and ratios of English culture they provide for Arab learners.

4.8.1. Group A countries

The content throughout the texts currently used in group A countries is of a similar style. Reading comprehension is predominantly taught through the use of texts reflecting national and Islamic-Arab values and culture, to the extent that it seems as though Islamic-Arab history texts have been translated from Arabic into English to teach English comprehension. In fact, Arab culture is the strongest common denominator of the English textbooks used in these countries. It unites and dominates the features of the general frame of reference in which foreign language classes take place. Reading texts in most cases are limited to non-realistic contexts. The general aims of these texts give prominence, as might be expected, to linguistic skills. Such a reading style only encourages students to think that learning a language is about memorising a definite body of information presented in a text. This is clearly evident when such students come to Britain and receive a 'cultural shock' when exposed to English culture. The following is a sample of textbook extracts taken from group A countries to support the above arguments:

(Extract 1)

The Holy Month of Ramadan

Islam is based on five beliefs. These are called the **Five Pillars of Islam**. The first belief is that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is His Messenger. The second is that a Muslim must pray five times a day at certain

times, and the third is that a Muslim must give a percentage of his income to the poor. (p. 28)

(Extract 2)

King Abdul Aziz bin Abdul Rahaman Al-Saud

AdulAziz was only eleven years old in 1891 when his family was forced to leave Riyadh for Kuwait. The young boy looked back as his caravan moved away from the gates of the city. Sadly, he watched his home disappear behind the cloud of dust, created by the camels. "This is not the last time I will see Riyadh," he promised himself silently. (p. 20)

(Extract 3)

Zakah

In Islam a rich man is someone who owns more than 80 grams of gold, or 560 grams of silver or an equal amount of money. It is the duty of every rich Muslim to give Zakah at the rate of 2. 0% of what he owns. (p. 99)

(Extract 4)

Islam, Zabid and Education

Zabid was one of the first places in Yemen to be converted to Islam. Abu Musa Al Asha'ari was the Sheikh of the Asha'er tribe in Wadi Zabid at the time and he visited the Prophet Mohammad in Medina. After Mohammad had spoken to Abu Musa and his **delegation**, he **addressed** his own people with the words...: (p. 9)

(Extract 5)

Jibrin

When Sultan ibn Saif died in 1668AD/1079AH, his son Bilarub became Imam. He built the fort and palace at Jibrin and moved there from Nizwa. For a few years Jibrin was Oman's capital. In the fort Bilarub started a free college. He paid the salaries of the teachers and the expenses of the students. (p. 11)

(Extract 6)

Oman's Farm Animals

Oman is also training "vets" to work in the clinics and sub-clinics. A "vet" is an animal doctor (the word is short for "veterinarian". Like a doctor, a vet has to go to a special college and study for many years. (p. 95)

Examining extracts 1 and 2, which are taken from *English For Saudi Arabia: Third Year Secondary Textbooks and Teachers' Book*, we can clearly see that Islamic-Arab culture and national themes dominate most of the texts. One goal stated for teaching English in Saudi Arabia is to offer secondary school students a window on the world (Al-Subahi 1991), yet selecting only reading texts containing aspects of Islamic culture does not help students to communicate or understanding English and universal culture. Another goal of teaching English for the Saudis is to cultivate the

pupils' critical thinking as a useful adjunct to intelligent reading of English texts. This emphasises reading as the principal source of learning, yet the type of reading texts used that are devoid of the target language culture may hinder the students' ability to think, to develop critical and analytical skill and reading strategies. Unfortunately, most of the reading texts (as illustrated in the samples) focus mainly on national themes. It should be noted that most of these themes have already been taught to the Saudi students in Arabic which is acceptable, but by repeating such texts in English textbooks serves little purpose except to reduce the scope of the students' background knowledge in English. Furthermore, most grammar points throughout the reading texts are presented in specific national situations where students are taught to memorise the rules within these situations. Relying heavily on local rather than international culture hardly encourages or allows students to communicate in English.

The analysis of extracts 3 and 4 which are taken from *English for Yemen: A course for 3rd year Secondary Schools* illustrates basically Arab culture and highlights a mismatch between the course objectives and the materials set (see *English for Yemen. A course for 3rd year Secondary Schools: Teacher's Book, 1984*). One of the goals stated for teaching English in Yemen is to give the pupils who finish their secondary education sufficient knowledge of the language to help them in their vocation and future studies (Ba-Abad 1984). One could argue that such reading texts, which are representative of the remainder of the English course, cannot provide students with sufficient tools of communication to help them in their future occupation or further studies. It primarily emphasises Islamic-Arab culture at the expense of the genuine materials of the target language and universal culture. With such textbook material communicative competence is a virtually an impossible target for learners to achieve.

Examining extracts 5 and 6, which are taken from *English for Oman: Third Secondary*, it is found that similar pedagogical approaches to that of Saudi Arabia and Yemen are followed when it comes to selecting materials for teaching reading. One of the general stated objectives of teaching English in Oman is reading and understanding authentic written English texts on topics of general interests, (see *English for Oman: Third Secondary Teacher's Book 1987*). However, in evaluating

the textbook it can be argued that the majority of the reading texts place great emphasis on national and Islamic-Arab culture with minimal exposure to Western culture. Such text materials restrict the creative ability and the thinking capacity of the students for the following reasons:

1. The extracts include many Arabic words such as sultan, Saif, Jibrin, etc. which are not lexical items of the target language and do not challenge the reader as they do not require any mental effort in the reading process.
2. Text materials include mainly Omani history which has already been taught in Arabic (see the Book of History 1987), decreasing the students' interest and their chance to build on and reinforce their general knowledge about the world outside of Oman.
3. Such reading texts would not encourage the students to develop the use of a variety of reading strategies for handling other types of reading texts.

In the same textbook rules of grammar are often taught and presented within single sentences reflecting Oman national aspects (see p.15). Students' reading is based on manipulation of language structure rather than communicative practice. The result will be, ineffective teaching and learning of reading, as well as distorting the students' comprehension.

In contrast to the above mentioned countries, socialism is the underlying precept and way of life that dominates and determines what is learnt by whom, when, where and how for every individual in Libya and Syria. This affects the design of the texts used for teaching reading comprehension. The following are extracts taken from textbooks currently used in these countries:

(Extract 7)

Agriculture

Farmers in Garian have many problems. Water is their first problem. There is another problem. In Libya each farmer works for himself. There are no people to work for him. So the farmer must work long hours. He usually, works from sunrise to sunset. (p. 38)

(Extract 8)

A. Mr. Fellah is a good man. He is a wise farmer, too. He believes in Allah. He also believes in hard work. He believes in science, too. He always says, "The new farmer must know something about science". (p. 65)

(Extract 9)
The Jacaranda Tree

If the boy desired anything more than this it was to hear voices in the rejected radio-set that Paterson had thrown away and was now his own. Every evening, in his own hut of bamboo across the compound, he laboriously took the set (p.18)

(Extract 10)
Jupiter And The Outer Planets

Astronomers used to think that it was made up of a central rocky core surrounded by a layer of ice over which lay a deep, dense atmosphere. Nowadays it is thought more probable that the whole globe is made up of gas, though near the middle of the planet this gas is so dense that it starts to behave in a most curious way. (p. 63).

Examining extracts 7 and 8 which are taken from *Living English for Libya: Third Year Secondary*, it can be noted that the major educational objective of teaching English in Libya seems to emphasise the description of the local capacity for the production of agricultural products rather than preparing the students for the universal challenges of social, political, moral and communicative values. Wallace (1992a: 19) states that 'reading helps us not just to do but to be, that is to act out certain behaviours associated with specific rules'. It would be more interesting for learners to be exposed to different communicative features such as instructive texts e.g. medicine, safety, etc. or argumentative texts on such topics as democracy, human rights, justice, equal opportunities, etc. If, as is claimed, the predominant objectives of teaching English in Libya are:

1. To prepare a student, who is able to speak, read and listen with understanding to current English.
2. To help the students gain good instruction in English so that they can understand the other party and whatever materials are required in their professional development. (*Living English For Libya, Gusbi, 1979*).

then clearly the reading texts in the Libyan English textbook contradict the above objectives. The above reading text types do not offer the students an opportunity to practice their study skills and develop receptive and productive skills in the use of the target language. They seem to have little to do with communicative purposes. Such reading texts which mainly emphasise national policy, overlook the benefit of incorporating authentic themes and topics, as well as disregard the cultural aspects of

the target language which distort students' perception of the culture and narrow their view of the world, particularly the world of work dominated by English and American culture.

Similarly, in analysing extracts 8 and 10 which are taken from *English for Secondary school in Syria*, it can be noted that they emphasise socialist principles and describe everything that takes place in Syria. Human, interpersonal functions or international culture such as meeting people, life in Britain and so on which are important aspects in daily life rarely exist in the English textbook. These would allow students to reinforce their English communicative ability as well as develop their social skills. Hence the students need to talk about accidents and emergencies, places and countries, leisure and entertainment, personalities and so on. Emphasising scientific subjects using specific and factual language types and neglecting socialising features of language will deprive students of exchanging cultural knowledge with other students in English-speaking environments. Although the texts give information to the learners, they do not provide them with enough opportunities to use it for communication, and do not encourage them to think or discover for themselves.

Highlighting the shortcomings of the textbooks is not meant as criticism of the educational system in these countries, but it must be stressed that language teaching should not be an end in itself but as a means of expression and interaction.

4.8.2. Group B countries

When evaluating the textbooks used for teaching reading to students in these countries, it is found that most of the text types are organised around themes of general interest. Most of the units are based on dialogue or a reading passage, which provides the stimulus for other lessons: guided conversation lessons, grammar study and practice lessons and reading and writing lessons. The textbooks include a balanced input of language types and materials from the native culture and the culture of the target language for the purpose of maintaining a consistent world view i.e. based on universal cultural dimensions without deviating from the spirit and the social values of the home country. The topics chosen are relevant to the age and

needs of the learners, and range from real-life situations (home, friends, sports, letters, etc.) to adventures (novels, space flights, round the world trips, etc.) and humour.

The reading materials also bring in the wider world of the school curriculum, with topics such as environmental protection, health issues, animal life, history, business, computer science, and so on. Cross-cultural elements are also included. The students learn about human behaviour and rights, the universe, space travel, English literature etc. The reading texts aim to develop the students' understanding of life in Britain and other English-speaking countries, but with a cross-cultural element which encourages students to compare their own culture with that of other countries. The values included are those deemed to be fundamental, e.g. appreciation of one's national heritage, preservation of the environment, seeking knowledge, habits and traditions of Western countries, human rights, media and computing, etc. One could argue such texts are a means of gaining insights into other people's cultures and patterns of thinking, thereby facilitating the learning of the language and using it as a means of communication with other people of the world. This communication could be educational, economic or technological. Examples from the students' responses that support these arguments will be illustrated later. To illustrate this argument a number of extracts are taken from each textbook used currently in these countries:

(Extract 11)

A journey through time

Imagine that a man and a woman who lived about 150 years ago are visiting our world today. They are walking down a street. Here's part of their conversation: 'What's that thing?'. (p. 1)

(Extract 12)

Making friends in London

If you enjoy meeting people London Linkup could be the club you have been looking for. We are a friendly group of young people. Our aim is to become involved in things that really interest us and to make the best use of our spare time. (p. 29)

(Extract 13)

Holiday fun

A Swedish couple, Erik and Brita, are on holiday in Alexandria. They are with their Egyptian friend, Sami.

Sami: What shall we do today?

Erik: Let's go swimming

Sami: I know a very nice beach. It's not far from here. (p. 55)

(Extract 14)

Studying abroad

Kamal is from Egypt. He has just qualified in medicine from the University of Cairo and is making inquiries at the British Council about post-graduate studies in England.

Kamal: I'd like to go to England to do post-graduate work in medicine.

Could I have some information please?

Secretary: Certainly. This leaflet tells you what you must do to get into a medical school in England. (p. 79)

(Extract 15)

A Japanese pen-friend

Dear Faud,

Would you like to be my pen-friend? Please say 'yes'. I am a Japanese boy and I am fourteen years old. I go to Secondary school and I live in a small town called Soma..... (p. 7)

(Extract 16)

Neighbours

Therefore a Muslim must not hurt his neighbours. Muhammad (blessing and peace be upon him) has said that a Muslim must help others. A Muslim must help his family, and he must also help his neighbour..... (p. 42)

(Extract 17)

The Crown Prince's Award

In 1956, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award was designed to encourage the young people of Britain to become involved in a balanced programme of voluntary self-development activities. The Award was so popular that it soon expanded to become the International Award Programme. (p.4)

(Extract 18)

A wedding in ...

A traditional white wedding needs to be planned months in advance, as it can be a very big event. It is customary for the main wedding celebrations to be the responsibility of the bride's parents and some parents even invest some money when their daughters are young, so that they can afford to put on a splendid show when the 'happy day' comes. (p. 75)

(Extract 19)

Modern life in English speaking countries

Situated at the Marble Arch entrance to Hyde Park, Speaker's Corner has existed as a meeting place for many years. Hyde Park, London's biggest and most central park, is regarded by many as the "people's park," (p.8).

(Extract 20)

Humour and Leisure (Shakespeare's House)

Scene : The living-room of a house in Stratford-upon-Avon, the town where Shakespeare was born.

Characters : Sidney and Ethel, tourists. A man.

Sidney and Ethel come into the room. (p. 32)

Examining extracts 11 and 12 which are taken from *Excel in English: Student's Book* currently used in Palestine, one could argue that such reading texts ensure that the students are able to use their developing knowledge accurately and enable them to communicate in English in a wide variety of situations relevant to their needs. One of the objectives set for teaching English in Palestine is to develop the integration of English language, culture and social values (Alexander 1987). In comparing this objective with the course materials it is fair to say that the English textbook reasonably meets the stated objective. Such reading materials would give the students the opportunity to develop their creative abilities, build up the skills to find out for themselves, expressing and arguing ideas in their own terms. Cultural awareness - which is so important for encouraging good communication between people from different cultural backgrounds, is developed throughout the textbook. Topics such as 'Pen-friends', 'Changing fashions', 'Tomorrow's world', 'Catching a train', etc. are included. In these topic options social issues are addressed and this would seem fertile ground for preparing students for understanding culture in terms of shared meanings and value systems. The structure chosen for presenting the material offers opportunities for organising a range of study and learning activities. It integrates different areas of knowledge acquired by the students in other studies, and in the wider world beyond school. Grammar and vocabulary are taught in different textual contexts. This would enable the learners to understand these rules and apply them if encountered in any context or situations.

The points already mentioned regarding the textbook adopted in Palestine, can be reiterated for the one used in Egypt (*Excel in English. Student's Book English for Arab Republic of Egypt*) because they are similar in content, as they have the same author. Almost all the reading texts give opportunities for the students to become personally involved by relating the topics to their own knowledge and experience. The texts also provide material likely to interest both sexes. The aims of the English course in Egypt for secondary students are given as:

1. Encouraging the students to read the language intensively through the prescribed books that are related to their studies as language students.
2. Developing the students' proficiency in understanding and using the language in spoken and written forms.

3. Improving the students' competence so that they can communicate accurately in English, and opening up the world beyond the classroom.

It can be argued that the course (see *Excel in English, English for Arab Republic of Egypt. Teacher's Book: 1985*) is carefully designed and has a good variety of topics such as 'Shopping in London', 'Thinking of other people', 'Stop press', etc., and meets the stated aims reasonably well. Students are provided with a variety of themes, which embrace different lifestyles and are very wide-ranging. The themes include 'Tip - or be punished', 'Good manners', 'The human brains', 'What sorts of holiday do you want this year?', etc. This allows them to be prepared for varied experiences in the English speaking world, enrich their knowledge of different cultures, giving them the opportunity to practise the language in an enjoyable atmosphere and encouraging them to create natural communicative language.

Extracts 15 and 16, which are taken from *Crescent English Course: Language Teaching for the Arab World. Third Year Secondary* used currently in Kuwait, and it can be noted that the texts have three main purposes, instructive, descriptive and narrative. It seems that because the Kuwaiti outlook on education is one that is very open, the authors have not been hindered in any way in their selection of topics. Language is used, and should therefore be learnt, in a social context. The textbook includes texts talking about Islamic-Arabic culture at the same time as giving information or materials about the culture of the target language and universal topics. This enables the students to gain insight into English culture and way of life. It also provides students with the opportunity to compare their own language and culture to the world of English speakers. Exposure to a variety of texts would help to develop the students' range of reading strategies and, hopefully, improve their ability to accurately extract information from varied texts. They also provide the students with natural and dynamic topics and give an accurate picture of modern day Britain. There are several reasons to support these arguments:

1. The content of the various reading texts includes themes of relevant issues to meet the progress of the country and the world at large.
2. These various themes and topics reflect the social life in Kuwait and in Western countries.

The language material is contextualised, and practised through activities, which encourage learners to use the language and participate in discussion (see unit 4: 42). Although the course contains themes about Islamic culture (see extract 16), yet the themes encourage interaction with other communities and the building up of good human relationships with non-Muslims. Even when an Islamic theme is incorporated into the textbooks, the selection is certainly different from those used in the group A countries as the emphasis lies more on interpersonal aspects, rather than the more rigid and personal features of items such as the pillars of Islam.

Analysing course materials used for teaching reading in Jordan (see *English Course for Jordan. General English 2 Secondary: 1996*) in terms of content it is revealed that, in the broadest terms, the reading texts are authentic drawn from a wide variety of written English ranging from journalistic to academic, scientific and literary styles (see extracts 17 and 18). The material is well balanced and the reading texts adopted include language used to describe local and wider cultures of the Jordanian community and of other societies in the world at large together with the needs and desires of the learners. Such texts may extend the learners' knowledge, maximise their potential and improve their future career prospects. The course aims 'to enable the students to develop their study skills to a level that will enable them to use English independently and to enrich their knowledge in various fields' Jayyusi et al. (1996: 4).

According to McEldowney (1996/97) language has three central communicative functions in the life of the learners: social (interacting with particular social groups, with friends and strangers); imaginative (stimulating learners' creative ability) and transactional (communicating factual information). Examining the above extracts with regard to these main purposes of language, most of the course materials adopted for teaching reading in Jordan may be said to encourage the appropriate development of social, creative and transactional language within and outside the classroom. Most of the reading texts contain language, which reflects national and foreign social aspects both in lexical items and structure. The language used in the reading texts can help students to communicate and socialise in English, within their home environment and broaden their social skills to be used in the wider world. For

instance, there is a wide range of reading texts, which include topics on people, feelings, idiomatic aspects of the culture of the target language etc. Extract 2 represents the type of language learners might need for social interaction. Even the heading of the letter reflects the culture of the target language (mum and dad). These terms are also used in many Arab countries, which clearly illustrates that there are a lot of common and shared cultural features among different communities that can be used.

Regarding the transactional concept of the language, the reading materials also include factual text types combining both form and vocabulary, such as information about education, politics, economics, agriculture, industry, sport, tourism, health, weather, religion, science and so on. Such texts would provide learners with necessary tools for higher education or for preparing them for a professional career. As well as demonstrating social and transactional functions, the language used in certain reading texts is descriptive and encourages the learners to develop their imaginative and creative abilities.

In Algeria as demonstrated in extracts 19 and 20, the reading texts cover the day-to-day life of many people (see *Comet: A Communicative English Teaching Course Book for all Streams: 1994*). They were carefully selected and are aimed at providing the students with materials chosen from various sources, covering current affairs that enable them to communicate in English in a wide variety of situations relevant to their needs. The topics are challenging, informative and stimulating. The four skills are given similar weighting in every lesson. The main objective of the course content is to help learners to communicate in English by means of participating in topics and activities set around learners' interests. (see Benzain: 1994). The textbook includes stories, poetry and descriptive texts in addition to cultural features of the target language to stimulate learners, cater for their needs and satisfy their interest and curiosity. Most of the reading texts present the learners with interesting information about the world in general and the culture of the target language in particular.

It can be said that such reading texts would help learners improve their English competence partly because they involve grammatical features and cultural insights

which work together to display the meaning and partly because they include a variety of topics and themes involving real-life situations and consequently widen prior knowledge.

B. The development of the tests used in the study

Section B includes a detailed description of the instruments used to demonstrate the research hypothesis which assumes that absence of English culture hinders the development of the comprehension skills of Arab learners of English. It describes the tests design, including a justification of why each of the two texts were chosen and why each format was selected and how exactly the tests were developed. It also includes the construction of the interview questions. Before discussing these issues, it is of paramount importance to highlight the basic foundations of the characteristics of language testing. The relevance of this section to the present study can be summed up as follows:

- to outline the main criteria and procedures for designing valid and reliable tests in general and reading tests in particular
- to put forward the key characteristics for designing the tests for the present study and to select items that measure the intended purposes

4.9. Language testing

According to McEldowney (1994:1):

... the aim of the examination is to test the ability of the candidates to understand and produce the type of factual, impersonal language and related cognitive skills that are the medium of education across the curriculum and normal day-to-day transactions....

This pertinent approach indicates that tests are an inherent and necessary part of the process of teaching/learning and will continue to play an important role in formal education. Language tests should not exist for their own sake but to develop the learners' ability to identify or produce information and to use language effectively.

4.10. General considerations in testing

The essential considerations for test design discussed by Hughes (1989) and other test experts (e.g. Alderson and North 1991, Bachman 1990, Weir 1993, McEldowney 1994) are validity, reliability and practicality. What follows is a brief investigation of each one. This will constitute a starting point for investigating the testing criteria for reading comprehension.

1. Validity

Test validity concerns the extent to which it 'measures what it is intended to measure, and not simply what is easy to measure (see Weir 1993, Brown 1996). Validity is normally specified in four aspects: content validity, construct validity, face validity and empirical validity.

A. Content validity

Content validity refers to the representative sample of the relevant knowledge and abilities that a test is supposed to measure. Another important feature of content validity is demonstrated by McEldowney (1994) who suggests that in order to train candidates to use language effectively, the information content of test items should be largely unfamiliar to candidates.

B. Construct validity

According to Hughes (1989) a test, part of a test, or a testing technique is said to have construct validity if it can demonstrate that it measures just the ability which it is supposed to measure.

C. Face validity

Face validity depends greatly on how much the examiners design the test to be acceptable to the people involved in it.

D. Empirical validity

This is concerned with whether the test results correlate positively and strongly with some trustworthy external criteria. There are subdivisions of empirical validity:

- concurrent validity: it is related to the question of whether the test produces similar results to existing tests which have already been validated
- predictive validity: it is the ability of the test to predict accurately the students' performance in some subsequent situations

2. Reliability

The reliability of a test is a matter of how consistently it produces similar results on different occasions under similar circumstances. An important aspect, which is normally taken into account in consistent measurement, is the scorer reliability which means that a test will have the same results even if it is marked by more than one person.

3. Practicality

This relates to the test efficiency and the practical aspects involved during the operation of the test. A test's practicality is determined in relation to the cost in terms of materials, time and effort that it requires.

To sum up, the ideal test would be one which is valid in that it measures what it is supposed to measure, and reliable in that it provides dependable measurements, and in addition, it is easy to use and administer.

4.11. Criteria for constructing a reading comprehension test

Swaffer et al. (1991:157) state six significant features and characteristics of reading tests which are summarised as follows:

Reading tests should:

1. Assess students' background knowledge as a factor in text selection.
2. Include items that reveal a grasp of intersentential links.
3. Enable students to demonstrate their view of textual organisation.
4. If feasible, allow reader conceptualisation of text meaning in the native language.
5. Ascertain the reasoning behind a student's conclusion.
6. Enable students to demonstrate a grasp of the text's cultural and authorial characteristics.

4.12. Types of reading comprehension tests

The literature shows that there are three major types of reading comprehension tests: objective, subjective and cloze tests. The aim of this section is to assess the apparent strengths and weaknesses of each type based on the concept of testing criteria discussed earlier in this chapter. This short account is necessary as it develops awareness of the reading testing theory and provides background to the selection of the type(s) of reading comprehension tests, which will be used in the present study.

4.12.1. Subjective tests

Subjective tests mean nothing more than subjectively marked tests. The basic strengths of subjective tests are that they include items which may encourage the students to think and express their thoughts and they are likely to have a beneficial backwash effect. Despite these advantages, subjective tests have been criticised for the following weaknesses:

- unreliable marking: accuracy of marking is difficult to achieve, though certainly not impossible.
- subjective items involve writing which may interfere with the main purpose for which the test is constructed. For instance, in a reading comprehension test, a student can read and understand the text, but writing may prevent him from displaying this. In this regard McEldowney (1994: 26) stresses the importance of assessing these two language skills separately. She states that:

It may be that some candidates understand the paragraph but have such poor writing skills that they are unable to demonstrate their understanding adequately.

- the amount of knowledge actually measured may be too limited. The test deals with only a limited part of the syllabus, which is neither representative of the material covered nor fair to the students.

4.12.2. Objective tests

An objective test is one in which there is a single correct answer for each question. The great strength of this approach is that the result provides the users with explicit information that enables them to make valid inter-individual comparisons with a known degree of reliability. The specific weaknesses of objective tests are as follows:

- it is sometimes difficult to construct three or four real alternatives from which to make a choice
- many teachers have been concerned about the effects of guessing in objective tests and it is easier to cheat in this type of test.

4.12.3. Cloze tests

In its classic form a cloze test is constructed by omitting words through a text and substituting in their places blanks of a standard length (see Hughes 1989, Thompson 1996, Lennon 1998). The reader then attempts to anticipate meaning from the context and to supply the words deleted from the text requiring the learner to insert an appropriate word in each blank. The main features of the cloze tests are:

- **Reliable and valid scores:** According to Heilenman (1983) cloze procedure appears to be a valid measure of language proficiency.
- **A practical technique to measure readability:** N.J. Anderson (1991) evaluates the cloze as a measure of both the readability of written language and the ability of subjects to comprehend written language.

4.13. The construction of the reading tests

Reading tests are included for two reasons: firstly, there is a clear relationship between the teaching of reading and comprehension assessment. This relationship is used to assess how much has been learned and what students have achieved in second/foreign language courses (Cohen 1980, McEldowney 1994). Secondly, tests can be considered as a method of operationalising the construct of reading problems, reading strategies and the learners' level of language comprehension. Thus the tests were designed to:

- gain insight into the relevance of cultural context to reading comprehension: whether lack of cultural knowledge would hinder the subjects' reading comprehension ability
- find out the problems that the students might encounter while processing the reading texts
- explore the types of strategies applied by the students while reading for comprehension

The following principles were taken into consideration when constructing the two tests to:

- concentrate on making judgements, not merely on the students' performances, but on the entire reading process
- include adequate contexts (that students are interested in) related to a clear, stated objective in reading
- be concerned with the way the students build up patterns of meaning within a flow of language, rather than merely the production of 'right' answers to the comprehension questions
- allow for the development of the students' ability to decode which stems from the students' ability to analyse words as units of meaning, not merely units of sound

4.14. Criteria for the tests design

This section will be devoted to the description of the methods adopted when designing the tests. This process involved approximately six months of work, and was very time

consuming to ensure that the following steps were valid. The production process for the tests began with the selection of texts and ended with designing the tests.

i. Selection of texts

The first thing to be done was to select two appropriate reading texts, which would be used to examine the comprehension process in two settings. Therefore two types of texts were used:

- A. English/Liverpool cultural bias text taken from a Liverpool prospectus (1991)
- B. Descriptive text including neutral cultural content taken from Field (1982)

Throughout the selection process, topics or contexts of language use which might introduce a bias against any group of students of a particular background (i.e. on the basis of race, sex or religion etc.) were avoided. To avoid inadvertent offence to users, the texts were selected to suit both male and female students.

ii. Designing the tests

Two tests, each of 60 minutes duration were designed:

Test 1 consisted of 20 objective comprehension questions reflecting English/Liverpool cultural specific items. The questions included 10 multiple-choice items with 4 options and 10 true/false and matching items (see Appendix A: 177). The present study favours an objective test (multiple-choice question) for the following reasons:

- reliable scoring: multiple-choice questions lend themselves to complete objective marking and therefore have full marker reliability. Usually one mark is awarded for each correct question without any need for individual judgement. This method is explicitly supported by Bachman (1990) who states that in an objective test the correctness of the test taker's response is determined entirely by predetermined criteria so that no judgement is required on the part of the scorers.

- variety of items: multiple-choice questions demand no writing from the students and therefore can include more items which include a range of language features such as grammar points or vocabulary samples which increase its reliability. Hughes (1989) states that the more items that you have in a test, the more reliable the test will be.
- easily scored: multiple-choice questions are easily scored and therefore can achieve high test practicality and test efficiency
- multiple-choice questions allow the teacher to measure the students' reading comprehension independently of their writing, speaking or listening ability.
- furthermore, the multiple-choice tests provide opportunities for the subjects to demonstrate their receptive word knowledge which they might not be able to express in other tests.

Test 2 was of the multiple-choice cloze type including global/neutral cultural content (see Appendix B: 183). The test contained 20 deletions of a word or a phrase. For each blank space, there was a choice of four possible answers. The reasons for promoting the cloze technique in the present study are:

- the cloze is considered a useful tool for testing reading comprehension since it is believed to give a clear picture about the reading process and a valid predictor of reading comprehensibility (see Hughes 1989, Bensoussan and Kreindler 1990).
- furthermore it has been found that the cloze is a useful research technique for exploring the reader's processing strategies and fostering reading comprehension (see Oller 1979, Stover 1989).

To avoid any confusion the questions were checked by colleagues who are teaching in JMU. Efforts were made to keep the language of instruction to the users as simple as possible, so as not to have a situation where the student would be unable to discern the answer as a result of not understanding the structure of the question. There were a total of 20 marks for each test. One mark was given for each correct answer. There was a prepared scoring key for each test (see Appendix A: 177) for test 1 and (see Appendix B: 183) for test 2.

4.15. Constructing the interview questions

The aim of the interview questions (see Appendix C: 186) was to elicit the problems encountered and the strategies adopted during the reading comprehension process. They would also bring out any source of information the subjects used to answer the questions. Issues related to basic concepts of interview technique, ways of designing an interview investigation and interview analysis were considered (e.g. Poulisse et al., 1987, Kvale, 1996). The following factors were taken into consideration when designing the interview questions. They are:

- designed to provide a clearer picture of what actually goes on in the mind of the reader
- left open so that the subject's answers would not be affected by the researcher's bias and to encourage the subjects to talk freely about their own experience
- constructed in such a way as to lead the subjects from general concepts about the reading texts to questions about the strategies they employ and reading problems they face during the reading process

4.16. The subjects

The subjects were advanced Arab learners from groups A and B countries. The term "advanced" denotes that the learners had completed secondary school (and sat exams roughly equivalent to A level). Thus, they were considered to have attained the standard of education required to enter either Arab or Western universities. However, at Western universities, these learners are required to take an English test to determine their level. The level required of Arab students is a TOEFL score of 550 or IELTS 5.5.

In examining the students' results of the TOEFL and IELTS tests, it shows that there were significant differences among the students in terms of the scores obtained in the IELTS. In the TOFEL results, Group A scored less than group B however, there were no significant statistical differences (see Tables 3 and 4).

Table 3: T-Test for Independent Samples shows the difference in the IELTS and the TOEFL scores of group A and B Arab students

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means when 95% Confidence	
		Sig.	T	df
IELTS	Equal variances assumed	.000	-5.465	32
TOEFL		.335	-3.409	14

Table 4: Averages of students’ total scores of IELTS and TOEFL

Students	Total scores of IELTS	N	Average	Total scores of TOEFL	N	Average
Group A	83.3	15	5.55333	5529	10	552.9
Group B	112	19	5.89473	3410	6	568.4

Although these tests show a disparity in the scores of the students from the different groups, the results cannot be used as the benchmark in relation to this research for the following reasons.

1. The IELTS and the TOEFL tests are designed to measure the learners’ ability in various language skills, i.e. reading, writing, speaking, etc. However, the tests in this study were only designed to measure the students’ ability in reading comprehension.
2. The (IELTS and the TOEFL) are not specific tests for measuring the cultural experience of the learners. The tests in this study were developed to measure whether lack of cultural knowledge (English and global cultures) would hinder the subjects’ reading comprehension ability.

The sample of this study originally included 120 overseas Arab students, including both male and female, who had recently arrived in the UK. However only 50 of this sample participated in all the tests. The reasons for this ‘drop-out’ rate will be discussed later in Chapter six section 6.3. The subjects’ ages were 19+ and the amount of time that they had studied in the UK ranged from approximately two to three months. This was to ensure that these learners would have experienced minimal exposure to English culture, and would have had a minimal period of time to improve their English language competence. Details of the students have been described in Appendix D: 188 and Appendix E: 197.

4.17. Pilot study

After the initial construction of the tests and identification of potential problem areas, they were piloted on 20 students (14 male and 6 female) from various Arab countries. The aims of the pilot study fell into two main categories:

- detecting any unforeseen practical difficulties and examining the validity and reliability of the research instruments
- preliminary classifying of reading strategies used by the students

The testing procedures were carried out at Liverpool John Moores University in a separate room at Aquinas building seminar rooms after 7 p.m. Each test was administered individually to each student and supervised by the researcher. Immediately after the test, every student of the selected sample was interviewed using a tape recorder (for those who were willing to be recorded). During the interview the subjects were not informed of the answers, so as not to influence their perceptions. In this way data from 15 students of the pilot study was collected and typed out. Marks were awarded in accordance with the criteria set out for the tests scoring. The data was transcribed and analysed using the scheme outlined in section 4.19. The interviews produced some interesting outcomes in terms of revealing learners' reading difficulties and strategies used when taking the tests.

4.17.1. An overview of the pilot study

After the pilot study the research became more focused. Much light had been shed on the tests and revealed new avenues to be investigated (i.e. evaluation and assessment of textbook materials). A number of minor alterations were made in the questions of test 1 and 2 and in the interview technique as well. For instance in test 1 question 1, there was a change of the options.

1. The 'Beatles' refers to -----

- a. a football team.
- b. a multi-faith society
- c. a major seaport.
- d. a music group.

Originally option a. read as 'a group of people from Liverpool'. However after the pilot study, this ambiguity was highlighted and therefore the option was then altered and replaced by 'a football team'. Another example of alterations to the test questions is the rewording of Question 8. This question used to read as 'Albert Dock is', however, the interviews following the pilot study showed that this was confusing as the Albert Dock was an acceptable answer to a number of the options given. Therefore the question was reconstructed to avoid confusion to 'Albert Dock is now used as -----'. In question 20 there were 5 'match the correct answer' statements, and originally there were only 5 options to choose from. During the interview after the test, it was found that 4 students answered the last two options by random elimination or guessing. In order therefore to encourage students to work out the answers to all the statements, an extra option was added.

In test 2 considerable efforts were made to make sure all the options to a particular question were of a similar language category (e.g. all nouns, verbs, preposition, adjective, etc.) so as to eliminate the chance that a student may guess the correct option, as was noticed in the pilot study.

4.18. Investigating procedure

The testing procedures of the main body of this research were carried out using the same technique as in the pilot study. Prior to the test administration, information regarding the students' ages, country of origin, type of school/college/faculty, scores in IELTS or TOEFL, interests, and arrival in GB was collected. As in the pilot study, immediately after each test, the student was interviewed. The responses were typed out immediately after the interview and then analysed. With the same subjects test 2 was carried out using the same procedures as used in test 1. Fifty students were involved, each student tested and interviewed over two sessions (after each test).

Each test took one hour and each interview lasted approximately the same time. So 50 sessions, each lasting a total of two hours were needed to complete the data collection for test 1 only. Then this whole process was repeated for test 2, i.e. 50 sessions lasting 2 hours each. In total 100 sessions of two hours each were undertaken (i.e. 400 hours of data collection). This process took up a period of over one year.

The present researcher on occasions resorted to the use of translation in the interview. This measure concerned only a small number of candidates not exceeding ten students. The aim of using the mother tongue was a means of:

- enhancing and maximising the candidates' chances of answering the questions at the time of the interview
- helping them feel at ease and giving them confidence to provide better retrieval cues
- minimising the effect of lack of English proficiency (communicative competence) which would hinder them from participating in a full discussion

The translating method was based on the word for word process so that no change could occur in the candidates' responses. In the case where this approach did not work the gist of what was said in Arabic was translated into English. The Arabic was immediately translated within the text and indicated by being underlined (see Appendix F: 206). Students' responses were then translated and transcribed as accurately as possible. In order to increase the validity of the results, it was important to check and certify the translation by consulting language experts. In this way, the mixed language data was recorded although there may be a few inaccuracies in the translation.

4.19. Data transcription frame

The answers of the subjects are categorised according to their responses. The letter (C) represents cultural items and the letter (L) added after an item representing linguistic features.

Cultural background knowledge comprises four aspects:

- general cultural knowledge (C) which is the cultural knowledge that the majority of people would reasonably be expected to know about. For example Liverpool is known in the majority of Arab countries through its football team.
- information from a source (I/C) which is all information that may be obtained via other people (i.e. word of mouth, media, etc.)
- familiarity with cultural item(s) (F/C) which is knowledge obtained through personal experience
- prior specific knowledge of culture (P/C) which are all sources of cultural knowledge obtained through deliberate desire to learn about specific subjects (e.g. through reading, learning or media)

Linguistic background knowledge comprises the following aspects:

- grammatical items (G/L) which include knowledge of word class (verbs, nouns, adjectives etc.). It also indicates the students' ability to use for instance cohesive ties such as reference pronouns, conjunctive items, etc.
- lexical items (L/L) which include knowledge of units of the words (synonym, collocation, etc.) and knowledge of interrelationships between these words
- question analysis (Q/L) which shows the ability of the student to interpret and grasp the overall construction of the question(s)
- sentence structure (S/L) which indicates recognising the position of a word and its relation to other words within a sentence
- text structure (Ts/L) which includes the student's ability to recognise the function of words in context

In addition to the above categories a number of responses which combine the use of both cultural and linguistic background knowledge were identified as follows:

- using linguistic and cultural knowledge together (C+L)
- applying familiar concept(s) and linguistic knowledge together (F+L)

Other techniques included: elimination (E), guessing (R), matching (MT), key words (K) which implies the student's ability to search for key words to retrieve information, note-taking (N), translation (T), skimming (SK), scanning (S), and (U) underlining unfamiliar words or phrases.

Correct random guessing (Nas) implies that the student selects the right answer but does not use any particular type of strategy in doing so. Abandoning (A) i.e. not answering the questions, was also identified. Number (1) added after an item indicates incorrect answer(s).

A summary of the above scheme is described in Table 5 below. It displays the various strategies adopted by the students and the problems encountered while performing the tests.

Table 5: A summary of the scheme adopted in transcribing the students’ responses.

Strategies used successfully		Abb	Unsuccessful strategies	Abb
Cultural Background Knowledge	Using general cultural knowledge	C	Insufficient general cultural knowledge	C1
	Using information from a source (e.g. word of mouth, media, etc.)	I/C	Using wrong information from a source	I/C1
	Applying familiar concept(s)	F/C	Unfamiliar with concept(s)	F/C1
	Using prior specific knowledge of culture (through reading, learning, etc.)	P/C	Misleading prior specific knowledge of culture	P/C1
Linguistic Background Knowledge	Using grammatical items	G/L	Misinterpreting grammatical item	G/L1
	Using lexical items	L/L	Misunderstanding of lexical items	L/L1
	Paraphrasing the question(s)	Q/L	Misinterpreting the question(s)	Q/L1
	Recognising sentence structure	S/L	Misinterpreting sentence structure	S/L1
	Identifying text structure	Ts/L	Misinterpreting text structure	Ts/L1
Familiarity with concept(s) & Linguistic Background	Using both prior cultural and linguistic knowledge skilfully	C+L	Mistaken usage of cultural and linguistic knowledge together	CL/1
	Applying familiar concept(s) and using linguistic skills together	F+L	Unfamiliarity with concept(s) and mistaken usage of linguistic ability together	F+L1
			Familiarity with concept but mistaken usage of linguistic feature(s)	F/L1
			Knowledge of linguistic feature(s) but unfamiliarity with text information	L/F1
Other techniques	Adequate elimination	E	Incorrect elimination process	E1
	Contextual guessing	R	Mistaken random guesses	R1
	Sensible matching	MT	Mismatch	MT1
	Searching for key words	K	Misinterpreting key word(s)	K1
	Underlining unfamiliar word(s)	U	Mistranslations	T1
	Note-taking	N	Abandoning	A1
	Skimming	SK		
	Scanning	S		
	Correct random guessing	Nas		

4.20. Data gathering technique

After the students had completed each test and the interview, the question papers were collected and marked. The students' responses were transcribed using the frame outlined earlier and scores in both tests (1 & 2) collated. Scores are presented in the Tables 9, 10, 11 and 12 from groups A and B.

4.21. Concluding remarks

This chapter reveals that the two educational systems (Group A & B countries) present conflicting approaches to the teaching of English which affect the learning process in terms of students' prior knowledge and learning experience. The evaluation of the various content of the textbook materials for teaching reading has indicated that the source of reading comprehension difficulties could stem from inadequate reading materials which focus on one particular reading model only which is often not suitable. This matter will be dealt with in detail in chapters 5 and 6 when these arguments will be discussed in relation to the evidence gained from responses given by students of the different groups to questions in tests 1 and 2. The findings reveal different scores in test 1 and 2 between group A and B students and are an indication of the importance of the cultural backgrounds of learners.

Chapter 5

Discussion and findings of the data

5.0. Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of (a) the textbook analysis and (b) the tests. The findings regarding the cultural content of the texts used for teaching reading comprehension are illustrated. In terms of the test findings, the discussion is focused on cultural aspects of reading. This includes:

- evaluation of the data collected from tests 1 and 2
- analyses of the students’ perceptions and responses from the interview
- comparison of the conclusions reached as a result of the textbook analysis with the students’ responses

5.1. The findings of the textbook analysis

The evidence, obtained through data collection based on the analysis of textbooks and their cultural content which are used to teach reading comprehension, is illustrated in Table 6 for group A and Table 7 for group B countries.

Table 6 shows percentages of different text types used in group A

Group A Countries	Number of Units/Lessons	Number of Reading Texts	Cultural Representation			General Knowledge
			Arab	English	International	
Saudi Arabia	18	18	12	-	2	4
Yemen	12	20	10	-	1	9
Oman	10	18	8	2	3	5
Libya	30	20	7	-	-	13
Syria	25	19	9	2	3	5
Average			47.9%	4.17%	9.38%	37.50%

Table 6 shows that the reference to Islamic-Arab culture accounts for nearly half (48%) of the materials presented in the textbooks, whereas international culture accounts for just (9.38%). The table reveals that English culture in reading texts is minimal (only 4.17%). This is a clear indication that the target culture in textbooks used in group A countries is either disregarded or restricted. The table above also shows that there is considerable reference (37.50%) to subjects related to general knowledge such as volcanoes, earthquakes, solar system, agriculture, etc. This evidence is not surprising because the information of these texts is what McEldowney (1982) terms 'neutral, factual and impersonal'.

Aspects of cultural learning such as values, social patterns and cultural diversity are rarely found in any of the reading texts. In the area of intercultural comparison, very little evidence is to be found in the reading texts. For example the information in extract 6 (see Chapter four) seems to be specific to 'Oman farm animals'. It would be more beneficial if the information included was of a more global nature, which would provide learners with an understanding of other systems such as farming animals in Britain.

On the whole evaluation of the textbooks in group A countries, has shown that there are many features which seem to be common throughout. These are summarised as follows:

- group A countries seem to be similar in the manner they design or choose textbooks and formulate their objectives. Absence of authentic materials, little variety of text types, lack of challenge offered to the learners and neglect of international and English cultures are the main shortcomings of the English textbooks adopted by these countries.
- the textbooks used to teach English in these countries greatly emphasise national and Islamic-Arab culture, at the expense of the culture of the target language. This emphasis is not restricted to the secondary stage of teaching alone; it is a continuation of the textbooks used for the teaching of English from the intermediate stage onwards.
- there is excessive focus on language forms and neglect of communicative skills. The assumption being that teaching/learning, is based on providing grammar and vocabulary exercises and ignoring activities which motivate and engage the learners with opportunities to use language rather than to just know it.

- there is absence of challenging issues to stimulate thought and provide opportunities for exchanges of views, or make the topic content meaningful and beneficial to advanced learners. For instance there are few literary texts which could be a source of potentially stimulating tasks and as a means of engaging learners in meaningful interaction with the target language.
- the study clearly shows that most of the reading texts are translated extracts from Islamic or Arab historical sources. Saudi Arabia uses materials with almost no reference to English-speaking cultures while the Yemeni and Omani textbooks mainly contain extracts based on their own history and cultural heritage. In the Libyan textbook most reading texts centre around agriculture and the nomadic lifestyle and in Syria the teaching of national and socialist ideas is emphasised and used as material for teaching reading.

Though there are considerable differences between Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Oman on the one hand and Syria and Libya on the other, in terms of Islamic perspectives, all of their textbooks have common features and reject any reference to the Western way of life. Fear that language influences and values of a foreign culture will corrupt students' minds is unrealistic, yet this seems to be the reason why there is little reliable information about the West in the reading texts. Problems encountered in cross-cultural interactions arise from a wide variety of misunderstood conventions, values and principles of Western culture. To know a language is to have some awareness about the social, historical, religious and social customs and ways of life of the people who speak that language. One could argue that language is a carrier of culture, a vehicle by which cultural aspects are conveyed. Aspects of English language culture can be considered as sources of motivation, which bring students into contact with the language. The gap between Islamic-Arab aspects and those of Western values that is clearly evident in the textbooks can be reduced if the socio-cultural differences are modified and adjusted.

In contrast, the results obtained from data collection about group B countries lead us to a very different conclusion from that of group A countries. The inclusion of cultural items is evident in most text materials used for teaching English in these countries. There is some kind of information on the target country included in most reading texts and they deal well with international information as well as the diversity of material focussing on the target language. The extension of the target culture to include a variety of cultural items of

countries speaking the target language seems to have been enthusiastically embraced in countries like Jordan, Kuwait, Algeria. Most textbooks include maps of countries where the target language is spoken. Some textbooks include information about Germany, France, America, etc. and the people who live there.

There is then a real effort to transmit information and to recognise cultural diversity. This is illustrated by the table below:

Table 7 represents percentages of different text types used in group B

Group B Countries	Number of Units/Lessons	Number of Reading Texts	Cultural Representation			General Knowledge
			Arab	English	International	
Palestine	20	17	4	5	4	4
Egypt	20	20	6	4	8	2
Kuwait	16	20	7	6	3	4
Jordan	24	18	3	5	6	4
Algeria	12	20	2	5	7	6
Average			23.16%	26.36%	29.47%	21.5%

The table above reveals that there is a balanced approach to using cultural materials in reading texts. The reference to English culture (26.36%) and to international culture (29.47%) is in stark contrast to that of group A countries. This is a reflection of the policy of education adopted by group B countries and the openness to accept and encourage different views and ideologies. In the area of intercultural comparison there are some good examples in several textbooks in these countries. For example, there is a photograph of a wedding involving a Jordanian family; information is given not just about celebrating the act of marriage in Jordan, but there is an attempt to understand the social and religious conventions of weddings in other countries particularly Britain. Here students are asked to progress beyond the mere noting of differences to an understanding of more fundamental differences in value systems with the opportunity of understanding their own culture from a different perspective.

In general the analysis of textbooks used in group B countries showed that there were common features throughout the group, and these are highlighted below:

- reading texts include dialogues, short descriptive, instructive and narrative texts, games, literary texts, etc. They are combined with coloured pictures, notices, maps, charts, etc. to provide illustrations and stimulate discussion.

- the textbooks in this group contain texts which are representative of a range of topics which are contemporary and more likely to meet and satisfy the needs of the learners as individuals, as young people in the community and as citizens of the world. The texts include relevant themes such as science and technology; the physical environment and ecology; youth and experience; education; communication and travel, learning about other countries and universities; food and health; sport and pastimes; the future and the past; etc. They also achieve the correct equilibrium, taking into consideration individual learning styles so the more able and the less able students are catered for.
- the textbooks present the language through a variety of materials with clear illustrations for language presentation and skill development. These include vocabulary exercises, completing grammatical tables, writing answers to questions, etc.

5.2. An overall summary of the textbooks in both groups (A & B)

The general observation, which can be drawn from the above analysis of English language textbooks used in various Arab countries, is that the system of education is a direct reflection of government policies. A government's educational policy has two important influencing factors. On the one hand, it is determined by religious and economic practices, and on the other, the political and ideological norms together with the countries' relation to, and standing with, Western civilisation. Awareness of the importance of English in today's world is a reflection of the degree of cultural interaction with the West. Selection and design of reading texts to teach English is often influenced by these perspectives or positions.

Group A countries share common features. The selection of text materials is under the strict control of the government, which determines not only the general English curriculum but often the contents of the course, and at times even the reading texts. In Saudi Arabia, Oman and Yemen, most topics covered in the reading texts are based on national and Islamic-Arab themes because of these countries' resistance to Western culture. In Libya and Syria, the centralised socialist tendencies of the governments are reflected in the socialist influence on the subject matter chosen for the reading texts. Looking at the textbook from the viewpoint of a western ESL teacher, it can be seen that it lacks authentic material. There is little trace of foreign settings that can embody the language in

meaningful situations. Functional materials such as the important issues of human rights, marriage, media, politics, sports in the world, life in the West, computing, political and economic systems and so on, are almost absent.

According to conservative Islam, there are some preventive and precautionary measures to be observed. However, there are shared values, beliefs, customs and so on, amongst all societies and communities all over the world. Furthermore, there are aspects of English culture, which can be accepted, in content selection, and cross-cultural contrasts can be avoided or at least accommodated. These differences need to be taken into account, but there are concepts, which can be transposed from one culture to another without creating too large a deviation from its original notion. In Group B countries, Algeria, Jordan and Egypt, for example, the choice of reading texts is influenced by their openness and greater interaction with the West. The text selection is balanced between national and international topics and is taken from a wider range of sources. Themes such as media or human rights (see Appendix I: 245) are addressed which would not be found in group A countries. Such themes give the learners a more general and broad-based knowledge of the target culture.

5.3. Results and analysis of the tests findings

Both qualitative and quantitative data analysis were adopted. However, the former was the most informative, because the data analysis was heavily based on the students’ responses. The total number of correct and incorrect responses of each test is demonstrated in Tables 9, 10, 11 and 12 which represent the difference between the two groups. The Arab countries whose students have been tested are represented by the following abbreviations described:

Table 8: Abbreviation of countries whose textbooks are assessed

Country	Abbreviation
Saudi Arabia	S.A
Yemen	Yem
Oman	Om
Libya	Lib
Syria	Syr
Palestine	Pal
Egypt	Eg
Kuwait	Ku
Jordan	Jor
Algeria	Alg

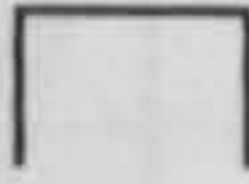


The first column of each table represents the countries as abbreviated in the above table, gender identified by (F or M) and the number of students from each country (which is five), identified by letters (A, B, C, D or E). The last six columns represent the total scores obtained and also the score breakdown in terms of students' responses. These are abbreviated as follows:

Cult: Scores obtained through cultural responses.

Ling: Scores obtained through linguistic responses.

Cult + Ling: Scores obtained by both cultural and linguistic responses.

The key to symbols for the type of answer given to the questions in the tests is shown below:

	correct answer
	incorrect answer
	unanswered (abandoned)

The students' responses and scores obtained through cultural knowledge or other techniques from test 1 were transcribed and presented in Table 9 which included students from group A countries, and in Table 10 which included students from group B countries. In test 2 the overall number of students' responses and scores obtained were transcribed and presented in Table 11 for group A, and Table 12 for group B.

Table 9: Students' responses and marks obtained in Test 1 group A countries

Quests Answers Students	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20	Total marks	Scores obtained by cultural , linguistic and other techniques				
	D	B	A	B	C	A	C	a	D	B	X	√	√	X	X	f	d	b	e	a		Cult	Ling	Cult+Ling	others	No
S.A/M/A	F/C1	CL/I	S/L	K1	Nas	A1/C	S/L	CL/I	C+L	Ts/L	C/L1	Nas	R	CL/I	C+L	I/C	R	S/L	F/C1	F/C1	11	1	4	2	2	2
S.A/F/B	F/C1	CL/I	CL/I	R	A1/C	CL/I	C+L	MT	S/L	S/L	R1	CL/I	R1	CL/I	CL/I	Ts/L	R1	TS/L	R1	E	8	-	4	1	3	-
S.A/M/C	F/C1	C1	C+L	R1	R1	MT1	R1	C+L	I/C	C+L	Ts/L	R1	CL/I	CL/I	Ts/L	I/C	R	E	Ts/L	CL/I	10	2	3	3	2	-
S.A/F/D	MT1	A1/C	CL/I	E	P/C1	MT	Ts/L1	R1	P/C	MT	S/L	R1	R	R1	Ts/L1	Ts/L	R1	Ts/L	S/L	R1	9	1	4	-	4	-
S.A/M/E	F/C1	CL/I	S/L	S/L	R	CL/I	I/C1	CL/I	C+L	C+L	Ts/L	Nas	R1	CL/I	F/C1	C	E	S/L	MT	CL/I	11	1	4	2	3	1
Yem/M/A	I/C	C+L	I/C	Ts/L	R1	CL/I	C+L	C+L	I/C	Ts/L	S/L	CL/I	S/L	R	I/C	C+L	E1	MT	C+L	P/C1	15	4	4	5	2	-
-Yem/M/B	C+L	F/C1	C+L	R1	CL/I	Ts/L	I/C	E1	C+L	C+L	MT	CL/I	F/C1	CL/I	F/C1	C	A1/C	U	Ts/L	R	11	2	3	4	2	-
Yem/M/C	F/C1	MT1	F/C1	R1	R	F/C1	MT	F/C1	Ts/L	I/C	Ts/L	R	F/C1	Ts/L1	F/C1	I/C	E	Ts/L	Ts/L1	R1	9	2	3	-	4	-
Yem/F/D	F/C1	Ts/L	R1	E	F/C1	S/L1	P/C1	F/C1	S/L	Ts/L	R	A1/C	Ts/L1	R1	Ts/L	CL/I	F/C1	A1/C	Ts/L	CL/I	7	-	5	-	2	-
Yem/F/E	R	S/L	MT1	S/L	CL/I	CL/I	P/C1	MT1	I/C	C+L	MT	CL/I	R	CL/I	CL/I	I/C	E1	S/L	Ts/L	E1	10	2	4	1	3	-
Om/M/A	C	P/C	CL/I	MT	CL/I	CL/I	C+L	P1/C	C+L	C+L	Ts/L	CL/I	R	CL/I	R1	C	MT1	Ts/L	S/L	Ts/L	12	3	4	3	2	-
Om/F/B	CL/I	Ts/L	CL/I	Ts/L	CL/I	MT	P1/C	C+L	I/C	I/C	Ts/L	R1	CL/I	CL/I	CL/I	I/C	CL/I	S/L	Ts/L	E1	10	3	5	1	1	-
Om/F/C	CL/I	CL/I	S/L	E1	CL/I	CL/I	CL/I	E1	Ts/L	C+L	Ts/L	A1/C	Nas	R1	CL/I	CL/I	R1	MT	S/L	CL/I	7	-	4	1	1	1
Om/M/D	F/C1	S/L	S/L	MT1	E	CL/I	CL/I	E1	I/C	C+L	Ts/L	CL/I	R1	MT	R1	C+L	A1/C	Ts/L	MT	Ts/L	11	1	5	2	3	-
Om/F/E	R	Ts/L	C/L1	U	C/L1	C/L1	C/L1	Ts/L1	MT	Ts/L	A1/C	R1	C/L1	C/L1	Ts/L	Ts/L1	A1/C	S/L	Ts/L	C/L1	8	-	6	-	2	-
Lib/M/A	CL/I	P1/C	C+L	S/L	CL/I	CL/I	C+L	CL/I	I/C	C+L	MT	A1/C	R1	MT1	CL/I	C+L	Nas	MT	Ts/L	F/C1	10	1	2	4	2	1
Lib/M/B	MT1	CL/I	MT	CL/I	CL/I	Ts/L1	MT1	CL/I	C+L	I/C	MT	CL/I	Ts/L1	CL/I	S/L	I/C	Ts/L1	Ts/L	MT	E1	8	2	2	1	3	-
Lib/M/C	F/C1	Ts/L1	CL/I	S/L	CL/I	S/L1	Ts/L1	MT1	Ts/L	S/L	CL/I	R1	CL/I	R	Ts/L1	I/C	CL/I	S/L	MT	CL/I	7	1	4	-	2	-
Lib/M/D	CL/I	C1	S/L	MT	Ts/L1	CL/I	C+L	CL/I	C+L	C+L	MT	CL/I	Q/L1	Ts/L1	S/L	I/C	R1	Ts/L	Ts/L	CL/I	10	1	4	3	2	-
Lib/M/E	CL/I	Ts/L	CL/I	Ts/L	CL/I	MT1	CL/I	CL/I	I/C	C+L	Ts/L	CL/I	Nas	Ts/L1	CL/I	I/C	E1	S/L	MT	E1	9	2	4	1	1	1
Syr/M/A	I/C	U	Ts/L1	Ts/L	E1	CL/I	P1/C	P1/C	C+L	C+L	MT	R1	R1	CL/I	S/L	C	R1	MT	Ts/L	C+L	11	2	4	3	2	-
Syr/F/B	I/C	CL/I	Ts/L	MT	CL/I	CL/I	MT	CL/I	I/C	C+L	Ts/L	CL/I	S/L	CL/I	Nas	C+L	R1	Ts/L	MT	C	13	3	4	2	3	1
Syr/M/C	MT1	E1	S/L	MT	F/C1	Ts/L1	Ts/L1	P/C1	C+L	I/C	R	CL/I	S/L1	Ts/L1	Ts/L	C	A1/C	MT	Ts/L	CL/I	9	2	3	1	3	-
Syr/M/D	C	Ts/L	S/L	Ts/L	R1	K1	C+L	Ts/L1	C+L	C+L	MT	R1	Ts/L	CL/I	CL/I	C+L	E1	Ts/L	MT	Ts/L1	12	1	5	4	2	-
Syr/F/E	E1	CL/I	CL/I	Ts/L	CL/I	Ts/L1	MT1	MT1	Ts/L	I/C	Ts/L	A1/C	Ts/L1	Ts/L1	Ts/L	R1	A1/C	Ts/L	MT	CL/I	7	1	5	-	1	-
Total																					245	38	99	44	57	7

Table 10: Students' responses and marks obtained in Test 1 group B countries

Quests Answers	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20	Total marks	Scores obtained by cultural, linguistic and other techniques					
																						Cult	Ling	Cult+Ling	others	No	
Students	D	B	A	B	C	A	C	A	D	B	X	✓	✓	X	X	X	f	d	b	e	a						
Pal/M/A	P/C	C+L	P/C	S/L	C+L	MT	C+L	P/C	C+L	P/C	P/C	CL/I	Ts/L	S/L	C+L	C	C	Ts/L	C+L	C+L	P/C	19	7	4	7	1	-
Pal/F/B	P/C	Ts/L	I/C	Ts/L	C+L	E	P/C	C+L	P/C	I/C	Ts/L	R	L/L	S/L	Ts/L	P/C	P/C	S/L	Ts/L	P/C	P/C	20	8	8	2	2	-
Pal/M/C	C	P/C	P/C	S/L	Ts/L	S/L1	P/C	S/L	P/C	C+L	C+L	R1	S/L	MT	C+L	P/C	P/C	S	S/L	P/C	P/C	18	8	6	3	1	-
Pal/M/D	P/C	C+L	P/C	Ts/L	P/C	S/L	C+L	C+L	C+L	P/C	Ts/L	P/C	L/L	S/L	L/L	P/C	P/C	P/C	S/L	P/C	P/C	20	9	7	4	-	-
Pal/F/E	P/C	Ts/L	S/L	Ts/L	P/C	MT	C+L	C+L	I/C	C+L	Ts/L	MT1	S/L	R	C+L	P/C	P/C	E	Ts/L	P/C	P/C	19	6	6	4	3	-
Eg/M/A	P/C	P/C	C+L	C+L	Ts/L	E	C+L	P/C	P/C	C+L	P/C	K	Ts/L	MT	I/C	P/C	P/C	C+L	S	U	P/C	20	8	4	6	2	-
Eg/M/B	P/C	P/C	C+L	Ts/L	C+L	CL/I	C+L	P/C	P/C	P/C	P/C	C+L	L/L	S/L	C+L	C	C	Ts/L	Ts/L	C+L	C+L	19	7	5	7	-	-
Eg/F/C	P/C	Ts/L	S/L	S/L	P/C	S/L1	C+L	C+L	I/C	P/C	Ts/L	Ts/L1	S/L	Ts/L	S/L	P/C	P/C	MT	Ts/L	P/C	C+L	18	6	8	3	1	-
Eg/F/D	P/C	P/C	C+L	Ts/L	P/C	Ts/L	P/C	C+L	P/C	P/C	S/L	C+L	L/L	K	C+L	C	C	S/L	MT	P/C	P/C	20	9	6	4	1	-
Eg/M/E	P/C	C+L	P/C	MT	S/L	S/L1	P/C	Ts/L	P/C	L/L	Ts/L	CL/I	L/L	CL/I	S/L	P/C	P/C	E	K	C+L	P/C	17	5	7	3	2	-
Ku/M/A	C+L	I/C	C+L	L/L	C+L	CL/I	P/C	C+L	C+L	I/C	Ts/L	CL/I	L/L	R	P/C	C+L	C+L	S/L	S/L	P/C	F/C	18	6	5	6	1	-
Ku/M/B	P/C	P/C	P/C	S/L	G/L	MT	P/C	C+L	P/C	P/C	Ts/L	MT	S/L	Ts/L	L/L	C	C	MT	Ts/L	C+L	P/C	20	8	7	2	3	-
Ku/F/C	P/C	Ts/L	MT	MT	S/L	S/L	P/C	C+L	C+L	C+L	S/L	S/L1	L/L	Ts/L	C+L	I/C	I/C	K	S/L	C+L	P/C	19	4	8	5	2	-
Ku/F/D	P/C	C+L	P/C	E	S	S/L	P/C	MT	P/C	C+L	Ts/L	R	L/L	CL/I	K	P/C	E	Ts/L	C+L	C+L	C+L	19	5	6	4	4	-
Ku/F/E	C	P/C	C+L	Ts/L	MT	MT	F/C	C+L	P/C	P/C	MT	C+L	K	S/L	K	P/C	P/C	S/L	S/L	P/C	P/C	20	8	6	3	3	-
Jor/M/A	P/C	P/C	C+L	P/C	C+L	S/L	C+L	C+L	P/C	C+L	I/C	MT	S/L	S/L	I/C	C	C	S/L	S/L	C+L	C	20	8	5	6	1	-
Jor/F/B	F/C	U	P/C	C+L	P/C1	S/L	I/C	P/C	I/C	C+L	Ts/L	C+L	L/L	MT	C+L	C	C+L	E	P/C	P/C	I/C	19	8	3	6	2	-
Jor/M/C	P/C	I/C	P/C	MT	P/C	CL/I	P/C	C+L	P/C	P/C	Ts/L	R	L/L	MT	S/L	P/C	P/C	S/L	Ts/L	P/C	P/C	19	10	5	1	3	-
Jor/M/D	P/C	F/C	P/C	Ts/L	C+L	S/L	P/C	C+L	P/C	P/C	Ts/L	Ts/L	K	Ts/L	C+L	I/C	I/C	S/L	Ts/L	P/C	P/C	20	9	8	3	-	-
Jor/M/E	F/C	C+L	C+L	S/L	C+L	E	P/C	Ts/L	I/C	C+L	Ts/L	C+L	K	MT	L/L	P/C	P/C	Ts/L	C+L	P/C	P/C	20	4	6	7	3	-
Alg/M/A	F/C	C+L	I/C	Ts/L	P/C	CL/I	P/C	CL/I	P/C	C+L	Ts/L	Ts/L	L/L	Ts/L	I/C	C	C	Ts/L	MT	P/C	C+L	18	8	6	3	1	-
Alg/M/B	P/C	P/C	C+L	S/L	C+L	Ts/L	P/C	MT	I/C	C+L	S/L	MT	L/L	MT	K	P/C	P/C	E	P/C	P/C	P/C	20	7	6	3	4	-
Alg/M/C	P/C	I/C	P/C	MT	S/L	CL/I	C+L	Ts/L	C+L	P/C	Ts/L	CL/I	S/L	Ts/L	K	P/C	P/C	Ts/L	Ts/L	P/C	P/C	18	7	8	2	1	-
Alg/M/D	P/C	P/C	P/C	S/L	C+L	S/L	C+L	MT	P/C	C+L	Ts/L	MT	K	S/L	C+L	C	C	S/L	Ts/L	C+L	P/C	20	6	7	5	2	-
Alg/M/E	F/C	C+L	C+L	S/L	S/L	R	C+L	Ts/L	C+L	I/C	S	C+L	S/L	MT	L/L	P/C	P/C	S/L	MT	C+L	P/C	20	4	7	6	3	-
Total																						480	175	154	105	46	-

Table 11: Students' responses and marks obtained in Test 2 group A countries

Quests Answers	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20	Total marks	Linguistic knowledge, familiarity concept(s) and other techniques		
	Planet	They	Despair	Useful	Therefore	Wherever	Land	Their	In the first	And	It	Death	Otherwise	Because	For this reason	unfortun -ately	which	this	from	Threatene d		Ling	F+L	Others
S.A/M/A	F+L1	R	AI	F/L1	R	R	G/L	G/L	F+L	G/L1	E1	S/L	R	F+L	R1	AI	L/F1	L/F1	R1	U	10	4	2	4
S.A/F/B	F+L1	G/L	F/L1	S/L1	R1	R1	Ts/L	SL1	F+L	F+L	F+L1	S/L	L/F1	L/F1	F+L1	R1	F+L	AI	G/L	F+L1	7	4	3	-
S.A/M/C	S/L	G/L	L/F1	F+L	R	MT1	Ts/L	Ts/L1	F+L	F+L	R1	S/L	R1	F+L	R1	S/L	F+L	S/L1	G/L	AI	12	6	5	1
S.A /F/D	T1	G/L	R1	Ts/L1	E1	R1	Ts/L	F+L	F+L	F+L	R	F+L	E1	F+L	S/L1	S/L	F+L	R1	G/L	E1	11	4	6	1
S.A /M/E	F+L1	G/L	AI	F+L	T1	R	G/L	G/L1	F+L	F+L	L/F1	R	F+L1	G/L	AI	R1	E1	R	G/L	F+L1	10	4	3	3
Yem/M/A	S/L1	G/L	F+L	S/L1	L/F1	F+L	G/L	S/L1	F+L	G/L	F/L1	F+L	R	G/L	S/L	E	F+L	G/L	S/L	R	15	7	5	3
Yem/M/B	F+L	L/L1	G/L	F/L1	E1	G/L	G/L	G/L1	S/L	G/L1	L/F1	S/L	F+L1	F+L	R1	F+L	E1	R	G/L	F+L	11	6	4	1
Yem/M/C	F/L1	G/L	R1	S/L1	L/F1	Ts/L	S/L	R	F+L	G/L1	R	F+L	L/F1	G/L	L/F1	R1	MT1	G/L1	G/L	AI	9	5	2	2
Yem/F/D	Ts/L1	G/L	R	Ts/L1	E	F/L1	Ts/L	F+L	F+L	F+L	R1	S/L	L/F1	L/F1	AI	F+L1	F+L	S/L1	G/L	R1	10	4	4	2
Yem/F/E	F+L1	G/L	F+L1	F/L1	F+L1	F+L	G/L	F/L1	F+L	G/L1	F/L1	S/L	E	F+L1	R	F+L1	F/L1	F/L1	G/L	L/F1	8	4	2	2
Om/M/A	G/L	E	F/L1	E1	F+L1	F+L	G/L	G/L	F+L	F+L	R	G/L	F/L1	F+L	R1	F+L1	R1	G/L	E	G/L	13	6	4	3
Om/F/B	L/F1	F+L	F+L1	G/L	G/L	F+L	G/L	G/L	F+L	F+L1	L/F1	G/L	E1	S/L	F+L1	F+L	G/L1	E	R	F/L1	12	6	4	2
Om/F/C	F+L	F+L	S/L1	Ts/L1	Ts/L1	S/L1	S/L1	G/L1	F+L	F+L	L/F1	F+L	R1	F+L	R1	Ts/L1	F+L	L/F1	G/L	F/L1	8	1	7	-
Om/M/D	F+L	F+L	E	S/L1	Ts/L1	F+L	G/L	F+L	F+L	F+L	R1	F+L	S/L1	F+L	MT1	AI	F+L1	G/L1	G/L	Ts/L1	11	2	8	1
Om/F/E	F+L	F+L	S/L1	E1	R1	S/L	Ts/L	Ts/L	F+L	G/L1	L/L1	S/L	R	G/L1	R1	F+L1	F+L	F/L1	F/L1	L/L1	9	4	4	1
Lib/M/A	F+L1	G/L	F/L1	F+L	R1	F+L	G/L	S/L1	Ts/L	F/L1	F+L1	E	R	F+L	F+L1	F+L1	G/L	R	G/L	F+L1	11	5	3	3
Lib/M/B	S/L1	F+L	L/L1	F+L1	Ts/L1	F/L1	G/L	F/L1	F+L	F+L	MT1	Ts/L	F/L1	S/L1	R1	S/L1	F+L	F/L1	F+L	MT1	7	2	5	-
Lib/M/C	F+L1	F/L1	Ts/L1	E1	R1	S/L1	G/L	F/L1	F+L	F+L	AI	S/L	E1	S/L	T1	MT1	R	S/L1	G/L1	S/L1	6	3	2	1
Lib/M/D	S/L	F+L	S/L1	S/L1	E1	S/L	F+L	Q/L1	F+L	U	E	S/L	L/L1	F+L	S/L	R	F+L	S/L1	G/L	R1	13	6	5	2
Lib/M/E	F+L1	G/L	S/L1	Ts/L1	L/F1	S/L1	G/L	F+L1	S/L	T1	G/L1	F+L	L/F1	F+L	L/F1	F+L	F/L1	F/L1	G/L	S/L1	7	4	3	-
Syr/M/A	S/L	G/L	F+L1	G/L1	R1	G/L	G/L	F+L1	F+L	F+L	S/L1	F+L	L/L1	S/L	F+L1	AI	G/L	E	F+L	R1	11	6	4	1
Syr/F/B	F+L	G/L	R	S/L1	E1	L/F1	S/L	G/L	F+L	F+L	S/L1	S/L	F+L1	F+L	F+L1	F+L	G/L	F/L1	G/L	F+L	13	6	6	1
Syr/M/C	T1	G/L	S/L1	Ts/L1	L/F1	S/L1	G/L	S/L1	F+L	G/L	F/L1	F+L	R1	S/L1	AI	S/L1	G/L	S/L1	S/L	S/L1	7	5	2	-
Syr/M/D	Ts/L1	F+L	G/L1	S/L	MT1	F+L	G/L	F/L1	S/L	F+L	S/L1	F+L	S/L1	F+L	R1	S/L1	G/L	E1	G/L	R1	10	5	5	-
Syr/F/E	F+L	T1	F+L1	S/L1	F+L1	MT	S/L	R1	S/L	F+L	F+L1	F+L	F+L1	S/L1	E1	R	G/L	AI	G/L	G/L1	9	4	3	2
Total																				250	113	101	36	

Table 12: Students' responses and marks obtained in Test 2 group B countries

Quests And Ans Students	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20	Total marks	Linguistic knowledge, familiarity concept(s) and other techniques		
	Planet	They	Despair	Useful	Theref ore	Wherever	Land	Their	In the first	And	It	Death	Oth erw ise	Because	for this reason	unfortun- ately	Which	this	from	threatened		Ling	F+L	others
Pal/M/A	F+L	F+L	F+L	F+L	G/L1	F+L	G/L	U	F+L	F+L	S/L	F+L	Ts/L	F+L	Ts/L	E	G/L	G/L	G/L	F+L	19	8	10	1
Pal/F/B	F+L	F+L	F+L	F+L	F+L	F+L	F+L	G/L	F+L	G/L	S/L	F+L	F+L	S/L	S/L	F+L	G/L	G/L	G/L	S/L	20	9	11	-
Pal/M/C	S/L	F+L	F+L	F+L	F+L	S/L	S/L	G/L	F+L	F+L	S/L	F+L	S/L1	F+L	Ts/L	S/L	G/L	G/L	G/L	F+L	19	10	9	-
Pal/M/D	F+L	E	F+L	F+L	Ts/L	F+L	G/L	G/L	F+L	G/L	S/L	F+L	MT	G/L	F+L	F+L	G/L	G/L	G/L	F+L	20	9	9	2
Pal/F/E	S/L	F+L	F+L	F+L	MT	F+L	G/L	Ts/L	F+L	G/L	G/L	F+L	S/L	F+L	F+L	S/L	G/L	G/L	G/L	F+L	20	10	9	1
Eg/M/A	F+L	F+L	F/L1	F+L	G/L	G/L	G/L	G/L	F+L	F+L	S/L	F+L	F+L	F+L	MT	G/L	G/L	G/L	G/L	S/L	19	10	8	1
Eg/M/B	F+L	F+L	F+L	F+L	G/L1	F+L	G/L	G/L	F+L	F+L	F/L1	F+L	G/L	F+L	Ts/L	F+L	G/L	G/L	G/L	F+L	18	7	11	-
Eg/F/C	F+L	F+L	F+L	F+L	E	F+L	F+L	S/L	F+L	G/L	MT	F+L	S/L1	S/L	S/L	F+L	G/L	G/L	G/L	S/L	19	8	9	2
Eg/F/D	F+L	F+L	F+L	F+L	Ts/L	F+L	G/L	G/L	F+L	G/L	S/L	F+L	S/L	F+L	F+L	F+L	G/L	G/L	G/L	F+L	20	9	11	-
Eg/M/E	F+L	F+L	F+L	F+L	S/L1	F+L	G/L	G/L	F+L	S/L	E	F+L	G/L	F+L	S/L	F+L	G/L	G/L	G/L	F+L	19	8	10	1
Ku/M/A	F+L	F+L	F+L	F+L	G/L	F+L	G/L	G/L	F+L	F+L	G/L1	F+L	R1	G/L	G/L	G/L	G/L	S/L	G/L	F+L	18	9	9	-
Ku/M/B	F+L	F+L	F+L	F+L	Ts/L	F+L	F+L	G/L	F+L	S/L	S/L	F+L	MT	F+L	S/L	F+L	G/L	G/L	G/L	F+L	20	8	11	1
Ku/F/C	S/L	G/L	F+L	F+L	Ts/L	F+L	S/L	G/L	F+L	F+L	MT	F+L	S/L	G/L	F+L	F+L	MT	G/L	G/L	F+L	20	9	9	2
Ku/F/D	F+L	F+L	F+L	F+L	Ts/L	F+L	F+L	G/L	F+L	F+L	S/L	F+L	G/L	G/L	F+L	F+L	G/L	U	G/L	F+L	20	8	12	-
Ku/F/E	F+L	S/L	F+L	F+L	MT	F+L	G/L	G/L	F+L	S/L	S/L	F+L	S/L1	G/L	MT	S/L	G/L	Ts/L	G/L	F+L	19	10	7	2
Jor/M/A	F+L	F+L	F+L	F+L	G/L	F+L	G/L	G/L	F+L	F+L	S/L	F+L	G/L	F+L	F+L	E	G/L	G/L	G/L	F+L	20	8	11	1
Jor/F/B	F+L	F+L	F+L	F+L	Ts/L	F+L	G/L	G/L	F+L	S/L	G/L	F+L	G/L	F+L	G/L	F+L	G/L	G/L	G/L	F+L	20	10	10	-
Jor/M/C	F+L	F+L	F+L	F+L	S/L1	F+L	G/L	G/L	F+L	G/L	MT	F+L	S/L	F+L	S/L	F+L	G/L	G/L	G/L	F+L	19	8	10	1
Jor/M/D	F+L	F+L	F+L	F+L	E	F+L	G/L	G/L	F+L	S/L	G/L	F+L	MT	S/L	F+L	Ts/L	G/L	G/L	G/L	F+L	20	9	9	2
Jor/M/E	F+L	F+L	F+L	F+L	Ts/L	F+L	G/L	E	F+L	F+L	G/L	F+L	S/L	F+L	F+L	S/L	G/L	Ts/L	G/L	F+L	20	8	11	1
Alg/M/A	F+L	G/L	F+L	F+L	R	F+L	G/L	G/L	G/L	MT	G/L1	F+L	S/L	F+L	S/L	F+L	E	G/L	G/L	F+L	19	8	8	3
Alg/M/B	F+L	F+L	F+L	F+L	Ts/L	F+L	F+L	G/L	F+L	S/L	G/L	F+L	S/L	S/L	MT	F+L	G/L	Ts/L	G/L	F+L	20	9	10	1
Alg/M/C	S/L	MT	F+L	F+L	Ts/L	F+L	G/L	S/L	F+L	F+L	E	F+L	Ts/L	F+L	S/L	S/L	G/L	S/L	G/L	F+L	20	10	8	2
Alg/M/D	F+L	F+L	F+L	F+L	E1	K	G/L	Ts/L	F+L	S/L	G/L	F+L	MT	S/L	F+L	F+L	R	Ts/L	G/L	F+L	19	8	9	2
Alg/M/E	F+L	F+L	F+L	F+L	Ts/L	F+L	G/L	S/L	F+L	F+L	K	F+L	S/L	F+L	F+L	F+L	G/L	S/L	G/L	F+L	20	8	12	-
Total																					487	218	243	26

The scores obtained in the tests were analysed by using the t-test to find the mean responses and the standard deviation between the two groups of students as shown in the table below:

Table 13: Overall mean scores and standard deviation of students from group A and B countries

Responses	Group	Scores	Mean	Std. Deviation
Culture	A	38	1.5200	1.0456
Culture	B	175	7.0000	1.6833

The above table shows a difference between the two means and standard deviations of the students from both groups. Results from the mean scores for the two tests indicated that the overall performance of group B students was higher than that of group A students. The t-test was applied (Ferguson and Takane 1989, Cohen and Holliday 1979) to the data as shown below.

Table 14: t-test Paired Samples shows the difference in mean in terms of cultural responses.

Responses	Group	Paired Differences					T	D f	Sig. (2- tailed)
		Mean	SD	SE Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Culture	A	-	2.002	0.400	-	-	-13.683	2	0.000
	B	5.4800	5	5	6.3066	4.6534		4	

The above table shows that there is a statistically significant difference between groups A and B students. The t-test provides a measure of significance between the two groups in terms of correct cultural scores, which is < .01. It is interesting to speculate on the reasons why the differences in means is greater in the case of students from group B than in the case of those from group A. It can be argued that the former have enough prior cultural knowledge to process the texts confidently and employ successful strategies which resulted in achieving higher scores in both tests. Similarly, the wide range of standard deviation for the cultural category indicates a variation among the students of both groups. This may be due

to the variation in the teaching materials and the cultural experiences of the students.

5.4. Analysis of students' perceptions and responses from the interview

The following sections (5.4.1 & 5.4.2) describe the problems encountered and the successful reading strategies adopted during reading comprehension. This will be illustrated by examples of students' responses from groups A and B which represent a small part of the extensive comments and descriptions of students' responses elicited in the interviews (see Appendix F: 206) for group A and (see Appendix G: 223) for group B students.

5.4.1. The reading problems encountered

The interviews produced some interesting outcomes in terms of revealing learners' reading difficulties and strategies used when taking the tests. It seems reasonably clear that the differences in levels of comprehension are due to variations in the students' cultural backgrounds. It also showed that those students who were exposed to English culture and global culture were reading at a higher level of understanding and analysis of information of the text than those who did not. The following is a list of the main problems faced by the students while performing the reading tests.

1. Insufficient general cultural knowledge

Group A students' responses clearly illustrate their lack of English cultural awareness. In the multiple-choice test 1, a response of a Saudi student to a cultural item of the target language was:

- *'I chose 'a football team' because the text is about Liverpool and the first paragraph talks about sport. I do not understand. I have no idea about the word 'Beatles'. What does it mean? Yes I refer to the passage but I did not understand it'.* (Student A, Q 1).

The response of the student indicates that he selected the wrong answer because he is unfamiliar with the term 'Beatles'.

A Yemeni student replied when asked about the 'museum' by saying:

- *I selected 'ship building' because I understand from the text that it illustrates Liverpool shipping. No I do not know. No I do not know what is a 'museum' or what it is used for. Actually, I have not come across it even in the school'. (Student E, Q 7)*

The response of the student implies that she has no idea about the meaning of the word 'museum' or even about its function, therefore she selected the wrong answer.

What a Libyan student said regarding a cultural item was:

- *'I decided 'educational'. This is what I understand. It is in the text. No I have no idea about 'Grand National'. (Student A, Q 2)*

The student's response shows inability to retrieve the right information because he had no idea about the 'Grand National' being linked to sporting activities.

The response of a Syrian student was:

- *'This is really also a difficult question because you cannot find the answer in the text. Yes I tried to get the answer but it is not there. Well I had no idea about 'Albert Dock'. Thus I chose 'a modern art exhibition'. (Student C. Q 8).*

The student could not select the correct answer because of unfamiliarity with the function of the cultural item 'Albert Dock' which is now used as a trade and entertainment centre.

The above sample of answers clearly reveals the cultural gap experienced by students from group A countries. The learners' difficulties are largely influenced by the lack of exposure to English culture, which in turn reduces their knowledge of vocabulary and phrases including culture, idioms, norms, etc. This affected their level of understanding, since the teaching of foreign language involves in addition to the system, the target language culture. Cultural incompetence among group A students occurred with great frequency and even when the students were able to answer one or two cultural questions correctly, the response showed that it was not taught but obtained via friends, relatives, etc. So when the group A students were able to answer

the odd cultural question correctly, it was only by chance that they managed to answer correctly. There follows examples, which illustrate this point.

- *'I chose 'sporting and cultural heritage' because I heard that Liverpool is well known for sport'. From a relative who studied in Liverpool'. (Saudi student A, Test 1: Q 16)*
- *'Why 'the use of computer technology' because I have been informed that JMU specialises in computing. A friend of mine'. (Libyan student E, Test 1: Q 9)*

The problem here lies in the fact that these cultural items were not incorporated into their textbooks originally and therefore the information was not obtained from a structured permanent source.

2. Inadequate linguistic knowledge

It also seems that focusing on the rules of the language rather than on the content or meaning will hinder the learners' ability to understand it. Learning grammatical sentences without understanding the use of the target language in its cultural context will not enhance the learners' ability to understand texts, which contain and use culture-specific items of the target language. Thus in cloze test 2 students from group A countries struggled to comprehend the text, so they adopted different strategies that were mostly unsuccessful and hence affected their comprehension resulting in low scores. The following are examples taken from the responses of students from each of the countries of group A, which clearly illustrate their weakness of linguistic knowledge:

When a Yemeni student was asked in question 1 about 'the true masters of the *'planet'* he said:

- *'I selected 'creation' because the text is about insects, which are creation. I also understand from the sentence that it talks about 'creation'. That what I understand from the sentence'. (Yemeni student A, Test 2: Q 1).*

The response implies that the student knows the meaning of creation but he was unable to interpret the sentence in paragraph 1. Many incorrect answers were also made because despite the fact the students were familiar with the linguistic items,

they were unable to use them in context. Examples from the students' responses are listed below:

- *'I chose 'of' because it takes ing and the verb 'leaving' in the sentence has ing. Yes I know the meaning and I know it is a preposition'.* (Libyan student C, Test 2: Q19)

The student's response shows misuse of grammatical items. He did not pay attention to the function of the words in the sentence. He selected the wrong answer instead of choosing the appropriate form, which is 'from'

A number of students from group A who also failed to answer some of the questions in test 2 attributed their inability to do so to their lack of understanding of the relevance and the function of cohesive ties. Examples are taken from students' responses to illustrate this point:

- *'Why 'these' because it talks about the behaviour and methods. So these behaviours and methods. That what I understand'.* (Omani student C, Test 2: Q 8)
- *'I chose 'until' because it indicates that a locust does not join a swarm, until it changes colour. Yes I know the meaning of until'.* (Saudi student A, Test 2: Q 10)

Some incorrect answers were the result of the students misunderstanding a word or misinterpreting the whole question. This in turn led to the students to arrive at the wrong conclusion, hence to select the incorrect answer. To illustrate this point, examples taken from the students' responses are as follows:

- *Actually I could not understand this question. What the word 'located' means in the question. So finally I put 'false'.* (Libyan student D, Test 1: Q 13)

The student's response indicates that he was unable to fully appreciate the overall construction of the question(s) thus he selected the wrong answers.

3. Misunderstanding of lexical items

Another reason for students' poor understanding of the text and in selecting the incorrect answer is due to the lack of knowledge of lexical items. Below are some examples to demonstrate this point:

- *'I selected 'noticed' because this is what experts usually did when the farmlands are going to be attacked. Yes I get it from the sentence. No I do not know the meaning of threatened'. (Omani student E, Test 2: Q 20)*
- *I chose 'thus' because the sentence talks about killing locusts. If we don't take care we can kill natural helpers. So I chose 'thus' which indicates this meaning'. (Syrian student A, Test 2: Q 13)*

The students' responses demonstrate that they could not get the right answer because they were unable to understand the meaning and the usage of some lexical items and use them in context.

4. Mistaken usage of cultural and linguistic knowledge combined

A great number of incorrect answers resulted from students having both poor cultural background knowledge and inadequate linguistic skills. The following examples are from students who obtained the lowest scores, due to their weakness in both areas:

- *'Aintree' because when I refer to the text again and read the sentence paragraph two I found the word 'Goodison' and 'Aintree' but I think it is Aintree because it is written in the text it is a popular area. So I think it is right although I do not know both words what they mean. (Saudi student B, Test 1: Q 3)*

The student's response reveals that she was unable to select the correct answer because she had no prior cultural knowledge and she could not understand the text to be able to retrieve the right information due to weak linguistic skills.

The same can be seen in a very small number of students' responses from Group B:

- *'I put 'true' because I had no idea about Walker Art Gallery. I refer to the text. I understand from the idea of paragraph 3 that Walker Art Gallery contains large collection of paintings and arts'. (Egyptian student E, Test 1: Q 14).*

Here the student has no idea about the 'Walker Art Gallery' and failed to retrieve the right information from the text by analysing sentence or text structure. It shows both cultural and linguistic problems.

5. Knowledge of linguistic feature(s) but unfamiliarity with text information

A number of students were familiar with linguistic features. However they were often unable to use linguistic information in context to achieve comprehension, thus leading them to select the incorrect answers. An example follows which exemplifies this point.

- *'I chose 'they' because it refers to the locusts. The other options are not suitable because they are singular. And the word 'locusts' are plural'. (Omani student B, Test 2: Q 11)*

The response explains that the student was able to identify the function of the linguistic item 'they', but misinterpreting the text information caused her to select the wrong answer. The right option is 'it', hence the answer should read 'More and more locusts join the swarm as it spreads over a wide area'.

Lack of prior cultural knowledge not only affected their level of comprehension but also the strategies they adopted. As a result, with the skills available to them, they employed alternative techniques (elimination, matching, guessing and so on) to try to obtain the correct answer. However, this was often unsuccessful because many students frequently used these strategies incorrectly. The following are examples of the students' responses followed by analysis to show how the lack of prior cultural knowledge affected the way students processed the text:

6. Mistaken random guesses

- *'This question is also difficult. I did not understand it at the same time it is not clear in the text. So I just guess it is 'false'. (Libyan student C, Test 1: Q 12).*

The response indicates that the student chose the wrong answer because he guessed without checking or revising the answer.

7. Incorrect elimination

- *'I just tried to eliminate the answers. Then I chose 'a football team'. I think it is the nearest answer. I do not know what is the 'Beatles''. (Syrian student E, Test 1: Q 1)*

The student's response exemplifies that she could not get the right answer because she just eliminated the options without referring to the text or using any other types of strategies.

8. Mismatch

- *'I selected 'in addition' I just matched the answers and I found this is the best'. (Omani student D, Test 2: Q 15).*

The response reveals that the student was unable to achieve the right information because he only compared the answers in the question with the text without any direction or analysis of the sentence (simply matching).

9. Mistranslations

- *'Well! I chose ' while' what helped me is the meaning of the sentence. Yes I translated the words. I know its meaning. 'Binama' = while. (Libyan student C, Test 2: Q 15)*

The response indicates that the student used the first language as a means of conveying the meaning of the second language (using the mother tongue as a means of comprehension) but he failed to get the right answer, which is 'for this reason'.

10. Abandoning

Some of the students from group A struggled to retrieve the right information and faced difficulties in answering, therefore they left a few questions unanswered. This is owing to the problem of having little specific cultural knowledge or linguistic ability to analyse the text. An example from the students' responses is given below to illustrate this point:

- *'Actually, I left this question because it is difficult. Yes the options and the sentence is not clear'. Yes I tried but I could not find the answer so I left it. (Omani student D, Test 2: Q 16).*

5.4.2. Framework of the successful reading strategies adopted

In comparison, students from group B countries showed better comprehension skills in test 1. The students' interviews revealed their conscious use of reading strategies in their efforts to comprehend the reading texts and infer information in tests 1 and 2. The following is a list of the reading strategies used by students.

i. Using general cultural knowledge

The following are examples of students' responses from group B in test 1 which show how the use of prior cultural knowledge enabled them to retrieve essential information from the text.

The response of a Palestinian student when asked about his answer was:

- *'I chose 'a music group' because 'Beatles' is known to me. It is the most famous music group in Britain. I like to listen to it. I did not refer to the text. O! Yes we have music lessons'.* (Student A, Q 1)

An Egyptian student responded:

- *'"Sporting" because I heard and read about Grand National and I often saw its horse racing in the TV. I have information about it before I came to Liverpool. I obtained it from the TV and through reading sport magazines. Yes we have so many of them in the school library and outside the school'.* (Students B, Q 2)

The response of a Kuwaiti student was as follows:

- *'Good! I chose 'collecting and displaying paintings' because 'galleries' ... what can be used for?. Yes. We get this. We know the function of galleries. No need to go to the text although the text mentioned about galleries'.* (Student C, Q 20)

When a Jordanian student was asked about his answer he responded:

- *'I selected 'historic collection' this I know already because I studied about museums. Well! 'Maritime' is a name I think'.* (Student E, Q 7).

The above examples clearly indicate the influence of prior cultural knowledge on language comprehension. The students were able to use this knowledge to process the text confidently, make sense of what they read and thus achieved very high scores. The analysis of students' responses also reveal that the utilisation of cultural items is a useful way to understand the unknown language units met in new contexts and helps in understanding the gist of the text.

ii. Using linguistic knowledge

When examining the responses of students from group B countries as a whole, it was found that their linguistic ability was fairly good. They were able to use the linguistic features correctly. Students in Group B were able to determine the meanings and context of unfamiliar sentences and text structures, and the unknown lexical items presented in test 2. This is owing to the fact that learners' had a wide exposure to authentic materials as well as access to a variety of interesting contents in their secondary schools. This helped them to gain new information, key language structures and vocabulary of the language as well as develop a variety of reading strategies. The following examples show some of the students' responses to support the above argument:

- *'The 'Protestant' it is clear in the text. I understand that the 'Protestant' designed the Catholic Cathedral. Well! I have no idea but I think it is in the text. The word 'designed' I mean 'was designed by'. (Kuwaiti student B, Test 1: Q 5).*

The student's response indicates that he used linguistic knowledge to reach the correct answer by recognising grammatical items 'was designed by', their functions in the sentence and their relation to other words

- *'I first read the question then interpreted the words. I understand from the question that it asks about direction to get from to. So I know it means direction. Then I re read the text and I realised that 'Hope Street' is the way so I chose 'take Hope Street''. (Kuwaiti student A, Test 1: Q 4).*

The response indicates that the student worked out the meaning of the word(s) in the question and in the text, which gave clues about what to look for and thus helped in choosing the right answer. Another aspect of linguistic knowledge, which was found

to be useful in assisting the students to comprehend the texts successfully, was the use of cohesive ties. The following are examples from students' responses to illustrate this point:

- *'It is 'which' because it functions as a joining word. It joins the two sentences'.* (Kuwaiti student E, Test 2: Q 17).
- *'I chose 'therefore' according to my knowledge and understanding of the sentences in the paragraph. Yes I know its meaning and its usage and this what the writer wants to say'.* (Jordanian student A, Test 2: Q 5).

iii. Other techniques

Students adopted other techniques such as guessing, elimination, etc. These strategies were not exclusive to one group, because the group A students also adopted such strategies. However the difference here is that group B students used these techniques efficiently. They employed them successfully because they were not guessing or eliminating at random, but in actual fact they referred to the text, analysed it and used the clues to reach an educated guess, an adequate elimination, etc. The following are examples taken from the students' responses to illustrate the various techniques adopted:

- *'I chose 'unfortunately' because first I get confused of the options then I decided either 'unfortunately' or 'hardly' later I chose 'unfortunately' because the whole sentence expresses sorry about the birds which die'. I really tried to get rid of the unlikely options.* (Jordanian student A, Test 2: Q 16)

The response indicates that the student reached the right answer because he eliminated the incorrect words and thought of an alternative, relying on some clues and his own prior knowledge.

- *'I chose 'a peaceful area' the same I get it from the text. No it is not ambiguous but I analysed the sentence then I matched the answers to the text. I understand that it should be a peaceful area.* (Kuwaiti student B, Test 1: Q 6)

The student's response shows that he was able to select the right answer because he used matching which was directed through analysis of questions and answers as well as the text.

- *'I faced little difficulty in this question then I read the text again I tried to understand the meaning of the words 'post' medieval' then I decided to put 'true'. I think this is the nearest understanding to me. That what I get'. (Palestinian student B, Test 1: Q 12)*

The student guessed at the meaning of words by looking at the surrounding words or situations which enabled her to select the right answer.

- *'Again here I analysed the sentence focusing on the word 'wherever' which means a place. I also interpreted the sentence mainly the verb 'go' which shows a direction. So go where that is why I decided 'wherever'. (Algerian student D, Test 2: Q 6).*

The student's knowledge of the grammatical item 'wherever' and his understanding of the sentence by interpreting key words assisted him in extracting the right information and in turn choosing the correct answer.

- *'I chose 'the Liverbird' because when I reread paragraph 1 I could understand that it is named after 'the Liverbird'. In the sentence it is written 'the name rose from Liverbird'. I have no idea. I did not come across this word'. (Palestinian student C, Test 1: Q 17)*

The response indicates that whenever the student encountered language items he did not understand he went back and read some portion of the text glancing over a particular piece of information within a specific sentence in order to collect more information related to the situation and thus working out the correct answer.

- *'While reading I really tried to take notes of each paragraph focusing on the main idea or points. This gave me full idea about the text'. (Algerian student C, Test 1).*

The response implies that the student wrote down or took note of the main ideas or important points in the text while reading to make a record of them. This shows that he had initiative and strategies for retrieving information.

- *'sporting' because I understand from the text that if Liverpool does mean music or sport so the text speaks about music or sport when I read the sentences I found that Grand National. I underlined the word 'these' because it is the key. I understand from the word 'these' that it indicates more than one sport football and other sport which 'Grand National' as sport images'. (Jordanian student B, Test 1: Q 2)*

The response shows that when the student did not understand specific words she underlined them and then she started to use strategies to find out the answer.

5.5. The ‘eclectic’ model

It was observed that one of the successful models, which greatly contributed to comprehension, stemmed from a balanced approach using both prior cultural and linguistic knowledge and the ability to activate this knowledge in an appropriate context. The students’ responses from group B in test 1 showed that a considerable percentage of correct answers was obtained by using this approach. The following examples illustrate how such a model enabled the students to understand and process information successfully:

- *‘I selected ‘the use of computer technology in its courses’ because I had previous knowledge about JMU. I read an article about the university. I understand that it is interested in information technology. I read the text in order to find out about the word special and in teaching and learning. I analyzed the sentence in paragraph 1 the word pioneered which nearly mean the same as special and also the phrase teaching and learning. This confirmed my answer’.* (Kuwaiti student A, Test 1: Q 9).

The student could back up his prior knowledge by analysing sentence structure where he associated key words with their meaning in the text and the idea he had in his mind. His prior cultural experience enabled him to put it together with his linguistic skills to answer the question correctly. The student used his prior knowledge about the ‘Albert Dock’ by analysing key words in the text, such as ‘business’ and ‘social activities’, and used their meanings to reach the answer.

- *‘I chose ‘historic collection’ because I know that museums are used for collections and arts but I refer to the text again in order to be sure about ‘Maritime museum’. I read paragraph three. I found that the word ‘history’ and the adjective is historic and the ‘Maritime museum’ illustrates history of Liverpool. So it is for historic collections’.* (Algerian student C, Test 1: Q 7).

The student had prior knowledge about the function of museums. He was able to use the specific examples relating to the Maritime museum, by analysing sentence structure and word-class within the text, to support his understanding.

On the other hand, the highest percentage of incorrect answers from group A was owing to insufficient cultural experience and mistaken usage of linguistic knowledge. To illustrate this point, the following example is taken from the students’ responses:

- *This question is the same as question number 1 it is too difficult. I could not find the answer in the text. I do not understand the sentence. I just chose 'educational'. It might mean education because the paragraph talks about education centre. (Libyan student B, test 1: Q 2).*

The student's response indicates that he could not select the right answer because he was unable to work out the meaning of the sentence. He was unable to establish a link between words within the paragraph. He also suffers from a lack of cultural awareness.

From the above discussion it can be deduced that a single model where only the 'top-down' is concentrated on or the other extreme of using exclusively 'bottom-up' models as the sole source of learning is not beneficial to the student, both in the understanding of the language and organising the forms into a meaningful structure. Using only a single model will in the long term hamper the student when trying to grasp the language thus his comprehension skills will not sufficiently develop. Furthermore, when a student uses more than just the text based information (as in the bottom up model) or knowledge based information (as in the top down model), to arrive at the meaning of the text, this research again finds better performance and higher level of reading comprehension.

5.6. Concluding remarks

In comparing the textbook analysis with the findings of the two comprehension tests, it is found that the responses of the students from group A clearly illustrate reading comprehension difficulties that resulted from their insufficient background knowledge. Difficulties faced by students from group A countries appear to be owing to the limited nature of their general cultural experience of the target language. Undoubtedly, textbooks from group A countries which exclude cultural specific items of the target language may have affected the learners' cultural and linguistic experience. In contrast students from group B countries, because of their adoption of successful reading strategies and prior cultural knowledge, gave far fewer incorrect responses.

When students from group A countries were given the text in test 1 which includes English lifestyles and cultural specific items, which are outside the framework of the standard texts to which they are accustomed, it is apparent that they encountered many difficulties. This was found to be the case both in their test scores and through their responses in the interviews i.e. they had very poor prior knowledge about the life and socialising features of the people whose language they studied. This in turn affected the way they processed the texts. On the other hand, students from group B countries performed better and achieved higher scores in test 1. This reinforces the purpose and relationship of culture teaching within language syllabuses of group A countries. It is not possible to ignore the significance of culture as an integral part of a whole. It also implies that the true content of English language reading texts is not only the grammar, but the cultures expressed through that language.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the above findings is that successful reading comprehension is a process involving cultural background in conjunction with the learners' ability to utilise a variety of strategies when processing a text. This supports the argument of the present study which emphasises that the study of language as a system will not produce communicative learners i.e. learners will know the language and about the language but perform poorly. The findings indicate that group A students have a relatively poor level of comprehension and their reading strategies were random. Two underlying causes can be suggested:

- the English textbooks used in group A countries have overlooked or ignored to a great extent the importance of learners' exposure to the culture of the target language
- most of the reading texts have been selected for their potential as a means of teaching rules of grammar and not for their potential in broadening learners' communicative ability and improving their reading strategies.

There is a need as demonstrated by the findings of this study to integrate cultural aspects of the target language in text materials and encourage the implementation of cultural specific items into day-to-day lesson planning.

Chapter Six

Implications and Conclusions

6.0. Introduction

This chapter has three sections. Firstly, the various outcomes of the textbook analysis and tests findings are examined and conclusions are drawn. Secondly, teaching implications are outlined with reference not only to the process of reading comprehension but also to the nature of the content material of school textbooks. Thirdly, recommendations for further research are made.

6.1. Summary and conclusions from the findings

The findings that are reported arise from the major areas of research that were outlined in Chapter 1 (see sections 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7 and 1.8). It has been shown that students' textbooks used in group A Arab schools include topics that are of little use to their purpose of learning English language skills. Their emphasis on Arab culture (47%) and very little reference to English (4.17%) or international culture (9.38%) has created an imbalance in the content of textbooks used by advanced Arab learners. A sample of text extracts from English language textbooks, which were analysed showed that the content area of the textbooks as a whole, at both micro and macro-levels, suffers from a lack of cultural items of the target language and fails to use grammatical items in communicative situations. It is reasonable to suggest that textbooks which exclude cultural items of the target language may be presented as a causative factor in students' observed weaknesses.

The findings of the tests reveal that cultural knowledge and understanding are critically important to successful reading comprehension. The more the students know about target language culture, the greater their chances of making the appropriate cultural interpretation of the texts. Thus, Arab students from group A performed poorly as compared to other Arab students from group B (see Table 9 and

10: Chapter 5). The reasons why students from group A obtained low scores (245 out of 500) and a very low level of comprehension were (a) the fact that they had been taught English mainly using Arab culture (47%) and (b) they had not previously been exposed to the cultural aspects of the target language (4.17%) and international cultures (9.38%) within school textbooks. They are taught to listen not to take part in the lesson. They consequently become ill-motivated. As a result, the analysis of the students' responses demonstrated that they tended to approach the texts in tests 1 and 2 in a linear way, concentrating their attention mainly, if not exclusively, on processing word for word. An example is illustrated by a Syrian student, when he confuses the individual words, thus failing to understand the gist of the message:

'because I understand from the sentence it is 'a shopping area'. In paragraph 3 I found the word 'shopping' and in the question there is 'shopping'. (Syrian student D, Test 1: Q 6)

The response reveals that the student perceived words in an isolated manner as if they were not part of a larger unit: the sentence, the paragraph and the whole text. This text-based processing known as the 'bottom-up' approach (Gough: 1972) makes reading a matter of decoding words rather than a process of interacting intelligently with the text to make sense out of it. Similarly, when an Omani student was asked about the purpose of the Albert Dock, she replied:

'I chose 'a housing centre' because after reading paragraph 3 I assume it is the most suitable answer that what I understand. There is the word 'houses' so it is 'housing centre'. No I have no idea about Albert Dock. No I did not read or heard about it'. (Omani student E, Test 1: Q 8)

The student's response indicates that she was unable to get the right answer because she could not grasp beyond what was explicitly stated in the text. She relied on surface-level processing instead of inferring meaning from the overall context. She failed to work out the function of the word 'houses'. She was unable to distinguish the differences between a plural noun and 'houses' as a verb. In other words the student was unable to determine the grammatical items in context. This shows the importance of associating a real language need in the learner's mind with each grammatical item presented. One significant factor in this respect is the necessity to provide clear teaching contexts, which enable teachers to relate items to real world knowledge. McEldowney (1976).

On the other hand, students from group B countries could read more successfully and obtained high scores (480 out of 500) and a very high level of comprehension. They could overcome most of the difficulties they experienced in understanding the texts by applying effective reading strategies. The findings have shown such students have direct experience of interaction with items from other cultures and know a variety of cultural expressions for which lists of examples are presented in the textbooks they use (see Appendix G: 223). The analysis of reading texts has revealed that students had been exposed to a wide source of English culture (32.16%) and international culture (29.47%). This enabled them to look at the text globally with an eclectic perspective. They managed to process textual information in a non-linear way. They interacted with the text, establishing significant connections between textual information and background cultural knowledge. The degree of cultural awareness displayed by many of the students from group B countries (36%) indicated a high level of sophistication in their ability to infer information in the reading process. The following examples are taken from students' responses to support this point:

'I chose 'a trade and entertainment centre' because I understand from paragraph 3 that the whole words indicate that 'Albert Dock' is used for business and entertainment. Yes I analysed the words in the paragraph e.g. 'social and business centre' Again the phrase ' houses a number of shops and restaurants'. I think all this indicates that what I chose is the right answer. (Egyptian student E, Test 1: Q 8)

I chose 'good-natured' because first I heard from a friend that Liverpool people are good in general and like foreigners. But what about 'good-nature'. So I refer to the text to be sure. I found in the last paragraph the last two lines the words 'friendly, sympathetic, good attitude', which indicate that they have 'good-nature'. This supports my previous knowledge about the people of Liverpool. Yes they are good except few'. (Egyptian student A, Test 1: Q 10)

The above examples demonstrate that the students had a reasonable cultural knowledge as they were also able to identify the meaning and the function of words within the text. This enabled them to comprehend the text and then to answer the questions successfully. A balance between different types of information is crucial for Arab students to be able to understand textual information successfully without

being over-reliant on one single model. This is illustrated by an example taken from a student's response:

'I put 'false' because I understand from the sentence in paragraph 3 where I found that 'Walker Art Gallery' contains the biggest collection of art but outside London. In Britain the best gallery according to the text is Lady Lever which contains the best collection of art'. Yes both contains art but one is the largest which is outside Britain and one contains the best and inside Britain'. (Jordanian student A, Test 1: Q 14)

The student's response is evidence that he could obtain the correct information by recognising the location of each gallery and the meanings of words in each sentence. He was able to reach the right answer. Therefore, reading strategies (e.g. contextual guessing, sensible matching, adequate elimination, scanning, note-taking, etc.) should be used equally with other types of processing such as 'top-down' or 'bottom-up'.

6.2. Teaching implications

Teaching and learning of foreign languages should aim at developing communicative competence. This can be achieved through providing the learners with a realistic learning environment that includes examples of the target culture. Reading texts should include varied authentic materials such as political and social contexts (e.g. media, information technology, life in Britain, human rights, etc). It can also be suggested that the teaching methods play an integral role in the students being able to use their prior cultural knowledge in processing texts.

The results of this research have implications for advanced classroom teaching of reading skills, the selection of reading materials and reading comprehension assessment in Arab countries. These include the following:

6.2.1. Developing cultural awareness of the target language

If the research findings showed that developing a greater awareness of English culture needs to be undertaken at the same time as the language training, culture needs to be given a higher profile. Attempts to develop thorough integration of culture into language learning materials clearly need to rest on some understanding

not just of what English or international culture is but also on an understanding of how it can be taught and learned. Exposure to the target culture that prevails in textbooks currently used in many Arab countries seems quite at odds with the much broader and deeper focus needed for intercultural awareness. The data analysis of this study, particularly the tests findings, highlighted the importance of teaching foreign cultural items. As a result, teachers should give the teaching of culture a great deal of thought in their lesson planning. It should form part of the teaching syllabus and part of the testing scheme. English programmes should be organised and structured in such a way that students become conscious of the cultural similarities and differences and can make judgements that are fair and meaningful. Students should be given the opportunity to:

- come into contact with native speakers and work with authentic materials, including newspapers, magazines, films, radio, television, etc.
- gain insights into the daily life, lifestyle, customs and social patterns of the inhabitants of the country of which they are learning the language
- develop positive attitudes and open minds to other cultures and civilisations

In order to create a sound learning environment and develop cultural awareness into language teaching materials and methods, it is suggested that the following aspects need to be considered:

- A. Reading activities should involve practices of the target culture, for instance an activity to compare native culture with English culture and discuss it inside the classroom. This can be done by providing school libraries and classrooms with literary novels, poems, plays, stories, etc. which display information about the target culture. This will arouse the interest of the students and help to develop positive attitudes towards English people.
- B. Creating a learning environment that contains specific aspects of the target culture. For example, games reflecting certain items of English culture can be acted out and inside the class. This will be an interesting aid to change the classroom atmosphere. These games should be selected carefully so that they can contribute to furthering the cultural knowledge of the target language.

It is important therefore, that educational systems in the Arab world encourage an atmosphere of openness and realism. Teaching and learning of foreign languages should aim at developing communicative competence. This can be achieved through providing the learners with a realistic learning environment that includes examples of the target culture. Cultural awareness of the target language should be increased not only for the students but also for the teachers who are expected to use alternative features of culture in order to consolidate the process of interaction. To achieve socio-cultural targets, the objectives should be classified into topics reflecting students' actual needs of English in terms of topical preferences and interests. Reading texts should include varied authentic materials such as political and social contexts (e.g. media, information technology, life in Britain, human rights).

It should be made clear that the above suggestions are not recommended to undermine or undervalue the national culture in any way but merely in order to enhance the students' experience of learning a foreign language. Educational authorities and text designers are advised to strike a balance between the students' native culture and their feelings toward it, with the importance of including aspects of the target language culture.

6.2.2. Directing students to use explicit reading strategies

As seen from the analysis of the interviews (see chapters 5 & 6), group B students who were trained to use a variety of reading strategies showed a significant difference in their reading comprehension scores in both tests 1 and 2 when compared to other students from group A who were lacking reading strategies. The interview analysis also showed that learners from group B countries could read more successfully. They could overcome most of the difficulties they experienced in understanding the texts by applying effective reading strategies. The students' perceptions, i.e. what Arab students think about how best to approach a reading test and achieve good results, were informative. They made explicit statements concerning their approach to retrieving information from texts. The following examples are taken from students'

responses as evidence supporting the statement regarding the way some students were trained to read:

'The text was not difficult but I have to concentrate on the paragraphs and sentences and understand the questions. There are some words, which were new for me, as well as some information which is about history and religion. Some of the questions are not direct because they include a lot of information not direct in the passage. I read the sentence again and tried to understand what the sentence is talking about. I tried to understand what the whole passage is taking about and sometimes I tried to read all of the paragraph again'. (Kuwaiti student A)

'The text is easy. I managed to answer all the questions with no difficulty. Well I faced some but I could overcome any by getting the answers through re reading the text focusing on the sentence understanding the meaning'. (Jordanian student E)

'Generally the text is not difficult I just faced some difficult words in the text and in the questions. I tried to understand the meaning from the sentences. Some of the questions are difficult and it is not easy to select one option because of difficult words. Actually while reading I really tried to take notes of each paragraph focusing on the main idea or points. This gave me full idea about the text'. (Palestinian student A)

'The text is not difficult. It includes some unknown words. The questions are obvious. I tried to read the sentence and match the words. Sometimes I eliminated the answers. I sometimes took notes of the main ideas or important points on the text while reading to have a record of them. Yes this helped me for retrieving information'. (Algerian student C)

The above examples illustrate that students were able to use a range of reading strategies to deduce information from the texts. It is an indication that they might have been taught to utilise different reading strategies in a variety of reading activities. These can be briefly grouped as follows:

i. Transferring information

This refers to the students using previously acquired information particularly cultural knowledge to approach the reading text.

ii. Recognising text structure

One of the useful strategies involved in comprehending and retrieving information contained in texts was the ability of the students to interpret the structure of the text at hand.

iii. Using lexical items

It was found that activation of such knowledge to interpret text structure helped the students to consider the relationship between concepts and make better predictions about text content.

In addition to the above strategies, the interviews with students also reveal other strategies, which were found to be useful in comprehending information contained in the texts. These included: scanning, guessing, matching, elimination, note-taking, skimming, etc. (see chapter 5). It can be argued that no single reading strategy is adequate by itself for successful reading comprehension. Students should be taught to use multiple reading strategies (eclectic model) for effective text comprehension. Barnett (1986) has come to a similar conclusion when she stated that during the reading process L2 readers are far more successful in their comprehension if they use a combination of lexical knowledge and syntactic knowledge, rather than relying on one to the detriment of other.

6.2.3. Teaching methods

The assessment of English textbooks used to teach English in the Arab world has revealed that most of these textbooks are designed to teach English as a system i.e. there is an absence of cultural specific items of the target language. In most of the reading tasks, Arab students are encouraged to answer mechanically questions about the text. As stated in chapter one ineffective methods of teaching reading have been considered amongst the potential factors which may hinder students' reading comprehension ability. For the purpose of this study a number of procedures and activities influencing the success of the teaching of reading are described:

A. Pre - reading procedures

Wallace (1992a) considers pre-reading procedures to be important for two reasons (a) they can be used as means to activate the reader's prior knowledge, and (b) they will

help the reader to select a strategy appropriate to the reading of that particular text and consistent with the reader's purpose. Pre-reading activities might include:

- Formulating pre-reading questions: prior to reading there might be various types of discussion on expectations about the topic of the text.
- Underlining specific vocabulary items which appear in the reading text. This could be done by writing a list of key words from the text and then giving definitions of each item.

B. During reading procedures

During the process of reading, students should be encouraged to articulate the kind of information which can be drawn from the text by using their existing cultural knowledge and their reading strategies.

C. After reading procedures

These activities often consist of comprehension questions that follow a text. The aim is to ensure that the students have acquired a clear understanding of information expressed in the text. Reading questions should be designed in a way to control the problem of mechanical response and encourage communicative functions. In this respect McEldowney (1994: 24) argues that:

The central assumption of the test is that tasks appropriate to the testing of communication and, therefore, language proficiency will demand the processing, rather than mechanical manipulation, of some body of information.

Comprehension tasks should be selected to develop good comprehension skills among our students in that they should encourage the use of various reading strategies to process the text effectively. (see McEldowney 1982, 1996/97, Thomas 1988, McGrory 1999).

6.2.4. Replacing or redesigning reading texts

The reading materials should offer learners the chance to build up their productive and receptive skills through language use, not merely through knowledge of grammatical rules. Furthermore, the materials and methodology should be essentially student-centred, aiming to promote learning through interactive activities. Initially some teachers may be unsettled by any changes to course materials, in particular with relation to cultural norms. However they may be more ready to accept them if they are introduced gradually, and if the professional community as a whole is allowed to participate in inservice training. Assuming that the text is the core of the reading comprehension activity, the means by which the message is transmitted from the writer to the reader, it may be useful to outline the following basic points, which should be considered when selecting reading texts:

The text:

- should provide an element of challenge by offering the students an opportunity to think for themselves, to argue, to analyse, and to enjoy themselves in the reading process
- should offer the opportunity to promote key reading strategies. Certain kinds of texts for instance, may lend themselves to scanning or skimming, and others, to activating prior cultural knowledge and so on.
- should avoid cultural and social bias and reflect universal human concerns, needs and feelings. Teaching materials should attempt to strike a balance in their projection and use of cues both national as well as those of the target language. Any distortion of one at the expense of the other will adversely affect the students' language comprehension, communicative ability and appreciation.

The above points suggest that teachers should establish a relaxing and pleasurable learning atmosphere, and let the learners actively participate in their learning process through the use of their own culture and the culture of the target language. Activities of the kind proposed by McEldowney (1996/7), for example, to help students read more critically, would encourage greater engagement with texts and the cultures that produce them. Teaching materials produced in the Arab world for use in classrooms

should be a source not only for grammar, lexis and activities for language practice, but, like McEldowney (ibid.) suggests, reading texts which are imbued with 'cultural promise'. At this point, it can be suggested that the global textbook can become a useful instrument for sparking cultural debate and, simultaneously, a genuine educational tool.

6.3. Weaknesses of the study

This research aims to identify the problems, the strategies and the relevance of prior cultural knowledge to reading comprehension. The findings, which reveal different scores in test 1 and 2 between group A and B students, are an indication of the importance of the cultural backgrounds to learners. This research has encountered a number of constraints which can be summed up as follows:

- A. The study as it stands has too broad a range, especially in attempting to cover the education systems of the whole Arab world. It would have been better to focus on one country, such as Saudi Arabia.
- B. The experimental design failed to control variables such as the diverse effects of family background, cognitive ability, gender, etc.
- C. A large number of students only participated in half of the testing procedure. Initially, this study set out to involve a cohort of 120 male and female students from both sets of countries (60 students from each group). However, 20 of these 120 were used in the pilot study of this research to check the validity of the two tests and the interview questions. Data was collected from 15 of the 20 students and used in the pilot study. Their contribution was not included in the final results as some modification took place to some of the items in the tests and in the interview questions. From the remaining 100 respondents, 30 students participated in test one but did not undertake test two and 20 of them undertook test two but not test one. In actual fact 27 respondents from group A participated in both tests whereas 25 respondents from group B undertook both tests. In order to accommodate the statistical methods, two respondents from group A were not used, thus 50 students (25 from each group of countries) were used in this study. Therefore, because of the original classification of the countries as described in

Chapter one, this left 5 students from each country as contributors. These students were willing to participate in both tests and responded to all the questions they were asked. This substantial number of students, and the subsequent data they provided, revealed that the students were able to perceive their reading problems and provide insights into the strategies used. Other reasons why only 50 completed both test one and two out of 120 respondents chosen for participation in the tests, include:

- Politics; some students did not want to be interviewed because they came from countries with oppressive regimes and were afraid to reveal their views and perspectives.
- Owing to a poor performance in the 'first' test (either not attempting questions or answering only a few of them), some students were again reluctant, because they felt ashamed and embarrassed to subject themselves to a further test.
- Caution; although all participants were explicitly informed of the confidentiality of the tests, some students (on the foundation courses) were worried that if they got a 'low' score, this would then be shown to their English tutors.
- General reasons; some of the students showed a lack of interest in participating in the study – through apathy. Similarly, some students were unreliable as they promised to take part in both tests but did not.

6.4. Concluding remarks

The argument that cultural background plays a part in comprehension is not a novel idea. However, the literature review shows that there are conflicting views over its importance. The present research has attempted to show the relationship between culture and comprehension amongst advanced (pre-university) Arab learners from various Arab countries. As a result of the research, further evidence has been gathered to show that comprehension can be achieved through learners' cultural awareness and linguistic competence thereby assisting the reader in identifying the potential meaning of the text. On the basis of the findings it seems

reasonably clear that cultural knowledge combined with linguistic features facilitate comprehension. It seems that a lack of cultural awareness can be an underlying feature and inherent problem in reading comprehension. Therefore, it is proposed that it would be useful to teach topics including cultural information of the target language in order to provide enough scope for learners' cultural background development, which makes a significant contribution to overall reading comprehension competence.

A diagnosis of Arab learners' difficulties in reading comprehension has shown that these difficulties stem from a variety of factors. The English textbooks used to teach English in the Arab world may be said to be the main cause, particularly those textbooks used in the Arab countries of group A. Firstly, they lack authentic materials; secondly, there is an absence of cultural reference to the target language; and thirdly, the stated objectives do not meet the needs of learners i.e. do not prepare learners for the real world of English. It is therefore argued that texts should include an approach to intercultural learning which prepares students to move with ease amongst numerous cultures and to be less bound, cognitively, by the notion of the nation-state. Resistance to change, rigidity of some of the current Arab educational systems and the inflexibility of some English textbooks make it difficult to envisage drastic and concrete change in the near future.

This study has shown that Arab learners are still very passive recipients and the teachers play only a minimal role in the selection of the reading, learning materials and the teaching methods. Such 'under-involvement' forms one of the obstacles to successful language teaching. This study suggests that in order to enhance reading comprehension, teachers must be encouraged and should be allowed to select some relevant and appropriate materials for their students, which meet their needs and improve their cultural awareness of the target language, therefore maximising their learning potential. One hopes that the benefits of understanding the culture embodied in a language will be seen as sufficiently important for it sometimes to be given prominence in the textbook.

6.4. Suggestions for further research

It is reasonable to suggest that many educational systems in the Arab world could benefit from the above findings in order to improve the teaching of reading. The design of English language textbooks and the reading materials to which students will be exposed should be modified. English textbooks in many Arab countries need to be reviewed. The content of reading materials should be organised to encourage global understanding and improve cultural awareness of the foreign language. If measures are not taken, the foreign language learning issue in Arab schools will remain problematic and the students' level will remain below the required standard. The education authorities in Arab countries should take into account recent developments in foreign language teaching and current theories on reading skills. They need to integrate these theoretical and experimental findings into useable teaching materials and techniques. It is believed that if there is no immediate remedial work in terms of revising reading materials and teaching and assessment methods of reading skills, students' reading difficulties will continue to hold them back in other areas of the school curriculum.

There are many other aspects that will need research concerning reading skills, for it is a fast-moving subject, and interest in how to improve reading ability is growing all the time. The findings reported in the present study suggest a number of areas in which future studies in this area might be designed in order to

1. focus more tightly on the key issue of cultural context and cultural content in textbook design. The focus in future studies needs to be on finding a way to isolate the factor of cultural awareness and to design a test or tests that produce reliable measures of cultural knowledge.
2. determine how cultural issues can be integrated into course materials and how to teach them, to what extent such materials will develop the learners' motivation and interest and in what ways learners' own culture and target language culture can be introduced and practised within the classroom environment.

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Appendices

Appendix A: students' reading comprehension test 1

Test 1

Name:

Read the following text and answer the questions below:

Because Liverpool is a major city, you will probably have heard something about it. Some people think of it as 'the home of the Beatles', 'a major seaport', 'where the Grand National is run', or 'famous for Liverpool and Everton Football Clubs'. Liverpool is all these things, but it is also much more. Some of its features and the surrounding area make it an attractive place to spend your student days. Liverpool has a landmark monument in the Liverbird from which the city's name arose. Liverpool is also a major educational centre; for instance Liverpool John Moores University has pioneered the use of information technology in teaching and learning.

If Liverpool does mean music or sport to you, then you will not be disappointed. You can be part of the crowd at Anfield or Goodison Park, where you will see football of the highest quality. What could be more alive than these grounds when the first team is playing at home? Aintree is also a popular area, especially in April when the Grand National steeplechase takes place. But while these are the well-known sporting images of Liverpool, you should have little difficulty finding the sports that satisfy your needs.

In the busy shopping area in the city centre is a peaceful seventeenth-century building called the Bluecoat Chambers. Paintings by local artists are often displayed on its railings. For more formal exhibitions try the Walker Art Gallery, with the largest collection of paintings outside London, ranging from early Flemish to twentieth-century. The Tate Gallery contains a major collection of contemporary and modern art. It is situated in the Albert Dock, one of the best examples of Victorian maritime architecture still extant. In 1984 it was reopened as a social and business centre, and it now houses an exciting number of shops, restaurants and exhibition halls. Adjacent to the Albert Dock is the Maritime

Museum, which beautifully illustrates the history of Liverpool shipping. The world-famous ferries are still a live Merseyside attraction. Across the river, the model village of Port Sunlight houses the Lady Lever Art Gallery, which contains one of the best collections of applied art in Britain. Liverpool has also several beautiful parks; Sefton is the largest municipal park in the country where you can walk, cycle, jog, or simply sit back and admire the surroundings. To reach such places Liverpool provides you with excellent transport services from companies such as Liverline and Mersey Travel.

Liverpool is one of the few cities distinguished by two cathedrals. The Roman Catholic Cathedral almost on the Precinct is sometimes called 'Paddy's Wigwam' or 'the Mersey Funnel'. It uses modern stressed concrete engineering to achieve its 'space capsule' outline. The Anglican Cathedral is very large compared to most medieval buildings, and is built in neo-Gothic style in the traditional way using masonry. In typical Liverpool fashion, the Anglican Cathedral was designed by a Roman Catholic and the Catholic Cathedral was designed by a Protestant. Hope Street, aptly named, runs directly between the two Cathedrals. In fact Liverpool is a multi-faith society where different churches, mosques, synagogues and temples are found. These societies provide a friendly warm atmosphere for any student. They also hold regular social and religious events. With some exceptions, the people of Liverpool are generally friendly and sympathetic, with a good attitude towards foreigners.

I. For questions (1-10) Circle the letter a, b, c, or d to indicate your choice:

1. The 'Beatles' refers to -----

- a. a football team.
- b. a multi-faith society
- c. a major seaport.
- d. a music group.

2. What kind of activity is the Grand National?

- a. musical.
- b. sporting.
- c. artistic.
- d. educational.

3. Where would one go to see football in Liverpool?

- a. Goodison.
- b. the Tate Gallery
- c. Aintree.
- d. Albert Dock.

4. The best way to get from the Roman Catholic to the Anglican Cathedral is to

- a. hope for God's mercy.
- b. take Hope Street.
- c. go through the Cape of Good Hope.
- d. hope for a space capsule.

5. The designer of the Catholic Cathedral was a -----

- a. Roman Catholic.
- b. Protestant and Catholic
- c. Protestant.
- d. Catholic and Protestant.

6. The Bluecoat Chambers building is regarded as being -----

- a. a peaceful area.
- b. a shopping area.
- c. an educational centre.
- d. a painting centre.

7. The Maritime Museum is a place for -----

- a. art exhibition.
- b. business exchange.
- c. historic collection.
- d. ship-building.

8. Albert Dock is now used as -----

- a. a trade and entertainment centre.
- b. a sea port.
- c. a housing centre.
- d. a modern art exhibition.

9. What makes John Moores University special?

- a. the friendly atmosphere.
- b. the easy access to the city.
- c. the music and sporting activities
- d. the use of computer technology in its courses.

10. How do you describe the people of Liverpool?

- a. unfriendly.
- b. good-natured .
- c. dislike foreigners.
- d. arrogant

II. For (11-15) mark true (✓) or false (X):

11. The Roman Catholic Cathedral is close to football grounds. (X)

12. The Anglican Cathedral is a post-medieval wonder. (✓)

13. The Tate Gallery Liverpool is located in the Albert Dock. (✓)

14. One of the best collections of art in Britain is in the Walker Art Gallery. (X)

15. Sefton Park is a private property. (X)

III. For (16-20) write the letter (A - G) of the correct answer :

16. What is Liverpool internationally well known for? (F)

17. The city of Liverpool was named after (D)

18. The transport service through Liverpool is run by (C)

19. Liverpool can be distinguished from other cities by the (E)

20. Galleries are often used for..... (A)

A. collecting and displaying paintings

B. mosques and synagogues

C. Liverline and Mersey Travel

D. the Liverbird

E. Cathedrals

F. sporting and cultural heritage

G. restaurants and exhibition halls

Appendix B: students' reading comprehension test 2

Test 2

Insert an appropriate word or phrase in the spaces provided, choosing the best word or phrase (a-b-c or d) in page (2) for each space (1-20).

Man is said to dominate the earth, but the true masters of the ---(1)--- are the insects, if only in sheer numbers. More than three-quarters of the known living species of animals are insects. There are so many different kinds and ---(2)--- vary so much that no simple definition could take in all the variations. Throughout recorded history insects have been both the delight and ---(3)--- of mankind. A great many diseases of man, his animals and his crops are transmitted by insects. Nevertheless, many other insects are ---(4)--- because they destroy pests, and ensure fruit and seed production. The study of insects ---(5)--- has a great part to play in man's economy.

Locusts are probably the most known harmful insects in the world. ---(6)--- they go, crops are destroyed, trunks of trees can be deformed and branches are broken off trees by the weight of the locusts that ---(7)--- on them. Everything a farmer grows can be eaten in a few hours. In order to control the spread of locusts and to reduce their damage, scientists have studied ---(8)--- behaviour and methods of eradicating them. They believe that the locust lives in two phases. ---(9)---, it lives by itself in the desert, but later on, it changes colour ---(10)--- joins a swarm. More and more locusts join the swarm, as ---(11)--- spreads over a wide area.

Nothing could be easier than just poisoning all the insects in an area to ---(12)---, yet there is no knowing what the final results might be. We have to kill locusts, but we should do it intelligently – ---(13)--- we can poison our natural helpers and ourselves. When sprays are used, we have to be careful ---(14)--- chemicals can get into our food and make us ill. ---(15)---, we try only to spray locusts when they attack our crops. Sometimes it is difficult to see the locusts when we want to kill them, so we spray them all from the air. ---(16)---, birds and animals often die after eating locusts ---(17)--- have been sprayed.

The problem caused by insects will never be overcome completely. ---(18)--- has made agriculture authorities try their best to provide farmers with advice and assistance, as well as to prevent swarms ---(19)--- leaving the desert. In addition, international experts have succeeded in providing governments with early warning when farmlands are likely to be ---(20)---.

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. a. sphere | b. creation | c. planet | d. star |
| 2. a. they | b. their | c. it | d. he |
| 3. a. bliss | b. despair | c. joy | d. dispirited |
| 4. a. useless | b. practical | c. harmful | d. useful |
| 5. a. yet | b. therefore | c. however | d. besides |
| 6. a. wherefore | b. whenever | c. whatever | d. wherever |
| 7. a. put | b. ground | c. land | d. dock |
| 8. a. their | b. these | c. this | d. they |
| 9. a. then | b. in the first | c. later on | d. next |
| 10. a. until | b. so | c. but | d. and |
| 11. a. it | b. they | c. he | d. she |
| 12. a. life | b. death | c. being | d. growth |
| 13. a. thus | b. but | c. otherwise | d. moreover |
| 14. a. because | b. so | c. but | d. and |
| 15. a. while | b. nevertheless | c. in addition | d. for this reason |
| 16. a. when | b. unfortunately | c. seldom | d. hardly |
| 17. a. whose | b. whom | c. which | d. who |
| 18. a. this | b. those | c. they | d. these |
| 19. a. to | b. of | c. from | d. with |
| 20. a. noticed | b. threatened | c. predicted | d. deserted |

Appendix C: List of the interview questions

The interview questions

- Would you please tell me how old are you?
- Are you married or single?
- What country do you live in?
- What school did you study in? (e.g. state or public school, etc.)
- What are you interested in? (e.g. watching TV, reading , playing football etc.)
- Was the text you read easy or difficult? Why?
- What real problems did you encounter? How did you manage to solve them?
- What did you do when you came across a word unfamiliar to you?
- What difficulties did you face during the reading?
- What did you do to overcome the problem(s)?
- Did you read all the text? Wh?
- Did you check your answers? How?
- Did you reread the text? Why?
- Why did you select this word?
- What helped you to use it?
- How did you know that it is the most suitable word?
- What sources of information helped you during the reading process? Which specific concepts were most useful?
- What were the most useful method(s) that helped you to retrieve information from the text?

Appendix D: Details of the students (Group A)

Saudi Arabia:

Student A

Age: 19

Status: Single/Male

Country of origin: Saudi Arabia

Type of school: He went to State school

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: Studied 6 years English

IELTS: 5.5

Interests and hobbies: He dislikes watching TV. He does not know anything outside Arab community. He often reads books about religion

Arrived in GB: July 1998

Tested in: August 1998

Student B

Age: 20

Status: Married/Female

Country of origin: Saudi Arabia

Type of school: She went to State school

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: Studied 6 years English

IELTS: 5.4

Interests and hobbies: She enjoys reading books about religion, drawing, sewing, using the computer

Arrived in GB: October 1998

Tested in : November 1998

Student C

Age: 19

Status: Single/Male

Country of origin: Saudi Arabia

Type of school: He went to State school

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: Studied 6 years English

IELTS: 5.5

Interests and hobbies: He watching TV, swimming, sports

Arrived in GB: November 1998

Tested in : January 1999

Student D

Age: 20

Status: Single/Female

Country of origin: Saudi Arabia

Type of school: She went to State school

Languages: Arabic + English
Education: Studied 6 years English
IELTS: 5.6
Interests and hobbies: She likes travelling, watching TV. She likes reading magazines and newspaper
Arrived in GB: October 1998
Tested in : December 1998

Student E

Age: 21
Status: Single/Male
Country: Saudi Arabia
Type of school: He went to State school
Languages: Arabic + English
Education: Studied 6 years English
TOEFL: 554
He likes playing football, reading books about religion. He likes travelling
Arrived in GB: August 1998
Tested in: October 1998

Yemen

Student A

Age: 20
Status: Single/Male
Type of school: He went to State school
Country of origin: Yemen (Adan)
Languages: Arabic + English
Education: Studied 6 years English
IELTS: 5.7
Interests and hobbies: He often likes playing football, watches TV and reads magazines and books
Arrived in GB: September 1998
Tested in: October 1998

Student B

Age: 20
Status: Single/Male
Type of school. He went to State school
Country of origin: Yemen
Languages: Arabic + English
Education: 6 years English
TOEFL: 556
Interests and hobbies. He Likes watching TV, reading magazines. He also likes sports

Arrived in GB: December 1997

Tested in: February 1998

Student C

Age: 21

Status: Married/Male

Type of school: He went to State school

Country of origin: Yemen

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: Studied 6 years English

TOEFL: 550

Interests and hobbies: He likes different types of sports and climbing the mountains

Arrived in GB: July 1998

Tested in: September 1998

Student D

Age: 19

Status: Single/ Female

Type of school: She went to State school

Country of origin: Yemen

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: 6 years English

IELTS: 5.4

Interests and hobbies: She likes sewing, decorating and cooking

Arrived in GB: December 1998

Tested in : January 1999

Student E

Age: 20

Status: Married/Female

Type of school. She went to State school

Country of origin: Yemen

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: 6 years English

TOEFL: 550

Interests and hobbies: She likes watching T.V. drawing, travelling and reading anything

Arrived in GB: November 1998

Tested in: December 1998

Oman

Student A

Age: 19

Status: Single/Male

Type of School: He went to State school.

Country of origin: Oman

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: Studied 6 years English.

IELTS: 5.7

Interests and hobbies: He likes TV, reading magazines, stories etc. He likes travelling and various sports

Arrived in GB: November 1998

Tested in: January 1999

Student B

Age: 20

Status: Single/ Female

Country of origin: Oman

Type of school: She went to State school

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: She studied 6 years English

IELTS: 5.6

Interests and hobbies: She likes sport, running. She watches TV. She likes drawing and reading

Arrived in GB: December 1997

Tested in: January 1998

Student C

Age: 19

Status: Single/ Female

Country of origin: Oman

Type of school: She went to State school

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: She studied 6 years English

IELTS: 5.5

Interests and hobbies: She likes cooking and sport.

Arrived in GB: October 1998

Tested in: December 1998

Student D

Age: 19

Status: Single/Male

Type of School: He went to State school
Country of origin: Oman
Languages: Arabic + English
Education: Studied 6 years English
IELTS: 5.6
Interests and hobbies: He likes sport, watching TV and swimming
Arrived in GB: August 1998
Tested in: October 1998

Student E

Age: 19
Status: Single/ Female
Country of origin: Oman
Type of school: She went to State school
Languages: Arabic + English
Education: Studied 6 years English
IELTS: 5.6
Interests and hobbies: She likes watching TV and swimming
Arrived in GB: December 1998
Tested in: January 1999

Libya

Student A

Age: 20
Status: Married/Male
Country of origin: Libya
Type of school: He went to State school
Languages: Arabic + English
Education: He studied 6 years English
TOEFL: 550
Interests and hobbies: He likes sport, reading books on his area and watching TV.
He is interested in reading magazines and newspapers
Arrived in GB: November 1997
Tested in: December 1998

Student B

Age: 19
Status: Single/Male
Country of origin: Libya
Type of school: He went to State school.
Languages: Arabic + English

Education: Studied 6 years English
TOEFL: 540
Interests and hobbies: He likes watching TV and sports
Arrived in GB: July 1998
Tested in: September 1998

Student C

Age: 19
Status: Single/Male
Type of school. He went to State school
Country of origin: Libya
Languages: Arabic + English
Education: 6 years English
TOEFL: 556
Interests and hobbies: He likes playing football, camping, watching T.V and riding horses
Arrived in GB: November 1998
Tested in: January 1999

Student D

Age: 21
Status: Single/Male
Country of origin: Libya
Type of school: He went to State school
Languages: Arabic + English
Education: Studied 6 years English
TOEFL: 545
Interests and hobbies: He likes watching TV, reading magazines in Arabic and some stories in English. He also likes sports
Arrived in GB: January 1998
Tested in: February 1998

Student E

Age: 19
Status: Single/Male
Type of school: He went to State school
Country of origin: Libya
Languages: Arabic + English
Education: Studied 6 years English
IELTS: 5.6
Interests and hobbies: He likes sport and watching T.V
Arrived in GB: September 1998
Tested in: October 1998

Syria

Student A

Age: 20

Status: Single/Male

Country of origin: Syria

Type of school: He went to State school

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: Studied 6 years English. (literary section)

TOEFL: 570

Interests and hobbies: He likes watching TV a lot. He likes reading a lot. He likes sport. He likes listening to music and songs

Arrived in GB: August 1998

Tested in: September 1998

Student B

Age: 19

Status: Single/Female

Country: Syria

Type of school: She went to State school

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: Studied 6 years English. (Literary section)

IELTS: 5.6

Interests and hobbies: She likes reading books, She likes films, theatre, travelling and watching T.V.

Arrived in GB: August 1998

Tested in: October 1998

Student C

Age: 19

Status: Single/Male

Type of school: He went to State school

Country of origin: Syria

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: Studied 6 years English (Scientific section)

IELTS: 5.5

Interests and hobbies: He likes sports, watching TV

Arrived in GB: December 1998

Tested in: February 1999

Student D

Age: 20

Status: Single/Male

Country of origin: Libya

Type of school: He went to State school.

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: Studied 6 years English.

IELTS: 5.5

Interests and hobbies: He likes watching TV, reading magazines in Arabic and some stories in English. He likes sports

Arrived in GB: January 1998

Tested in: February 1998

Student E

Age: 20

Status: Single/Female

Type of school: She went to State school

Country of origin: Syria

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: Studied 6 years English (Scientific section)

TOEFL: 558

Interests and hobbies: She likes reading, watching T.V a lot, decorating, making friends, she also likes travelling and visiting other countries

Arrived in GB: September 1998

Tested in: October 1998

Appendix E: Details of the students (Group B)

Palestine

Student A

Age: 19

Status: Single/Male

Country of origin: Palestine

Type of school. He went to State school

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: Studied 6 years English.

IELTS: 6.2

Interests and hobbies: He likes watching TV a lot. He likes reading a lot. He likes sport. He likes listening to music and songs

Arrived in GB: August 1998

Tested in: September 1998

Student B

Age: 20

Status: Single/Female

Country of origin: Palestine

Type of school. She went to State school

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: Studied 6 years English

IELTS: 5.7

Interests and hobbies: She likes reading, watching T.V., travelling, music, listening to songs, cooking

Arrived in GB: October 1998

Tested in: November 1998

Student C

Age: 20

Status: Single/Male

Country of origin: Palestine

Type of school. He went to State school

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: Studied 6 years English

TOEFL: 560

Interests and hobbies: He likes watching T.V, sports, drawing, adventures, listening to music, likes poetry and literature

Arrived in GB: October 1998

Tested in: December 1998

Student D

Age: 19

Status: Single/Male

Country of origin: Palestine

Type of school. He went to State school

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: Studied 6 years English

IELTS: 5.8

Interests and hobbies: He likes reading literature, magazines, stories, poetry, history, and novels. He likes playing football

Arrived in GB: August 1998

Tested in: September 1998

Student E

Age: 20

Status: Single/Female

Country of origin: Palestine

Type of school. She went to State school

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: Studied 6 years English

IELTS: 5.7

Interests and hobbies: She likes reading, drawing, adventures, music and travelling

Arrived in GB: September 1998

Tested in: November 1998

Egypt

Student A

Age: 19

Status: Single/Male

Country of origin: Egypt

Type of school. He went to Grammar school

Languages: Arabic + English + French

Education: 7 years English

TOEFL: 560

Interests and hobbies: He likes watching TV, reading magazines and stories. He also likes travelling and sports. He likes reading literature

Arrived in GB: November 1997

Tested in: January 1998

Student B

Age: 19

Status: Single/Male

Country of origin: Egypt

Type of school. He went to State school

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: Studied 7 years English

IELTS: 5.8

Interests and hobbies: He likes watching TV, music, singing, reading magazines, stories and newspapers a lot. He also likes sport

Arrived in GB: December 1998

Tested in: February 1999

Student C

Age: 20

Status: Single/Female

Country of origin: Egypt

Type of school. She went to State school

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: 7 years English

IELTS: 5.6

Interests and hobbies: She likes reading a lot of different kinds of books. She also likes travelling and sports

Arrived in GB: September 1998

Tested in: October 1998

Student D

Age: 19

Status: Single/Female

Country of origin: Egypt

Type of school. She went to State school

Languages: Arabic + English + French

Education: Studied 7 years English

TOEFL: 560

Interests and hobbies: She likes sports, swimming, running, playing volleyball, watching TV, music, singing, reading newspapers, magazines, stories, poetry, literature Arab and foreign

Arrived in GB: July 1998

Tested in: August 1998

Student E

Age: 20

Status: Single/Male

Country of origin: Egypt

Type of school. He went to State school

Languages: Arabic + English
Education: 7 years English
IELTS: 6.1
Interests and hobbies: He likes sports, watching T.V and reading
Arrived in GB: December 1998
Tested in: January 1999

Kuwait

Student A

Age: 19
Status: Single/Male
Country of origin: Kuwait
Type of school. He went to State school
Languages: Arabic + English
Education: Studied 7 years English
IELTS: 6
Interests and hobbies: He likes horse riding, swimming, watching TV video and satellite. He loves music. He likes talking, reading stories, poems and literature
Arrived in GB: July 1998
Tested in: September 1998

Student B

Age: 19
Status: Single/Male
Country of origin: Kuwait
Type of school: He went to State school
Languages: Arabic + English
Education: Studied 7 years English
IELTS: 5.6
Interests and hobbies: He likes sports, watching TV, music, reading different kinds of magazines
Arrived in GB: July 1998
Tested in: September 1998

Student C

Age: 20
Status: Single/Female
Country of origin: Kuwait
Type of school: She went to State school
Languages: Arabic + English
Education: 7 years English
IELTS: 5.8
Interests and hobbies: She enjoys reading a lot. She likes watching T.V, playing volleyball, travelling to other countries, spending holidays
Arrived in GB: September 1998

Tested in: November 1998

Student D

Age: 19

Status: Single/Female

Country of origin: Kuwait

Type of school: She went to State school

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: Studied 7 years English

IELTS: 6

Interests and hobbies: She enjoys watching TV, music, reading, sports, decorating, painting, sewing and travelling

Arrived in GB: August 1998

Tested in: October 1998

Student E

Age: 19

Status: Single/Female

Type of school: She went to State school

Country: Kuwait

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: Studied 7 years English

IELTS: 5.9

Interests and hobbies: She likes travelling, reading a lot such as sporting magazines, stories, history, literature. She enjoys swimming and listening to songs music

Arrived in GB: September 1998

Tested in: November 1998

Jordan

Student A

Age: 20

Status: Single/Male

Type of School: He went to State school

Country of origin: Jordan

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: Studied 7 years English

IELTS: 6

Interests and hobbies: He likes TV, reading magazines, sports and travelling. He often reads books about science, maths, and politics about other countries. He also joined a course in the British council where he got an image about Britain

Arrived in GB: July 1998

Tested in: September 1998

Student B

Age: 19

Status: Single/ Female

Country of origin: Jordan

Type of school. She went to State school

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: Studied 7 years English

TOFEL: 580

Interests and hobbies: She likes watching TV a lot, reading stories and books about science. She likes sport, travelling, swimming and playing volleyball

Arrived in GB: August 1998

Tested in: October 1998

Student C

Age: 19

Status: Single/Male

Country of origin: Jordan

Type of school. He went to State school

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: 7 years English

IELTS: 5.8

Interests and hobbies: He likes listening to music, reading much about history, literature, and religious education. He enjoys sports and decorating

Arrived in GB: December 1997

Tested in: February 1998

Student D

Age: 21

Status: Single/Male

Type of School: He went to State school

Country of origin: Jordan

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: Studied 7 years English

IELTS: 6.2

Interests and hobbies: He is interested in reading books about history, Islam, magazines, literature. He likes sports. He enjoys listening to songs, music and poetry

Arrived in GB: September 1998

Tested in: November 1998

Student E

Age: 19

Status: Single/Male

Country of origin: Jordan

Type of school. He went to State school

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: Studied 7 years English

IELTS: 6.3

Interests and hobbies: He is interested in sports, watching TV, listening to music, reading all sorts of books, literature, history, newspapers as well as magazines. He enjoys travelling

Arrived in GB: July 1998

Tested in: August 1998

Algeria

Student A

Age: 20

Status: Single/Male

Country of origin: Algeria

Type of school: He went to State school

Languages: Arabic + French + English

Education: Studied 6 years English

IELTS: 6.2

Interests and hobbies: He likes reading magazines and newspapers a lot. He also likes sport and watching TV. He also likes reading books about English literature, poems and stories

Arrived in GB: August 1998

Tested in: October 1998

Student B

Age: 19

Status: Single/Male

Country of origin: Algeria

Type of school. He went to State school

Languages: Arabic + French + English

Education: 6 years English

TOEFL: 570

Interests and hobbies: He likes reading all sorts of magazines, newspapers, stories, and literature. He also enjoys music and travelling. He is interested in sports.

Arrived in GB: November 1998

Tested in: December 1998

Student C

Age: 20

Status: Single/Male

Country of origin: Algeria

Type of school. He went to State school

Languages: Arabic + French + English

Education: Studied 6 years English

TOEFL: 580

Interests and hobbies: He enjoys watching TV, music, singing, reading a lot of magazines and newspapers. He is interested in sport

Arrived in GB: June 1998

Tested in: July 1998

Student D

Age: 20

Status: Single/Male

Type of School: He went to State school

Country of origin: Algeria

Languages: Arabic + French + English

Education: Studied 6 years English

ILETS: 5.7

Interests and hobbies: He enjoys sports, running, watching TV, reading, writing stories and poetry

Arrived in GB: July 1998

Tested in: October 1998

Student E

Age: 19

Status: Single/Male

Country of origin: Algeria

Type of school. He went to State school

Languages: Arabic + French + English

Education: Studied 6 years English

IELTS: 5.6

Interests and hobbies: He likes watching TV, reading, sport, hunting, climbing mountains

Arrived in GB: October 1998

Tested in: December 1998

Appendix F: Sample of the students' responses (Group A)

Saudi Arabia:

Student A

Age: 19

Status: Single/Male

Country of origin: Saudi Arabia

Type of school: He went to state school (Public)

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: Studied 6 years English.

Interests and hobbies: He dislikes watching TV. He does not know anything outside Arab community. He often reads books about religion.

Arrived in GB: July 1998

Tested in: August 1998

Test 1

It is difficult because الحقيقة كثير من المفردات صعبة there are many words I did not understand. I never see them or read about them مثل كثير like Beatles, Tate Gallery, Bluecoat Chamber and others. يوجد أيضا كثير من الأسئلة صعبة ما فهمتها There are also difficult questions because I did not understand the meaning of words. I read the text and each paragraph I read the sentence in which the word of the question appears I tried to think of the meaning of the difficult word(s). Sometimes I could understand and sometimes I could not. أحيانا أظن الجواب I sometimes either guess the meaning or guess the answer or sometimes أختار أي جواب I chose any option like question 1 and others.

I.

1. 'I chose 'a football team' because the text is about Liverpool and the first paragraph talks about sport. نعم انا ما فهمت كلمة بيتلز. ما عندي فكرة. I do not understand. I have no idea about the word 'Beatles'. What does it mean?. Yes I refer to the passage but I did not understand it'. (F/C1)
2. 'I chose 'educational' because first I do not know what does 'Grand National' mean. I read the sentences paragraph 1. They talk about grand national and then in the following sentences talk about education. So I chose d'. (CL/1)
3. 'Goodison' because when I refer to the text again and read the sentence paragraph two. I understand that Anfield and Goodison parks where you see football'. (S/L)
4. 'I chose 'hope for God's mercy' because it is the suitable answer. انا ركزت على Well! I focused on the word 'church' so it is for God. So for seeking God's mercy. That is what I understand'. (K1)
5. 'I chose 'protestant' because that what I know about the Christian either Protestant or Catholic. So I chose c'. (nas)

6. 'This question is so difficult. هذا السؤال صعب جدا. I did not understand neither the questions nor from the text because I have no idea about the Bluecoat chamber. So I left it'. (A1/C)
7. 'I chose 'historic collection' because I know the word history and the adjective is 'historic'. I read the sentence in paragraph three then I related the word متحف 'museum' to history which follows the word museum in the sentence'. (S/L).
8. I chose 'a housing centre'. I read the text, and I understand in paragraph 3 that it is 'a housing centre' for my answer. لا أدري. I do not know anything about 'Albert Dock'. Is it correct?'. (CL/1).
9. 'I chose 'the use of computer technology..' because I had an idea about JMU. أنا سمعت عن الجامعة I heard about it. I also understand from the text paragraph 1 that JMU is good at information technology in teaching and learning'. (C+L).
10. 'good-nature' I found difficulty in this question because in the text it is written friendly but I focus on good nature then I read the text again where it is written that they are good'. (Ts/L)

II.

11. 'I put 'true' because I understand from the text that there is football ground near the cathedral' yes from the text. (CL/1) نعم من النص
12. 'I hesitate between true and false then I put 'true'. I don't know I put true'. (Nas)
13. 'Yes I put 'true' because I think. I only guess. I did not understand from the text. It is too difficult'. (R)
14. 'I Just put 'true' because I did not understand the question. نعم Yes I refer to the text but also I did not understand it'. (CL/1).
15. 'I put 'false' because a friend of mine من صديقي told me that they used to play football in a park called 'Sefton'. I also understand from the sentence that you can walk, cycle, jog and sit. So I thought this is not private'. (C+L).

III.

16. 'I chose (F) because I heard that Liverpool is well known for sport بصراحة أنا سمعت إنها مشهورة بالكرة (F)'. (I/C)
17. 'I chose (D) because I guess it is true.wonder. post والكلمة الاخيرة ما فهمت كلمة. this question is difficult. (R). بالصراحة هذا السؤال صعب
18. 'I chose (C) because I understand from the sentence paragraph 3 that 'Liverline and Mersey Travel is for transport'. (S/L)
19. 'I chose (B) because I understand from the question talks about Liverpool ليفربول and is distinguished because of the mosque. I do not know'. (F/C1) متميزة بالمسجد
20. 'I do not understand the word galleries, and I get confused between انا ارتبكة ما بين a and g . I also could not understand which one. Both are in the paragraph. I know restaurant and exhibition halls meaning. (F/C1) لأنني أعرف معنى (G) chose (G)

Test 2

Oh, this test is difficult. It is more difficult than the first test. The text has many difficult words and sentences. I understand the text. It is about insects and locusts and man. I read the sentence if I understand the word or I forget it. There are many words in the questions and in the options I don't understand but also I read the sentence after and before then I fill the gap. If I do not understand the sentence or the options I guess. I left one question because it is difficult I do not understand the options.

1. 'I read the sentences in the first paragraph. I decided b or c . I chose 'creation' لأن الجملة تتحدث عن مخلوقات because I understand from the sentences that they talk about creation: man, insects, animals'. (F+L1).
2. 'I chose 'they' because I think it is the right answer. I just chose it'. (R)
3. 'This question is difficult because I did not understand the options. So I left it'. (A1)
4. 'I chose the word 'harmful' because I know that insects are harmful and in the sentence they destroy and cause disease لأن في الجملة تدمر و تسبب الامراض'. (F/L1)
5. 'I know that the text is about insects but I don't understand the options. So I guess it is 'therefore'. (R1)
6. 'I also find difficulty in this question because of the options. I understand the sentence. It is difficult the options are similar . I guess it is 'wherever'. (R)
7. 'I chose 'land' because the locusts land on not put or ground'. (G/L)
8. 'their' because it refers to locusts and in the sentence it talks about their damage and behaviour and methods لأن فيها خراب وطرق'. (G/L)
9. 'I chose 'in the first' because there are two phases of locusts لأن الجراد يعيش في طورين I know before. I also understand from the sentences in paragraph 2'. (F+L)
10. I chose 'until' because it indicates that a locust joins a swarm when it changes colour'. (G/L1)
11. 'I hesitated between (a or b) because the other options can not be the right answers. They are used for people. Then I chose 'they'. It refers to locusts'. (E1)
12. 'I chose 'death' because I understand from the sentence the word سم يقاتل poison then I relate the word death to poison'. (S/L)
13. 'I read the sentence and I guess it would be 'otherwise'. I guess it is right because of poison ourselves'. (R)
14. 'I chose 'because' this is what I know. We have to be careful because chemicals can get into food. لأنها سبب It is a reason. I also read the sentence to be sure. Yes I know the meaning of 'because' it is used to answer why'. (F+L)
15. 'I did not understand the sentence. So I guess it is 'while'. (R1).
16. 'This is also difficult question. I tried to understand the sentence but the options still difficult. I left it. I do not understand it'. (A1)

17. 'I chose 'who' because I think it is correct. It refers to people who spray the locusts. And it تربط الجمل joins the two sentences'. (L/F1)
18. 'I chose 'these' because it refers to the insects in the sentence before'. (L/F1)
19. 'It is also difficult question. I managed to understand the sentence but the options are difficult. I could not understand the meanings. Which one to choose. So I chose 'of تأخذ takes ing_'. (R1)
20. 'I chose 'threatened' because first I underlined the whole sentence I mean the words in the last sentence. اعرف معنى يهدد I understand the word 'threatened' refers to the word 'warning'. Yes I know the meaning of the word threaten'. (U).

Yemen

Student B

Age: 20

Status: Single/Male

Type of school. He went to State school

Country of origin: Yemen

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: 6 years English

TOEFL: 556

Interests and hobbies: He likes watching TV, reading magazines. He also likes sports

Arrived in GB: December 1997

Tested in: February 1998

Test 1

To a certain extent the text is easy but the difficulties that I faced is that I came across some strange words that I did not understand. Well some words I have background. Some questions are still difficult because they include also strange words. What I did was that I read the sentence and I tried to understand the meaning of the words then if I could not guess the meaning just I left it. I also tried to understand the whole context of the sentence. I read first the text and then I answered the questions. I read the text once. Those I was not sure about the answer I went back to the text

I.

1. 'I selected ' a music group' because I have an idea about the Beatles from a friend. But because of the options and the first paragraph says about sporting, education in the first paragraph it talks about sport it also talks about Liverpool technology and courses it is not written anything about the 'Beatles'. But I read the second paragraph where mentioned the word 'music'. I know it is music. This made me sure of the right answer. I went through the options and found the suitable answer is only 'd'. (C+L)
2. 'I chose 'musical' because that what I understand from the text'. (F/C1)
3. 'I chose 'Goodison' because I knew that 'Goodison' is a sport centre. I heard about it. But I am not sure whether people go there to see football. So I read the text again paragraph two. I understand from the sentence that the word 'crowd' means people and there is 'where' which refers to a place'. in the text paragraph 2 'you can be part of the crowd at Anfield or Goodison where you will see football'. I understand from the sentence that it is a football ground where people can see football'. (C+L)
4. 'I got confused between the answers because each option has the word 'hope'. So I finally decided to choose 'hope for God's mercy'. I just matched it to the text then I decided it'. (R1)
5. 'I chose 'Roman Catholic' because I thought that the Roman built their own cathedral. I chose (a). I make up my own mind according to my previous

information'. (P/C1)

6. 'I chose 'a peaceful area' because I understand from the text that the 'Bluecoat Chambers building' is peaceful place. In paragraph 3 I found the word 'peaceful building and the sentence ends with called. So I chose (a)'. (Ts/L)
7. 'Because I heard that a museum is a place that collected items I refer to the text to check my answer then I chose 'historic collection'. (I/C)
8. 'I chose 'a housing centre' because I looked at the options I concentrated on (a and c) I realised it could be (c) because I understand from the text that Albert Dock now is used for housing'. (E1)
9. 'I chose 'the use of computer' because I read about JMU and I knew that it is famous of IT. But I returned to the text to check the correct information. I analysed the sentences paragraph 1 where I found that John Moores is a university which has 'pioneered the use of information technology'. So I understand from this that JMU is special in computer and information technology in its courses'. (C+L)
10. 'I chose 'good nature' because I had an idea about the people of Liverpool from a friend. And in the text where I analysed the sentence paragraph 4 it says "friendly and sympathetic" so I refer to these words which means 'good-natured'. (C+L)

II

11. 'I put 'false' because in the text it is not mentioned that it is close'. (MT)
12. 'I just put 'false' because I did not understand the phrase 'medieval wonder'. I read the text again and again but I could not understand the meaning of the sentence. I did not understand the meaning of the words'. (CL/1)
13. 'I put 'false' because when I read the text again and did not find the answer'. (F/C1)
14. 'I put 'true' first I do not know what is 'Walker Art'. I had no idea about it but that what I understand from the text'. (CL1)
15. 'I just put 'true'. First I did not understand the questions. I know the meaning of park but what is Sefton. I just guess. Yes I refer to the text there is no private'. (F/C1)

III

16. 'I chose (F) because I have knowledge about Liverpool sporting. I know that Liverpool is famous for sporting. Everyone knows that Liverpool is famous of sport'. (C)
17. 'I left it I read the questions but I do not know which is the answer. No I have no idea about the meaning of liverbird but I think it must be a name of a place or a river'. (A1/C)
18. 'I chose (C) I tried to underline the whole sentence then I compared the answers then I understood from the text in the last sentence paragraph three that it is the most suitable'. (U)
19. 'I chose (E) because the text which says that the city of Liverpool is distinguished'. (Ts/L)
20. 'I chose (A) because I guess it after I finished the questions. No I did not refer to the text (R)

Test 2

It was slightly more difficult than the previous text because it has some technical words like eradicating, swarm, variation that I do not understand. The text is well structured but the grammar is difficult to understand. I read the sentence and I tried to work out and understand the whole context of the text. I tried to understand what the word means exactly. If I do not I ignore it.

1. 'I chose 'planet' because I know its meaning as well as the main concept of the text. I read the first sentence in the first paragraph which is about the earth which is planet. I went back to the text to be sure'. (F+L)
2. 'I get confused between the words 'they' and 'their'. Later I chose 'their' because it is the only suitable answer. It refers to the issue before'. (L/L1)
3. 'despair' because in the sentence it says that throughout recorded history insects have been both the delight and the word 'despair' is the opposite of 'delight'. (G/L)
4. 'I chose 'harmful' because the word harmful follows by destroy so it must be something bad'. (F/L1)
5. 'I was not sure which one then I thought of (therefore and however) then I read the text again. Later I chose 'however'. I think it could be the right answer. Because it talks about if you do something it is like mathematics you have to prove it'. (E1)
6. 'I chose 'wherever' because it talks about place. Again because of 'go'. (G/L)
7. 'Because insects 'land' on. It is a verb'. (G/L)
8. 'I chose 'these' because the sentence talks about methods and about behaviour of locusts and methods which show plural'. (G/L1)
9. 'I chose 'in the first' because the sentence talks about two steps. So it must be the first one. So I have to choose the first'. (S/L)
10. 'I chose 'so' because it adds information after doing something'. (G/L1)
11. 'I chose 'they' because of locusts it refers to the word locusts'. (L/F1)
12. 'Because poisoning is a substance used for killing. I read the sentence from the beginning and 'death' refers to poison'. (S/L)
13. 'I chose 'thus' means because. I tried to read the sentence but I did not understand it. Yes it is difficult. No idea about the word 'otherwise'. (F+L1)
14. 'I chose 'because'. Why because it is clear. Yes I know about the way to kill insects and about chemicals. The sentence also shows a consequence of something it is a result'. (F+L)
15. 'in addition' because added information. Other words I don't understand'. (R1)
16. 'I chose 'unfortunately' because I know the meaning of it. I also have an idea about what happens when we spray locusts with chemicals. The sentence also means something happened without our intention because we don't want to kill birds'. (F+L)
17. 'whose' refers to locusts. I get confused between whose and which'. (E1)
18. 'I chose 'this'. It refers back to the problem in the previous sentence'. (G/L)
19. 'I chose 'from' I do not know just I guess'. (R)
20. 'threatened' because this is clear. I know about it. I studied that experts often warn countries about locusts. Yes I know the meaning of threaten. And in the sentence the word warning'. (F+L)

Oman

Student E

Age: 19

Status: Single/ Female

Country of origin: Oman

Type of school: She went to State school

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: Studied 6 years English

IELTS: 5.6

Interests and hobbies: She likes watching TV and swimming

Arrived in GB: December 1998

Tested in: January 1999

Test 1

The text to a great extent is difficult and I could not understand most of the questions because they include strange words and phrases. I did not understand the meaning of many words like Beatles, Grand National, monument, Aintree, gallery, Chamber and so on. I tried to guess the meaning and also many answers of the questions.

I.

1. 'I actually could not find the answer in the text. So I Just think it is 'music group'. (R)
2. 'I chose 'sporting' because from the general understanding of paragraph 2'.(Ts/L)
3. 'I chose 'Aintree' because when I read the sentence paragraph 2 I understand that Aintree is the place where you can see football'. (CL/1)
4. 'I chose 'take hope street' because I read the text paragraph 4 then I put a line under the words hope street. Then I interpret the sentence'. (U)
5. 'I tried to understand the question but it is difficult. It contains unknown words. I tried to find the answer from the text. Then I chose 'Roman Catholic' according to my understanding'. (CL/1)
6. 'I chose 'a painting centre' because in the text it says that paintings are displayed ... Well I think it could also be a 'painting centre'. Is not it. I do not know'.(CL/1)
7. 'business exchange' because when I refer to the text again I understand it is for business'. (CL/1)
8. 'I chose 'a housing centre' because after reading paragraph 3 I assume it is the most suitable answer that what I understand. There is the word 'houses' so it is 'housing centre'. No I have no idea about Albert Dock. No I did not read or heard about it'. (Ts/L1)
9. 'I chose 'the use of computer...' because I just match the answer with the text. It is written and that what I understand from the sentence in paragraph 1'. (MT)
10. 'I chose (b) that what I understand from the text'. (Ts/L)

II.

11. 'Actually, I left this question because I could not understand it at all. If I do not understand the question how can I find the answer. I did not guess. Actually I left it to the end but I have no time left'. (A1/C)
12. 'This question is too difficult because I could not understand the words then I tried to look in the text. But also I could not find the answer. So I just put 'False'. (R1)
13. 'I put 'false' because when I read the text again I understand that it is not Tate Gallery not referred to 'Albert Dock'. No I do not know what Tate gallery is'. (CL/1)
14. 'I only put 'true' because that what I understand from the text in paragraph 3'. (CL/1)
15. 'false'. I think that what is in the text. When I reread the text paragraph three, I understand it is not private. Well the words 'you can walk, or simply sit and admire'. All these show that it is not private. That what I understand'. (Ts/L)

III.

16. 'I chose (G) because that what I understand from the text'. (Ts/L1)
17. 'I left this question because I could not understand it. How can I choose anyone'. (A1/C)
18. 'I chose (C) because I get it from the text paragraph 3. I understand that 'Liverline and Mersey Travel from the last sentence'. (S/L)
19. '(E) I also get it from the text in paragraph 4 it is said that Liverpool is distinguished by the two cathedrals'. (Ts/L)
20. 'I chose (F) because I think it is the best answer and this what I understand from the question. I did not refer to the text because I understand from the question'. (C/L1)

Test 2

Well again this test is similar to the first test. Yes there are some difficult words in the questions. At the beginning I read the whole text. Yes as a whole to get general idea before I answer. Yes of course it assisted me.

1. 'I chose 'planet' because the first sentence in the text shows that it talks about the planet not sphere or star or creation. Yes I know the meaning of planet and the meaning of other options. But that what I know from the sentence'. (F+L)
2. 'I chose 'they' because it is the proper word. It refers to the sentence before'. (F+L)
3. 'I chose 'joy' because it shows the same sense of the sentence and gives the same impression'. (S/L1)
4. 'I chose 'harmful' because first I think it could be useless or harmful. Because the sentences shows that they destroy and cause problems. That what I know about locusts. But later I chose harmful'. (E1)
5. 'I really could not answer this question easily because of the gap it is not easy to understand what it is suitable so I just guess it would be 'besides' that what I just understand'. (R1)
6. 'I chose 'wherever' because that what I understand from the sentence. (S/L)

7. 'I chose 'land' because it is the proper answer and the other options are wrong. The text shows that locusts land on'. (Ts/L)
8. 'I first get confused whether to choose (their or these) but when I read the sentence again I decided it is 'their' would be the suitable answer because refers to the behaviour and ways of the locusts'. (Ts/L)
9. 'I chose 'in the first' because it is known that a locust lives in two phases. Yes I learnt and read about it and it is mentioned in the text'. (F+L)
10. 'I chose 'until' because it shows the final stage of join a swarm'. (G/L1)
11. 'I chose 'they' because it is the right. It refers to locusts'. (L/L1)
12. 'It is no doubt 'death' because that the meaning of the sentence'. (S/L)
13. 'I understand the options but it is difficult to understand what is the best one. I read the paragraph again. Finally I just chose 'otherwise'. I think it is the closer answer'. (R)
14. 'I chose 'so' this is the consequence of using the chemical. Yes I know the meaning of 'until'. Is it wrong?'. (G/L1)
15. 'I Just think it is 'nevertheless' although I have no idea about the meaning of the options except the first one. It is difficult even the sentence is difficult'. (R1)
16. 'I chose 'when' because this is the result when we spray locusts. Yes this is the meaning I got'. (F+L1)
17. 'I chose 'which' because it is the most suitable answer. I know its function and it joins the idea and the meaning as well'. (F+L)
18. 'I really find difficulty to get the right answer because they do the same function. Later I decided to choose 'they' since it is the most suitable'. (F+L1)
19. 'I chose (of) because it takes ing. Yes from also could be right both of them are right. I just chose of'. (F/L1)
20. 'I chose 'noticed' because this is what experts usually did when the farmlands are going to be attacked. Yes I get it from the sentence. No I do not know the meaning of threatened'. (L/L1)

Libya

Student D

Age: 21

Status: Single/Male

Country of origin: Libya

Type of school: He went to State school

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: Studied 6 years English

TOEFL: 545

Interests and hobbies: He likes watching TV, enjoys reading magazines in Arabic and some stories in English. He likes sports

Arrived in GB: January 1998

Tested in: February 1998

Test 1

The text can be said to be difficult because it has some difficult words. I read the text when I found difficulty I tried to match the answers or guess the meaning.

I.

1. 'I chose 'a major seaport' because I get the answer from the text that what I understand from paragraph'. It is written just after the word 'beatles'. No I have no idea about the meaning of 'Beatles'. (CL/1)
2. 'I chose 'artistic' because I think it is an art activity. No I could not get it from the text. It is not clear. I do not know about 'Grand National'. (C1)
3. 'Goodison' because I understand from the text it is Goodison. Where you can see football. Yes I understand from the sentence where I found the word Goodison. No I do not know. But I think it is a stadium'. (S/L)
4. 'I also chose 'take hope street' because I just match the answers with the words in paragraph three where I found the words hope street. No I have no idea about Roman Catholic or Anglican Cathedrals. What are these?'. (MT)
5. 'I chose 'Roman Cathoile'. Just as I understand it from the text'. (Ts/L1)
6. 'Because I understand that it is a 'shopping area'. I think it is the answer'. (C/L1)
7. 'I chose 'historic collection' because I first know the meaning of museum. But I am not sure about the word Maritime. Then I go to the text again. I found the word 'History' then I think it is 'historic collection' which is the best answer'. (C+L)
8. 'I chose 'a modern art exhibition' because in the paragraph it is mentioned that Albert Dock is for art exhibition. No I never heard about Albert Dock'. (C/L1)
9. 'I chose 'the use of computer technology' first I have an idea about JMU. From my uncle. He studied in JMU business department. I also referred to the text to be sure'. (C+L)
10. 'The same could be said as the previous answer. I chose 'good nature' because I know that people in Liverpool are generally good although there is violence. Yes I also read the text I understand that they are good and friendly'. (C+L)

II.

11. 'I put 'false' because in the text when I compared the question. I found that there are no football grounds near the word cathedrals'. (MT)
12. 'This is a very difficult question. I read the text but I could not understand. Then I just put 'false'. (CL/1)
13. 'Actually I could not understand this question. What the word 'located' means in the question. So finally I put 'false'. (Q/L1)
14. 'I put 'true' because in the text it is written that it is the best. That what I understand the 'Walker Art Gallery' is the best collections of art'. (Ts/L1)
15. 'false' because when I read the text and analysed the sentence in paragraph three I understand that it is for everybody to walk to play to run. No I have no idea about 'Sefton Park'. I know the word 'park'. (S/L)

III.

16. '(F) because that what everyone knows about Liverpool. It is not direct in the text but you can guess it is mentioned. But I know it before. In the T.V'. (I/C)
17. 'I found difficulty in this question because it is not clear in the text. Therefore I guess it is (E). Because that what I can get'. (R1)
18. 'I chose (C) because I understand from the paragraph three'. (Ts/L)
19. 'This is the most direct question. It needs no efforts. Yes I chose (B) because I understand the answer from the text paragraph 4'. (Ts/L)
20. 'I chose (G) because this is what you can get from the general idea'. (CL/1)

Test 2

There are difficult questions. When I faced unknown words or phrases I just forget about them. Well first I tried to guess the meaning from the text.

1. 'I chose 'planet' because I think it is the suitable answer. It can not be the other options. The sentence meaning indicates planet'. (S/L)
2. 'I chose 'they' because it refers to 'there are different kinds'. Yes it is the proper word. It is used for plural. O yes I know its function'. (F+L)
3. 'I really get confused about the options. Then I tried to eliminate and compare the answer according to the sentence meaning. I then chose 'joy' because it goes with the meaning of 'delight'. (S/L1)
4. 'harmful' because of the insects they are harmful'. (S/L1)
5. 'First I read the sentence then I go back to the options which really are unclear to me. I just tried to eliminate. So I chose 'besides'. I think it may be right. That what I understand'. (E1)
6. 'I chose 'wherever'. I think it is right. That what is shown in the sentence'. (S/L)
7. 'I think it is the best word 'land'. Yes I know its meaning. Yes, it is a verb and it is right. Locusts land on the trees'. (F+L)
8. 'I chose 'these' because it describes the locusts'. (Ts/L1)
9. 'I think this is an easy question. Because the information is known and the

- sentence is clear. So that why I chose 'in the first'. (F+L)
10. 'I also chose 'and' because it is the suitable answer. I underlined the whole sentence. No doubt. Yes I know the meaning. It is a joining word'. (U)
11. 'I am not sure about the other two answers. I decided (a or b). Later I chose 'it'. (E)
12. 'death' is the right answer because consider of the word poison in the sentence'. (S/L)
13. 'thus' because it shows the influence of using chemicals'. (L/L1)
14. 'I chose 'because' it indicates the reason: chemicals can get into food'. (F+L)
15. 'Really the options are unclear. I tried to match them with gap. I read the sentence again. I think 'for this reason' would be the best. According to the understanding of the sentence'. (S/L)
16. 'I think 'unfortunately' would be the most suitable. In fact I just guess the answer'. (R)
17. 'I have no problem with this question. Because it is easy. The answer is clear. 'which' joins. The other options not suitable'. (F+L)
18. 'I guess it is 'these' but I am not sure. Yes I understand the meaning. Well I chose it because it is used for countable things and insects in the sentence plural'. (S/L1)
19. 'I chose 'from' because it is right. Why? because of the verb prevent and the 'ing'. (G/L)
20. 'When I read the sentence, I really get confused because I am not sure of the answers. Then I just assume that it could be 'predicted'. Because of the phrase 'are likely'. What do you think?'. (R1)

Syria

Student A

Age: 20

Status: Single/Male

Country of origin: Syria

Type of school. He went to State school

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: Studied 6 years English.

TOEFL: 570

Interests and hobbies: He likes watching TV a lot. He likes reading a lot. He likes sport. He likes listening to music and songs

Arrived in GB: August 1998

Tested in: September 1998

Test 1

The text to some extent difficult. I faced some difficult words particularly in the questions. I tried to find out the meaning of the difficult words from the sentences from the text. If I can't I guess. Some times I tried to match or eliminate the options or later I leave them.

I.

1. 'music group' because the Beatles is known as music group. From the radio. I listen to the music of the Beatles. I do not know whether it is in Liverpool or not'. (I/C)
2. 'I chose 'sporting' because I found the word 'these' which I put a line under it then I analysed the sentence. Yes it means more than one sport therefore the other would be 'the Grand National' as a sport activity'. (U)
3. 'I chose 'Aintree' because when I refer to the text I get confused about Anfield or Goodison or Aintree. What I understand is that Aintree the most suitable because it is popular. No I have no idea before'. (Ts/L1)
4. 'I chose 'take hope street' because in the text it said that 'hope street runs directly'. I understand that hope street is the only street you can get from if you want to go from one cathedral to another. The question is also shows how to get from one place to another'. (Ts/L)
5. 'First I chose (a and c) and exclude the other options then I decided 'Roman Catholic'. I understand from the sentence that it is Roman Catholic'. (E1)
6. 'I chose 'a painting centre' because in the text it says it has something to do with paintings. No, I do not know any thing about Bluecoat Chamber before'.(CL/1)
7. 'I chose 'art exhibition' because it is a museum. It is for art. I chose it straight a way I did not refer to the 'text'. (P1/C)
8. 'I chose 'a sea port' because Albert Dock is on the sea and it is known as a seaport. I know this before by reading books. It is a book to do with Britain, Liverpool and all important places. I did not refer to the text'. (P1/C)
9. 'I chose 'the use of computer...' because I read about Liverpool and about JMU

but referring to the text it says for instance Liverpool JMU has pioneered the use of information technology. I understand from the text'. (C+L)

10. 'I chose 'good-natured' because a friend told me about the people of Liverpool, but I am not sure. Then I understand from the text it says people of Liverpool are friendly. This confirmed what I have heard. I did not mix with them yet'. (C+L)

II.

11. 'I put 'false' because when I read the text I tried to match the question with the text where it is mentioned that there is no football ground near the Roman Cathedral'. (MT)

12. 'Again I put 'false' because I don't understand the words post medieval wonder I refer to the text any word closes to the post..... I guess'. (R1)

13. 'I Just put 'false'. I did not understand it from the text. I just guess'. (R1)

14. 'true' because in the text it says that walker art galleries with the largest collection of arts'. (CL/1)

15. 'I put 'false' because I refer to the text it says that Liverpool has several parks soften is municipal it means public you can walk'. (S/L)

III.

16. 'I chose (F) because I know Liverpool is known for football from my country because Liverpool is known of good football'. (C)

17. 'I chose (G) because I guess it is right it is the only option left to be right. (R1)

18. 'I chose (C) because that what is in the text. I just match the answer with the options'. (MT)

19. 'Cathedrals' which is (E) because the text says Liverpool is distinguished'. (Ts/L)

20. 'I chose (A) because galleries are used for displaying arts, but to check my answer I read the text. From the text are said that walker galleries and the Tate gallery and Lady gallery all of them are talking about collecting and displaying paintings'. (C+L)

Test 2

The text was not easy, it is more difficult than the text before and even the test is more difficult than the one I tested on Monday. However, I understood it. I faced some difficult words which I could not understand their meanings. Some of the questions are also difficult because I could not understand the meaning and what to choose for the space. First I read the whole text underlining main ideas of each paragraph. I tried to read the sentence and understanding the general meaning. If not I guess the meaning so that I could answer all the questions.

1. 'I think 'planet' is the most suitable answer. Although other answers like sphere could be but that what I get from the sentence'. (S/L)
2. 'I chose 'they' because it is taking about the insects and they refer to insects. They also is a plural'. (G/L)
3. 'I chose 'joy' because delight is the same as joy. I did not understand the meaning

- of other words in the questions. That what I understand from the sentence'.(F+L1)
4. 'I chose 'harmful' because the text is talking about insects and it refers to them as they destroy the crops and trees'. (G/L1)
 5. 'I did not understand the other options I just chose 'yet'. I think it is the right option'.(R1)
 6. 'I chose 'wherever' because the sentence talks about a place and 'wherever' refers to a place'. (G/L)
 7. 'land' because insects land on the trees and branches'. (G/L)
 8. 'I chose 'these' because of behaviour and it refers to the insects'. (F+L1)
 9. 'I chose 'in the first' because we learnt that a locust lives in two stages. The sentence also says that locust lives in two phases. So I chose 'in the first' because 'later on' is mentioned afterwards'. (F+L)
 10. 'and' because this is the final stage of the life of locusts. Yes I know this it first lives by itself, changes colour and joins the swarm. The word 'and' is also used to join the phases and the sentence together'. (F+L)
 11. 'they' because the sentence talks about locusts and they refers to locusts'. (S/L1)
 12. 'I chose 'death'. I know that when chemicals are used they can cause death. The sentence also talks about poisoning insects which leads to death'.(F+L)
 13. 'thus' because the sentence talks about killing locusts. If we don't take care we can kill natural helpers. So I chose 'thus' which indicates this meaning'. (L/L1)
 14. 'I chose 'because' that what I understand from the previous sentences which means a result and a reason'. (S/L)
 15. 'while' because it can be used at the beginning of the sentence followed by a subject. That is what we have learnt'. (F+L1)
 16. 'I could not answer this question because I get confused about the options. There is no time to think again or to read the text again'. (A1)
 17. 'I chose 'which' because I think it is the right answer. Yes I know what it means'. (G/L)
 18. 'I chose 'this' because first I eliminate the options (this, these, there) then I chose 'this' because I think it could be the right answer'. (E)
 19. 'I get confused about the four options later I decide to choose 'from' because I think it is correct. Yes I understand it from the sentence as well I know its meaning and it takes ing'. (F+L)
 20. 'This question is also difficult. I wanted to leave it but later I just chose 'deserted' Yes it is difficult'. (R1)

Appendix G: Sample of the students’ responses (Group B)

Palestine

Student A

Age: 19

Status: Single/Male

Country of origin: Palestine

Type of school. He went to State school

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: Studied 6 years English.

IELTS: 6.2

Interests and hobbies: He likes watching TV a lot. He likes reading a lot. He likes sport. He likes listening to music and songs

Arrived in GB: August 1998

Tested in: September 1998

Test 1

Generally the text is not difficult I just faced some difficult words in the text and in the questions. I tried to understand the meaning from the sentences. Some of the questions are difficult and it is not easy to select one option because of difficult words. Actually while reading I really tried to take notes of each paragraph focusing on the main idea or points. This gave me full idea about the text.

I.

1. 'I chose 'a music group' because 'Beatles' is known to me. It is the most famous music group in Britain and I like to listen to it. I did not refer to the text. Oh! Yes we have music lessons'. (P/C)
2. 'I chose (b) because I read about 'Grand National' in a magazine. I also understand from the text paragraph 1 and 2 that 'Grand National' is sporting activity'. (C+L)
3. 'I chose 'Goodison' because I read that Anfield and Goodison are playgrounds where people in Liverpool can play and see football'. (P/C)
4. 'I chose (b) because 'hope street' is the right answer because in the text it runs between the two cathedrals. So if you want to go from one to another you take hope street'. (S/L)
5. 'Protestant' because I had an idea that Protestant designed the catholic cathedral. I know it from my country. Yes, I referred to the text to be sure of the right answer. I noticed the verb 'designed' so I understand that the answer is correct'. (C+L)
6. 'a peaceful area' because I read the text. I concentrate on 'Bluecoat chamber' then I found the word 'peaceful'. I matched it with the first option in the question. No I had no idea before'. (MT)
7. 'I chose 'historic collection' because I read about 'Museum' where you can see collections about the past. I confirmed the answer by analysing the sentence in paragraph 3 where I found the word 'history' and in the question the adjective 'historic'. (C+L)

8. 'I chose 'a trade and entertainment centre' because I have an idea about 'Albert Dock' and the surrounding area. I read about it in a book about tourism in Britain: Liverpool and other cities. Yes we use the library in the school'.(P/C)
9. 'I heard about JMU that it is famous in the use of information technology. But I want to see is it special in the courses. So I read the text again paragraph 1. I understand that JMU has pioneered which indicates special. Then I found the words teaching and learning which indicates courses. Thus I chose 'the use of computer...'. (C+L)
10. 'I know about the people of Liverpool that they are friend and good. I read a leaflet so I chose 'good nature'. (P/C)

II.

11. 'I put 'false' because I have knowledge that the football grounds are far from the two cathedrals. I read about it in a book about Liverpool before I came here'. (P/C)
12. 'When I read the text I understand that it is a medieval building not a post medieval. That what I understand. So I put 'false' I don't know the meaning of post. So I put false'. (CL/1)
13. 'Through the text I understand that the Tate Gallery is situated in Albert Dock. So I put 'true'. (Ts/L)
14. 'I put 'false' because it is not Walker Art Gallery is the best in Britain there must be other galleries. I understand from the sentence that it is outside London'. (S/L)
15. 'I put 'false' because I know that all parks in Britain are public and belongs to the government. Through reading. I am not sure about 'Sefton Park'. So I referred to the text to be sure. I realised in paragraph 3 that in 'Sefton Park' people can sit. walk, jog, play etc. So all this indicates that it is public'.(C+L)

III

16. 'I chose (F) because I know what is Liverpool famous for it is famous for sport and culture heritage where the Beatles come from'. (C)
17. '(D) because I understand this from the text when I read the sentences I understand that Liverpool's name was arose from the liverbird'. (Ts/L)
18. 'I chose (C) because I have an idea about Merseyside travel. I read about it in an article. I also refer to the text just to find out about Liverline. I understand from the sentence in paragraph 3 that transport service in Liverpool is run through Liverline and Mersey Travel'.(C+L)
19. 'I chose (E) because I read that Liverpool has two big cathedrals. I also confirmed the answer by understanding from the text that Liverpool is distinguished from other cities by these two cathedrals'. (C+L)
20. '(A) I have knowledge about 'galleries' from my past reading about galleries that they are used for displaying paintings and arts. Yes we learnt about it in the school'. (P/C)

Test 2:

The test is not difficult but it needs an effort to answer the questions. Yes there are some difficult words and phrases as well as sentences in the text but I tried to

overcome this difficulty by reading the text carefully as well as each section then to understand the meaning of sentences as well as the meaning of words.

Some of the questions need more concentration because of the options some of them I could not understand their meanings but this does not stop me from doing the test.

1. 'planet' I know that the true master of the planet is insects. It can not be 'creation' because the sentence also talks about the earth which is planet'. (F+L)
2. 'I also have an idea about that there are various kinds of insects and the sentence talks about insects and different kinds. So the gap should be plural pronoun acting as subject of the verb vary. So I chose 'they'. (F+L)
3. 'I chose 'despair' because I am familiar with this idea. I also understand from the sentence basically the word delight that it talks about two effects of insects delight so it should be the opposite'. (F+L)
4. 'I also chose 'useful' because insects either are harmful or useful and when I read the sentence again carefully, I understand that insects cause diseases. Then the word 'nevertheless' must be the opposite therefore I chose 'useful'. (F+L)
5. 'I get confused between 'however and therefore' but I understand that 'however' is the suitable word which gives the impression of standing against what is said'. (G/L1)
6. 'I chose 'wherever' because I know this and I understand from the sentence that wherever they go so it shows a place'. (F+L)
7. 'Of course it is 'land' because it is a verb. It is suitable for locusts land on'. (G/L)
8. 'I chose 'their' because it refers to the locusts and it describes their behaviour. First I tried to underline the whole sentence and the sentence before. Yes I put a line. O! Yes it is really helpful'. (U)
9. 'Here I chose 'in the first' because I know that the locust's lives in two phases and in the second sentence, there is 'later on'. So 'in the first' is the right answer.(F+L)
10. 'and' is the best answer because 'and' is used to join the sequence of the sentences. It is the final stage so 'and' joins the stages'. (F+L)
11. 'it' because it is a singular and refers to the word swarm and the other options are wrong because they refer to mankind'. (S/L)
12. 'I chose 'death' because I know that in using chemicals it can poison the insects and the sentence starts talking about poison and the poison cause death'. (F+L)
13. 'This question is to some extent difficult because of the options. But when I read the text again I found that the best answer is 'otherwise' because it indicates if not we kill the locusts intelligently we can poison....'. (Ts/L)
14. 'I chose 'because' because it is clear that when we spray insects we have to be careful that what I know. The sentence also refers to a reason'. (F+L)
15. 'I chose 'for this reason' because I understand from the sentences before that there should be a reason for fighting the locusts but by care'. (Ts/L)
16. 'I tried really to eliminate the answers then I decided to choose 'unfortunately'. Well I understand the sentence'. (E)
17. 'I chose 'which'. It describes the locusts and joins the words come after'. (G/L)
18. 'I chose 'this'. It refers to the sentence before which is the problem of insects'. (G/L)
19. 'I chose 'from' because of the verb prevent which takes from'. (G/L)
20. 'I chose 'threatened' because I know that experts warn us when the farmlands are likely to be threatened. Yes I know the meaning of threatened and also understand the sentence'.(F+L)

Egypt

Student E

Age: 20

Status: Single/Male

Country of origin: Egypt

Type of school. He went to state school

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: 7 years English

IELTS: 6.1

Interests and hobbies: He likes sports, watching T.V and reading

Arrived in GB: December 1998

Tested in: January 1999

Test (1)

Well the text is not so difficult. Yes I met some difficult words and questions. Because of unfamiliar to certain expressions. I tried to get the meaning through reading the whole paragraph and the sentences. Sometimes I guess the meaning according to the analysis of the sentences.

1. 'I chose 'a music group' because I am familiar to this question. I know about the Beatles. From watching the T.V, from reading and also studying. I listen to the music. It is well known. I could answer without referring to the text'. (P/C)
2. 'sporting' because from my knowledge. I have an idea about Grand National. I saw in the T.V. Yes I refer to the text. I understand that it used for sporting activity'. (C+L)
3. 'I chose 'Goddison' again I got an idea about Goodison. It is a playground. I read many magazines about sport. Well it says in the text but I know'. (P/C)
4. 'I chose 'take hope street' I get the answer from the text. I matched the words in the question and the text in paragraph 4. Then I understand that it is Hope Street. Although the options are similar where you can get confused'. (MT)
5. 'I chose 'Protestant'. Well I refer to the text and I found that the catholic cathedral was designed by the Protestant. That is what I understand. Yes in the text paragraph 4'. (S/L)
6. 'I get confused with this question because of the like of the answers. I read the text and tried to find which answer in paragraph 3. Then I think it is 'a painting centre'. (S/L1)
7. 'I chose 'historic collection' because I generally museums are used for historic collections. Yes I studied this I also refer to the text where it is mentioned for the same purpose'. (C+L)
8. 'I chose 'a trade and entertainment centre' because I understand from paragraph 3 that the whole words indicate that 'Albert Dock' is used for business and entertainment. Yes I analysed the words in the paragraph e.g. 'social and business centre' Again the phrase ' houses a number of shops and restraints'. I think all this indicates that what I chose is the right answer'. (Ts/L)
9. 'Well it is known. I chose 'the use of computer..' because I have already got this knowledge about JMU. I read about universities in the UK. Yes it is written in the

text'. (P/C)

10. 'I chose 'good-nature' because in the text in the last sentence most of the words describe the people of Liverpool as friendly. Yes I analysed the sentence where it is written sympathetic and good nature. It is in paragraph 4'. (L/L)

II.

11. 'I put 'false' according to my understanding of the text'. (Ts/L)
12. 'false' Why? I really could not understand this question. I do not know the meaning of the question 'post medieval wonder' I also could not get the answer from the text. So I just put false. Is it right?'. (CL/1)
13. 'I decided 'true' because the information given in the text shows this. It is situated in Albert Dock. Yes I know the meaning of located which is situated and both words in the past. I know from the (ed). Yes that what helped me'. (L/L)
14. 'I put 'true' I had no idea about Walker Art Gallery. I refer to the text. I understand from the idea of paragraph 3 that Walker Art Gallery contains large collection of paintings and arts. That is why I put 'true'. (CL/1)
15. 'I put 'false' I also understand from the text that it can be used for everyone people can walk, run. I think it is not private'. (S/L)

III.

16. 'I chose (F) because I have knowledge about Liverpool that is famous of sports and it is cultural heritage. Yes I know the meaning'. (P/C)
17. 'I tried to eliminate the answers and comparing them to the text then I think it is (D)'. (E)
18. 'I chose (C) because I match the words with the text the word transport then I found in paragraph 3 transport service. Yes I focus on the word transport'. (K/L)
19. 'I chose (E) Well I know this that Liverpool has two large cathedrals in Europe. But I also understand the answer from the text paragraph 4'. (C+L)
20. 'I chose (A) because I know this that galleries are used for this purpose. We studied about them. Yes it is mentioned in the text'. (P/C)

Test (2)

Well I would say that the test is not difficult but it needs analysis and concentration in the questions. I do not think that I faced severe problems. Some questions are hard but I could manage to answer them. Most of the information in the text I really have an idea.

1. 'Why 'planet' because this what I know the true master of the planet is insects. Yes I analysed the sentence'. (F+L)
2. 'they' according to my knowledge about the function of 'they'. It is a pronoun and in this sentence it refers to insects. Other options are not right'. (F+L)
3. 'I chose 'despair'. This is the history of insects delight and despair'. (F+L)
4. 'The same some insects are harmful and others are 'useful'. That what the sentence also indicates. So 'useful' is the right answer'. (F+L)
5. 'yet' according to the understanding of the paragraph. Yes I know the meaning of it'. (S/L1)

6. 'wherever' because that what one can get from the meaning of the sentence and the information. I know where locusts go everything are destroyed'. (F+L)
7. 'I chose 'land' because it is the best answer. Locusts 'land on'. (G/L)
8. 'their' because scientists have studied their behaviour. The behaviour of locusts'. (G/L)
9. 'I chose 'in the first' that what I know about the nature of locusts and how they form. The sentence also emphasises this'. (F+L)
10. 'I chose 'and' according to the interpretation of the whole sentence. It includes phases then 'and' joins the last one'. (S/L)
11. 'it'. I eliminated the answers according to my understanding of the sentence'. (E)
12. 'What helped me to chose 'death' this is general information and the sentence indicates it'. (F+L)
13. 'I chose (c) because I know the use of 'otherwise' and its meaning'. (G/L)
14. 'I also chose 'because' because of my previous knowledge as well as the interpretation of the sentence. It is here used to show why do we have to be careful'. (F+L)
15. 'I chose 'for this reason' according to my understanding of the sentence'. (S/L)
16. 'I chose 'unfortunately' this is what often happens when we spray locusts from the air. O! I know this and the text shows this'. (F+L)
17. 'Well 'which' this is its usage to join. It also refers to locusts which have..'. (G/L)
18. 'I chose 'this' because other options can not be the right answers as well as it. This has. what ... it refers to the previous sentence'. (G/L)
19. 'from' of course I am sure: prevent from + ing'. (G/L)
20. 'I chose 'threatened' because I know the idea and also the whole sentences refers to threatened'. (F+L)

Kuwait

Student A

Age: 19

Status: Single/Male

Country of origin: Kuwait

Type of school: State school

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: Studied 7 years English

IELTS: 6

Interests and hobbies: He likes horse riding, swimming, He does like watching TV video and satellite. He loves music. He likes talking. He likes reading stories, poems and literature Arrived in GB: July 1998

Tested in: September 1998

Test 1

The text was not difficult but I have to concentrate on the paragraphs and sentences and understanding the questions. There are some words which were new for me as well as some information which is about history and religion. Some of the questions are not direct because they include a lot of information not direct in the passage.

I read the sentence again and tried to understand what the sentence is talking about. I tried to understand what the whole passage is taking about and sometimes I tried to read all of the paragraph again.

I.

1. 'I chose (d) because I assumed it could be 'music group' as I have little idea about the 'Beatles' but I am not sure. I heard about them. So I read the text again where I focused on the word 'Beatles' in paragraph one. But I found nothing written about them. But when I read the next paragraph, I realised that there are two words one is 'sport' and the other is 'music' and these two words related to paragraph one. So I asserted that the word 'music' describe the 'Beatles' and nothing else in the text'. (C+L)
2. 'I chose 'sporting' because I saw the Grand National in the TV in the satellite it is for horse racing and as I said I am interested in horse riding. I often watch it in the TV. Yes in my country. I did not refer to the text'. (I/C)
3. 'I had an idea about 'Goodison' as a sport centre but I was confused. I chose (c) first then I read the text again to be sure. I understand from the 'crowd' that it could be Anfield or Goodison. Then I also find the word 'where' which indicates Goodison where people can see football. And I understand that 'Aintree' is a place for horse racing where people celebrate Grand National. So I believed that (a) is the right answer. So I chose (a)'. (C+L)
4. 'I first read the question then interpreted the words. I understand from the question that it asks about direction to get from to. So I know it means direction. Then I re-read the text and I realised that 'hope street' is the way. So I chose 'take hope street'. (L/L)
5. 'I chose 'Protestant' because I read in a magazine that the Protestant designed the

- Roman Catholic but also I refer to the text. I understand from the sentence in paragraph 4 that it was designed by the Protestant'. (C+L)
6. 'I chose 'a shopping area' because I understand from the sentence in paragraph three that it is a shopping area'. (CL/1)
 7. 'I chose 'historic collection' because I know that Maritime Museum is used for historic collection. I read about it'. (P/C)
 8. 'I chose 'a trade and entertainment..' because I read about Albert Dock. But because in the question there is 'now used for'. I thought it might be changed. So I read the text again. I found the phrase 'business centre' which refers to trade and also the words 'shops, restaurants and halls'. These words show social entertainment where people can sit and enjoy the sea. This helped me to extract the right information and to confirm my previous knowledge'. (C+L)
 9. 'I selected 'the use of computer technology in its courses' because I had previous knowledge about JMU. I read an article about the university. I understand that it is interested in information technology. I read the text in order to find out about the word special and in teaching and learning. I analysed the sentence in paragraph 1 the word pioneered which nearly mean the same as special and also the phrase teaching and learning. This confirmed my answer'. (C+L)
 10. 'good-natured' because I know that the people of Liverpool are good and friendly I know this from friends'. (I/C)

II.

11. 'I understand it from the text that the cathedrals are not close to football ground. So I put 'false'. (Ts/L)
12. 'I put 'false' because I understand from the text that the Anglican Cathedral is largely compared to other churches. I do not understand the word post in the question'. (CL/1)
13. 'I put 'true' because I understand from the text that the Tate Gallery is situated in Albert Dock'. (L/L)
14. 'false' because I guess that it is the largest collection of art is in Walker art Gallery. But I doubt the word best. No it is not clear in the text'. (R)
15. 'I put 'false' because I read that all parks in Britain are public where you can sit and play. I read it in a book about Britain and other areas in Britain'. (P/C)

III.

16. 'I chose (F) because Liverpool is famous for sport. But I am not sure about the phrase 'cultural heritage'. I read the text again then I understand from the last paragraph that Liverpool is a mix society where you can find different faiths. So I know this is cultural aspect. I understand that it corresponds to my understanding'. (C+L)
17. 'I chose (D). I understand from the sentence in paragraph 1 that the city's name arose from Liverbird. The phrase 'arose from' indicates named after'. (S/L)
18. 'I understand from the last sentence in paragraph three that it is (C)'. (S/L)
19. '(E) because I heard that Liverpool has two cathedrals'. (P/C)
20. 'I chose (A) because I know that galleries are often used for displaying arts or other things'. (F/C)

Test 2

The text is not so difficult but there are some words which are difficult. There are some questions also difficult because of the choices. I tried to understand the meaning of difficult words from the sentence and from the text.

1. 'I chose (c) because I know that it should be 'planet'. When reading the sentence there is 'earth'. So I understand it talks about planet not 'creation'. (F+L)
2. 'I chose 'they' because I also know that there are different types of insects. I also understand that the sentences talking about different kinds of insects and the pronoun 'they' refers to insects'. (F+L)
3. 'I chose 'despair' because I have an idea that insects. They can be good and bad. The text also talks about two opposite things which are caused by insects: delight and despair'. (F+L)
4. 'useful' for the same reason: the insects can be harmful but on the other hand they are useful. This is what 'nevertheless' in the sentence emphasises it'. (F+L)
5. 'therefore' because it is the result of what is said before which means so'. (G/L)
6. 'I chose 'wherever' because it indicates a place and I understand from the sentence that it talks about a place where insects go. Yes I had an idea that wherever locusts go they destroy crops. We studied this in the school'. (F+L)
7. 'I chose 'land' because it is a verb and it is suitable for the locusts which means that locusts land on'. (G/L)
8. 'I chose 'their' because it refers to the behaviour of the locusts and it could not be 'they' because 'their' is a pronoun refers to human'. (G/L)
9. 'I chose 'in the first' because first I had a previous idea that a locust lives in two phases. The text also shows that there are two phases. In the sentence after there is 'later on'. So this gap should be 'in the first'. (F+L)
10. 'I chose 'and' because according to my knowledge of how locusts can be grown. Also from my understanding of the sentence'. (F+L)
11. 'they' because it refers to the locusts'. (G/L1)
12. 'I chose 'death' because it is clear whenever we use chemicals it causes death. And in the sentence there is 'poisoning' which is often leads to death'. (F+L)
13. Again this question is to some extent difficult. Because it is difficult to decide which one to choose. I hesitated between 'thus and otherwise' according to the sentence. But later I just chose 'thus'. (R1)
14. 'I chose 'because' as in the sentence there is the word 'be careful'. Why 'because'?. It which shows a cause and a result'. (G/L)
15. 'I chose 'for this reason' because it describes the action before'. (G/L)
16. 'I chose 'unfortunately' because non of the other options is right and 'unfortunately' is the right. It expresses something not good in the sentence following it'. (G/L)
17. 'which' because it refers to locusts and it works as a joining word of the sentence'. (G/L)
18. 'this' because I understand from the sentence before there is a problem and this refers to the problem. It has a relationship with the previous sentence'. (S/L)
19. 'I chose 'from'. The verb 'prevent' often takes the preposition 'from'. (G/L)
20. 'I chose 'threatened' because I know that experts often warn governments when locusts will attack the crops. I have an idea about it from the school. The sentence also shows this. (F+L)

Jordan

Student E

Age: 19

Status: Single/Male

Country of origin: Jordan

Type of school. He went to State school

Languages: Arabic + English

Education: Studied 7 years English

IELTS: 6.3

Interests and hobbies: He is interested in sports, watching TV, listening to music, reading all sorts of books, literature, history, newspapers as well as magazines. He enjoys travelling

Arrived in GB: July 1998

Tested in: August 1998

Test 1

The text is easy. I managed to answer all the questions with no difficulty. Well I faced some but I could overcome any by getting the answers through re reading the text focusing on the sentence understanding the meaning. I have already known the information except some.

I.

1. 'I chose 'a music group' it is general knowledge. It is common. Everyone knows the Beatles as a music group. The other options are completely wrong. I am familiar to it'. (F/C)
2. 'I chose 'sporting' because I know the Grand National. I know about it from reading sport magazines, T.V. I also understand it from the text'. (C+L)
3. 'Well! I think the same answer. All the information here is not strange to me. I have a good idea about 'Goodison' 'where you can see football' in the text. It is a playground in Liverpool'. (C+L)
4. 'I chose 'take hope street'. Here I really refer to the text. I get the information and the answer from paragraph 4. I read and analysed the sentence in this paragraph and I could know the answer which is 'Hope Street'. (S/L)
5. 'I chose 'protestant' it is clear in the text. I understand that the Protestant designed the catholic cathedrals. Well it is in the text. The word 'designed' and the information is clear'. (C+L)
6. 'I chose 'a peaceful area' the same I get it from the text. No it is not ambiguous. But I analysed the sentence. I eliminated the answers to the text. If you do not pay attention. But it is a peaceful area. That what I understand'. (E)
7. 'I chose 'historic collection'. This I know already. Because I studied about museums. Well! 'Maritime' is a name I think'. (P/C)
8. 'I chose 'a trade and entertainment centre'. I read the text again. I understand from the first reading. But well I have to go back to the text again. To be sure focusing on specific words. For example trade and entertainment. (Ts/L)

9. 'I chose 'the use of computer..' because I have an idea about JMU. I read that JMU is famous in information technology. (I/C)
10. 'I chose 'good-natured' so what they will be bad. Yes I read and many friends said: a lot of them are good some not'. (C+L)

II.

11. 'It is 'false' because I understand from the text that the Roman Catholic Cathedral is not close to football grounds. There are no football grounds close to it. Yes in the text. (Ts/L)
12. 'true' well I have an idea about the cathedrals. I look this question needs more concentration but I think I managed to get the answer. Because when I match the phrase 'post medieval wonder' with the words in paragraph 4 I think it is post medieval. That what I understand. (C+L)
13. 'I put 'true' according to my understanding of the text. O Yes in the text it is mentioned situated in Albert Dock'. (K/L)
14. 'false' because that what I understand from the text. In paragraph 3 Lady Lever Art Gallery is the best while in the question Tate Gallery. Well I just match the answers. (MT)
15. 'I put 'false' first I have an idea about gardens in Britain that they are used by everybody but when I read the text I understand that Soften is the largest municipal park. Yes I know the meaning of the words'. (L/L)

III.

16. '(F) Why because everybody should know this. From reading, media, T.V'. (P/C)
17. 'I chose (D) it is there in the text name of Liverpool arose from Liverbird. I matched the words in the text with the answer then I chose (d)'. (MT)
18. 'I chose (C) that what the text says in paragraph 3. Well I understand the question as well as the answer'. (Ts/L)
19. '(E) because I know previously that Liverpool has famous large Cathedrals. Yes I read about it. I also understand from the text. Yes I know the meaning of 'distinguished' (C+L)
20. '(A) according to my knowledge about galleries. No need to refer to the text. Although it is in the text but I know this. (P/C)

Test 2

The test is OK. No problems. The questions are all right. Well the subject is common I have a good idea about it.

1. 'It is 'planet'. That what I know. Yes I read the sentence. Yes it tells so'. (F+L)
2. 'they' because I know it and the sentence also shows that it is the suitable answer'. (F+L)
3. 'I chose 'despair' for the same factor. I think the whole context is not difficult'. (F+L)
4. 'I put 'useful' because I have previous knowledge about locusts that they are useful and harmful. I also understand from the paragraph that they help mankind in fruit production and the sentences before show that they are harmful. So, the

- answer should be useful'.(F+L)
5. 'therefore' I get the answer from the understanding of the whole paragraph'. (Ts/L)
 6. 'Well 'wherever' insects go. I also understand from the sentence'. (F+L)
 7. 'because 'land' on. Locusts land on. Yes it is a verb'. (G/L)
 8. 'their' I really tried to eliminate the answers then I decided to chose their. Yes I know its meaning and how it can be used'. (E)
 9. 'I chose 'in the first' because I got this idea before and the sentence helps me'. (F+L)
 10. 'I chose 'and' for the same reason'. (F+L)
 11. '(it) because the sentence tells so it spreads. It takes 's' . The other answers are not right because it refers to insect'. (G/L)
 12. 'death' according to the sentence and according to my knowledge of poison'. (F+L)
 13. 'I analysed the sentence then I understand that 'otherwise' is the suitable answer. Yes I know its meaning'. (S/L)
 14. 'I chose 'because' that what I know why to be careful. Well! the sentence. Yes it supports my choice'. (F+L)
 15. 'I chose 'for this reason' because again for the same reason'. (F+L)
 16. 'unfortunately' according to my understanding of the sentence'. (S/L)
 17. 'I chose 'which' because it links the sentence'. (G/L)
 18. 'this' because first I understand that it is used to describe what took place before and the other reason 'has made' in the text. (Ts/L)
 19. 'I chose 'from' because this is the suitable preposition'. (G/L)
 20. 'Again this is the general knowledge about what international experts often do when farmlands are likely to be 'threatened'. (F+L)

Algeria

Student C

Age: 20

Status: Single/Male

Country of origin: Algeria

Type of school. He went to State school

Languages: Arabic + French + English

Education: Studied 6 years English

TOEFL: 580

Interests and hobbies: He enjoys watching TV, music, singing, reading a lot of magazines and newspapers. He is interested in sport

Arrived in GB: June 1998

Tested in: July 1998

Test 1

The text is not difficult. It includes some unknown words. The questions are obvious. I tried to read the sentence and match the words. Sometimes I eliminated the answers. I sometimes took notes of the main ideas or important points on the text while reading to have a record of them. Yes this helped me for retrieving information.

I.

1. 'I chose 'a music group' without referring to the text. No I mean I have this answer. But I of course read the whole text before answering. But I know about the 'Beatles'. We studied about music and I am familiar to it'. (P/C)
2. 'sporting' I have information about 'Grand National'. I watch T.V and also through media'. (I/C)
3. 'I chose 'Goodison' well I know it is a playground where people can see football'. (P/C)
4. 'Actually I chose 'take hope street' because that is in the text and what the text illustrates. I tried to compare the question information with the sentence in paragraph 4. I understand that only 'hope street' is written and is the way to take you to the cathedrals'. (MT)
5. 'I chose 'Protestant' from the text paragraph 4. The sentence there tells that it was designed by Protestant. No I have not known before. Well I read about Liverpool and I also heard but this particular information. I do not know'. (S/L)
6. 'a shopping area' Well I get confused because of the answers. I do not know about Bluecoat Chambers building. Then I decided 'a shopping area' because it is in the sentence'. (CL/1)
7. 'I chose 'historic collection' because I know that museums are used for collections and arts. I refer to the text again in order to be sure about 'Maritime museum'. I read paragraph three. I found that the word 'history' and the adjective is 'historic'. and the 'Maritime museum' illustrates history of Liverpool. So it is for historic collections'. (C+L)
8. 'I chose 'a trade and entertainment centre' through the analysis of the text. Yes I get it from the text. The sentences show that it is used for trade and social events'.

(Ts/L)

9. 'It is 'the use of computer..' Well I understand from the text. I also have this information before'. (C+L)
10. 'I chose 'good-natured' since I know. I read about the history of Liverpool and its universities'. (P/C)

II.

11. 'It is of course 'false' that what you get from the text'. (Ts/L)
12. 'This is really the most difficult question. I know some of the words but it is not clear in the text. I just after analysing the text and re reading it. So I finally put 'false' that what I really think'. (CL/1)
13. 'It is 'true' because I get it from the text. I understand from the sentence in paragraph 3 it is in Albert Dock. The word situated shows in Albert dock'.(S/L)
14. 'I put 'false' as I understand from the text when I analyse sentences in the paragraph it shows that one of the best collection of art in Britain is in Lady Lever Art Gallery. It contains.....'. (Ts/L)
15. 'I put 'false' because when I read the text paragraph 3 about Soften. I found 'the largest municipal park'. The word ' municipal' means public .I also understand from the words 'walk, cycle and jog' to the meaning of public'. (K/L)

III.

16. 'I chose (F) that what is Liverpool always known everywhere. O! Yes I read about Liverpool'. (P/C)
17. '(D) This question is also difficult. I think I could answer it. When I refer again to the text in paragraph 1'. (Ts/L)
18. 'I chose (C) that is what I understand from the text. In paragraph three'. (Ts/L)
19. 'I chose (E) because I got this piece of information before. Liverpool is distinguished by the two Cathedrals'. (P/C)
20. '(A) I read about galleries. I also visited many galleries where arts are usually found'. (P/C)

Test 2

Really the test is easy I could answer the whole question. First because I have knowledge about the theme and I also read the text carefully and analysed the question then I managed to answer the questions.

1. 'planet' because that what can be understood from the sentence and the answers. Well I studied about insects but really I get the answer from the analysis of the sentence'. (S/L)
2. 'I just read the sentence and then match each answer then I decided 'they'. Because it described the different kinds'. (MT)
3. 'despair' this answer I know before but also I read and understand from the text'. (F+L)
4. 'Again insects can be useful and harmful. In the sentence it is mentioned 'useful'. (F+L)
5. 'I know the function of 'therefore' and I also know its meaning. In Arabic it

means (Lithalik). Yes I understand the whole paragraph which is about insects'. (Ts/L)

6. 'I chose 'wherever' again from my knowledge with the help of the text. Well you can not just choose without referring to the text'. (F+L)
7. 'It is 'land' because it is a verb and where do locusts land on trees'. (G/L)
8. 'Again according to the understanding of the sentence. 'their' behaviour'. (S/L)
9. 'In fact this is easy because I got knowledge so 'in the first'. Again when I read the text I understand it should be in the first'. (F+L)
10. 'and' Well this is the same answer. It joins the facts about the locust'. (F+L)
11. 'I chose 'it' first I read the sentence then I eliminate the options'. (E)
12. 'I chose 'death' well this is the result of using poison. Yes I understand the sentence and the words'. (F+L)
13. 'Actually I chose 'otherwise' according to the interpretation of the sentences. To kill locusts intelligently, otherwise we can poison....'. (Ts/L)
14. 'I chose 'because' as a result of my knowledge and understanding of the sentence. I know why do we have to be careful this is a general information and it is a fact'. (F+L)
15. 'I chose 'for this reason' because when I read the text and interpret the sentence as well as the question I found that it is the best answer. I know what it means'. (S/L)
16. 'Again I think for the same answer before. I interpret the sentence and understand the meaning of the options that what made me to choose 'unfortunately'. (S/L)
17. 'which' is the right answer. It connects the sentence and refers to the locusts which have been sprayed. The other options are false'. (G/L)
18. 'this' what happened?. I read the sentence then I understand that it refers to the information given before and 'this has made'. It can not be other options'. (S/L)
19. 'I put 'from' because no option can be right except from why? because look at the sentence prevent swarms from leaving'. (G/L)
20. 'threatened' because this is natural thing. When farmlands are threatened expert warn governments. Yes I understand the text'. (F+L)

Appendix H: Sample of texts analysed (group A countries)

Saudi Arabia

English for Saudi Arabia. Textbooks and Teachers' book.

Third Year Secondary.

Authors: Al-Qurashi, K.O., Waston, M., Hafseth, J. & Pond, R.

Published by: King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals.

Dhahran. S.A. (1994).

READING

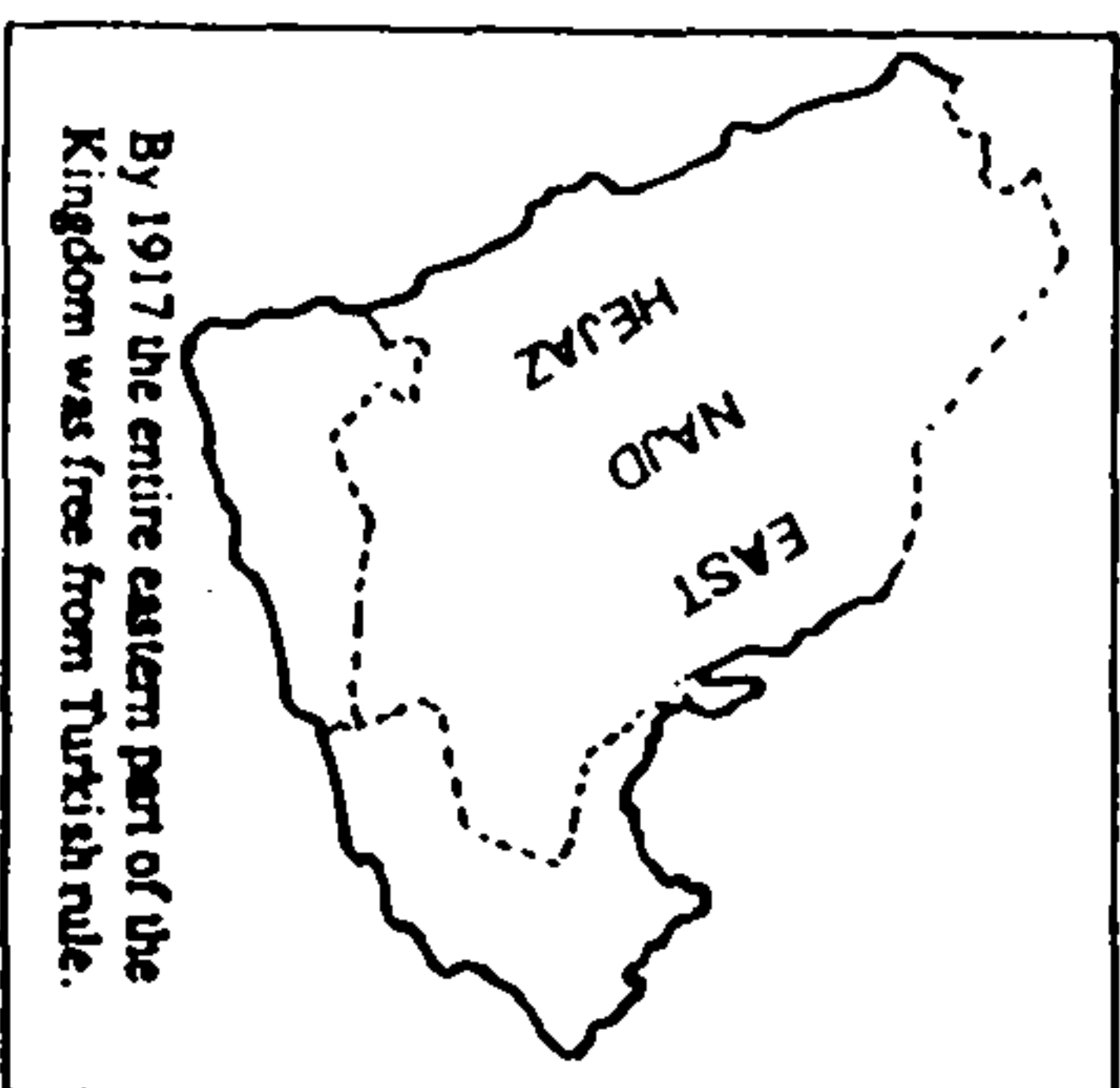
King AbdulAziz bin



Sadly, he watched his home disappear behind the cloud of dust created by the camels.

AbdulAziz was only eleven years old in (1891) when his family was forced to leave Riyadh for Kuwait. The young boy looked back as his caravan moved away from the gates of the city. Sadly, he watched his home disappear behind the cloud of dust created by the camels. "This is not the last time I will see Riyadh," he promised himself silently. "I will return, and I will take it back." While he was growing up in Kuwait, his desire to reconquer his family's Najdi lands increased. Eleven years later, he kept his promise to himself. On 15 January (1902), he returned with about sixty followers and recaptured Riyadh.

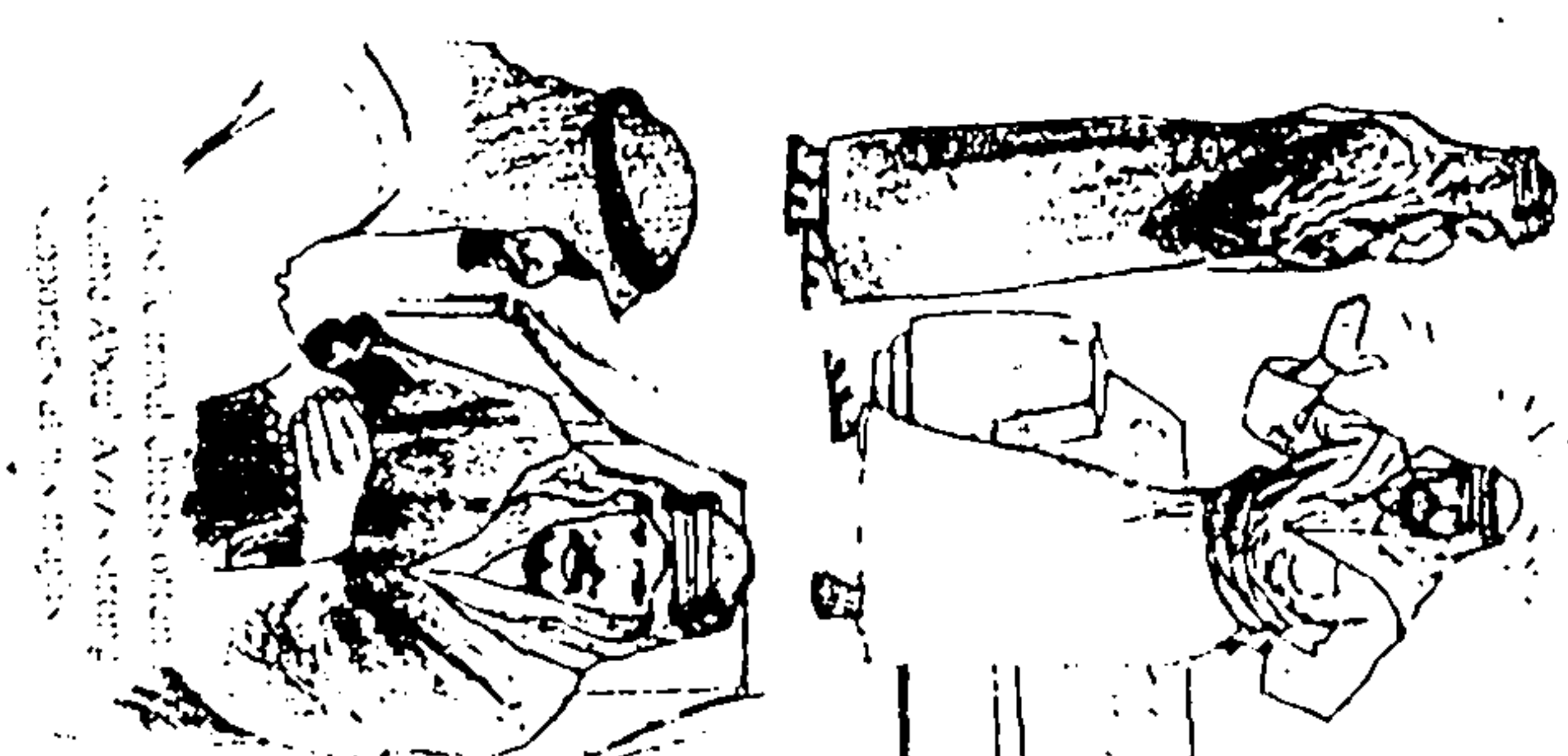
But Riyadh was only the beginning of AbdulAziz's great adventure. In (1913), he captured Hofuf from the Turks and by 1917 the entire eastern part of the country was free from Turkish rule. He became the Sultan of Najd in (1921) and King of Hejaz in (1926). Then on 23 September, (1932), he joined the two kingdoms to form the new nation of Saudi Arabia. Between then and the time of his death in (1953), King AbdulAziz put Saudi Arabia on the road towards modernization.



AbdulRahman Al-Saud



King AbdulAziz is remembered as a great and fair leader with a strong faith in Islam. He was a good speaker, and hostile tribal chiefs often became strong supporters at his *majlis*. He was so strong physically that he only needed to sleep for six hours a day. This gave him a lot of time for business and for meeting his subjects. He was also famous for his generosity. Once, while he was travelling to Makkah for the pilgrimage, his car had a puncture. While he was waiting for repairs, a man on a camel rode up. Not recognizing AbdulAziz, he asked if the King had passed by already. He said, "I want to see if the King will give me money so I can make the pilgrimage, too." King AbdulAziz immediately gave the man the money. The man was surprised but then he realized he was actually talking to the King. "Thanks, AbdulAziz. I did not recognize your face but I recognize your generosity," he said.



The Holy Month of Ramadan

Islam is based on five beliefs. These are called *The Five Pillars of Islam*. The first belief is that there is no god but Allah and that Muḥammad (peace be upon him) is His Messenger. The second is that a Muslim must pray five times a day at certain times, and the third is that a Muslim must give a percentage of his income to the poor. The fourth is the fasting of *Ramadan*. The fifth is that all Muslims who are able should perform the Hajj (Pilgrimage) at least once in their life.

Ramadan is the ninth month in the Islamic calendar. All adult Muslims must fast during the daylight hours. They are not allowed to eat or drink between dawn and sunset for the whole month. Fasting strengthens a person by increasing his self-control. Fasting also helps a Muslim to remember Allah and his obedience to Him. During *Ramadan*, the pain of hunger is shared by everyone. In this way, everyone is equal in Allah's eyes.

Some people (children, for example) are excused from fasting. Some may be too old or too ill. Others are on journeys. Women who are expecting or nursing a baby cannot fast at that time, either. However, all those who are able should complete the fast later.

Ramadan customs are very special. Many Muslims prefer to change working hours so that they can focus on the Islamic duties of the Holy Month. At sunset, a cannon goes off and people break their fast with dates and water. Then they go to the mosque for the sunset prayer (*Maghrib*). The exact time of sunset is very important, of course.

There is a special night known as *Lailatul Qadr*. No one knows exactly which night it is, but it is probably one of the last ten nights of the month. Around this time, Muslims try to stay awake all night and perform special prayers.

Immediately after the last day of *Ramadan*, there is a celebration called the *Eid Al-Fitr*. Muslims all over the world celebrate this holiday. During the *Eid*, Muslim children wear new clothes and receive gifts. Families everywhere enjoy themselves with friends and relatives. They thank Allah for His great blessing in revealing the Quran during the Holy Month of *Ramadan*.

4

Now look at this sentence from the reading passage:

Perhaps they are not as important in English as different scripts are in Arabic.

Remember, we use this when things are not similar.
Here are some more examples.

I am not as clever as you.

John is not as happy as James.

5

Now remember how we show things that are similar:

I am as clever as you.

John is as happy as James.

Look at page 28 in your workbook for more practice with *not as... as* and *as... as*.

Centuries

Finally, remember *centuries* in English:

We say:	but we write:	which means the years:
the seventh century	the 7th century	600 to 699
the tenth century	the 10th century	900 to 1099
the fifteenth century	the 15th century	1400 to 1499
the sixteenth century	the 16th century	1500 to 1599
the seventeenth century	the 17th century	1600 to 1699
the eighteenth century	the 18th century	1700 to 1799
the nineteenth century	the 19th century	1800 to 1899
the twentieth century	the 20th century	1900 to 1999
the twenty-first century	the 21st century	2000 to 2099
the twenty-second century	the 22nd century	2100 to 2199
the twenty-third century	the 23rd century	2200 to 2299
etc.	etc.	etc.

Look at page 28 in your workbook for more practice with *not as... as* and *as... as*.

6

King Fahd's Project for the Extension of the Two Holy Mosques



A reporter is talking to an engineer about the project.



DISCUSSION

A. Try to answer the following questions as you listen to the conversation:

1. What does Mr. Al-Dossary say at the beginning of this sentence?
....., the Holy Mosque at Makkah now has room for 730,000 worshippers
2. What is the total area of the Holy Mosque at Makkah now?
3. What was the area of the Holy Mosque at Makkah before the extension?
4. What is the total area of the Holy Mosque at Madinah now?
5. What was the area of the Holy Mosque at Madinah before the extension?

B. Listen to the discussion again.

Look at the words on the left and those in the box.

Choose the words from the box which you think best explain the words on the left:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. room 2. worshipper 3. normal 4. Not at all | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. a person praying b. You are welcome. c. ordinary d. space |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

C. Finally, what do you know about the extension of the two Holy Mosques? Discuss this in English with your teacher and classmates.

CONVERSATION PRACTICE

1 Practise the conversation in column A below.

	A	B	C
Reporter:	Can you give us some details about the <i>Holy Mosque</i> at <i>Makkah</i> ?	<i>new KSU campus</i> at <i>Riyadh</i>	<i>Pilgrims' Terminal</i> at <i>Jeddah</i> airport
Expert:	Yes, certainly. For a start, it has room for 1,000,000 worshippers.	can accommodate 15,000 students	can handle 80,000 pilgrims a day
Reporter:	What about the design?	is very modern and covers a 9-square-kilometre area	is tent-shaped and has many 46-metre-high pillars
Expert:	It matches the rest of the building and has two new 89-metre-high minarets.		
Reporter:	Thank you for telling us those interesting facts.		
Expert:	Not at all.		

2 Make more conversations but this time use the words in the B and C columns.

Lesson 3 GRAMMAR

Adjectives Made from More than One Word

Look at these adjectives from the conversations in Lesson 2:

<i>It has two new 89-metre-high minarets.</i>
<i>It covers a 9-square-kilometre area.</i>
<i>It has many 46-metre-high pillars.</i>
Note the hyphens: 89-metre-high

Note there is no s to show the plural.

GRAMMAR

Here are some more examples:

a five-ryal note.



He is a 15-year-old boy.



The Ka'abah is a 13.8-metre-high building.



Countable and Uncountable Nouns

Look at this sentence from the conversation in Lesson 1:

The Holy Mosque in Makkah now has room for 750,000 worshippers

The words *room* and *worshippers* are both nouns. However, they are very different. They have different meanings, of course, but there is another important difference:

You can count *worshippers* but you cannot count *room*.



(Remember, this word *room* means *space*. It is not the same as a *room* in a house. You can count the *rooms* in a house.)

We call *worshippers* a *countable* noun. We call *room* an *uncountable* noun.



It is important to know if a noun is *countable* or *uncountable* because you **cannot** do certain things with *uncountable* nouns:

- You cannot use numbers with *uncountable* nouns.
- You cannot use *a* or *an* with *uncountable* nouns.
- You cannot make *uncountable* nouns plural.
- You cannot ask questions with *How many* . . . ?
(You must use *How much* . . . ?)
- You cannot use *fewer* or *the fewest*. (You must use *less* or *the least*.)

Yemen

English for Yemen.

Third Year Secondary.

Authors: Ramsden, C. & Hubbard, B.

**Published by: Ministry of education and Research Centre. Sanaa,
Yemen. (1984).**

Lessons 4 and 5.

1. Joining Words.

In the text in the last lesson we read

«As a result of his preaching, many men who had formerly been pagans were converted to Islam.»

«As a result» means **نتيجة** and it explains why something happened.

Note: «As a result» is always followed by a **noun phrase**

اسم الفعل or a **verbal noun** **جمله اسمية**

2. Now look at the pictures and try to complete the sentences.

1. a)



(noun phrase)

b)



As a result of his laziness,

his business _____.

2. a)



(verbal noun)

b)



_____ eating too much,

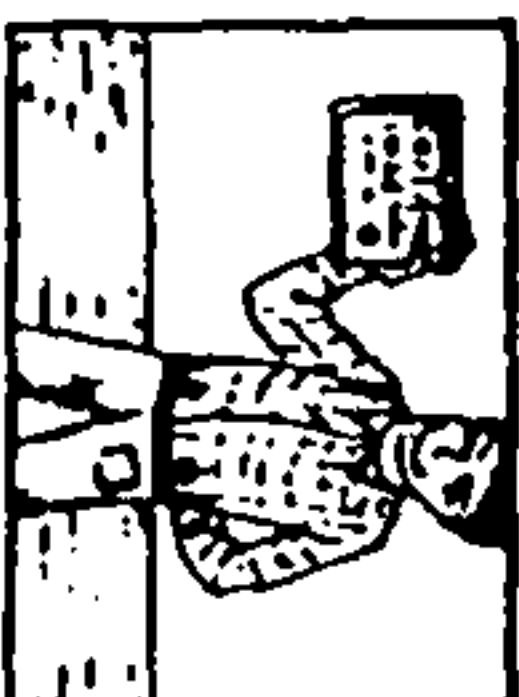
he _____.

3. a)



(verbal noun)

b)



he _____ certificate.

4. a)



(verbal noun)

b)



_____ not _____.

he _____ accident.

Now write these 4 sentences into your copybook.

3. Turn to exercise 2 in your workbook.

Lessons 6 and 7.

1. Dictionary Work.

1. Write the following words in alphabetical order in your copybook

Nouns	Verbs	Adjectives	Prepositions
tribe	delegate	amiable	throughout
revolt	address		
	found		
	expand		

2. Now look up the words in your dictionary.

Remember: n = noun, v = verb, adj = adjective.

prep = preposition

Match each word with its definition. The first two have been done for you.

tribe	likeable, friendly
delegate	in every part of
address	a rising, a rebellion
amiable	appoint and send as a representative
revolt	speak or write to someone
found	a large family descended from one ancestor
expand	begin something
throughout	grow larger

3. Turn to exercise 3 in your workbook.

Lessons 8 and 9.

1. Look at the picture below. Do you know where it is?
What do you know about Zabid?
Now read the text.

Islam, Zabid and Education.



- L.1 Zabid was one of the first places in Yemen to be converted to Islam. Abu Musa Al Asha'ari was the Sheikh of the Asha'eri in Wadi Zabid at the time and he visited the Prophet Mohammad in Medina. After Mohammad had spoken to Abu Musa and his delegation, he addressed his own people with the words:
- L.5

«People of Yemen have come to you. They are the most amiable and gentlehearted of men. Faith is of Yemen and wisdom is Yemen.»

- L.10 Sheikh Abu Musa returned to Wadi Zabid in 8 A.H. and built a mosque near a well.

Some 200 years later, Mohammad bin Ziad was sent to Zabid to put down a revolt. When he had done this, he founded his own Ziadi Kingdom with Zabid as the capital. It was built near to Abu Musa's mosque by the well. Abu Musa had already set up a Qu'ranic school in the Asha'er mosque, but Mohammad bin Ziad expanded the school into a university which became famous throughout the Arab world. When the famous Al-Azhar University opened in Egypt 150 years later, some of the first teachers there came from Zabid.

2. Comprehension.

Complete the answers to these questions.
Pairwork: Ask and answer each other.

1. Why is Zabid important in the history of Islam in Yemen?

Because it was

2. Who did Mohammad speak to first, his own people or Abu Musa?

He spoke first.

3. Why do you think Abu Musa built a mosque near a well?

I think he built the mosque near the well because

4. Why was Mohammad bin Ziad sent to Zabid?

He was sent

5. Did he put down the revolt first or did he build the city first?

He



2. Now look at this information table about the two cities.
Your teacher will discuss it with you.

City	Population	Annual Rainfall	Average Annual Temperature	Unit of Currency	= 1 Y.R.
Amsterdam	1,000,000	75 cm	8°C	Gilder	About 0.75 gilders
Paris	9,000,000	58 cm	10°C	Franc	About 2 francs



Pairwork.
Ask and answer the following questions.

- 1) How many people live in Paris?
 - 2) Is the population of Amsterdam as large as that of Paris?
 - 3) Which city is wetter. Paris or Amsterdam?
 - 4) Which city is cooler?
 - 5) How many gilders could you get for 1,000 Y.R.?
 - 6) How many francs could you get for 750 gilders?
4. Turn to exercise 8 in your workbook.

Lesson 12.

Turn to exercise 9 in your workbook.

Lessons 13 and 14.

1. Read this text about Waleed

Waleed is a pilot with Yemenia. Last week he was sick. If Waleed had been well, he would have flown to Rome. He would have stayed in the Central Hotel for a night, and he would have flown back to Sana'a the next day. But because he was sick his friend Mahmoud flew in his place. Waleed stayed in bed.

2. Study this sentence again (Line 2)

'If he had been well, he would have flown to Rome.'

This is another type of conditional sentence, the unreal past.

هذا هو النوع الآخر من الجمل الشرطية
ويشتمل هذه الجملة في الفعل الماضي
الذي يدل على أن عملية الفعل في الجزء الثاني من الجملة لم تحدث.

When we read the sentence, we find
out that Waleed was not well, and we
know that therefore he did not fly to
Rome.

Notice the form of the unreal past conditional.

If + had + past participle → would + have + past participle.

If Waleed had been well → he would have flown to Rome.

3. Now answer these questions.

- 1) What is Waleed's job?
- 2) Did Waleed go to work last week?
- 3) Why not?
- 4) If Waleed had been well, where would he have flown to?
- 5) Where in Rome would he have stayed?
- 6) When would he have come back to Sana'a?
- 7) Who took his place?



When Hamid arrived at the laboratory he studied the sample carefully. He could see some small parasites in the blood. These were the parasites which are spread by the anopheles mosquito.

«He's got malaria!» Hamid said to himself. «A mosquito must have bitten him. He must go home to bed immediately. If I hurry, I can buy him some medicine at the pharmacy. Poor Saifi! He will be very upset because he won't be able to play football tomorrow.»

Questions:

- 1) Why hadn't Saif seen the doctor?
- 2) What was Saif's temperature?
- 3) Why didn't Saif want Hamid to study the blood sample?
- 4) How did Hamid know that Saif had malaria?
- 5) How do you get malaria?

Zakah

In Islam a rich man is someone who owns more than 50 grams of gold, or 560 grams of silver or an equal amount of money. It is the duty of every rich Muslim to give Zakah at the rate of $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ of what he owns.

Some men may not own silver, gold or money, but if they have a large number of animals they should also give Zakah. Zakah should be given only to poor people, not to non-Muslims and not to one's parents, children, grandparents or grandchildren. When giving Zakah, the following order should be remembered.

1. Relatives.
2. Neighbours.
3. Poor people of one's own country.
4. Poor Muslims from other countries.

Also, before Eid Al Fitr, Muslims should give 1,450 grams of wheat or 2,920 grams of barley, dates or grapes, or an equal amount of money.

In the giving of Zakah, parents should also give for their children.

When a rich man gives some of his wealth to his poor brothers, he will be blessed by Allah.

Questions:

- 1) In Islam, what is the **definition** of a rich man?
- 2) What percentage of his wealth should a rich man give?
- 3) If a man owns 400 grams of gold, how much Zakah should he give?
- 4) If a man owns 200 grams of silver how much should he give?
- 5) Abbas has little money, no gold and no silver, but he still gives Zakah. Why is this?
- 6) When do rich Muslims give food as Zakat al Fitr?

Oman

English for Oman.

Third Secondary.

Authors: Smith, B. & Smith, C.

Published by: London Group UK Limited (1987).

UNIT TWO

7 Jibrin



The inner courtyard has carved wooden verandahs all round on each floor, and fine arches and screens.

There are many fine historic buildings in Oman. Most of them are forts, built for defence by rulers through the ages: the great strong forts of Nizwa, Al Hazm, Rostaq and Bahla, the forts of Mirani and Jalali in Muscat. But one of Oman's great buildings was more than a fort. It was also a palace and a college, a place of beauty, where art and learning flourished. The fort and palace of Jibrin combined strong walls and high towers with fine examples of the art and crafts of its age.

The great Imam, Sultan ibn Saif, who became Imam in 1649AD/1059AH, drove the last of the Portuguese from Muscat. Then he built the great fort at Nizwa, which took twelve years to complete, rebuilt the falaj between Nizwa and Izki, and opened trade links with many neighbouring Arab countries, India and Persia. For twenty years Oman was peaceful and prosperous.

The ceilings of many of the rooms and corridors are decorated with inscriptions from the Quran.



When Sultan ibn Saif died in 1663AD/1079AH, his son Bil'arub became Imam.

He built the fort and palace at Jibrin and moved there from Nizwa. For a few years Jibrin was Oman's capital. In the fort Bil'arub started a free college. He paid the salaries of the teachers and the expenses of the students. Many of them became great scholars and experts in Islamic Law.

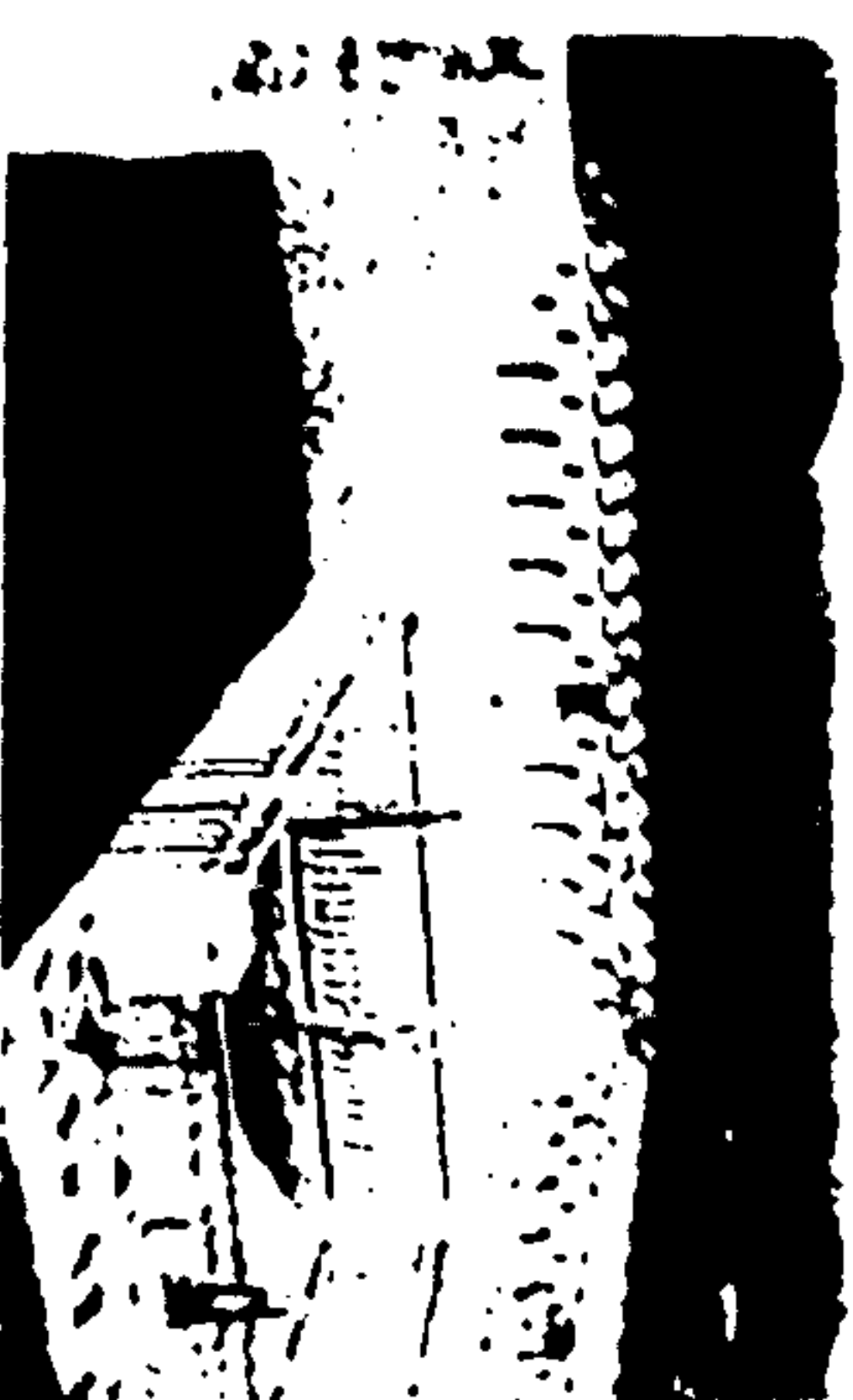
Because Oman was at peace, the fort at Jibrin was decorated by the best artists and workmen. Beauty and comfort were as important as strong defences. Carpenters carved the doors, roof beams and verandahs in beautiful patterns. Artists painted the ceilings of the main rooms in bright colours, with flowers, patterns and verses from the Quran. Stonemasons built beautiful arches and stone screens around the courtyards. It was the finest palace ever built in Oman.

Unfortunately Bil'arub's brother, Saif ibn Sultan, fought a civil war against him, and finally led an army to attack the fort at Jibrin.

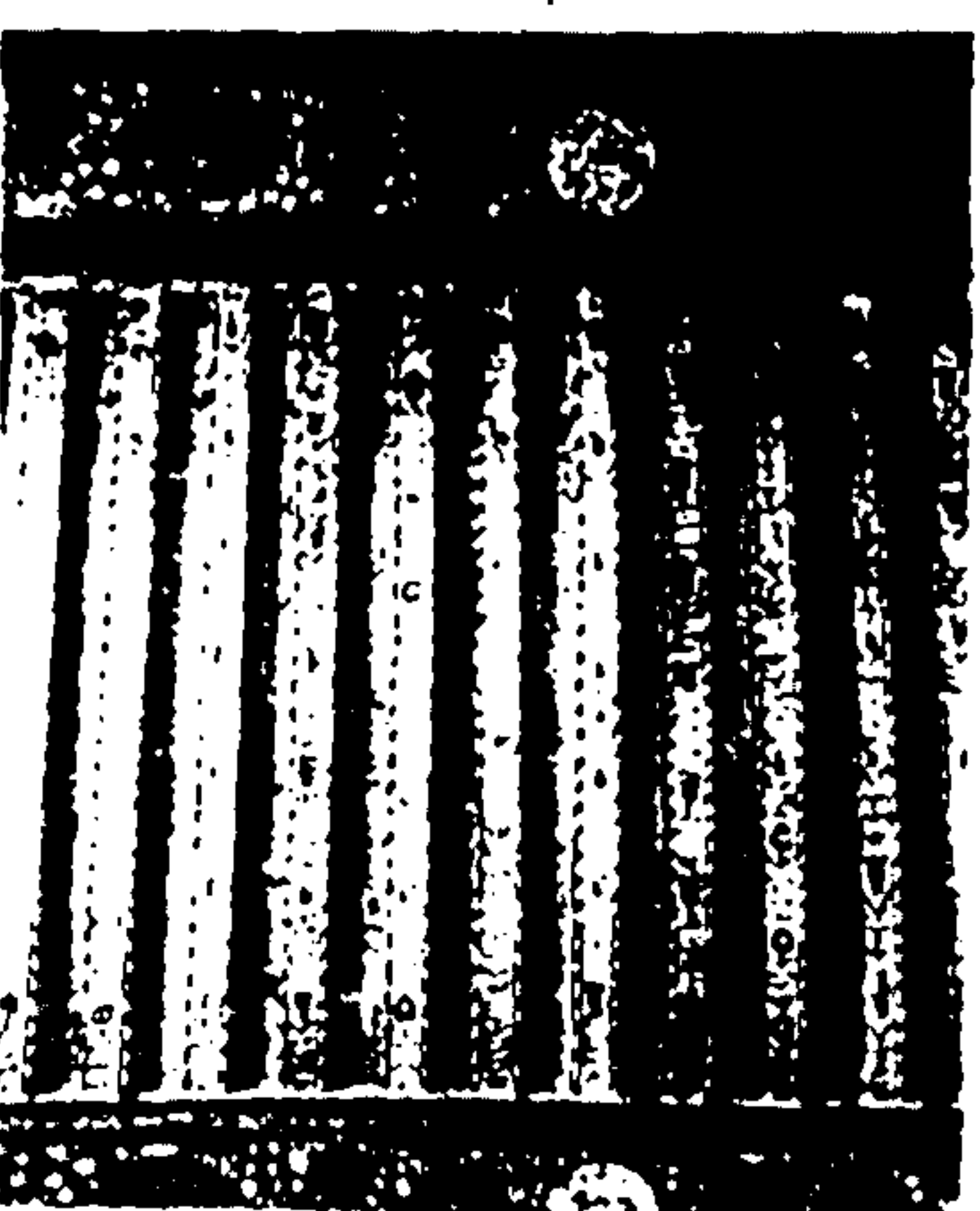
Bil'arub died and was buried in a small tomb inside his palace. Saif ibn Sultan became the new Imam. He was a strong and successful ruler for many years. He made his capital at Rostaq, and the fort at Jibrin was left empty.

Fortunately in the early 1980s, Jibrin was repaired and restored by the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture and visitors can now see it in all its original beauty, one of the finest jewels from Oman's history.

Today the restored palace is surrounded by date gardens and farms.



From the roof there is a view across the date gardens to the Jebel Akhdar.



The ceiling of one of the main rooms is decorated with flowers and patterns in bright colours.

UNIT TWO

Oman's Farm Animals

There are almost 14 million farm animals in Oman, including 125,000 cattle, 700,000 goats, 135,000 sheep, 70,000 camels, and 11,000 donkeys and horses. This livestock is an important part of Oman's natural wealth. It produces an annual income of over R.O. 50 million. It also provides 15% of the country's milk, and 20% of its fresh meat.

The Animal Wealth Department at the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries is responsible for the care and growth of this animal population, which is increasing annually by about 3%.

They face two main problems. Firstly there is a general shortage of food for animals, as Oman is a semi-desert country. Fodder for livestock can only be grown easily in Dhofar and on the Batinah plain. But by introducing new kinds of fodder plants, which will grow bigger and stronger in poor soil, the Department hopes to produce more locally-grown fodder in all regions.

Secondly, the Omani livestock has suffered from a number of diseases and parasites (insects and worms which live on or inside the animals). A campaign of immunisation and treatment, organised from 13 clinics and 26 sub-clinics all over the country, has greatly reduced this problem. A full-scale livestock vaccination programme began in 1982, and in four years almost every animal in the country had been immunised against the commonest diseases.

But the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries is doing more. At experimental farms at Runais, Khaboura and Wadi Qurayal, Omani goats and sheep have been cross-bred with foreign ones. The Anglo-Nubian goat cross-breeds successfully with the Omani goat, and produces an animal almost 50% larger than the local animal. These larger goats are stronger, healthier, produce more milk and meat, and have 50% more young. Also, the Chios sheep from Cyprus have been cross-bred with the local species to produce bigger and healthier sheep.



This young cross-bred goat, born on an experimental farm at Khaboura, will be a bigger and healthier animal than the traditional Omani goat.



Sheep and goats are cross-bred on experimental farms to improve their wool and meat.

Oman is also training "vets" to work in the clinics and sub-clinics. A "vet" is an animal doctor (the word is short for "veterinarian"). Like a doctor, a vet has to go to a special college and study for many years. He immunises young animals, and treats diseases, infections and wounds, such as cuts, scratches and animal bites. He recognises diseases, and can stop them spreading to the other animals in a farm or village.

At first many farmers were unhappy about taking their animals to a clinic. They preferred to give their sick animals their traditional home-made medicines. But they soon saw the advantages. They saw that quick and expert treatment and injections of antibiotics could save the life of a sick animal, even a whole herd. Now at the first sign of trouble they take the animal to see the local vet.

Oman's animal population has never been so well looked after and healthy. And with the human population growing year by year, Oman needs its livestock to go on producing the food the people need.



Keeping all the groups of experimental animals fed and healthy is a full-time job.



Farmers now bring their animals to the vet as soon as they have a problem.



These hungry young kids are the new generation of Oman's livestock.

Libya

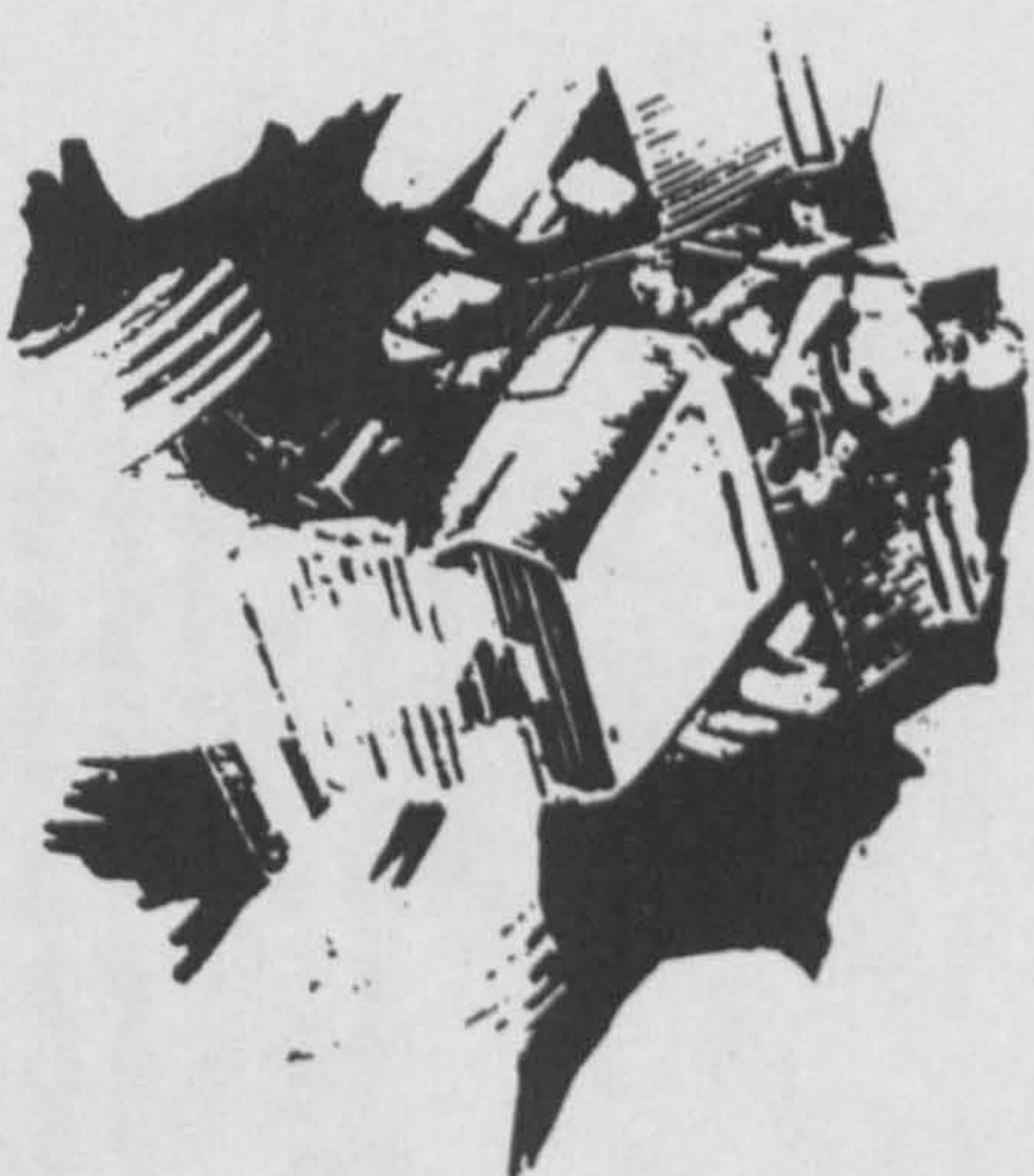
Living English for Libya.

Third Year Secondary.

Authors: Gusbi, M.

**Published by: General Publication and Distribution Co. Tripoli,
Libya (1979).**

LESSON EIGHT



A. Farmers in Garian have many problems. Water is their first problem. There is another problem. In Libya each farmer works for himself. There are no people to work for him. So the farmer must work long hours. He usually works from sunrise to sunset. Sometimes he works during the night, too. In winter you can see the headlights of tractors in the fields. The farmers are not having fun with their tractors. They are ploughing the fields. This is why farmers are called busy people.

B. Machines help Mr. Fellah very much. This is why he takes good care of them. How does he take good care of his machines? Do you still remember that?

But machines cannot do all the work. This is why Mr. Fellah always says, "Work is never done! Work is never done!"

28 - thirty-eight

Each member of the family has to do something. Do you still remember what each member does? Mr. Fellah has machines to help him. He has also his wife and children to help him. But work is never done. There are no people to work for him. What must he do? Can the association help him?

C. AHMAD:

ALI:

MAHMUD:

ALI:

Are you angry, Mahmud? What's the trouble? We're here to have fun. What's the trouble? I'm angry with Hani. He laughs at me. Hani! Hani! Mahmud is angry with you. Why do you laugh at him?

HANI:

Because he's afraid

to touch the cow.

AHMAD:

There are ten cows.

Which cow is he

afraid to touch?

HANI:

The black and white

cow by the tree.

Don't be afraid,

Mahmud. That's

friendly cow.



D. HANI:

WAFI:

HANI:

MAHMUD:

HANI:

MAHMUD:

Touch it, and I won't laugh at you any more. Here comes Mr. Fellah. Hani wants Mahmud to touch the black and white cow. But he's afraid to touch it. That's why Hani laughs at me. And that's why Mahmud is angry with me. What do you think, Mr. Fellah? Will the cow let me touch it?

thirty-nine 39

MR. FELLAH: It's usually a friendly cow.

AHMAD: And friendly cows don't usually kick.

MAHMUD: Will Hani touch it first?

HANI: All right. I don't come from Tripoli. I'm never afraid to touch animals.

E. Answer these questions:

1. Does Mr. Fellah have any people to work for him?
2. How long does he usually work every day?
3. What does he always say?
4. How does he take good care of his machines?
5. How many people are there in Mr. Fellah's family?
6. Do you know the name of each member?
7. Who is afraid to touch the cow?
8. Who is angry with Hani?
9. Will Mr. Fellah let the boys touch the cow?
10. Who will touch the cow first?

F. Make questions from this table:

Shall	I	let	him	go?
	we		her	come in?
			them	jump over the fence?

G. Play this game: do/homework read/book write/letter draw/cow

AHMAD: Please, sir, here comes Ali. What do you want him to do?

TEACHER: I want him to do his homework.

AHMAD: Ali, the teacher wants you to do your homework.

H. Play this game: new here has broken arm has no friends

ALI: What's the trouble with that boy?

AHMAD: He's new here.

ALI: All right. I'll take good care of him.

I. Learn: I = myself You = yourself he = himself she = herself

Now complete:

1. I work for
2. He works for
3. You work for
4. She works for
5. You are talking to
6. She is talking to
7. He is talking to
8. I am talking to

J. Answer these questions:

1. What time is sunrise in December?
2. What time is sunset in July?
3. Does your father have a car?
4. How many headlights does it have?
5. How many people are there in your family?
6. Does each member do some housework?
7. What do you do yourself?
8. How many brothers and sisters do you have?
9. What is your lucky day?
10. What is your lucky month?

1. There are people who cats.
2. There are people who the land.
3. There are children who like to animals.
4. There are bad children who animals.
5. There are girls who like to sick people.
6. There are plants which quickly.
7. There are plants which good crops.
8. There are plants which plenty of water.
9. There are plants which always green.
10. There are plants which in water.

1. *Play this game:* butter cheese bread meat cake coffee tea

AHMAD: Shall I give Mahmud some tea?

ALI: Please don't. Wait until the other boys wash their hands.

J. *Read this:*

1. The boy is hungry. He is eating quickly.
2. Ali is a good pupil. He always writes carefully.
3. Ahmad is a clever pupil. He always does his homework easily.
4. The man is talking quietly. Perhaps he is sick.
5. The woman is watching the children sadly. Perhaps she has no children.
6. Mr. Fellah is a wise farmer. He always chooses his seeds wisely.

Now make some other sentences yourself.

64 - sixty-four

A. Mr. Fellah is a good man. He is a wise farmer, too. He believes in Allah. He also believes in hard work. He believes in science, too. He always says, "The new farmer must know something about science."

Science helps Mr. Fellah to choose his seeds. Now he can grow a new kind of wheat. This new kind of wheat is ready for harvesting in ninety days. This is good for Mr. Fellah. Why? Because the rainy season is never long enough.

Syria

English for Secondary School.

Third Year Secondary.

Authors: Syrian Arab Republic, Ministry of Education.

**Published by: Abdul Kader Arnaout LTD. Damascus, Syria.
(1994).**

Syria

English for Secondary School.

Third Year Secondary.

Authors: Syrian Arab Republic, Ministry of Education.

**Published by: Abdul Kader Arnaout LTD. Damascus, Syria.
(1994).**

THE JACARANDA TREE

H. E. Bates

Herbert Ernest Bates born at Rushden in 1905, is a distinguished essayist, short-story writer, and novelist. His books have made him famous in Britain and America, and have appeared in fifteen foreign languages.

In the piece below, the boy Tuesday brings Paterson his early morning tea, and it is set in Burma during the war against Japan.

If the boy desired anything more than this it was to hear voices in the rejected radio-set that Paterson had thrown away and was now his own. Every evening, in his own hut of bamboo across the compound, he laboriously took the set to pieces in the light of a paper-shaded candle and then labor-

a — The spelling in this book has been —, and *humour* is spelt *humor*.

b — The old man started to — about life, and we had to sit and listen for two hours.

c — After treading on the girl's foot, he — profoundly.

d — It is only human to — with those who are ill.

e — At the university Robinson — in English Literature, but now he is a publisher.

4. In the first paragraph :

Not much of a place = not a very good place.

He took it for granted = he supposed it to be true (but had no proof).

Write out the meaning of the following in other

words :

a — My husband is not much of a gardener. He takes it for granted that what he plants will grow well; but it doesn't.

b — « This isn't much of an essay. said the examiner.

« The student, for some reason, takes it for granted that Napoleon had a weak heart. »

c — « Never take anything for granted. » said the professor.

1. Reject : to pick out and cast aside.
2. Compound : enclosure round a house.
3. Laborious : requiring great effort.

iously put it together again. Every evening he listened and waited. Nothing had so far happened to break the silence and bring voices and music to him as they were brought to Paterson, but he did not doubt that, in time, if he were patient, something would. The bungalow was two-storeyed, opening on to sleeping verandahs back and front. The nights were still cool enough for Paterson to sleep inside. On the upper back verandah slept the boy's sister, and as he went upstairs with the tea at a minute to five he stood on the top of the stairs for a moment and listened and waited. She did not seem to be moving and he went on. In both the cool and the hot weather and through the short hot rains she always slept there. Ever since the day the boy had first brought her to the house Paterson had called her Nadia, partly because it was a name he liked, partly because he could not bother with Burmese names, beautiful though they were. In the same way he called the boy Tuesday : because that too was simpler and because Tuesday was the day he had walked in, dead-beat and smiling, from the country somewhere east of Shwebo.

« Patson sir, » the boy whispered. « Patson, Patson sir »

He stood at the side of Paterson's bed, looking down on Paterson under the white mosquito net.

Dead - beat completely tired out.

« ရဲလူဝီ သိ၊ » လူ ခေါ် « ပါဆွန် ဆို. ၂၉၁. »

He called once or twice more before he set down the tray by the bedside and began to fold back the mosquito net, flinging it soundlessly over the top of the frame.

« Patson sir. Tea. » he said. « Tea. »

When Paterson stirred at the fifth or sixth call he sat straight upright, as if something had hit him. It was the moment for which the boy was always ready and yet in a way, from one morning to another, never really sure. And now he stood transfixed and smiling, waiting for Paterson's first act of the day.

It astonished him terrifically when it came. Paterson pushed back the single sheet and blanket which covered him and got straight out of bed. The boy could remember nothing of the kind ever happening before. He did not move. With the

-
1. Fold back : bend or double one part of a thing over on itself.
 2. Fling : throw.
 3. Frame : a border of wood or other material.
 4. Transfixed : as if fixed to the ground by a spear through his body.
 5. Sheet : a large piece of linen or cotton cloth, a person usually sleeps with a sheet under him.
 6. Blanket : soft woollen covering.

unbroken and unsurprised smile on his face, he watched Paterson walk three times across the bedroom.

Sometimes Paterson, huge and dark, seemed to the boy no less than ten feet tall. And now as he strode across to the window, to stare briefly out at the sun, already brassy and clear above the north-eastern cloud of hills, and back again to pour out his own tea, he seemed unbelievably gigantic because the boy was unprepared for what was going to happen next. He had just time to notice that Paterson astonished him again.

He came over to the boy and ran one hand through his hair. The enormous hand seemed for a moment as if it would pluck the cream-black skull from the shoulders and throw it jovially away. For a second the boy's heart began beating very fast and his smile widened to the edges of terror.

EXERCISES

Comprehension :

1. *What did Tuesday do every evening ? Why did he do it ?*
2. *Where did Tuesday's sister sleep ?*
3. *What did Tuesday do at 5 a.m. ?*
4. *Why was Tuesday surprised that morning ?*
5. *What filled Tuesday with fear ?*

Essay Subjects :

- a— Good and bad masters, and good and bad servants.
- b— It is the unexpected that happens.
- c— ‘ There's magic in the distance, where the sea - line meets the sky. ’ (Alfred Noyes)
Do far-off places seem wonderful, or merely interesting to you ?

Language :

1. *Fill each space with one of the given words in its correct form :*

1. *Stride : walk with long swinging steps.*
2. *Brassy : like brass = yellow metal.*
3. *Pluck : pull; pull up.*
4. *Jovially : merrily.*

Appendix I: Sample of texts analysed (group B countries)

Palestine

Excel in English. Student's Book.

Secondary School.

Authors: Alexander, L.G.

Published by: Longman. London (1987).

Guided Conversation A Journey through time

Imagine that a man and a woman who lived about 150 years ago are talking out with today. They are walking down a street. Here's part of their conversation.

What's that thing?
I don't know. It must be a carriage. It's got wheels and seats.
You must be mistaken. It can't be. It doesn't look like a carriage.
Listen! What a terrible noise. Where's it coming from?
Up there! Look up at the sky! What is it? It's gone.
It must have been some kind of bird.
It can't have been. It was so noisy and so fast.
Let's cross the road.
Quick! That horseless carriage is coming towards us!
Whew! We might have been killed!
Haven't the world become an awful place?
You can't be sure of anything any more!

Answer questions on the text: _____
Teacher: How long ago did this man and woman live?
Student: About 150 years ago.

What do we have to imagine?
That do they see first?
That does it look like?

Ask questions on the text: _____
Teacher: Ask me if they think it looks like a carriage.
Student: Do they think it looks like a carriage?
Teacher: What.....?
Student: What do they think it looks like?
Teacher: Why.....?
Student: Why do they think it looks like a carriage?

Talking Points _____
Talk about what the following things were like in the past:

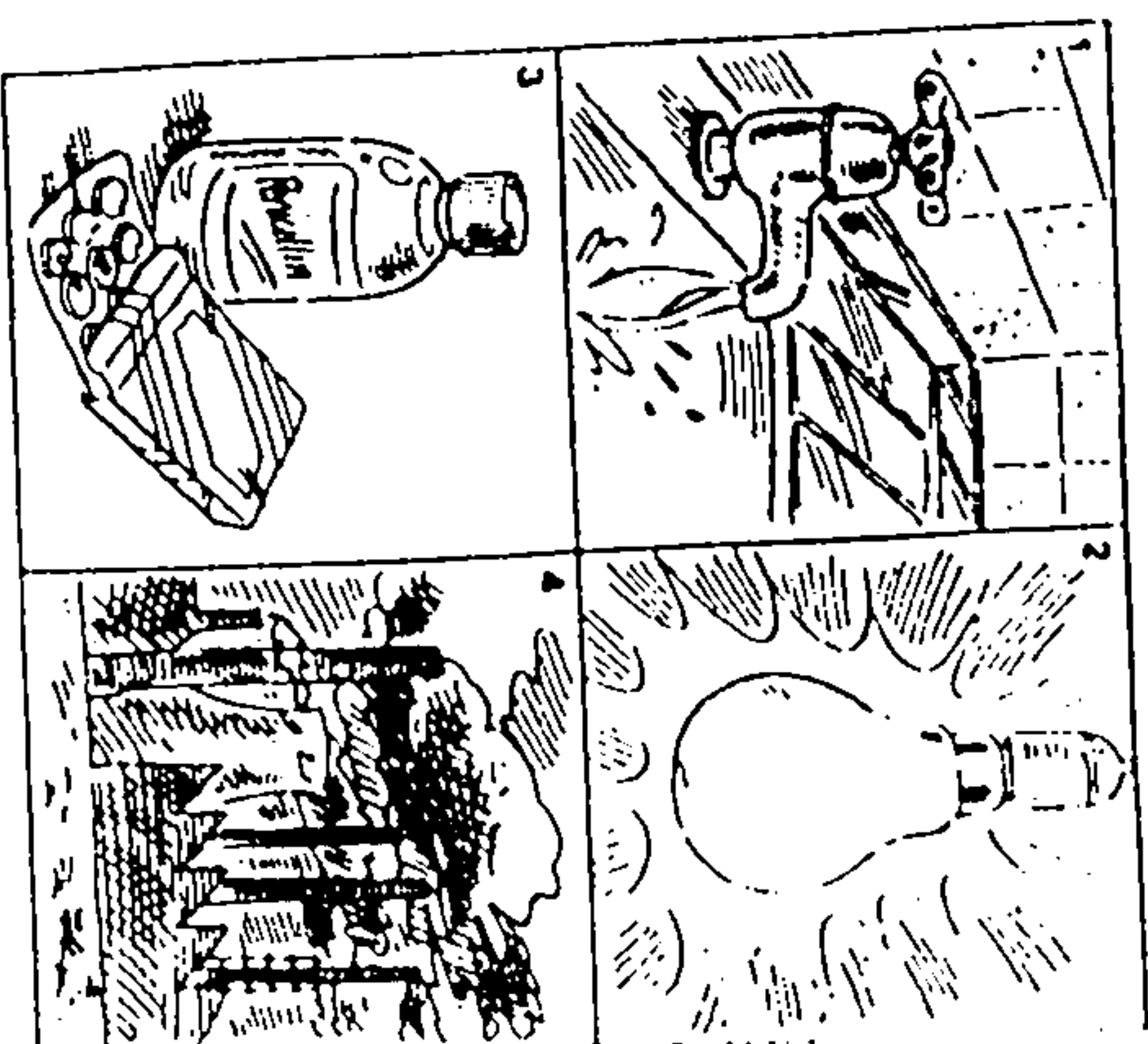
1 Water
We now have running water in most houses and clean water supplies. How did people get their water in the past?

2 Electricity
Most houses now have an electricity supply. What did people do for heat and light in the past?

3 Medicine
We now have many useful medicines like penicillin. We also have anaesthetics. What were medicine and surgery like in the past?

4 Pollution
We now have dirty rivers, dirty air and chemicals in the soil. Was there pollution in the past?

What do you think? Was the past better than the present?
Discuss this question.



Reading and Writing

Read the advertisement and then answer the questions

MAKING FRIENDS IN LONDON

or in any big city can be very difficult. You can't just go up to strangers and say, 'Hello, I'd like to meet you.'

If you enjoy meeting people LONDON LINKUP could be the club you have been looking for. We are a friendly group of young people. Our aim is to become involved in things that really interest us and to make the best use of our spare time.

To find out about us, just come to one of our introductory talks. These take place at 6.30 p.m. and 8.00 p.m. on Mondays and Thursdays at the International Sportswriters' Club, Great Russell Street.

If you want information about us, please ring us on 01 606 1750. We look forward to welcoming you.

LONDON LINKUP

- films
- concerts
- plays
- cooking
- chess
- football
- water skiing
- horseriding
- cycling
- games

- 1 What is it difficult to do in a big city?
- 2 Tell us in your own words what you think LONDON LINKUP is. Do not write more than two sentences.
- 3 How can the readers of this advertisement find out more about the activities of LONDON LINKUP?
- 4 What sort of people is this club aimed at? Begin: People who

Guided Summary _____
Refer to Lesson 13. Write some notes about the advertisement. Copy the text and make one paragraph.

- 1 Is Andrew better a boy or a girl? Describe him or her in detail.
- 2 Does he want a pen friend or not? Who gave him the idea of getting a pen friend?
- 3 What did Andrew write his first letter to Hilary?
- 4 Did he write a few things about himself for her to read? What did he write about? (for example) school or not? (for example)
- 5 Did Andrew say he would like to visit Egypt's most famous city? Did he say he would like to visit soon or not? (and?)
- 6 Did Andrew enclose two photographs of his house and his family?

Guided Composition _____
Write your answer to a pen friend in any country in the English-speaking world. Write it as if you should.

- introduce yourself
- write something about yourself and your family
- write something about your school and your interests
- write something about your home and the village town city you live in
- express the hope that your friend will reply soon

Special Difficulties

Words often confused or misused: enclose, include

Study these sentences

Andrew enclosed two photographs with his letter.
The price of the room includes breakfast.
I included Sue and Tom in my list of guests.

Choose the right word

- 1 Please ... a stamped envelope with your reply to this letter (enclosed/enclose).
- 2 We made a long shopping list: ... eggs, oil, flour (from and vegetables (included/include).
- 3 I sent off my application form and ... my certificates (included/include).
- 4 Thirty people ... several children, were hurt in the accident (including/including).
- 5 Our names were not ... in the list (enclosed/include).
- 6 You should never ... money in an envelope when you send a letter (enclosed/include).

Egypt:

Excel in English. Student's Book .

English for Arab Republic of Egypt. Secondary School

Authors: Alexander, L.G.

Published by: Akhbar el-Yom Press. Cairo, Egypt (1985).

Egypt:

Excel in English. Student's Book .

English for Arab Republic of Egypt. Secondary School

Authors: Alexander, L.G.

Published by: Akhbar el-Yom Press. Cairo, Egypt (1985).

Guided Conversation **Holiday fun**

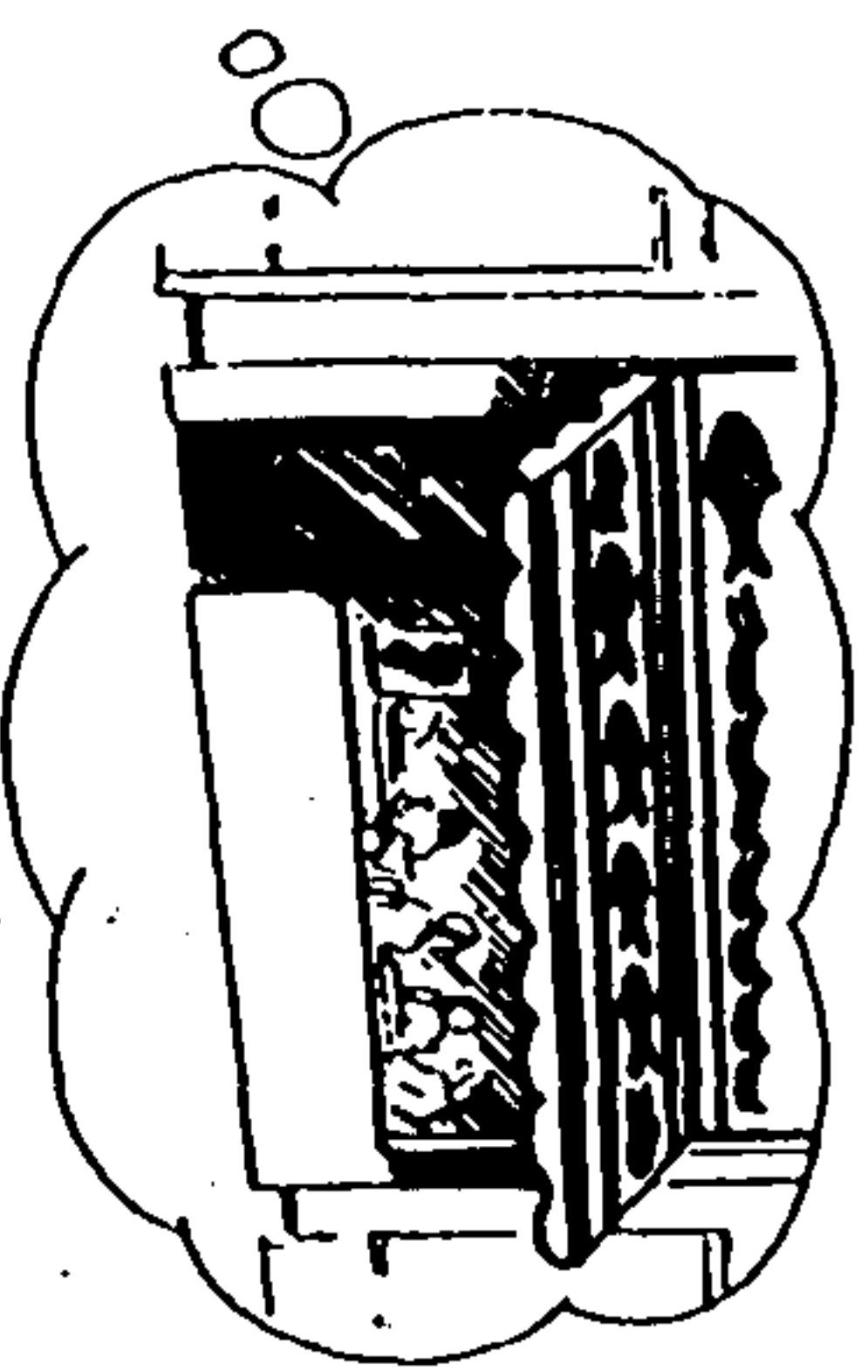
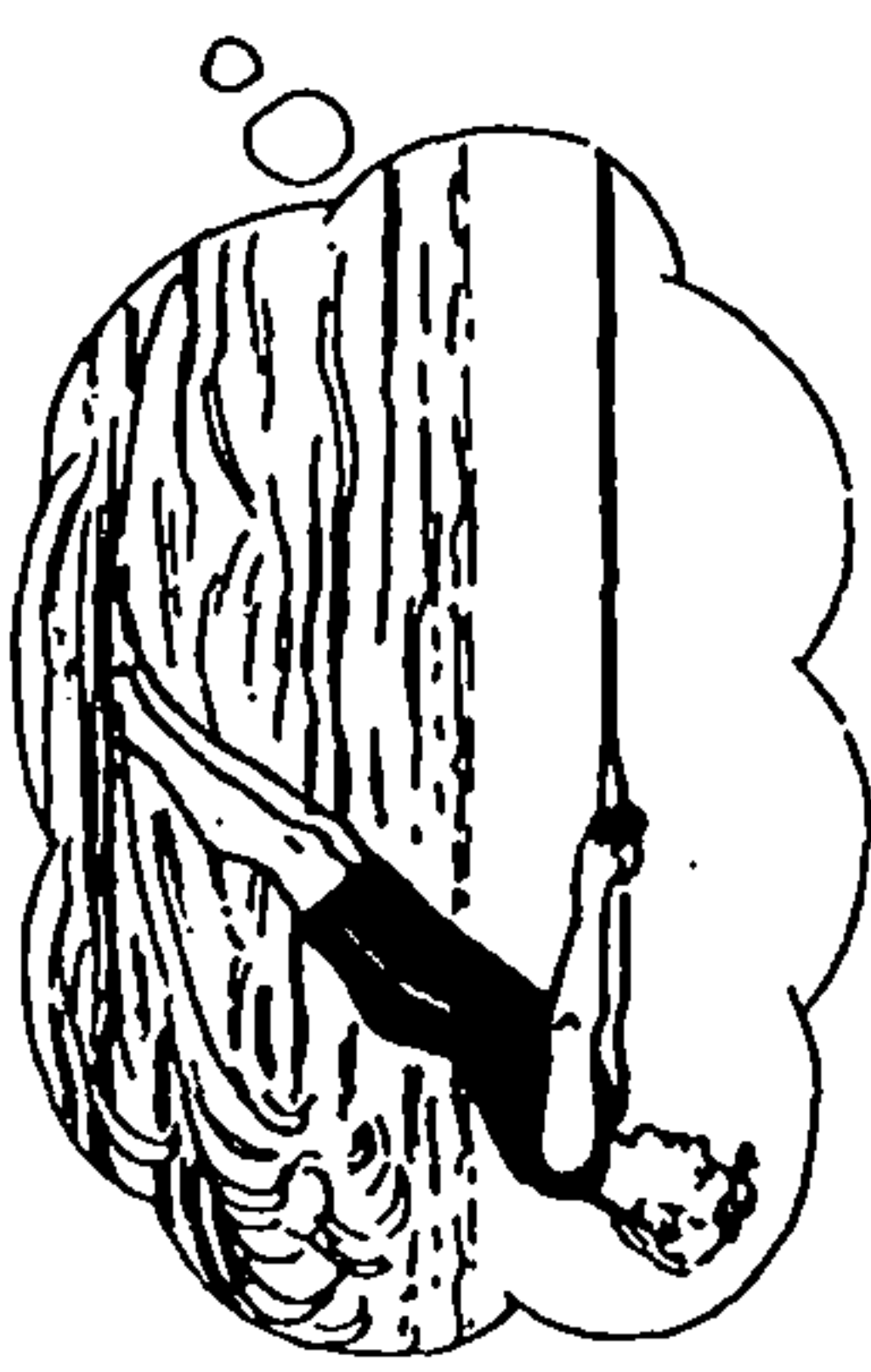
A Swedish couple, Erik and Brita, are on holiday in Alexandria. They are with their Egyptian friend, Sami.

Sami: What shall we do today?
Erik: Let's go swimming.
Sami: I know a very nice beach.
It's not far from here.

Sami: Do you like water-skiing?
Erik: That would be fun.
We've never tried it.
We're only used to
skiing on snow.

Brita: What about lunch?
Sami: I know a very nice fish restaurant
not far from the beach.
Brita: That sounds nice.

Erik: We must be back at our hotel
by eight o'clock.
We're going dancing this evening.
Sami: Come on then. Let's go.



Answer questions on the text _____

Question: What nationality are Erik and Brita?
Answer: Swedish.

What does Erik suggest?
What kind of skiing are Erik and Brita used to?
Why must they be back at their hotel by eight?

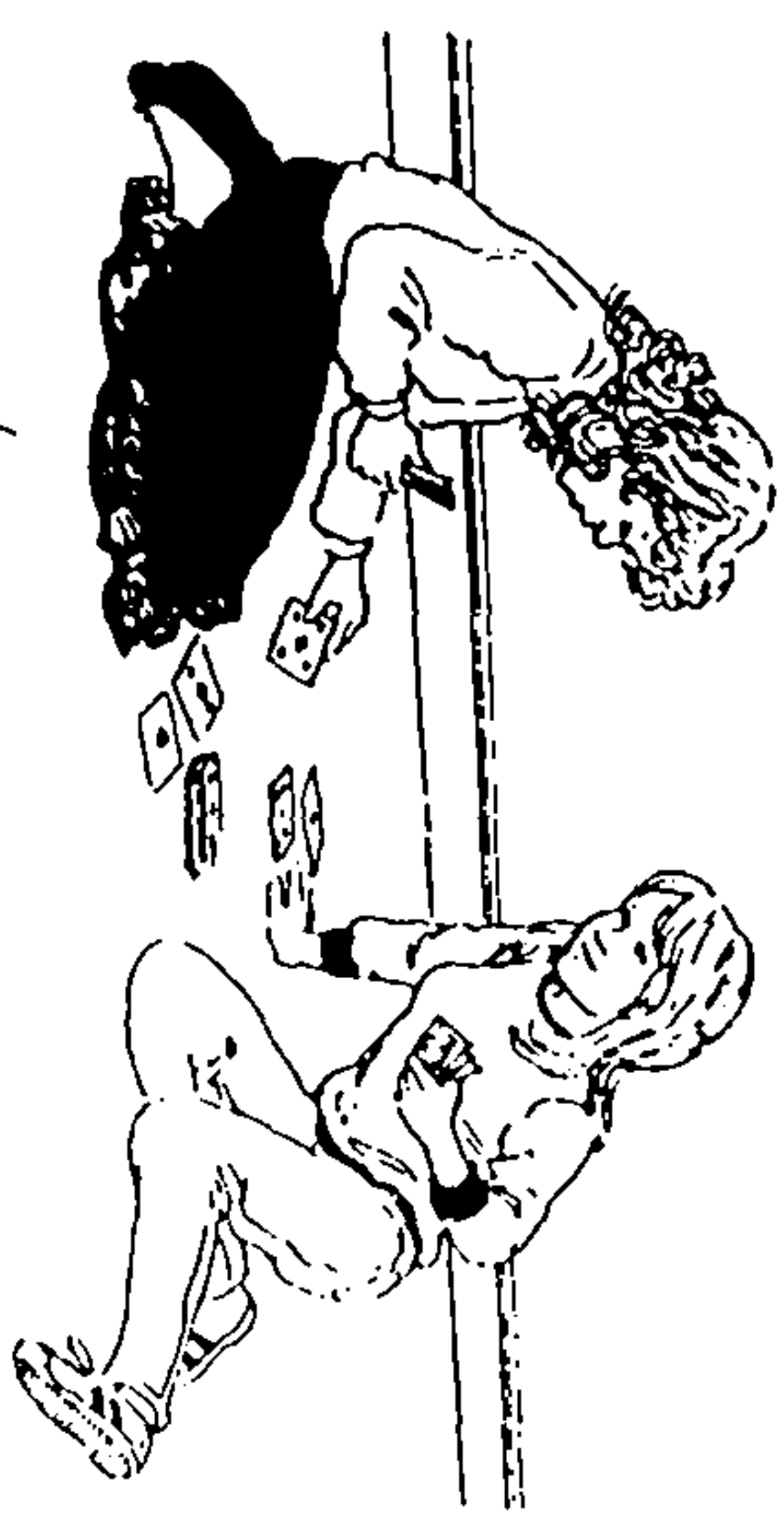
Ask questions on the text _____

Teacher: Ask me if Erik and Brita are on holiday in Alexandria.
Student: Are Erik and Brita on holiday in Alexandria?
Teacher: Where?
Student: Where are Erik and Brita on holiday?
Teacher: Why?
Student: Why are Erik and Brita in Alexandria?

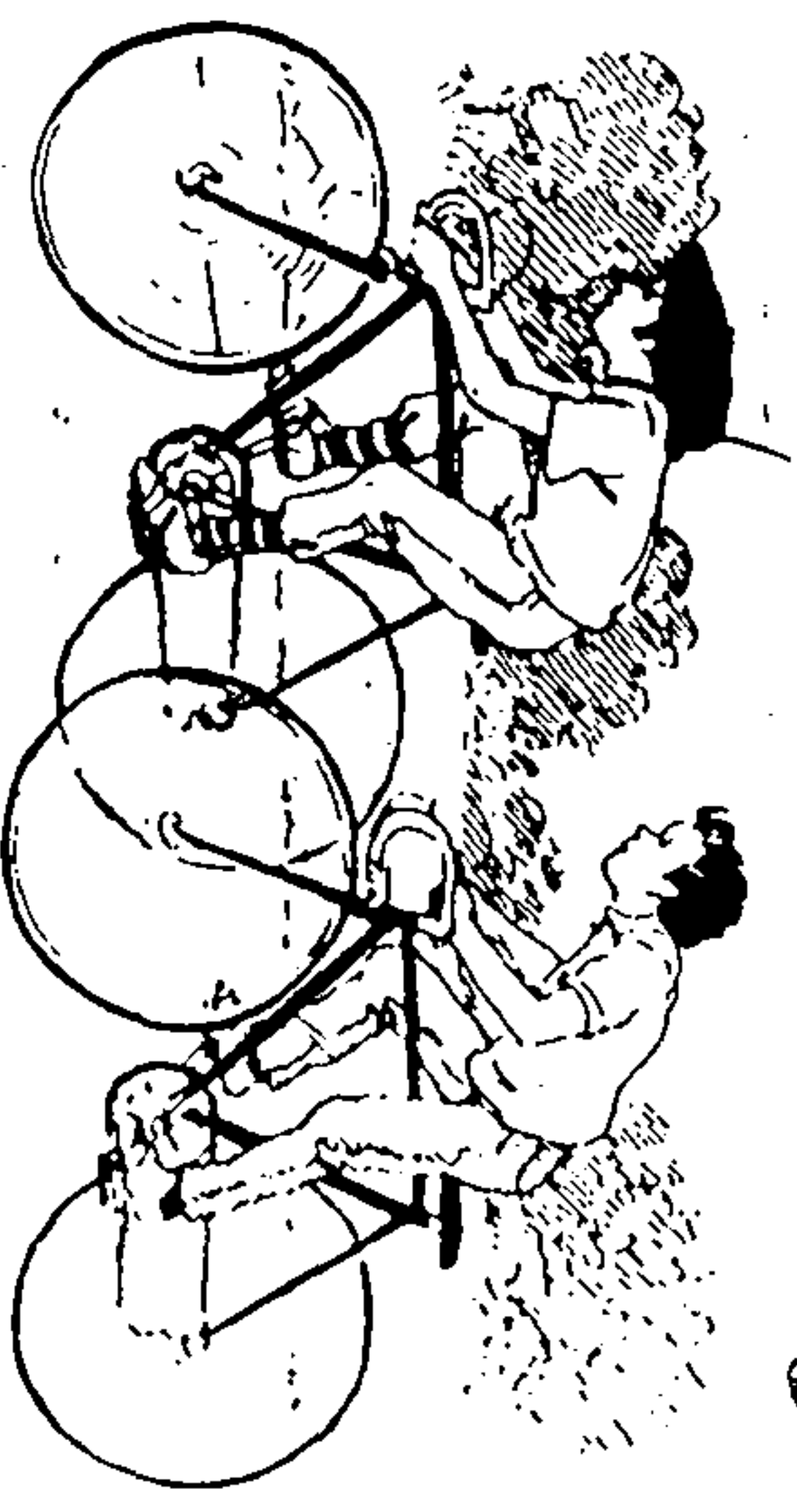
General Questions _____

How do you spend your spare time?

Indoors
Do you watch TV? How often?
Which programmes do you like best?
Do you play indoor games? (e.g. board games, table-tennis)
Which indoor games do you like best?



Outdoors
Do you play any sports?
If so, which do you like best and why?
Do you get any exercise? (e.g. walk, ride a bike, swim)



Talking Point _____

Tell us if you think you use your spare time well or badly.

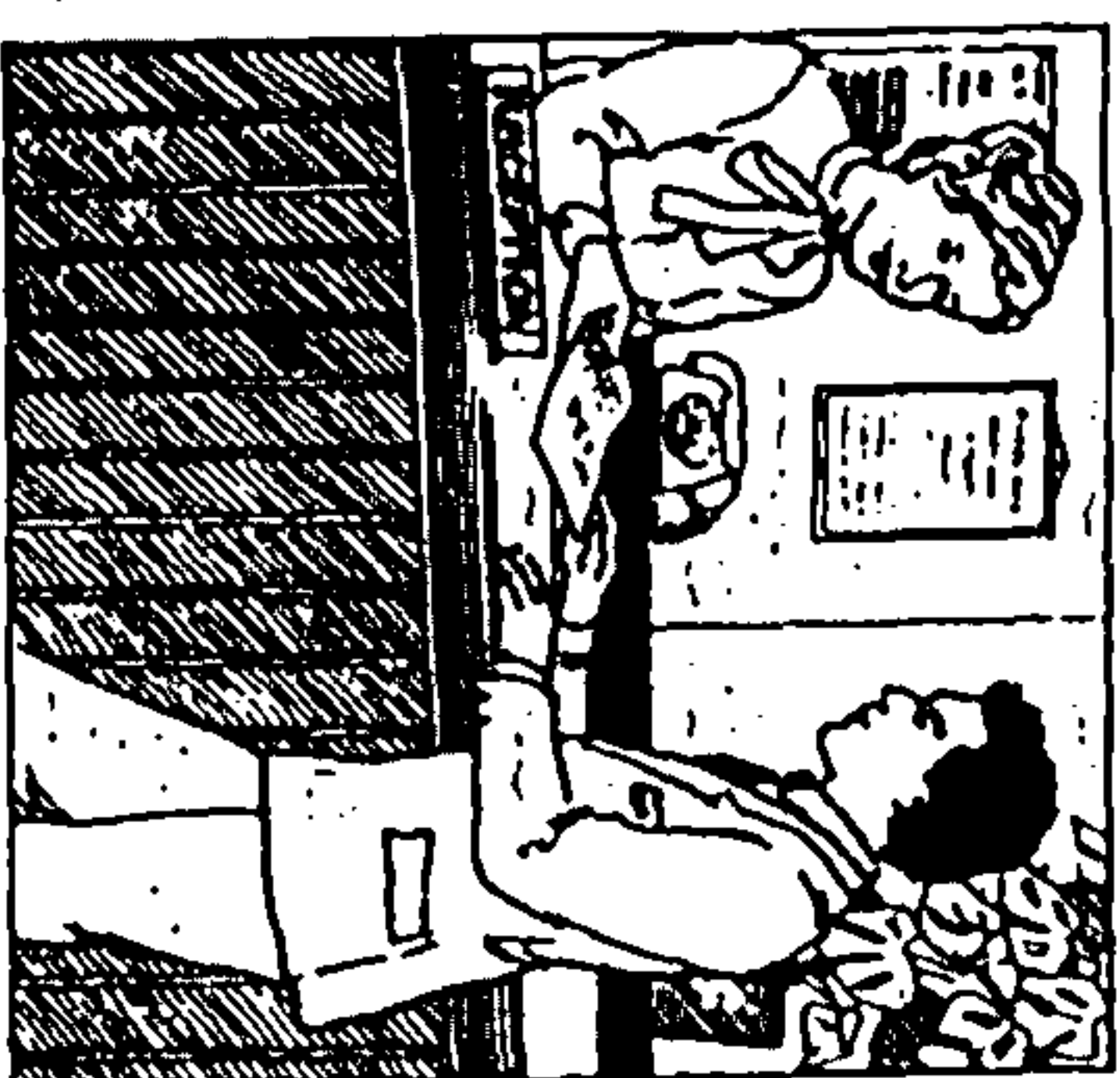
Guided Conversation **Studying abroad**

Kamal is from Egypt. He has just qualified in medicine from the University of Cairo and is making inquiries at the British Council about post-graduate studies in England.

Kamal: I'd like to go to England to do post-graduate work in medicine. Could I have some information please?

Secretary: Certainly. This leaflet tells you what you must do to get into a medical school in England.

Kamal: Thank you. I'll read it carefully.

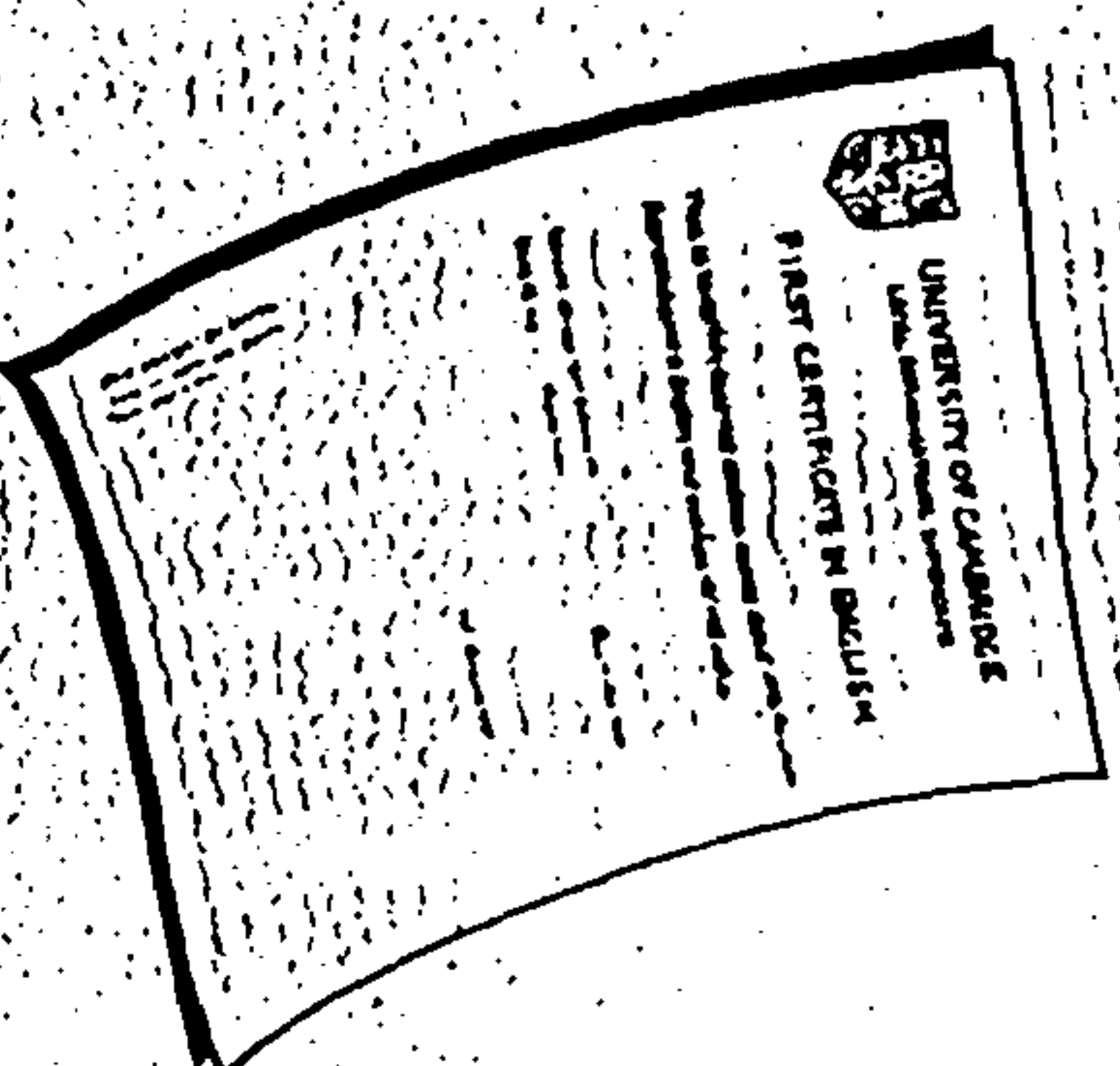


Secretary: You speak English very well. How long have you been learning it?

Kamal: I've been learning English since I was twelve.

Secretary: You will have to take a test in English. Do you mind?

Kamal: No. I've already passed the First Certificate examination.

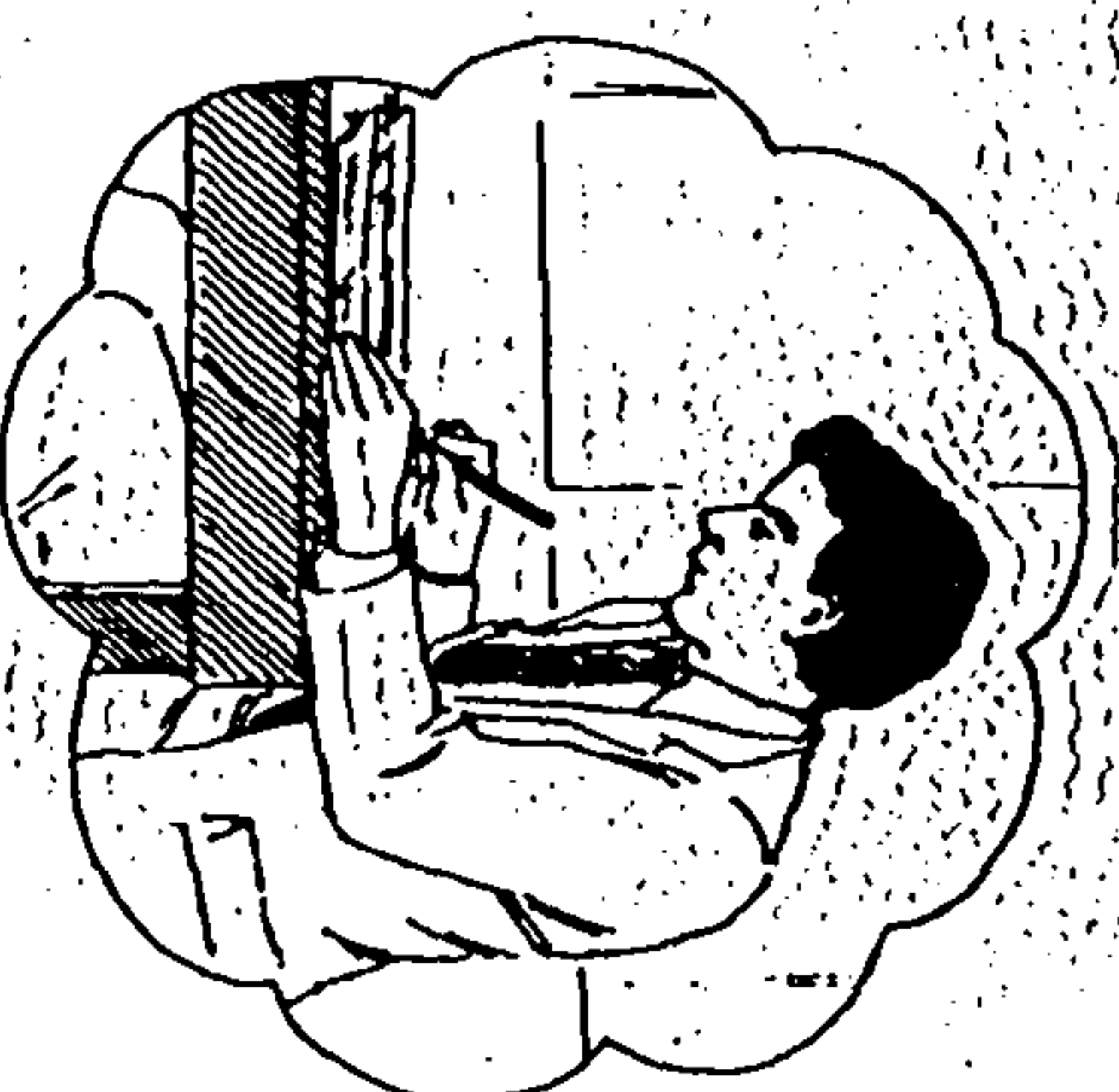


Secretary: When did you take that exam?

Kamal: I took it a year ago.

Secretary: Then the test won't be hard for you.

Kamal: I hope not. I hate examinations!

**Answer questions on the text**

Question: What subject did Kamal study at Cairo University?

Answer: Medicine.

Why is he making enquiries at the British Council?
What does Kamal say he will do with the leaflet?
How long ago did he take the First Certificate exam?

Ask questions on the text

Teacher: Ask me if Kamal has qualified in medicine.
Student: Has Kamal qualified in medicine?
Teacher: What?
Student: What has Kamal qualified in?
Teacher: Who?
Student: Who has qualified in medicine?
Teacher: Which subject?
Student: Which subject has Kamal qualified in?

General Questions

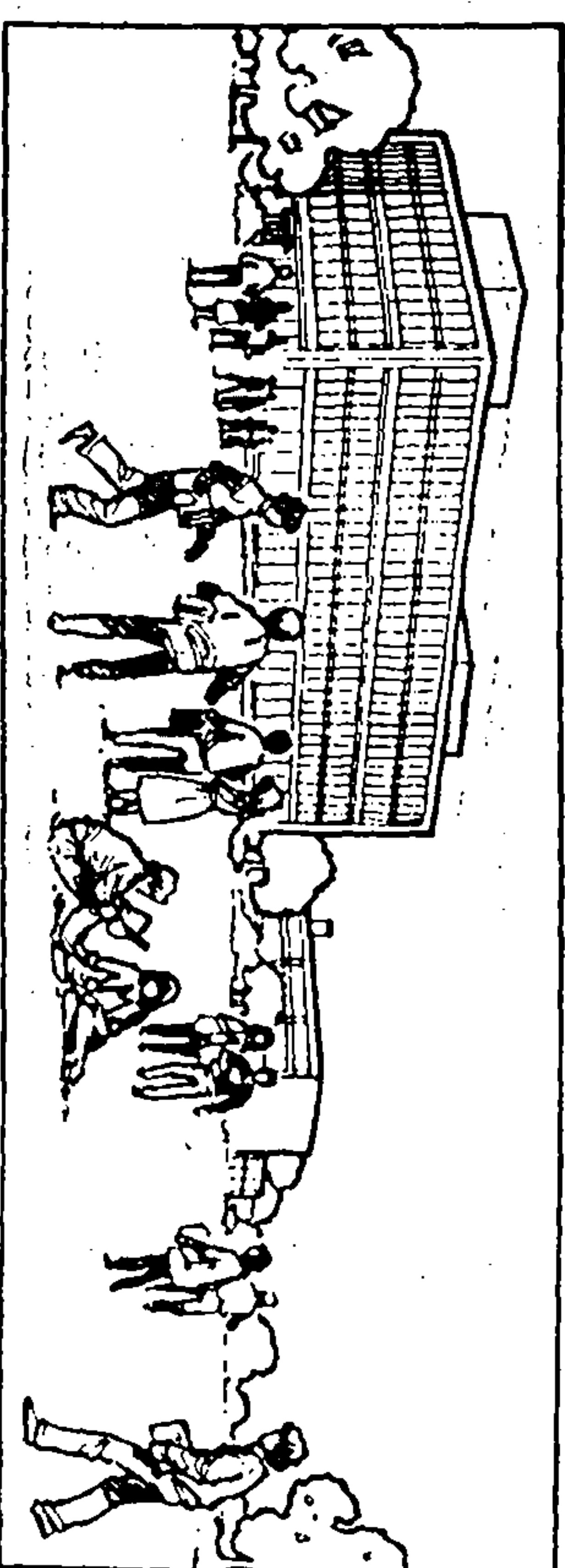
1 Exams
Have you taken any exams? Which ones?
What are the different school exams in this country?
Do you think exams are a good way of testing people?

2 University
What do you have to do to get to university in this country?
How many universities are there? Name some of them.
Which subjects are the most popular? Why?

About You

Tell us about your hopes and plans for the future.

Do you want to go to college or university? What do you want to study? What kind of work would you like to do?



Kuwait

Crescent English Course. Language Teaching for the Arab World.

Third Year Secondary.

Authors: O'Neill, T. & Snow, P.

Published by: Oxford: OUP (1995).

A Japanese pen-friend

Fuad filled in an application form for a pen-friend.
One day he got this letter from Japan.

PO Box 261,
Sema,
Hornshu,
Japan

10th October

Dear Fuad,

Would you like to be my pen-friend? Please say 'Yes'. I am a Japanese boy and I am fourteen years old. I go to Secondary school and I live in a small town called Sema. My house is very near the sea. My favourite pastimes are fishing and climbing mountains.

What is Kuwait like? Japan is not very big, but it is very beautiful. There are several large modern cities as well as small towns and villages. We have many mountains, rivers and lakes. Japan is very green because it rains a lot in summer. The wettest month is September. In winter it is very cold and sometimes it snows.

Would you like to visit Japan one day? There are lots of interesting things to see and do. For example, you can visit Disneyland, go to a baseball match or learn to do judo. You can also visit old temples and gardens or go to see a traditional Japanese play.

Please write and tell me all about yourself and your country.

Yours,

Yuku Ono



About twenty minutes later the first suitcases appeared.

'Here's mine,' shouted Tariq. 'It's the first one!'

'And here's mine.' I said. 'The blue one. Can you get it, please, Tariq?' He picked up a blue case.

'Thank you,' said an old grey-haired lady behind us. 'Thank you so much.'

How kind of you.' She took the case and left.

'It looked like my case,' I said.

'Where is your case, then?' asked Tariq. Now there were fewer and fewer cases going round.

'It's not here. It's lost. What am I going to do?' I shouted. 'Why do these things always happen to me? Why me?' I was worried.

'Don't be silly,' said Tariq.

'Look, here it is. I knew it wasn't lost.'

We walked towards the customs desk.

'Have you anything to declare?'

asked the customs officer.

'No,' I said. 'We're going to the

World Youth Camp.'

'That's nice,' said the customs officer.

'But would you mind opening your suitcase, please?'

I opened my case and the customs officer looked inside. Then he looked at me. Tariq looked at me. I looked at the case.

'Oh no! It's the old lady's. Now what am I going to do? Oh, why me? Why do these things always happen to me?'

Jordan

English Course for Jordan.

General English 2 Secondary.

Authors: Jayyusi, S.H., Farkouth, S. & Mukattash, L.

Published by: Ministry of Education. Amman, Jordan (1996).

THE CROWN PRINCE'S AWARD

- 5 IN 1956, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award was designed to encourage the young people of Britain to become involved in a balanced programme of voluntary self-development activities. The Award was so popular that it soon expanded to become the International Award Programme. Jordan decided to adopt the Award Programme in 1984 under the title "The Crown Prince's Award" (CPA). This has been a success and there are now over 140 units operating the programme in Jordan.



- 10 The age range for the Crown Prince's Award is 14 to 25 years and it is open to both girls and boys. Each young person is expected to participate in four sections of the Award: Sports, Adventure, Community Service and Personal Skills. There are three separate Award levels: bronze, silver and gold. When a young person has been successful in completing the Programme at a particular level, he or she receives an Award in the form of a badge and a certificate presented by His Royal Highness, H.R.H. Crown Prince Hassan. This Award is internationally recognised.

- 15 The Award is granted for individual achievement whatever the participant's social background and mental or physical fitness. The Programme is designed to give opportunities and challenges to young people so that they can learn how to know themselves and their potential. Self-confidence, the ability to work hard, concern for others, the spirit of adventure and enterprise are some of the qualities that the Award Programme wants to develop.
- 20 In order to meet the dynamic challenges of our times, Al-Sabilah was introduced in 1990 as part of the C.P.A. outdoor activities which have been derived from Raleigh International. It is an exciting 27-day programme consisting of three main parts: Adventure, Services and Scientific Projects. In this programme, a participant has to meet four challenges: assessment and selection; fund-raising; going on the expedition itself; and being an effective and responsible team member.

- 25 On joining Al-Sabilah, you might be scuba-diving one day in Aqaba and the next day mountain-climbing in Wadi Rum. Another day you might be doing community work in a small village, cleaning out water pumps, channels and reservoirs or perhaps you will be marking out football and volleyball pitches. All along the way, you are guided and supported by adult volunteers, experts in their particular fields.

The noble philosophy of the Award Programme is perhaps contained in the name "Al-Sabilah", which – translated into English – means "to pass by on a long journey and to leave good memories behind".

Based on information from *The Crown Prince's Award* and on "Award World", published by the Duke of Edinburgh's Award International Association, 19 St James's Square, London.

After you read ...

- 1 When did Jordan start the Award Programme?
- 2 How many sections of the Award are there and what are they?
- 3 How many levels are there and what are they?
- 4 When was Al-Sabilah started?
- 5 Why was Al-Sabilah started?
- 6 Al-Sabilah helps students on the Award Programme. Who else does it help?

Workbook Lesson 1, Page 11

About you

Lesson 2: Focus on Language

Grammar and functions

Grammar Target 1: Verb forms

- 1 Base form
This form of the verb is used
 - a in the Simple Present tense (except in the 3rd person singular):
I/You/We/They **clean** the kitchen daily.
 - b in imperative sentences:
Clean the kitchen, please.
 - c after modal auxiliaries:
You **must clean** the kitchen.
 - d with 'to' to form the infinitive:
I want to **clean** the kitchen today.
- 2 Base form + -s or -es
This form is used in the 3rd person singular of the Simple Present tense:
He/She/He/They **cleans** the kitchen daily.
- 3 Base form + -ing
 - a When used after the auxiliary 'be' in the Present and Past Progressive tenses, this form is called the Present Participle:
I **am cleaning** the kitchen now.
She **was cleaning** the kitchen when I arrived.
 - b When used as the subject of a sentence or after a preposition or after certain verbs, this form is called the Gerund:
Cleaning the kitchen is hard work.
I **thanked her for cleaning** the kitchen.
I **don't like cleaning** the kitchen.
- 4 Base form + -d or -ed
 - a This form is used with regular verbs for the Simple Past tense. It is the same for all persons of the verb.
I/You/He/We/They **cleaned** the kitchen yesterday.
Irregular past tenses, e.g. come – came, do – did, must be learnt.
 - b This form is also used as the Past Participle of regular verbs. It is mainly used with the auxiliary 'have' in perfect tenses and the auxiliary 'be' in passive constructions.
The kitchen **was cleaned** the kitchen twice today.
The kitchen **was cleaned** yesterday.
Irregular past participles, e.g. come – come, do – done, must be learnt.

get by.
Most of the lectures are very interesting, that is, when I can understand them! We have a huge amount of background reading to get through but there aren't enough hours in the day to do it all. The hostel is O.K. It's a bit barren and it can get you down sometimes but at least it's warm! I'm sharing a room with a girl called Karen. We'll be sharing for the rest of the year so I expect we'll all get together eventually. I'm sure we're going to become close friends.

She's tall with short curly blonde hair (the exact opposite of me!). She has quite a pale complexion and, when we're not in uniform, she usually wears black which makes her look rather delicate. (In fact, she's as strong as a horse!) She comes from Lancashire in the north of England - and yes - I can understand her!

Karen is very kind but she has the most annoying habit of leaving her books and things all over the room. You can't see her desk because it is all covered with papers. Her clothes are everywhere except in the wardrobe; you can't walk across the floor without falling over something. She is so vague, she puts something down and forgets about it. She borrows things and then can't remember where she's put them. I lent her that nice black jumper last week - I don't expect I'll ever get it back.

On the other hand, I have never met anyone so generous and warm-hearted. If ever you need any help, she's always willing although she does sometimes try to get out of doing the washing up! She is also very clever. She is so alert in the lectures that I've asked her more than once to go over some notes with me. She seems to be able to get things across better than the lecturers sometimes! So, all in all, I get on with her very well.

Next week we're going to start our practical training but we've got exams before that so I'd better get on with some revision. Bye for now.

Love, Angela

Letter 2

To whom it may concern

Karen Dobbs completed her nursing training at the Edgeware Nursing College in June of this year. She passed all theory and practice papers and achieved a "B" grade overall.

Throughout the course, Ms Dobbs impressed her tutors with her dedication to the job. She was liked by her fellow nurses and was able to develop good relationships with patients.

On the whole Ms Dobbs is a competent and hardworking nurse. However, she has a tendency to be unsteady and her supervisors observed that this led to an element of disorganisation in her work. Although this need not prevent Ms Dobbs from pursuing an excellent career in nursing, it is a fact that future supervisors need to be aware of, bearing in mind the importance of accurate medical records.

In spite of this one reservation, I believe that Karen Dobbs would be a valuable asset to any nursing team. I have no hesitation in recommending her for the post concerned.

Sister M.G. Mackenzie

First the words, from which you

- 1 positively
- 2 negatively
- 3 neutrally

Workbook Lesson 1, Exercises a-b

About you

What words would you use to describe yourself are your weaknesses?

Lesson 2: Focus on Language

Grammar and functions

Grammar Target 6: Phrasal verbs

- 1 Phrasal verbs are very common in informal English. They are formed by a verb + one or more prepositions or particles:
get + on: *He got on the horse.*
get + on + with: *I get on with her very well.*
- 2 Phrasal verbs often have a literal meaning and another unrelated, non-literal meaning. We can work out the literal meaning by considering the literal meaning of the preposition, as in the first example above, where 'on' means 'on its back'. The non-literal meaning must be learnt, as in the second example above, where 'on' doesn't mean literally 'on top of' anything!
- 3 As with single-part verbs, phrasal verbs can be transitive (taking an object) or intransitive (not taking an object):
transitive: *I have got over my homesickness.*
intransitive: *I'm sure I'll be able to get by.*
- 4 If a transitive phrasal verb consists of a verb - a particle (e.g. *get back*), the object can precede the particle or follow it:
I'll never get the book back. OR *I'll never get back the book.*
But if the object is a pronoun, the pronoun can only precede the particle, not follow it:
I'll never get it back. NOT **I'll never get back it.*
- 5 If a transitive phrasal verb consists of a verb - a preposition (e.g. *get over*), the object cannot precede the preposition:
I have got over my homesickness. NOT **I have got my homesickness over.*
I have got over it. NOT **I have got it over.*

Algeria

Comet: A Communicative English Teaching Course Book for all Streams.

Third Year Secondary.

Authors: Benzian, A.

Published by: Algeria: Al-Diwan Al-Watani lilmatbuat. (1994).

MODERN LIFE IN ENGLISH SPEAKING COUNTRIES

I N I O N I

THIS ENGLAND...

...THIS ROYAL THRONE OF KINGS, THIS SCEPTERED ISLE,
THIS EARTH OF MAJESTY, THIS SEAT OF MARS,
THIS OTHER EDEN, DEMI-PARADISE;
THIS FORTRESS BUILT BY NATURE FOR HERSELF
AGAINST INFECTION AND THE HAND OF WAR;
THIS HAPPY BREED OF MEN, THIS LITTLE WORLD,
THIS PRECIOUS STONE SET IN THE SILVER SEA,
WHICH SERVES IT IN THE OFFICE OF A WALL,
OR AS A MOAT DEFENSIVE TO A HOUSE,
AGAINST THE ENVY OF LESS HAPPIER LANDS;
THIS BLESSED SPOT, THIS EARTH, THIS REALM, THIS
ENGLAND...

(Richard II. act II, sc. I.)
William SHAKESPEARE

I. PRE - LISTENING

- 1/ Let's talk about it.
- a) Where and when do crowds of people form in your town / village?
 - b) What particular aim do these crowds gather for?
 - c) There's a special place in London where people gather to listen to speakers. Do you know its name?

II. LISTENING

- 2/ Listen to the following passage and say whether it is
- a. economic?
 - b. political?
 - c. cultural?

III. POST - LISTENING

- 3/ Class discussion
- * What qualities should speakers have to interest their audience, according to you?

TEXT FOR LISTENING AND READING COMPREHENSION

DID YOU KNOW IT?

Speaker's Corner

Situated at the Marble Arch entrance to Hyde Park, Speaker's Corner has existed as a meeting place for many years. Hyde Park, London's biggest and most central park, is regarded by many as the "People's Park", and has been used as the starting point for many demonstrations, as well as being a useful place for holding large meetings.

It is a place where everyone, whether radical, missionary, or just plain lunatic, can stand on a box and shout out his or her opinions into the crowd.

Every Sunday, Hyde Park sees the start of a series of world revolutions: speaker after speaker talks about religion, the arms race, East-West relations, and life's inequalities.

1. PRE - LISTENING

1/ Let's talk about it.

- * Have you heard of Shakespeare?
- * Where is he from?
- * What is he famous for?
- * What kind of plays did he write?
- * Do you know any of them?

II. LISTENING

2/ Listen to your teacher's reading and make a list of all the furniture in Shakespeare's house.

3/ Listen again and say whether the following statements are true or false.

- a) Sidney and Ethel are visiting Shakespeare's house.
- b) The man is one of Shakespeare's relatives.
- c) Sidney and Ethel paid twenty five pounds for the ash-tray.

TEXT FOR LISTENING & READING COMPREHENSION

Shakespeare's House

Scene : The living-room of a house in Stratford-upon-Avon, the town where Shakespeare was born.

Characters : Sidney and Ethel, tourists. A man, Sidney and Ethel come into the room.

Sidney: Well, Ethel, here we are in Shakespeare's front room. This must be where he wrote all his famous tragedies.

Ethel: I'm not surprised, with furniture like this.

Sidney: What do you mean?

Ethel: Well, look at that armchair. He can't have been comfortable sitting there.

Sidney: Don't be silly! He probably sat at this table when he was writing tragedies.

Ethel:

Oh, yes, look!

(She shows Sidney a typewriter.)

This must be Shakespeare's typewriter.

Sidney: Shakespeare's typewriter?

Yes. He probably wrote all his plays on this.

Ethel: Ethel! That can't be Shakespeare's typewriter.

Why not?

Sidney: Because Shakespeare didn't use a typewriter.

Ethel: Didn't he?

No, of course he didn't. He was a very busy man. He didn't have time to sit in front of a typewriter all day.

He probably used a tape-recorder.

Ethel: A tape-recorder?

Sidney: Yes, I can see him now. It's probably on this chair that he used to sit, holding his microphone in this hand, saying,

"To be, or not to be."

What does that mean?

Ah, well that is the question.

Ethel: Sidney, look!

What?

Over here. This must be Shakespeare's television.

Yes it must be. It looks old. But Shakespeare didn't have a television.

Ethel: Why not?

Why not? Because he went to the theatre every night. He didn't have time to sit at home, watching television.

Sidney:

Ethel:

(They hear someone snoring.)

Sidney, what's that? I can hear something. Oh, look!

Where?

Over there. There's a man over there behind the newspaper. I think he's asleep.

Oh, yes. He must be one of Shakespeare's family. He's probably Shakespeare's grandson.

Ethel: Ooh!

I'll just go and say "Hello"

(He goes over to the man and shouts.) Hello!

What? Eh? What's going on?

Man: Good morning.

Good mor-Who are you?

Ethel: We're tourists.

Man: Tourists?

Sidney: Yes.

I PRE - LISTENING

1/ Let's talk about it.

- * Where do immigrants in Great Britain come from?
- * Where do you expect to find immigrants in England?

II LISTENING

2/ Listen to the following news bulletin and answer the questions written on the board.

- a) What happened in the district of Tottenham in London?
- b) When did it happen?
- c) Is that the only event that has taken place recently?

III LISTENING

3/ Class discussion

- * Try to guess what some of the young immigrants living there would say to BBC reporters.

TEXT FOR LISTENING COMPREHENSION

BBC newsmen

Last night on a housing estate, in the North district of Tottenham, a policeman was stabbed to death with a gun. The violence there is said to have been far worse than in noting in other inner cities of England recently. Tension has remained high all day on the broad housing estate, with the police patrolling the area in strength, fearing a repetition of last night's trouble, and to judge by views expressed to BBC reporters during the day by some of the young people living there, hostility to the police makes those fears fully justified.

The recent troubles in Birmingham, in London's Brixton district and now in Tottenham were all sparked off by specific incidents, giving rise to local resentment against the police.

IV. PRE - READING

4/ Let's talk about it.

- * Which countries do the immigrants in France come from?
- * Do you know anyone in your family or a neighbour who has emigrated? Why?

V. READING

TEXT FOR READING COMPREHENSION

The dilemma of second generation immigrants

Certain European countries count amongst their populations today a very large number of immigrants from a variety of countries and cultures. This means that the most diverse cultures are destined to exist permanently in the host country. This necessary and unavoidable co-existence gives rise to conflicts if the groups concerned continue to ignore, or even to oppose, one another.

According to statistics, 85 percent of immigrants belong to the working class, and their working conditions are extremely hard. A large majority of them are illiterate and incapable of reading or writing their native language. To this major handicap must be added the effect of being removed from their traditional cultural milieu, their unhealthy living conditions (75 percent of the insanitary dwellings in France are occupied by immigrants), precarious economic conditions and permanent legal insecurity. Immigrants are confronted with an industrial civilization which is interested in them only as productive individuals, denies their right to be different and ignores their cultural potentialities. Consequently immigrants and their children live on the fringe of social and civic life. Nevertheless, second generation "immigrants" have never emigrated from anywhere!

The marginalization, not to say the rejection, of immigrants, is due to racial or xenophobic prejudice, often transmitted via the media, which belittles the cultures of people from formerly colonized countries. This problem is, relatively speaking, less manifest in the case of Italian, Portuguese and Spanish immigrants, because of a cultural heritage shared in common with the host country.

BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was proclaimed by the United Nations on December 10, 1948. It sets forth the basic social, economic, and civic rights and freedoms of every human being. Its preamble states that the Declaration is intended to serve 'as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations'. It has thirty articles. Here are some of the most important.

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in the Declaration without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude.

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has all the guarantees necessary for his defence.

Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

(PROVERBS)

ROBERTS IS THE BEST POLICY

**NO BIBLE, NO MONEY.
NO WORK, NO MONEY.**

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