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Abubaker, Fatma Mohamed Hassen (2017) *The road to possibilities: a conceptual model for a program to develop the creative imagination in reading and responding to literary fiction (short stories) in Libyan English as a Foreign Language (EFL) university classrooms*. PhD thesis

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UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW



**The Road to Possibilities: A Conceptual Model for a
Program to Develop the Creative Imagination in Reading
and Responding to Literary Fiction (short stories) in Libyan
English as a Foreign Language (EFL) University Classrooms**

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BA in English Language and Linguistics, MA in English Language

**A Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor
of Philosophy (PhD)**

**School of Education
College of Social Sciences
The University of Glasgow**

September 2017

Logic will take you from A to B. Imagination will take you
everywhere.

(Albert Einstein)

Dedication

To

The soul of my beloved grandfather

*For being the source of inspiration, wisdom, and willingness, to seek
knowledge wherever it may be*

My Mother

*A strong & gentle soul who taught me to trust my instincts, trust Allah
(God), & believe that "when there is a will, there is a way"*

My Father

*For being my first teacher, mentor, and role model. From you, I know
what being wise, gracious, and ambitious means.*

My soulmate, my husband

*For your moral support, your gentle and kind nature, and the strength to
bear the burden of this long journey*

My beautiful babies

I promise you will be seeing a lot more of Mommy. I Love you kiddos

Abstract

Reading and understanding texts in English is problematic for university EFL students in Libya, and processing English literature is even more so. Some of these difficulties are related to teacher-centered approaches that focus on form, accuracy, and translation rather than on students' abilities to make meaning. The aim of this study is to determine an instructional approach to help Libyan EFL university students learn to read and respond to fiction (short stories) by drawing on their imagination. Therefore, this study set out to explore the role of the imagination in meaning making in education (Vygotsky, 1930; Dewey, 1938; Egan, 1992; Craft, 2005), the role that literature plays in Libyan culture (in both its oral and written forms), the role of education in Libya and the place of English therein, and the challenges of reading in a second language (English).

By analyzing the literature on the imagination and its role in learning, on reading processes in L1 and L2, on Reader-Response Theory, and on the process of meaning making in literature, I was able to answer the first research question, namely how the imagination could be stimulated and developed to extend Libyan EFL students' abilities to read and respond to short stories. Then I synthesized that analysis into a conceptual model. Features of the imagination that have been conceptualized in the model for imaginative reading and meaning making include: schema (background knowledge and experience); the interactive theory of reading; the role of the imagination in learning (meaning making), which includes an intellectual faculty or 'analytical thinking' and an emotional faculty or what is called 'intersubjectivity'; the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD); and possibility thinking.

The next stage was to demonstrate that this model could be applied to the design of a reading program which makes a transition from a teacher-centered and translation-centered approach to reading literature (short stories) to a student-centered and interactive approach. The study relates the model to the literature on syllabus design to set up a framework for selecting and grading texts into five levels. I drew on the literature for interactive task design and standard EFL approaches of teaching reading to design lesson plans for the five stages of the program.

The study concludes by suggesting that for the successful implementation of the model,

there is a need for a shift in attitudes to more interactive approaches that facilitate meaning making. It also suggests conducting a series of workshops to introduce interactive teaching approaches and provide teachers with techniques for dealing with the challenges of shifting from teacher-centered to student-centered teaching. Finally, the thesis provides ideas on how to further the current research by evaluating the effectiveness of the program through empirical enquiry.

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Acknowledgements

Undertaking this PhD has been a truly remarkable and life-changing experience which would have not been possible to overcome without the guidance and support of many people.

Firstly, praise be to Allah (God) for all the blessings that He has bestowed upon me. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisors Dr. Esther Daborn, and Dr. Beth Dickson, for their guidance, dedication, and perseverance to get me through to the other side. The valuable comments they provided me with throughout the course of this journey made me feel as if I was part of a team. I appreciate all the hard work, and the thinking that they have put into this research, and most of all their care and kindness throughout the ups and downs in those four years. I have been extremely lucky to have had supervisors who have cared so much about my work, and who responded to my questions and queries so promptly. I could not have imagined having better supervisors and mentors for my PhD.

I would also like to thank all the members of staff at the school of Education, for their kindness and generosity, and for making me feel part of them. Just a smile, is sometimes more than enough to make everything better. Many thanks also go to Prof. Nicki Hedge for her valuable time and comments. I also like to thank my fellow office mates for all the stimulating discussions, the fun we have had those past few years, and for their heartfelt concerns and good wishes. In particular I am grateful to Yun Yu (Emma) for all her help and guidance, especially with the immense task of formatting to make the final submission go as smoothly as possible.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my family: my parents for always making things right when the pressure becomes unbearable. I am thankful for my younger brothers, Hasan and Hatim for being my friends and dedicated fans, cheering me all the way. To my mother and father-in-law for their heartfelt prayers and moral support, and my three lovely boys, Jihad, Abdulkader, and Mohammed for being so brave, and patient with me missing out on so much. Most of all, I would like to thank my husband, Ahmed, who has been by my side throughout this PhD, living every single minute of it, and without whom, I would

not have found the strength and courage to embark upon this long journey with such determination.

Authors' Declaration

“I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.”

Printed Name: Fatma Mohammed Abubaker

Signature: _____

Abbreviations

L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
FL	Foreign Language
HE	Higher Education
DM	The Direct Method
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
GTM	Grammar Translation Method
ALM	The Audio-Lingual Method
MA	Master's Degree

Chapter 1

Introduction

Literature is no one's private ground; literature is common ground; let us trespass freely and fearlessly and find our own way for ourselves.

Virginia Woolf (1940: 125)

Woolf here acknowledges the collaborative roles of writer and reader in creating personal meanings, thus rejecting accepted meanings and interpretations. She tries to empower readers by declaring that literature is open to all, and stresses that this freedom makes literature meaningful through what she calls 'private reading'. The very fact that reading literature is challenging and demands a certain level of thinking and reasoning (Hall, 2015) provides more support for Woolf's idea of individuality (personal response) in making sense of literature. This active role that she seeks to promote suggests that reading literature requires deep thinking and understanding. For that reason, teaching literature in an educational setting ought to focus on developing the students' abilities to think freely, and make sense of a text individually.

However, this is not the case when literature is studied in English as foreign language (EFL) classrooms in Libya. Libyan EFL university students find it challenging to read and make sense of literary texts on their own. These difficulties are generally attributed to pragmatic and contextual factors. Such factors include the students' low English language level; large class size; traditional teacher-centered teaching methods which do not value learners' meaning-making skills and personal responses; and teaching materials (syllabuses and textbooks) which do not suit learners' levels or needs. There is also a lack of training in pedagogy among pre-service and in-service teachers and insufficient knowledge of the course requirements. Teachers usually do not use course book material, but provide their own material based on intuition and prior experience. There are also flawed attitudes towards learning where, focus is mainly on the need to pass exams. Most importantly, there is a lack of awareness and training in effective strategic reading where analysis and evaluation are essential for understanding a text (Saleh, 2002; Sawani, 2009; Orafi, 2008; Elabbar, 2011, Suwaed, 2011; Tamtam et al, 2011; Tantani, 2012; Pathan, 2012, 2013; Abosnan, 2016; Mohamed, 2016). Challenges that Libyan EFL students face in making sense of literature (El-Naili, 2006; Elbadri, 2009) sparked my interest in finding a method

with which I could help students read and appreciate the quality of literature in a meaningful way.

Our role as educators is to make learning meaningful by overtly making sense of the processes that go into making it an efficient and productive experience, as well as to search for ways to help support that experience inside the classroom (Bruner, 1966). To be able to help Libyan students reach a level of thinking and individuality in reading literature, and, as Woolf (1940) argued, make the act of reading and understanding literature free to all, educators must first determine how learning takes place. Because I respond to literature imaginatively, my quest was to explore how the imagination could play a role in learning, and then find a way to develop this mental activity for reading and making sense of literature.

This curiosity led me to Lev Vygotsky and his detailed work on the imagination in his article “Imagination and Creativity in Childhood” (1930/2004). Vygotsky’s extensive work on the imagination reveals the important role that it has in human cognitive development. Vygotsky’s (1930/2004) conception of imaginative thought does not involve the exotic form which is seen in creative artistic expression (such as music, poetry, or dancing), but rather the mundane form of creativity in everyday imagination (Drew, 2013). It means thinking in a particular way; thinking of not just the actual, but also ‘the possible’ (Dewey, 1916/1966; Egan, 1992). This form of everyday imagining described by psychologists such as (Vygotsky, 1930, 1931) and Piaget (1923, 1966) is the most interesting for my research goal, which is to develop the creative imagination for reading and understanding literature. As Vygotsky (1930/2004) argues, everyday imagination is a cognitive tool for creating something new and making sense of the world around us. For that reason, the form of creativity that I am seeking for in this research study is the form which leads to ‘meaning making’ when reading texts, the form that allows readers to not only understand what they are reading, but also construct new ideas and possibilities.

Vygotsky (1930/2004) defines the imagination as a socio-cognitive tool for meaning making, and claims that the imagination serves as an imperative impetus for all human creative activity. This means that “imagination provides for innovation and original changes and possibilities” in learning (pp.97-98). This productive form of the imagination is what Vygotsky terms the ‘creative imagination’. The imagination has many aspects that make it a practical and powerful instrument for creative activity. With its natural ability to

shape and alter the future by making use of and taking as its main resource the past (Vygotsky, 1930/2004), it plays a significant role in education and learning as a tool for building new knowledge. According to Vygotsky, through the imagination we build new knowledge, which we make sense of by relating, combining, and refining past knowledge. With its close interrelatedness to thinking and reasoning, the imagination, therefore, becomes an alley through which new ideas are generated. For that reason, the imagination is central in education (Egan, 1992) because the classroom is the formal setting where learning takes place.

Against this background, the present study takes as its central aim the development of the creative imagination as part of an educational approach to teaching literary texts to Libyan university students of English as a foreign language (EFL). This chapter presents a rationale for the research topic, and shows its significance within the research area and the context it wishes to address. It also presents the main theoretical themes on which the research builds, how it will be carried out, and the contribution it provides. Finally, it outlines the structure and layout of the thesis chapters.

1.1. Research Rationale

Experiences are both the quicksand on which we cannot build and the material with which we do build. . . . A method has to be found that makes it possible to work on experiences, and to learn from them.

Frigga Haug (2000:146)

Behind those words lies the acknowledgement that, in order for us to develop in this world, we will have to make use of what we know and experience, to construct a new and possibly different version of our realities as we move towards the future. Through Haug's challenge to find a method that makes experiences both the platform on which we build and the tool with which we learn, she is, I assume, most likely encouraging us to 'imagine' and find a way in which the imagination could be fostered and developed for learning. The imagination, as a cognitive tool that feeds on past experiences (Vygotsky, 1930/2004), provides a rationale for its key role in reading and responding to literature.

I would like to point out that this study is mainly driven by my interest in literature in both Arabic and English, and how the imagination could affect the development of meaning making in reading it in the EFL classroom. Because literature assumes an important position in most Libyan people's lives as a tool for expressing feelings, ideas, and passing on cultural beliefs and moral values, there is a great demand for making the reading of literature experiential and significant. Narrative fiction in general provides readers with access to different experiences since fictional stories are representations of human life and experience (Hardy, 1977).

In a previous study which I conducted in 2009 as part of my Masters (MA) qualification (Abubaker, 2009), though limited and small scale, I was able to come out of the study with questions that provided a stepping stone on which this research was initiated. Through an experimental study on developing University students' abilities to read and understand literary texts in Libyan EFL classrooms, the study was conducted to indicate the important role of extensive reading for developing students' knowledge of literary conventions. The study centred on the idea that extensive reading as a pedagogical technique and the use of tasks inside the classroom provide more opportunity for accessing literary texts with more open ended and analytical thinking. However, although the study was experimental in nature, and used mixed methods by using a pre and post-test, and a interventional phase where intervention was provided to the experimental group (20 students), it provided ideas on the need to develop 'literary competence' which is mainly about developing knowledge of literary conventions. This meant that background knowledge was seen as an important aspect of literary reading and literary understanding. This type of knowledge builds on what students form out of prior reading. The different ideas which could be deduced and formulated from different texts were, therefore, seen as common aspects of different literary texts, and if students were encouraged to recognize such common ideas, themes, and literary devices then students could draw inferences which lead to understanding.

What the study overlooked was personal involvement. I realised that in addition to the use of background knowledge of literary conventions (literary competence), readers also needed to develop individual and emotional responses to texts. As a result, the outcome of my MA dissertation shaped my thinking on the need to address the reading process and determine how meaning is constructed in literary reading. Throughout my three year experience of teaching literature in the English department in Libyan university classrooms

my knowledge of literature was under constant scrutiny and challenge. The main questions which were being formulated in relation to teaching practice were why students have difficulties answering open-ended questions when so much effort and continuous explanations were provided inside the classroom from teachers. One explanation that was always used as an excuse which I used as an indication of emerging problems was the assessment methods used in pre-university education. Prior to the time when I started teaching, and when I was a student myself, students had more opportunity to answer such open-ended questions; however, their low linguistic level was an obstacle. However, as a teacher, the students' linguistic level was overall good, yet they found reading a literary text very challenging, because they were used to answering multiple choice questions which were introduced in the last few years on which their pre-university education was based on. This gave me more motivation to look for a way to support students and equip them with the necessary tools to read and understand literature on their own, therefore focusing on meaning making.

Knowing the Libyan educational system, and how literary classrooms are constructed in Libyan EFL universities, I realized that there were challenges in terms of how literary classrooms are mainly focused on developing theoretical knowledge of literary conventions, and not personal response. Although individual response is valued, and fixed meanings of literary texts were not encouraged from teachers, what was missing was how to actually train students to respond and make sense of the texts without having to find more comfort in perceived ready-made interpretations. This, without doubt, would be challenging, and would therefore, be better achieved through a deeper and more analytical research investigation which would later become the main focus of my current research study. Hence, the key word on which this research revolved around was 'response' and the process of understanding literature here especially short stories, since a new course was introduced recently as part of the EFL syllabus in American and British fiction. A teaching approach which valued students' responses was a preliminary goal which the current study addressed.

Bellour (2012) conducted research in Algeria, which shares similar teaching and learning perspectives and conditions with Libyan education, to determine the role of response-based teaching on students' understanding of literary texts. He indicated that a reader-based approach to the teaching of literature can be beneficial for second language classrooms.

His reasons for such a conclusion are based on the quantitative data he collected from students through two questionnaires, where he tried through the first one to identify the students' attitudes towards literature and how they approach literary texts. The second questionnaire was distributed among teachers in order to identify their teaching practices and beliefs about literature. Based on the data, he then suggests the need to make literature teaching engaging and experiential by encouraging students to draw on their schema (background knowledge and experience) (Anderson, 1977), and stresses the importance of involving the students in the meaning-making process through collaboration and discussion (Langer, 1990). He indicates that, as most classes have a large number of students, it would be helpful to use activities that elicit responses from all students. Such activities include writing literature journals, where students keep a record of their emotions, thoughts, and understandings in response sheets for them to share and pass around. Bellour, therefore, advocates the use of the transactional reader-response approach to the teaching of literature which prioritizes the role of the students as meaning makers and acknowledges the impact of their background knowledge and experience in the meaning-making process.

In response to the previous points made by Bellour and taking into consideration the context of Libyan higher education HE which is chiefly teacher-centered, the current study uses these ideas with the aim of designing a more experiential (Dewey, 1986), student-centered approach to the teaching of literary fiction, more precisely short stories, for their short manageable length, with a heavy focus on students' personal responses. The imagination as a tool for meaning making (making sense of the world around us) is, therefore, my tool for achieving this goal.

1.2. Centrality of the Research

This research has been conducted at a transitional time in Libya, moving towards a post-Gadaffi regime, which had lasted for 42 years and unfortunately hindered progress in the educational sector. In an attempt to assist, as well as be part of, the educational reform and shift in how learning and the teaching of English as a foreign language EFL takes place in Libyan universities, the product of this research aims to help teachers as well as curriculum designers in setting out appropriate strategies for both curriculum/syllabus design as well as classroom instruction in the teaching of literature, especially fiction. It aims to provide

teachers with the mechanisms for overcoming reading difficulties by addressing issues related to text readability and how to select suitable literary texts based on readability features. It, therefore, encourages teachers to structure their own syllabuses and design pedagogic tasks that match the level of their students and the learning objectives.

EFL research conducted in the Libyan context is mostly concerned with reading comprehension. If it addresses literature in EFL, it is usually concerned with identifying difficulties, pedagogic implications related to the importance of literature in language teaching (as a resource) (Mansour, 2013), or its effectiveness for developing certain language skills, such as vocabulary (Mohamed, 2016), speaking (Mansour, 2013), or reading comprehension through short story reading (Pathan, 2012; Pathan & Al-Dersi, 2013). None of these studies have actually focused on literary understanding.

Other studies which did in fact deal with the reading and understanding of literature were quantitative in nature. In one study conducted by El-Naili (2006), the focus was on uncovering the difficulties that students (upper-intermediate and advanced) struggled with when reading literature. Results of her research indicated that text structure and vocabulary constituted the main difficulties, and that poetry was mostly found difficult due to unfamiliar vocabulary. She also identified through the use of a test and a questionnaire that students faced problems in answering open-ended questions. Another study conducted by Elbadri (2009) looked into the language problems that readers come across when reading literary texts. According to her study, students had difficulty with vocabulary meaning. Abubaker (2009), on the other hand, concentrated on the role of extensive reading and the use of tasks for developing interpretation skills and understanding literary conventions (literary elements), indicating the positive role of such strategy. None of these studies looked into the processes involved in reading and understanding literature or the role of the reader in understanding. Moreover, they did not address the causes of the difficulties faced by readers, or how to potentially address them through the development of reading skills.

A chief theme in this study is how students respond to literary fiction since fiction lends itself to more analytical and evaluative skills and to reflection on the cultural, social, moral, and personal values, which together facilitate a personal growth model of teaching literature that values imaginative response (Brumfit & Carter, 1990; Lazar, 1993). Research has been conducted in different EFL contexts (for example, Ali, 1994; Hirvela,

1996; Khatib, 2011) on how to create response-based classrooms. However, most of these studies aimed to provide pedagogical approaches and insights on the effectiveness of these teaching approaches. There are few analytical models in both first language (L1) and second language (L2) that explain the process of literary response (for example, Langer, 1990), and no models that address this sophisticated response through the stimulation and development of the creative imagination.

1.3. Research Questions

From the previous discussion, the identified issues are related to the teacher-centered approaches that are used in Libyan EFL teaching. These include the traditional methods of teaching literature that do not consider the students' background knowledge and experience for making meaning, and the inadequate teaching material which neglects the importance of interaction and group work. Based on the previous discussion on the importance of the imagination for learning and meaning making and these issues, the following research questions have been proposed as a guide for structuring my research aims:

- 1. How can the imagination be stimulated and developed in the classroom to extend the students' abilities to read and respond to short stories?*
- 2. What would be the features of a program of learning that would enable the students/learners to achieve that goal?*
- 3. What would be the opportunities and the constraints in implementing such a goal?*

1.4. Nature of the Research (conceptual research study)

To explore the above questions, this research takes a theoretical approach for investigation, which is a basic requirement and generally adopted structure in the development of conceptual research (Watts, 2011). According to Watts, conceptual research facilitates theory building by providing new theoretical perspectives or integrating existing views about a theory or different theories. He further adds that conceptual research is innovative, in the sense that new or adapted techniques and procedures may be used to posit views about professional development and provide reasoned explanations for previous research.

This idea of theory building, consequently, means that “theory builders need to have deep experience and knowledge in what they are trying to explain” (Storberg-Walker, 2003:211).

Under the umbrella of conceptual research there can be found exploratory conceptual modeling, and taxonomy development (Callahan, 2010). Conceptual models, as Callahan indicates, are “linked to theory building and theory building leads to new theories tested through research” (p.3). According to Storberg-Walker (2003), a conceptual model is an approach to theory building where a model is the result of problem stating and problem solving, followed by designing and conducting research, with the end result being theory.

In conceptual research, the theoretical foundation and the literature review is selective (Callahan, 2010), so that “the key elements of the theory are identified, relationships are described, and limitations and conditions are delineated” (Storberg-Walker, 2003:213). In other words, the researcher of a conceptual study will choose and select from existing literature and connect a range of theories and concepts in order to support the argument that he/she wishes to convey.

It is my intention in this study to expand existing theoretical views on the process of reading and responding to literature, integrate them, and offer reasoned reactions to previously published literature. Due to the impracticality of collecting empirical data on this topic in Libya at present, I am, therefore, undertaking a conceptual study since this will have value for university teachers and students of EFL in Libya. The research will, consequently, synthesize the processes involved in responding to literature through the imagination in a conceptual model. Hence, it will look into three main areas to build the theoretical framework.

1.5. Research Themes to Explore: Theoretical Framework

In order to address the issues identified earlier, and to answer research questions 1 and 2 for developing a useful program that supports the development of Libyan EFL students’ reading skills to imaginatively respond to literature, I will draw on the literature in three main areas:

- 1) The concept of the imagination and its functional value in an educational context.
- 2) The processes involved in reading and understanding a text in both L1 and L2 and meaning making.
- 3) The process of reading and responding to literature (reader-response) and the role of the imagination in meaning making.

Finally, for practicality, I will consult the literature on syllabus design to determine methods and procedures for designing and organizing a reading program which applies the conceptual model and facilitates the development of the creative imagination.

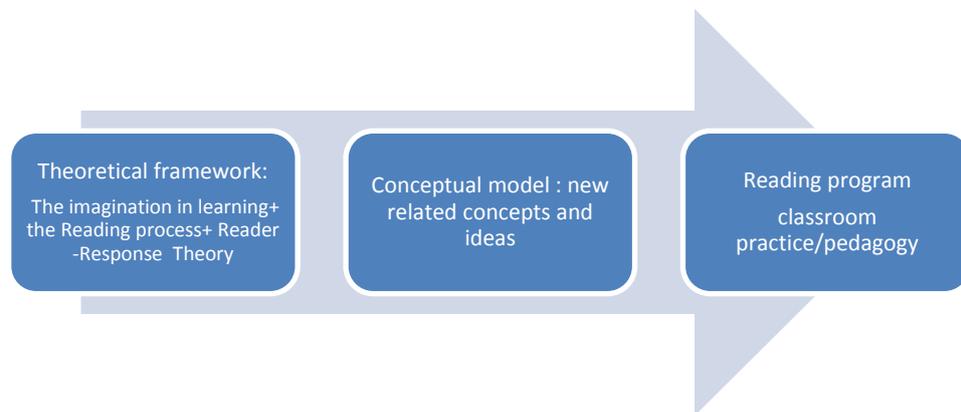


Figure1. 1. The process of my conceptual research study

1.6. Method of Inquiry

The research philosophy guides the research enquiry, and, in this case, the analysis of the literature and the development of theory which frames this conceptual research study. This research study, though conceptual in nature, follows the interpretivist approach to research inquiry which believes that a researcher's understanding of the world around him has to come from the inside (Cohen et al., 2007). According to Cohen et al, interpretative research approaches acknowledge the creative nature of individuals manifested through their engagement with activities. They also acknowledge people's active role in constructing their own realities and their uniqueness and individuality. Consequently, such approaches centralize the idea of 'multiple truth', meaning that "there are multiple interpretations of, and perspectives on, single events and situations" (p. 21). Moreover, there is a general understanding within this paradigm that situations are flexible, that they change over time, and that they are richly affected by context.

This research is located within a constructivist paradigm that makes certain assumptions about reality (ontology) and how we acquire knowledge (epistemology). The nature of this research acknowledges the idea that there are different truths and that learning is socially and historically constructed, where new knowledge builds on previous knowledge and experiences. As a result, the theoretical views that underpin this research are a reflection of the cumulative, selective, and subjective aspects of my perceptions of the literature, and how I have come to present them to reach my research aims. I must emphasize the collaborative nature of theory building that has been postulated in the design of a conceptual model, and how the structure and presentation of that model articulates my perceptions about the nature of reality and knowledge acquisition (learning). As a result, this interpretivist approach to research design is based on how this interpretative experience is translated from theory into practice through the development of my research argument. As indicated earlier, in conceptual research the researcher tailors his/her theories according to the argument he/she wishes to present (Callahan, 2010).

Although this study has employed a conceptual approach to gathering information, the aims and research questions had to be addressed in a practical way. As a result, and for practicality, several steps have been taken to bridge theory and practice. Principles of syllabus design have been reviewed to determine how a program of reading that draws on the creative imagination in literary response could be carried out.

A collection of ten stories were selected and graded based on a set of criteria. The criteria were determined based on readability features: schematic knowledge, text structure, and language complexity, which fall under two main categories: reader variables and text variables. The grading of the texts was based on cognitive factors that affected text readability, including language complexity, text length, literary focus, and reading strategies to be used. Then, pedagogic tasks, which draw on specific reading strategies, were designed and organized, also according to cognitive complexity, to suit the levels of the stories and the objectives of the lessons. Cognitive factors affecting task design involve task type, sufficiency of background knowledge, scaffolding required, the number of elements, planning time, and whether the task demands were single or dual. The selected

texts and tasks arranged and organized accordingly to design a reading program for teaching literature to Libyan EFL students by drawing on the designed conceptual model.

1.7. Research Contribution

The importance of this research is its attempt to not only address the mental processes involved in reading literature by providing an analytical model that summarizes that process, but also to consider the instructional implications for classroom practice through the design of a reading program. It is important to place the learner at the center of the conversation when researching teaching approaches and this study tries to connect the learner and the teacher and place them within a socio-constructivist learning environment.

1.8. Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is arranged into three main parts which summarize the conceptual journey of my research. The first part includes an introduction and overview of the problem in context. This part of the thesis is arranged into two chapters: Chapter One has introduced the topic by addressing the research problems, aims, and research significance. It has also provided a summary of the research issues, questions, and nature of the study, the methodology, and research contribution. Chapter Two sets the research problem in context, and provides an overview of the Libyan educational system and the views held about language learning and teaching, and the purpose and place of literature within the language teaching and cultural framework.

The second part of the thesis builds the theoretical framework and reviews the main theories and concepts related to the topic. It includes three chapters (Chapters Three, Four, and Five). Chapter Three provides a working definition of the imagination and its role in learning. It determines the relationship between the imagination and creativity, providing a definition of the creative imagination and how it can be developed for learning. Chapter Four explores the nature of reading and the reading processes required to develop reading skills in a second language. Chapter Five presents the theories of how meaning is constructed in the process of reading literature (reader-response). It introduces the two main dimensions of literary response: emotion, and cognition (intellect). The chapter ends

with the conceptual model for the study which draws on theoretical and conceptual ideas based on the three sources of the theoretical framework: the role of the imagination in learning, the processes of reading and understanding in L1 and L2, and reader response and the process of meaning making in literature.

The third and final part of this thesis tries to move from theory to practice and therefore provides practical examples to demonstrate how the model could be applied in the classroom. It includes three chapters. Chapter Six focuses on theoretical considerations, on the method used to construct the reading program by exploring the literature on syllabus design. Chapter Seven provides an overview of the program description, objectives, and the graded learning outcomes. It also provides a summary of the features of the selected texts (stories) in the program, and how they were selected and graded. Chapter Eight is a discussion of the methodology for applying the conceptual model through the use of the pedagogic tasks. Last but not least, Chapter Nine offers a summary and conclusion for the thesis, outlining the research implications and limitations, and suggestions for further research.

Chapter 2

The Libyan Context

The value of an education in a liberal arts college is not the learning of many facts, but, the training of the mind to think something that cannot be learned from textbooks.

(Albert Einstein, 1921)

2.1. Introduction

The central aim of this chapter is to present the context and determine in detail the problem(s) underlying this research study. It starts by introducing the Libyan higher educational policy for the teaching of English as a foreign language and the approaches used for teaching it. Furthermore, there is discussion on the place of literature in Libyan culture and its importance in the foreign language classroom. The chapter also discusses reading pedagogy in Libyan EFL classrooms and the problems in the teaching of literature in EFL in Libya. Finally, it presents a solution to the problem(s) with an imaginative approach for the teaching of literary fiction (short stories).

2.2. An Overview of Libya

Libya is an Arab country situated in North Africa along the Mediterranean Sea. With an area of 1.8 million square kilometers (Ismael et al., 1991), it is one of the largest countries in the African continent (Hamdy, 2007). The population is only 6.4 million (The World Factbook, 2011), most of which is located on the coastline stretching 2,000 kilometers along the Mediterranean Sea. The vast majority of the land is covered by the Sahara Desert, which is less inhabited than the coast. Libya has the largest oil reserves in Africa, and is among the ten largest oil suppliers in the world. Oil production is approximately 1.65 million barrels per day, 85% of which is exported to European markets (BP Statistical Review of World Energy, 2011).

Arabic is the official language of Libya, spoken by the majority of Libyans. Amazighen is a language spoken by a minority - the original people of Libya, called *Berber* or *Amazigh*. They constitute 5% of the Libyan population and live in the western mountains of Libya. English is a foreign language in Libya, only taught in schools and not used for communicating outside. Islam is the only religion practised in Libya, with Sunni Muslims representing 97% of the population (Hamdy, 2007).

Libya gained independence from Italy on December 24th 1951 and was ruled by King Muhammad Idris Al-Mahdi Al-Senussi until he was deposed in a 1969 coup d'état by army officers led by Muammar Gaddafi. Gaddafi took power from 1969 to 2011, when he was overthrown amid the so-called 'Arab Spring' (encompassing Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya) that was triggered by the widespread corruption and underdevelopment of Libya's institutional and vocational sectors.

It is worth mentioning that despite the new circumstances in Libyan politics after the 2011 uprising, education remains unchanged to the date of this thesis. Therefore, information provided in this chapter includes the Libyan educational policy throughout the three previously mentioned eras in Libyan history (Kingdom, Gaddafi, and Post-Gaddafi eras), but it relates mainly to the specific conditions before the instability of 2011. Subsequently, Libyan educational policy has not witnessed any significant changes, especially in higher education.

2.3. The General Educational Philosophy in Libyan Higher Education (LHE)

This section provides an overview of the country, the general educational philosophy of Libyan Higher Education, and its educational objectives. It also presents the policy behind English language teaching in Libyan university classrooms.

2.3.1. The Structure of Education

The educational system in Libya consists of three stages: basic education which includes primary and preparatory levels, intermediate education (secondary level), and higher

education which includes undergraduate and graduate university level education as well as vocational preparation. Primary education, from grade one (at around six years old) to grade six (at around eleven), and preparatory level, which include grades seven, eight, and nine, are mandatory for all. Successful completion of nine years of basic education is recognized with the award of the *Basic Education Certificate*. Secondary school, which is for an additional three to four years and is optional, is highly valued in Libyan society. These three levels (primary, preparatory, and secondary) are all under the Ministry of Education. Students at all levels progress to the following grade if they score 50 percent or higher in each subject. While, at university (either as an undergraduate or graduate student) and at vocational and technical training level, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research is the governing body. However, every university manages its own budget and administration.

Higher education is considered the most important sector in Libyan education because of the great demand to modernize, which is seen in terms of raising educational attainment. There has been a significant increase in the number of students enrolling at this level since the 1990s. After passing the standardized test in the final (third or fourth) year of secondary school, students can be admitted to universities if they achieve the scores required by each school or subject area. For instance, students who wish to go into medical schools need an overall percentage of at least 85%. The required score differs from one subject area to another and from one faculty to another. Since the 1990s, enrolment on a university course has usually required a minimum score of 65%. Students achieving a lower score are often transferred to higher vocational or technical studies.

2.3.2. Views about Learning

Learning in Libya is highly valued and ensuring access to education and learning for all members of Libyan society is a central goal in the Libyan educational policy (GPCE, 2008). For that reason, education in Libya is free for all at all stages.

The Libyan culture perceives learning as a receptive process of knowledge extension that involves the passive transmission of information from one individual to another. Teachers or mentors are therefore seen as the main sources of knowledge. This might be traced back to the theocratic roots of Arabic-Islamic cultures (Cook, 1999). Islam holds a deep

reverence for the significance of knowledge gathering and learning, considering it as the highest religious activity (Barakat, 1993; Cook, 1999). This view therefore tends to elevate the ‘knowledgeable person’, mainly the teacher, to a high position in Libyan culture. The respect that a teacher or mentor holds within Libyan culture thus creates a void between teachers and learners, giving the teacher or mentor the role of the source or transmitter of knowledge and the learner the role of the passive recipient of that knowledge.

Students’ attitudes towards and expectations of schooling are that they should be able to receive as much information as possible which will help them move on to the next educational level. This is because Libyan education is an examination-based system that solely relies on tests for assessing learning conditions from as early as primary school. Students are, therefore, brought up in a society where there is belief that any information from a teacher is very valuable for knowledge acquisition and that their learning depends on how well they are able to perform in their examinations. They are not encouraged to construct new knowledge on their own (Vygotsky, 1930/2004). As a result the Libyan educational policy sees students as passive learners, rather than active thinkers. It does not take into account the important role in reflecting on their understanding in light of what they encounter in a new learning situation so that they can compare it and accommodate it with what they already know, and alter their understanding accordingly (Bruner, 1996).

Views about learning influence, and can be used as generalizable principles on which language teaching approaches are based (Ellis, 2005). Libyan views about learning provide some perspective on the process of teaching there. The following section presents the teaching approach used in Libyan education from basic to higher education.

2.3.3. Views about Teaching

As mentioned above, the Libyan government is responsible for all policy matters relating to education, such as, construction of schools or universities, developing curricula for basic education, and any other matters relating to education (Ibrahim & Carey, 2017). In the same way, educational policy in Libya is also responsible for setting guidelines and principles for teaching practice and is the main influence on how teaching takes place. The general conceptions of how learning takes place, which derive from cultural ideals, are

consequently perpetuated by official Libyan government policy and shape classroom pedagogy.

Libyan education, in all its different sectors and levels, follows a teacher-centered pedagogy, where the teacher is the main focus inside the classroom (Orafi, 2008). There is a tendency in Libyan classrooms to focus on direct instruction as a method of teaching, which has negatively affected the quality of education being offered (Tamtam et al., 2011). This indicates that classroom instruction does not provide the opportunity to develop self-learning skills, like analytical thinking, problem solving, creativity, innovation, and exploration. Students are, therefore, not encouraged to interact in the classroom as they try to build meaning. There is no class time given to students to work in groups and interact with each other so that they can solve problems and share their ideas with their peers. This means that they are not given a chance to broaden their perspectives and sharpen their understandings as they compare their ideas with others and make meaning of what is being taught (Vygotsky, 1978a). They are usually given some time to carry out certain tasks, such as working out a mathematical equation or determining the grammatical function of a sentence or word in English or Arabic, however, they are mostly required to work individually. As a result, most of classroom time is given to modeling information and explaining course content, and basically little time is devoted to actual application of knowledge and practice, which, as Vygotsky (1978a) states, is an important aspect of learning.

In addition, the use of pedagogic tasks is not something common in Libyan classrooms (Orafi, 2008). This is mainly because teachers, especially at basic and intermediate level, usually teach material from a fixed curriculum. For that reason, classroom time is usually managed according to the structure of textbooks. This leads to the teachers focusing more on completing the curriculum content in time for the final examinations, rather than focusing on developing students' skill sets. This does not mean that teachers do not put effort into students' understanding of the material, but the question remains as to how well the students have actually understood, and whether they are able to apply what they know on their own after the final exams are over, and move beyond it.

2.3.4. EFL Teaching in Libya: Policy and Practice

English has become the dominant language for international communication. It is now considered a global language that is spoken either as a first (L1), second (L2), or foreign language (FL) in most countries of the world (Crystal, 1997). An estimate of more than 350 million people are native speakers of English, and more than 400,000 million speakers of English as second language or foreign language (Kitao, 2006, cited in Soliman, 2013). English has become the lingua franca of the world in the fields of business, science, aviation, computing, education, politics, and entertainment (and arguably many others). Knowledge of English is therefore very important for many countries to have access to the latest achievements in science and technology. It is, therefore, important for Libyans to have a good command of the English language in order to be part of the new world.

With the new digital age, the internet has spread to nearly all parts of Libya, with most of the internet websites constructed in English (Graddol, 1997, cited in El-Abbar, 2016). There is a demand to learn the language in order to access knowledge and information, communicate through emails and chats, and to surf the World Wide Web. This demand is critically important for students who wish to communicate and share knowledge, research, and experience, and to study abroad. One of the main objectives outlined by the National Report of the General People's Committee of Education (GPCE) in 2008 states that for the development of education in Libya, emphasis must be put on the learning of a foreign language, namely English, in order to communicate with others in the globalized community. This, however, was not always the case.

Libya has witnessed several attempts to reform English language education over the years. Interest in teaching English in schools started after the discovery of oil and gas in the 1950s, which led to more than 2,000 international investments in construction, trade, and manufacturing in Libya (Najeeb & Eldokali, 2012). English was first introduced into the school curriculum in 1944, at the time of the British administration in Tripolitania (West of Libya) and Cyrenaica (East of Libya). However, since most Libyans were illiterate at the time, and due to the Libyan people's resistance to the colonization (Ibrahim & Carey, 2017), not many students had the chance to study the language. Most of the ones who did have the privilege to go to schools were in the capital city, wealthy, or had good connections with people in the government.

In 1954, a few years after Libya's independence from Italian colonization and following the Anglo-Libyan friendship treaty, English was taught in primary schools at the fifth grade (age 10) until completion of secondary school. In the late 1960s, English was put back to seventh grade (secondary school). In 1960s, Gusbi designed a new English syllabus for secondary schools called *Living English for Libya*. It focused on the Audio-Lingual Method, which was used for nearly three decades. The focus was on the teaching of linguistic forms (Tantani, 2012), and neglected the communicative nature of language acquisition and language use. Most of the course content was related to Libyan culture with the use of drills and exercise (for example, comprehension questions, sentence completions). Then in 1982, Gusbi introduced a new course book: *Living English for Libya*. It was based on the Grammar-Translation Method, with focus on oral drills, memorization of new vocabulary, the use of syntactic structures, translating isolated sentences, and reading texts (Orafi & Borg, 2009).

In 1986, following an 'Arabization' campaign in the aftermath of the American airstrikes on Benghazi and Tripoli, and in response to the US sanctions on Libya (Wright, 2010), the English and the French languages were withdrawn altogether from schools and universities. As a result, the English language was phased out of schools and universities for nearly a decade. This had a negative impact on students who were studying during that time, as well as on teachers. Teachers of English were forced to teach other subjects, such as history, geography, or Arabic. Students who then entered university had either no knowledge of English or very low competency. In 1992, English was included in the school curriculum as a mandatory subject starting from 7th grade and taught using traditional textbooks. In the 1999/2000 academic year, the curriculum for EFL was changed (Youssef, 2012; Mohsen, 2014). Following the improved relations between Libya and the West, and with the suspension of the United Nations embargo (El-Abbar, 2016), English regained its status as an international language in Libya, and the Libyan government reconsidered its policy towards the place of English within Libyan Education. In 2000, a new curriculum that was based on communicative language teaching (CLT) was introduced to middle and secondary schools (from 7th grade to 12th grade). Since 2003, English has been taught at primary level starting at grade 4 (age nine) until completion of university.

In the 2007/2008 academic year, with the change in the secondary school system from general secondary education to specialized, the national educational authority introduced the new *English for Libya* textbooks for secondary education (Tantani, 2012). The textbook mostly focuses on acquiring the relevant knowledge (vocabulary, grammar structures) through exposure to specific content (English for Specific Purposes ESP) in economics, medicine, science, social studies and humanities, Islamic Studies, or engineering. Activities include writing formal and informal letters, describing certain situations, and using illustrations and pictures to tell stories (Orafi & Borg, 2009). These activities are aimed at developing learners' control over grammatical structures and vocabulary knowledge in order to develop their reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills (Tantani, 2012). These textbooks were designed based on the Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT), i.e. a student-centered, interactive approach. The main goal of these new textbooks is therefore to focus on meaning making and classroom interaction.

In the face of initiatives for implementing such student-centered English textbooks in Libyan schools, teaching practice finds itself actually to be in conflict with the new curriculum objectives (Orafi, 2008). When the new curriculum, which was based on interactive student-centered approaches, was introduced in schools, English language teachers were given briefing sessions about it on the assumption that these teachers would see its benefits and would therefore be able to implement it. The teachers were given teacher's books that explain how the new course books and lessons were to be implemented. However, most of the teachers selectively chose parts of the curriculum that were already congruent with their teacher-centered beliefs and prior experiences (Orafi, 2008).

Although one of the aims of a communicative curriculum was "for the students to communicate effectively and fluently with each other and to make talking in English a regular activity" (Macfarlane, 2000:3), teachers were actually using teacher-centered methods that mainly focused on transmission to teach the new student-centered curriculum, which should instead have emphasized student interaction. Orafi (2008) indicated through his study that although the textbook was actually aimed at developing effective interaction between students, classrooms were generally teacher-centered and Arabic was the dominant language during classroom interaction. Orafi explained that teachers did not for

instance make use of the activities that require pair or group work. He observed that some teachers holding negative views about such activities believed that their classrooms were too big and such dynamics would therefore lead to the teacher losing control over the classroom, or end up with students conversing in their mother tongue (Arabic rather than in the target language - English).

Teachers who had negative views about pair and group work acknowledge its importance for enhancing the students' language proficiency, although, they did not include it as part of their teaching practice (Orafi, 2008; Shihiba, 2011). Their concerns included the students' inability to converse in English as their very low language level would have impeded them from interacting and therefore result in them resorting to the use of Arabic. They also felt that using English to teach such difficult subjects was going to make it harder for the students to understand them (Orafi, 2008). This, according to Orafi, led some teachers, including myself, to believe that using the L1 (Arabic) was beneficial to teach what they consider more difficult subjects, such as grammar. In this sense, the focus is usually on form rather than meaning. Class size was also mentioned as a major impediment against the use of group work and interactive activities inside the classroom (Shihiba, 2011).

Upon entering university, students in departments other than the English Language study English as a general subject throughout their university years, and sometimes take English for specific purposes (ESP) courses during their final year. This might be in medicine or economics, where their focus is on developing specific language related to their area of study. Either way, the syllabus is not fixed and most departments rely on the teacher to design their own material, which often focuses on teaching grammatical functions and vocabulary (Imsaalem, 2002).

On the other hand, students enrolling in English language departments are required to study different courses focusing on both language skills and content. Such courses include: grammar, listening comprehension, writing, reading comprehension, speaking, phonetics, literary readings, linguistics, teaching methods, and principles of translation, and continue throughout the course of their university years (four years/eight semesters) in the English department. Students are mostly at pre-intermediate and intermediate level (Elabbar, 2011).

Syllabuses in English departments are set out for the teachers in advance. However, the teaching material is not fixed, and so most teachers are required to provide their own material. There is usually agreement between different teachers of the same course on the course content to ensure that all students in the same year of study have the same exams. University teachers, especially those who teach content subjects such as linguistics and literature, tend to combine different aspects from different EFL teaching methods (Grammar-Translation Method, the Direct Method, Audio-Lingual Method, and the Communicative Approach) into their teaching approach (Elabbar, 2011). However, Elabbar affirms that the Grammar-Translation Method is the most dominant in EFL university classrooms. So, most of the focus is on form rather than meaning.

As students we were encouraged to think critically and question texts, although most of what we learnt was mostly in order to gain more knowledge and develop our knowledge of language skills such as grammar and spoken language, and most of all vocabulary. Translating, note taking, generating questions, and answering comprehension questions were a few of the strategies that we used in the process of learning. Students, like myself had no opportunity for reflection or personal response in the literary classroom.

EFL university education, as with pre-university education, does not make use of interactive approaches. Sawani (2009) indicates that learners are used to, and therefore more comfortable, receiving information from the teachers in order to prepare for the exams. Sawani further illustrates that most students prefer not to collaborate or interact in a mixed-gender university setting. What can then be concluded from the previous discussion is that Libyan EFL is still teacher-centered at both pre-university and university levels.

As a teacher, having taught many courses, most of which were in literary reading, reading comprehension, as well as a short course in listening and speaking, I came to realize through my three years' experience of teaching at University level that most students found it rather challenging to answer open-ended question in their exams, although a lot of effort was put into providing students with various explanations and discussion. What I then realized during the process of this PhD research was that what was missing was actual practice inside the classroom. Also, discussion was usually controlled by the teacher (me), and it could be said that it was actually a one way discussion since most students found it rather difficult to participate and take part. This usually lead me to settle with just

generating questions and giving the students hints to consider as the reading text preceded, and model what kind of questions are useful to understand a text. This kind of modelling, eliciting, and questioning technique would be more useful if the students actually had opportunity during class time to practise on their own how they can think and make sense of the text, rather than dedicate most of their time to taking notes.

With the new examination system introduced in the pre-university level which is based on multiple-choice questions, students are encouraged to provide the correct answer, without having an opportunity to express their individual understanding of what they learn, whether it is justifiable through what they have studied or not. This led the students to find open ended question which are more expressive and to some extent subjective at times challenging, though their linguistic level is relatively good.

Since the aim of this study is to investigate reading and to design a program drawing on the imagination as a tool to support meaning making in literature, the following section will explore the attitudes of Libyan people to literature in Arabic (L1) and illustrate the importance of studying it in English (L2).

2.4. The Purpose of Teaching Literature in Libyan EFL Higher Education

Literature is an elevated form of art that is highly appreciated in Arabic cultures, both inside and outside the classroom. EFL classrooms teach literature in order to form a bridge between the language and how it is learnt, and its cultural value in Libya. This section demonstrates the place of literature within the Libyan context, and identifies the reasons for teaching it inside EFL university classrooms.

2.4.1. The Value of Literature in Libyan Culture

Literature (poetry, drama, and fiction) is one of the earliest forms of creativity in the Arab world, and a significant part of Arabic cultural heritage. In Arabic cultures it is given a prominent status as an expressive tool used to mirror and reflect on society's experiences, issues, and feelings, all of which make up their identity. Poetry, seen as an elevated form

of literature, is given high prominence in the Arabic tradition, dating back to the late 5th - 6th century, when it was produced and ‘transmitted’ orally in order to preserve it. It was not until the late 7th century that a systematic large-scale movement was initiated to set it down in textual form (Zwettler, 1976). As Khalil Barhoum, a senior university lecturer in linguistics and Arabic at the University of Stanford, states in an interview to the Stanford University News Service (1993), for Arabs, “poetry is not just an art, it's *The* art”. He adds that this elevation is "perhaps... why the Arabic word for ‘poet’, *sha'ir*, means 'one who feels'". Barhoum, who taught a course in Arabic Literature and Culture, emphasized that in Arab culture "rhetoric is considered part and parcel of a person's ability to express him or herself eloquently. Thus, when someone is referred to as ‘rhetorical’ it's far from insulting. It simply means the person is articulate, and that the way he expresses his emotions is quite appealing”.

The most common themes that Arabic poets express through their literature are patriotism, religion and its influence, repression, love, social and psychological alienation, and barriers and differences (social and economic) between urban and rural dwellers (Ham, 2002). This is because, as in any culture, literature as a creative act of the imagination (Vygotsky, 1925) is directly linked to the context (socio-cultural) one is part of, and is therefore a representation and extension of the reality embedded in that context (Vygotsky, 1930/2004).

As is the case in all Arabic countries, poetry in Libya represents the Libyan culture and is considered a telling of the country's sentiments and a reflection of its reality. Libyan poetry made little contribution to the Arab Renaissance of the late 19th and 20th centuries (Chorin, 2008). Nonetheless, Libya developed its own tradition which was centered on the oral recitation of poems, usually expressing the country's suffering during the Italian colonial period of the early 20th century. Many poets, like Ahmad Al-Sharif, wrote about the violence perpetuated by the Italian invaders (Diana, 2013) and their fight for independence after the Italian defeat in the ‘50s. Poetry was also used to express the Libyan people's feelings and views on social change after the discovery of oil (Ham, 2002). Poetry is a powerful form of art, because its expressive dimension, conveyed through metric language and rhythmic affiliation, captures both the mind and the heart of the reader/hearer (Vygotsky, 1925).

The written word had little influence. It only emerged after the discovery of oil and the change that it, as well as new foreign ideas, brought to the Libyan people, who were mostly known for their very traditional and rural nature (Chorin, 2008). There were not many short story writers during that time, mostly because of the very small population (around four million), most of whom were illiterate. Nonetheless, because of the strong geographical and cultural relations between Benghazi (Libya's second city) and Egypt, some writers in the east of Libya were influenced by the strong literary movement centering on short stories which had developed in Egypt after the 1800s.

It is apparent that Libyan literature reflects the cultural values of its time, and the different issues that each time period presents, thus giving it a very strong connection with the context in which it is produced. Literature, in all its forms, not only expresses Libyan society's experiences, values and beliefs, but it is also a powerful linguistic tool for expressing the people's freedom of speech, especially post the 2011 revolution.

The value literature holds within Arabic cultures in general, and the Libyan society in particular, makes learning the art form very important for transferring values and cultural heritage inside the classroom in both the first and second language. It also makes such issues worth exploring, thus, providing opportunity for understanding not only the Arabic cultures, but also different cultures through their own literature. In that way, a reader of literature can have a chance to think critically about such diversity between different cultures and find commonalities that shape them as human beings. In this sense, literature is given a function as a medium in which ideas, issues, and problems are dealt with in relation to specific cultures and societies, which explains its significance inside the Libyan classrooms in both L1 and L2. The following section illustrates the reasons for using literature in the EFL classroom.

2.4.2. The Importance of Teaching Literature in EFL Classrooms

Since the mid- 80s and the growth of CLT, there has been a growing advocacy for the use of literature in language teaching (e.g. Maley and Moulding, 1985; Collie and Slater, 1987; Lazar, 1993; McRae and Vethamani, 1999). This is mainly for cultural, motivational, linguistic, communicative, interpretative, and humanistic reasons (Brumfit & Carter, 1986; Holden, 1988; Maley & Duff, 1990; Carter & Long, 1991; Lazar, 1993; Carter & McRae,

1996; Gilroy & Parkinson, 1997; Chan, 1999; Hall, 2005; Paran, 2006). As mentioned in the previous section, literature in Libya is valued highly for its cultural and historical merit, and for its ability to portray and deliver the Libyan culture and the different realities that are portrayed in that culture. According to Lazar (1993), literature can provide foreign language students with access to the culture of that language. However, not all works of literature do in fact represent the realities of the societies in which they are written. Lazar argues that this may be a relative issue since it may be hard for the students to appreciate the work as being only “a highly atypical account of one particular milieu during a specific historical period” (p.16). So, reading literature encourages students to broaden their awareness and understanding of the political, historical, and social events surrounding a particular work in a different context.

In addition, literature can contextualize how members of a particular society might behave and act in a certain situation. In this sense, a language student, through a literary text, is given a chance to gain perception of how members of a society may describe or evaluate their experiences. This, then, should make the language learner aware of the different perspectives, and they should be encouraged by the teacher to treat the literary work critically, so that “the underlying cultural and ideological assumptions in the text are not merely accepted and reinforced, but are questioned, evaluated, and if necessary, subverted” (Lazar, 1993:17).

The high value that literature holds in many cultures makes some students studying it in an L2 feel a sense of achievement when they can deal with a literary text in the classroom (Lazar, 1993). According to Lazar, studying literature in the EFL classroom can be interesting and motivational for students, especially for those who come from a culture with a rich oral tradition of literature. As in the case of Libyans, using literary texts in English could provide good and thought-provoking points of comparison. So, the task of asking students to retell some of the stories from their own culture before reading a story in English with a similar theme could be interesting and motivating. Students in that way are encouraged to make comparisons and use their background knowledge to make sense of the new story they read in English. The complex themes and the unexpected and gripping plot of a short story or novel can grab the students’ attention and help them establish close connections with the characters (Bobkina & Dominguez, 2014).

EFL students in Libya, like in many countries, have fairly limited access to spoken English, and written English usually takes primary importance for stimulating language acquisition (Lazar, 1993). This acquisition, as Lazar points out, could be stimulated using literature since it provides the learners with memorable contexts for processing and interpreting new language. Low level students may find it rather difficult to cope with an authentic literary text alone because the language used deviates from generally observed rules (Leech, 1988). So, it would be helpful for teachers to provide them with the necessary support. When more advanced students become absorbed in the plot or characters of a novel or short story, they acquire a great deal of language incidentally (Lazar, 1993). Also, using tasks in which the students listen to or see a story or play acted out can help students understand unfamiliar words by making guesses using features like gestures, intonation, or an understanding of the relationship between speakers (characters) as clues. This, as Lazar points out, can help students internalize vocabulary, grammar patterns, and also intonation. Jones and Carter (2012) indicate that some EFL students do not want to study literature for its own sake (literature as content), but would be happy if they were able to see a clear learning outcome linked to the development and expansion of their language awareness.

According to Lazar (1993), literary texts can be used to design activities which encourage students to share their feelings and opinions about a poem or characters in a story through group work and class discussion to facilitate better learning. This is because literature is rich, with multiple levels of meaning leading to multiple responses. By providing students with interesting and meaningful content, they can be encouraged to participate in discussion (Daskalovska & Dimova, 2012).

Widdowson (1975) argues that, by asking students to explore the sophisticated use of language in a short story or poem, they can think about the norms of language use. In that way the students can compare everyday meaning and use with stylistic use, such as figurative language. It can help them become sensitive to some of the overall features of language, such as collocation (Lazar, 1993).

Literary texts are created from language, but it is the reader (student) who brings meaning to those texts (Rosenblatt, 1987). It has been argued by Widdowson that literature helps students develop their interpretative abilities and make inferences (Rossner, 1983). Because literary text are often rich in multiple meanings, being actively engaged in the

construction of the text meaning by forming hypotheses and drawing inferences can help the students unravel the unstated implications and assumptions made by such multiple meanings. That is why literary texts ought to avoid one interpretation (Lazar, 1996). Widdowson (1983), therefore, sees that literature can provide a good source for activities that encourage students to use reading strategies, such as inferencing and drawing conclusions, based on the underlying assumptions in the text. The multiple interpretations and different opinions commonly generated by literary texts can lead students to engaging in real, motivated interaction, not only with the text, but also with their peers and with the teacher (Widdowson, 1983). Therefore, literature can provide a good source of a variety of activities for developing not only reading skills and strategies, but also speaking, listening, and writing skills, too (Erkaya, 2005). Such activities help “the students actively participate in making the text mean” (Carter & McRae, 1996:3), so that the students are not simply asked to comprehend the text, rather, they are asked to actively process the text and construct meaning through engagement with tasks. Jones and Carter (2012) state that this helps students engage with the text and become active thinkers and creative users of the language.

One of the greatest strengths of literature consists of its imaginative, suggestive power, which is undoubtedly beyond the scope of the written words in the text (Maley, 1989). According to Lazar (1993), besides the linguistic benefits that literature may provide in the language classroom, it can have a wider educational function in its ability to help stimulate the students’ imagination and critical thinking, and increase their emotional awareness. If students are given a chance to personally respond to a given text, they may, with time, become more confident in expressing their emotions and ideas in English. It, therefore, can foster emotional intelligence by drawing on the students’ affective behaviors when they relate with characters in a story and empathize with them. By connecting personally with the text and relating it to their own lives, their traditions, values, and societies, they will become empowered and confident enough to read a literary text individually. By thinking about the text, the development of the plot, and the characters’ behaviors, students can develop their critical thinking skills by also reflecting on their lives and on the surrounding environments, and questioning, interpreting, and exploring different perspectives, ideas, and possibilities (Langer, 1997).

In order to indicate the challenges that face Libyan students when reading literature, it is first necessary to determine how reading is taught in Libya.

2.5. Teaching Reading in Libyan EFL University Classrooms

Reading is a complex cognitive process which involves the construction of meaning from the written print (Grabe, 2009). It involves the interaction between the text and the reader's background knowledge. It is, therefore, the product of text decoding, and the reader's comprehension of the text (Rumelhart, 1977). Recent research has suggested the role of social interaction in the enhancement of readers' comprehension of both literary and informative texts (Langer, 1990; Applebee et al., 2003).

Reading in Libyan EFL classrooms is taught using traditional methods which place importance on accurate pronunciation and the translation of the words (Abosnan, 2016). Teachers tend to focus on accurate pronunciation, unfamiliar content knowledge, lexical meaning, difficult grammatical structures, and corrective feedback (Abosnan, 2016). Investigation of Libyan school teachers' approaches in the language classroom revealed that during the reading lessons, teachers spend considerable time reading word by word and sentence by sentence, explaining vocabulary, translating into Arabic, and reading aloud (Orafi, 2008). Although researchers, such as Dwyer (1983), Gardner (1986), and Khand (2004) have shown the effectiveness of silent reading over reading aloud, reading aloud is still given significant time within a reading lesson in Libyan classrooms, at all levels of education (Abosnan, 2016). As Dwyer (1983) asserts, reading aloud makes students lose their sense of meaning of the text in hand, which goes against the very purpose of reading (reading for meaning). Little attention is given to the activities which draw on reading strategies such as working out the meaning of the words from the context, skimming, scanning the text for specific information, or inferencing (Ghuma, 2011; Ahmed, 2012; Albeckay, 2013; Elmadwi & Shepherd, 2014; Abosnan, 2016). Moreover, if students do in fact use these strategies, perhaps because they are able to transfer them from their L1, they are most likely using them inaccurately in L2 (Ahmed, 2012).

Although one of the underlying principles of teaching reading is that it is possible to understand the general meaning of a text without understanding every single word

(Macfarlane, 2000), reading instruction is nevertheless translation-centered. When students come across an unfamiliar word, they tend to use an English-Arabic dictionary to figure out the meaning, rather than trying to figure out the meaning on their own, thus, often leading to decontextualized meanings of the words (Abosnan, 2016). This results in comprehension difficulties, especially when students are required to read individually.

According to schema theory, effective reading comprehension involves readers drawing on their prior knowledge and experiences (schema, plural schemata or schemas) (Anderson, 1977). Lessons in the Libyan EFL classroom are not usually divided into pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading stages, during which students' schema is activated to help them understand the text. Teachers of reading do not give importance to the activation of students' prior knowledge and experience (schemas), and the important role that prior knowledge plays in making sense of the text (Ahmed, 2012). Reading instruction in Libyan classrooms, therefore, does not employ current cognitive views of reading instruction that understand the reading process as an interactive process between the reader and the text and that promote developing 'meaning making' through strategy use (Grabe, 2009).

2.5.1. Problematizing the Teaching of EFL Literature in Libyan Universities

English departments at Libyan universities teach literature as a specialist subject (mainly for teaching the content, not for teaching the language). The aim of the course is to familiarize the students with different literary genres, styles, and classics from the English speaking world, mostly the UK and the US. The course consists of three main sections/genres: English poetry, Fiction (short stories), and Drama (plays). Students take the course Introduction to Literature in the first semester of their second year, with most of the course content covering basic literary definitions within each genre. So, in poetry classes, students are introduced to basic elements of poetry: sense devices (e.g., metaphor, simile, contrast, and personification), sound devices (e.g., alliteration, onomatopoeia, and assonance), and structural devices (e.g., repetition, rhythm, and meter: line, stanza etc.). (Definitions of these devices are found in the Glossary of Thesis Terms).

In later stages (in the third and fourth year), the students are usually given a few short poems and three to four stories to practice extracting such terms and functions from the

texts, together with examples for illustration. They are also introduced to different forms of literary criticism (such as feminism, structuralism, and formalism) and the principles underlying them. This only provides students with theoretical knowledge about different literary lenses and ways of interpretations. There is, however, not much time given for application and practice. Students have a chance to study a short story and a play. Then, they are required to apply their knowledge of these elements by identifying them in the text and determining their meaning and the effect that they produce. Focus is, therefore, mainly on developing knowledge of literary elements and how to apply such elements in literary texts. Thus, the main teaching objective becomes literary form and the ways in which the use of such literary elements affects the textual structure and style of the text.

Although meaning is valued in the literary classroom, instruction usually aims to provide students with ready-made interpretations. While teachers try to give students the opportunity to ask questions and initiate interpretations if the meaning is not clear, students do not actually take part in constructing such meaning. Most students are either too shy or are afraid they will not be giving the correct answers. At other times, they just prefer not to take part in the mixed-gender (males and females) university setting (Sawani, 2009). This may be traced back to the students' lack of practice inside the classroom to personally construct the meaning of texts, and, as indicated earlier, to a lack of training in critical reading and thinking skills (Albeckay, 2013). This usually leads to low self-confidence and the burden of not saying the 'right' answer. Students, as a result, find themselves struggling to get the meaning of the text when they are required to read it on their own (El-Naili, 2006). However, they find it less challenging to apply their knowledge of literary terms and literary conventions (El-Naili, 2006). These challenges are caused by difficulty in making inferences to make sense of unfamiliar words, and also the ability to make connections between different parts of the text, whether finding out metaphoric meanings or relating different ideas together (Elbadri, 2009). Due to the difficulties that many students in Libya face with reading literature, mainly because of the challenging language use (El-Naili, 2006; Elbadri, 2009), students become alienated from literature in general and develop a stigma towards it (Pathan, 2012). This may be a result of a lack of pedagogic tasks for practising constructing meaning inside the classroom, which would allow students more time to actively read and engage with the text.

If students were given more opportunity for interaction with text, they would have a chance to not only draw on their skills, but also interact with each other and respond to the text by drawing on their own knowledge and experiences (Hirvela, 1996; Khatib, 2011). This is in line with Breen (1984) advocating the use of pedagogic tasks as a methodological technique on the grounds that they facilitate a more student-centered learning environment which prioritizes ‘meaning making’ and analytical thinking skills.

2.5.2. Overcoming the Challenges: An Imaginative Approach to the Teaching of Literature in EFL

What can be concluded from the above discussion is that there is limited research conducted on the teaching of literature in a learner-centered environment. Also, and most importantly, much of the focus in Libya is on the teaching of reading and on the difficulties in reading. Although there have been a few research studies on the processes of meaning making in literature reading in L1 which have recommended whole class discussion for meaning making (e.g. Langer, 1991), there is no research designed to support meaning making in literary texts in L2 by developing the creative imagination.

Furthermore, through consulting the literature, it can be seen that most researchers emphasize the role of literature for developing students’ imaginations and creativity (such as Maley, 1989; Lazar, 1993; Langer, 1991). However, there is no indication of how such mental properties could be developed in the teaching of ‘imaginative’ texts, especially in the reading of short stories. Even though researchers like Vygotsky (2004) and Dewey (1992) underline the central role that the imagination plays in learning, to my knowledge, at the date of this thesis, no research has been conducted on exploring how this imagination could be developed for understanding literature, more specifically fiction (short stories). Research has indicated that Libyan students have less difficulty with short stories (Pathan, 2012) and that short stories provide better practice for developing reading comprehension skills, mainly because of their short length and tendency to make language more contextualized. There is, however, no indication of how the teaching of literary fiction and reading comprehension could be interrelated as part of one course.

Last but not least, throughout this chapter there has been the advocacy for developing a new educational vision which will lead to a more up-to-date educational policy that shifts from a teacher-centered pedagogy to a more student-centered pedagogy. Also, there is the implied need to create a parallel system that makes use of such an approach in developing instructional material, which, therefore, links teaching approaches with the methodology for carrying them out. In fact, studies and reports on the educational system in Libya have suggested that updated syllabuses and quality assurance in education must be implemented (Tamtam et al., 2011). For that reason, there is a need to develop a program of reading that tries to integrate all the issues presented here in a coherent form. A teaching approach that can help students develop their imaginative reading and response to literary fiction is in this sense the central aim of this study. More specifically, the current study is constructed for the purpose of designing a reading program that supports Libyan EFL university students' reading and response (meaning making) to literature by stimulating and developing their imagination.

2.6. Concluding Thoughts

This chapter aimed to investigate the issues relevant to this study. Through the literature provided within the Libyan context, it has been indicated that the teaching of reading English literature in Libyan university classrooms is rather underdeveloped and employs teacher-centered approaches for the teaching of reading, and language in general, thus, giving less importance to developing meaning making. It has also indicated that Libyan HE currently adopts a more intuitive and traditional approach for designing materials which focuses on content and does not take into consideration the methodology required for meeting classroom objectives. Furthermore, the literature indicates that Libyan students prefer reading short stories rather than poetry or drama, and that short stories are more appealing to the imagination since they draw on the person's intellectual and emotional properties (as with other literary forms) in a meaningful context. The current study therefore concentrates on developing an approach to the teaching of literary fiction that takes into consideration all these shortcomings through the design of a student-centered reading program for literature teaching. The first aspect that needs to be explored in order to come up with this imaginative approach is how the imagination can facilitate learning, and what beneficial role it can play in reading and understanding literature.

Chapter 3

The Concept of the Imagination and its Role in Learning

Reason is the natural order of truth; but imagination is the organ of meaning

(C.S. Lewis, 1969:265)

3.1. Introduction

This chapter offers the first step in the development of the theoretical framework intended for designing a model that draws on the creative imagination to read and make meaning of literary fiction. The discussion provided herein is an attempt to develop an understanding of the concept of the imagination and identify its role in learning and cognitive development. In doing so, it addresses reality (background knowledge and experience) as a key link between the imagination and creativity, and indicates how the faculty of intellect (logical reasoning), emotion, and context contribute to the development of this creative imagination for constructing new knowledge and meaning making. The chapter then goes on to discuss the importance of imagination and knowledge construction in the classroom and their pedagogical applications. It ends with a summary and illustration of the first foundation block for the conceptual model.

3.2. The Imagination and Human Cognitive Development

This part of the chapter provides a detailed discussion of the nature and function of the imagination in human cognitive development. The aim is to provide a working definition of the role of the imagination in cognitive development for the purpose of this study. To understand the concept of the imagination and identify its role in human development, we are then required to take a look at the first act of the imagination.

3.2.1. From Riding a Stick to Creative Potential: What is the Imagination?

According to Vygotsky (1930/1966), evidence of the imagination is first seen in childhood play. Play is actually imagination in action. Vygotsky saw play as a conscious act of

imaginary situations, where children create new circumstances by building on their prior experiences as they try to make sense of the world around them (also referred to as socio-dramatic play). Socio-dramatic play is an activity in which children create imaginary situations, often creating a story, taking and giving roles, and making rules. They then embody those roles and act them out or create new roles for a different story. Vygotsky saw in this early form of human activity the first manifestations of the creative imagination. Vygotsky (1986) illustrates this with the following example:

The child who straddles a stick imagining that he is riding a horse; the girl who plays with a doll, imagining herself the mother; or the child who in play changes into a highwayman, a Red Army soldier, or a sailor....all these playing children represent examples of early forms of creativity (p. 4).

Vygotsky here believes that any form of creativity is also the work of an active imagination, and that this imagination is informed and developed by how well a person is able to combine what he/she already knows with new knowledge in order to create something new. Newness, in this sense, is dependent on one's memory, and play is a special unique form of memory activity, which results in the creation of new ideas through what Vygotsky called the 'creative imagination'. So, in its general sense, the imagination is about newness and originality in thinking.

In his theory of development, Vygotsky (1934) argued that the imagination is initially unconscious during childhood. It develops as a result of the substitutions of known products pre-school children make during play (Vygotsky, 1930). In the pre-school period, the child's memory is the leading mental function that initiates and informs the creative imagination through his/her play. When involved in play, the child creates an imaginary situation where he/she makes imaginary worlds and uses objects to substitute for certain things in that imaginary world which he creates. Although most of this childhood play originates from what children see in real life, and much of it is reproductive construction, it still "involves a process of creative reworking and combining of impressions into realities" (Ayman-Nolley, 1992:79). Play was seen by Vygotsky (1966) as the leading source of cognitive development in children. He considered it more than just a pleasure fulfilling activity. For him play was particularly about the child's needs and imaginary desires that are experienced by the child at around the age of two. According to Vygotsky, if the child

wanted to drive a car and his/her wish was not immediately gratified, he/she could then satisfy that desire by actually playing cars. He was convinced that “from the point of view of development, creating an imaginary situation can be regarded as a means of developing abstract thought” (Vygotsky, 1978:103). However, at that stage of early childhood, the child still has no understanding as to what drives his/her actions, and is therefore not conscious of such behavior, which makes it an act of immediate response from the stimuli of the real world. This indicates that imagination in its initial form is stimulated or triggered by information and an idea stored in memory, meaning that prior knowledge produces an unconscious reaction. This means that the imagination during childhood is concrete since it is directly informed by reality through the child’s prior knowledge and experience.

Vygotsky believed that imagination differs in nature and content at different stages of human development. The imagination develops as people’s thinking and reasoning develop, which usually starts at around the age of five (starting school) (Vygotsky, 1966). During that age we (adults) start to witness how a child begins to think and reason, so this imagination is based on how we conceive and witness it. Reasoning, according to Vygotsky’s theory, is the person’s ability to think critically about his reality and make sense of what is around him. Imagination and reasoning in children are separate, yet they develop in parallel (Vygotsky, 2004). In fact, “...in the process of their development, imagination and reasoning are opposites, their unity is inherent in the very first generalization, in the very first concept that people form” (Vygotsky, 1987:78).

However, during puberty, one’s social experiences broaden and expand, and both imagination and reasoning intersect (Vygotsky, 1978), where imagination and reasoning (thinking in concepts) come together and strongly influence each other (Ayman-Nolley, 1992). It is only at that transitional stage of adolescence where “motive and actions become accessible to consciousness” that a person can identify the reason why he/she acts in a specific way (Vygotsky, 1966:8). So, the imagination during that time becomes conscious.

Imagination during adolescence is probably the most interesting since it is at that age that reasoning and imagination are coupled together, and the imagination becomes more active. Vygotsky states that “at the time of puberty, there arises a powerful imagination and the

first beginnings of mature fantasy” (1930/1986:9). He believes that during this time the imagination is a continuation of childhood play and that one is more drawn towards creativity. During this stage, people’s imaginations become less sensory, in the sense that it is less reliant on the direct visuals (stimuli) which serve the memory. Although the imagination might remain concrete (based on one’s reality), it is more controlled and reliant on abstract thinking, making it more productive, i.e., creative. This indicates that the imagination during adolescence becomes more removed from one’s immediate reality, making it more abstract.

An adolescent might not only be able to draw something that he has seen, but also be able to add, change details, and draw things that he is not familiar with, like drawing a car with wings (a space shuttle), or an animal with two eyes and three or more heads. Vygotsky saw that “the fantasy of adolescence is more creative than the child’s and less productive than that of adults” (1931/1986:12). This, however, does not mean that adolescents are less imaginative, rather they are less productive. This is probably because, at that age, one is more critical of the products created as the creative imagination is under the control of reasoning. One might start to look at drawings with a critical eye and evaluate them. Often they will actually give up that activity because they become too critical and aware of what they have produced (Ayman-Nolley, 1992). As Ayman-Nolley points out, this kind of critical thinking sharpens the imagination. So, the imagination is more active when it involves critical analysis and when there is opportunity for action. During this stage (adolescence), exercising one’s thinking leads to the development of the imagination.

Vygotsky’s claims are based on empirical work drawn from Ribot (1901/2010). Vygotsky’s work indicates that though imagination (the conscious act of construction) and creativity (the construction of something new) during adolescence stem from the same realities, they are quite different in nature and content (Ayman-Nolley, 1992). This difference, according to Vygotsky (1930), is the cause of the unity between the imagination and reasoning, because, both of them stem from the same experience. This means that adolescents may have the same world knowledge and experiences, but the product is different, and therefore the responses to their realities are also different. This is a very important aspect of the role that the creative imagination plays in learning. It indicates that through imagination one’s thinking is broadened and that different people can produce different outcomes, because they respond differently.

Vygotsky (1931) did not elaborate extensively on the development of the imagination and creativity in adulthood. He offered a general idea of the nature of the creative imagination in adulthood. According to Vygotsky (1930/2004), the imagination fully matures during adulthood. As one develops and cognitively matures, one's thinking becomes more abstract (Vygotsky, 1966), i.e. it becomes more removed from one's immediate, concrete reality (prior knowledge and experience). At this stage of development, the imagination and reasoning come together and are influenced by one another in a more mature form of creative thinking. The reciprocal nature of the relationship between the imagination and reasoning is "influenced by a great complexity of adult experiences and needs", making it a richer and more productive process. Vygotsky believed that the product of this unity between the imagination and reasoning produces a more developed form of imagination, which he came to identify as the 'creative imagination'. Vygotsky's conception of the imagination revealed that it is a conscious act of the construction of ideas.

Piaget's (1945) views regarding the nature of the imagination were different to Vygotsky's. Piaget, who originally included the concept of imagination in his theory of cognitive development, also addresses issues about child development and imagination. Like Vygotsky, he also stresses the important role that the imagination plays in human development and behavior. He shares with Vygotsky the view that play is a form of the imagination in action, and that it uses material from the person's experiences. However, Piaget saw the imagination as a function of the unconscious (Ayman-Nolley, 1992).

Piaget (1945) saw the imagination as something which was separate from reality, that imaginative thinking and realistic thinking (thinking about reality; which involves prior knowledge and experiences) were opposites. For him a child's thoughts are unconscious and illogical, and as the person moves into adulthood, this kind of thinking will eventually be replaced with logical reasoning (Gajdamaschko, 2005). In this way, Piaget saw that imagination is not related to reasoning and therefore cannot lead to understanding. Following Piaget's theoretical view makes it hard for the educationalist to help the child develop his imaginative skills since this assumption makes the imagination seem uncontrolled because it is unconscious.

Piaget (1945) argues that imaginative thinking is opposite to realistic thinking in the sense that during imaginative thinking one is not connecting his fantasies with his own life

experience and therefore the process is not related to meaning making or knowledge building. He saw imagination as being emotional and only relating to immediate satisfaction. This assumes that imagination has no hand in determining the future or identifying the past, i.e. it has no role in learning. According to his conception of the imagination, there is no link between the imagination and creativity.

With this in mind, it can be seen that Vygotsky's work was in a way complementary to Piaget's. Vygotsky (1930, 1931, 1932) referred to Piaget's work and made a distinction between their approaches. He strongly disagreed with Piaget's theoretical position since Piaget did not take into consideration the significant role of the imagination in advancing abstract thinking and reasoning abilities (Ayman-Nolley, 1992). Piaget's ideas may be used to elaborate on Vygotsky's developmental changes, especially during adolescence. According to Piaget, adolescence is linked to the development of higher levels of reasoning, hypothetical thinking, and abstraction. This idea is in line with Vygotsky's ideas of increased powers of reasoning during adolescence, which shapes creativity (Ayman-Nolley, 1992). In his 1945 work *Play, Dreams, and Imitation*, Piaget explains how this creative faculty is developed through the interconnection of what he called 'assimilation', which is the use of existing knowledge and experience to deal with new objects and situations, and what he termed 'accommodation', which happens when a person's knowledge and experiences do not work and are replaced to fit any new objects or situations. According to Piaget, creativity is a result of the assimilative process, which is the "subjective transformation of reality". When this assimilation is balanced and integrated with the more concrete and reality-bound processes of accommodation, it leads to creative thinking and meaning making (Ayman-Nolley, 1992:83). As Piaget indicates, this interrelatedness between the two processes forms a more mature form of imagination, which is creative in nature. This, to some extent, agrees with and expands upon Vygotsky's idea of a transformational stage at puberty (adolescence).

However, a central difference between Piaget's and Vygotsky's explanation of this developmental path of the imagination is seen at the stage of adulthood. As far as Piaget is concerned, as one enters adulthood, one's logical reasoning becomes fully developed, yet the imagination is not the central aspect in that maturation. Unlike Vygotsky, who saw an interrelated relationship between imagination and reasoning, Piaget gives no importance to the role of the imagination for furthering this reasoning ability as if reasoning were

separate from imagination. The distinction that Vygotsky makes between imagination during childhood, adolescence, and adulthood, by contrast provides a structure on which the creative imagination could be developed. It highlights the active nature of the imagination and its strong link to reasoning. Further analysis is given in the following section on the relationship between the imagination and reasoning in order to identify the main components of the creative imagination relevant to this study.

3.2.2. Abstract Thinking, Reasoning, and the Role of Language as an Essential Aspect of the Imagination

Imagination and reasoning are correlates in the sense that there is no imagination without reasoning, and, at the same time, high levels of reasoning cannot occur without imagination (Vygotsky, 1930/2004). Because the imagination in childhood is concrete, it is unconscious and is not related to reasoning. However, in adolescence, both these faculties are united, making the imagination active and conscious. Reasoning and imagination in adulthood are interrelated and intertwined; they affect and influence each other, thus leading to the creative construction of new ideas. The different stages of human development reflect the different forms of the development of the imagination. This means that the imagination moves from being concrete and unconscious to becoming rational and logical, and then matures to become abstract and complex, and, most importantly, creative, as when constructing new ideas. Vygotsky (1934/1986) saw abstraction as the ability to find key features associated with one's realities.

Related to the complementary relationship between the imagination and reasoning is the idea that language is a cultural tool for thinking (Vygotsky, 1987). In all its forms (from concrete to abstract), the imagination is influenced by language. Language has a primary role: thinking (Vygotsky, 1934/1986). A person uses language not just to think about realities, but also to consider things that are not actually linked directly to immediate perceptions and experiences. The symbolic meaning of words gives the person freedom to think of things not limited to one's immediate perceptions and experiences, which therefore allows for mature abstract thinking (Wherland, 2012). In relation to child development, Vygotsky (1987) saw that "speech frees the child from the immediate impression of an object [;] it gives the child the power to represent and think about an

object that has not been seen” (p.346). The child, therefore, uses language not only to respond to his reality through his verbal monologue, but also to react to the new realities that he combines. In childhood, language is verbal and expressive.

Vygotsky (1934/1986) challenged Piaget’s (1923/1973) theory of development that viewed egocentric speech (thinking out loud or verbal thinking) as an activity only related to children and merely a means of expressing and releasing tension. Egocentric speech is an instrument used for thinking as one is searching for solutions to problems (Vygotsky, 1978b). Vygotsky’s work showed that egocentric speech is a stage that pre-school children go through as they think and solve problems and make sense of the world around them. As they get older, egocentric speech disappears and “goes underground” and is then replaced with inner speech, i.e. silent thinking and reflection. According to Vygotsky (1934/1986), the adult engages in an act of inner speech or nonverbal thinking, where he becomes involved in a dialogue with himself as he tries to solve problems and create solutions. Hence, inner speech and egocentric speech, according to Vygotsky’s theory, fulfil the same function, namely thinking. As a person matures and the thinking becomes more abstract, language also develops accordingly.

Language is, therefore, a tool for imagining and reasoning. For Vygotsky, whether thinking out loud using egocentric speech, or silently thinking using inner speech, a person is involved in a creative process of finding solutions to problems and making sense of the world around him. In Vygotsky’s analysis of children trying to carry out specific tasks and solve problems, he says:

In such circumstances it seems both natural and necessary for children to speak while they act; in our research we have found that speech not only accompanies practical activity but also plays a specific role in carrying it out. Our experiments demonstrate two important facts:

(1) A child’s speech is as important as the role of action in attaining the goal. Children not only speak about what they are doing; their speech and action are part of one and the same complex psychological function, directed toward the solution of the problem at hand.

(2) The more complex the action demanded by the situation and the less direct its solution, the greater the importance played by speech in the operation as a whole.

Sometimes speech becomes of such vital importance that, if not permitted to use it, young children cannot accomplish the given task (Vygotsky, 1930:8).

Vygotsky here maintains the importance of spoken language for thinking and reasoning, thinking about what is done, and what needs to be done to reach a solution to a problem, and, following Vygotsky, the more complex the problem is, the more vital language and the verbalization of thoughts becomes. So, in this sense, language is the means for understanding and sense making.

Although Piaget is highly respected in the field of developmental psychology and his ideas are considered influential in educational psychology, his views on imagination and creativity are to some extent behavioral, in the sense that imagination is considered unconscious and not related to thinking (inactive). This makes it hard for the current study to develop and sustain his ideas. His conception of the imagination does not lend itself to the main purpose of this study, which is to make sense of literary fiction (short stories), and therefore cannot be useful as a guiding theory in the development of the intended model. For this reason, a Vygotskian perspective is adopted in this research. Vygotsky's ideas on the role of the imagination for thinking and reasoning are highly relevant to this study, which explores ways of making use of this tool for meaning making in literary response. Vygotsky's concept of the creative imagination is crucial to identifying factors associated with developing this creative imagination inside the classroom, and, more precisely, in L2 reading. For that reason, understanding fully the trajectory of the development of the creative imagination will further establish its role in learning.

3.3. The Creative Imagination: Developing a Definition

Vygotsky (1930/2004) theorized the relationship between imagination and creativity. This section focuses on the process by which imaginative thinking can help people create new meanings. It suggests the creative aspect related to the imagination as a process that leads to constructing new knowledge (meaning making). It is a cycle that involves the departure from one's reality to build on that reality in an effort to create/make new realities (Vygotsky, 1987).

The basic principles that can be deduced from Vygotsky's theory of imagination are:

1. That imagination is the internalization of child's play.
2. Imagination is a higher cognitive process that is directed by conscious thought.
3. Creative thinking is a combination of imaginative thinking and reasoning, which first takes place during adolescence and develops as one reaches adulthood.
4. Imagination and reasoning are both important for the creation of new ideas and knowledge (Smolucha and Smolucha, 1992).

Learning is the process of creating and constructing new knowledge (Selvi, 2013). Therefore, the conception of the imagination as a cognitive tool for creating something new and making sense of the world around us, when applied in the context of this educational research study, can be perceived as a cognitive tool for constructing new knowledge. The following section elaborates on this constructive process of knowledge building.

3.3.1. Building on Old Experiences and Constructing New Knowledge

Constructivism is one of the psychological theories of how individuals learn. The basic assumption behind this theory is that meaning or knowledge is actively created in the human mind using past experiences, not passively received (Piaget, 1923; Dewey, 1938; Vygotsky, 1978). Based on this theory, we have to accept the epistemology that it bestows; that there is no such thing as knowledge 'out there'. Rather, that a person is in fact responsible for his own learning as he engages with the world (Dewey, 1938). It can then be said that learning (from a constructivist point of view) is an active process that involves the construction of knowledge based on past experience. In this sense, it is a cycle where new knowledge construction is determined by previous knowledge (Bartlett, 1932). It is a cognitive process which involves the mind in a constant activity of meaning making and organization. Human knowledge is, in this sense, not absolute, but our current best fit to our experiences (Glaserfeld, 1989). So, for the purpose of this thesis, I will be using the term 'knowledge construction' to refer to the creation of new ideas. This will provide an explanation of the role of the creative imagination in reading literature as discussed in Chapter 5.

Knowledge construction takes as its primary sources of information background knowledge and experiences (as shown in child's play). Learning, according to constructivist views, is based on how this knowledge and experience build on one another. Bartlett (1932) proposed that people have schemata, or unconscious mental structures, which represent an individual's general knowledge about the world. The term 'schema' (plural: 'schemata' or 'schemas') was used to define the system of interrelated knowledge and experience that a person has stored in the brain (Rumelhart, 1980; Gibbons, 2002). A person's schemata represents his knowledge about different concepts, about objects and the relationships that these have with other objects, about situations, events, and actions, and the sequences of these events or actions (Rumelhart, 1980). Different examples of types of schemas include social, formal, linguistic, or content schemas, as well as others. Schema theory, a psychological theory that has been adopted in education, generally accepted that all knowledge is structured and organized into these units of understanding (schemata) (Rumelhart, 1980). The notion behind schema theory is that past experiences lead to the creation of structures which eventually, compared with old ones, lead to the understanding of new experiences and new knowledge (Rumelhart, 1980; Alderson, 1979). This means that a new experience is understood in comparison with a stereotype of prior experiences held in the memory. The new experience is then processed in terms of its deviation from the stereotypical version or conformity to it (Cook, 1995). It is through schemata that old knowledge influences new information, and thus, leads to the understanding of new knowledge.

It has already been mentioned earlier that the imagination links to what a person already knows, as in childhood development and play. Imagination can therefore be defined as a cognitive tool for making sense (understanding), and the creative imagination is the imaginative process of the construction of new ideas. In order to establish how the creative imagination can be developed, it is first important to address the link between imagination and creativity in more depth, and identify the basis of that process.

3.3.2. The Link between Imagination and Creativity

It has already been established that the imagination is closely related to reality (background knowledge and experience). It "always builds using materials supplied by reality" (Vygotsky, 1930/2004:4). What's more, the imagination is, according to Vygotsky, crucial

for understanding reality. This shows that not only does the imagination depend on experience, but experience also depends on the imagination, meaning the imagination is a way of extending and refining one's experience (and with it, one's understanding). Vygotsky saw that "a true understanding of reality isn't possible without a certain element of imagination, without a departure from reality, from the immediate concrete unity of impression which this reality represents in elements of acts of our conscious" (Vygotsky, 1932/1987:45). That being said, we can conclude that the imagination involves a historical event, in the sense that it is based on the accumulation of knowledge and experiences (Wherland, 2012).

Vygotsky (2004) elaborated on the concept of the creative imagination, and the role of reality in its development, by making a distinction between *reproductive construction* and *productive or combinatory construction*. He explained that reproductive construction is the rebuilding of reality. It is seen when a child, for example, tries to fly using a stick or broom. The child's play originated from what he has seen in real life. Nonetheless, it still involves a process of creative reworking and combining of impressions into realities which are in response to the child's needs (Lindqvist, 2003). This kind of creativity is usually linked with imitation and the ability to make associations, and is therefore based on immediate response to the stimuli.

On the other hand, productive or combinatory construction can be seen in, for example, works of fairy tales, myths, legends, and dreams. In this case only, the combination of elements can be seen as a product of imagination, while the elements themselves are taken from reality. If we take for example a hut on chicken legs, the idea of the hut is combined with the idea of chicken legs. It is only an image of a complex combination of some elements taken from reality, where one creates new combinations from one's experience. These examples of the imagination in action provide evidence of the significance of reality in the construction of new ideas. Mellou (1995:97-98) says:

The key link between imagination and creativity lies in the opportunity that based upon reality, imagination provides for innovation and original changes and possibilities.

This indicates that creation is based on originality and newness (Mellou, 1995). As Mellou illustrates, in child play, new conclusions can be made about things by placing them in

different situations and new relationships. In this sense, when a child is involved in dramatic play, the child gets to comprehend the nature of reality and explores possibilities as well as impossibilities in their situation. Additionally, children might add to their reality and make changes. They might synthesize objects or events and might come to conclusions beyond their experiences and creative development.

Imagination and reasoning are seen as necessary mechanisms for knowledge building by Dewey (1986). Both Vygotsky (1930) and Dewey (1938) share the view that experience feeds knowledge, which then feeds experience. They show that the imagination is a mechanism that fuels that cycle. In this way, developing the imagination is a means for developing knowledge. It is a means for developing one's ability to make meaning. It is therefore important to develop the imagination for individual and community development, and to explore the main factors that support the development of the creative imagination.

3.4. The Development of the Creative Imagination

This discussion of the Vygotskian perspective on the imagination shows that imagination has a deep connection to reality, and that imagination is important for developing a “future orientation” (Vygotsky, 2004:88). Creative imagination is a higher mental function, meaning that it is a “historical cumulative process where every succeeding manifestation was determined by the previous one” (2004:30). The development of the creative imagination is supported by the context in which a person is situated. It is within a social and cultural context that other functions interrelate to form, what Vygotsky (1978) has called, the ‘psychological system’. This psychological system is a combination of mediated tools that have been accumulated over time. The imagination can develop through the acquisition of these cultural tools (for example, language) (Vygotsky, 1977). In childhood, during play, language is considered the mediational tool for the imaginative activity and, as time passes, one picks up more cultural tools that act as mediational means for making sense of the world around oneself.

The creative imagination “very slowly and gradually evolves from more elementary and simpler forms into more complex ones” (Vygotsky, 2004:12). Two common factors guide this evolution: emotion (feelings evoked as a reaction to our experiences) and context (the

environment or community of which we are part). Both are influenced by the relationship which associates the imagination with reality. Hence, the creative imagination has cognitive, historical (based on accumulated experience), emotional, and social faculties.

3.4.1. Emotion and the Imagination: “All forms of creative imagination include affective elements” (Vygotsky, 2004:19)

In his theory of imagination, Vygotsky (1933/1966) also takes into consideration emotional or affective faculties. One of these affective considerations is the “lived emotional experience”, or what he terms *Perezhivanie*. The term was originally associated with Stanislavsky’s teaching of actors, where they were required to re-live previously relevant profound experiences as they engaged in a new role (John-Steiner et al., 2010). Vygotsky argued that “all forms of creative imagination include affective elements” (Vygotsky, 1930/2004:19). He saw the imagination as active, conscious, and related to meaning making; a cognitive process that is connected with one’s emotions as well as his intellect (thinking) (Gajdamaschko, 2005).

Vygotsky stated that “every construct of the imagination has an effect on our feelings, and if this construct does not in itself correspond to reality, nonetheless, the feelings it evokes are real feelings, feelings a person truly experiences” (1930/2004:19), eventually relating emotion to thought and consciousness. He shared Ribot’s (1906) argument that “emotions and passions give rise to mental phantoms” (p.31). Emotion contributes to the imagination not only in its aesthetic aspect (as reflected in how we perceive our reality and respond to it), but also in its mechanical and intellectual form (as a function of how we engage in and carry out different tasks in reality), meaning that it draws out creative activity and, at the same time, develops with it (Ribot, 1906: 32). This means that emotion and imagination are closely related and that they are affected by one another. Emotional stimulus can result in an imaginary process, and vice versa. It is, therefore, linked with reality on the basis that thinking about reality (background knowledge and experiences) draws on prior emotions which are related to that reality too (Vygotsky, 1978). Indeed, “In exploring matters of the mind, cognitive activity cannot be divorced from emotional involvement” (Vacca & Vacca, 2009: 118).

The interplay between emotion and imagination is reflected in what Vygotsky (1930/2004) calls the “emotional reality of the imagination” (p.19), which are feelings manifested in a person’s experiences (Tsai, 2012). It is dependent on subjective thought or subjectivity, which gives direct emotional reactions to experiences. According to Vygotsky (1930/2004), subjective thoughts are directed towards reality and combined with realistic or objective thought. Objective thought (logical reasoning) includes the person’s ability to think and reason, even about emotions and feelings themselves. This indicates that for the imagination to develop, it should be based not only on logical reasoning but also on emotion.

This interplay between emotion and reasoning can be seen in early stages of childhood. In childhood play, or what can be called ‘dramatic play’, a child takes on differing roles. His acting of those roles is driven by his ability to associate them with the feelings that are associated with them. If, for instance, the child is pretending to be a mother who has lost her/his child, she/he will also act out the emotions that come with this role; the feeling of sadness, fear, and panic. It is through this activity (play) that children first learn to differentiate between their emotional state (i.e. happiness in playing the game), and the emotions of the role being played (the fear of losing a child) (Vygotsky, 1978). The ability to engage, make associations, and relate action to experiences requires the imagination. In such realization, one can say that there is actually no imagination or meaning making without emotion, for emotion is “the ferment without which no creation is possible” (Ribot, 1906:31). Emotion is, therefore, not only associated with how we think of the past and feel about the present, it also gives rise to how we see and shape the future, making it an element that cannot be divorced from the imagination, nor from how we make sense of the world around us.

3.4.2. Imagination and Context in Socio-Cultural Theory

Vygotsky (1978) criticized Piaget (1923) for not taking into consideration the social nature of humans and the role and influence of the environment and social interactions in shaping human development and behavior. Vygotsky saw Piaget’s view as being similar to Freud’s in assuming that the imagination is innate, unconscious, non-social, and only serves as wish fulfilment (Smolouch & Smolouch, 1986). He believed that as humans are social beings, the imagination will have to be influenced by one’s environment and surroundings.

This was a very important aspect of his theory that attracted a great deal of attention from researchers and educationalists later on, especially with the reduced prominence of behaviorist learning views (a theory of learning that emphasizes the passive acquisition of knowledge), and rise of more constructivist views, which emphasize the active process of knowledge construction (Dewey, 1933; Bruner, 1960; Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky's ideas on the important role of social context were the main focus and reason behind his socio-cultural theory of learning.

The main attraction of Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory of learning is that we develop complex thinking through context and social interaction. It is theoretically based on his cultural-historical theory of cognitive development which hinges on the idea that we develop through interaction with our context, meaning that we develop mental dispositions that are not inherently part of our genetic system (Wherland, 2012). Vygotsky defined the ability to grow into culture, i.e., context, as the ability to develop what he called 'higher mental functions'. These are the mental formations that we develop instrumentally through the internalization of cultural tools, which have the power to change into psychological tools which can change how we think and behave. To stress the cognitive nature of those tools, Vygotsky (1997) postulates that "if it [a cultural tool] did not have the capacity to influence behavior, it could not be a tool" (p.87). These tools are interconnected to form a system (a psychological system) which is shaped by time and the environment (society). He states that:

The following may serve as examples of psychological tools and their complex systems: language, different forms of numeration and counting, mnemotechnical techniques, algebraic symbols, works of art, writing, schemes, diagrams, maps, blueprints, all sorts of conventional signs, etc. (1997:85)

Vygotsky saw that all learning is a result of social interaction through the use of those cultural tools. We therefore develop mentally through exposure, practice, and the internalization of culturally mediated tools (Vygotsky, 1978). According to Vygotsky, these cultural tools shape our thinking.

In relation to child development, Vygotsky (1978) stated that children develop intellectually by internalizing the cultural tools (such as signs, numbers, maps, plans,

symbols, musical notes, charts, models, pictures, and language) which they pick up as they develop. A child internalizes cultural tools from his external context in the early years of development. These tools generate different types of understanding, so that the more sophisticated the tools, the more understanding can be enhanced (Alphen, 2011). This process of internalization is historic and dynamic in the sense that as development takes place, a change of perspective leads to a change of synthesis, which is at the heart of development. As the child emerges in the active process of thinking, he will need to supply his raw materials and thought from his reality and the world he lives in. His relationship with the context around him is considered an agent for his imaginative thinking. This means that a person's experience and cultural-historical past will influence and change how he thinks and imagines. So, learners in the Libyan context will be influenced by the Libyan culture and their socio-cultural heritage when they are thinking and creating meaning. This process of internalization is historic and dynamic in the sense that as development takes place, a change of perspective leads to a change of synthesis, which is at the heart of development and meaning creation.

Language is the most important cultural tool that shapes our thinking and a central idea in Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory of cognitive development, making it an apparatus for learning. It is a symbolic system of communication and a cultural tool that mediates mental process, such as memory and thinking, and human communication. It acts as a mediator and facilitator of knowledge amongst people. Vygotsky (1978) accepted Piaget's proposition that learners do not respond to the external stimuli, but rather to their interpretations of those stimuli. However, he argued that Piaget had overlooked the social factor of language, and as a result had failed to understand the collaborative nature of the learning process (Tuncel, 2009). Vygotsky's theory of 'cognitive development' postulates that information from the external world is transformed and internalized through language (tool). He considered language as a higher psychological function which is influenced by culture, and due to its ability to shape how we behave and think, it is a 'tool'. For that reason, language can be regarded as a cognitive tool, a mental formation of the mind, and function of social and cultural practice.

Language and imaginative thinking are influenced by one another. Vygotsky saw that just as language develops the imagination, imagination enhances language development. As we develop, we transform from being other-regulated to self-regulated, and play serves as a

means for discovering language (Vygotsky, 1978). A child first observes, listens, and then imitates others. Imitating others helps them learn different words and give names to different objects. The semiotic means a child uses during internalization of what is surrounding him becomes the basis of his egocentric speech and verbal thinking (John-Steiner et al., 2010). So, imagination is important for making sense of what is around us and for developing/acquiring language. Language is the tool that can be used to verbalize and communicate our ideas, and therefore heighten our imagination and shape our understanding.

Since experience is cumulative and gradual, it relies on the social context and is influenced by how well we can communicate and make use of different experiences besides our own. Vygotsky relates the imagination to one's environment and interaction with one's context by saying that "imagination operates not freely, but directed by someone else's experience, as if according to someone else's instructions" (Vygotsky, 2004:17). In this way, the imagination:

becomes the means by which a person's experience is broadened, because he can imagine what he has not seen, can conceptualize something from another person's narration and description of what he himself has never directly experienced.
(Vygotsky, 2004:17).

That means that social interaction not only helps us communicate our experiences with each other through language and activity, but also helps us broaden our understanding of both our experiences and others. This is the key to this study as it underpins the student-centered approach to teaching (using group work, etc.). For example, if someone has never been to the desert, never seen or had the chance to touch the sand and experience the weather of the desert, from others' experiences and descriptions, whether orally from conversation, written in for example a novel, or graphically when watching a movie, he can imagine being in the desert. He can imagine himself living in the desert (Vygotsky, 1930/2004). This link is made possible by social experience, where a person's imagination is directed by someone else's experiences. In this sense, imagination broadens a person's experience and is therefore a socio-cognitive tool for making sense of what is around him, old and new. It can be concluded that the concept of the creative imagination is influenced and shaped by emotion and context. For developing the imagination, a person should relate

his reality to emotion and context, and language is the means for inner speech which is a characteristic of adult reasoning and imagining.

Vygotsky's views on human development and cognition led him to develop a concept that took as its overarching paradigm the social factors for constructing new knowledge and creating new ideas; this will be explained in detail in the following section. Vygotsky's ideas on social interaction, and the role of the imagination in cognitive development as a tool for making sense of the world and constructing new ideas, led to the fusion of the idea of the zone of proximal development.

3.4.3. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD): Pedagogical Implications of the Socio-Cultural Theory of Learning

Essential to cognitive development is the social interaction between the learner and a more knowledgeable other, that is, those who know more (Bruner, 1984). The view that shows the child as a social being has implications for educational practice (Ivic, 1994). The socio-cultural nature of human development entails that children cannot be disconnected from their social and cultural environment (Ivic, 1994). Their very nature requires them to build relationships with others around them. As Ivic maintains, it is for that reason impossible to analyze a child's development, capacities, or education without taking this social nature into consideration. The concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) takes this view as a principle to build on.

The ZPD has been defined as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978:86). Vygotsky proposed that a child's development differs from point 1 (his stage of development) to point 2 (the level of potential development). The difference between them is the "zone of proximal development". With assistance, the child develops and moves into a new ZPD and problem-solving level. In the case of the growing child, the parents and the "more expert peers" facilitate this (Bruner, 1984:95).

Vygotsky (1978) saw that interaction with a more knowledgeable other was an effective way of determining cognitive development and learning skills and strategies. Less

competent children will learn within the zone of development by interacting with more skilled peers. He believed that a child doing a task in his ZPD can be assisted and supported to achieve the task. The actual forms of adult assistance in the proximal zone vary greatly: the demonstration of methods to be imitated, examples and questioning, monitoring by the adult, and, most important of all, shared activities as a constructive factor of development (Ivic, 1994). In the educational context, this assistance is referred to as 'scaffolding'. The term 'scaffolding' was originally introduced by Wood et al. (1976) as an instructional method which corresponds with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development. Scaffolding is an important feature of effective instruction and can include modeling a skill, providing hints or cues, and adjusting new material or activities to suit the learners' level (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). According to Wood et al. (1976), scaffolding is used to deal with "those elements of the task that are initially beyond the learner's capacity, thus permitting him to concentrate upon and complete only those elements that are within his range of competence" (p.90). In this way, scaffolding requires that a teacher shows by example how to solve a problem or carry out a task, while learning moves step by step.

Vygotsky's theory of proximal development claims that children achieve better and are more productive when they work in a cooperative environment. He asserts that "without creating ZPDs there is no learning" (John-Steiner et al., 2010: 27). In the light of this, for teachers to develop the imagination in classroom practice, they will have to work within the students' ZPD and use scaffolding as a technique to support students' learning and knowledge construction. In reality, what can be rather challenging for a teacher is identifying the students' actual ZPD in order for them to effectively proceed and help them move beyond that level. Interaction with the students is a very important component of such identification.

Scaffolding students' learning can be achieved through collaborative learning or group work activities (Wood et al., 1976). The main idea behind these instructional techniques is collaboration or cooperation and interaction between students. Collaborative learning is a pedagogical approach in which a group of learners at various proficiency levels work together towards a common goal (Gokhale, 1995). This entails an exchange of ideas between the learners and dialogue. Gokhale (1995) examined the results of collaboration among language learners and came to the conclusion that collaborative learning is better

than individual learning and that students have a positive attitude towards it. Cohen (2010) states that “cooperative learning’s success is a result of positive interdependence, face to face interaction, individual accountability, and group self-monitoring” (Cohen, 2010:6). This collaboration is an important aspect in the development of the imagination and the creation of new knowledge (learning), and construction of new ideas (meaning making).

3.5. The Significance of Imagination and the Construction of New Knowledge in Education

According to White (1990) and Dewey (1991), the imagination is essential for education, and it is very important for educators and teachers to develop students’ imaginations in the classroom. Egan (1992), an educationalist, acknowledges the key role that the imagination has in developing human cognition in general, and the role that it has in education. He argues that because “so much of the focus on student’s cognition is in terms of logico-mathematical skills, [...] our very concept of education becomes affected” (Egan, 1992:5). Egan (1997) bases his conception of the imagination on two theories: the nineteenth-century theory of recapitulation on the order in which humans have historically mastered actual knowledge, and Vygotsky’s theory of culturally mediating intellectual tools, such as language (pp.26-31).

According to Egan (1997), Vygotsky’s idea of culturally mediated tools (e.g., signs, numbers, and language), is that these tools generate different kinds of understanding. So, the more sophisticated the tools, the more understanding can be enhanced (Alphen, 2011). Learning is therefore an accumulation of such tools, and development entails raising the sophistication of these tools with time. Following Vygotsky’s notion of cultural tools and how they shape understanding and learning, Egan (1997) introduced his notion of ‘cognitive tools’. In his understanding of learning and how people develop intellectually, they acquire a set of cognitive tools throughout their lifetimes. For both Vygotsky and Egan, such tools (for example, particular ways of using language) are first encountered in a social context and then they are gradually integrated into individual patterns of awareness (Fettes, 2010). In every stage of their lives, students develop another set of tools in addition to the tools they already have stored in memory. According to Fettes, Vygotsky’s psychological tools are concrete - a gesture, a word, a drawing, a model, and so on. In

contrast, Egan's concept of cognitive tools is rather abstract: "binary opposites", "association with heroes", and "the search for general schemes". This suggests that if students are reading literature and trying to make sense of what they read, then using tools like metaphors, (relating two unrelated things, i.e., indirect comparison), empathy (emotionally relating with the characters), or imagery (creating a mental picture in the mind) can all be regarded as cognitive tools for understanding the meaning of such texts.

Education is not merely about knowledge gain but the meaning that one can derive from that knowledge, and, therefore, it is important to engage students in "imaginative learning" (Egan, 1992). According to Egan, imagination is "a means to the end" (1992:53). Making use of, and developing, the imagination in education provides learning. Egan argues that "stimulating the imagination is not an alternative educational activity to be argued for in competition with other claims; it is a prerequisite to making any activity educational." (Egan, 2005:212). He asserts that the imagination is fostered and exploited in the classroom with varying degrees of sophistication, and that just as language is acquired in stages, the imagination as a social concept also follows in that developmental path of sophistication. He says:

I want to consider degrees of culturally accumulated complexity in language, beginning with oral language, then moving to literacy, then to the development of systematic, abstract, theoretic, linguistic forms, and finally to habitual highly reflexive uses of language. Each of these degrees of sophistication in language development restructures the kind of sense their users make of the world. (Egan, 1997: 30)

This assumes that for the development of the imagination, teachers need to consider raising the level of sophistication of the knowledge to be learnt, and the tools that they have to use in order to make sense of that knowledge. This, therefore, provides a framework within which new knowledge can be structured and organized, giving significance to how pedagogical materials can be structured to help develop the imagination. Since language plays an important role in developing the imagination, developing sophistication of the modes of language use is also considered important for thinking, and consequently for the imagination, too. This can be seen in the different forms of understanding that Egan presents, and how language plays a significant role in each form of understanding throughout human development.

1. Somatic – pre-linguistic understanding gained through the senses of the body; from birth;
2. Mythic – understanding is now broadened through the development of oral language;
3. Romantic – understanding enabled through the development of written language;
4. Philosophic – the development of a systematic understanding of the world, emerging during the teenage years; the ability to see the connections between things;
5. Ironic – the realization emerges that there are limits to systematic thinking, which cannot explain the world adequately; an awareness of historical and cultural influences on understanding brings reflexivity and freedom from conventional thinking.

Egan (1997) regards the modern mind as a composite of the above forms of understanding, and holds that education needs to facilitate the development of each form as fully as possible “in the sequence in which each developed historically” (p.4). Imagination lies at the core of developing these forms of understanding, each of which employs a variety of cognitive tools which become available to children as they grow up, stimulated (or not) by the society that surrounds them. This has several implications for the approach that the current research study is aiming to employ for the purpose of developing the ability of the imagination to create meaning. So, by raising the level of sophistication for reading strategies, the teacher can raise the level of thinking needed to deal with the new knowledge being presented, thus making use of different modes of language at different stages (oral or written). It also brings with it the implied need to promote the ability to create meaning, or meaning making in education, as an advanced level of imaginative thinking, that is, the creative imagination.

Imaginative thinking is capable of transforming the knowledge and skills to be learned into enhanced experiences which can then stimulate creative thinking (Alphen, 2011). Creativity is not something that is inherent in us, nor is it a property of eminent thinkers (Craft, 2005; Pope, 2005). Arguably it can be said that “schooling can create creative minds” (Sternberg & Lubart, 1991:608). Perhaps more relevant to education is the notion of little ‘c’ creativity, or what the NACCCE report (1999) referred to as ‘democratic’ creativity, which is the creativity of the ordinary person. This recognizes that all students

are capable of creative achievement given the right circumstances (Craft, 2005). The creative achievement that this study is promoting through reading literary texts is to help students move from the less simple construction of knowledge into the more sophisticated aspect of the creative imagination, which is ‘meaning making’.

A core aspect of learning for meaning making is enabling students’ possibility thinking (Craft, 2002). This is a concept that has been identified by Craft (2000, 2001) and Craft & Jeffrey (2003) as being at the heart of little ‘c’ creativity. Possibility thinking is the formation of the question ‘what if’, and therefore involves the shift from ‘what is this?’ and ‘what does it do?’ to ‘what can I do with this?’ This suggests that teaching for meaning making is about constructing new knowledge and creating new ideas. According to Craft (2005), teaching for meaning making entails helping learners develop their own imaginative thinking or behavior, and hence has student empowerment as the prime objective. So, in a student-centered classroom, empowering students means helping them become skilled ‘meaning makers’. With specific reference to this study, I take the term ‘creative imagination’ to represent a process that facilitates meaning making in which students construct knowledge and create new ideas.

According to the UK’s Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) (Craft, 2005:55), and in relation to the previous discussion on the creative imagination, evidence of learners’ meaning making includes:

1. Making connections, and seeing relationships, which entail emotional and affective properties, and relating new information and ideas to past knowledge and experience.
2. Questioning and challenging, i.e., solving problems and working out solutions.
3. Reflecting critically on ideas, action, and outcomes through logical reasoning.
4. Exploring ideas and keeping options open. This is achieved through collaboration and interaction to explore different ideas.
5. Imagining what might be, i.e., creating new ideas and different possibilities.

3.6. Summary of Chapter and Foundation Block of the Conceptual Model (Schema Theory)

The Creative Imagination and its Role in Learning

Imagination is a socio-cognitive tool for constructing new knowledge, extending that knowledge, and creating something new. It is, therefore, a tool for meaning making. The imagination is strongly linked with reasoning in the sense that through logical reasoning, a person's understanding is heightened, and the imagination facilitates that understanding. Imagination is closely linked with creativity; the imagination uses background knowledge and experience (reality), and combines it with new knowledge and ideas to create something new.

Two factors guide and shape the imagination: the faculty of emotion and context. Imagination is shaped and influenced by emotion to guide one's thinking.

Language is a very important factor in the development of the imagination. Through language, thinking and reasoning is enhanced and developed both individually and socially. Social context guides the imagination, and language is the tool that mediates interactions for thinking.

The creative imagination can be developed for meaning making if the following elements are present:

- Background knowledge and experience (schema).
- New information/knowledge.
- Intellect (objective thought) + emotion (subjective thought).
- Social interaction through the use of language (tool).
- Extending that knowledge for the creation of new ideas.

3.7. Conclusion

Vygotsky's approach offers a general outline of how learning could be enhanced through its social and cultural aspects. His theory of the imagination provides an insight into how learning could be developed through the development of the creative imagination. A central aim of this study is to develop reading skills for responding to literary fiction through the creative imagination. The concept of the role of imagination presented in this chapter, as a tool for creating something new, can be used to explore the role that this imaginative activity plays in reading, and how it can be developed to help Libyan students respond to short stories in English. The following chapter argues that for the imagination to be exploited and stimulated in reading, a reader needs to make use of his prior knowledge and experience (reality) and relate it to the text through interaction in order to make sense of the text. It therefore emphasizes the interactive nature of reading and meaning making.

Chapter 4

The Processes of Reading and Understanding a Text: Meaning Making

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the relevant literature related to the reading process and explores the mechanisms that are used by readers in order to make meaning of a written text. It presents the main models of reading which are categorised in the literature for explaining the reading process, and identifies the current views on the process of reading. It also explores the main factors relevant for reading development in a first language, and identifies effective strategies used by proficient readers. Finally, the chapter provides a summary of the key points, and the second foundational block of the conceptual model (The Interactive Theory of Reading).

4.2. How does reading happen in L1? Current Views on the Reading Process

Reading is a complex activity that involves the conscious act of making meaning from the written medium (Smith, 2004). Cognitive science has had considerable influence on the orientation and perception of the nature of reading. Reading is seen as an active process of meaning making. *Meaning* (comprehension) is, therefore, given centrality in the process of reading. Comprehension, as Bartlett (1932) has shown, is a constructive process. Smith (1994) argued that without comprehension the act of reading is rather meaningless. Understanding a reading text, therefore, entails that we draw on our background knowledge and experience, for “we are unable to make sense of what we read unless we bring to the text our understanding of the world” (Rosowsky, 2001:57). Hence, a text has no inherent meaning in itself; rather the meaning is generated through the interaction between the text and the reader’s background knowledge. Meaning, consequently, varies according to the knowledge and experience that different readers bring to the text. Researchers like Anderson (1977) see that meaning resides not in the text but in the interaction between the text and the reader. An important aspect of this cognitive view is

related to schema theory that provides a comprehensive analysis of the psychology of reading and understanding of the written text.

4.2.1. The Contribution of Schema Theory to the Understanding of the Reading Process

Every act of comprehension involves one's knowledge of the world as well.

(Anderson et al., 1977:369)

Kant (1781) argued that new information, new ideas, and new concepts can only have meaning once they are related to what someone already knows. This, as indicated in the previous chapter with reference to the imagination and the construction of new knowledge, shows that for understanding new information, concepts, or ideas, it is important to make use of background knowledge, i.e. schemata. According to schema theory, past experiences lead to the creation of structures, which, in turn, when compared with old structures, lead to the understanding of new experiences.

Schema theory and cognitive psychology have made great contributions to reading research. Reading, influenced by schema theory and psycholinguistic perspectives, i.e. top-down views (explained below), involves an interactive process where the reader interacts with the text by weighing it against and guiding it with his background knowledge and previous experience (Rumelhart, 1977, 1980; Carrell, 1983, 1984; Carrell & Wallace, 1983; Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983). So, efficient comprehension requires that a reader is able to relate the written text (print) to his own existing knowledge. According to schema theory, “a text only provides directions for readers as to how they should retrieve or construct meaning from their own, previously acquired knowledge”, and is not the sole source for meaning (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983:556). Text comprehension, therefore, entails the interaction between the text and the reader (his background knowledge, prior experiences, interests, and motivations).

Vygotsky (1930/2004) explained that the cycle of knowledge-building described above is driven by the conscious act of the imagination. The fact that schema theory views reading as an interaction between the text and the reader's background knowledge (Adam & Collins, 1979; Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983; Rumelhart, 1989) suggests that this interactive

process is fuelled by the imagination in the search for meaning. The reader in this sense uses his background knowledge to stimulate his/her imagination in order to think about the text in front of him. The reader will, therefore, use his knowledge (schematic knowledge about text structure, content, and language) and experiences, relate it with new information he finds in the text, and use his imagination to build on that knowledge and make sense of the text (Vygotsky, 2004). It is this interactive process between text and background knowledge that has led researchers to suggest that reading comprehension is a process that involves both top-down and bottom-up processing skills (Rumelhart, 1977, 1986). Different models that have been developed to explain the processes a reader goes through as he tries to make sense of a text are discussed below in order to find a relevant view for this study.

4.3. Models of Reading

In the literature there are three major models of reading that explain what reading and understanding a text looks like: bottom-up, top-down, and interactive model of reading. Views related to each model will now be presented.

4.3.1. The Traditional Bottom-up Model (text decoding)

Bottom-up models of reading focus on the perceptual aspects of reading. They see the reading process as *text-driven/data-driven*, and the focus is on the decoding (decrypting the linguistic code) of the text. Widdowson (1979) characterized reading as the process of extracting linguistic information from the written word. According to this view, reading is simply a matter of word perception or identification (Spache, 1964), and the role of the reader is to reconstruct the meaning from the smallest units of the text, that is, the reader decodes the sentence “letter by letter, word by word” to make sense of it (Gough, 1972:354). *Phonics*, Gough indicates, is a method which is related to this reading approach, in which readers match the letters on the page with their sounds, decoding the text word by word. According to the Gough model, the reader follows the following stages when processing the text: 1) eye fixation, 2) letter identification, 3) phonological representation, 4) understanding words one after the other from left to right, 5) the absorption of the visual stimulus. As Gough sees it, reading starts with the reader trying to

capture the visual images of letters and examining them to create an overall image of the text, then begins another act of decoding the received image (codes).

In this model, the processing starts from the bottom, with the perception of the letters in the printed text, and moves to the top, where cognition is used to construct meaning out of these letters (Williams, 2006). Extracting meaning from the text is a matter of combining the meaning of individual words, phrases, and clauses (Alderson, 1994). It does not focus on the meaning that the author of the data seeks to send across, nor does it take into account reader variables that affect the process of reading, thus failing to identify how readers might make use of their background knowledge to comprehend a given text (Eskey, 1973; Rumelhart, 1977). Reading is, therefore, ‘data driven’; it resides in the text and the reader should reproduce it without having to make use of his previous knowledge. In this sense, readers are seen as passive decoders. By contrast cognitive views take a more holistic approach as discussed in the next section.

4.3.2. The Top-down Model (cognitive views)

Top-down reading models, unlike bottom-up models, place great emphasis on the reader, and what the reader brings to the text. Advocates of this perspective (Goodman, 1970; 1976, 1979; Smith, 1971, 1982, 2004), which later came to be called ‘the top-down model of reading’, view readers not as passive decoders, but rather as active participants in the construction of meaning. In this view, readers develop expectations of the text through the use of their prior knowledge.

The general view underlying top-down approaches is that reading is primarily *meaning-driven/concept-driven*, as opposed to being *data-driven*, as suggested by bottom-up models of reading. In this view reading is not just a matter of extracting meaning from print, but rather relating it to one’s knowledge in the construction of meaning. We, therefore, make sense of reading when our identification of the written text is in correlation with our cognitive exploration, in the quest for meaning (Smith, 2004). This view emphasises the reader’s interests, world knowledge, and skills-strategies in the process of meaning making, i.e. *schema* (Bartlett, 1932; Rumelhart, 1980).

One of the main models related to this view is Goodman's (1967, 1971) and Smith's (1971) psycholinguistic model. The central idea behind psycholinguistic models of reading is that fluent reading is the result of the cognitive processing of linguistic information. Goodman (1967, 1978) describes reading as a "psycholinguistic guessing game", a process in which the readers sample the text, make hypotheses, confirm or reject them if they see inconsistencies, then continue to make new hypotheses. Similarly, Smith (1971:185) describes reading as "the reduction of uncertainty". Reading is therefore, a rational, purposeful, and conscious activity which is driven by one's background knowledge.

In Goodman's psycholinguistic model, the reader samples the print just enough to confirm his guesses of what is coming. Prior context strongly influences the earliest stages of processing, which involves selection of graphic cues, processing perceptual images, and initial identification of words. In this sense, reading is a dialogue between the reader and the text which involves an active cognitive process in which the reader's background knowledge plays a key role in the creation of meaning (Tierney and Pearson, 1994). This is not to say that readers do not make use of phonic accuracy, but it is just not the primary focus (Smith, 1994). Smith (1971, 1982) elaborated on Goodman's psycholinguistic view by also taking a whole language approach to reading where the reader relies on language factors instead of graphic information to search for meaning. Although both Goodman and Smith place great emphasis on background knowledge and cognitive processing, they accept that "the brain must recognize graphic display [...] and initiate reading" (Goodman, 1988:16). But then again, fluent readers will not rely much on decoding skills; their focus will rather be on meaning through top-down schematic processing. Accordingly, Goodman (1988) states that efficient readers always utilize strategies that help them reduce the amount of uncertainty, they are selective about making use of textual information, and, most importantly, they rely on their knowledge (conceptual, or linguistic), and "minimize dependence on visual detail" (p.12).

In his early work on reading, Goodman (1967) referred to three main types of knowledge that readers draw on as they try to make sense of a reading text: semantic knowledge (knowledge of the world); syntactic knowledge (knowledge of the language system and its structure); and graphophonetic knowledge (knowledge of sound-symbol relationships). In this respect, the lack of these three types of knowledge sources can lead to difficulty in processing and understanding a text. All three types of knowledge, according to Goodman,

can help the reader make predictions about possible meanings of the text. For example, a reader acquainted with the appropriate world knowledge can make predictions about the missing word in a sentence like:

The sun rises in the East and sets in the _____.

A person's knowledge of the world suggests that the missing word is West (Gibbons, 2002:78).

In the same way, a person with good knowledge about the syntactic system and the language would be able to predict the missing word in the sentence below as being a noun, even if the word itself is unfamiliar to the reader.

This animal is a klinger. This is another klinger. There are two _____.

Here, Gibbons (2015:78) uses the word 'klinger' as a noun. The word 'klinger' is actually not an English word, it is a made-up word. But, if a reader assumes it is actually the name of a rare animal, he/she will probably replace this word with another known word, like 'cat' or 'dog', and continue to use cues to make predictions in later sentences about the kind of animal a klinger is. This may include information about what it looks like, or where it lives. This indicates that by having the syntactic knowledge, readers are able to make the necessary predictions that make comprehension possible. Comprehension, in this sense, means understanding the text as a whole and not every specific word.

Although, both bottom-up and top down processing were seen as having important significance in describing the reading process and contributing to reading pedagogy, they have both recently been considered inadequate characterizations of the successful reading process (Alderson, 2000). Bottom-up models have neglected and underestimated the reader's role and contribution to the comprehension process, and, most importantly, the importance of his background knowledge (Carrell, 1988). Also, they have failed to account for the influence of higher level processing, such as predicting, and inferencing, on processing textual information like words and sentences (Rumelhart, 1977, 1986; Stanovich, 1980).

Top-down models, on the other hand, have been criticised for their tendency to “emphasize such higher-level skills as the prediction of meaning [...] at the expense of such lower-level skills as the rapid and accurate identification of lexical and grammatical forms” (Eskey, 1988:93). Eskey argues that top-down models are only accurate when it comes to skilful, fluent readers for whom perception and decoding are automatic and somewhat unconscious, but when it comes to less proficient, less skilled readers and beginners, like in the case of most foreign language readers, he indicates that “this model does not provide a true picture of the problems such readers must surmount” (p.93).

Rayner and Pollatsek (1989) later conducted experimental studies that provided evidence showing that neither top-down, nor bottom-up models in isolation can fully account for reading data. Carrell (1988), in relation to second language pedagogy, confirms this inadequacy, arguing that even second language learners with minimum proficiency sometimes take a top-down approach and at other times a bottom-up approach, confirming that “overreliance on either mode of processing to the neglect of the other mode has been found to cause reading difficulties for second language readers” (p.239). As a result, top-down and bottom-up models have been challenged by proponents of the interactive view of reading (Hinkel, 2005) which is discussed in the next section.

4.3.3. The Interactive Model: Top-down/Bottom-up (interactive views)

The Interactive Model of Reading combines perspectives of top-down and bottom-up models. Reading, according to this view, is an interactive process between the text and the readers' prior knowledge, and is the result of both top-down and bottom-up processing proceeding in parallel (Rumelhart, 1977, 1986; Stanovich, 1980). Accordingly, one can say that both linguistic theory (decoding) and schema theory (background knowledge) when coupled together are more effective for reading comprehension. Reading, according to this view, involves the interaction of both top-down and bottom-up processing modes. Interactive theorists, such as Rumelhart and Stanovich's Interactive-Compensatory model, indicate that this interaction allows for the interaction of various skills (top-down/bottom-up) at various levels of process.

Rumelhart (1977) pointed out that reading is both perceptual and cognitive, and that it involves an array of sources which have an effect on the reader's interpretation of the text.

In this way, phonemic/graphemic features, metacognition, syntactic feature recognition, decoding textual features, word recognition, and prior knowledge, all interact in the process of reconstructing the meaning of a text (Bernhardt, 1991). His model incorporates a mechanism which he calls the “message centre” or “pattern synthesizer”, which holds information and redirects it according to one’s needs. So, the ‘graphic input’, different levels of linguistic knowledge (orthographic, syntactic, lexical), and semantic knowledge, all interact to produce the “most probable interpretation of the graphic input” (Rumelhart, 1977:588). It is, however, not precisely clear in Rumelhart’s model what actually happens in the pattern synthesizer. Rumelhart’s model allows for the use of strategies at both higher-level and lower-level processing which provide opportunity for the interaction between the imagination and reasoning.

Different readers tend to process a text in differing ways depending on their purpose for reading, their interest, and attitudes, as well as on the knowledge stored in memory (Spiro, 1980). In his “interactive-compensatory model”, Stanovich (1980) considered these differences amongst readers (whether skilled or unskilled, proficient or less proficient), and his work has been influential in the field of second language reading. According to his model, which builds on Rumelhart’s ideas that reading involves the combination of top-down and bottom-up processing, any deficiency caused at one level (for example bottom-up) can be compensated for at the other level (top-down). Stanovich (1980) indicated that:

A deficit in any knowledge source results in heavier reliance on other knowledge sources, regardless of their level in the processing hierarchy. Thus, according to the interactive compensatory model, the poor reader who has deficient word analysis skills might possibly show greater reliance on contextual factors (p.63).

So, if a reader does not recognise a word or phrase because it is unfamiliar, he can compensate for that by using top-down processes and guess the meaning of the word. In the same way, if a topic is unfamiliar, he can apply bottom-up processing to build an understanding of the main points. Thus, the reader will use his/her imagination to relate what he knows about the language, use the information in the surrounding context, and build on it by making guesses about the meaning of the word or phrase in that particular context.

Interactive models presented by Rumelhart and Stanovich represent what can be referred to as ‘Interactive Parallel Processing’ models because “the processing is distributed over a range of parallel systems simultaneously” (Grabe, 1988:59). Top-down and bottom-up models are, in this sense, considered complementary to each other and are to be treated as a whole by the reader (Nuttall, 2005). Although sometimes one model dominates over the other during the process of reading, there is a need for interaction.

Interactive models of reading are more useful for explaining foreign language readers’ reading processes and defining key aspects for developing L2 reading comprehension. They provide a more comprehensive explanation for differences (linguistic, processing, and cognitive) between readers at different levels of proficiency, and how such differences can be incorporated in reading instruction (Nuttall, 2005). The significance of this view in this study, is the fact that the creative imagination, as a cognitive activity for knowledge construction, could be developed by enhancing readers’ abilities to use top-down processing skills, relate these skills to the information they find in the text, and build on that new information to make sense of the text. Interaction is therefore adopted as part of the overall process of meaning making in reading literature through the use of the creative imagination. This will be useful for the development of the conceptual model.

4.4. Reading Development and L2 Reading Pedagogy

Reading is an important skill for foreign language learners and their academic achievement (Carrell, 1989). Research in second language (L2) reading has developed remarkably in the past three decades, and used first language reading research to gain insight and perspective on theory and practice in L2 reading instruction (Grabe, 1991). This section explores how reading could be developed in the foreign language classroom.

4.4.1. Reading Theory and its Contribution to L2 Reading Pedagogy

As mentioned earlier, the view adopted in this research is that reading is not merely about transcribing the words on the page (decoding), but also about making sense of them by using background knowledge to make predictions about the meaning of the text (Goodman, 1967). This research draws on Schema Theory applied to reading to suggest

that reading comprehension also requires culturally acquired knowledge that guides the meaning making process (Gibbons, 2015). More recent research has shown that EFL/ESL reading comprehension relies heavily on what the reader brings to the text (background knowledge) (Carrell, 1991; Clarke & Silberstein, 1997). Clarke and Silberstein state:

More information is contributed by the reader than by the print on the page. That is, readers understand what they read because they are able to take the stimulus beyond its graphic representation and assign it membership to an appropriate group of concepts already stored in their memories (1997:136-137).

In the process of reading the successful reader:

brings to the task a formidable amount of information and ideas, attitudes and beliefs. This knowledge, coupled with the ability to make linguistic predictions, determines the expectations the reader will develop as he reads. Skill in reading depends on the efficient interaction between linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the world (Ajideh, 2003:2).

According to Nuttall (2005), second language readers trained in efficient reading strategies initially adopt a top-down approach to make predictions and guess the meaning, then move to the bottom-up approach to verify the predicted meanings. Grabe (2008) indicated that L2 readers make use of visual-word recognition processes while reading, and engage in phonological processing at the earliest possible moment that the orthography allows. Successful readers use syntactic information to determine text meaning and text comprehension. Successful readers set goals, engage in reading strategies, and apply some level of meta-cognitive (thinking about thinking) awareness to text comprehension. On the purely cognitive side: all readers use a capacity-limited working-memory system, draw on long term memory (background knowledge and experience) to interpret text meaning, engage in very rapid pattern recognition (decoding), and employ well-practised processing skills (top-down and bottom-up reading strategies).

Although the importance of background knowledge has already been explained, it should also be noted that the importance of this knowledge in the L1 is also addressed in L2, especially when research is trying to understand to what extent proficiency in L1 reading is transferred to the foreign language. This means that researchers have been trying to determine if reading skills and strategies used in a first language are transferred to the second language. Alderson (1984) addressed this issue when he posed the question of

whether reading in a foreign language is a reading problem or a language problem. Carrell (1991), in an attempt to address this question, investigated two groups of L2 students, Spanish and English, studying English and Spanish as a second/foreign language. She indicated through her findings that:

[...] while both factors - first language reading ability and proficiency in the second language - may be significant in second language reading, the relative importance may be due to other factors about the learner and the learning environment (Carrell 1991:168).

Carrell's conclusion was indicative of what had been called the "linguistic threshold" (Cummins, 1981) or "short-circuit" hypothesis (Clarke, 1980). This hypothesis fundamentally states that "in order to read in a second language, a level of second language linguistic ability must first be achieved" (Bernhardt & Kamil, 1995:17). The hypothesis is based on the idea that a certain level of proficiency in the second language must be reached by readers in order for them to be able to transfer their reading abilities from L1 into L2. So, for instance, an Arabic student who has good reading skills in his first language (Arabic) needs to be able to "cross" the threshold of sufficient linguistic knowledge in the L2 (English) first, before he can become a good reader of English (his L2). This means that knowledge of the language is an important factor influencing reading in a foreign language, and that good first language reading skills do not compensate for low level language skills, nor guarantee efficient reading in L2. Bernhardt (1986) and Horiba (1996) along with others believe that the limitation of language competence causes slower and insufficient processing, which leads to the construction of underdeveloped representations of the text.

Another hypothesis which also led to Alderson's question was the Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis (LIH) (Cummins, 1981, 1991). This hypothesis states that "[r]eading performance in a second language is largely shared with reading ability in a first language" (Bernhardt & Kamil, 1995:17). According to this hypothesis, when reading skills are acquired in one language (L1), they are automatically available to the reader when reading is carried out in another language (L2), and knowledge of the L2 (linguistic knowledge) has no influence on L2 reading. Most of the studies carried out with regards to this hypothesis were on bilinguals who had linguistic proficiency in both L1 and L2. Bernhardt and Kamil (1995) compared this hypothesis (LIH) with the Linguistic Threshold

Hypothesis (LTH). They suggested that both linguistic knowledge and reading ability are important for reading comprehension, indicating that both hypotheses are relevant, and at the same time complementary. However, they emphasised the existence of other factors, such as the reader's interest in the given topic, and his background knowledge. As a comment on their findings, Bernhardt and Kamil say that:

[...] second language reading is not merely an impoverished version of L1 reading, but that it is indeed a process that requires some unique reading capacities and lexical and grammatical flexibility. That performance hinges on specific (and limited) knowledge shows what care must be taken in assessing performance in a second language (1995:31).

Based on these views, EFL reading instruction should aim to develop not only linguistic knowledge to facilitate reading in the FL, but, more importantly, aim to develop L2 reading abilities (mostly skills and strategies), which have their own unique characteristics and challenges, and, therefore, require a great deal of effort and dedication on the part of the learner. Foreign language learners can sometimes face challenges if the texts they are given are unfamiliar, or if the information contained therein is culturally specific, and they end up giving a different meaning than intended by the writer (more on this will be discussed in Chapter 7). This is why background knowledge is very important for reading and understanding a text in L2, whether knowledge of the language, reading skills and strategies, or knowledge of the world.

Carrell and Eisterhold (1983) suggest that in the classroom, reading instruction should aim at providing a balance between background knowledge, which is presupposed by the text (writer), and background knowledge (schemata) which the students already possess. So, providing background information and previewing content for the readers (e.g. teaching key concepts, presenting specialized vocabulary and structure) are important strategies a language teacher can use, especially with poor, FL readers (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983).

For a reader to become efficient at reading, he will not only have to draw on background knowledge and previous experiences, but will also need to draw on a set of reading strategies that permit him to make use of all types of knowledge, whether semantic, linguistic, or structural. Interaction is enhanced and meaning is constructed through the use of reading strategies (Anderson, 1991). Reading strategies, in addition to other variables, are key to the development of reading, and an L2 reader's ability to use them efficiently

and appropriately will make understanding possible. By looking into the reading strategies, it will be possible to identify what cognitive decisions readers need to make in order to develop their reading and understanding of texts in L2, and, therefore, determine what mental processes are exhibited during interaction.

4.4.2. Reading Strategies

There is now general acceptance that successful reading, whether in L1 or L2, involves effective automatic use of strategies. The focus of this study is on both the skills and the development of reading strategies to support the use of skills, like word recognition skills, and the ability to match up sound with spelling to pronounce the correct utterance. A strategy-based approach to teaching reading entails the teaching and development of reading strategies that help readers, especially beginners, process a text. This, as Wallace (1992) indicates, will vary according to “the nature of the text, the reader’s purpose, and the context of situation” (p.57).

Strategies, in learning, are defined as actions that are used to generate meaning (Garner, 1987). In reading they refer to the conscious actions used by readers as they interact with a text (Pritchard, 1990). Reading strategies help readers approach a reading task and solve potential problems that may arise during the reading and processing of the text. This means that reading strategies are used by readers to tackle any likely difficulties encountered while reading and searching for meaning. Readers are therefore able to plan their work and monitor their comprehension of the text at hand.

It is sometimes assumed that learning to read is simply a matter of building up particular skills (Wallace, 1992). This assumes that reading is product-oriented, and focus is merely on the outcome that is gained from the reading. Reading is, however, process-oriented, where learning to read is about focusing not only on the outcome but also on the processes. Focus, as Wallace indicated, will then need to be given to the development of existing knowledge and extending the reader’s abilities. Meaning making is facilitated through fluent reading. Reading fluency can be enhanced through the use and development of automaticity in decoding, as well as by the application of reading strategies. In this sense, reading fluency, as this research sees it, relies on the interactive model of reading.

Successful readers, whether in a first or second language, tend to use a host of reading strategies (Hosenfeld, 1977; Block, 1986). The kind of strategies that ‘good’ readers are likely to use can include: skipping unimportant words, guessing the meaning from context, reading in broad phrases, and the ability to carry on reading after encountering difficulty decoding some words or phrases (Wallace, 1992). Successful readers, according to Hosenfeld’s (1977) research study, tend to keep the meaning of the reading passage in mind as they read, look up the meaning of unknown words as a final option only if other strategies have not worked, and have a positive self-concept as readers. Hosenfeld also noted that good readers will continue reading the text in order to gain more context, and that they sometimes tend to replace unknown words with a “filler-word” just to keep the flow of the reading running until they are able to use other strategies to decode it.

On the other hand, poor readers, based on Hosenfeld’s classification (successful vs. poor/less proficient) are readers who engage in word-by-word reading (decoding), do not skip unfamiliar words, and translate every sentence, resulting in the loss of the general meaning of the text. According to her characterization of poor readers, Hosenfeld indicates that such readers are mostly fixated on bottom-up strategies, in which focus is given to the text and use of lower-level processing (decoding). Grabe (2009) points out that this engagement in local (bottom-up) strategies may be the result of text difficulty, or low L2 language proficiency which impedes processing the text for meaning, thus assuming the importance of matching students’ level with the texts they read for effective reading.

Block (1986), following Hosenfeld’s classification, pointed out, through his study on L1 and L2 non-proficient university students reading the same texts, that successful readers focus on general strategies (top-down strategies), like questioning the text, making connections and integrating information, and using background knowledge and previous experience. In addition, Block indicates that such readers (successful) also use what he called local strategies (i.e. bottom-up strategies), such as paraphrasing, re-reading, and trying to identify word meaning by using contextual clues, or dictionaries. Poor readers, he asserts, do not make use of such strategies. These strategies, as Wallace (1988, 1992) maintains, also characterize good L1 readers. In brief, good L2 learners use the same reading strategies as good, experienced first language L1 readers. Predicting, skimming, scanning, guessing meanings of words from the context, making inference, and self-monitoring are all strategies readers can use as they interact with a text and construct

meaning. Also, less proficient students tend to use fewer strategies than more proficient ones, and they tend to use them less effectively in reading comprehension (Garner, 1987). Researchers have divided the reading process into a set of component skills (e.g. Carpenter & Just, 1986; Rayner & Pollatesk, 1989; Carr & Levy, 1990). This has led them to propose six general component skills and knowledge areas:

1. Automatic recognition skills, in which readers decode the written print, scan for specific details, or look for key words.
2. Vocabulary and structural knowledge, in which readers use contextual clues to guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases, use dictionaries or glossaries, analyse the structure of the word, and apply grammatical knowledge.
3. Formal discourse and structure knowledge, where readers make predictions about the text structure (rhetorical structure), or use the text structure to make predictions about content.
4. Content/world background knowledge, where readers make predictions and speculations about the text topic they are reading, and use their prior knowledge.
5. Synthesis and evaluation skills/strategies, where readers make predictions about content, make inferences, and make connections in order to draw conclusions and evaluate.
6. Meta-cognitive knowledge and skills monitoring, in which readers monitor their comprehension by thinking about their understanding as they read the text. “Metacognitive processes are presumed to take place when we think about our own thinking, for example, when we reflect on whether we know something, whether we are learning, or whether we have made a mistake” (Smith, 2004:29). Metacognitive strategies can include: generating questions, summarizing, re-reading, and skimming through parts of a text.

Strategy training and direct instruction have been shown to improve L2 reading comprehension. Grabe (2009) indicates that the particular skills and strategies to be stressed depend on the educational contexts, student needs, and teaching objectives. He believes that effective reading strategies do not just develop as a result of reading; rather, they also require explicit instruction and practice as part of the reading comprehension course. Understanding and learning reading strategies help readers, especially the less skilled, improve their reading comprehension in L2 (McNamara, 2007). Although it has

been mentioned earlier that foreign language reading comprehension is affected by both the reader's L1 reading abilities and his language proficiency in the L2, Bernhardt (1991) also indicates, in her interactive model of FL reading, that if readers have a good foundation in their L1, like good motivation and interest in reading, and knowledge about the content, then acquiring the FL reading strategies becomes easier for them. The readers will benefit from all sources of knowledge when they have to compensate for any deficiency in other knowledge sources. Reading strategies will help them understand by drawing on all these knowledge sources, as a combination of strategies (bottom-up and top-down) is necessary for the interactive process of reading.

For that reason, high priority should be given to modelling, scaffolding, and constant practice of reading strategies inside the FL classroom (Grabe, 2009). A teacher can make sure that readers make use of reading strategies by judging the time, and procedure for intervention and support (Wallace, 1992). Wallace explains that shared reading is helpful, where the teacher and students explore, discuss, and analyse both language and content of a text. The students are encouraged to create a reading community inside the classroom, and explore the text through shared meaning making, which is an important aspect of learner-centred teaching. Teachers can scaffold the students' acquisition of reading strategies by modelling through think aloud protocols (TAPs) the strategies used in processing a text, and how these strategies help determine an objective (generally the meaning). According to Wallace's suggestion, students will develop not only their metalanguage skills, by discussing the textual features of the text, but they can also develop their metacognitive strategies by learning how to monitor their comprehension, and ways of talking and exploring together their use and selection of strategies. This way of discussing and modelling reading strategies raises learners' awareness and cognition of the process of meaning making. It also gives the learners a chance to interact with the text as well as interact with each other, which is relevant for the activation of the imagination and development of their thinking and reasoning skills as they try to make sense of the text they are reading.

The EFL student-centred reading lesson is structured into three main stages: pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading stages (Wallace, 1992). Reading lessons should be planned in a pre-, while, and post-reading framework in order to build background knowledge, practise reading skills within the reading texts themselves, and engage in

comprehension instruction (Grabe, 1991). Each part will give the students a chance to explore, think, and use their knowledge and skills, and build on that knowledge to understand the meaning of the text. In the pre-reading stage, students are encouraged to draw on their background knowledge, and activate their schemata regarding text content, structure, and language. In the while-reading stage, they interact with the text and use their reading strategies, and at the post reading stage, they will check their comprehension, and relate with the text, meaning they can make sense of it. Another component which contributes to the development of reading comprehension is vocabulary knowledge.

4.4.3. Vocabulary Development

Vocabulary knowledge and vocabulary development is very important for reading in L2 reading comprehension (Grabe, 2009). Research on L2 vocabulary knowledge has shown that lexical size correlates with L2 reading comprehension (Droop and Verhoeven, 2003). The more one reads, the more his knowledge of vocabulary grows, therefore making him better at reading (Mikulecky, 2008). Students should be able to recognise a large number of words automatically in order to be fluent at reading (Grabe & Stoller, 1997). However, reading by itself, Grabe and Stoller claim, does not necessarily mean development of vocabulary knowledge.

Direct instruction is one way of enhancing vocabulary building. For that reason, instruction should be planned so that the students encounter new words multiple times in meaningful contexts (Mikulecky, 2008). Also, for students to be motivated, teachers should explain the usefulness of mastering high-frequency words for reading development. These words can be learnt either with direct instruction in classrooms, or even through self-study. Another approach which was suggested by Grabe and Stoller (2001) is for teachers to preview the text intended for reading, and decide which words are likely to be unfamiliar for the students. They suggested three categories for the classification of words:

1. ++ Words that are critical for comprehending the text and useful in other settings.
2. + - Words that are necessary for comprehending the text, but not particularly useful in other contexts.
3. _ _ Words that are not necessary for understanding the text, nor particularly useful in other contexts.

According to Grabe and Stoller, words that fall into the ‘++’ and ‘+’ categories should be considered for direct instruction. However, they warn against over teaching words, since students will then have difficulty remembering them. For this reason, they recommend that teachers focus on four to five key words per text. Other useful and important words can be built into exercises and activities (e.g. semantic maps, tables, word families).

Grabe and Stoller also suggested extensive reading for vocabulary acquisition and development. Their 1997 case study found that extensive reading improved the students’ vocabulary and reading comprehension. Similarly, Stanovich (2000) indicated that extensive reading (extensive exposure to the written print) leads to significant differences in both vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension. Although this study will not focus on this point, it is worth noting the effectiveness of extensive reading for vocabulary development. What could be taken from such findings, additionally, is that students can pick up new words from meaningful contexts, especially if they have a chance to work on such texts, use different strategies to figure out the meaning of new words, and understand the texts. So, throughout the reading program and the different texts that students will read, they will encounter different vocabulary items, and therefore develop their repertoire of words, which will in turn eventually help them to make sense of the texts they read.

It should be noted that vocabulary knowledge does not necessarily guarantee L2 text comprehension. For example, qualitative studies conducted by Bensoussan and Laufer (1984) found both proficient and poor L2 readers could not guess the meanings of unfamiliar words from the context. Such unfamiliarity with word meanings could lead to misinterpretation of the text as whole, and though the readers might recognize the words, they nevertheless do not make appropriate inferences. Bensoussan and Laufer trace this back to the lack of schema. Bensoussan (1986) later argued that the only way contextual clues are helpful is when the reader is aware of the cultural differences between L1 and L2 and familiar with the conventions of written texts in both languages.

What is important to keep in mind is that the reading process is like a game with three players: the reader, the text, and the writer. We can only try to predict what happens in this complex interaction; yet, what is certain is that it cannot be exclusively a matter of language knowledge (Laurea, 2013). Other factors play a role in this interactive process, one of which is the ability to actually read the words on a page (decode).

4.4.4. Decoding

It has already been established that reading involves the combination of two processing skills, top-down and bottom-up. Bottom-up advocates (like Gough, 1972; LaBerge and Samuels, 1974) argue that meaning making starts from the bottom (the text) to the top (reader), and, as explained earlier, suggest focusing on developing decoding skills (e.g. automatic word recognition and pronunciation). Since reading comprehension is interactive, it involves not only the reader's background knowledge and experience, but also the ability to transcribe the written print into sounds (decode). Decoding (putting into sound what is seen in a text) is one of the main reading strategies that a reader needs to master in order to process a text. It is the basis on which all other reading processing skills build. According to Goodman (1968), the decoding of a text involves three sequential phonological/phonemic components:

Graphemes → Phonemes → Meaning

It, therefore, involves the graphic print (letters, words), which are then transformed into phonological sounds, which can then lead to understanding.

Decoding requires that readers use their lower-level processing skills in order to extract the visual information from the print (Koda, 1992). It is a word attack skill in which a reader can use structural clues such as morphology (knowledge of affixation, and how compound words are built, or how phrasal verbs are put together), where students could work out the meaning of a word by relating it to the meaning of another word, for instance, by relating it to the function of a certain affix (e.g. UN-, -LY, -EN, -MENT, -NESS) (Nuttall, 2005:71). According to Nuttall, another structural clue which students can use to assign meaning to a word is to look at its grammatical function. By looking at a word's position in a sentence, readers can establish whether it is a noun or verb or otherwise. In doing so, readers can determine what kind of meaning they need to look for. According to Nuttall, students with a good level in the language and skills benefit more from the use of top-down models, since what they bring to the text from their previous knowledge acts as a guide to how they make sense of it. Therefore, decoding is not the primary strategy they use for comprehension. Low level readers, on the other hand, probably use decoding and grammatical structure more to reach an understanding of the text.

If students have insufficient knowledge of the letter-sound relations, recognizing words becomes harder for them, and, therefore, their reading rate becomes slower. For that reason, some level of automatic decoding must then be available so that short-term memory can work on comprehending, not on decoding, the words (Koda, 1992). That is why fluency (automatic decoding/word recognition) in reading relies heavily on the reader's ability to decode the text quickly, and, therefore, comprehend it more effectively. There is general agreement that speed of lexical access is an essential component of successful communication and fluent language use (Pellicer-Sánchez, 2015), where the term 'lexical access' is used to mean recognising the word so as to find its meaning in memory, and silently activating its pronunciation. Of course, this indicates fluency in relation to silent reading. When a word is recognized, it is stored in the memory ready for consultation when he is presented with a visual mental representation (Walter, 2014). The faster a reader is able to retrieve words from their mental lexicon, which is linked to their level of knowledge of vocabulary, the more proficient they become as readers (Walter, 2014).

4.4.5. Reading Fluency and L2 Reading Comprehension

This study, as mentioned earlier, takes as its basic conception of reading comprehension the understanding of written print. It is a process that involves sense-making and constant adjustment of reading skills (Carrell, 1991). That is why comprehension or understanding is the main goal behind reading. In this respect, "reading for general comprehension involves a complex set of processes when carried out by fluent readers" (Grabe, 2009:10). 'Reading fluency' can be defined as fast reading with good comprehension and adjustment of the reading rate (automaticity in word identification and retrieval of its meaning from memory) to suit the reading purpose (the aim, whether reading for gist, or specific information; reading for entertainment, or to combine several pieces of information from different sources) (Mikulecky, 2008). Fluent readers are readers who are able to read with appropriate speed and automaticity in word recognition, use reading strategies and skills, and at the same time manage to reach a general understanding of the text (Grabe, 2007). When it comes to word recognition, the fluent reader makes fewer eye fixations and for shorter durations because he requires less visual information. He makes use of his linguistic knowledge and the resulting redundancy. Thus, he can make a good guess

without extensive analysis of the visual input (Cohen, 1972). It is this fluency, Grabe (2009) indicates, that most readers of a second language find rather challenging and difficult.

The development of reading fluency is an important ability, especially for advanced reading comprehension skills (Gorsuch & Taguchi, 2008; Grabe, 2009; Klauda & Guthrie, 2008; Taguchi et al., 2012). Eskey (1988) indicates that fluent reading requires both skilful decoding, as well as relating information to one's previous knowledge. Word recognition and reading fluency are, therefore interrelated for "without mastery of decoding, fluency is compromised; if decoding and fluency are not automatic, the reader's ability to extract and construct meaning from text effectively and efficiently is compromised" (Perfetti, 1985:32). Cohen (1972) argues that reading too slowly can result in poor comprehension. He explains his point by saying that if materials from one fixation must be held in a temporary buffer store, it will decay and get lost before it can be related to material derived from later fixations. So, if students put too much mental energy into sounding out the words, they will have less mental energy left to think about the meaning (reconstruction).

It is important to note that reading fluency does not refer to oral reading (reading aloud) since it is possible for a person to read a text aloud fluently yet not comprehend it, meaning that they are just decoding it. But, fluency in silent reading allows the reader to read for ideas rather than for individual words, leading to interaction and then possibly understanding (Grabe, 2009). For this reason, Grabe points towards encouraging sustained silent reading in order to build reading fluency (automaticity). This assumes that with continued practice in silent efficient reading, students can reach automaticity (fluency) in reading. This also implies that for the purpose of designing a reading program, fluency in reading may be an aim if the texts that have been selected require high-level skills and analysis, which then require that readers at least be able to determine the general meaning of the text with automaticity in order to leave more time for analysis and close reading. Although automaticity in reading is not an aim of the current study, it is, however, an advantage for more advanced stages (with more complex texts), where close analysis of the text is an objective. All in all, reading in the FL classroom requires that students use their background knowledge and experiences and draw on a host of strategies that help them make use of both low-level as well as higher-level mental skills for the creation of meaning.

4.5. Conclusion

The main argument of this chapter is that reading is an interactive process between the reader and the text. It involves both higher-level and lower-level processing skills in the process of understanding and meaning making. The imagination is, therefore, the cognitive tool that fuels that interaction and meaning making. It uses the reader's background knowledge, combines it with new knowledge in the interaction process, and extends on that knowledge, leading to meaning making. Literature, with its unique characteristics, involves more of the imagination than simple interaction between reader and text, and top-down and bottom-up strategies. The following chapter will provide the key elements that contribute to the learner's abilities to read and respond to literary fiction. How this response takes place is, therefore, outlined in Chapter 5.

4.6. Summary of Chapter and Foundation Block of the Conceptual Model (The Interactive Theory of Reading)

Theory of the Process of Reading

Successful reading is an interactive process (between text and reader) of meaning making. It involves text-based/bottom-up (text decoding) as well as reader-based/top-down (background knowledge and experience) processing skills. Text-based/bottom-up includes decoding skills which involve (e.g. word recognition skills). Top-down skills include activating prior knowledge (schema), prediction, and guessing meaning from context.

Reading instruction based on interactive views suggests the use of a combination of both top-down and bottom up reading strategies. Through pre-reading activities and tasks, it is important to activate the necessary background knowledge for engagement with the text and to familiarize the reader with the text so that he is able to make predictions about its meaning.

Second language reading comprehension can be developed through strategy instruction, vocabulary development, and decoding skills. Effective strategy use is important for reading comprehension. Reading fluency (automaticity in decoding and use of effective reading strategies) is not central but beneficial for general text comprehension and reading proficiency.

Chapter 5

Reading Literature and the Process of Meaning Making: Reader-Response

Text is just ink on a page, until a reader comes along and gives it life.

(Louise Rosenblatt)

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the second aspect of the theoretical framework by exploring the literature in relation to meaning making, specifically reader response. Reader response is a school of literary criticism which places more emphasis on the analysis of the reader's experiences, than on the intentions of the author and the text content when reading a particular work (Rosenblatt, 1938). It is concerned with the reader's reaction to the written text, and the process of meaning making. By linking the two previous chapters on reading processes and the concept of the creative imagination, this chapter tries to identify the processes involved in reading short stories through the creative imagination. It opens with clarification of the notion of response by providing the main principles related to *Reader-Response Theory* (Rosenblatt, 1938), and explaining how this theory is relevant to the current study. It draws on this theory for other foundational blocks that are relevant for the design of the conceptual model and which contribute to the process of meaning making in literature. The chapter concludes with the designed model, which combines the foundation blocks presented through the theoretical framework (Chapters 3, 4 and 5) and which reflect the approach used for this study.

5.2. Reader-response Theory

Reader-response theory (Rosenblatt, 1938) is a general term used to describe theories of literature that center on the nature and process of literary reading and understanding. In this sense, reader-response theory attempts to explore what happens in the reader's mind during literary reading. One of the chief attractions of these theories is the shift from an emphasis on the text and its author to a focus on the text and its reader (Rosenblatt, 1938, 1978,

1994). Two dimensions fall into this theory: the historical and intersubjective aspects of literary interpretation, and the nature of consciousness. Reader-response theory, therefore, raises many questions as to the nature of meaning and the role of the reader in constructing that meaning. In addition to that, it also focuses in detail on the processes of interaction that take place between the reader and the text, and how meaning is generated.

Reader-response theory emerged as a reaction against *New Criticism*, and *formalism* which emphasized the role of linguistic elements and the text for generating meaning. Such literary movements focus on the literary text as the source of meaning (Richards, 1930). They take the reader for granted, putting him in the shadow, and making him rather “invisible” (Rosenblatt, 1994:2). Just as psycholinguistic theorists of reading have added a dimension to traditional bottom-up views of reading comprehension, reader-response theorists have moved away from the objectivist claims of the New Critics (such as Richards, 1930 and Eliot, 1965) who emphasize close reading of the words of the text (Miller, 2001). In fact, according to Dias and Hayhoe (1988:15), it is precisely “the role of the reader in the act of reading that has not been sufficiently and properly addressed” in New Criticism, making it rather inadequate for understanding the nature of literary reading. Reader response theories, on the other hand, emphasize the active role a reader plays in the construction of meaning.

A general philosophy of reader-response theory acknowledges the reader’s role as an active agent who imparts ‘real existence’ to the literary work, and a text is considered meaningless without the reader. According to reader-response, literature should be viewed as a performing art in which each reader creates his own, possibly unique, text-related reaction, thus accepting multiple meanings of a text (Rosenblatt, 1978).

The reading of literature is not just an active process of meaning making; it is also transactional (Rosenblatt, 1978, 1985), where the reader and writer are communicating through the text as mediator. Rosenblatt’s (1978, 1995) “Transactional Theory”, one of the most influential theories of reader-response, is based on the idea that readers are interactively involved with the text they read. By trying to avoid the traditional postmodern views that see the reading act as placed in either the text (see René Wellek and Austin Warren’s *Theory of Literature*) or the reader (see Ronald Barthes’s 1967 *The Death of the Author*), Rosenblatt saw the meaning as coinciding in the mutual partnership of the reader

and the text (i.e. transaction/interaction). This theory also makes clear the different types of reading that take place between both the reader and the text (stimulus).

Rosenblatt (1978) made a distinction between ‘aesthetic’ and ‘efferent’ (non-literary) reading. Aesthetic reading can be said to be rather subjective, where “the reader’s attention is centered directly on what he is living through during his relationship with that particular text” (p.25). Efferent reading, on the other hand, is taken to be more objective, in which “the reader’s attention is primarily focused on what will remain as a residue *after* the reading — the information to be acquired, the logical solution to a problem, the actions to be carried out” (p.25) as in the reading of a restaurant menu. These stances that a reader takes are based on the purpose of the reader and the nature of the text. These two different types of discourse give the reading both literary and informative purposes, where in the first “the language-user engages in a lived-through experience of literature” while in the latter he “holds meaning apart, in quest of more rational or logical understanding” (Langer, 1991:6). Rosenblatt (1978) does not see these types of readings as opposites, rather as belonging to the same continuum of reading behavior.

According to Rosenblatt (1938, 1978) the “poem” or the literary work only exists when being read, that is, the work is what the reader produces “out of” the text. As Rosenblatt (1994) suggests, “once a text leaves its author’s hands, it is simply paper and ink until a reader evokes from it a literary work, or sometimes even a literary work of art” (p.ix). According to Rosenblatt, the process of reading a literary text is active, where the meaning making process mainly coincides within the reader as he is involved in the deconstruction (how the text can be broken down). She, therefore, assumes the pragmatic (Pierce, 1877) nature of the text and how it is interpreted by stressing the role of context in the construction of meaning.

Rosenblatt (1985) argued that we “need to see the reading act as an event involving a particular individual and a particular text, happening at a particular time, under particular circumstances, in a particular social and cultural setting, and as part of the ongoing life of the individual and the group” (p.100). This means that each reader will have different interpretations, and the same reader over time may have a different understanding of the same text, which is a basic assumption in reader response theory. The transaction between the elements involved is different; as a result, the meaning will be different.

Iser (1978) was one of the main proponents of reader response, especially in the way he presented literature as an experience rather than an object. For Iser, the process of reading is the focus of attention rather than the meaning of the text. Iser describes the relationship between the reader and the text as having two poles; at one end is the writer's text which he calls the "artistic" pole, and at the other end is the reader's understanding or realization of it, what he identified as the "aesthetic". Instead of asking what the text *means*, Iser is more interested in what the text *does* to the reader.

Iser's (1978) theory of Aesthetic Response differs from other theories of reader response significantly. He does not analyze actual readings of a text, but proceeds from an ideal "implied reader" (the calculated response of the reader) (Iser, 1974), where the reader fills in the gaps in the text. It is a process of discovery in which a reader is given a chance to recognize the deficiencies of his own existence and the suggested solution to counterbalance them (Iser, 1974). For Iser, the aesthetic object is neither the text nor the reader; rather, it is situated in a virtual world somewhere between the two, in the transaction between the text and the reader. It is in this process of bringing the text to life, through what Iser calls "concretization", that the reader actively fulfills the text. Iser (1978) indicates that within this process, if "one loses sight of the relationship [between the two poles], one loses sight of the virtual work" (p. 21). Literary understanding is therefore, a constructive process where questions, hunches, insights develop as one is reading, and these understandings can be enhanced, modified or even deleted. Iser reminds us of the individuality in meaning making, and the need to focus on the act of reading itself by saying:

Obviously, the total potential can never be fulfilled in the reading process, but it is this very fact that makes it so essential that one should conceive of meaning something that happens, for only then can one become aware of those factors that precondition the composition of the meaning (1978:22).

Growing out of psycholinguistic views of reading, Iser's orientation to the process of literary understanding as growing understandings that change over time can also be regarded as an experience of "Envisionment building", a term used by Langer (1990), in her Envisionment Building Theory. Langer uses the term 'envisionments' to describe a process involving modification and provision in thinking. As she states:

The term envisionment refers to the understanding a reader has about a text—what the reader understands at a particular point in time, the questions she has, as well as hunches about how the piece will unfold. Envisionments develop as the reading develops. Some information is no longer important, some is added, and some is changed. What readers come away with at the end of the reading, I call the final envisionment. This includes what they understand, what they don't, and the questions they still have. The final envisionment is also subject to change with time, as the result of conversations with others, the reading of other works, or pondering and reflection (Langer, 1990:812)

Langer refers to the existence of envisionments as a result of thinking. According to her concept of envisionments, different readers build different envisionments because every reader is unique in their personal, historical, and social conditions. As Langer puts it:

Envisionments are text-worlds in the mind, and they differ from individual to individual. They are a function of one's personal and cultural experiences, one's relationships to the current experience, what one knows, how one feels, and what one is after (Langer, 1995:9).

Langer (1990) uses the term 'envisionment building' to describe the process of meaning making when reading a text. Her theory is not, however, confined to literary reading; it is an act that occurs whenever "we make sense of ourselves, of others, and of the world" (p.9) whenever we ask questions, change perspectives about ideas already formed over time, i.e. whenever a person thinks. It refers to the text world a person goes through at any point in time. According to Langer (1991), as reading takes place, readers weave a growing web of understanding. It is woven through the variety of recursive mental stances a reader takes along the way. Through these shifting relationships between the reader and the text (i.e. the transaction), readers will structure their own understanding, gain different knowledge, and enrich their growing responses.

Langer (1991) differentiates between two modes of thinking and makes the distinction between literary and discursive (non-literary) thinking, similar to Rosenblatt's aesthetic and efferent (non-literary) reading, but in much more detail. The literary mode is described as "exploring horizons of possibilities" where the reader goes through mental exploration and reflection: readers "explore emotions, relationships, motives, and reactions. They call on all they know about what it is to be human, and they consider the possibilities evoked by their exploration" (Langer, 1998:17). Imagination, according to Langer, is placed at the

center of this possibility raising and exploration, as new understanding provokes still far more possibilities. An important aspect of this way of literary thinking is the ability to relate one's current thinking to past thinking, and the openness to different perspectives and possibilities. As readers try to make meaning, they create different scenarios as a way of exploring ideas, as they look for the "real story, and the hidden story" (1998:17).

Langer (1991, 1998) takes a descriptive stance in her view on the nature of literary reading. She argues that, in the course of meaning making, readers enter into a series of relationships with the text. As mentioned above, the reader shifts in and out of different 'stances' or 'takes' in order to extend their ideas, or the 'spiritual experience' created through the work of fiction. When applied to this study, this process could imply that reading stories is about experiencing the text or the story. Langer's Envisionment building theory sets out this process:

1) Being out and Stepping into an Envisionment

Readers in this stance attempt to make contact with the world of the text using their prior knowledge, and use it to identify essential elements in the text (e.g., genre, content, structure, language) to begin to construct an envisionment.

2) Being in and Moving Through an Envisionment

As readers continue to read and think, they become immersed in developing their ideas using prior knowledge and knowledge from the text to further their creation of meaning. As they read, meaning making moves along with the text; they are caught up in the narrative of a story, or are carried along by the arguments of an informative text. This stance has been described by Langer (2001) as the most active meaning building stance that readers, whether poor or good, L1 or L2 go through. It is also the stance in which readers spend most time.

3) Stepping Back and Rethinking What One Knows

Here, the reader uses his developing ideas (envisionment) to reflect back on his previous knowledge or understanding.

4) Stepping out and Objectifying the Experience

In this stance, a reader distances himself away from his envisionments as he builds understanding, reflects, reacts, and sometimes analyses while making connections with the text (taking a critical stance). Langer (2011) added another stance to her theory:

5) Leaving an Envisionment and Going Beyond

As a reader experiences these different stances, he actively tries to make meaning of the text by exploring the 'horizons of possibilities'. This is done by using one's background knowledge and the information from the text, and constructing meaning by taking in different points of view and different perspectives. In this theory, the meaning making process is determined by the text, the writer, the reader, and the interaction between the reader's reflections on the text. It is a result of the interaction taking place between the reader's own knowledge and experience and the writer's expectations.

When exploring horizons of possibility, the source of meaning may change and the meaning making process may shift from the world of the text to the world of the reader (Abdullah & Zainal, 2012). This can be seen as one enters the third stance, where the reader uses his textual envisionments to reflect on his own world and personal experiences. However, not every reader has to go through all these stances; some may not reflect on their own personal world. This shows the dynamic and engaging nature of meaning making in literature reading (ibid).

According to Langer (1991), readers use their imagination as a driving agent for exploring different possibilities and extending their understanding as they think about the literary work and engage in the literary experience. As Craft (2005) suggested, it is through imagination that readers can develop and expand their horizons of possibilities through thinking and question posing and searching for potential answers to these questions. In that process of exploration, readers tend to shift their focus from the whole and focus on the more specific, what Langer calls the "point of reference". Meaning making is, in that case, dynamic, an interaction between the sense of the whole (horizons of possibility) and the moment-by-moment understanding (momentary). It is the sense of the whole that actually keeps the envisionment building going since the momentary meaning could be overlooked

and filled in. In some sense, this is similar to Iser's (1974) "implied reader", where readers fill in gaps as they are making meaning of what they read.

As the envisionment building is continuous, this means that the meaning making process will continue even after the reading stops - as long as the reader is thinking. This is similar to Rosenblatt's (1978) use of the term 'transaction' as describing not only the interaction between text and reader, but, also referring to the ongoing meaning making process. Rosenblatt's (1985) analogy for describing that process was a continuous process of meaning making.

Langer's theory of "Envisionment Building" also offers provision for classroom instruction and application. Basing her theory on the socio-cultural view of learning, which maintains that learning is a social act, Langer (1990, 1991) believes that through collaboration and dialogue, literary understanding can be enhanced. She, therefore, emphasized the cumulative meaning-making process, and the creation of shared meanings between students (shared meaning making) (Applebee, Langer, Nystrand, & Gamoran, 2003). Although her implications for the classroom suggest a collaborative and dialogic approach (i.e. learner-centeredness), the theory originally describes the cognitive meaning-making process which individual readers go through as they read both informative and literary texts.

A reader response-based approach to the teaching of literature sees the reader as more actively involved in the reading and meaning-making process. It gives him a chance to personalize the literary experience, judge, and imaginatively respond to it. Significantly, these aspects are part of the aim of this research in which students develop their ability to use their imagination to reason and make judgements about new knowledge (found in the text/story), and relate it to their own lives and experiences. A response-based approach thus offers opportunities for developing the creative imagination. Part of this response is personal and emotional engagement. The following section elaborates on the importance of affect/emotion in literary response.

5.3. Emotion/Affect in Literary Response

Reading literature is both a cognitive and emotional or affective process. Emotional response in literature has been researched widely. Miall (1989) argued that conventional schema theory and other cognitive models have tended to neglect emotion, and he suggests that they are, therefore, inadequate for explaining literary response. He argues that during comprehension of a literary text, a reader's response is controlled by emotion, and that this affective property is what guides and controls the creation of schema more adequately. As Miall puts it:

Narratives allow us to redefine, modify or suspend schemata, but through this process it seems likely that the primary goal of reading is to explore the emotions of the self through engagement with the text. The emotions invoked by narrative episodes and their outcome allow the reader to enact symbolically various implications for the self. One effect may be to alter the emotional valency of existing schemata, and thus their relationship to other elements within the cognitive system, as well as to bring into being new (and possibly more adaptive) schemata. (p.76)

Alderson (2000) took the same view in relation to literary reading, indicating that reading in all its forms is a process that involves both emotion and cognition. Consequently, he came to the interpretation that it is "important to understand in greater depth the constructive and imaginative processes necessary to bring a text to life, in order to contribute to a more complete understanding of the reading process and the literary experience in particular" (p.55). In view of that, there is clearly a need for a cognitive model that explains the process of reading by explicitly taking into account the cognitive as well as the affective factors in literary response.

An important notion of Langer's (1990) Envisionment Building Theory is the idea of making meaning by taking different perspectives, and exploring different ideas as a result of relating the text to one's own life. This exploratory approach to reading literature entails using both one's own world to construct the text or "virtual world", and using the world of the text to reflect back and rethink one's own world and experiences. This dynamic relationship between the text and the reader, and the reader's ability to shift his thinking, helps readers to think differently and relate to the text on both an intellectual and an emotional level. During this process, readers reflect back on their own lives and their prior

experiences, which include their emotional experiences. Their responses are charged with the feelings and thoughts that they have previously experienced, as well as with the feelings they have as a result of their engagement with the texts they are reading. The affective properties related to reading are driven by the reader's ability to imagine and think about not only the text, but also the feelings that it evokes. This, as Miall (1989) indicated above, guides the reader's thinking, and helps him relate to the text and makes sense of the ideas that it elicits.

This view relates to the personal enrichment aspects of reading literature in the EFL classroom (Collie & Slater, 1987; Carter & Long, 1991; Lazar, 1993). This entails personal development, where readers can learn, with the appropriate support, to connect imaginatively with the text on a more personal level and critically compare it with their own lives (Lazar, 1993). This personal experiential orientation in narrative discourse has been termed 'intersubjectivity' (Hardy, 1977; Harrison, 2004) and is discussed in the next section.

5.4. Literary Fiction and the Concept of Intersubjectivity

'Intersubjectivity' is defined as "the ability to recognise mental states in ourselves, and, through imagination and projection, to recognise the potential reciprocity of mental states in others, their beliefs, intentions, desires and the like" (Harrison, 2004:5). It is a form of human cognition that can best be reached through the reading and engagement with narratives (Bruner, 2000). In fact, narrative is a critical tool in the construction of intersubjectivity. Reading narrative fiction can then be regarded as an exercise for the imagination. Through narratives one is able to practise the possibility of being in someone else's place, to see things differently, to make the associations between the worlds of the text, and to connect it to our own worlds, feelings, conceptions, and expectations (Crossley, 1996). These images, in which the reader puts himself in the place of the characters of a story, vividly evoke the psychological activities of identification and prognostication or foreseeing (Teich, 1994), where one also anticipates the feelings, thoughts, and ideas of the characters. In this sense, when we are involved in reading a story, we put ourselves in the characters' positions and create an imaginary world. It can be said that reading stories is a matter of learning how to live (Hardy, 1977).

Intersubjectivity entails using both emotional and cognitive faculties. Reading, as an active process, leads one to think, and according to the current research on literary response, for thinking to fully develop, one needs to draw on the imagination. Imagination, as indicated in an earlier chapter, has both an intellectual and emotional capacity, and for meaning to fully develop, both elements must intersect. This intermingling of both the cognitive and the affective is central to what is known as intersubjectivity (Bleich, 1986). Harrison (2004:4) says:

Reading determines how we are able to think, it has a fundamental effect on the development of the imagination, and thus exerts a powerful influence on the development of emotional and moral as well as verbal intelligence and therefore on the kind of person we are capable of becoming.

Intersubjectivity is grounded in the social act of internalizing the attitudes of others and objectifying one's own experiences (Bleich, 1986), i.e. self-objectifying one's experiences and subjectifying the experiences of others. This makes it relevant to the current study because, since it gives rise to suggestive thinking and negotiation of different perspectives, it gives provision for an interactive orientation (socio-constructivism) between both text and reader, as well as between students. Taking this perspective is at the heart of intersubjectivity, whether taking the perspectives of others in the surrounding context of the classroom or taking the perspectives of the characters in the fictional text. Through dialogic thinking (Bakhtin, 1982) in which students interact, think reasonably, share opinions, and explore each other's ideas, intersubjectivity can be explicitly and implicitly practised, both within and between groups (students) (Gillespie & Cornish, 2010).

Intersubjectivity is closely related to empathy (May, 2017). As a notion that evokes emotional activity, intersubjectivity gives rise to empathy. Empathy is the ability to take on perspectives of others and as a result have similar feelings and perhaps thoughts (May, 2017). Empathy and intersubjectivity are related, but the connection between them is two-way. As May clarifies, this connection is seen at the end of two extremes. Optimists believe that "empathy puts us in touch with others in a way that generates a compassionate concern that forms the foundation of morality and even immortality" (p.12). Pessimists, on the other hand, as May explains, generally argue that "empathy merely blurs the distinction between oneself and others, yielding self-interested motivation or at least precluding genuine altruism" (p.12). Either way, empathy offers readers of fiction the opportunity for

“identification”, where a reader identifies himself with a character, and shares their feelings, and worries (Harding, 1977). It also offers the chance for reflection, and sometimes “pity”, sympathy and compassion (Nussbaum, 2001), which, as Harding argues, is not just an imaginative reaction towards what a character might be feeling, but also feelings that the reader as an “onlooker” or spectator feels as a result of what the character has witnessed. For example, a reader who watches imaginatively as Othello kills his wife does not simply feel what he imagines Othello to be feeling, but may also feel pity *for* him (Harding, 1977:71).

Rogers (1961) argued that identification and projection should not be the whole story of empathy. He writes, “Empathy, or being empathic, is to perceive the internal frame of reference of another with accuracy and with the emotional components and meanings which pertain thereto as if one were the person, but without ever losing the ‘as if’ condition” (pp. 140–141). The identification, therefore, lies in the idea that empathy leads to self-other merging in which a person connects with others and with self, while maintaining a sharp distinction between self and other. This ability to connect with others and at the same time retain to individuality can lend itself to discussion and debate about morality and moral values of self and other.

Intersubjectivity is linked with moral and spiritual value systems. According to Pike (2004), the development of spiritual values can be achieved by “helping pupils present, explore, and reflect on their own and on others’ inner life in drama, and the discussion of texts and ideas” (p.169). The development of moral values, on the other hand, can be achieved “through exploring questions of right and wrong, values and conflict between values in their reading of fiction and non-fiction, in their discussion and in drama” (p.169). The interrelations between a reader and a character can be explored through intersubjectivity in the connectivity that is created between them. Pike indicates that spirituality and especially morality are aspects of intersubjectivity that require advanced levels of thinking and reasoning skills and that discussion is an important aspect of exploring such deep relations. An intersubjective reading of a story’s events and characters entails a high level of literary response that some writers suggest can best be described as employing a personal growth method of teaching literature (see Lazar, 1993; Carter & Long, 1991).

The development of students' spiritually and morally, as well as socially and culturally are important aspects that need to be stressed and presented as part of the personal growth model of teaching (Pike, 2004). In literature teaching the personal growth model places importance on learners' enrichment as they draw on their own experiences, feelings, and opinions, and make use of both their emotional and intellectual capacities. In this sense, they make use of their imagination. Personal growth models of teaching value students' responses. This research study adopts this model of teaching, which values the role of imagination as a tool for meaning making and stresses the significance of students' responses.

Literary fiction as a representation of human life and experiences employs a level of attachment to the readers. From the perspective of the personal growth model of teaching literature (see Lazar, 1993; Carter & Long, 1991), literary fiction is one of the main courses within the curriculum that can offer "the complexities of the moral situation and the consequences of action" (MaCulloch & Mathieson, 1995:30, cited in Pike, 2004: 169). This is not to say that literature is the only way of developing morally, for "all education is in a sense moral education" (Haydon, 2003:320). Formal education in all its versions (scientific, religious, humanitarian, and political) in some way serves as a way of morally educating not just the individual but the whole culture. Moral education, if one is to assume that there are general principles and characteristics underlying morality within a society, can be related to some sort of rational reflection about right and wrong. Piaget (1965) believes that morality arises from cognitive development, and for moral reasoning to take place, an appropriate level of cognitive development is needed. This calls for thinking critically about situations in a story and making reasoned judgments and evaluations as to what is morally right or wrong.

In this way morality is associated with reasoning (Haydon, 2003). Moral development then can be seen as a significant aspect of developing students' reasoning capacities as they try to search for meaning when reading literary narratives. For that reason, moral development, as a significant part of intersubjectivity, is seen as an important paradigm in the development of the imagination. By reading short stories (or novels), students engage with their inner selves and consider moral issues (Pike, 2004). They can learn, for instance, about the human character and how good and evil can exist within one individual; this gives them a chance to understand the complexities of human nature. Literary fiction can

raise their awareness about human behavior and deepen their understanding. Literature, as T.S. Eliot perceived it, is “an imaginary work of art that affects us wholly as human beings” (1935:396 cited in Pike, 2004).

In the classroom, a focus on moral values can contribute to the students’ development of behaviors and virtues (Haydon, 2003) not only in the area of their reasoning abilities but also in their feelings and attitudes towards others. According to Haydon (2003), teachers can model certain ways of behaving by showing virtues, i.e. behaviors reflecting high moral standards. They can also model their reasoning behaviors as they interact with different hypothetical situations. Promoting disciplined, open-minded, and critical discussion is also a good way of helping students develop their moral skills, and, therefore, their intersubjectivity (Haydon, 2003). Kohlberg’s (1981) “just community approach” to moral education was based on responding to hypothetical dilemmas where students could practice setting forth virtues and principles of right and wrong. When reading short stories, students are in a sense engaging in such hypothetical dilemmas, and through tasks that draw on intersubjectivity and moral judgment, they come to some conclusions about the different ideas and issues raised in the text. This is an important part of the creative imagination since students develop their imaginations as they reason and try to make sense of the world around them.

A spiritual value system, on the other hand, is concerned with awe and wonder, which, according to Egan (1992), is a property related to the imagination. Egan (2014) defined ‘awe’ as an overflow of powerful feelings which result from confronting everyday features of the world and experiences which contain general problems and puzzles that we may rationally seek to explain, such as the origin of life and the universe. ‘Wonder’ and ‘awe’, according to Egan, are sometimes used interchangeably to mean the same thing. He made a distinction by indicating that wonder is “a related response to what is comprehensible but amazing or unique in some way. It is concerned with the rationally graspable” and how we feel a sense of surprise and sometimes curiosity about it (p.152).

Pike (2004) sees that a spiritual value system is related to aesthetic response which, as Rosenblatt (1987) indicated earlier, is an aspect of literary understanding and therefore the imagination. This spiritual value system is defined by the English School Curriculum and Assessment Authority SCAA (1995) as “applying to something fundamental in the human

condition which is not necessarily expressed through the physical senses and/or expressed through everyday language. It has to do with relationships with other people and, for believers, with God, It has to do with the universal search for individual identity, with our responses to challenging experiences, such as death, suffering, beauty, and encounters with good and evil. Generally speaking, spirituality has to do with the search for meaning and purpose in life and for values by which to live” (p.3). Therefore, spiritual development is related to the fundamental questions about the meaning and purpose of life which affect everyone; it is not only about religious affiliation. In a sense, spirituality is determined by how readers evaluate/re-valuate, and reflect on not only their lives, but also the lives of others (i.e. the characters).

It is sometimes hard to make a distinction between spiritual values and moral values when trying to make sense of short stories. That is why I have used both terms to imply an aspect of intersubjectivity, in which readers of fiction make a variety of connections between different perspectives. I would also argue that this intersubjectivity not only takes place between the readers and the text, but also as they take on different perspectives with other readers, explore ideas, and are exposed to different views and opinions. The uniqueness of a reader’s beliefs, values, opinions, and experiences is what leads to different responses. Through interaction with others and with language as the main source of communication, ideas from the reading text can be negotiated as meaning is developed. Good language skills make communication possible for people, to appreciate that others have different thoughts and perspectives (Vygotsky, 1978). This perspective is an important aspect of intersubjectivity because it means that literary teaching in EFL can help develop a person’s cognitive, spiritual, moral, social, cultural, and communicative skills.

In conclusion, encouraging intersubjectivity by focusing on empathy in analyses of situations, issues, and characters in reading narrative fiction can be said to support reflective habits with regard to moral and spiritual issues. It involves affective properties as well as intellectual, where readers think about their emotions towards the text characters (i.e. use emotional reasoning) in the process of their meaning making. Though intersubjectivity involves reasoning, it is taken to be an emotional property that is related to the imagination in the sense that thinking about feelings and emotions is seen in this study as related to one’s personal experiences. For that reason, in this study of reading processes it is taken to represent the emotional dimension of the imagination.

5.5. An Imaginative Approach to Literary Understanding: The Need for Both Emotion (processes of the mind) and Intellect (textual analysis)

It has been established so far that the imagination is a cognitive tool for meaning making. The imagination, as shown by Vygotsky and other cognitive researchers and psychologists, involves not only intellect but also emotion, and for the imagination to be creative, and, therefore, lead to meaning making, both emotion and intellect are combined. The imaginative activity in literary reading is no exception.

Langer (1991) in her *Envisionment Building Theory* writes about creative and critical thinking, and indicates that both critical thinking and creative thinking are essential parts of consciousness in the construction of meaning. Creative thinking is seen to be related to the emotion of the imagination, and critical thinking is related to the intellectual properties of the imagination. It is important to point out that this research, for educational purposes, is using the terms ‘critical thinking’ and ‘analytical thinking’ interchangeably, mainly because the definition that has been used for critical thinking is based on Langer’s *Envisionment Building Theory* (of literary response). Both types of thinking, according to Langer, involve individuals in a process of asking questions, judging the appropriateness of the questions, and making comparisons, connections, syntheses, and evaluations. However, they both differ with regard to their approach to reasoning. As Langer explains, critical thinking is an attempt to explain how text ideas and images relate to each other. She indicates that critical thinking is related to students taking a stance towards a text where the focus is oriented towards seeking information about content and how each piece of information is linked.

In creative literary thinking, Langer indicates a subjective orientation is used where open-endedness leads to differing possibilities to explain the text. In this sense, the difference between creative and critical thinking is based on whether one is reading for information or for literary reasons. Literary reading, as suggested by Langer’s *Envisionment Building Theory*, involves orientation to find information, along with creative and critical thinking. Both types of thinking are interrelated in the process of meaning making to the extent that it is difficult to separate between them in the reading of literature. As Iser (1978) argues, “It is impossible for such a meaning to remain indefinitely as an aesthetic effect” (p.22).

Therefore, there is constant shifting between the aesthetic and the discursive or non-aesthetic/logic. He explains, “Initially, it is aesthetic, because it brings into the world something that did not exist before; but the moment one tries to come to grips with this new experience one is constrained to reach out for non-aesthetic reassurance” (p.22). Readers in this sense shift their orientations as they try to make sense of the literary text. Literature in this way builds on what Langer calls critical and creative thinking to create different possibilities and make meaning through the exploration of different ideas and perspectives in language and content of the text. One can then suggest that literature reading and understanding involves both textual analyses, where readers look for connections between different parts of the text and ideas, and emotional connection with the text in the search for different and new possibilities and meanings.

Analytical thinking can be supported by textual analysis. Stockwell (2005) saw that literary reading involves a mixture of texture, and meaning. He suggested that it should, therefore, involve ‘poetics’ which is the study of “the mind reading literature”, and ‘hermeneutics’ which involves the study of “the interpretations produced by minds reading literature” (p. 267). Stockwell asserts that each one of them is informed by the other. He argued that literary interpretation, which is the holistic experience of meaning and textures, requires not only analytical thinking about texture, but also cultural and experiential aspects of reading and understanding. Stockwell follows Gadamer’s (1989) hermeneutics when he argues that understanding (sense making) is always conditioned by interpretation (textual analysis). Stockwell (2005) maintains that:

Interpretation precedes reading and informs it, though our analytical and self-conscious minds regard interpretation as the product of reading rather than the fabric of the experience. Our poetics is experienced in the service of our hermeneutics. I would like to insist that the only way we can capture this fact is with an integrated stylistics – stylistics alive to both sociocultural and cognitive aspects of literature (p.282).

My aim through this thesis is to argue for the role of textual analysis as a route to critical reading of a text. It is important that students read a text closely in order to analyze the different forms and styles, make reasoned judgments, and think critically about how the text informs their meaning-making process as they interact with the text. Reading strategies, such as previewing, rereading, and questioning, are considered helpful strategies

for analytical thinking, which helps readers and guides their thinking as they try to make sense of a text.

Moody, the author of *Literary Appreciation* (1986, cited in Hall, 2011), distances himself from literature appreciation. Though stressing the need to consider the students' interests and experiences, he also encourages close linguistic analysis when required. His claim for analysis arises from his conception of literature as language, and thus, analyzing literary language is encouraged, not for its own sake, but for the sake of guiding the meaning-making process. Analytical thinking in this sense extends to include textual analysis as well as analytical thinking with regards to characters, author or narrators, intentions, characteristics, and actions.

In this study, I am focusing on two main elements related to imagination which are part of the process of making meaning of literature: analytical thinking for textual analysis, and intersubjectivity for a more subjective, emotional connection with the text. An important aspect of analytical thinking is close reading of the text structure, styles, and language. An important aspect of intersubjective reading is emotional connectivity with the characters of the text characters and personal involvement. In literary reading, creative thinking involves both the intellectual and emotional dimension in combination, and this in turn leads to the creation of possibilities (meanings). As Langer has indicated, critical thinking and creative thinking intermingle in envisionment building. However, it is creative thinking that leads to different possibilities and imagined outcomes. In the following section, I would like to shed light on this view of analytical thinking and creative or possibility thinking in education. I will explore what they mean, why they are important for literary understanding, and some ideas on how to develop them inside the reader response-based classroom.

5.5.1. Critical/Analytical Thinking and Reading Literature

Critical thinking requires a disposition to seek truths, reasons, and determine evidence (Khatib & Shakouri, 2013). The disposition to think critically means the willingness, motivation, tendency and intention to engage in critical reflection, make important decisions, and develop the ability to solve problems (Facione, Sanchez, Facione & Gainen, 1995). Critical thinking, broadly speaking, involves reasoning behaviors that students

across disciplines are engaged in, mostly questioning and analyzing (Langer, 1992).

According to Langer:

....the field of education has taken a one dimensional view of critical thought, defining its properties as those of logical/scientific thought. In doing so, I fear the field has unwittingly erased from the consciousness of educators another essential aspect of human reasoning and problem solving, another highly productive avenue to sense-making -- what I call literary understanding.

When reading literature, students are encouraged to question, analyze, and make evaluations of the text (turn of events, characters motives, behaviors). Also, they may comment on the language, such as the choice of words, word meanings, and writer's intentions, or the structure of the story and how the events proceed or turn out. In order to help students develop their analytical thinking, teachers need to consider the importance of motivating them to come to their own conclusions, and supporting them as they try to make sense of a literary text.

For the purpose of this study, I have referred to this kind of thinking as analytical thinking, in which readers analyze the text. Langer refers to this as 'taking a critical stance', in which a reader orients his meaning towards parts of the text, then relates it to the whole as he tries to create meaning and search for different possibilities. Analytical thinking requires the use of a reader's interpretative skills (for example, inferencing, metacognition, making intertextual connections) and intellectual abilities to make logical conclusions about the meaning of the text, and make reasoned judgments about it (about the language, as well as the content). In this sort the thinking mode the reader may be looking and trying to find out how the events in the story connect together, or how the characters are related and characterized in the text. The reader may also be thinking about literary features like similes, imagery, symbolisms, and viewpoint. Analytical thinking in reading literature can also involve the constant search for clues. It can help monitor a reader's comprehension through close textual analysis as text meaning is built.

Strategies that can be used inside the literature classroom to create a culture of thinking include: clarifying the purpose, concept, and procedures of good reasoning, and modeling reasoning behavior for the students so that they have an idea of what the thinking dispositions look like. It is important that the students are given time for collaborative

reasoning inside the classroom, and practise using such skills in order to guide the meaning-making process (Langer, 1989, 1991; Applebee et al., 2003). It is helpful for students to receive structured feedback on their thinking dispositions from teachers, peers, and self-reflection. It can be said that literary reading involves this critical orientation in which students analyze parts of the text to make sense of the whole. However, literature reading, as indicated earlier, requires that readers use both orientations in order to create different possibilities and meanings.

5.5.2. Creative Thinking and Literary Understanding: New Possibilities

Langer (1990, 1992) indicated that at the heart of literary experience is an exploration of a 'horizon of possibilities'. Horizons, according to Langer, are never stationary and they constantly move towards closure. When readers are moving towards the horizon of meaning, the horizon itself can shift, and other possibilities can emerge to be explored by the reader. A characteristic of the imagination is that it helps us think of not only the actual, but also the possible (Egan, 1992). This is what Craft (2005) calls creative learning. It should facilitate the student's evolution, expression, and application of his own ideas for knowledge production. Creative learning must have to do with generating and initiating different possibilities (Craft, 2005). Based on personality traits identified by researchers such as Torrance (1956), Stein (1974), and Craft (2005), creativity involves being critical, original, risk taking, curious, judgmental, assertive, evidence-seeking, questioning, independent, and having openness in thinking. 'Possibility thinking', a term that was originally coined by Craft (1999), was found to be at the heart of little creativity (Craft et al., 2007; Craft et al., 2013). According to Craft et al. (2013), possibility thinking "was encapsulated as the posing of the question 'what if?' in different ways and contexts, together with perspective taking, or 'as if' thinking" (p.539). It involves students in taking a perspective, posing and answering questions, and going beyond by taking risks, being innovative, and, most importantly, imaginative.

As has been previously argued, reading literature involves not only the text but also the reader in an interactive process between the written print and the reader's background knowledge and experiences, and also between intellect and emotion. It is the collaboration of the reader's thought and the ability to personally engage with and relate to the world of the text, which helps readers reach a 'horizon of possibilities'. When students are involved

in reasoning using both intersubjectivity and analytical thinking, they start to analyze and make judgments about the text. They then begin to create meanings through shared meaning making. They start to think of different possibilities and extend their thinking by not only thinking of the text and what it means, but also what they make of their own lives as they imaginatively engage with it. Through reflection, negotiation, and progression, readers of literature make use of both literary/subjective and non-literary/objective orientations to extend their meaning of the text.

Langer (1992, 2012) illustrates that a literary approach to reading also involves taking an objective stance as part of the process. This means that for one to reach a 'horizon of possibilities' he sometimes needs to shift his focus and take an objective stance. Literary thinking mainly focuses on the search for possibilities, but also includes taking a point of reference and thinking critically about a specific point or idea then moving on to create more possibilities and so on.

In this study I will be using the term 'possibility thinking' to reflect and include creative thinking as an indication of originality and openness. And for that reason, 'possibility thinking' is what the whole process of meaning making will be aiming at. Langer (1992) explains the way in which readers shift their orientation towards possibilities as follows:

In a literary experience, reading proceeds at two levels; on the one hand people consider new ideas in terms of their sense of the whole, but they also use their new ideas to reconsider the whole as well. There is an ever-emerging "horizon of possibilities" that enriches the reader's understanding. Readers clarify ideas as they read and relate them to the growing whole; the whole informs the parts as well as the parts building toward the whole (p.4).

Langer argues that in a literary experience, readers are, from the start, aiming for possibilities, and, therefore, their meaning-making process becomes dynamic, in which they move from the part towards the whole. Langer says:

In a literary experience, readers also continually try to go beyond the information. From the moment they begin reading, they orient themselves toward exploring possibilities -- about the characters, situations, settings, and actions -- and the ways in which they interrelate. Readers also think beyond the particular situation, using their text understandings to reflect on their own lives, on the lives of others, or on human situations and conditions in general. In doing this, they expand their

breadth of understanding, leaving room for alternative interpretations, changing points of view, complex characterizations, and unresolved questions (p.4).

It is, therefore, important to note that the meaning-making process is a continuous process of thinking and creating new possibilities, and is therefore a cycle that begins with reality and the use of background knowledge and ends with the creation of meaning through possibility thinking, which is a result of taking intellectual and emotional orientations towards meaning.

In the classroom, teachers can help students respond to a text by drawing on aspects of the creative imagination in order to make meaning of the text. The following section highlights some points that need to be considered in the literature classroom to achieve this goal.

5.6. Literature Instruction

As has already been argued in Chapter 2, literature reading can be beneficial in the language classroom. For that reason, it is important to teach EFL students how to read and make sense of it. Using the imagination as a cognitive tool for meaning making therefore makes response to literature more accessible.

Reader-response theory takes as one of its central characteristics the potential for different responses and encourages the need to arrive at different possibilities and create new meanings. Collaboration and dialogue are necessary for creating different possibilities (Langer, 1991), in which students take on different perspectives and reflect on them alongside their own. The joint collaboration between varying experiences and different cultural and historical backgrounds creates different ways of thinking among different people. This is important for the discussion that arises as each student talks about his response to the text. And the openness to taking different perspectives is central for creativity (Craft, 2002, 2005). Openness to different views and perspectives is an important part of meaning making and learning. By building on the views of others, one can make sense. Collaboration and cooperation between students, and the chance to use collective thinking for the exploration of different possibilities (Langer, 1991) is important in literary understanding where students can express and share their thoughts and ideas. Discussion is an important element for developing possibility thinking, for “discussion is treated as

exploration, students learn that as in real life, you get to know the characters and their behaviors best if you explore and imagine their intentions, actions, and feelings from multiple perspectives”, (Langer, 2001). Through collaboration and classroom discussion, learner-centeredness may be achieved (Vygotsky, 1978).

In order to enhance the learning experience, there is a need for students to develop social and emotional skills (Whalen, 2010). This, according to Whalen, can be achieved through the reading and teaching of narratives as “reading narratives lead students to happy endings not only in novels, but in real life as well” (p.146). As Whalen suggests, it is widely accepted that that literary stories, being a genre of narratives, do generate discussion, because different people respond to them differently. This variation in response usually leads to discussion among listeners or readers of stories. Happy endings or sad endings can have different emotional effects on people. Discussion helps any reader or listener of a story explain what they see as a result of that perspective.

There are many practical teaching strategies which are considered effective in literature classes and which enhance the learning experience (Cooper, 1993). According to Cooper, these strategies include supporting the learners to go beyond their zone of proximal development. Also the teacher should model the use of reading strategies and thinking strategies by posing questions and modeling problem-solving skills.

In addition, Cooper also recommends that classroom instruction makes use of self-initiated reading and writing, and uses different modes of reading. According to Cooper, a key approach to developing imagination and students’ abilities to think and reason is that teachers activate their learners’ background knowledge and make space for a personal response to literature. These points will be further developed in Chapter 8. The following section will summarize the chapter and present the main points related to literary response.

5.7. Summary of Chapter and Foundation Blocks of the Conceptual Model (Analytical Thinking, Intersubjectivity, Possibility Thinking)

The Process of Reading Literature (Reader-response)

Reader-response theory contributes to a more dynamic way of teaching that encourages students to explore different meanings of the text and search for new possibilities. Reader-response theory sees meaning as residing in the reader, and regards the reader as an active agent who constructs meaning. It therefore gives importance to readers' schema (background knowledge and experience: personal, linguistic, intertextual, conceptual) in responding to and understanding literary texts. Readers will, therefore, respond differently to a text based on their individuality (knowledge and experience, beliefs, and histories), but there is no incorrect interpretation.

Transactional reader-response theory maintains that the meaning-making process continues even after reading is complete, and that even the same reader will respond differently to the same text at different intervals and in different situations. As long as the reader is involved with the text and thinks about it, he builds envisionments and is in a constant search for meaning. Readers imaginatively respond to and make meaning of a text by being involved both emotionally and intellectually with the text. Response-based instruction encourages students to be responsible for their own learning process and helps them develop creativity as they search for their unique meanings of the text.

In the process of meaning making a reader of literature will draw on the imagination to relate what they already know with new information found in the text. During that process they will draw on aspects of the imagination - intersubjectivity (emotion) and analytical thinking (intellect) - in order to create different possibilities (possibility thinking) and make sense of the text they are reading. Intersubjectivity (another foundational block in the

conceptual model) is summarized next. Following that, is a summary of the final foundational blocks of the model: analytical thinking and possibility thinking.

Intersubjectivity

Intersubjectivity is a notion that involves the reader in a state where he makes connections between himself and the characters from a narrative text, by which he shares their thoughts, ideas, and feelings. Intersubjectivity involves affective and cognitive qualities that intersect as one connects with a text, i.e. emotional reasoning. It entails empathy and emotional responsiveness in which one feels compassion and identifies with the characters.

A developed system of moral values is a result of high-level reasoning processes where one thinks about human behaviors and virtues. By engaging in questions about right and wrong, students can develop their feelings and motivations towards others. It is important for students to develop their skills in moral judgement so that they are involved in open-ended, critical discussions about the dilemmas and issues raised in a story, thus, helping them understand the complexities of human nature.

Developing spiritual values is also an aspect which links to intersubjectivity. It is related to how people think about universal issues such as love, pain, or evil, and is related to the search for individual responses to such experiences. It is related to how people evaluate and re-evaluate their lives, and through stories it can help readers think about general questions relating to the meaning of life and values.

Language, through discussion and negotiation, is an important factor that helps develop intersubjectivity. Students should, therefore, be encouraged to explore their responses and share their feelings, opinions, and questions with each other, and through perspectives taking be sensitive and open to those of others.

Strategies related to intersubjectivity involve making connections with a text by making emotional connections with the characters and making inferences about what they feel, what they think, and how they behave. Students are mostly guided by their schemas.

Analytical Thinking

Analytical thinking refers to the intellectual aspect of the creative imagination. It is mostly related to thinking and reasoning that is stripped from emotion or personal connection. It involves taking an informative stance where readers are mainly focusing on interpreting parts of the text. It involves readers in an act of analyzing the text through inferencing, metacognitions and intertextual connectivity.

Analytical thinking and intersubjectivity have a reciprocal relationship.

An important aspect of analytical thinking is textual analysis, where readers focus on the formal aspect of the text, the structure, language, and the style. In this kind of thinking readers also think about narrative structure and how it could inform in understanding the text in general, i.e. analytical thinking is complementary to intersubjectivity in the meaning-making process. Discussion and negotiation between students is important for developing analytical skills.

Possibility Thinking

Possibility thinking, also referred to as creative thinking, is a property that is related to literary reading, i.e. thinking of different possible meanings.

Possibility thinking is at the heart of creativity, it is defined as the posing of the question ‘what if?’ in different ways and contexts, together with perspective taking, or ‘as if’ thinking. It generally involves critical thinking, originality in thinking, openness, and the ability to take risks and imaginatively engage with a text. In possibility thinking, readers of literature draw on both analytical thinking and intersubjectivity as they search for meaning.

Discussion and collaboration is a very important property of possibility thinking, in which shared meaning making and reflection are important to reach a horizon of possibilities. It is a socio-constructive process that starts with a reader’s schema and through transaction (continuous interaction) leads to creative response (meaning making) of a text.

5.8. Putting Everything Together: A Conceptual Model for the Process of Imaginative Meaning Making in Literary Reading

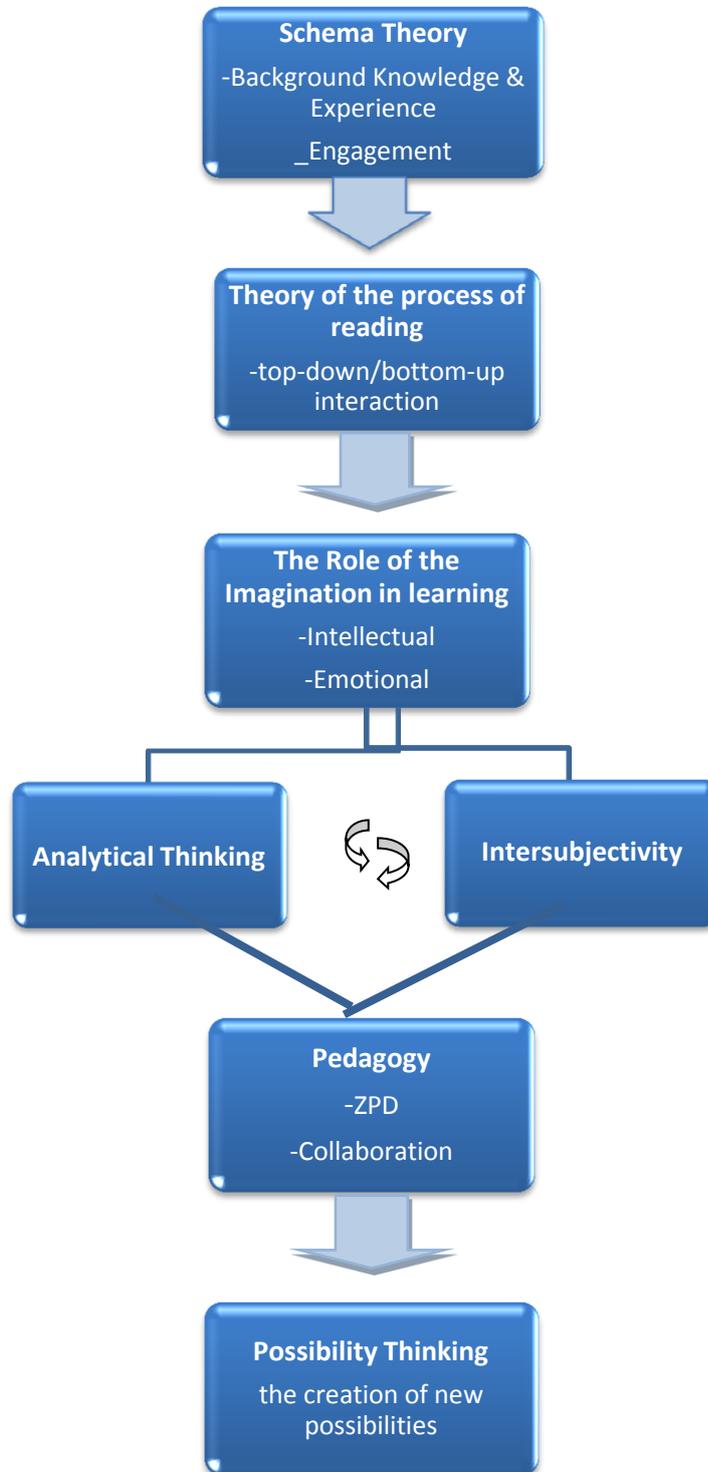


Figure 5. 1. A model of the Process of Literary (short story) Response using the Creative Imagination

5.9. Conclusion

The model shown in Figure 5.1 is based on the theoretical views that have been adopted in this research study. Themes related to the creative imagination (such as schema, interactive theory of reading, the role of the imagination in learning (meaning making), intersubjectivity, analytical thinking, ZPD, possibility thinking) are presented here in this section based on previous summaries of the foundational blocks that have been presented throughout the theoretical framework. The process that has been adopted in the designed model represents my general perspective on how the creative imagination could be developed and systematically stimulated in a structured manner that informs the organization of the lessons for this specific research study. It is important to note that the way the model has been structured in this chapter (as shown in Figure 5.1) is not static, and most importantly it does not assume the linearity of the process of meaning making in literary response. This means that it has been customized to achieve purposeful planning, thus assuming an instructional objective. For the purpose of establishing the practicality of this model and arriving at an instructional approach, the following chapter will be dedicated to addressing the procedures for moving from theoretical views to classroom practice. Therefore, the main aim of the next chapter is to present the literature relevant to the pedagogical application of the model.

Chapter 6

Method of Constructing the Reading Program

A theory can be proved by experiment; but no path leads from experiment to the birth of theory.

(Albert Einstein)

6.1. Introduction

An important aim of this study is to explore the main features of the creative imagination since they form the basis of the designed conceptual model that could help develop the abilities of Libyan EFL university students to make sense of literary fiction (short stories). In the previous chapter, the main features of the process of reading and responding to literary fiction have been presented as part of a conceptual model that draws on the creative imagination. These features (schema, interactive theory of reading, intersubjectivity, analytical thinking, ZPD, and possibility thinking) will be used as pedagogic foundations for developing a reading program with graded learning outcomes for teaching short stories in Libyan EFL university classrooms. So, this research is a conceptual exploration that intends to offer some pedagogic proposals for how literary fiction could be read imaginatively. Although conceptual research is usually theory-based, sometimes it can seek practical application (Callahan, 2010). This research takes a practical stance because my goal was to link the theoretical framework (Chapters 3, 4, and 5) with teaching practice. Thereby, I tried to provide an interpretation of how the proposed conceptual model could be applied inside the classroom. The aim of this chapter is to present the method and tools that I have used to construct the reading program, which applies the conceptual model to the classroom. To recap, the main research questions that I have come up with in order to guide my thinking in this exploratory study are:

- 1. How can the imagination be stimulated and developed in the classroom to extend the students' abilities to read and respond to short stories?*
- 2. What would be the features of a program of learning which would enable the students/learners to achieve that goal?*
- 3. What would be the opportunities and the constraints in implementing such a goal?*

The theoretical framework and the conceptual model that synthesized the theoretical views on how the imagination could be stimulated and developed to read and respond to literary fiction have established the answer to the first research question. For further investigation of the second research question, and in order to develop a reading program that applies the designed conceptual model in the classroom, this chapter explores the literature on syllabus design, and builds a model to use as a tool for constructing the intended program.

The chapter will start by specifying a rationale for this type of research study by offering the philosophy behind it and research choices. For this reason, the research needs to be underpinned by compatible and appropriate ontological and epistemological views. It will then state the research tool that has been chosen to guide the procedures followed for designing the reading program.

6.2. Background and Philosophical Underpinning: Rationale

This section designates the rationale behind the choices that I have made for carrying out the current research study and provides justification for the philosophy behind it. The first step is to offer a general view on the research philosophy and approached used in this research, and how they influenced the research design.

6.2.1. Positionality

The structure of the research and the choice of the literature reflect my subjective views about the world and how we acquire and maintain knowledge. The model illustrating the processes involved in the reading of literary texts, specifically short stories, also reflects a progressive belief about reality, how we acquire knowledge, and therefore how we develop certain skills (Cohen et al., 2007). The conceptual model was a result of a constructive act of knowledge building (Vygotsky, 1978) and a belief about what kind of knowledge can precede the other and how existing knowledge informs further knowledge acquisition. In a sense, this research study was a conceptual journey that involved me in an imaginative process of negotiation between myself and the literature on the one hand, and the collaboration that took place between myself and people around me (for example supervisors) (Cohen et al., 2007). The practicality of this study lends itself to a creative and

purposeful journey of knowledge building that is considered one of many possibilities for how reading literature imaginatively could be achieved. This view can be interpreted as stemming from my perspectives about the nature of reality (ontology) and knowledge acquisition (epistemology).

6.2.2. Ontological Perspectives

Ontology considers the views about reality and about the world. Ontological concerns are primarily about the nature of reality and the social phenomena under research (Cohen et al., 2007). In this case, the phenomena are generally within an educational setting, and for that reason, the ontological perspectives concern “the philosophical study about the nature of educational reality and how there may be different perceptions of what is known” (Jackson, 2013:52).

This research study falls under the interpretive approach to research inquiry which indicates that a researcher’s understanding of the world around him has to come from the inside, that is, his interpretation of that reality (Cohen et al., 2007). According to Cohen, interpretative research approaches acknowledge the creative nature of individuals that is manifested through their engagement with activities. Consequently, such approaches centralize the idea of ‘multiple truth’, meaning that “there are multiple interpretations of, and perspectives on, single events and situations” (p. 21). My view of the educational reality takes a constructivist approach to knowledge building. As has been mentioned throughout this study, the aim of the current research is to develop Libyan EFL university students’ reading skills and equip them with the tools for understanding and responding to literary texts imaginatively. It was then posited that by developing the imagination (a socio-cognitive tool for knowledge construction and meaning making) and enhancing the learners’ thinking and reasoning skills, they will become better able to make sense of literary texts. For that reason, I adopted a conceptual approach to research design because I believe it will be more suitable for both exploring the literature and, based on the theoretical views therein, it can help provide a logical interpretation of how to plan a reading program for the purpose of teaching literature and developing the creative imagination to support meaning making.

As this is a conceptual enquiry, much of this research is based on what Callahan (2010) calls ‘thoughtful exploration’ of the relevant literature and the ways in which it can be used to extend my thinking and develop a well-constructed model. This way of constructing and applying research has been underpinned by the belief that reality is not the result of individual cognition (Vygotsky, 1978), but rather it is the product of shared and negotiated meanings, and that it is *we* human beings who give objects their meanings based on our beliefs, our experiences, and our knowledge of the world (Cohen et al., 2007).

Reality, within the framework of this research study, is taken to be created by the individual and his cognition, and knowledge is an interpretation of that reality (Jackson, 2013). Research itself is constructed in that way, and in this study I try to take into account the subjective nature of the construction of meaning and the belief that our interpretations of reality are related to personal beliefs, values, and experiences. This means that reality is personal and subjective, and how we interpret it depends on our cognitive affiliation with that reality. We also need to bear in mind that the way we view reality will inform the way we seek and obtain knowledge, or what may be termed ‘epistemology’ (Cohen et al., 2007). The epistemological perspective that I have adopted in this study sees knowledge as the result of the transaction between individual cognition and the surrounding environment (Vygotsky, 1978). This means that a more constructive approach of knowledge building could be attained from the exploration of different theories and theoretical views which then could be applied, rather than experimenting with participants first.

6.2.3. Epistemological Perspectives

Epistemology is the philosophy that explains how knowledge is acquired (Cohen et al., 2007). According to Cohen et al., views about knowledge gain and development will inform the researcher of a methodological perspective about the *how* and *what* of the research or the investigation. As mentioned earlier, this study is conceptual, and its goal is to develop and design a reading program.

According to Cohen et al. (2007), interpretative research acknowledges people’s active role in constructing their own realities, and their uniqueness and individuality. Moreover, there is a general understanding within interpretative research that situations are flexible and that they change over time, and that we acquire knowledge from the outside in,

meaning from interaction with the context (surrounding environment). This philosophical undertaking has led to the framing of decision-making as a set of procedures which have to be taken in order to develop the desired program. So, the way that this model program will be constructed is based on my views about learning and knowledge development and, consequently, about how language is learned in a second language. Beliefs and views about language learning and about how reading takes place will therefore be reflected in the procedures that I have come to take. This will influence not only the approach that will use for syllabus design, but also other factors relating to the process of designing a syllabus, such as texts (content) and tasks (methodology) (in Chapters 7 and 8). The following section aims to identify the approach that I have adopted to syllabus design and to look at the procedures and stages of designing the reading program.

6.3. Syllabus Design as a Tool for Designing the Material

This study has been conducted in a way that tries to make its theoretical assumptions applicable to a classroom setting. Syllabus design is the methodological tool for ensuring that there can be a transfer from theory into practice. The study aims to make a link between learning theories and pedagogy by practically considering different variables for teaching short stories in the Libyan context. Because this research is conceptual, an appropriate way to facilitate the shift from theory to practice is through syllabus design as a tool for planning, selecting, and grading material for classroom instruction (Nunan, 1988). Through syllabus design, I am able to determine the learning goals in a way that best fits the learners' needs, because this is about my imaginative knowledge of the Libyan teachers and students.

In addition, I needed to take into consideration the processes that can facilitate students' learning and ensure a more learner-centered environment, simply because, this is the socio-constructivist position. This section, in that sense, will explain the current views and perspectives about syllabus design, and explore the main principles for planning and designing an effective syllabus. The types of syllabuses, learning goals, concepts of needs analysis, and objectives will also be discussed in order to establish the rationale for the approach that is used for constructing the model program.

6.3.1. Defining a Syllabus

A syllabus is a plan that determines what will be taught and learned (Breen, 2001). Traditionally, the distinctions made between a syllabus and a curriculum relate to issues of content and methodology. The language syllabus was taken to be concerned with stating, outlining, and structuring the contents of a single subject or course (Nunan, 1988). A curriculum, on the other hand, would focus on the whole educational system, stating the main objectives and themes, the methodologies, and ways of evaluating and assessing student learning (Nunan, 1988). According to Nunan, current views on syllabus design are concerned with more than just the *what* (content), and have also come to include the *how* (methodology).

Some researchers (for example, Widdowson, 1984) narrowly define a syllabus as a plan that describes the content to be taught, and exclude the methodology for actually carrying out the content of the syllabus. Others (such as, Candlin, 1987; Breen, 2001) have taken a much broader definition that includes not only the content and objectives but also the processes of learning and the evaluation (Stern, 1984).

In this respect, a comprehensive definition that I have come to consider is given by Yalden (1984) who defines a syllabus as a public statement, record, or document. Yalden adds that it concerns not only the ends of instruction and the social purpose, but also the means to be undertaken. He also recommends considering other constraints, such as, classroom setting, pedagogical theory, constraints imposed by language planning like time, resources, and motivational factors.

6.3.2. The Aim of a Syllabus

A syllabus, according to Yalden (1984), should focus on stating the content and the methodology. Yalden points out that a student-centered syllabus is seen as an instrument which can to a degree connect learners' needs and goals with the activities which will be utilized in the classroom. Providing a general framework, Breen (2001:151) proposes the following aims for a syllabus:

- It should give a clear framework for the knowledge and skills that are needed as part of the requirements that are selected to suit the overall aim.
- It should be able to direct the work that is needed in the classroom from both teacher and learner.
- It should be able to provide a record for teachers who may teach the course, or who may be following on from other teachers teaching the course.
- It should provide a foundation for assessment and evaluation of student progress.
- It should be able to provide a basis for evaluating the course and how well it meets the overall aims, and a way to identify whether it fulfils the learners' needs - this is usually considered at the beginning of the course and is enhanced and improved throughout. Evaluation also encompasses assessment strategies to be used with the students to evaluate and assess their learning, and the level of achievement that the students have come to possess by the end of the course.
- A syllabus should also be able to provide appropriate content that fits well with the overall curriculum, the class of learners, the educational system, and the wider society. This means that it should be able to take into consideration the sociocultural status (context).

Widdowson (1984) argues that a basic requirement of syllabus design is that it allows for interaction between the learners in the construction of meaning. I consider this a basic principle for this study, because the development of the imagination is heavily dependent on socio-constructive views of learning. This means that meaning making is the main point in the development of and design of a syllabus. According to Breen, this can be done only if syllabus designers and educators who plan their own syllabuses take into consideration some important requirements. These will be explained in the next section.

6.3.3. Principles of Syllabus Design

I have taken into consideration four main principles to syllabus design: focus, selection, subdivision, and sequencing (Breen, 1987). This provides more opportunity for a more socio-constructivist learning environment in which learning can build on prior knowledge and skills. Breen (2001) makes the following recommendations to the syllabus designer:

- The overall purpose/focus of the syllabus should describe the targeted knowledge and capabilities. Breen explains that a syllabus may have a linguistic or communicative focus, or that it can focus on some or all the skills; it can also have a rather broad focus, such as developing problem-solving or negotiation skills and capabilities. Developing reading and thinking skills and capabilities is, in fact, the overall purpose of designing the reading program intended for this study. So, it can be said that the focus is actually a psycholinguistic one, where the content focuses on developing a variety of skills: reading, linguistic, and communicative.
- The selection of content should fit the overall purpose. Breen states that if the focus of the syllabus is on linguistic form, then the instructor should identify the grammatical structures and vocabulary that need to be covered in a particular lesson and also identify language use and the kinds of tasks to be selected. Breen's approach entails a requirement to take every aspect into consideration, though there may be a specific focus on the objectives relating to the content. In this sense, since the overall purpose of a literature course is to acquire and apply literary elements to texts, the content should try to incorporate the use of such features of fiction and elements of literature as much as possible in order to achieve knowledge development.
- Content should be divided into smaller manageable parts. This, according to Breen, can make instruction easier to control within a manageable timescale. It also gives provision for grading and sequencing the content based on the focus and goal of each unit or part. Subdividing can also include what has been termed 'staging' (Halliday et al., 1964). This can help teachers in Libyan classrooms who have the burden of dealing with large class sizes and minimum time to teach the course. It also helps maintain a focus as students move along the developmental scale of learning, helping them to pick up new skills along the way.
- Content should be sequenced along the path of development. Breen indicates that this can either be done in a step-by-step sequence, where the content moves from the simple to the more complex, or it can be done in a more cyclical manner, where earlier knowledge is revisited and refined at later stages. For this research study, and for the purpose of developing reading skills in literary reading, the step-by step

approach to sequencing would best suit the goals and objectives of the course. This ensures that the learners build on their current skills to acquire and develop a set of other skills as they deal with literary texts, thus ensuring that Libyan students acquire and practice the elements of fiction, as well as develop their reading and meaning-making skills. To ensure that these aims are manageable in the course of this investigation, an approach that is both product- (learning objectives) and process- (methodology) oriented would be most appropriate.

6.3.4. A Hybrid Approach to Syllabus Design (product-/process-based)

According to Nunan, product-based syllabuses tend to focus on outcomes that have been previously determined as being important and beneficial for the learners, while process-based syllabuses focus on the processes through which skills and knowledge might be gained by the learner. So, for the intended reading program I will not rely on a single approach to syllabus design. I will instead incorporate a mixed approach by using elements from a product-based syllabus, which aims at developing a set of skills, and a process-based syllabus, which targets the achievement of a set of skills through the use of pedagogic tasks (Nunan, 1988). A syllabus that integrates both product and process relates a focus on the learning processes to outcomes that meet learner needs through the use of tasks and activities. This way a teacher can facilitate students' learning by helping them move beyond their ZPD level as they engage in pedagogic tasks. Since meaning making is the main focus of this research study, I will therefore, integrate both the product and process syllabuses in the design of this program.

An integrated approach to syllabus design means that there is no specific focus in the development of the syllabus (Nunan, 1988). Also referred to as a 'content' syllabus, an integrated approach can be located at the center of the product-process continuum (Nunan, 1988). According to Nunan, an integrated approach is more flexible and can be more efficient for planning specific subjects within the language program. In addition, the subject will be more coherently organized and planned. This argument revolves around the fact that the rationale behind such organization could take a non-linguistic focus, and there could be a chance to relate the content of the course with language. In such cases, Nunan maintains, it is important that the classroom instructor explain to the learners the

relationship between language and content. This interrelation between language and specific subject content has also been argued for by Mohan (1986), saying:

We cannot achieve this goal if we assume that language learning and subject-matter learning are totally separate and unrelated operations. Yet language and subject matter are still standardly considered in isolation from each other (Mohan, 1986: iii).

It is for this reason that developing reading skills for reading literary texts also involves the development of language skills as part of the overall purpose of the course. Language skills will become unconsciously acquired through the processes of meaning making and close reading between students and the classroom as a whole. Nunan (1988), on that basis suggests that “the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the curriculum should be seen as an integrated set of processes” (p. 47). This view makes it manageable for me as a language teacher to plan a syllabus that can fulfil both linguistic and communicative purposes, because, it reflects a more socio-constructivist approach. In order to plan out the reading program, I needed to first identify principles on which my selection, and organization of both the content and methodology would be based.

6.3.5. Stages of Designing and Organizing a Syllabus

There are many stages in the selection and organization of a syllabus (Breen, 2001). In order for a teacher to best determine how a syllabus is going to be selected and organized, he/she will first have to determine the learning purpose for which it is intended.

A. Learning Purpose

The overall purpose of this program is to read and understand literary texts. According to Nunan (1988), two important factors determine the selection and organization of a language syllabus:

- The general view about language.
- The general view about learning.

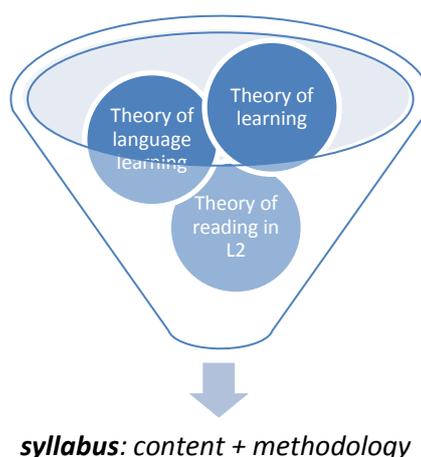


Figure 6. 1. Factors Contributing to the Selection and Organization of the Designed Reading Program

These two factors were put forward as representing the purpose of a language course. In this respect, for the purpose of developing a reading program for L2 reading and responding to literary texts, the main factors that I used to determine the selection and organization of the content are the potential view about learning, and the general view about the processes of reading. It has already been established how learning is believed to happen within the framework of this research. Learning is the construction of meaning within a social setting (Vygotsky, 2004). Reading, within a cognitive view, is viewed as an interactive process (between text and reader) of creating meaning from print. The interactive view of the reading process also indicates that meaning is created through an interaction of top-down and bottom-up processing skills. An integrated approach to syllabus design can facilitate the learning process and the interaction between top-down and bottom-up processing skills, where different tasks are organized and designed to focus on particular skills, thus aiming to make use of both processing strategies within a single lesson.

B. Needs Analysis

Needs analysis involves a set of procedures used to gather information about learners and tasks to be used in syllabus design (Nunan, 2004). There are two types of needs analysis: learner and task analysis.

By conducting needs analysis surveys, issues relating to learner preferences of what and how content should be taught can be identified (Nunan, 1988). This can give the learners a

chance to become more involved in their learning, and a way of ensuring that both learner and teacher perspectives are aligned in the designed syllabus. Based on the literature, and on my personal knowledge of Libyan teachers and students, the Libyan EFL students' needs are to move from a teacher-centered to a student-centered learning environment which facilitates interaction and collaboration between students (Orafi, 2008). Also, there is a need to adopt an approach to reading which facilitates meaning making and strategic reading (Abosnan, 2016).

C. Goals and objectives

Proponents of student-centered approaches argue that learners should be involved in setting their own objectives (Candlin & Edelhoff, 1982). The course objectives should be able to identify and explain the students' learning outcomes. Their main purpose is to act as a guide for the selection of other elements, such as content and activities (Nunan, 1988). It should answer the question of what the students will be able to do at the end of the course. This will include the skills that they will have developed upon finishing the course, and the cognitive demands of undertaking the tasks. Nunan argues that a well-developed syllabus should be able to specify both product and process objectives. Product objectives are overall objectives that involve the knowledge and skills that a course target, while process objectives are the specific aims for the pedagogic tasks and activities used in the course.

The course is aimed at supporting students' development of reading skills for understanding literary fiction (short stories) in English. Nunan (1989) indicates that there are two methods for setting objectives: either starting by matching the content and material to suit the objective, or by first selecting the texts and activities, and on that basis identifying the objectives or outcomes that need to be achieved. In this study I follow the first approach by setting goals and objectives first, and on that basis, the content will be established, so that I can be able to develop not only the skills, but also make use of previous knowledge and therefore move from simpler concrete text to more abstract texts. Based on the literature on the teaching of reading in EFL in Chapter 4 and the issues that have been established from the Libyan context shown in Chapter 2, I was able to identify the following course objectives:

- understand the processes involved in reading and responding to literature
- become familiar with different cultures through reading a variety of stories from different cultural background and different periods
- understand organizational patterns and relationships of ideas and how they affect the development and meaning of the text
- Make use of models of reading
- develop top-down and bottom-up reading skills, such as skimming, scanning, identifying meaning from context, inferencing, apply word-attack skills (phonics, syllabication, ignoring unimportant words, using contextual clues) and dictionary skills to develop knowledge and understanding of vocabulary
- identify literary elements (plot, theme, point of view, character types/roles, and tone) and apply them to help develop the meaning of the text
- develop personal and aesthetic skills, such as relating personally to the text, empathy, self-evaluation, and self-reflection
- develop overall language competency and communicative skills through the negotiation of meaning, and shared meaning making in both spoken and written form
- evaluate works by different authors and from different cultural backgrounds,
- develop creative skills, like risk taking, seeking new ideas, challenging beliefs, being open to new and different ideas, and taking different perspectives

It is important to note that these objectives are general goal statements and signposts for teachers and students (Nunan, 1988). They provide a general idea of the purpose of developing the reading program and the approach that I have adopted in the design of the program materials.

D. Selecting and Organizing the texts (content)

Central to the design and operationalization of any curricula, or any planned, institutionally based program, is the need to select, grade, and sequence both content (texts) and methodological arrangements (tasks). These three main principles, as indicated by Breen (2001) earlier (in Section 6.3.3), are used in this study for planning and arranging the reading program.

I have previously indicated that syllabus design involves not only the selection and organization of the content but also the selection and organization of the methodology (Breen, 2001). The content of the course for this research includes a number of short stories in English. Content selection and organization should be based on the level of the students, and can also be conducted through needs analysis surveys to determine topics or themes to be used or covered in the content (Breen, 1984). This way, texts can be selected to suit the students' interests. A second aspect to address is how to select, grade, and sequence content for a syllabus. This will be addressed in Chapter 7.

E. Selecting and Organizing Pedagogic Tasks (Methodology)

Pedagogic tasks will bridge the content and the objectives. As Breen (2001) points out, different tasks and activities will constitute the methodology used to carry out course objectives, which will help learners develop their meaning-making skills. The selection, grading, and sequencing of pedagogic tasks for the current program will be discussed in detail in Chapter 8.

6.4. Conclusion

This chapter has established the main issues related to the method of constructing the intended reading program. Syllabus design has been identified as the main tool for the program, and involves the selection and organization of the content, in addition to the methodology. More specifically, a hybrid approach for syllabus design has been chosen in this study that places importance not only on the product (learning objectives: skills, knowledge) that needs to be gained, but also on the process (methodology) by which such objectives are to be achieved. By setting out the main principles of syllabus design, it has been possible to identify the necessary stages for designing and organizing the intended reading program, including the stipulation of the learning purpose, identifying the learners' needs through needs analysis and subsequently determining the learning objectives. The final stage is selecting, grading, and sequencing both the content (texts) and the tasks (methodology).

The ideas that have been presented in this chapter provide the guidelines with which this study was able to move from theory to practice. The following chapter contains the first

part of the process of designing the program. Chapter 7 presents the criteria chosen for selecting, grading, and sequencing the program content (texts). It will also outline the main features of the reading program and the selected texts.

Chapter 7

The Reading Program: The Content (stories)

7.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the first stage in demonstrating the application of the conceptual model to the design of the reading program. It covers the general principles on which the material for the reading program is selected, graded, and sequenced. It draws on text readability to determine criteria for selecting the texts. It also discusses how these texts can be graded to suit the learning objective set out in Chapter 6. As indicated in Chapter 5, the conceptual model builds on the idea that meaning making in literature reading is developed through different faculties of the creative imagination: background knowledge and experience, the interactive theory of reading, intersubjectivity, analytical thinking, ZPD, and possibility thinking. The grading and sequencing process establishes how these faculties could be sequenced in the structure of the reading program to make graded cognitive demands on the learner. The final section of the chapter presents the selected stories and their features to illustrate the structure. First, however, it is necessary to provide a general overview of the course.

7.2. Overview of the Reading Program

7.2.1. Course Description

This course intends to help students extend their comprehension of short stories through an understanding of narrative structure and the role of personal experience and textual negotiation in literary response. It will pay particular attention to those elements of fiction that shape the way a story is read and understood, and how the students can be supported with specific reading strategies which draw on: background knowledge and experiences, the interactive process of reading, the role of the imagination in learning through both intersubjectivity and analytical thinking, ZPD, and possibility thinking. As they progress

through the program, students will hone their close reading skills and participate in meaningful discussion and group work.

This program draws on the conceptual model to support the experience of reading short stories as an engaging, social, aesthetic, and analytic experience. The program hopes to overcome the student view that the language barrier in a literary work can only make it accessible to highly advanced readers. It thus emphasizes the important role that readers play in giving a text its meaning through personal response. This highlights the experiential focus of the course.

A total of ten stories are included in the program, offering a stimulating mix of classic and contemporary fiction from different genres and cultural backgrounds. They have been selected according to a set of criteria that determine the level of difficulty and the appropriateness of each story to the students. The criteria are based on text readability features of the literature. They are also based on my personal knowledge of Libyan cultural values and the sort of themes and issues that are more appealing and engaging to the students. Also, since literature plays such a significant role in Libyan culture as a vehicle for passing on and communicating moral values, the texts are also chosen for their potential to reflect on some of these values in a more intercultural context.

7.3. The Process of Selecting and Grading the Stories

The aim of this section is to outline the criteria for selecting the stories. It also illustrates how the grading and sequencing of these stories can be determined based on readability features.

The following section will, therefore, draw on both reader and text variables to determine the different factors which contribute to text difficulty. Reader variables are related to the reader. They include factors like familiarity with the content and interest. Text variables relate to the text itself and include factors like lexical and syntactic difficulty (Klare, 1984). This will help in the selection of suitable texts which can facilitate the students' development from understanding concrete familiar texts to more abstract unfamiliar texts. It will also facilitate the use of different reading strategies that draw on the imagination.

7.3.1. What Makes Texts Easy or Difficult to Read: Text Readability

Providing students with texts that match their levels of proficiency has always been considered a challenge for educators (Crossley et al., 2008). It has been argued that what makes a text easy or difficult to read is determined by its readability (Hetherington, 1985; Crossley et al., 2007). Dale and Chall (1949) stated that text readability involves “the sum total of all those elements within a given piece of printed material that affect the success a group of readers have with it. The success is the extent to which they understand it, read it at an optimal speed, and find it interesting” (p.23). These elements will clarify “what makes some texts easier to read than others” (Dubay, 2004:3).

Harrison (1980) states that in order to best define readability, it would be best to determine what components of reading a text relate to text comprehension. So, to choose texts based on their potential readability requires that they are chosen for their likeliness to be understood by the students. He took account of both reader and text variables. Harrison’s definition of readability asserted that it is those aspects of the text that enable comprehension to take place. This implicitly assumes the interactive nature of reader and text variables in determining text readability, an aspect which most readability formulas, tools that have been designed to measure or predict text readability, have failed to take into consideration (Taylor, 1953; Harrison, 1980; Carrell, 1990; Crossley, et al., 2008). Initial readability formulas focused on surface features of the text, like word frequency (Thorndike, 1921; Dale-Chall, 1948), word and sentence length (Flesch, 1948; Dale-Chall, 1948; Gunning, 1952), and sentence structure (Chall, 1974). This means that what makes a text difficult includes a combination of variables which are generally traced to semantic, syntactic, and lexical difficulty. These variables are specially relevant to L2 text selection that emphasizes reader variables, like background knowledge or schematic knowledge, for determining whether a text is easy or difficult to understand (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983; Nuttall, 2005).

It has been made clear in the theoretical framework that background knowledge plays a central role in text comprehension (Smith, 1973, 1975, 2004; Goodman, 1979; Carrell, 1987, 1993; Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983; Carrell et al., 1988) and more specifically for developing the imagination (Vygotsky, 2004). The following section explores the main

features of readability that have been used in this study to select suitable texts (stories) and to grade and sequence them according to difficulty within cognitive views which take into consideration both text and reader variables. It outlines the criteria chosen for text selection and grading as well as the criteria for assessing the suitability of short stories for Libyan EFL readers and the aspects that need to be considered for grading them. So, for the purpose of determining such criteria, I will arrange my discussion of features affecting text readability under two broad categories: reader variables and text variables. Reader variables include factors related to the reader and what he brings to the text, while text variables are aspects which relate to the text and determine whether a text is easy or difficult to read and understand (Davey, 1988).

7.3.1.1. Reader Variables

A) Schematic knowledge

Reading, as indicated in the literature, involves the interaction between the text and the reader's background knowledge (Rumelhart, 1987). Second language readers use decoding and then knowledge of the content and text structure, which is schematic knowledge (Nuttall, 1996, 2005). Background knowledge and experiences can guide the readers' thinking via prediction to make guesses about textual information (Goodman, 1976, 1979). This means that "the schema employed to comprehend a text acts like an outline which guides the reader in organizing the text during the process of encoding into memory" (Carrell, 1984b:89). The implications of schema theory discussed in Chapter 4 for text readability lie in the idea that the more background knowledge a reader possesses about a particular text, the easier that text will be to understand (Carrell, 1987, 1991), and, based on the conceptual model, the easier it will be to use the imagination to build on that knowledge and make sense of the text. So, the first stages of the program will aim for texts that are schematically familiar, because they are easier to predict.

Wallace (1992) indicated that schematic knowledge involves knowledge about the content or content schema, and knowledge about the genre type, or rhetorical structure or formal schema. The former is considered largely a reader variable and the latter will be dealt with in the discussion of text variables. If the content of the text is a familiar topic or subject matter from the reader's own culture, it is easier to read and comprehend than a text with

an unfamiliar topic (Steffensen et al., 1979; Johnson, 1981; Carrell, 1987). For example, if the reader has the cultural knowledge about the topic which is discussed in the texts, he will find it easier than a text discussing issues which are culturally remote from his own. This knowledge makes comprehension much easier, and the text is therefore more readable, even if it is linguistically difficult (Nunan, 1991). Readers tend to rely on their knowledge of the topic to make guesses and predictions, and make use of textual clues, like surrounding words or phrases, and previous sentences to make predictions about the meaning (Goodman, 1979). This “tendency to rationalize”, according to Bartlett (1932:84), is particularly significant for second language readers.

Another feature related to text content which can affect its readability is concreteness. This refers to ideas or material relating to physical referents that are familiar in one’s immediate reality. A text which is concrete discusses concrete concepts and ideas which are available to the reader’s senses, such as table, door, hand, wound, walking, or eating, and are easy to visualize. It may require less inferencing than a text with more abstract and more complex concepts and ideas (e.g., love, freedom, democracy, or loyalty). It can also affect the retrieval of information in two ways (Paivio, 1971). In the first instance, imageability can affect how well information is retrieved through its organizational properties; that is, by chunking information items together. Also, imageability can prompt an additional memory code known as imaging, which enhances recall of information through ‘coding redundancy’ (Paivio, 1971). Concreteness of the text has been shown to have an effect on the reader’s memory and retention of information (Kausler et al., 1979; Marschark & Paivio, 1977). This means that a concrete text is likely to be easier to recall and comprehend than a more abstract text.

Reading ability is also considered a reader variable, since it is something which readers bring to the text. Successful reading is determined by a reader’s efficiency in sampling the visual information, such as paragraphing, font size, bold, and italics, and effective use of reading strategies to make sense of the text. Inefficient word recognition is usually associated with a slow L2 reading rate which is caused by the readers’ inability to effectively make use of their background knowledge to interact with the text using both top-down and bottom-up reading skills (Koda, 1992). Without the ability to decode, readers will not be able to apply the other reading strategies and make sense of the text (Grabe, 2009). Other variables that contribute to the difficulty in understanding text are

related to the text, its structure, and the linguistic features it contains. Factors that relate to the text are discussed under text variables in the following section.

7.3.1.2. Text Variables

A) Macro-Level Features: Rhetorical Structure

The second type of schematic knowledge that affects the readability and therefore the comprehensibility of texts on a micro-level is knowledge about the rhetorical structure of the text, which is also called ‘formal schemata’ (Carrell, 1984, 1987). Text structure has been shown to be a source of difficulty, especially for younger and less skilled readers (Berkowitz & Taylor, 1981), including second language readers. It has been shown that texts with familiar structures, like fairy tales and fables, are easier to read and comprehend than texts with unfamiliar structures (Carrell, 1984). For example, if a student is able to recognize a story as a fairy tale, he will use his rhetorical schema of the genre, build on it using his imagination, and make predictions about the kind of plot and ending it might have or about the kind of characters and how they develop.

Literary fiction contains different genres, like fairy tales and parables, and these kinds of stories have different organizational patterns that demand different forms of processing from their readers. In general, it can be said that more structured stories, such as fables, are easier to comprehend and recall than less structured stories (Rumelhart, 1975; Thorndyke, 1977; Kintsch & Yarbrough, 1982; Carrell, 1984, 1990). Rumelhart (1975:211) explains that “just as simple sentences can be said to have an internal structure, so too can stories be said to have an internal structure”. He believes that a high-level of organization takes place in stories, which make them more memorable and comprehensible. A reader’s rhetorical schema of certain genres helps him make predictions about what to expect from the text being read. This can be seen when reading a fable where one can predict how a story might end (Yarbrough, 1985).

Familiarity with the genre sometimes, but not always, entails familiarity with the content (Wallace, 1992). A reader may be able to predict the content of the text by just reading the title. Gibbons (2002) suggests that a person’s familiarity with similar topics and genres will lead him to assume that the story will probably start with an orientation (setting) and an

outlining of the relationship between the characters, and it will conclude with an ending. For example, in a story with the title of 'The Sly Cat and the Clever Mouse', the reader is probably going to assume that the story will end with the cat being fooled by the mouse. The reader's prior knowledge influences his expectations and he uses stereotypical events in a story stored in memory (Van Dijk, 1980). For example, the mouse is probably going to trick the cat by taking cheese from the kitchen while distracting him with something else. This is why some researchers have suggested teaching students rhetorical structures so that they can rely on their rhetorical schemata for making predictions about text content and therefore help them better understand texts with similar rhetorical structures (Meyer, 1979; Kintsch & Yarbrough, 1982; Carrell, 1984; Connor, 1984). Yarbrough (1985) asserts that readers are better able to understand a text with a clear and familiar organization at the macro-level of general meaning than a text with a similar content but without such organization, and that the organizational patterns that are created in that text compensate for the linguistic difficulty caused at the micro-level of detailed meaning.

The next broad category relates to the chronological organization of the text. Carrell (1987) indicated that when it comes to the understanding of top-level structure and the understanding of sequences of events and chronological relationships in narratives then, from the two factors, rhetorical form may be a more significant factor determining and influencing difficulty. Meyer and Freedle (1984) hold that a text with more chronology, in which the association between ideas is sequenced, presents less difficulty to the reader because it is organized and therefore easier to recall.

Apart from chronology, the macro-level structure of a story depends on the organization of events in a plot or the plot line. Plot is a basic story element around which other elements like setting and characters are built (Abrams, 1999). Events in a plot are sequenced in a logical manner based on for example, cause and effect, or problem and solution. Abrams (1999) states that plot is related to how the story is linked together by causes and motivations; it is a product of the events and actions being rendered and ordered towards achieving artistic and emotional effects. The plot of a story often consists of five main elements. So, a story that follows the most common linear plot structure will start with an *exposition*: preliminary information given before the start of actual events or action (Chatman, 1978). In this part of the story the setting and the characters are usually introduced. Then the events are disrupted causing a sense of *rising action*. An example of

this would be when there is danger caused by darkness. After that, the action reaches its *climax*, when tension is usually very high. The climax mostly leads to a conflict, as in the example of a confrontation with a wild animal or with criminals. Then events move to the *falling action*, which normally leads to the *resolution* (Halliwell, 1995). An illustration of a resolution would be a prince marrying a princess. This order of events determines *how* the story takes place, or what Chatman (1978) calls the ‘discourse’.

The relationship between events in the plot does not always reflect how the story is chronologically presented in the written text, meaning that sometimes the written text does not follow the five elements of exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. Sometimes a story violates the expected simple time sequence of beginning, middle, and end that was proposed by Aristotle. Despite this, Carrell (1984) points out that the temporal sequencing of the story that the readers remember still tends to reflect their schematic order of events, rather than the actual temporal order of presentation in the story.

Meyer and Freedle (1984) found that a text with more chronology, in which the association between ideas is sequenced, presents less difficulty to the reader because it is predictably organized and therefore easier to recall. If a story does not fit into the common linear structure of beginning, middle, and end, it will be harder to follow the plot, and therefore more difficult to comprehend. This is because in a non-linear plot structure, a reader’s simple story schema will not fit into the ana-chronology (not chronological) caused by a flashback or flash-forward, which a writer uses to break the flow of the discourse to either recall earlier events or leap ahead to future ones (Chatman, 1978). In the more structured linear story, the point of attack, which is the point where a story begins, is usually in the beginning, functioning as the exposition. As Chatman explains, in this kind of story the beginning will probably start off with background information about the character and place, and describe the first events which later develop into the plot, meaning the story will start with an orientation. It will first introduce the setting of the story and then move on. The setting of a narrative work refers to the place, time, or the social circumstances in which the action occurs (Abrams, 1999).

If the story does follow a linear plot, and starts with an orientation where the setting is introduced, the point of attack or logical entry to the narrative is at the beginning. Being

introduced to the setting is central for understanding a story. Sometimes the setting is explicitly stated in the story, at other times it is implied, and the reader, therefore, has to make inferences about it. Setting can provide a certain atmosphere to the story. Darkness and narrow spaces, for instance, are usually associated with a threatening or restricted atmosphere. Wide open spaces or spaces with sunlight create an atmosphere of freedom. However, sometimes a setting is not explicitly stated, meaning that the reader may have to make inferences to determine the time and place of the story, therefore making it more difficult to grasp.

If the setting is not positioned at the start of the story, the plot is usually nonlinear. The point of attack or the beginning of a written story may be depicted right in the middle of the story when the developments are already taking place (rising action). In such circumstances, the reader is plunged right into the middle of events, thus requiring more attention and processing from him (Chatman, 1978). Although Chatman states that the reader is usually provided with the necessary information about earlier events and developments through flashbacks, (or sometimes by just introducing them as part of the events), this may result in readers finding it more difficult to follow the overall organization of the plot.

Alternatively, the point of attack may be at the end of a story, where a narrator reveals the story through a series of flashbacks explaining how things have come about (Chatman, 1978). As Chatman explains, this kind of arrangement usually produces suspense, which leads readers to make guesses and speculate about what happened, and what will happen next, or what will happen at the end. If the plot ends with a resolution in which the difficulties encountered by the characters are resolved, the ending is said to be “closed”, and therefore the story is easier to understand. When a plot does not have a definitive resolution, that is, where the ending is “open”, a reader can have several different interpretations of the endings to choose from because there is not one definitive conclusion for the events (Lethbridge & Mildore, 2004). This means that a story with an open ending maybe more difficult than a story with a closed ending, where the meaning requires a range of possibilities and interpretations, which in turn requires more of the imagination. Generally speaking, this non-linear way of presenting a story is less coherent at the macro-level in terms of how the ideas are linked together, and incoherent texts are a source of difficulty to both the content and the formal schema (Halliday & Hasan, 1979).

Meyer's (1975, 1979) research looked at expository rather than narrative texts. The organizational plans of different text types have varying impact on reading recall. She identified at least five rhetorical patterns: collection, description, causation, problem/solution, and comparison, and indicated that these are distinct patterns of prose. From the five patterns, the recollection of sequences in time organized chronologically, causation, problem/solution, and comparison are more successfully remembered than recollection of description, which is a list of features usually related to the topic. This consequently affects the cognitive processing of a text.

This is relevant to the discussion because the range of rhetorical patterns found in narrative texts is similar to patterns found in expository prose. However, in a narrative, these patterns are used for a different purpose. Narrative prose may consist of a combination of rhetorical patterns (Carrell, 1984). Carrell explains, that "a folktale may contain description, causation, and time-sequenced events (that is, collection) within an overall problem/solution organization where the protagonist confronts and resolves a problem" (p' 444). The combination of patterns will support the overall macro-level pattern of the text structure. If the overall text structure is a comparison, causation, or problem/solution, the text will therefore be easier to recall and comprehend. This indicates that a story with more description is more difficult than a story with simple problem/solution or causation links between events, such as a parable or a folktale.

As mentioned earlier, the plot of a story is the foundation on which the characters are built. Characters are the persons represented in a dramatic or narrative piece of work, whom the readers interpret as having particular moral, intellectual, or emotional qualities (Abrams, 1999). There are two main areas of concern with regard to characters: the role of the characters in the story and whether they are simple or complex, meaning, character complexity. It is important for a reader to determine the role of the character first, to then be able to determine his characteristics (Chatman, 1978). This is usually done by considering a character in relation to other characters. When teaching literature in Libya, students are usually introduced to the type of characters and the different roles they may have in a story. The teachers, after students are familiar with terminology, such as protagonist, antagonist, foil, and confidante (see thesis Glossary), encourage readers to apply their knowledge of literary terms, including character role and functions, and identify

them from the text. This focus on form may be supported if students have the opportunity to relate it to meaning. If students are able to link their knowledge of literary elements to the text, a text becomes more comprehensible. This can also help them follow the plot.

Character complexity is also important when reading and analyzing stories. For instance, minor characters often remain mono-dimensional when the text presents one or just a few characteristics. Forester in *Aspects of the Novel* (1927) introduced the terms ‘flat’ and ‘round’ characters, which describe the distinction between static and dynamic characters (Abrams, 1999). A *flat character* comprises both the aspects of being mono-dimensional and static. In this sense, there is little or no development of the character throughout the story. Examples of such characters can be seen in stereotypical figures, like the wicked step-mother, the faithful servant, and the miserly old man. Oliver in *Oliver Twist* is mono-dimensional (i.e. good) as well as being a static character. A *round character*, on the other hand, is “complex in temperament and motivation and is represented with subtle particularity. Such a character is “as difficult to describe with any adequacy as a person in real life, and like real persons, is capable of surprising us” (Abrams, 1999:33).

Major characters, on the other hand, are more frequently multi-dimensional and dynamic, though this is not always a rule. One might argue, for instance, that a round character has a number of defining characteristics, sometimes conflicting ones. Such a character is usually dynamic in the sense that he or she undergoes a development throughout the story. Classic examples of characters that develop are Charlotte Bronte’s Jane Eyre or Dickens’s David Copperfield (Abrams, 1999). By tracing the development of the characters and their dimensions, a reader of literature can better understand the story and how it develops (Lazar, 1993). The way in which a text informs the reader about characters through action or dialogue is termed ‘characterization’. Readers are able to work out the function and characteristics of the characters by inference and from dialogue, whether from the character himself or through other characters. A reader can also infer information about a character through his actions.

Characterization can sometimes be explicit, when someone, either the narrator through his narrative point of view, or another character, explicitly tell the reader through dialogue what a character is like (Chatman, 1979). At other times, we can deduce character traits implicitly from actions or other characters’ attitudes to those characters. Chatman asserts

that it is important for readers to take into account the reliability of the source of characterization. A character's explicit characterization of other characters serves the purpose of implicit self-characterization since it expresses attitudes towards them, revealing a character's weaknesses or strengths. For instance, the atmosphere or the environment in which a character moves can also serve to provide some background about his character. Sometimes the setting or the place reflects the personality of the character, symbolizing an aspect of that character. For instance, a dark and dangerous atmosphere could represent the action taking place or the character himself, suggesting an evil individual. If readers are able to make these connections, they will be able to achieve a level of response by reflecting back on their own fears, and will thereby be able to imagine the scene.

Problems may arise when a characterization of an individual is given by another character whose reliability is questionable, for instance, that is, from an unreliable narrator. This makes it difficult for a reader to determine what is true and what is false about the characters, and in such cases, more detailed textual analysis and inferencing is required. In this sense, narratology as a craft is something that readers might learn to recognize as they analyze the story and try to make sense of it. Through the recognition of a narrator's point of view, readers can extract some ideas and information from the text.

The point of view is the writer's choice as to the way a story gets told. It is the mode (or modes) established by an author by which the reader is presented with the characters, dialogue, actions, setting, and events, which constitute the narrative in a work of fiction (Abrams, 1999). It is one of the most prominent and persistent concerns in modern treatments of the art of prose fiction (Chatman, 1978; Abrams, 1999). There are two main types of point of view. 'The first person' is usually a character in the story; the reader can identify him through the use of the first person pronoun I. The second type of point of view is the third-person point of view. There are two types of third-person point of view, which may be omniscient or all knowing, or limited. Either the narrator seems to know everything about the characters, actions, and events, and has privileged access to the characters' thoughts, feelings, and motives, or the narrator tells the story and stays inside the confines of what is perceived (Abrams, 1999). If the narrator only tells the story, readers may find it difficult to connect with the characters and personally relate to them, which can cause

difficulty understanding their intentions and thus may cause difficulty understanding the text as a whole.

Another term, which is related to how we think about a narrative as a mode of speech or what is called 'discourse' and is helpful for readers' analysis and experiencing of literature, is 'tone' (Abrams, 1999). According to Richards (1930), tone is the language that reflects the literary speaker's attitudes to his listeners. In a literary narrative, the writer's tone reflects his attitudes towards the characters he is writing about in the text. The writer's tone could be "critical or approving, formal or intimate, outspoken or reticent, solemn or playful, arrogant or prayerful, angry or loving, serious or ironic, condescending or obsequious", and if readers are able to detect that, it could reveal some things about the characters, or even the events, that they may or may not find helpful for understanding the whole story. Other aspects that affect text readability relate to the language of the text and how language affects the presentation and development of a story. These are discussed under micro-level variables.

B) Micro-Level Features: Language Complexity

Text readability is also influenced by features at the micro level, which are considered important, since students in this study are reading in their L2. Such features include syntactic complexity, and vocabulary difficulty.

a) Syntactic Complexity

Syntactic complexity is usually measured by sentence length, mostly by readability formulas (e.g. Dale and Chall, 1948; Flesh, 1948). Sentence length is said to correlate with difficulty (Botel et al., 1973; Schulz, 1981). Apart from memory considerations, longer sentences are considered more complex because they are likely to contain more ideas linked by complex structures, like coordination and subordination (Beaman, 1984; Hetherington, 1985). Catalano (1990) in his study states, "Readability and writing experts say sentence length is an appropriate gauge of difficulty because it measures relationships" (p.98). So, it was hypothesized that the more clauses there are in a sentence, the more difficult it is to understand (Harrison, 1980). Such relationships refer to the coordination of simple clauses or to the connection of dependent clauses with the main clause

(Hetherington, 1985). That is why, according to Hetherington, there have been many recommendations to reduce difficulty by shortening sentences. According to Hetherington, such proposals were rather problematic, since, although, they reduce the complexity of the sentences as a separate unit, simplified sentences can result in the discourse becoming incoherent and disconnected (Marshall, 1979)

However, complex structures are not necessarily an indication of difficulty. Pearson (1974) argues that complex sentences are normally used to express complex ideas and therefore clarify and point to certain referential information that links sentences together. He further illustrates that a sentence like “Because the chain broke, the machine stopped” on the surface is considered more difficult than “The chain broke. The machine stopped” because it is longer. However, it is actually easier to understand the longer sentence than the two short simple sentences (p.190). In fact, “Pedagogically, the data lend no support to the recommendation that the difficulty of written discourse can be reduced by eliminating subordinating constructions or reducing sentence length” (Pearson, 1974:189). This is due to the causal link between the two short sentences being lost, consequently forcing the reader to try to infer the relationships that exist between the sentences. Complex sentences with clues that indicate relationships with other sentences are less difficult than short simple sentences, which can be somewhat redundant.

Marshall (1979) clarifies this point by indicating that readers tend to benefit from information which reveals the relationships found in complex sentences. On the other hand, when faced with short sentences, readers have to use a sufficient amount of inferencing to be able to understand. This supports Danks's (1969) and Stoodt's (1972) argument that understanding sentences is merely a function of meaning (semantics) and that it is less reliant on the grammar (syntax). It could then be concluded that texts with very short sentences are sometimes harder to process and understand than longer complex sentence structures, unless there are cohesive ties and discourse markers.

Cohesive devices are used in a written text to make connections and signal relations between ideas and sentences (Nuttall, 2005). These may be pronouns, connectives, and the omission of redundant words. An experienced reader will supply connections that are not given in the text, but a reader who does not possess the skill or the appropriate schemata will find it difficult. Apart from the sequence and the arrangement of the sentences,

coherence depends on the use of text structuring words known as ‘discourse markers’ to distinguish between one rhetorical feature and another (Nuttall, 2005). Words like *however*, *thus*, and *on the contrary* are used to help the reader identify the intended value of the sentences in which they occur; a reader will expect to find a result, contrast, or contradiction. Complex discourse markers do not tend to be used in simple, straightforward texts since the reader can identify the relationships between the ideas for himself. Sometimes complex texts contain discourse markers, because such discourse markers (for example, *and* or *but*) are usually used because they link complex ideas. So, sometimes, but not always, more discourse markers in a text is an indication of its complexity.

b) Vocabulary Difficulty

Vocabulary difficulty is an important aspect of text readability (Harrison, 1980; Hetherington, 1985), but not the exclusive determiner of text difficulty (Duffy and Kabance, 1982). Duffy and Kabance indicate that it is a correlative but not a causative factor in text comprehension. Of course, this could be traced to the significant role that schema has contributed to the comprehension of texts. Vocabulary difficulty is usually measured by word length (e.g. Flesh, 1948) and word frequency (e.g. Thorndike, 1929). It is assumed that longer and less frequent words are more difficult than short and frequently used words.

Word length is usually calculated by the number of syllables that a word has (e.g. Flesch’s *Reading Ease Readability Formula*, 1948), although this method may be questionable. Hetherington (1985) argues that such measures have failed to take into account the common use of affixes and compound words, suggesting that vocabulary difficulty cannot and should not only be measured by the length of the word.

Word frequency can be helpful in determining difficulty, but based on the level of the students and the amount of lexical knowledge they have. The more words a reader knows or is familiar with, the more accessible the text becomes (Thorndike, 1921). Unfamiliar words will require that students use reading strategies in order to make sense of them, such as guessing meaning from context (Nuttall, 2005). Coady and Huckin (1997), after drawing on a number of studies, conclude that “a number of 3,000 word families or 5,000 lexical items is needed for general reading comprehension, as this would cover 90-95% of any text. Below this threshold, reading strategies become ineffective” (p.2). Therefore, if

readers have to process a text that has a high percentage of unfamiliar words, then their comprehension is impeded. If an L2 reader is mostly “focusing on slightly or completely unfamiliar words”, then that “will take up some cognitive capacity that would otherwise be used for higher level processing of the text” (Laufer, 1997:22).

Density of unfamiliar words is therefore considered an issue that needs to be addressed in selecting texts for EFL students, especially at earlier stages, where the focus is on general understanding of the text. If a text contains a large number of unfamiliar or difficult words, it will cause impediments to the students’ comprehension of the text (Nuttall, 2005). So, this indicates that beyond a certain percentage of unfamiliar words, processing the text becomes strenuous. This is why Nuttall suggests that in an L2 reading text, the best percentage of unknown words on a page would be 1%, which is equal to about seven words on a page of about 550 words. Above that figure, understanding the text becomes problematic for the students. Providing too many new words is not an effective strategy for vocabulary development, since words are best learned in context (Nuttall, 2005). Teachers could use different strategies to decrease the number of unfamiliar words, such as simplification, pre-teaching vocabulary, or giving a glossary (Wallace, 1992; Nuttall, 2005). In fact, I would argue that it would also be acceptable if a text does not have any new words. That way, the focus will be more on understanding the general meaning of the text, especially when the main focus is on general comprehension of the text and the moral it presents. So, a text with fewer difficult or unfamiliar words is easier to understand. Also, the number of new words in a text should be minimal, if focus is on general comprehension.

Another issue that may be raised in relation to vocabulary choice concerns how words are used and the reason behind such use. This is discussed under figurative language.

- **Figurative language**

Sometimes word difficulty does not relate to unfamiliarity or frequency but rather to words being used figuratively, in a non-literal way, for stylistic purposes. For example, Wallace (1992) argues that sometimes the words in a text are familiar, but they do not fit the usual meaning suggested by the writer in that specific context. The use of figures of speech and

the choice of words are related to the stylistic effect the writer wishes to make and the image that he wishes to convey in the text.

Abdulrahman (2012) indicates that there are many ways of using language creatively by attributing metaphoric and metonymic meanings which differ from the original ones. It is a “change in what we take to be their standard meaning” (Abrams, 1999:76). He further illustrates that although identifying this departure from the standard may be a disputable matter, nonetheless, what may be agreed on is that standard meaning, that is, the literal meaning of the word. An EFL learner who is familiar with figurative use of language can be said to be pragmatically competent (Abdulrahman, 2012). Language used in a figurative way for a rhetorical purpose is sometimes referred to as a ‘trope’ (Thornborrow & Wareing, 1998). Tropes are common in most language use; they are used for their effect.

Tropes or what can be called ‘figures of speech’ are usually related to a departure from the standard language usage not only in the meaning of words but also in the order or syntactical pattern of the words. Literary texts are probably one of the main genres that tend to use language in this way (Carter & Simpson, 2005). The most commonly identified figures of speech, according to Abrams (1999), are: simile, metaphor, irony, symbols, personification, paradox, and hyperbole (Culler, 1975). Definitions of these terms are provided in the thesis Glossary.

Failing to interpret such figures of speech could be a result of failure to interpret the relationship between lexical items and other parts of the discourse, or what can be referred to as ‘lexical cohesion’, in which words have the same referent or refer to the same thing (Nuttall, 2005:91). Nuttall states that this can include the use of example, synonymy, hyponymy, or metaphor. Also, they may include words such as text-structuring words which require the reader to fill out the meaning, usually from other parts of the text (Nuttall, 2005). Nuttall also points out those words often get their meaning by referring or looking back at other parts of the text, from external facts, or sometimes from common sense related to experience and knowledge of the world. These meanings could involve the use of irony, symbol, or simile. According to Nuttall, these forms of lexical choices are hard to pin down, and it is important that readers are able to understand them in order to understand the meaning of the text as a whole. So, figurative language and imagery are

two important variables that need to be considered in the selection of my texts since they may cause linguistic and conceptual difficulties for the readers.

7.3.2. The Identified Criteria for Short Story Selection

In the previous section, I have determined the main factors that contribute to text difficulty or what is referred to in the literature as ‘text readability’. Current cognitive views on text readability presented in this study define it as a measure of how easy or difficult a text is to understand. Since reading is an interactive process between the text and the reader, factors which contribute to text difficulty include a mixture of both reader and text variables. These factors can be further divided into three main categories relating to schematic knowledge, rhetorical structure, and language complexity. Based on these categories, the criteria for selecting and grading the texts to be used for the current study are:

- Schematic knowledge, which includes cultural and content knowledge, such as theme, abstractness-concreteness of topic or subject matter, and reading ability.
- Rhetorical/Text Structure, which includes plot, setting, character and characterization, and point of view.
- Language Complexity, which includes syntactic complexity and vocabulary difficulty.

The above criteria, as I have mentioned, were used to select and grade the stories based on their difficulty level. The table showing the criteria for text selection is shown in Appendix 1. When selecting the texts, I also had to resort to other resources, such as reading different analysis, blogs, essays, and stylistics analyses by literary critics. The reason for doing this was to make use of as many ideas as possible, and perceive different interpretations and responses to better exploit the text for classroom practice. The following section will present the reading program by offering features of the ten selected stories that have been used in the current program to demonstrate how they are sequenced to fit the conceptual model.

7.4. Features of the Reading Program: The Selected Stories

This section presents the reading program and the selected texts. It also shows how the texts have been graded and sequenced according to the identified criteria presented in the previous section, and how the learning outcomes that have been inferred from the literature on L2 reading instruction can be fitted to the conceptual model. Finally, the features of the program are presented to demonstrate the characteristics, aims, objectives, strategies use, and focus of each selected story.

7.4.1. Graded Learning Outcomes and Stages of the Program

Based on the established criteria presented in the previous section, this section demonstrates how the grading process of the program content is determined. Syllabus design, as discussed in Chapter 6, involves setting learning outcomes (Nunan, 1986). These outcomes mainly set out to demonstrate how the designed program is organized. The learning outcomes are therefore used to structure and organize the type of knowledge and skills which are aimed at in the course objectives for the design of the reading program. The learning outcomes focus on illustrating how the objectives identified in Chapter 6 will be achieved. The learning outcomes that this course has set have been structured in a graded way to help students gradually develop their knowledge and skills for reading and responding to short stories using their imagination. Bloom's (1956) *Taxonomy of Cognitive Skills*, which has been dominant in many educational settings (Yorke, 2003) has been adapted to guide this grading and sequencing process.

The graded learning outcomes were arranged in a way to link the conceptual model with Bloom's types of cognitive skills. For that reason, the reading program was arranged into five developmental stages shown in Figure 7.1. Accordingly, the texts were graded in these five stages to help achieve the course objectives, with each stage focusing on developing a different set of skills starting with comprehension then application, analysis, evaluation, and, lastly, creation, where 'comprehension' is the most simple and 'creation' the most demanding.

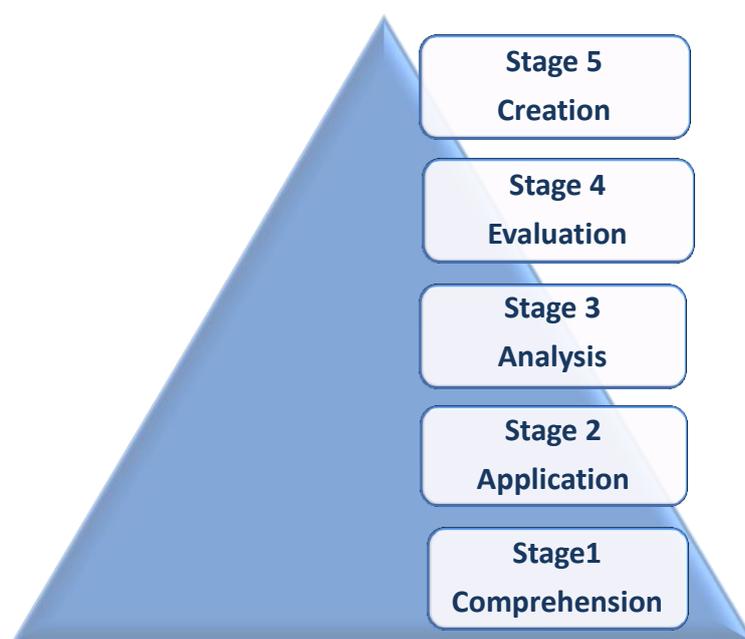


Figure 7. 1. The Learning Outcomes in the Five Stages of the Reading Program

Each stage consists of two stories which have similar learning outcomes and similar cognitive characteristics that permeate the acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary in each developmental stage. Therefore, the five stages were aimed at: comprehension, application, analysis, evaluation, and creation.

A total of ten stories were selected, with levels ranging from more simple and concrete to more abstract and complex. The determination of these levels is based on a set of criteria that meet the demands of each stage. Key elements that were focused on for grading and sequencing the stories are: subject matter, theme, plot, setting, character and characterization, point of view, and also language complexity (shown in Appendix 2). For example, in Stage 1, the focus is on developing comprehension. Therefore, the texts were chosen because they have concrete familiar topics, such as giving and taking advice as in the first story ‘Joha and his Donkey’, and misjudging others in the second story ‘Cookies’. These stories have familiar rhetorical structures which have predictable outcomes that could be taken as a moral or lesson for the reader. Such texts have a simple familiar rhetorical structure which is linear, and the setting is explicitly stated in the beginning of the story in the exposition. There are simple, flat characters, who are explicitly characterized and static throughout the stories. The story is narrated by a third-person narrator, and it has familiar grammatical structures and familiar words. Such simple texts

are, therefore, suitable for focusing on the general comprehension of the text. This allows the students, through the faculty of analytical thinking, to draw on schema and make use of their background knowledge and experiences and employ their imaginations to use that knowledge and make predictions about the text's meaning and the moral behind it.

In the second stage, the stories were chosen to support application skills because they have simple, concrete topics that are familiar for example, running away from death in the third story 'The Appointment in Samara', and the consequences of ignoring parental advice in the fourth story 'Little Red Riding Hood'. Both stories have a single theme and familiar and predictable rhetorical structure; the plot is linear, and the setting is stated at the beginning of the story. The story is also considered simple, because of its simple characters, although the characters are implicitly characterized. Tension is raised through conflict between characters, and therefore, character roles are easier to identify. The stories in this stage have third-person limited narrators and contain some difficult vocabulary. In the second story, there are some difficult syntactic structures and some figurative language, like irony and symbolism. Based on these criteria, I was able to determine the suitability of the texts for focusing on students' application of knowledge and skills to understand the text by drawing on what they already know to interact with the text and use their knowledge of the language and text structure (plot structure). For example, in the fourth text, the students use their knowledge of plot structure and of the language, features such as symbolism, to make sense of the story. In this stage of the program, students could draw on interactive reading skills and use reading strategies to understand the text.

The third stage makes use of stories which are slightly difficult than previous ones, 'The Birthmark', and 'The Open Window'. The topics are unfamiliar, with more than one issue and theme explored in each, such as reality vs. appearance, obsession, and the danger of controlling nature. The plot is linear and the settings are explicitly stated by the narrator. The characters in these texts are quite complicated and characterized indirectly through their actions, which requires inferencing from the students. The two stories are narrated in the third-person omniscient point of view, and language is to some extent difficult since it contains a few unfamiliar words and figures of speech, such as similes, imagery, symbolism, and irony (at the end). Therefore, in this stage, students are trained to use their background knowledge to comprehend, and to apply their knowledge of text structure, of

characters roles, and of the language to make sense of the text. These texts are chosen and graded based on their potential to provide an opportunity for close analysis of characters and of how the language of the text informs us about the characters and their personalities. The texts in this stage provide more opportunity for drawing on analytical thinking, intersubjectivity, and interactive reading. Characters are the main focus at this stage of the program as are the ways in which language choice can be used to inform character traits and complexity.

In Stage 4, the two stories that were selected were graded based on the complexity of their themes, and on the unfamiliar content that they present. This complexity relates both to their level of abstraction, and to the multiple issues that they raise about freedom, morality, and relationships in story 7 ‘The Story of an Hour’, and on injustice, apartheid (racism), oppression, and violence in story 8 ‘The Wasteland’ , which are all discussed with specific cultures in mind. The first story is about women in the 1800s in US societies, and the second discusses South African society. Another important criterion of this stage is that the plot not be linear; so the point of attack or the beginning of the story is in the middle of the rising action. Both stories in this stage have complex, round, unpredictable characters and an implied setting. In the first story, the time is implied, and in the second story, the time is explicit. The two stories are chosen to help focus on evaluation skills as well as to draw on the previously learned skills of using background knowledge, the application of knowledge of literary elements and language, and analysis of word choice and characters. This will help students use their analytical thinking and intersubjectivity to not only evaluate character behavior and make reasoned judgments about their actions but also the writer’s choice of language and what it informs about the characters. In such stories, the content is culturally specific, and that’s why the tasks will encourage students to make connections as they evaluate characters by relating to them through the two features of the conceptual model, namely, intersubjectivity and analytical thinking.

In the last stage, stage 5, the stories were selected to mainly focus on developing students’ creative skills. The stories were selected because they provide more opportunity to raise the level of cognitive demand on the students, thereby helping supporting creative skills. So, these stories have abstract themes, such as madness, pain, and remorse, and although these topics are universal, they are culturally unfamiliar. The structure of the text is rather

challenging as the plot is not linear. The first story ‘Incarnations of Burned Children’ starts in the middle of the action (in the rising action), and the last story actually builds up from the end and is based on a flashback. The setting is very difficult to decipher and requires a lot of inferencing and close analysis to understand when and where the events took place. Although the characters are presented at the beginning of the story, the main characters are rather complex and round. In the second story ‘The Tell-Tale Heart’, the main character is also the narrator, but is an unreliable one, as it turns out, and is struggling to convince the reader of his sanity after committing a crime. The language and writing style is quite challenging in both stories. In the first story, the sentences are very long and run-on, while in the second one, they are sometimes very short and elliptic, therefore requiring more inferencing and finding relationships between parts of the sentences or paragraphs. The vocabulary is also challenging and contains some unfamiliar words and, especially in the final story, two or three archaic words. Based on the level of complexity found in these stories, they have the potential to develop all prior features of the model (background knowledge, interactive reading, intersubjectivity, analytical thinking, and possibility thinking) and help the students develop their creative meaning making through interaction and collaboration. Close analysis of the characters and the language, intersubjectivity through empathy, and possibility thinking and the construction of new ideas are central at this stage of the program.

Grading and sequencing the program content based on these cognitive demands provides the opportunity to structure the texts according to complexity factors, but also helps develop the different faculties of the imagination to be drawn upon as the program develops. This method of grading, which adopts Bloom’s taxonomy of thinking skills, makes it possible not only to achieve the intended objectives but also to provide instructional guidelines that help structure the lessons to create an ongoing process of knowledge building (of the language, literary elements, and reading strategies). This should allow the conceptual model of imaginative response to fiction to be applied in a structured and measurable way. The learning outcomes presented in this section were important for the design of the reading program. They help set the purpose of the program and determine the general features of its content to inform the process for selecting and grading the stories. The next section presents the features of the program that follow selection, grading, and sequencing by conducting a detailed analysis of each story, looking

at its background, length, general topic and main themes, level of difficulty, lesson objective, model features, learning outcome, and the strategies to be focused on in order to draw on all aspects of the conceptual model.

7.4.2. Stage 1

Lesson 1: "Joha and His Donkey" & Lesson 2: "Cookies"

Lesson 1: "Joha and his Donkey" by Jawaher Mutlaq Alotaibi, available at:

<http://www.storyjumper.com/book/index/14746422/Joha-and-His-Donkey>

To the line: 'What kind of a man owns a donkey and yet walks with his son when he should be riding?'

Word count: 439

Genre: Folktale

Publication date/period/place: This is an old folktale that spread orally around the Arab world. Most Arabic people are familiar with the character of Joha and the kind of situations that he finds himself in. He is mostly known for his silly and funny behaviour and his many complications and dilemmas.

Summary and overview of main themes: This story is about taking advice on a journey and on who should ride on the donkey. It has four different incidents, in each of which Joha is criticised, making it impossible for him to please people. The theme is that it is impossible to satisfy others and one should do what he thinks is best.

Level of Difficulty (cognitive demands):

- **Subject matter:** Concrete
- **Theme:** Single theme, moral, with predictable outcome.
- **Plot:** Linear plot structure with (Beginning, middle, and end), with a closed ending.
- **Setting:** Explicit presentation of place, implicit time
- **Character/Characterization:** Simple flat, explicitly characterized
- **Point of View:** Third-person limited, no dialogue
- **Language complexity:** Familiar words, simple sentences, familiar rhetorical structure.

Aim of the lesson: Determine central ideas or theme of a text and analyze its development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas,

Lesson 2: "Cookies" by Douglas Adams, available at:

<http://lingualeo.com/es/jungle/cookies-by-douglas-adams-42061#/page/1>

Word count: 470

Genre: Folktale.

Publication date/ period/place: This legend has circulated in Great Britain at least since 1972. Author Douglas Adams tells the "packet of biscuits (Cookies)" tale in his 1984 novel *So Long, and Thanks for All the Fish*. The theme of the "victim turned thief" has circulated since the early 1900s.

Summary and overview of main themes: A universal situation where the “victim is turned into a thief”. It is a funny story about how sometimes we can be so ignorant of how wrong we are and thus misjudge other people.

Level of Difficulty:

- **Subject matter:** concrete.
- **Theme:** single theme, it has a moral, and predictable outcome.
- **Plot:** Linear plot (beginning, middle, and end), with a closed ending
- **Setting:** Explicit presentation of time and place
- **Character/characterization:** simple flat characters, explicitly characterized.
- **Point of view:** first-person limited narrator, and no dialogue.
- **Language complexity:** familiar words, simple sentences, familiar rhetorical structure.

Aim of the lesson: General comprehension, to use background knowledge to make speculations about the meaning of the text and the moral behind it.

Focus of Stage 1 (Lesson 1 + 2)

Learning outcome: comprehension. Students should be able to use their background knowledge and recall information from the text to understand and make sense of it.

Main features of the model included: Schema theory, (interactive) theory of reading, the imagination as a tool for thinking and meaning making, analytical thinking and intersubjectivity, and the use of ZPD pedagogy.

Reading strategies focused on: activating prior knowledge, predicting, decoding scanning, making connections, and summarizing.

7.4.3. Stage 2

Lesson 3: “Little Red Riding Hood” & Lesson 4: “The Appointment in Samarra”

Lesson 3: “The Appointment in Samarra” by Roger Hurn, available at:

<http://www.storymondo.com/news/appointment-in-samarra/>

Word count: 660

Genre: Folktale

Publication date/period/place: An Arabic folktale (parable). A retelling of the story told by Somerset Maugham (1933) of an ancient Mesopotamian tale. Published in 2012 as part of Roger Hurn’s collection *Spooky Stories and Twisted Tales*.

Summary and overview of main themes: Tale of a man who tries to run away from death. The main theme in this story is that you cannot escape death, and that one cannot change his fate/destiny no matter how hard he tries.

Level of difficulty:

- **Subject matter:** concrete.
- **Theme:** single theme, moral (lesson), unpredictable outcome.
- **Plot:** linear plot with (beginning, middle, and end), closed ending (surprise ending/irony).
- **Setting:** Explicit presentation of place, time is implied.
- **Character/characterization:** simple flat characters, implicitly characterized.
- **Point of view:** third-person limited narrator, with dialogue.
- **Language complexity:** simple words, simple sentences, figurative language (irony + symbolism)

Aim of the lesson: The aim of this lesson is to help the students to selectively use reading strategies to understand the text. It introduces the students to types of irony. Become able to identify character roles.

Lesson 4: “Little Red Riding Hood” By Brothers Grimm, available at:

http://germanstories.vcu.edu/grimm/rot_dual.html . **To line:** I will never by myself leave the path, to run into the wood, when my mother has forbidden me to do so.

Word count: 1140

Genre: Folktale

Publication date/period/place: European tale which is traced back to the 10th Century. This version was published by Jeanette Hassenpflug (1791–1860), Germany.

Summary and overview of main themes: The main theme in this traditional story is that children should not talk to strangers, and that they should listen to their parents’ advice, and the consequences of ignoring parental advice or instructions. It conjures different issues like love, care, danger, obedience, and discipline which are all generalizable themes that take different forms, and involve different age groups.

Level of difficulty:

- **Subject matter:** concrete.
- **Theme:** single theme, moral, predictable outcome.
- **Plot:** linear plot (beginning, middle, and end), closed ending.
- **Setting:** explicit presentation of place, implicit time.
- **Character/characterization:** simple flat characters, implicit + explicit characterization.
- **Point of view:** third-person limited, with dialogue.
- **Language complexity:** unfamiliar words, complex sentences, symbolism.

Aim of the lesson: to follow a simple story structure, and understand the five stages of plot. Identify symbolism.

Focus of Stage 2 (Lessons 3 + 4)

Learning outcome: application. Students will be able to use their knowledge of the language, literary conventions, and reading skills to construct meaning from the text.

Main features of the model included: Schema theory, (interactive) theory of reading, the imagination as a tool for thinking and meaning making, analytical thinking, intersubjectivity, and possibility thinking.

Reading Strategies focused on: activating prior knowledge, predicting, decoding, skimming, scanning, making connections, visualizing, and summarizing.

7.4.4. Stage 3

Lesson 5: “The Birthmark” & Lesson 6 “The Open Window”

Lesson 5: “The Birthmark” by Nathaniel Hawthorne, available at:

<http://lingualeo.com/pt/jungle/the-birthmark-by-nathaniel-hawthorne-160298#/page/1>

Word Count: 1360

Genre: this short fiction belongs to the genre of “Dark Romanticism” with its interest in psychology, philosophy, and morality. It is also a story with a lesson or moral.

Period/Publication date/place: 19th century literature. It was first published in the March 1843 edition of *The Pioneer* and later appeared in [Mosses from an Old Manse](#), a collection of Hawthorne's short stories published in 1846.

Summary and overview of main themes: This Classic short story discusses a number of themes. The main theme is about obsession and Nature vs. Science, and how Man is constantly in a quest to control Nature. Another significant theme in this story is the foolishness of thriving for perfection and how humans are imperfect creatures. This story raises many questions about ideology and perfection, and teaches about morality and destructive ambition.

Level of difficulty:

- **Subject matter:** abstract.
- **Theme:** multiple themes, story with a moral, unpredictable outcome
- **Plot:** linear plot structure (beginning, middle, and end), closed ending (surprise ending/ironic).
- **Setting:** implicit presentation of time and place.
- **Character/characterization:** complex round characters, implicit + explicit characterization.
- **Point of view:** third-person omniscient with dialogue.
- **Language complexity:** unfamiliar words, complex sentences, figurative language (similes, metaphors, symbolism), imagery.

Aim of the lesson: (Analyzing the characters). The aim of the lesson is that students become able to make interpretations about the characters and character types. They will learn to make classifications for the characters and then how this can help them make sense of the specific issues related to them as used in the text.

Lesson 6 “The Open Windows” by H.H. Munro (Saki), available at:

<http://www.eastoftheweb.com/short-stories/UBooks/OpeWin.shtml>

Short film at:

https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=15&cad=rja&uact=8&sig=2&ved=0ahUKewjBiJSVw57UAhVpJMAKHUHeBi4QtwIlaTAO&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3DnZfSa0z8mvo&usq=AFQjCNHkHOTxdzUWqcoLR_Nh8zg_2Qjt9g

Word Count: 1212

Genre: Comedy/ humour

Publication date/ period/ place: published in the collection *Beasts and Super-Beasts* in 1914, England.

Summary and overview of main themes: Vera, a charming teenager, plays a practical joke on a nervous visitor, causing him to run off from the house. It is a story about deception and very strong perception. Key themes in this story are appearance vs. reality, the power of the imagination, and the art of storytelling and telling lies. Other themes are child comedic fantasy vs. dull adult lifestyle, and sanity and insanity and how there is a fine line between them.

Level of difficulty:

- **Subject matter:** abstract.
- **Theme:** multiple themes, unpredictable outcome.
- **Plot:** non-linear plot structure (point of attack at middle), closed ending (twist ending/ironic).
- **Setting:** implicit presentation of time and place.
- **Character/characterization:** complex round characters, implicit + explicit characterization.
- **Point of view:** third-person omniscient, with dialogue.
- **Language complexity:** unfamiliar words, complex sentences, figurative language (irony, symbolism, imagery)

Aim of the lesson: To analyze characters, characterization, point of view and focalisation and how they affect the meaning of the text. Text structure and tone.

Focus of Stage 3 (Lessons 5 + 6)

Learning outcome: Analysis. Students will be able to examine the language, content, and structure of the text, and use their prior knowledge to understand how they affect and influence the overall meaning of the text.

Main features of the model include: Schema theory, interactive reading theory, the imagination as a tool for meaning making, analytical thinking, intersubjectivity, ZPD, and possibility thinking.

Reading Strategies focused on: activating prior knowledge, previewing, predicting, decoding scanning, making connections, guessing meaning from context, questioning, inferencing, note taking, and listing.

7.4.5. Stage 4

Lesson 7: “The Story of an Hour” & Lesson 8: “The Wasteland”

Lesson 7: “The Story of an Hour” by Kate Chopin, available at:

<http://archive.vcu.edu/english/engweb/webtexts/hour/>

Word Count: 1021

Genre: Family drama, 19th century American Literature.

Publication date/period/place: *The Story of an Hour* was published in 1894 in Vogue, USA.

Summary and overview of main themes: The story raises the issue of the position of women, and talks about the forbidden joy of independence and freedom in marriage, specifically, and in society, in general, in the late 1800s. The main idea developed is about “joy that kills”. Other themes that are raised in this dramatic text are morality and relationships between spouses. It also sheds some light on sub-themes, like communicating bad or sad news, and the consequences that follow such news.

Level of difficulty:

- **Subject matter:** abstract.
- **Theme:** multiple themes, unpredictable outcome.
- **Plot:** non-linear plot (point of attack at the middle), closed ending (surprise twist ending/ironic).
- **Setting:** implicit presentation of time and place.
- **Character/characterization:** main character (complex), implicit characterization.
- **Point of view:** third-person omniscient, with dialogue.
- **Language complexity:** unfamiliar words, complex sentences, descriptive (a lot of imagery), figurative language (metaphor, similes, irony, repetition), symbolism.

Aim of the lesson: Analyze cultural significance and connect the text to background and cultural information. Evaluate character behaviour and make moral judgements about them (morally)

Lesson 8: “The Wasteland” by Alan Paton, available at:

<http://www.teachergratitude.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/The-Waste-Land-by-Alan-Paton.doc>

Word Count: 1083

Genre: African Literature

Publication date/period/place: published as part of Alan Paton's collection *Tales from a Troubled Land* in 1961 South Africa.

Summary and overview of main themes: The story is about a man who is chased by a group of young criminals, and unknowingly ends up killing his own son. The main themes are crime, desperation, and injustice in the author's home land, South Africa.

Other themes in the story are fear and courage. It is realistic in the sense that it can happen anywhere, to anyone, and raises social and political issues related to oppression, poverty, injustice, inhumanity and the consequences that they can lead to. The story is culturally loaded, yet raises universal questions about morality and justice.

Level of difficulty:

- **Subject matter:** abstract.
- **Theme:** multiple themes, unpredictable outcome.
- **Plot:** non-linear plot structure (point of attack at the middle), closed ending (surprise ending).
- **Setting:** implicit presentation of time, explicit indication of time.
- **Character/characterization:** complex round character (main), implicitly characterized.
- **Point of view:** third-person omniscient, with dialogue.
- **Language complexity:** unfamiliar words, complex sentences, descriptive language, figurative language (symbolism, imagery, metaphor, irony).

Aim of the lesson: To examine the role of background information and the cultural background of author and how these inform the meaning of the text. Evaluate and judge characters' behavior and personalities, and provide textual evidence.

Focus of Stage 4 (Lesson 7 + 8)

Learning outcome: Evaluation. Students will be able to critically examine the story content and language, make reasoned judgments and justifications about story and the writing style.

Main features of the model include: Schema theory, theory of reading, the role of the imagination in learning, analytical thinking, intersubjectivity, pedagogy (ZPD).

Reading strategies focused on: activating prior knowledge, decoding, scanning, skimming, visualizing, making connections with the text, monitoring comprehension, using contextual clues, inferencing, visualizing, predicting, analysing, evaluating.

7.4.6. Stage 5

Lesson 9: "Incarnations of Burned Children" & Lesson 10: "The Tell-Tale Heart"

Lesson 9: "Incarnations of Burned Children" By David Foster Wallace, available at: <https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=sites&srcid=ZGVmYXVsdGRvbWFpbm9jcndyMjEwfGd4OjIwNTQzODI2ZDVkNjAxODM>

Word Count: 1100

Genre: Tragedy, Contemporary literature

Publication date/period/place: published in 2004 in New York, USA.

Summary and overview of main themes: The story describes an unfortunate accident involving a toddler who is burned with hot water that falls on him from the stove. It is a telling of the parents' desperate attempts to treat the child and ease his pain, however failing to notice that the hot water has actually accumulated in his diaper. This tragic story is about dealing with severe pain (physical for the child, and emotional for the parents), and helplessness in both (the child who cannot communicate where the pain really is, and the parents who are unable to understand their son). It lends itself to discussion about negligence, blame, and remorse.

Level of difficulty:

- **Subject matter:** abstract.
- **Theme:** multiple themes, ambiguous unpredictable outcome.
- **Plot:** non-linear plot structure (point of attack at the middle), open ending (no resolution).
- **Setting:** implicit presentation of time and place.
- **Character/characterization:** complex round characters, implicitly characterized.
- **Point of view:** third-person omniscient, no dialogue.
- **Language complexity:** unfamiliar words; complex, long, run-on sentences, descriptive, figurative language (excessive use of imagery, metaphors, similes, irony, symbolism).

Aim of the lesson: Stylistic analysis, and evaluation of textual and stylistic choices. Help students realize stylistic effect on the meaning and outcome of the story. Create dramatic scenes.

Lesson 10: "The Tell-Tale Heart" By Edgar Allan Poe, available at: <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYper/POE/telltale.html>

Word Count: 2218

Genre: Gothic fiction (horror)

Publication date/period/place: Eighteenth century short fiction, published in 1843 in the United States.

Summary and overview of main themes: It is told by an unnamed narrator who endeavours to convince the reader of his sanity, while describing a murder that he had

committed. The main theme of the story is how human beings are capable of committing evil actions, and how the human mind is vulnerable. It raises issues of mental stability, obsession, and fear.

Level of difficulty:

- **Subject matter:** abstract.
- **Theme:** multiple themes; unpredictable, ambiguous, and unclear outcome.
- **Plot:** non-linear circular plot structure (flashback: point of attack at the end), open ending (no resolution).
- **Setting:** implicit presentation of time and place.
- **Character/characterization:** complex round character (main character/narrator), implicitly characterized.
- **Point of view:** first-person (unreliable narrator), no dialogue.
- **Language complexity:** unfamiliar words, complex (very short) sentences, descriptive, figurative language (irony, metaphors, repetition, personification, simile).

Aim of the lesson: language focus is on syntactic structure. Read and understand the Gothic Horror fictions and use critical reading skills to analyse the text and create new meanings and experiences from the text. Draw on their personal experience to construct new ideas that reflect their understanding of the text, and the many possible meanings it can have. Students are then expected to create dramatic presentations of the text.

Focus of Stage 5 (Lesson 9 + 10)

Learning outcome: Creation. Students will be able to use their imagination, think of different possibilities, and create new meanings and interpretations of the text.

Main features of the model include: Schema theory, theory of reading, the role of the imagination in learning, analytical thinking, intersubjectivity, pedagogy (ZPD).

Reading strategies focused on: activating prior knowledge, predicting, decoding scanning, making connections, monitoring comprehension, questioning, note-taking, visualizing, guessing meaning from context, inferencing, making textual connection, re-reading, paraphrasing, evaluating, using a dictionary, translating and summarizing.

7.5. Conclusion

This chapter has presented the main features of the designed reading program. It has established a set of criteria for selecting the stories according to features of readability. Based on difficulty levels, the criteria used for selecting suitable texts draw on two main types: reader variables and texts variables. These have led to the identification of three

categories that pose difficulties for the reader in understanding a text in L2: schematic knowledge, text structure, and language complexity.

For grading and sequencing, Bloom's (1956) taxonomy of thinking skills was adopted to help arrange the texts according to the cognitive demands they have on the readers. This led to structuring the program into five levels, which require comprehension, application, analysis, evaluation, and creation to build up the demands on the students. The texts are therefore arranged accordingly, with comprehension as the first and least demanding stage, and creation at the end of the program, being the highest level thinking skill that students are aiming for. This structure also helped in sequencing the texts by relating the criteria for text difficulty with the main learning objectives, thus drawing on all features of the conceptual model in the design of the program content. After establishing the graded learning outcomes based on the grading and sequencing process, the features of the model were all presented with the characteristics of the ten selected stories and the five stages they fall into. The next step is to establish how this model is applied inside the classroom and will therefore draw on task design for illustrating the methodology for carrying it out. Chapter 8 provides a discussion of how the model can be applied to the reading program.

Chapter 8

Discussion of the Reading Program & Application of the Conceptual Model: The Tasks

8.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to provide detailed explanations of how the reading program can best apply the designed model in classroom practice. It focuses on the utilization of pedagogic tasks for developing the creative imagination, and explains how such tasks use specific skills for that purpose. The first section of this chapter therefore provides an exploration of the procedures used for designing and categorizing pedagogic tasks, and explains the stages in grading and sequencing. It then presents the criteria that were used in the selection and grading of tasks for the current program.

The focus, here, is on the application of the designed conceptual model in the classroom. Thus, the discussion aims to provide detailed explanations of how the selected tasks can help the students use their imaginations to make meaning of the stories they read, and shows how this meaning making process is achieved through the use of tasks that make use of specific reading strategies. The instructional approach adopted for designing the reading program makes use of the well-established format of the EFL reading lesson which has been pointed out in the literature (Chapter 4) for teaching reading in the foreign language. A reading lesson according to this approach involves three stages: a pre-reading, a while-reading, and a post-reading stage. The lessons in the current program build on that approach by making use of the imagination. The following section illustrates how the tasks were selected, graded, and organized to match the features of the model. It provides the criteria that have been used in designing a purposeful lesson for the ten selected stories.

8.2. Selecting and Grading the Tasks to Match the Foundation Blocks of the Conceptual Model

This section is a presentation of the process of selecting, grading, and sequencing of the pedagogic task for the designed reading program. It also provides an explanation of how the tasks make use of specific strategies that draw on and develop students' imaginations when responding to the stories they read in the program. The approach that has been adopted in this study follows the usual format for teaching EFL reading strategies for general texts as discussed in Chapter 7. I am extending this approach by including the developed conceptual model that has been presented in Chapter 5 in order to help the students cope with reading literature. An important aspect of this approach is based on the designed conceptual model for developing imaginative response to literature (shown in Figure 8.1).

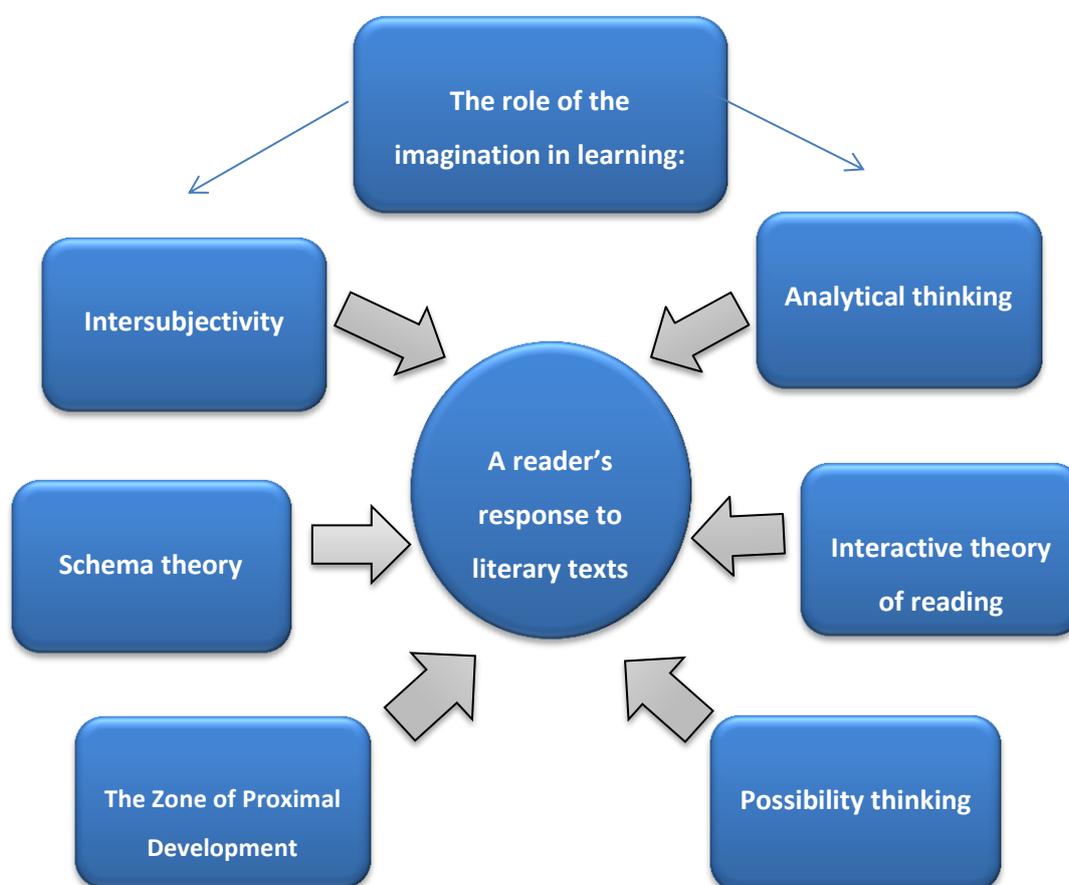


Figure 8. 1. The Process of Meaning Making through the Creative Imagination

The model as shown above in (Figure 8.1) takes the concept of the creative imagination as a cognitive process that involves an array of features which collectively influence the reader's meaning-making process. In the designed conceptual model, schema theory (background knowledge and experience), the interactive theory of reading, intersubjectivity, analytical thinking, ZPD, and possibility thinking all shape how readers process and respond to a literary text. The designed model, as was explained in the theoretical framework consists of these selected features (as shown in Figure 8.1), stimulates and develops the imagination, and contributes to the process of meaning making in short story reading. Although some features or concepts may precede others at some time during the meaning-making process, it is, nonetheless, not a linear process that develops in stages or moves from one step to the other. Also, as readers may have different competencies and levels, not all levels may be involved in a single reading. The levels of the reading program set different learning goals (as mentioned in Chapter 7) with a different literary and skills focus in each lesson, so some features of the model may not exist in some lessons or at a specific stage. Because the process of meaning making is otherwise a non-linear process, how the students are trained to develop the necessary skills will vary from one lesson to the other. This chapter will demonstrate how the development of these skills has been supported in a graded way through the design of the program.

It is important for teachers who want to support their students' reading and meaning-making skills using short stories, specifically in an EFL classroom, to first understand the processes involved in literary understanding, and make the reading imaginative, they will need to understand what is meant by the imagination and how the imagination could be deployed and stimulated to raise thinking and reasoning skills. For that reason, it is important to plan purposeful classroom material that draws on all aspects of the model, and provide goals and objectives that relate to and lead to the activation and utilization of all the aspects mentioned in the model with different focuses and outcomes as guidance. A very important aspect of this approach and the model shown above is that learning is process-oriented (Vermunt & Verschaffel, 2000), meaning that the focus is on meaning making. Pedagogic tasks are activities that place importance on meaning, on communication for solving problems, and on making relations with real world activities (Skehan, 1998). So, using tasks in the classroom is useful for developing the learners' meaning-making capacity, their overall strategies capacity, and making learning active.

In this sense, the focus of this section will be to present the pedagogic tasks that were designed to help the students apply the features of the model inside the classroom, and match them with the teaching objectives which determine the skills to be developed and used in classroom instruction. It will also provide the theoretical foundation for designing tasks for the selected texts (in Chapter 7), and, most importantly, clarify the techniques through which these skills and strategies can be presented inside the classroom.

8.2.1. Task Design

Since the 1970s different writers and publishers of language teaching textbooks have considered tasks as an important *tool* in the design and organization of textbook pedagogic content (Nunan, 1988, 2004). In fact, there is general agreement that language learning is experiential, and the communicative task which focuses on the idea of learning as process not product and on the importance of collaborations and negotiation of meaning between groups of learners has become an important factor in curricula planning, implementation, and evaluation (Nunan, 1991). The use of such tasks helps learners take over their own learning and develops their thinking and also their language. A very important aim of using communicative tasks, therefore, is to develop the learners' reading and reasoning skills (Vygotsky, 1978) and at the same time develop their language skills, which is part of the overall purpose of this program: language learning and development. Classroom-based research has suggested that interactive language use, in which learners collaboratively make meaning, stimulates processes of L2 acquisition (Nunan, 1988).

In Chapter 6, the approach to syllabus design that was adopted for the reading program was established as a hybrid approach that integrates both process-based and product-based views. The idea entails that in designing a syllabus, it is important to have goals and outcomes that need to be achieved and also procedures that lead to an end product. In this case, 'end product' refers to the tasks and activities that make use of the specific skills and strategies which need to be developed and acquired as part of that learning process. Just as in the selection and grading of the texts, each story was chosen to have a specific purpose/objective, it is important in task design too to identify and set specific objectives (Candlin, 1988). A task objective could be to seek information or process information. According to Candlin, it is important to identify how the objectives are going to be

identified in terms of task design, and, most importantly, how the learners are able to formulate them in terms of actionable goals or outcomes.

According to Candlin, there are three target dimensions in which purposeful tasks are used in a syllabus. The first is interpersonal, in which tasks are used to help learners interact and exchange information and ideas in a meaningful context and get things done. The second dimension is targeted towards knowledge, in which tasks are used to help students solve problems, find information, apply knowledge, provide interpretations, and find solutions. Finally, tasks aiming for an experience dimension should help students to draw on their prior knowledge and skills to help them provide expressive and imaginative responses. All the factors that Candlin suggested for task design reflect socio-constructive ideas which the conceptual model builds on. Another secondary step, before addressing the criteria used for selecting and grading the tasks for the lessons, is to explain the main principles of task grading and how the tasks have been graded and structured accordingly.

8.2.2. Task Selection, Grading, and Sequencing

Assessing task difficulty and sequencing can be challenging and rather problematic for a second language course designer (Long & Crookes, 1992). In order to establish a basis for decision-making in L2 syllabus design and determine principles for the selection and sequencing of tasks, it is important to identify the main characteristics that influence the different difficulty demands and arrange them into categories. One way of dealing with difficulties is by applying a set of criteria (Maley & Duff, 2007). By identifying criteria for task selection, they can be categorized in terms of demands.

Standard English Language textbooks have usually categorized classroom activities based on the demands they make on the learners (Nunan, 1988). As a way of organizing the tasks in relation to the texts in the five stages of the program and building up the demands in every stage, I have adopted Duff and Maley's (1990, 2007) approach for building up the demands on the students shown below in Table 8.1:

level	Text difficulty	Task difficulty
level one	simple text	low level task
level two	simple text	more demanding tasks
level three	difficult text	low level tasks
level four	difficult text	more demanding task

Table 8. 1. Building up Demands on the Students (Maley & Duff, 2007)

Since the reading program was structured into five stages, I built up the demands on the students in each lesson across the five stages as shown in Table 8.2:

Stage/Story		Text difficulty	Task difficulty
<i>Stage one</i>	story 1	very simple text	low level tasks
	story 2	very simple text	more demanding tasks
<i>Stage two</i>	story 3	simple text	low level tasks
	story 4	simple text	more demanding tasks
<i>Stage three</i>	story 5	more demanding text	low level tasks
	story 6	more demanding text	more demanding tasks
<i>Stage four</i>	story 7	difficult text	low level tasks
	story 8	difficult text	more demanding tasks
<i>Stage five</i>	story 9	very difficult text	low level tasks
	story 10	very difficult text	more demanding tasks

Table 8. 2. Building up the Demands on the Students in the Current Reading Program

Maley and Duff's proposition is helpful for organizing the tasks according to difficulty. However, what is important is identifying simple or low-level tasks from more demanding tasks, and on what basis such difficulty levels can be determined. It is possible, as with the selection of texts (in Chapter 7), to choose tasks based on the cognitive demands they make on the students. As with text selection, Bloom's (1956) taxonomy shown in Chapter 7, provides a rationale for determining the kind of skills that a task could draw on at each

stage of the program. The next section will briefly present the literature on task classification that helps in the selection and grading process.

8.2.2.1. Task Difficulty: Classifying Tasks

Task difficulty can be determined by task type (Long & Crookes, 1992). This is because task type concerns the learners' perceptions of the task demands. According to Prabhu (1987), there are three main types of tasks. He identified them as: information-gap, reasoning-gap, and opinion-gap. Each of these task types provides opportunities for targeting one of the three dimensions that Candlin (1988) indicated earlier: interpersonal, knowledge, and experiences. Information-gap tasks aim for the interpersonal dimension of a syllabus. The reasoning-gap tasks provide more opportunities for the knowledge dimension of a syllabus, and the opinion-gap tasks are targeted at the experience dimension and allow for student responses. Information-gap tasks include the transformation of information from one form to another, as in information from the text. It mainly involves the learners in the decoding of the text. Reasoning-gap, according to Prabhu's description, will require the students to draw new information from the text through inferencing, deduction, logical reasoning, and perception of patterns and relationships within a text. The final task type that has been identified by Prabhu is what he called 'opinion-gap', which involves identifying and articulating personal preferences, feelings, attitudes, and responses about the text. In this kind of task the students usually use factual information to justify their opinions and beliefs about a text. According to Prabhu's typology, the three task types move, in terms of reasoning demands, from the simple information-gap to reasoning-gap to opinion-gap.

The three main task types promote the kind of thinking and processing abilities that help the students move through the stages of the reading program. Information-gap tasks promote decoding and the students' abilities to recall information from the text and understand it. Reasoning-gap tasks promote more close reading and textual analysis. These kinds of tasks will help apply analytical thinking which involves more of the imagination. Opinion-gap activities promote evaluation and the development of creative responses. Prabhu (1987) indicated that these tasks (opinion-gap) could include taking part in discussions, which is also an important feature of the model and of the creative imagination. These kinds of tasks will help develop the students' meaning-making skills

and provide more opportunities for negotiation of meaning, leading to different possibilities and creative thinking - a primary aim of imaginative reading.

It is important to determine on what basis teachers can make a decision about task sequencing to present to the learners more complex task versions as a lesson proceeds, and what it is that makes one task easier than the other. To increase the complexity of tasks means raising the difficulty level of some aspects of the tasks themselves (Baralt et al, 2014). Cognitive factors have attracted most researchers' attention for task sequencing (Nunan, 2004). The following section elaborates on this.

8.2.2.2. Sequencing the Tasks According to Cognitive Complexity

According to the literature, there are different task characteristics that can affect task difficulty. The two main characteristics are the interactional demands (task conditions) and cognitive demands (task complexity) (Garcia Mayo, 2007; Robinson, 2007a, 2007b). The cognitive demands are related to task complexity. Therefore, task complexity is indicative of the cognitive factors affecting task difficulty on which the program will draw. The interactional demands, on the other hand, are related to task conditions, that is, "the interactive demands of the tasks" (Robinson, 2001a:29).

From the two types of demands, the cognitive demands are taken to be the most influential factors contributing to task design (Robinson 2001b, 2003, 2005, 2007a; Robinson & Gilabert, 2007). An increase in the task's cognitive demands will push the learners to produce more accurate language in order to meet the more complex functional and conceptual demands that such tasks place on the language learner (Robinson & Gilabert, 2007). Therefore, increasing the complexity of the tasks in each lesson of the program will chiefly depend on the cognitive demands that these tasks impose on the learner.

Robinson (2001a) indicates that cognitive factors include two main categories: resource-directing and resource-depleting (which make demands on attention and working memory). The resource-directing factors include: the number of elements (few or many), amount of contextual support (here-and-now), and reasoning demands on the user. The resource-depleting factors relate to the amount of planning time, whether demands of a task are singular or dual, and whether or not the relevant background knowledge exists (+/-

). These factors are considered for the purpose of this study and are summarized in Table 8.1 below.

Cognitive demands (task complexity)	Interactional demands (task conditions)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of elements (+/-) • Amount of contextual support (scaffolding) (+/-) • Reasoning demand (task type): information-gap, reasoning-gap, & opinion-gap. • Amount of planning time available. • Single-/dual-demand of task. • Available background knowledge (BK) 	<p>a) <u>Participation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open/closed • Information flow: one-way/two-way • Goal/solution (convergent/divergent) • Type of response (oral/written) <p>b) <u>Participants</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of participants (few/many)

Table 8. 3. The Cognitive Demands and the Interactional Demands

Task conditions, on the other hand, that were found to be relevant for the purpose of this research include variables relating to the participants themselves, and to the kind of participation. They include factors such as: shared characteristics between the participants (the proficiency level, gender, and background knowledge), and whether the participation is open or closed, whether the information flow is one-way or two-way, and whether the goal requires agreement between the participants (convergent) or opposition ideas (divergent) (Robinson, 2001a). Another aspect that also can be taken into consideration is the type of response (whether oral or written), the number of participants (few/many) (Skehan, 1998). All other factors shown in Table 8.1 will be used to develop principles for sequencing the pedagogic tasks for the selected stories.

It should be noted that from the list of cognitive demands, the reasoning demands have been chosen to indicate the type of tasks, whether they are information-gap, reasoning-gap, or opinion-gap. That is because, as mentioned earlier, every task type will place a different reasoning demand on the students (Prabhu, 1987). So the simplest task type will be information-gap with less reasoning. The reasoning-gap will require more reasoning, and the opinion-gap will require more. The interactional demands relate to the task conditions and the learner's ability to perform. In what follows I will draw on the two kinds of

demand to describe principles on which the sequencing of pedagogic tasks for the reading program is constructed.

❖ **Developing Principles for Sequencing the Pedagogic Tasks:**

Decisions for designing and sequencing tasks are based on the theoretical implications of the cognition hypothesis CH, which suggests that increasing the cognitive demands will increase students' learning (Robinson 2001b, 2003, 2005, 2007a; Robinson & Gilabert, 2007). In the same way, I have tried to provide a model on which the demands can be increased on the learners (table 8.4). By using the two main categories shown in Table 8.3, the procedure used to sequence the task is explained in three phases. These phases reflect the three stages of a reading lesson, the pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading. So phase 1 is the pre-reading, phase 2 is the while-reading, and phase 3 is the post-reading stage.

In Phase 1: cognitive demands (A) are simple (+), and interactional demands (B) are also kept simple (+). This is to help the learners start at a level appropriate to their proficiency.

In phase 2: the cognitive demands (A) are kept simple (+), while the interactional dimension (B) is increased (-). This is to promote more automatic processing skills.

In phase 3: Both, the cognitive demands (A) are increased (-), and the interactional demands are increased (-). This will promote more processing and thinking skills, which involves more of the imagination and at the same time language use.

	A Cognitive demands	B Interactional demands
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few elements • Scaffolding provided • Low reasoning demand • Long(er) planning time • Single-demand of task • Available background knowledge (BK) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open participation • One-way information flow. • Convergent goal/solution • Oral response • Number of participants (few)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many elements • No scaffolding • High-reasoning demand • Short(er) planning time • Dual-demand of task • No BK 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closed participation • Two-way information flow. • Divergent goal/solution • Written response • Number of participants (many)

Table 8. 4. Criteria for Grading and Sequencing Pedagogic Tasks

8.3. Organization of the Tasks across the Five Stages: Applying the Conceptual Model in the Classroom

This section shows how the selected tasks were organized across the five stages of the reading program. It will try to provide an illustration of how the designed tasks reflect and apply the model features at each level to use specific skills for stimulating and developing the imagination. In this sense the main purpose of this section is to move from the theoretical foundations of this study and link them with classroom practice, and thus, focus on theoretical views on: schema theory, interactive theory of reading, the role of the imagination in learning, and the two main concepts relating to it: intersubjectivity, ZPD, and analytical thinking. Finally it will draw on the concept of possibility thinking for creating new meanings.

The focus of this reading program is on developing the students' imagination to critically read and make sense of short stories (fiction). By drawing on their background knowledge, students will be guided through purposeful tasks to make use of specific strategies and

skills to make sense of a short story. Through the use of a range of reading skills, the imagination could be evoked and nurtured to guide the students' responses and develop their meaning-making skills in a more imaginative way as they move from one story to the next. The students' acquisition and usage of those skills/strategies is scaffolded, by the use of pedagogic activities which extend the learners' logical and emotional reasoning in order to analyze, evaluate, and create meaning of a short story. Collaboration, interaction, and dialogue among students are central for the development of the imagination and the creation of different possibilities in meaning making (Vygotsky, 1978). This way the readers can become more involved in their learning process and more independent, creative thinkers.

8.3.1. Activating Prior Knowledge

This aspect of the imagination (activating background knowledge) is shown through the use of pre-reading activities. I have included different activities to be included in the lessons within the five stages and with different cognitive demands (as indicated in section 8.2). The way that schema is activated across the five stages of the program is as follows:

In **Stage one**, the learning aim is comprehension of content. It includes two stories 'Joha and his Donkey' and 'Cookies'. The content of both stories is familiar and simple and concrete. The structure is simple and the language is kept relatively easy with minimum unfamiliar words and simple sentences. An Example of a low-level task, in the first story is shown below.

From Lesson 1 'Joha and his Donkey'

Information-gap task

Pre-reading: Activate background knowledge and speculate or predict

The teacher activates the students' background knowledge of the story content, main character (Joha) and main idea through the following activities:

- Using pictures from the story: the teacher shows the students some pictures of Joha and asks about the time, the place of the story, the character, and the culture through the character's clothes, buildings, and so on.
- The teacher uses the title of the story to get the students to recall information about Joha: what they know about him and whether they are familiar with any of his other adventures.
- The teacher generates discussion about the task of giving and taking advice. The teacher can elicit their responses by asking questions like:
 - Do you normally ask people for advice? Who do you usually ask? Are they helpful with providing you with the help you are looking for? When you get different advice from people, how do you make up your mind?

Prediction tasks, as shown above, help the students to make speculations about the text content, the kind of genre, plot structure, and sometimes the kind of outcome if the genre has a familiar rhetorical structure. Having an idea of what the text is likely to be about may assist the reader in understanding the text at hand (Nuttall, 2005). The students will draw on their prior knowledge and experience and use their imagination to build on it as they further engage with the text, helping them to make more guesses as they read. In the example shown above, most of the students will be familiar with the main character of the story, Joha. Joha is a well-known character in their culture, and they will most likely be familiar with the sort of stories related to him, which are fables. After showing the students some pictures of Joha, they will relate the pictures to their schematic knowledge of Arabian stories and the Arabic culture, prompting them to make predictions about the content of the story. When the students are given a chance to look at the title, they will relate this cultural knowledge to their understanding of the character and the genre (fables), helping them make more speculations about what might happen. Knowledge of the

rhetorical structure also leads them to make predictions about the story outcome (story with a moral).

Finally, the teacher could support the students' thinking and use another strategy - questioning. Students are asked questions which relate to the story theme of 'asking for and giving advice', and that 'it is sometimes difficult to satisfy everyone, so it would be better to do what you want to do'. Answering questions leads to discussion, which also helps activate student's schema on the topic, and help them to draw on it later as they try to build meaning. It is important that the teacher does not directly ask questions that will lead the students to predict the theme, but only activates their prior knowledge, and relates their past experiences with what the character faces in the text to make predictions about the topic.

In **Stage two**, the learning aim is recalling background knowledge of the language and the content, and knowledge of the elements of fiction, such as plot, setting, characters, and theme and how to apply them to the story. In the fourth story, 'Little Red Riding Hood', the teacher could use an information-gap task to activate schema. The story is a Western fairy-tale that most students are familiar with from TV cartoons. Although some may not be familiar with that specific story, the idea it contains of disobedience and disregard for the rules is quite familiar to them, since it will often have been seen on children's programs, and in children's literature, both in the oral and written form, when they were growing up. The pre-reading tasks in the box below aim to help them deal with the symbolism in the story and set the mood through brainstorming. If they are able to determine the atmosphere and the setting in which certain features are associated with the place of a story, they can identify the mood (e.g., danger, happiness, or sadness). In the example shown below, the students will look at the pictures of faces and places and try to come up with words (adjectives) that they can associate with them. This can also be called semantic mapping, where a person makes associations between two words or things, and could be done in many ways. It helps students use what they already know and relate it to what they read or see.

From Lesson 4 'Little Red Riding Hood'

Information-gap task

Pre-reading - Image brain storming:

-The students are shown some pictures of cartoon characters both human and animals (a lamb, kitten, tiger, wolf, and fox). Ask the students to say out loud the first word that comes to their minds to describe that character (e.g. good, nice, bad, evil, wicked, mysterious). The teacher writes on the board the students' answers.

-Then, the teacher shows the students some pictures of different places at different times (morning, afternoon, night), seasons, (for example: field in the sun, rocky beach in the storm, desert, hill with flowers, dark forest, jungle), and asks them to think of words that would describe the places they see. The teacher writes the students' answers on the board for all to see.

-The following prompts are used to generate discussion: Ask the students to think of a time that they were asked and warned not to do something but decided to ignore it and do it anyway and ended up in trouble.

- What do they think about rules? What are they for? And when are they most important? How do they deal with rules now?

Students in groups listen to each other's stories, and discuss them.

This is a more abstract idea and some students may not be familiar with associating a wolf or forest with fear and danger, and as a result they may not be able to understand the symbolism in the story. Others may have knowledge of these associations but need support to make use of this knowledge while they read and try to understand the story. Guiding students to activate the appropriate knowledge is important. To avoid confusion in a story like this 'Little Red Riding Hood', the teacher helps the students recall vocabulary related to the story. The students may use their knowledge of word association, build on what they know, and determine the mood of the story and how the setting can help set the mood on danger. They will use their imagination to make speculations about the events that will take part in the story, follow their development, and identify how they are associated.

Another activity following brainstorming that can be used to activate the students' knowledge on the story subject (disobedience) and help them relate their experiences to it is by having them think about some questions and situations where they went against the rules. By discussing their answers with their peers in groups, they can share their ideas, beliefs, and concerns giving them more insight, which helps them expand their ideas as they read the story. This can also help them make connections between parts of the story and understand the moral through their understanding of how the story events have developed based on cause and effect.

In **Stage three**, the learning aim is analysis of short story through figures of speech such as symbolism and irony. The texts are a little demanding for the students as they contain abstract content. Therefore, for the teacher to activate the students' background knowledge when dealing with abstract ideas in stories with interesting titles (as is the case in both stories in this stage), he could start by having the students preview the title to make predictions about its content. For example, in the sixth story, 'The Open Window', the title is interesting and can create a sense of curiosity as to whether it has a literal or metaphorical meaning, or even both. The readers will find themselves having to deal with difficult aspects of the language. For that reason, a pre-reading reasoning-gap task which activates the students' prior knowledge and stimulates the imagination for them to build on their ideas is shown in the example below.

From Lesson 6 'The Open Window'

Reasoning-gap task: Thinking about the title (Prediction)

The students are told that they will be reading a story called 'The Open Window'.

- The students are asked to think of the title of the story and guess what they think the story is about. (Tell me what you think "the open window" suggests?)
- The teacher can use questioning strategies to guide the students' thinking by asking questions like: What is a window? Are there any other meanings that you have for 'window'? Is it normal for a window to be open? When are window usually left open? Why? What happens when a window is left open? Why?
- The students call out their suggestions, and all suggestions are accepted.

The teacher writes their ideas on the board for the students to jot down and use later for the follow-up task to see if their predictions are accurate.

If the students can make predictions about what the text content might be, then they can read to support or reject their hypothesis (Anderson, 1999). It also helps them set a purpose. By reading the title, the students can also make predictions about the kind of words that they may encounter in the story they are about to read. Most students will use their prior knowledge and probably assume that the title of the story is metaphorical. The teacher could use their suggestions and generate more guiding questions to help them get as much ideas as possible. Others may refer to the meaning behind the title and suggest a more literal meaning. All the students' ideas are accepted by the teacher. This activity will give the students some background relating to what an open window might lead to, or what an open window may symbolize, thus giving them a chance to use those different ideas and imaginatively build on them as the story events develop, and pay attention to textual and semantic clues that may refer to something different. Because this story has a surprise ending, and the surprise is to some extent indirectly stated, the different interpretations of the title given at the beginning could help the students understand it by making the necessary connection through the imagination. It also raises their interest and sense of curiosity to find out more about the text and actively read it.

In **Stage four**, the learning aim is evaluation of the text: characters, ideas, and issues raised in different cultures. So, not only are the texts complex, but the content is chosen to be culturally unfamiliar to the students. A possible way to help students with the text is to give them the necessary background information to understand the setting, i.e. the context, time, or place in which the story was written. Another possible pre-reading activity would be to provide some background knowledge about the author of the story. For Lesson 7, 'The Story of an Hour', the example below shows how the teacher provides cultural knowledge about the time and place of the story to help students deal with such culture-specific texts.

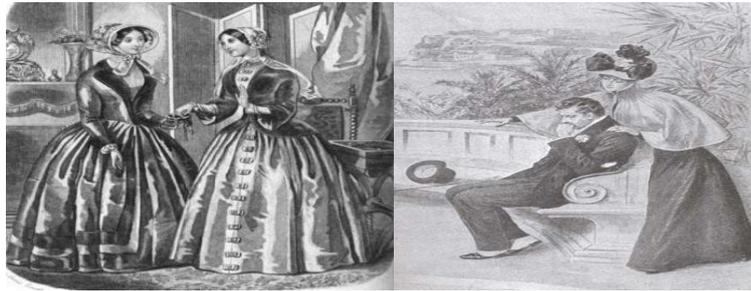
From Lesson 7 'The Story of an Hour'

Opinion-gap task: Building Historical Background Information:

- Teacher tells students that the story was written in the 19th century, published in 1894.
- Students are given a worksheet with background information and two photos.
- Ask the students to first look at the photos of women from the 19th century.
- The students are then asked to write down any words or phrases that come to mind when they see the pictures. This should only take 3-5 minutes.
- The teacher reads the background information about women in 19th century America.

The Role of Women in 19th- Century America

Women living in the United States in the 19th Century, or the 1800s, had few rights. Women were not allowed to vote. Very few women went to college. Education was considered only important for men. Women were expected to marry a man and give birth and raise his children. If women worked, they had to give their wages to a man. Women could not get divorced, even if their husbands abused them. However, many women worked very hard to gain equal rights. By the late 1800s, women had formed a movement to gain the right to vote. In 1920, women in the United States were allowed to vote for the first time.



This culture-specific knowledge should help the students with the text and the themes it provokes. The above task introduces the students to the setting and helps them relate it to their own lives before they read 'The Story of an Hour'. The story is set in 19th Century America and the character is a woman who starts to have ideas about freedom, empowerment, and independence. The photos help the students imagine the time of the story. The title and the background information will help them understand the issues that might be raised in the text regarding how women were expected to behave in American and Western societies during that time. They can use their imagination not only to build on that knowledge, but also to make connections between the two cultures (the American culture, and their own) and the role of women.

In **Stage five**, the learning aim is creativity in the construction of meaning. In the final stage of the reading program, the texts are both complex and abstract. For this reason, this pre-reading part of the lesson to activate background knowledge will be very important to help the students deal with the textual complexity in the writing style, vocabulary, structure, and the abstract themes. In the ninth story ‘Incarnations of Burned Children’, the students can think about potential dangers and accidents by looking at a picture, shown in the task below.

From Lesson 9 ‘Incarnations of Burned Children’

Graphics, guided imagery, and discussion: (Opinion-gap task)

-The students first look at a picture of a little boy trying to reach for a pot on the stove. This will activate their prior knowledge of danger, burns, negligence, etc. The teacher could help students set a purpose by saying:

-What do you see in this picture? What is the girl trying to do? Is there anyone next to him? Where do you think her mummy and daddy are? What do you think will happen?



The teacher takes note of their ideas. The students take notes in their response journals too to return to them later after reading.

After the students make predictions about what the topic of the picture is, their schema of danger will be activated. The teacher then stimulates their imagination through guided imagery by saying:

-Imagine that you were the parent of the child, how would you feel if the child got hurt? What would you do? How would you deal with the situation?

Students share and discuss their ideas with the teacher in a class discussion.

Students will be guided by the kind of discussion that takes place between them and the teacher. They can relate what they know about a child being hurt or burned to engage with the text and empathize with the characters. As they look at the picture, their schema of danger and probable pain is activated. They then begin to imagine what might happen if a child is hurt and respond to the pictures by putting themselves in the position of a parent or even the child. The questions that are given through the guided imagery help them to think of parents' responses to such a tragedy, what they feel, and how they might react to it. Students will have different views on how a parent in this situation might react. Some students might suggest that they will panic; others may suggest that they will immediately call for help, and so on. The students' ideas are most likely based on how they see themselves acting and feeling, whether they can cope and bear the idea, or if they are too sensitive to act out or even imagine such situation. All ideas are accepted and shared in the class discussion in order to build on as the students read the text, thus helping them focus on the meaning regardless of the complex language and style. A good way to help the students hold on to those ideas so they can build on them and link them imaginatively when they are reading is to make them note down some words or phrases that they think of as they respond to the picture and imagery for later use.

8.3.2. The Interactive Theory of Reading

The second aspect of meaning making to be discussed is interactive reading. Classroom instruction which facilitates this interaction between reader and text will make use of the students' activated background knowledge (as shown in 8.3.2) and decoding skills for text comprehension. The students should be trained to make connections between their background knowledge and the text content, and to draw on both bottom-up reading strategies and top-down strategies. Therefore, the selected tasks will be aimed at helping the students use their background knowledge and use their imagination to build on that knowledge. This will help them understand information they read from the text by making use of decoding, skimming, scanning, predicting, guessing meaning from context, and making connections and inferences. This process of interaction can be supported through while-reading activities. To put development of this aspect of the meaning-making process into practice, the following tasks were designed to be used at different levels of the program:

In **Stage one**, the purpose is to get main ideas and general meaning. A task at this stage for interaction with the text is seen in the example below from the first story, ‘Joha and His Donkey’. To complete the activity, the students will have to be trained to use skimming and scanning strategies for understanding the general idea and identifying the position of each of the three characters. Skimming will help them identify the plot structure and build on it using their imagination to make speculations about how the story develops as they read the story one section at a time.

From Lesson 1 “Joha and His Donkey”

Information-gap task

While reading: Choose the position

The teacher asks the students to read quickly through the text. They are given four diagrams with different positions for Joha, his son, and the donkey. They have to assign each paragraph to a diagram showing the positions of Joha, his son, and the donkey. The teacher then reviews the answers with the whole class, and sticks cut-up drawings on the board to show the answers.

e.g.

	J		J+S		S		
a)	S	D	b)	D	c)	J	D
	D			D		D	D
	J= Joha	S= Son		D=Donkey			

When it comes to the discussion about the task of ‘giving and taking advice’, scanning helps the students use their existing knowledge about the topic, the genre, and what they know as the usual sorts of events that Joha goes through. Together with their predictions about the title, they can be asked to make connections between the title and the character of Joha. They can look for key words, such as the names of the characters, and the key prepositions: *on*, *beside*. Skimming and scanning tasks help them build the meaning of the story eventually leading to the ending: the idea of never satisfying people, thus reaching an understanding of the text content.

Stage two: At this stage the learning goal is application of knowledge of the content rhetorical structure, the language, and of the short story elements: character roles, themes, setting, and plot. A while-reading information-gap task to show how the students could be guided to interact with the text and apply that knowledge to understand the fourth story ‘Little Red Riding Hood’ is shown below.

From Lesson 4 “Little Red Riding Hood”

Information-gap task: Diagram Completion:

- The teacher asks the students to read the text silently, pointing out that she/he has previously removed a section from the text and marks the location of the missing section.
- The students are given a range of events that might fit the gap and have to choose the correct or missing one by completing the missing part of the plot.
- The students have to think about the missing part of the plot as they read the rest of the story, and think about the sequence of events.
- The teacher scaffolds the students’ task completion by giving an example and modeling think aloud the kind of question and reasoning involved. The teacher uses the plot diagram as a guide to help students make connections between parts of the text and use contextual clues to try and reach a possible answer.

In order to complete the task shown above, the students draw on their prior knowledge and use their top-down processing skills to make predictions about what the missing part of the text may be. They can then use their decoding skills and use bottom-up processing to check their predictions of the missing part. They can, with the help of the plot diagram, try to make adjustments to their understanding of the text, and apply their understanding of plot structure to build on their knowledge and what they know of the text using their imagination to reach an understanding of the development of the plot. In order to do that, they could not only rely on their knowledge of rhetorical structure, but also use contextual clues to draw conclusions about what the missing part is. Since, the students have already established the link between what they already know about the story so far, and their understanding of the parts of plot structure (e.g. the climax of a story: that moment when all events come together for its peak intensity), they can, through the task, make connections between the different parts of the text, and draw conclusions about how the events are joined together by time

In **Stage three**, the learning aim is analysis of character and close reading to draw inferences. An example of interaction that could be promoted in the classroom at this stage of the program is presented below from Story 5 ‘The Birthmark’. As a while-reading task, the students are presented with a table to complete a characterization grid with information from the text. This reasoning-gap task requires them to find facts about the characters of the two main people in the story, Aylmer, and Georgiana. The second column requires they read between the lines and use their imaginations to draw inferences about both characters.

From Lesson 5 ‘The Birthmark’

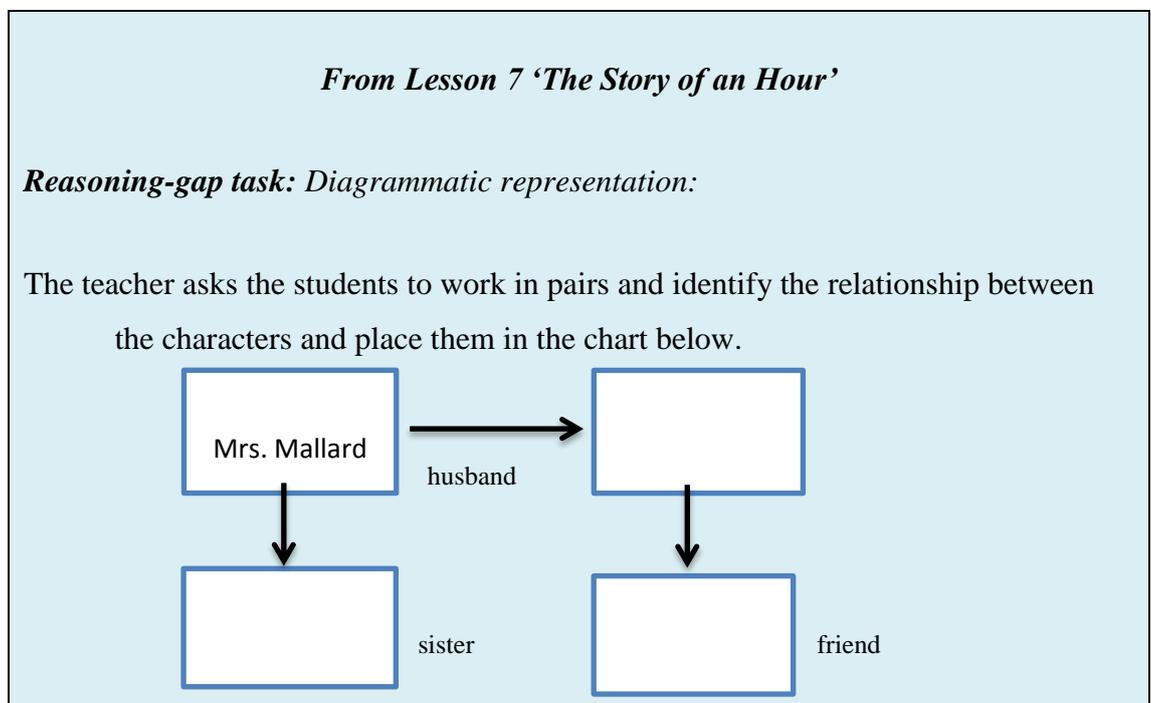
Reasoning-gap task: Characterization grid

-The students are asked to take notes as they read about Aylmer and Georgina and classify them according to the characterization grid below. Information could be of two kinds: ‘specifically stated’, or ‘suggested’. It could be about appearance, qualifications, likes, dislikes, etc. The teacher can model for the students how this classification could be made by reading the first paragraph to: “His love for his young wife could only be the stronger of the two if it could link itself with his love of science”. The teacher shows the students that information about Aylmer will go in the row of Aylmer, while information about Georgiana will go in the row next to her name, and information that they share in common will go in the bottom row.

Characters	Facts from the text	Inferences
Aylmer		
Georgiana		
Both Aylmer & Georgiana		

This task helps the students scan for specific information about the two characters for the facts column. They may also make notes of the information, listing characteristics, and building on that information by using their imaginations to draw inferences and conclusions about the kind of people they are. In that process, they draw on their own experiences to make such speculations and guesses. The bottom line in this grid asks students to make connections between the characters themselves – specifically, what they share, and what they might have in common.

Stage four: The aim at this stage is to guide the students to use their imaginations to make evaluations about the characters' actions, behavior, and character relationships. In order to achieve this goal, a task like the one exemplified below could be presented. The while-reading task taken from Lesson 7 'The Story of an Hour' requires the students to organize their thoughts and understand the character relationships by using a chart. This chart shown below has arrows between the boxes where the names of characters have to be written. This will help create a more visual representation of the relationships between the characters to help them visualize, think, and use their imaginations to make the necessary connections.



The main challenge of the story is that there are a number of characters, some of whom are mentioned but do not actually appear in the action of the story (for example, Mr. Mallard). This makes the relationships between the characters rather hard to work out and might cause misunderstanding on the part of the students. However, with a task like the one used here, they will be able to use the chart to follow and make the necessary links or intertextual connections. They can use contextual clues from the text and the chart itself and draw conclusions by using their imaginations to relate information they have read at the start of the story with new information as they read. Support for making these links can lead to understanding the kind of relationships the characters have with each other. This could help them later in the lesson to make evaluations about the kind of relationships the

narrator shows us, for example, between Mrs. Mallard and Mr. Mallard, or that between Mrs. Mallard and her sister.

In **Stage five**, the focus of learning is on the creative skills and the students' ability to draw on their close-reading skills of analysis and evaluation to build meaning and create possibilities. The example below uses the last story, 'The Tell-Tale-Heart'. Questioning is a good way of eliciting responses and linking parts of the text with readers' experiences and prior knowledge. As the students read the text, they are required to think of questions to ask their peers about the story events and the main character's narration of the story. This will help them think carefully as they read and look for clues. They will respond to the story and take notes to organize their thinking about the sequence of events. If the teacher models the questioning strategy through a 'think aloud' protocol, the students will get a chance to see the kind of thinking they are expected to demonstrate and the level of questioning which helps their inner thoughts to be extended through the imagination as they try to connect parts of the text. This could help them make the meaning of the text more concrete in their minds and easier to follow. Through the imagination, the students can use the information they read, connect it to their personal lives and personal beliefs, and make assumptions about what to expect.

From Lesson 10 'The Tell-Tale Heart'

Reasoning-gap task : *Do it yourself (DIY) questionnaires:*

- The students can be divided into groups, or the whole class can be divided into two or three large groups (A, B, and C). Each group is responsible for a section of the text and is asked to provide questions for their part of the text.
- As they read they have to try to think of some questions to ask their classmates for the section they were assigned.

The teacher models for the students the kind of questions they are encouraged to pose in order to give them an idea of what they are expected to do. The groups then share their answers with each other by choosing one student from each group to share with the whole class their answers.

The above task helps the students overcome the challenging structure, language, and style of the text. Sharing the questions with each other and with the class helps guide their thinking and responses, set target ideas that they will need to reconsider, and analyze in order to find answers. In this way, they can collaboratively create meaning of the text through interaction. They will use their imaginations to guide their thinking and set the purpose for their reading. This creative task helps the students understand the complexities that are presented in the story, such as the chronology, complex characters, and especially the motives and attitudes of the characters. They can use all this shared information to make a judgement about the reliability of the main character, the narrator, based on how they understand the meaning of the story. They are helped to wonder about the outcomes of the story, for example, whether the narrator will actually kill the old man, or if he is only fantasizing about it.

8.3.3. The Role of the Imagination in Learning (meaning making): Intellect & Emotion

The imagination is probably the most important aspect of the conceptual model of meaning making where students build on their existing knowledge by learning how to use intellect and emotion to make meaning of the text they are reading. Both of these aspects of the imagination, analytical thinking and intersubjectivity, are developed through collaboration and discussion. To participate in collaboration and discussion requires close-reading skills where readers use inferencing, and make connections between the text and the world, between different texts, and between the text and themselves. Metacognition, in which the students think about their thinking processes to develop an understanding of the text, is also helpful for extending one's thinking and reasoning. The tasks below demonstrate how these two aspects of the model, analytical thinking and intersubjectivity, are applied.

8.3.3.1. Analytical Thinking

Analytical thinking is a feature of the imagination which has been previously discussed in Chapter 5 to include a reader's interpretative skills, such as inferencing, metacognitive strategies (monitoring comprehension, adjusting reading speed to match comprehension), and making intertextual connections. Pedagogical implications of this feature of the imagination place importance on the reader's logical reasoning and formal analysis of the

text. Tasks aimed at developing analytical thinking will refrain from personal and subjective relations with the text and will be focused towards taking a more informative stance (Langer, 1990). The application of this aspect of analytical thinking can be shown across the five stages as follows:

In **Stage one**, these stories have concrete themes and familiar content, so the skills developed aim at using the imaginative memory to get the general meaning and understand the moral or lesson behind the text. Analytical thinking at this stage of the program involves the students' abilities to make the necessary connections between parts of the text and reach an understanding of how the events are sequenced and how the plot structure and development affects the outcome of the story. So, in the first story, 'Joha and his Donkey', students make decisions about the genre and what to expect from it. A task that can help the students make connections between parts of the text and also relate what they know about the text genre to think objectively about the moral/lesson is shown below:

From Lesson 1 "Joha and his Donkey"

Reasoning-gap tasks

After- reading: *Plot Summary*

-The students work in groups of three to write a summary of the events that took place in the story. They should have one sentence for each event and they should write five sentences to summarize the events. They can use the following format to present their ideas.

- Once upon a time/One day.....

Choose from the following (Then/when/while/ but/ eventually/so)

- What do you think Joha might have ended up doing at the end after all the criticism he received?

The example shown above is a scaffold on which the students use their memory of the story events to make a summary. Students will be encouraged to draw on different strategies like skimming and scanning as they re-read some parts of the text to check for information

Then, in the second part of the task, they will try to use prediction and make logical guesses about what they think will happen after the story. To be able to make these guesses the students will have to think about the previous events and the actions/reactions of the characters after receiving people's advice. They need to use their imaginations to relate the text to their prior knowledge to think of a possible solution that Joha may come up with to help him make up his mind. Perhaps the teacher could lead a discussion about what makes YOU happy and not others (because it is impossible to please everyone). Students can achieve the desired outcome if they are supported with tasks that help them draw on their own similar experiences. For this, they will make use of intersubjectivity, which will be discussed separately in section 8.3.4.2.

In **Stage two**, learning outcomes are determined by how well students can apply their knowledge of text features and reading strategies to understand a text. They should use reading strategies like guessing meaning from context, or skipping unimportant words. Students can try to use context clues, such as the title and previous sentence(s), and use them to learn the meaning of new vocabulary, or they can exploit their knowledge of how to use a dictionary to look up unfamiliar words they encounter.

Students at this stage of the program can learn to use analytical thinking on a more macro-level by drawing conclusions to figure out the moral or theme behind a story, or follow the plot structure and identify the genre type based on what they read at the beginning of a story. This will help them to make such conclusions more efficiently as they deal with more complex texts and analyze them on a micro-level by thinking critically about the language and build up meaning. Analytical thinking in this stage focuses more on the students' abilities to figure out text structure and plot structure (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution) and on understanding and identifying the main elements of fiction: sequence of events in the plot, and character roles, such as protagonist, antagonist, setting, narrator, first, or third person. In a post-reading example cited from the third story, 'The Appointment in Samaraa'. The activity aims to enrich the students' vocabulary and develop their understanding of the characters by asking them to complete a table linking ideas from the text with characters and justifying the link.

From Lesson 3 ‘The Appointment in Samaraa’

Reasoning-gap task

Words or expressions to characterize a text: (fill in a diagram/table):

-The teacher asks the students to fill in a table or diagram that has some words and expressions.

-The teacher asks the students to refer back to the text and assign the expressions to certain features or characters. The first example models how the activity is done. The teacher models for the students by explaining the reason behind her choice.

<i>Word/expression</i>	<i>Character/feature</i>	<i>Why?</i>
-powerful	Merchant	<i>He is rich, and he has servants</i>
-chooses not to confront, but run away.	Ahmed (servant)	<i>Fled to Samaraa to escape death</i>
-courageous	Merchant	<i>He confronted Death for scaring servant</i>
-surprised/shocked	Death	<i>Stared at the servant</i>
-ignorant of what awaits	<i>Ahmed (servant)</i>	<i>Death is planning on giving him a visit at his friend’s house where he fled to.</i>
-a place that has positive and negative properties	<i>Samaraa</i>	<i>An escape for Ahmed, and also a place to fulfill his destiny (die)</i>

In pairs the students can answer and give justifications for their answers.

After the class has finished the teacher could write down the answers on the board and complete the table for all the class to see. Students may have different suggestions; the teacher probes them, and makes use of their suggestions in a class discussion.

The tasks show how students can be trained by questioning and discussion to infer or ‘read between the lines’ to make connections between the textual features and what they already

know about the characters and the story line. They can use their imaginations to draw conclusions and make deductions about certain characteristics related to the characters and events.

In **Stage three**, the learning outcome is analysis of the textual features, the language, the literary elements (plot, characters, etc.), and the structure, words, and figures of speech and how they affect the overall meaning of the text. Students will have to be able to understand the general meaning of the text. Then, they can apply their knowledge and skills in order to make sense of the text. A task that helps students use their skills and knowledge to deal with the complex language and abstractness of the texts at this stage is exemplified below. Having worked on simpler tasks in stage two, the 6th story, ‘The Open Window, is aimed at helping the students analyze and understand the language of the text and how it informs the meaning of the whole text by making inferences.

From Lesson 6 “The Open Window”

Reasoning-gap task

After reading, answer the questions:

- 1) What is the narrator suggesting to the reader by stating, “Mr. Nuttel suffers from a mental illness and nervous condition? He has come to the village to get better and regain his health”?
 - a) People should treat him nicely and give him food.
 - b) People should be sensitive and careful when they are with him.
 - c) People should be tough and harsh with him.
- 2) Vera has told her story to Mr. Nuttel in confidence. Do you think that Mr. Nuttel felt that Vera was telling him a secret? Why? Use reference from the text to justify your answer?
- 3) Choose from the set of factors why you think Framton Nuttel believed the story told by Vera?
 - a. The window is open on an October afternoon.
 - b. The aunt thinks that they will come through that window one day.
 - c. The bodies of the three men and their dog were never found.
 - d. Vera’s remark “Do you know, sometimes on still, quiet evenings like this, I almost get a creepy feeling that they will all walk in through that window”.

e. Mrs. Sappleton immediately comments on the open window by explaining that her husband and two brothers are coming in through it when they come home from shooting.

4) Do you think that this was the first time Vera played a prank (trick) on somebody? Identify how you have reached your conclusion by referring to the text.

-The students share their answers with their peers in groups of 3-4.

The questions in the tasks require empathy from the students so that they can draw on both intersubjectivity and their analytical skills to look at the text features. The three questions in the task above demonstrate the sort of questions that require analytic skills to understand and analyze the language of the text, the characters' behavior and speech, the sequence of events, and narration (point of view). So the questions are designed to guide the students to use close-reading skills to make connections and draw inferences by using contextual clues to figure out and make an interpretative decision about text meaning. They will use what they know about the story and the characters from reading it, and then relate it to new information, which is directed by the students' ability to make connections between parts of the text. They will use their imaginations to make links between different ideas and assumptions, make adjustments if necessary, and look for more clues to support their interpretations. To help achieve this goal, the students should be encouraged by the teacher to take notes, re-read, and scan for specific information (name, places, and words). A task like the one shown above provides the students with a chance to work with others to share their ideas and develop their thinking. Also, they can share justifications in their discussion to demonstrate the basis on which they developed their ideas and draw conclusions.

The activity above can help the students interpret literal and figurative meaning, and analyze and understand character complexity in 'The Open Window' through inferencing and deduction. For example, in Question 4 shown above '*Do you think that this was the first time Vera played a prank (trick) on somebody? How do you know? Refer to the text*', the students have to link their answers to information found in the text. They could suggest clues and justifications, but one probable clue that they can provide is the final comment in the last line of the text (line 87) "Romance at short notice was her specialty". This sentence may not be easy to interpret at first, but if the students connect it to other contextual clues

and comments made by the narrator or the characters, they may be able to build on them and predict the meaning of “Romance at short notice” by inferring its meaning.

The teacher starts by asking the students questions about the meaning of ‘romance’. The phrase ‘short notice’ is already given to the students in a glossary. The teachers, therefore, ask them to try to link the meaning of ‘short notice’ with ‘romance’ by scaffolding their thinking processes. By asking questions like: *How can romance be at short notice? Are there any other meanings of the word ‘romance’?* The students are, therefore, encouraged to use the dictionary to identify any other possible meanings.

The teacher can model for the students the sort of thinking that supports their reasoning skills for building meaning. If they are able to understand the meaning of ‘spirit of adventure’ and identify ‘at short notice’ as meaning ‘with little warning or time for preparation’ (The New Oxford American Dictionary), then they can draw conclusions about the main character Vera as being a person who loves pranks and making up stories, and they can then understand the narrator’s point of view towards Vera (main character). Likewise, it might help them understand and identify the twist in the surprise ending, and, with the right help, understand the theme of the story, which is the power of the imagination, and the art of storytelling in children, and the idea of the contrast between what is real and what is just appearance (reality/appearances).

In **Stage four**, evaluation is the learning goal, and therefore the students are encouraged to read the text closely. Their analytical thinking is driven towards making judgments or evaluations about the author’s style, word choice, and intentions. Students will of course have to be able to comprehend, apply their knowledge, and analyze the text features before they are able to provide stylistic evaluations. Evaluation of characters and their behavior and actions is dealt with in tasks related to ‘intersubjective’. An example from Story 7, ‘The Story of an Hour’, demonstrates how teachers could help students draw on their imaginations by thinking about stylistic features and making an evaluation of the writer’s word choice and its role in the meaning of the story.

From Lesson 7 ‘The Story of an Hour’

Reasoning-gap task: Analyze the text:

- After reading the text, the teacher asks the students to work in small groups of 3-4 and look at the following worksheet with extracts from the text, then work together and answer the questions about each line of the extract:

She sat with her head thrown back upon the cushion of the chair, quite motionless, except when a sob came up into her throat and shook her, as a child who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams.

In this line, there is a comparison between _____ and a _____.

This image indicates (happiness / grief / anger)

There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, and the color that filled the air.

Chopin (author) indicates that Mrs. Mallard’s epiphany was a result of the mood she was experiencing. Can you indicate (underline) what verbs or phrases that she uses to create that image? How well was she able to portray that image through her choice of words?

- What does this image say about Mrs. Mallard’s feelings? Use only adjectives.

After the groups have completed the chart and answered the questions, they can share their answers with the rest of the class.

In the first example of the above task, the students have to draw on their linguistic knowledge to be able to recognize the key words which create imagery. The students can be encouraged to visualize the scenes, and the descriptive language, explaining every aspect of the main character’s movement as she reacts to the news of her husband’s death. A key word in this sentence is the word ‘sob’ which can be linked with the word ‘cries’ in the same sentence: as a child who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams. When students analyze this sentence, they will recall their knowledge of figurative

language, and more specifically of simile, metaphor, and personification. They need to be able to apply that knowledge to the text in order to picture the image that the writer is describing of Mrs. Mallard's (main character's) feelings at that particular moment. To help the students understand the direct comparison in the simile in Extract 1, the teacher helps them to make the connection between the two images: the image of Mrs. Mallard and a crying baby through the use of 'as'. The students' knowledge of sentence structure and parts of speech can help them make the correct choice to complete the question shown above "In this line, there is a comparison between _____ and a _____". So, their knowledge of the language can help them use their imagination to make a conclusion that there is a comparison between two nouns, and their knowledge of literary elements, more specifically of similes, will help them determine that these two nouns have something in common which is signaled by the use of 'as' or 'like'. They can also work out that the missing word from the first gap is probably a reference to 'she' (Mrs. Mallard). The second space has the article 'a', which, if they can make the right inferences, is based on the sentence in bold ("as a child who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams"). Then, they can work out that the comparison is between Mrs. Mallard and a crying baby.

This is also the case with the second example shown above. The two words 'creeping' and 'reaching' show that verbs are quite important choices by the narrator, and if the students can make a link between these words and the context, they can determine the imagery of Mrs. Mallard's new feelings of freedom and liberation, and the reason behind them. This analysis and the conclusions drawn from it can lead them to empathize with her - a property of intersubjectivity which will be discussed in the next section. As has been mentioned in the literature, analytical thinking and intersubjectivity interact by building on one another. This example is given to help the students make evaluations about the writer's style and choice of words to create a certain tone. When the students work collaboratively to analyze both literal and figurative aspects of the language, they should have access to their dictionaries to check the meanings of unknown words and make sense of them using contextual clues and inferencing from earlier parts of the text. The writer's inclusion of the question 'What was it?' indicates something mysterious or not known that is happening to her. If the students can answer the first question in that example and identify two key verbs ('creeping' and 'reaching'), they can find out their meanings from the dictionary and look

for links. The word ‘epiphany’ has already been introduced to the students in the pre-reading stage in which the teacher gives it as a key word then provides the meaning as: a sudden intuitive leap of understanding, especially through an ordinary but striking occurrence, (Oxford Dictionary). The meaning of ‘epiphany’ in the question, provides a clue which they can draw on and use their imaginations to make connections between its meaning and the sentence in the extract.

The level of abstractness is probably too high for the students to appreciate and understand on their own, and, therefore, the questions aims to scaffold the students’ thinking processes and abilities to fully imagine and visualize the scene from the choice of words and sentence structure. By using prior knowledge of the story events and knowledge activated at the beginning of the lesson on women and women’s minor role in 18th century societies, combined with knowledge from their own cultural background, the students use scanning close reading, and making connections to deal with the abstract topic. They are pushed to draw on their imaginations to understand the meaning behind the writer’s selection of words and why such words were chosen, and what effect they have on the general meaning of the text. This will eventually help them understand the issues raised and the themes discussed, and how they can make connections between the story, the cultures it portrays, and their own lives. In this story, packed with imagery, listening to someone more skilled and fluent (the teacher) read the story, helps the students imagine and visualize. The students will probably need to be guided to draw on a range of strategies like taking notes using the dictionary, inferencing, making connections between the textual features, guessing meaning from context, and visualizing. All these strategies are tools for developing their imaginations to make sense of the text in general.

In **Stage five**, focus is on the students’ creative skills, and therefore, students will need to build on their previous skills of comprehension, application, analysis, and evaluation. For the purpose of drawing on the aspect of analytical thinking, the students’ interpretative skills will be heavily dependent on how well the students are helped to activate background knowledge and the sort of scaffolding strategies used by the teacher in the pre-reading tasks to facilitate their understanding and interaction with cognitively demanding texts. The abstract content and complex text structure, along with the difficult vocabulary, necessitates that the teacher provides students with as much support as possible, through elicitation of responses, or questioning at the beginning of the lesson (pre-reading stage).

This is to assist them with the complex plot structures of the stories they are going to read. Managing the tasks and schema activation activities can then prepare the students for later stages where they could do more close reading, which involves more of the imagination (Langer, 1990, 1991). In the ninth story, ‘Incarnations of Burned Children’, the teacher will establish, after the pre-reading task shown earlier, that the story is about a baby getting burned and based on this, the students will be supported to study how this is revealed through the writing style. An example of how to develop their imagination through analytical thinking in this stage, where focus is on meaning creation, is shown below:

From Lesson 9 ‘Incarnations of Burned Children’

Reasoning-gap + Opinion-gap task: Textual analysis:

- The students are given 2 or 3 extracts from the text (sentences, or whole paragraphs). These are provided in slips. In groups (3-4) the students work together to answer the questions enclosed in the paper slips. Each slip has a quote taken from the story. The slips are arranged so that the students start from the beginning and build on their understanding until they reach the end of the story. Though the quotes may be the same, each group will have different slips than the others as the questions may change from one group to the other. The aim of this is to create diversity of thinking between the different groups for later discussion. The following worksheet contains a sample of the slips given to the students.

“The Daddy was around the side of the house hanging a door for the tenant when he heard the child's screams and the Mommy's voice gone high between them”. “He could move fast, and the back porch gave onto the kitchen, and before the screen door had banged shut behind him the Daddy had taken the scene in whole”

- Why are the words Daddy and Mommy capitalized?

- Do you believe that the writer is trying to send a message (yes/no)
- If these two words had not been capitalized would the meaning change?

“their baby's diaper burned their hand and they saw where the real water'd fallen and pooled and been burning their baby all this time while he screamed for them to help him and they hadn't, hadn't thought”.

- The meaning of *pooled*: a) gathered and collected b) c) evaporated
- What do you think is the writer's attitude? Do you think he blames the parents for how things have turned out to be for the child? Refer to the text for justification.

In the above examples, the students are required to make inferences to make sense of the quotations taken from the story. Inferencing will require them to look back at what they know about the text and the effect of boiling water and use their imagination to build on that knowledge to draw conclusions about the events that took place before and after the incident. This will make them better able to analyze the text, and give them the chance to respond more freely to the story. This story, 'Incarnations of Burned Children', is a story with an open ending - it is not clear how the story ends and, therefore, the students can give different possibilities to its meaning and the lesson behind it. After understanding the parts that they analyze in this task, they can connect the parts of the text together to give a more coherent understanding of the story as a whole, and give different and reasoned ideas for the ending. If students are able to interpret the text, its language, and style, they can create their horizon of possibilities when they share their ideas with each other in a more collaborative social environment.

The teacher can lead the students to build on their knowledge of the second language structures using their imagination to make speculations and draw conclusions about why the words 'Mummy' and 'Daddy', as shown above, are capitalized (to give generalizability, representing all mothers and all fathers). To understand the meaning of the word "pooled", they can also use their knowledge of the word 'pool', their grammatical knowledge, that *ed* is used with a verb in the past simple, and also use the context to build the meaning of the word. The students might re-read the extract to try to figure out the author's attitude towards the incident and understand more about his intentions. If the students try to link previous sentences with the final phrase in the last extract (hadn't thought), use their previous knowledge and experiences to connect with the text on a more emotional sense, their imaginations will help them build on that knowledge and emotional connection to create new understandings of the text and also the characters. They will reflect on the sense and use visualizing techniques to create a visual image that explains the writer's descriptions in that extract from the text.

8.3.3.2. Intersubjectivity

Intersubjectivity is the aspect of the conceptual model which is related to emotional response and connectivity with the characters of the story. Through the emotion of empathy, a reader can feel what can be assumed as the feelings and emotions of others. In

the classroom the teachers can provoke this kind of engagement and interaction with the text mostly through discussion tasks, such as imagining a particular situation, or asking them what it would be like to be in a character's position. Intersubjectivity lends itself to discussion and exploration of moral and spiritual values with and beyond the text. It is usually shown in while- and post-reading activities, but sometimes it is also encouraged at the beginning of a lesson. Activities which involve the students in emotional connectivity, character identification (Keen, 2006) and being emotionally involved in the narrative situation require intersubjective reading. Examples of how this aesthetic aspect of the imagination can be applied inside the classroom across the five stages are presented in the following section.

In **Stage one**, learning outcomes are aimed at developing general comprehension skills and the students' abilities to use prediction for understanding the moral behind the stories. Intersubjectivity at this level, therefore, is a way of helping the students to make general comments on human behavior and stereotypes and relate their own life experiences to how they interpret and understand those stereotypes. For example, in a post-reading task from the second story, 'Cookies', shown below, the students are required to put themselves in the situation of the main character and also make connections between their cultural background and that of the main character.

From Lesson 2 "Cookies"

Opinion-gap task: Visualization:

- Ask the students to imagine that they were in that position, and that this encounter with the "cookie thief" happened to them in their own country, but in a different setting. What would be different in terms of the man's behavior towards the man eating his cookies? Would they (the students) have said something to the man, or would they have responded differently, and why?
- The students then write their responses on small pieces of paper where they articulate how they can make intercultural connections with the story.

This kind of visualizing helps the students make connections by recalling aspects of their own life and cultures and using their imaginations to build on them and think of how they

would react to a particular situation. The concreteness and familiarity of the text makes it more accessible for the students to make these connections by drawing on their knowledge. They will also use that knowledge that they are familiar with and with their imaginations make assumptions based on what they know about themselves and the cultures that they are related to. Discussion helps the students share their ideas with others, build on them, and sometimes make adjustments to their responses based on how they judge and evaluate the situation or the character, thus refining their understanding of text and the message that it tries to convey through those characters.

In **Stage two**, the learning aim is application of the language, of content knowledge, and knowledge of literary conventions. Accordingly, intersubjectivity is mostly portrayed in tasks that help the students to apply their knowledge of literary elements (theme, character/characterization, and point of view) and understand them. For that reason, when the students are asked to read a story like ‘The Appointment in Samaraa’ in the example shown below, they will have to be able to think of how their understanding of the characters and the characters’ actions are interpreted in the world they live in. They will try to make connections between their own lives, their understandings of the world around them, and the characters, events, and outcome in the text. They will then use their imagination to build on this knowledge to make sense of the story and understand the message “that you cannot escape death or destiny”. A post-reading task from the third story suggests how the students could draw on what they already know, and how they relate with the text to build up meaning is:

From Lesson 3 “The Appointment in Samarra”

Opinion-gap task : Journals:

-The teacher gives the students a chance to respond to the text and comment on it by asking them what they thought about what the servant (Ahmed) did, whether they agree or not, what would they have done differently, and why?

If the students are able to make these links when working on the task above between their own lives and the character’s, then they can reach an understanding of the main theme and the moral behind the story - that you cannot escape destiny.

In **Stage three**, the learning outcomes aim to develop analysis of the text characters and their actions. At this stage the literary focus is on characters and characterizations and therefore the tasks help the students develop their analytical skills for understanding character roles and character development and complexity. Being able to understand and describe the characters and justify their behaviors is important for understanding the text and the abstract themes that it presents to the reader. In the task presented below the students should be able to engage with the text on an emotional level when they make connections with the characters and put themselves in their position. The students will use what they know about the story and their own personal experiences to anticipate the characters' thoughts and feelings using their imaginations. For example, in the second question about 'The Birthmark', they will empathize with Georgiana, and maybe even Aylmer, seeing him as a self-destructive, obsessive person who is striving for perfection when he himself is far from being perfect. This will help the students uncover the many issues unfolding in the story.

From Lesson 5 'The Birthmark'

Opinion-gap task: Post-reading Discussion:

The teacher asks the students to discuss the following questions in groups of 4.

- 1) How do you think Aylmer feels after the death of his wife? Would you forgive yourself if you were in his position?
- 2) Who do you believe is the victim in this story, Aylmer, or Georgiana, or both? Explain your answer? Why?

The students then share their ideas with the teacher in a whole class discussion.

In **Stage four**, the learning aim is evaluation of the characters' behaviors and the issues raised in the story. The aspect of evaluation related to intersubjectivity is taken to involve making decisions about the moral and spiritual values of the characters, their actions, and re-evaluating one's own values. It can also involve the reader's view of the writer's intentions, beliefs, or perspectives on a particular issue or idea. Generally speaking, the students will emotionally connect with the text, with the characters, and with the writer. This can be shown through the post-reading example shown below.

From Lesson 7 ‘The Story of an Hour’

Opinion-gap task: Class discussion

The teacher uses the students’ interpretations and responses to the text so far to initiate a whole class discussion where students explore the following questions:

- What did you think of the ending?
- Was the ending ironic? In what way?
- In what ways can you identify with Mrs. Mallard’s situation?
- Do you feel that Mrs. Mallard’s marriage to her husband, Mr. Mallard, is the cause of her misery or weakness?
- How can marriage shackle women’s freedom in your society? At what point would you feel that a woman’s freedom in your culture is related to marriage?
- Do you agree/disagree with how society views a perfect marriage in your culture?
- What is the author’s attitude towards grief as opposed to freedom? Which one do you believe is more prominent in her story? How do you think the author feels about freedom?

In the above example from the seventh story, ‘The Story of an Hour’, the students make connections between their own lives and cultures and the story characters and culture. They will use evidence to make judgements and evaluations, and use their imagination to make predictions about characters attitudes and emotions. They will, through discussion with others, have the opportunity to reconsider their beliefs and sometimes question them. The teacher can facilitate the discussion by pushing the students to apply their values and their culture’s values to the issues that were raised in the text about women’s rights, empowerment, the oppression of marriage, and independence. To make imaginative judgements, the students will have to re-read some parts of the text and make inferences about the characters’ emotions and thoughts, about the writer’s attitude and view of the place of women within 19th century American societies. They will have to relate their ideas to the writer’s background, as well as to their own. Students can pose questions and revise their initial responses through close reading of the text for evidence to support their predictions/assumptions and interpretations. Their imaginations help them to build on each other’s ideas to make sense of the abstractness of the text.

In cases like these, where students are more focused on giving their impressions and evaluations of characters, the writer, or values in certain cultures, most of the meaning-making process is a mixture of intersubjectivity and analytical thinking. In order for the

students to be able to benefit from their discussions as a class, they will be reminded by the teacher to look back at the text for textual clues that support their ideas. Looking at the language that has been used to convey the imagery of the descriptive scenes and the emotional state of the main character provides the students with support to make inferences and draw conclusions based on intertextual and subjective background. Inferencing is a key strategy that they will draw on to develop their imaginations and responses to the text.

In **Stage five**, the learning aim is focused towards helping the students draw on their higher order creative skills. At this stage the text has a high level of complexity. The students have to deal with the complex structure of the genres, abstract themes, and complex characters. The complexity of the characters makes intersubjectivity challenging for the students because the characters' emotional states can be hard to determine. Thus, they will need to work very hard on comprehension skills and on analysis of text features and characters in order to emotionally engage with the text and empathize with the characters. Following a non-linear, complex plot is demanding and it is, therefore, necessary to be able to follow the sequence of events, or the stream of thoughts in the story, and identify the narrator's perspective. In a post-reading example from 'Incarnations of Burned Children' shown below, the students are required to think about the characters of the story and their reactions to a tragedy where a child is burned with boiling water.

From Lesson 9 'Incarnations of Burned Children'

Opinion-gap task : Questions for discussion:

- "the Daddy kept saying he was here he was here, adrenaline ebbing and an anger at the Mommy for allowing this thing to happen just starting to gather in wisps at his mind's extreme rear still hours from expression".

Why do you think that is the father's attitude towards the mother? Is it justifiable? Can you find evidence for your view in the text? Would you feel the same way if you were in the Daddy's position?

This example helps the students draw on their imaginations by getting to put themselves in the characters' positions, to think what they are thinking, feel what they are feeling, and emotionally connect with them. The themes of the story are negligence, blame, and

remorse. The students will have to use their metacognition to re-read, monitor their comprehension of the text, and try to look for clues to make guesses about what might have happened in the story, and search for any textual clues that might hint, for example, that the mother is at fault for not paying attention to the child, and that the father is actually blaming her, or any other interpretation.

Thinking about the above questions can make the students more aware of the emotional state the parents were in. It also helps them imagine the kind of relationship that the parents might have. By drawing on their prior knowledge and experiences, they will try to support interpretation by matching their understanding of the world around them with what they read in the text. So, to condemn the father's actions, they are encouraged to put themselves in the mother's position and empathize with her, for she too is deeply traumatized by her child's accident. If the students do not agree, then they will put themselves in the father's place and give an explanation as to why he is acting this way, and relate with him. They use their previous experience to guide their thinking and make speculations about his feelings, his thoughts, and the reasons behind them. Either way, the students are encouraged through classroom discussion to make those connections between themselves and the mother, father, and also the child. In this way, they use their imagination to empathize with them and make moral judgements about their behavior and reactions, and whether or not they accept and agree with them. They will be guided by the teacher to question the father's and mother's actions, and also human behavior in general, and how people deal with these sorts of situations. The teacher's job is to facilitate the discussion and elicit responses by rephrasing what the students say. By eliciting responses, students can be encouraged to question and monitor their understanding by using provocative statements like, "the baby is probably thinking: what are you doing, quit arguing and pay attention". The teacher can deepen and expand the students' thinking through such statements to build on each other's ideas. This kind of thinking task can help students move to a more creative way of intersubjectivity in which they create a dialogue for the story.

8.3.4. Possibility Thinking

This feature of the model is mostly encouraged through class discussion to engage in shared meaning making. Applying this creative aspect of the imagination is demonstrated

inside the classroom through a range of activities (writing, drawing, graphics, creating a storyboard, drama). It is important to note that not every stage of the reading program includes possibility thinking.

In **Stage three**, the learning outcomes are aimed at developing the students' analyzing skills. Focus at this stage of the reading program was mostly on how the characters are delineated through language. To help the students draw on their imaginations to look at different possibilities, in the fifth story, 'The Birthmark', they are encouraged to first interact with the text and understand its general meaning. Then, after close analysis of the characters and the figurative language, such as symbolism, similes, and metaphors in the text, they have a chance to share their ideas in a class discussion. Finally, they can work on the following task to make a storyboard. A storyboard makes use of visuals to understand and respond to stories, and the students have a range of items to choose from such as, characters, setting and faces. Based on how they visualize the characters and setting, they can relate the images to their ideas and possible understandings.

From Lesson 5 'The Birthmark'

Opinion-gap task: Storyboard

- The students are asked to first put themselves into groups of 3.
- 1) The students are asked to record their ideas and thoughts about one of the characters in the story (Georgiana/Aylmer) by recording them in a response journal.
- 2) These journals are then shared between the groups to build up their thinking and extend their responses.
- 3) The students make use of their shared responses to create a storyboard for the story plot.

It is necessary for the teacher to model for the students what they are expected to do to help them understand how they can carry out the task.

In this process, the imagination is extended through the different possibilities and interpretations of the story events, and characters, and how they can be linked together in a storyboard summary. This kind of graphic organizer can be used to show how the events are structured to make one coherent story, and evaluate how well the students are able to make logical guesses based on what they understood from the story, for instance if they

were able to pick up the hints about the outcome of the story provided by the writer through foreshadowing. This task views negotiation and collaboration as central techniques to perspectives taking as they create a graphic version of the story.

In **Stage four** of the reading program, the learning goal is evaluation of the characters' behavior and how the writer's style is able to reveal that through stylistic choices. Possibility thinking at this stage can be encouraged through writing and building on classroom discussion. In an example from the seventh story, 'The Story of an Hour', the students have a classroom discussion where they share their different views and responses to some of the post-reading questions. A final question that is used to provide the students with help to move on to the follow-up task is: *How would the meaning of the story have changed if it did not end with an irony?* When the students answer this question, they will be able to take on different ideas and perspectives they hear from their classmates. They will then have a chance to think after the lesson and reflect on the story and the events that took place. They will also have a chance afterwards to build on their responses and knowledge by completing the tasks shown below:

From Lesson 7 'Story of an Hour'

Opinion-gap task

Writing task: Ironies in the story

- In small groups of 3, write a new version of the story that extends Mrs. Mallard's happiness over her new freedom? How do you think Mrs. Mallard's life would have been after the death of her husband? It is important that you try to highlight your ideas and attitudes towards the situation.

In this task the students use their background knowledge and experience to make predictions. They can draw inferences based on their knowledge of Mrs. Mallard and their knowledge of how women in similar situations might have acted. Their imaginations help them build on that knowledge to reach these conclusions after analysis of the text as described earlier. Note-taking and questioning are useful strategies that can help the students organize their thoughts and ideas. This can help them make the necessary connections between the new and old ideas and identify how they develop. Discussion is

useful for the students to explore different possibilities based on different students' understandings and help them to make sense of the text.

In **Stage five**, being able to create something new is the learning aim. In the final story, 'The Tell-Tale Heart', the following task encourages possibility thinking and creativity by using drama:

From Lesson 10 'The Tell-Tale Heart'

Opinion-gap task:

Drama (Role-play)

-The class is divided into four large groups. Each group is given a section of the story where they have to tell the story as a comic strip. Comic strips are not used for students to demonstrate their artistic attributes, but rather for the opportunities for dialogue, monologues, and thought bubbles that they create for the characters in the story. The students can also choose to view the story from a different perspective. The scenes can include thoughts about small details, such as objects, sounds, and so on. The teacher will have to model for the students the kind of questions and details they need to consider when carrying out this project. The teacher can use a previously prepared slide to do part of the story together.

After each group has created their versions of the sections assigned to them, they can get together at the end of the course and create a dramatic version of the story. The students make use of the different interpretations and perspectives they come up with within each group on what happens in the story.

Drama activities provide opportunities for aesthetic, visual, and oral responses to stories. Drama in the language classroom can be both enjoyable and rewarding (Collie & Slater, 1987), and it can help the teachers link the text to the students' own experiences and help them learn the language (Maley & Duff, 1978, 1982, 2005; Wessels, 1987). It will also give them an opportunity to recycle the language of the text as they retell and perform it.

In such an abstract and complex story as 'The Tell-Tale Heart', the students need to be encouraged to use strategies like mind-mapping to organize their thoughts and make

connection between the events and the characters. In the task above, the students will need to use their responses to the story to create a dialogue in a comic strip where they use what they have learned from the text to make reasoned guesses about how the characters look and act. They can use their knowledge of the text and the descriptions of the characters, the actions, and scenes in the story to create a mental image of the story events. The students get a chance to listen to the story being read to them that will sensitize them to the language and ideas in the story and engage their background knowledge making the story more imageable. This kind of drama task will help them extend their understanding of the story and explore the different issues and themes raised, such as madness, evil, and guilt, and the idea that, the human heart cannot endure the burden of guilt especially where murder is involved. This can also help the students understand the complex chronology and the flashbacks. The students have to take notes to write down key words or phrases from the text and make use of their previous responses to questions set at an earlier stage to help them act out the scenes. The different interpretations given by the groups can provide them with different perspectives and possibilities that they discuss as a class, with the teacher encouraging them to share and express themselves freely and create meaning from the text.

8.4. Concluding Thoughts

This chapter has demonstrated how the model is implemented in the tasks for the reading program and how the tasks were classified, graded, and sequenced according to cognitive complexity. It has tried to show how the features of the conceptual model lie behind the design of the tasks and how these are designed to match the learning outcomes. The discussion of theoretical views of task design in the first part of the chapter justified the choice of the three main task types- information-gap, reasoning-gap, and opinion-gap - to reflect how a teacher could provide a variety of tasks that promote different cognitive skills and abilities and, thus, train the students to use specific reading strategies which help develop the creative imagination.

The second part of the chapter has presented the different activities selected to put the model features into practice. Each feature of the model was presented separately and the application procedure was discussed and explained in detail across the five stages of the program. The examples for different stages of the model showed the different demands

made on the students and how the teachers, with the different teaching strategies, could help them develop their responses to the different stories. The examples that have been chosen to show how the model is applied inside the literature classroom demonstrate how the imagination makes literature reading more engaging, interesting, creative, and, most importantly, relevant to the students' own lives. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter 9 (the conclusion). The main points that have been drawn from this chapter are that learning is a developmental process that requires the grading of not only the texts and tasks but also the skills that help stimulate and develop the imagination through pedagogic tasks. The main implications and conclusions of the study are presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 9

Thesis Summary and Conclusion

Imagination is the beginning of creation. You imagine what you desire, you will what you imagine and at last you create what you will.

(G. Bernard Shaw)

9.1. Introduction

Every story must come to an end, and like all quest narratives, this research study has, at least in its own sense, reached its resolution. This research started out as compelling curiosity about how creative writers engage, excite, and teach their audiences through a work of narrative fiction. It then became a chance to explore, in a unique way, how second language learners reading literature can build up meaning and reach an adequate level of engagement and pleasure, and eventually, by imaginatively ‘experiencing’ the text, learn from the world which a writer weaves through his narrative. As an English language university teacher, my interest was raised, and my aim became to find a way to support Libyan EFL students to imaginatively read and respond to short stories and to facilitate their learning. This research became my journey to determine problems, search for solutions, and draw this imaginative tale to a conclusion.

This chapter, therefore, ties the knot by providing a summary of the main theoretical ideas which underpin this study and outlining my final reflections on this intellectual journey. It first starts by recalling the principal themes that this study revolves around and the main issues that it discusses. By restating the main theoretical perspectives framing this research study and the chief questions that it set out to explore, it provides a synthesis of the theoretical framework. It then highlights the pedagogical inferences deduced, as well as the practical implications, thus, leading to a range of suggestions and recommendations for classroom practice within Libyan HE. It concludes by discussing the limitations of this study and suggesting directions for expanding on the ideas that have been presented in this research.

9.2. Summary of the Research Aims and Research Questions

The central theme in this study is the potential use of the creative imagination (a socio-cognitive tool for meaning making) as a tool for developing Libyan EFL students' abilities to read and make sense of literary fiction (short stories). It argues that meaning making can be enhanced through the acquisition of a set of skills and reading strategies which help students draw on their imagination when reading short stories (fiction).

The questions that were posited at the start of this conceptual research were exploratory in nature and require conceptual considerations. Issues that were initially posed were mainly concerned with the difficulties that most Libyan students studying EFL face when reading literary texts. The study reflected on the institutional issues that may have posed difficulties. These include the teacher-centered teaching approach which dominates in Libyan classrooms, the inadequate teaching materials, and the neglected and barely established teacher training programs, which collectively can result in low-level reading abilities, ineffective teaching techniques, and insufficiently prepared syllabuses. Together these factors can create a void between students' actual abilities and the learning levels they achieve (the measurement of which are test-focused). They may also lead to misconceived notions, on the part of the students as well as the teachers, about the reading process (as discussed in Chapter 2). In response to these problems the research set out to explore three main questions:

- *How can the imagination be stimulated and developed in the classroom to extend the students' abilities to read and respond to short stories?*
- *What would be the features of a program of learning which would enable the students/learners to achieve that goal?*
- *What would be the opportunities and the constraints in implementing such a goal?*

9.3. Summary of the Theoretical Framework and Research

Procedure

There is ample research in Libya on students' difficulties with reading literature (El-Naili, 2006; Elbadri, 2009; Abukhattala, 2014), and suggestions for developing understanding in

reading (Albeckay, 2011; Abosnan, 2016; Mohamed, 2016). These might include extensive reading or developing language knowledge, especially vocabulary and knowledge of literary conventions, or what Culler (1975) called 'literary competence'. Studies that have focused on the reading of literature tended to focus on the difficulties with literary texts and the attitudes of Libyan students towards studying literature in the EFL university classroom (El-Naili, 2006; Elbadri, 2009; Abukhattala, 2014). What is interesting, and at the same time disappointing, is the lack of research in Libya on the process of literary understanding, and, more precisely, the role of the imagination in that process for overcoming the issues within the Libyan educational context. Such studies, therefore, neglect the important role of the reader in the creation of meaning. What is more, research on reading has mainly focused on determining the reading difficulties and the models used by readers. Such research on reading has not in any way taken into consideration the role of the imagination in understanding a text, nor how this imagination could be fostered in the classroom.

For the purpose of constructing a comprehensive theoretical platform for this study, rigorous interdisciplinary perspectives were interwoven in order to come up with an instructional approach for teaching short stories. Three main theoretical areas were explored: theories of learning and the role of the creative imagination in learning (Vygotsky, 1930; Dewey, 1933; Bruner, 1986; Egan, 1992), the interactive theory of reading and the processes involved in reading and understanding a text in both L1 and L2 (Rumelhart, 1977; Stanovich, 1980; Bernhardt, 1986), and reader-response theory and the process of reading and constructing meaning from literary texts (Rosenblatt, 1938; Iser, 1978; Langer, 1990). Based on this, the imagination was conceptualized as a socio-cognitive tool for meaning making. Ideas that were generated and identified from this theoretical framework were interrelated and combined to design a conceptual model that presented the process of meaning making in short story reading. The model draws on schema theory, the interactive theory of reading, the role of the imagination for learning (meaning making), analytical thinking (intellect), intersubjectivity (emotion), ZPD, and possibility thinking, as the main features of the creative imagination and the process of literary response.

To establish the transition from theory into practice and to fully address the issues presented earlier, the study had to tap into the field of syllabus design as a tool for

designing the reading program that takes all those theoretical ideas into account. Matters relating to text selection and grading, as well as task design (Nunan, 1988), were explored in the design of the program. A set of criteria for the design were suggested based on both reader and text readability variables for selecting texts and grading them in terms of level of difficulty. Criteria for selecting the texts fall into three categories: schematic knowledge, rhetorical structure, and language complexity. The conceptual model was adapted to link to Bloom's (1956) taxonomy of cognitive thinking skills (of comprehension, application, analysis, evaluation, and creation), therefore, guiding the grading and sequencing process of the texts. However, text grading and sequencing was mainly conducted by looking at cognitive complexity and the sophistication of short story elements (such plot, theme, character, characterization, point of view, and setting). A framework for grading and sequencing tasks, with reference to cognitive demands, was identified, which also took into consideration the learning outcomes which make use of Bloom's thinking skills. A total of ten stories were selected for the program content and structured according to complexity into five developmental stages where tasks vary in terms of cognitive complexity, focus on literary elements, and focus of cognitive skills and reading strategies. The five stages, therefore, addressed different learning objectives and aimed for graded learning outcomes, which reflected Bloom's (1959) taxonomy of cognitive skills. They initially targeted comprehension skills before moving on towards higher order creative skills. By relating the conceptual model to principles of syllabus design, it was possible to present the features of the program content.

The final step of the research was devoted to presenting the methodology carried out for the application of the conceptual model in the classroom through the use of pedagogic tasks. Application of the model was determined by how well the features of the model are explicitly presented through the use of reading strategies that support the development of the imagination. The designed tasks made it possible to identify the underlying principles of an instructional approach that takes as its main focus the establishment of a more socio-constructivist attitude to the reading and teaching of literary fiction in Libya. Socio-cognitivism when applied to learning emphasizes the need to think and construct meaning, as well as interact with the context around us through the use of cultural tools such as language (Vygotsky, 1978) in order to extend that meaning making. The task of finding answers to my research questions was therefore achieved through one of the many possible

ways to interpret the role of the imagination in the classroom (meaning making). The practicality of this study, though to some degree particularized, led to many implications which can to some extent be generalized to a much broader EFL and educational context.

9.4. Research and Pedagogic Implications

The process of building the theoretical framework and the design and application of the conceptual model had many implications. The imagination is a socio-cognitive (higher psychological) tool for meaning making (Vygotsky, 2004). This higher level thinking skill uses experience as the platform on which to construct meaning. The imagination, when coupled with reasoning, can lead to creativity. Emotion is an important aspect of the imagination, and for the imagination to fully develop, both emotion and intellect (reasoning) need to be coupled. This combination of both the affective and the intellectual aspects are strengthened when interaction with the environment (context) takes place through the use of language (as a tool). Meaning is, therefore, created as a result of the openness to different possibilities, ideas, solutions, and interpretations.

Reading literature is a chance for exploration, and the imagination is therefore a tool for taking on different perspectives and ideas to create different possibilities and meanings. Making sense of a literary text (short story) in the second language requires interaction between the text and the reader's store of background knowledge and experience (schema). This interaction is facilitated through a conscious choice of reading strategies and skills in order to create meaning. Readers with different backgrounds and diverse experiences therefore have different responses. Any change in one's background and experiences will thus result in a change in one's understanding of the text. The imagination is therefore developed and used to make sense of a literary text by consciously employing strategies that facilitate engagement and interaction between reader and text, and with different readers. These strategies also promote reasoning, emotional connectivity, and thinking of different possibilities.

Syllabus design is the tool for constructing a reading program. The design of a program, though seemingly simple, requires thoughtful questioning of the main learning purpose (Nunan, 1988). In this case, the organization of the program is influenced by the views

about learning, about language, and about how reading takes place. These views inform the approach to syllabus design which places importance on the process of learning as well as on the product (Nunan, 1988). In this sense, the program, which is aimed at developing the creative imagination in literary response, takes into account the need to involve students in the process of learning by engaging them actively in the reading process, in addition to acquiring the knowledge and skills to process a text efficiently. The design of a syllabus, therefore, requires that teachers select appropriate content (texts) by determining the level of difficulty with reference to a set of criteria. They must also identify a series of pedagogic tasks that facilitate the learning process (i.e. the methodology). Syllabus design includes the selection, grading, and sequencing of not only the content (texts) but also the methodology (tasks). Text selection takes into consideration factors which influence difficulty, such as schematic knowledge, text structure, textual features, and specific short story elements (e.g. character and characterization, setting, and point of view).

9.5. Recommendations for Teaching Literary Fiction in Libyan EFL University Classrooms

An instructional approach that draws on the previous ideas and aims for the development of the creative imagination for short story reading contains the following features:

- Using knowledge of the world (schema) (Rumelhart, 1977; Anderson, 1977).
- Activating the imagination to extend that knowledge and build meaning (Vygotsky, 1930).
- Learning features of the narrative structure to support this meaning building (Brumfit & Carter, 1990; Lazar, 1993).
- The content should be closely linked to students' knowledge and personal experiences (Carrell, 1987), and should be structured to develop higher order thinking skills (Bloom, 1956).
- Word lists should be minimal if introduced at the start of the lesson (Nuttall, 1996, 2005).
- Meaning creation is a social, analytic and aesthetic process that involves textual analysis (Stockwell, 2004), emotional connections with the text (Rosenblatt, 1938;

Iser, 1979), and exploration of different possibilities (Craft, 2001) through interaction (Langer, 1990).

- Utilization of writing (for example, response journals, argumentative essays), drama (Maley & Duff, 2005), and graphic art (pictures, comic strips, graphs, diagrams) to create something new (newness) and make meaning.

It is therefore important that Libyan educators make use of the students' personal responses in the teaching of both reading and literature by activating the students' schemas and encouraging them to draw on past knowledge and experiences when reading. In that respect, it is recommended that teachers organize their lessons into pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading stages, and do not ignore the pre-reading stage because it is the most important stage of any lesson.

As has been mentioned in Chapter 2, Libyan classrooms are teacher-centered and teaching and learning is basically about knowledge transmission. In order for the teaching of literature to be more imaginative and move towards student-centered learning, it is recommended that teachers take on a role of facilitator rather than controller in the classroom. Learning is a constructive process that requires students to think about what they are learning and make use of what they know in order to build on it and create new knowledge through interaction and collaboration with peers. That way, teachers of literature not only facilitate reading and understanding of texts, but also language development through oral communication (debates or role play), and writing (essays or response journals), in addition to reading and listening. It is important for Libyan educators to have a more flexible attitude to teaching and learning, which recognizes the social aspect of knowledge construction to facilitate student learning. So, group work and pair work are very important, and the national system could support such techniques by reducing class size and giving teachers and students more opportunity to focus on the learning process. This also assumes the goal of shifting from a product exam-oriented system to a process system which supports learning for meaning through the acquisition of a set of skills.

It is also recommended that the teaching of literature not be separated from the teaching of reading. This means that teaching students to read literature should involve developing

their reading abilities by making use of reading strategies and skills for understanding. What is more important is that teaching place special emphasis on the development of strategies that promote imaginative reading, such as inferencing and making connections, which draw on the students' abilities to think and reason, and emotionally engage with the text.

This study also provides some recommendations for curriculum and syllabus developers by suggesting that emphasis be given to the designing of a literary syllabus that not only considers the content to be taught, but also the classroom activities for teaching them. This should be done through carefully considering three main factors: the students' level, interests, cultural context, rather than focusing on what needs to be taught, and the importance of completing it in time for the examinations. It is also important to set specific objectives for a lesson, and help students understand these objectives from the start.

My final recommendation for the Libyan educational policy makers, in both basic and higher education, is with regards to professional development. It is vital that construction in learning becomes an area of focus not only with students but also with the teachers. Opportunities for professional development provide the teachers with the chance to test their understanding and build their knowledge and skills of how teaching and learning take place. So, teachers of literature need to be aware of the reading process before they actually teach it. Likewise, they need to be aware of how meaning is constructed in reading literature and what factors influence this meaning construction (such as social context, language). There is a need for a systematic, long-term development plan which allows teachers to practise and reflect on their practice through collaborative interaction with other teachers in the field of EFL, in general, as well as in specific content areas. This will afford teachers the chance to reflect on what their teaching practice looks like and why they do certain things, which will enable them to determine their weaknesses.

Several findings have been uncovered by drawing on the literature on the role of the imagination in learning and knowledge building, on the processes of reading in both L1 and L2 and meaning making, and on reader-response theory and the process of meaning making in literature reading. This study has indicated that reading and responding to short stories could be more productive in the sense that students can create meaning of the texts by drawing on their imaginations. The designed conceptual model determined the features

of the imagination which facilitate this imaginative response for making sense of literary short stories. Based on the current research study, it has been established through the design of the reading program that it can be possible to pedagogically apply the model to an EFL context. However, this does not dispute the fact that any research, even when making original contributions, is subject to challenges, and therefore, limitations.

9.6. Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Further Research

1. Limited research in the field

This study has looked at a neglected area in Libya. There is limited research on the teaching of literature in EFL in Libya. Likewise, there are limited resources available from empirical investigations into the difficulties, approaches, and perceptions of Libyan EFL university students and teachers on literature in EFL. This has led to limited access to the data required for identifying specific areas of difficulty that needed to be addressed in this research study, both for teachers, and, most of all, for learners. Most research conducted in Libya relates to the teaching of English in general. For that reason, for the design of the current program, I had to construct my own perception of how the texts could be selected and graded to suit the students' level based on readability measures which relate to a typical EFL student.

Hence, it would be of importance if further research could be carried out to explore the students' actual problems in reading literature in general, especially fiction, by investigating their reading procedures and the mechanisms that they currently use to make sense of a text. This could be done through a qualitative inquiry in which students perform think aloud protocols, and through interviews, classroom observation, and focus groups for data collection. Such research could help identify the areas on which to focus most for both teaching and curriculum planning.

2. Limits of the conceptual model

The conceptualized model has been designed for the purpose of developing the creative imagination in reading and responding to literary fiction. This model presents one view of how this creative imagination can be stimulated and developed. It could be used in other

cultural contexts, but this thesis focuses on Libyan educational thought. Different ways of using the creative imagination could be developed and manipulated in different ways, to cover different objectives in different learning contexts.

3. Need for teacher training (workshops)

As Orafi (2008) indicates through his study, Libyan teachers prefer to use communicative textbooks but while employing their traditional methods of teaching due to their misconceptions about the effectiveness of communicative teaching styles. The current research builds on a student-centered approach which values the role of the reader, and therefore shifts the focus of the learning process from the teacher. This is of utmost importance since the study is framed by a socio-constructivist approach which values collaboration, interaction and group work. Most teachers will find ideas and suggestions emerging from this study quite challenging to their beliefs or even inappropriate. This is mainly because the teachers are not used to this approach for teaching, and, therefore, this novelty poses a threat to their abilities to implement such views. They also doubt the feasibility of integrating such an approach within the wider spectrum of the university curriculum.

Based on my personal experience as a teacher of literature in Libyan EFL university classrooms, and on the basis of my background of the Libyan educational system, it could be assumed that the application of the socio-constructivist ideas of the current study may be rather challenging for both teachers and students in Libya. In that respect, implementing a different approach to literature instruction in Libyan EFL classrooms should be skillfully planned and scheduled. For this reason, there should be a transitional phase which helps facilitate this change on both teachers and students. This can be done through structured workshops. Training Libyan teachers in how to adopt a student-centered approach will therefore require many workshops to meet these demands and help teachers attain the necessary skills and understanding.

Workshops should focus on two main aspects related to the conceptual model: interaction and emotional response. Interaction here has three meanings, in the sense that both students and teachers need to be aware of the interactive nature of reading where they can be introduced to the idea of using background knowledge and experience in understanding

a text. Such workshops would, therefore, introduce and highlight the importance of activating schema, and ways in which such schematic knowledge can be made relevant in the construction of meaning. As has been indicated in Chapter 4, reading is an interactive process in which top-down and bottom-up reading strategies are used to make meaning from the text. This means that students as well as teachers need to fully comprehend the interactive nature of reading, and the importance of using both top-down (such as prediction, inferencing), and bottom-up (decoding) thinking skills when reading and understanding a text. These workshops could address the significance of interaction and collaborative meaning making when reading literary texts, and emphasise the role of dialogue and negotiation for developing thinking and reasoning skills. Emphasis needs to be given to demonstrating how interaction between different readers could be achieved and ways in which discussion could be moved forward indicating the socio-constructivist nature of literary reading on which this research is grounded. It should be, therefore, made clear before the program could be implemented the different levels of meaning in which interaction in literary response takes place, and that this interactive nature of reading is part of the course objectives.

The emotional aspect of the model stresses the role of affective faculties and personal engagement alongside cognition (analytical thinking and intersubjectivity) as complementary aspects in the development of the creative imagination, thus providing more opportunity for creative meaning making in the construction of new ideas and possibilities. This is also considered as an aspect of the cognitive nature of reading in which there is an interaction between the affective and the cognitive which is the basis of imaginative reading.

4. Assessment

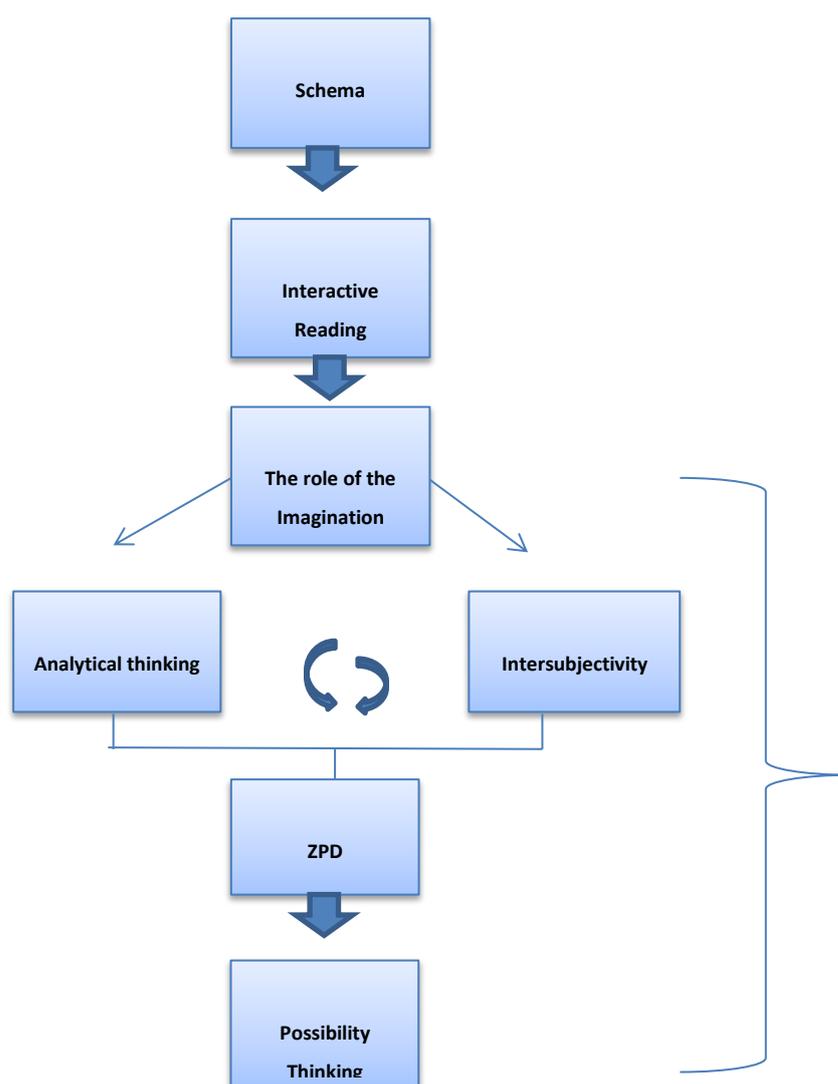
According to Nunan (1988), a syllabus should address three main issues: content, methodology, and evaluation. Unfortunately, due to the time limits, the current study was only able to address the first two issues, which relate to the design of content and tasks for carrying out the practice. Further research could be conducted into the assessment of reading literature, and specifically into assessing the reading of fiction (short stories) as outlined in this program.

5. The need for an empirical investigation of program effectiveness

Due to the current logistical and political issues in Libya, in addition to the time constraints, it was difficult to conduct empirical enquiry and have a chance to determine the effectiveness of the model and the reading program, and whether it can facilitate learner achievement. For that reason, further empirical enquiry is required to investigate whether the model actually works. It would be valuable, as well as interesting, to explore the effectiveness of the reading program through action research in which the program is taught to Libyan students, then data gathered to determine how the students and the teachers have perceived such an approach. Also, the students' performances could be measured before and after the implementation of the program to determine its effectiveness as an approach for teaching literary fiction in Libya.

One way in which to test the effectiveness of the model and the theoretical views which it covers through empirical inquiry could be done through conducting action research. This could involve the researcher, or others, actually teaching the designed reading program. The students could be assessed on the basis of their perception of the course and readiness. Semi-structured interviews could be used in which the students could demonstrate their opinions and ideas of how they evaluate, and perceive the designed program providing deep knowledge and explanations for the researcher. By asking follow-up questions, the interviewer might be able to interpret the interviewees' ideas and answers to the questions to be explored in more depth (Newby, 2010). Also, by conducting classroom observations, and more specifically where the students are involved in classroom, and group work activities, the researcher could make use of both content and discourse analysis in order to evaluate and interpret the students' responses to the texts. The responses that students provide in the form of written content could be scrutinised and analysed through content analysis. Content analysis, the scientific study of communicative content, can be used to make inferences and interpretations about the students' ideas and imaginative responses of the text (Elbadri, 2017). On the other hand, discourse analysis (studying language in use) investigates language expressing opinions and formulates accounts of events (Wooffitt, 2005). So, as part of a qualitative research inquiry, it could be utilized for the purpose of investigating the interactive nature of shared meaning making as the students are involved in group and classroom discussions. In this way, the researcher could try to investigate how the students' ideas and perspectives (responses) are shaped and developed.

In the process of conducting action research, think aloud protocols could also be taken as part of the overall inquiry in order to investigate the student's processes and actual thinking as they imaginatively interact with the text. The kind of strategies (if used), questions, and knowledge they use could be deduced from such a method, so allowing the researcher to verbalise the cognitive procedures that students follow both before and after implementation of the model.



It would be helpful if the students are explicitly shown how interaction is achieved, and guided by the teachers to make this interaction more socio-constructive. This means that students need to be able to build on their understanding of the interactive process of reading, the deferred interactive, and their use of the ZPD for the construction of meaning in literature. That way the program could be more explicit with the students about the

different stages and the aims and requirements of each stage by showing them what to expect at each stage. This is indicated in cognitive demands in Appendix 11. The aim of this is to help the students build on their previous skills, and for teachers to build on their prior teaching of those skills, and therefore help the students move beyond their ZPD level by learning more sophisticated skills/strategies in order to reach a stage where they can make meaning of short stories on their own. Teachers could therefore use the model as show below to plan out their lessons, and track their teaching practice

9.7. Research Contribution

This study has contributed to theoretical views on literary response by providing insights on how response to literary fiction could be enhanced for L2 readers through the development of the creative imagination. It built on the literature and proposed a model for reading and responding to literary fiction (short stories) in the Libyan EFL context through the stimulation and development of the creative imagination. Moreover, it provided instructional guidance for the application of the designed model in a reading program for teaching literary fiction. It also proposed a means by which a literary syllabus for these readers focusing on short stories could be structured, a means for selecting and grading texts (from concrete to abstract), and a means for selecting and grading tasks to meet specific objectives.

9.8. Final Thoughts

This study provided theoretical as well as practical considerations in terms of teaching and reading literature and more specifically short stories in the Libyan context. Though seeking practicality and rigor, the current research is, nevertheless, a product of a conceptual journey in which data is strictly based on how I have come to interpret the literature, combine it, and imaginatively synthesize it into a coherent form. I do not in any way undermine the originality of the ideas encapsulated in this thesis; rather acknowledge the fact that, as a theoretical enquiry, many of the ideas are based on my personal constructive process of meaning making. Like the research theme itself, I consider the process of creating this research study an imaginative experience which incorporates my current level of understanding to which my imaginative journey has led me so far. So, as with all

imaginative experiences, this research is just one possibility of how reading and teaching literature through the creative imagination could be developed. This means that the design of the model and reading program demonstrates how I have made sense of theoretical views and put them in a logical way to reflect the readers' responses within a classroom setting. Many variables influence how the features of the model could be organized and how the lessons and pedagogic tasks could be manipulated to make use of the imagination. Teachers can and organize their lessons in different ways based on the level of their students, their cultural background, and even their students' interests. The application of this model can therefore, be carried out in many ways, and based on how the teachers make sense of the conceptual model and the features of the imagination. Also, it is possible that students may respond differently to the model, therefore, creating new possibilities with regard to how the model could be applied.

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Glossary of Literary Terms

Atmosphere: is the emotional tone pervading a section or the whole of a literary work, which fosters in the reader expectations as to the course of events, whether happy or (more commonly) terrifying or disastrous

Character(s): One of the people (or animals) in a story.

- **Protagonist:** The main character in a story, often a good or heroic type.
- **Antagonist:** The person or force that works against the hero of the story. (See protagonist)
- **Confidant/Confidante:** Someone in whom the central character confides, thus revealing the main character's personality, thoughts, and intentions. The confidante does not need to be a person.
- **Foil:** A character that is used to enhance another character through contrast. Cinderella's grace and beauty as opposed to her nasty, self-centred stepsisters is one clear illustration of a foil many may recall from childhood.
- **Flat character:** A character who reveals only one, maybe two, personality traits in a story or novel, and the trait(s) do not change.
- **Round character:** A well-developed character who demonstrates varied and sometimes contradictory traits. Round characters are usually dynamic (change in some way over the course of a story).
- **Dynamic Character:** A character who changes during the course of a story or novel. The change in outlook or character is permanent. Sometimes a dynamic character is called a developing character.
- **Static Character:** A character that remains primarily the same throughout a story or novel. Events in the story do not alter a static character's outlook, personality, motivation, perception, habits, etc.
- **Villain:** A villain (also known as the "antagonist") is an "evil" character in a story, whether a historical narrative or, especially, a work of fiction.

Characterization: Techniques a writer uses to create and develop a character by what he/she does or says; other characters say about him/her, or how they react to him/her; or what the author reveals directly or through a narrator.

Comedy: Writing that deals with life in a humorous way, often poking fun at people's mistakes.

Conflict: A problem or struggle between two opposing forces in a story. There are four basic conflicts:

- ***Person Against Person:*** A problem between characters.
- ***Person Against Self:*** A problem within a character's own mind.
- ***Person Against Society:*** A problem between a character and society, school, the law, or some tradition.
- ***Person against Nature:*** A problem between a character and some element of nature—a blizzard, a hurricane, a mountain climb, etc.

Dialogue: The conversations that characters have with one another.

Fable: A short story that often uses talking animals as the main characters and teaches an explicit moral or lesson.

Fiction: A literary work whose content is based on the imagination and not on fact.

Figurative language: Language that has meaning beyond the literal meaning; also known as “figures of speech.”

Flashback: Interruption of the chronological (time) order to present something that occurred before the beginning of the story.

Folktale: A story originally passed from one generation to another by word of mouth only. The characters are usually all good or all bad and in the end are rewarded or punished as they deserve.

Foreshadowing: Important hints that an author drops to prepare the reader for what is to come, and help the reader anticipate the outcome.

Gothic fiction: Stories which evoke chilling terror by exploiting mystery and a variety of horrors.

Hyperbole: a purposeful exaggeration for emphasis or humour.

Imagery: Words or phrases that appeal to the reader's senses.

Irony: A technique that involves surprising, interesting, or amusing contradictions or contrasts. Verbal irony occurs when words are used to suggest the opposite of their usual meaning. An irony of situation is when an event occurs that directly contradicts expectations.

Metaphor: Metaphor comparison of two things essentially different but with some commonalities; does not use “like” or “as,” e.g. “Her smile was ice.”

Mood: The feeling a piece of literature is intended to create in a reader.

Moral: The lesson a story teaches.

Mystery: A novel, story, or play involving a crime or secret activity and its gradual solution.

Narrator: The person or character who actually tells the story, filling in the background information and bridging the gaps between dialogues. (See Point of View.)

Paradox: A paradox is a statement which seems on its face to be logically contradictory or absurd, yet turns out to be interpretable in a way that makes good sense.

Personification: human qualities attributed to an animal, object, or idea, e.g. “The wind exhaled.”

Plot: The action that makes up the story, following a plan called the plot line.

Plot line: The planned action or series of events in a story. There are five parts: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.

- **Exposition:** The part of the story, usually near the beginning, in which the characters are introduced, the background is explained, and the setting is described.
- **Rising Action:** The central part of the story during which various problems arise after a conflict is introduced.
- **Climax:** The high point in the action of a story.
- **Falling Action:** The action and dialogue following the climax that lead the reader into the story’s end.
- **Resolution:** The part of the story in which the problems are solved and the action comes to a satisfying end.

Poetry: A literary work that uses concise, colourful, often rhythmic language to express ideas or emotions. Examples: ballad, blank verse, free verse, elegy, limerick, sonnet.

Point of view: Perspective from which the story is told.

- **Third-person omniscient point of view:** narrator can see into the minds of all characters.
- **Third-person limited point of view:** narrator tells only what one character perceives.

Prose: A literary work that uses the familiar spoken form of language, sentence after sentence.

Setting: The place and the time frame in which a story takes place.

Short Story: Shorter than a novel, this piece of literature can usually be read in one sitting. Because of its length, it has only a few characters and focuses on one problem or conflict

Simile: Simile: comparison of two things using the words “like” or “as,” e.g. “Her smile was as cold as ice.”

Style: The distinctive way that a writer uses language including such factors as word choice, sentence length, arrangement, and complexity, and the use of figurative language and imagery.

Suspense: A feeling of excitement, curiosity, or expectation about what will happen.

Symbol: Person, place, or thing that represents something beyond itself, most often something concrete or tangible that represents an abstract idea.

Theme: The message about life or human nature that is “the focus” in the story that the writer tells.

Tone: the writer's attitude toward or feelings about the subject matter and audience

Appendices

Appendix 1: Criteria for Text Selection

Criterion	Story 1	Story 2	Story 3	Story 4	Story 5	Story 6	Story 7	Story 8	Story 9	Story 10
Familiar schema	*	*	*	*				*		
Unfamiliar schema					*	*	*		*	*
Cultural significance					*	*	*		*	
Concrete	*	*	*	*	*					
Abstract						*	*	*	*	*
Familiar words	*	*	*	*	*					
Unfamiliar words						*	*	*	*	*
Word length							*	*		*
Sentence length				*	*		*	*	*	*
Simple sentences	*	*	*							
Complex sentences				*		*	*	*	*	*
Cohesion	*	*	*	*	*	*	*			
Discourse markers	*	*	*	*						
Linear structure	*	*	*	*	*					
Non-linear structure						*	*	*	*	*

Open ending			*			*	*	*	*	*
Closed ending	*	*		*	*					
Characters	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Characterization				*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Plot structure	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Point of view	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Imagery					*	*	*	*	*	*
Metaphor	—	—	*	*	—	—	*	*	*	*
Simile	—	—	—	—	*	—	*	*		*
Irony	—	—	*	—	*	*	*	*	*	*
Symbolism	—	—	*	*	—	—	*		*	*
style							*	*	*	*

Appendix 2: Difficulty level of the Texts (cognitive demands)

num	Story	Theme (why)	Plot (<i>what</i>)	Setting (<i>when & where</i>)	Character (who)	Point of view (how)	Language complexity	Interaction required
1	<i>Joha and his Donkey</i>	Concrete, single theme, moral, predictable outcome	Linear plot (beginning, middle, and end). Closed ending	Explicit presentation of place, implicit time	Simple flat, explicitly characterized	Third person limited, no dialogue	Familiar words, simple sentences, familiar rhetorical structure	Interaction between background knowledge of the culture and the text and making connections.
2	<i>Cookies</i>	Concrete, single theme, moral, surprise ending	Linear plot (beginning, middle, and end). Closed ending	Explicit presentation of Time and place	Simple flat, explicitly characterised	First person narrator, no dialogue	familiar words, simple sentences, familiar rhetorical structure	Interaction between two different cultural knowledge, using that knowledge to understand the text and look for universal meaning behind the text.
3	<i>Appointment in Samara</i>	Concrete single theme, surprise ending	Linear plot (beginning, middle, and end). Closed ending	Explicit presentation of place	Simple flat, implicitly characterised	Third person limited narrator, dialogue	Simple words, simple sentence, figurative language (irony), symbolism familiar rhetorical structure	Interaction here involves that students use their knowledge of their culture, of figurative language, and of the world to construct meaning of the text.

4	<i>Little Red Riding Hood</i>	Concrete, single theme, predictable outcome	Linear plot (beginning, middle, and end). Closed ending	Explicit presentation of place, implicit time	Simple flat, explicitly+ implicitly characterised	Third person limited, dialogue	Unfamiliar words, complex sentences, symbolism, familiar rhetorical structure	Use of both top-down and bottom-up reading skills to construct meaning out of the text. Interaction using prior knowledge of narrative structure to construct meaning of the text. Students use their personal experiences to understand the moral behind the text. Interaction between students is important to understand the text
5	<i>The Birthmark</i>	Abstract, multiple themes, surprise ending	Linear plot, with closed ending	Implicit presentation of time and place	Complex round, explicitly+ implicitly characterised	Third person omniscient, dialogue	Unfamiliar words, complex sentences, figurative language (simile, metaphor), symbol un- familiar rhetorical structure	Interaction between the students' knowledge of the world, of narrative structure, and personal experiences. Use of both higher-level skills and decoding skills to make sense of the language and the characters of the story and build on it to make sense of the text as whole. Interaction also involves the use of both intellect and emotion intersubjectivity and analytical thinking) to make sense of the text.
6	<i>The Open Window</i>	Abstract, multiple themes, surprise twist ending	Non-linear plot, closed ending	Implicit presentation of time and place	Complex round, explicitly+ implicitly characterised	Third person omniscient, dialogue	Unfamiliar words, complex sentences, figurative language (irony, symbol, imagery),	Interaction between students prior knowledge of language and narrative structure, the use of both higher level and lower level reading skills and

							unfamiliar rhetorical structure	strategies (inferencing, decoding, guessing meaning from context,,etc.). The use of ZPD (discussion and collaboration) to develop both analytical thinking and intersubjectivity to analyse the characters' behaviours.
7	<i>Story of an Hour</i>	Abstract, multiple themes, surprise twist ending	Non-linear plot, point of attack at the beginning, closed ending	Implicit presentation of time and place	Complex round character (main)	Third person omniscient, dialogue	Unfamiliar words, complex sentences, descriptive, figurative language (symbols, similes, metaphors, imagery, irony repetition), unfamiliar rhetorical structure	Use background knowledge of culture of the language and of literary devices to interact with the text. Use both bottom-up and top-down reading strategies such as making connections, decoding, predicting, to construct meaning of the text. Interaction (ZPD) is very important to draw different possibilities and meanings, and make judgments and evaluations of the characters.
8	<i>The Wasteland</i>	Abstract, multiple themes, surprise ending	Non-linear plot, point of attack at beginning, open ending	Implicit presentation of time, explicit indication of place	Complex round character (main), implicitly characterised	Third person omniscient, dialogue	Unfamiliar words, complex sentences, Descriptive, figurative language (symbols, imagery, metaphor, irony).	Interaction of prior knowledge (of background information, information about the author's background) and prior knowledge and personal experiences to draw

							Unfamiliar rhetorical structure	conclusions, predications and inferences as the use their higher-level and lower levels skills. Interaction between each other to draw different ideas and possibilities to make judgements about the characters in the text.
9	<i>Incarnation of Burned Children</i>	Abstract, multiple themes, ambiguous unclear ending	Non-linear plot, point of attack at beginning, open ending	Implicit presentation of time and place	Complex round characters, implicitly characterised	Third person omniscient, no dialogue	Unfamiliar words, complex long, run-on sentences, descriptive, figurative language (excessive use of imagery, metaphor, simile, irony, symbol), unfamiliar rhetorical structure	Interaction between prior knowledge and text. Use of both higher-level and lower-level reading skills. Interaction between students to draw different possibilities and construct different ideas. Focus on decoding and the use of personal connections and emotional interaction to make meaning. Interaction (ZPD) is highly important to draw different possibilities of the ending and whole meaning of the text (themes).

10	<i>The Tell-Tale Heart</i>	Abstract, multiple themes, ambiguous unclear ending	Non-linear plot, circular (starts at the end) flashback, open ending	Implicit presentation of time and place	Complex round character (main), narrator/main character, explicitly characterised	First person unreliable narrator, No dialogue	Unfamiliar words, complex very short sentences, descriptive, figurative language (irony, , metaphors, repetition, personification, simile), imagery, symbols, unfamiliar rhetorical structure,	Interaction between the student previous knowledge of the world, the language, and the narrative structure. Students make use of their understanding of syntax, to guess meaning of new difficult vocabulary. Interaction between the students and the teacher as a whole is effective for developing ideas and creating new possibilities and construct new ideas.
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Appendix 3: Lesson 1 ‘Joha and his Donkey’

Aim: General comprehension by using background knowledge and experiences to make predictions about the meaning of the text. Giving and taking advice.

Pre-reading:

Pre-reading: Activate background knowledge and speculate or predict

The teacher activates the students’ background knowledge of the story content, main character (Joha) and main idea through the following activities:

- Using pictures from the story: the teacher shows the students some pictures of Joha and asks about the time, the place of the story, the character, and the culture through the character’s clothes, buildings, and so on.
- The teacher uses the title of the story to get the students to recall information about Joha: what they know about him and whether they are familiar with any of his other adventures.
- The teacher generates discussion about the task of giving and taking advice. The teacher can elicit their responses by asking questions like:
 - Do you normally ask people for advice? Who do you usually ask? Are they helpful with providing you with the help you are looking for? When you get different advice from people, how do you make up your mind?

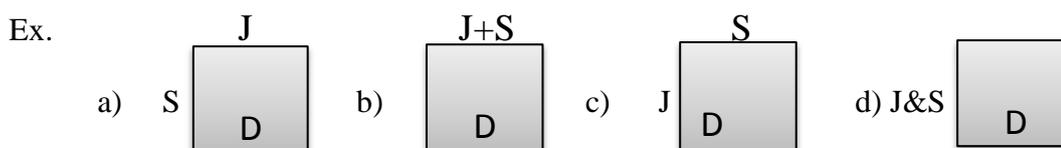
While-reading:

Predict and pause:

- Ask the students to read the first paragraph of the story (to line 5: *how can you ride upon the donkey while your son is forced to walk beside you?*), and predict what will happen next.
- The students then read the second paragraph (to line 8: *holding the reins in his hands as they made their way towards the market*).

Choose the position:

As the students read they jot down the situation, and assign a paragraph with a diagram showing the positions of Joha, his son, and the donkey. They are given four diagrams with different positions for Joha, his son, and the donkey. They teacher then reviews the answers with the whole class and uses cut off drawing and sticks the answers on the board.



J= Joha S= Son D=Donkey

Post-reading:

Plot Summary

-The students work in groups of three to write a summary of the events that took place in the story. They should have one sentence for each event and they should write five sentences to summarize the events. They can use the following format to present their ideas.

- Once upon a time/One day.....

Choose from the following (Then/when/while/ but/ eventually/so)

- What do you think Joha might have ended up doing at the end after all the criticism he received?

Questioning/ (help identify the moral)

- Ask the students to write down questions that they can think of to ask Joha about his reactions towards people? The teacher models the kind of questions he/she would like to ask Joha?

- Get the students to use their memory and think about a time in their lives where they were in a similar situation to Joha's. How many opinions did they get from people, and how did they feel about it. Why they think it is important to take advice from others? Why do people sometimes not prefer to take advice from others? Ask the students to write down their thoughts and save them later in the follow-up task.

Appendix 4: Lesson 2 ‘Cookies’

Aim: General comprehension, to use background knowledge to make speculations about the meaning of the text and the moral behind.

Pre-reading:

Sign-post questions:

Aim: The questions are used to activate schema, try to engage the students and elicit their initial responses on some of the issues that are discussed in the text.

Give the students the following questions to think about before they read the text:

1. Have you ever been in a situation where you believed something to be the absolute truth, to later find out that you were wrong?
2. Have you ever misjudged someone, and assumed that he/she was someone which he was actually **Not**? When? Why?
3. Would you try to give people the benefit of the doubt before making up your mind about their actions, behaviours, or personality?
4. Would you change your behaviour according to the situation you are put in? Or do you think that you are a person who acts based on certain principle no matter *what*?
5. How would you react to people who misjudge **You**? Would you try hard to change their minds?

Now tell the students that the story they are about to read is called “the cookie thief”.

While-reading

Reading in sections:

Aim: elicit student responses.

- Ask the students to read the first paragraph of the text and make predictions about the content, what they think the story is going to be about?
- The teacher can ask the students to write down their first predictions on a separate piece of paper, so that they could come to them later on as they go through the whole text and compare their responses.
- Ask them questions about the story so far, and try to elicit some responses. For example: Do you think that something is going to happen to the man while he is waiting for his train? What do you might happen? Is there anyone with him or is he alone?
- The students read the second section (half) of the story,.... (response)

Visualization:

- Ask the students to imagine that they were in that position, and that this encounter with the “cookie thief” happened to them in their own country, but in a different setting. What would be different in terms of the man’s behavior towards the man eating his cookies? Would they (the students) have said something to the man, or would they have responded differently, and why?
- The students then write their responses on small pieces of paper where they articulate how they can make intercultural connections with the story.

Predicting the ending:

Ask the students to read the final section of the story (without the surprise ending), and ask the students to speculate what they think will happen next. Do you think there something under the newspaper? What might it be?

“A moment or two later the train was coming in, so I tossed back the rest of my coffee, stood up, picked up the newspaper, and.....”

Post-reading

- In groups of 3-4 the students are asked to look at the ending paragraphs of the two versions, and decide which is the best ending?
- The students use a work sheet with a set of statements with choices, in order to guide their thinking:
 1. The main character in the story is nice/ rude.
 2. The main character’s reaction to the “thief” was of surprise/ embarrassment. The “thief”, knew that the main character was eating from his cookies, yet he was too nice/ too generous.
 3. Do you think that the “thief” actually sees the main character as a nice/ rude person?
 4. The moral behind the story is _____?

Then there is a class discussion about the general aim or moral behind the story. The students can share their different answers with the teacher and with each other.

Appendix 5: Lesson 3 ‘The Appointment in Samarra’

Aim: to teach types of irony, and understand a story with a twist ending. Internalize some new words.

Pre-reading

Aim: The goal of this to engage students with the text, and create/ set the mood for reading the text.

Key words:

The teacher gives the students two key words to think about and jot down anything that comes to their mind when they hear them.

a) Death

b) Destiney

To help the students the teacher can ask questions like? How do feel about death? Are you afraid of death or not?

They have a discussion about what the two words mean and what are some of the words that link to them by making use these questions:

-What does it mean to fulfil your Destiney? Do you think we all are destined to do something? or is it a coincidence? Do you death is also related to fulfilling our destiny?

Give background knowledge:

- The teacher can start the lesson by introducing the world “parable” to the students, and define a parable. The teacher can also introduce the word “fable” to the students and give out a definition. Then the students at the end of the story can try to identify whether this story is a fable or a parable, and why?

*(“A **parable** is a brief, succinct story, in prose or verse that illustrates a moral or religious lesson. It differs from a **fable** in that **fables** use animals, plants, inanimate objects, and forces of nature as characters, while **parables** generally feature human characters. It is a type of analogy”).*

While-reading:

Vocabulary exercise:

What is the meaning of the following?

a) *Frowned* (line 12, 19)

1. *To look displeased, or have an angry look*
2. *Concentrate*
3. *To look happy and delighted*

Words or expressions to characterize a text: (fill in a diagram/table): (inferencing some details from the text)

Aim: this activity is used to enrich the students' vocabulary and help them develop a sense of understanding of the characters.

Words or expressions to characterize a text: (fill in a diagram/table):

-The teacher asks the students to fill in a table or diagram that has some words and expressions.

-The teacher asks the students to refer back to the text and assign the expressions to certain features or characters. The first example models how the activity is done. The teacher models for the students by explaining the reason behind her choice.

<i>Word/expression</i>	<i>Character/feature</i>	<i>Why?</i>
-powerful	Merchant	<i>He is rich, and he has servants</i>
-chooses not to confront, but run away.	Ahmed (servant)	<i>Fled to Samaraa to escape death</i>
-courageous	Merchant	<i>He confronted Death for scaring servant</i>
-surprised/shocked	Death	<i>Stared at the servant</i>
-ignorant of what awaits	Ahmed (servant)	<i>Death is planning on giving him a visit at his friend's house where he fled to.</i>
-a place that has positive and negative properties	Samaraa	<i>An escape for Ahmed, and also a place to fulfill his destiny (die)</i>

-In pairs the students can answer and give justifications for their answers.

-After the class has finished the teacher could write down the answers on the board and complete the table for all the class to see. Students may have different suggestions; the teacher probes them, and makes use of their suggestions in a class discussion.

- **Post-reading:**

Summary:

- The students are given sentences; they have to write a summary of the story using those sentences as prompts. Students can work in small groups of three on the summaries.

- 1) Ahmed went to market.
- 2) He met death.
- 3) He was frightened.
- 4) He ran away to Samaraa.

Journals:

-The teacher gives the students a chance to respond to the text and comment on it by asking them what they thought about what the servant (Ahmed) did, whether they agree or not, what would they have done differently, and why?

Appendix 6: Lesson 4 ‘Little Red Riding Hood’

Aim: to follow a simple story structure, and understand the five stages of plot. Identify symbolism. Identify main character roles (protagonist, antagonist) and how they affect the overall development and meaning of the story.

Pre-reading:

Pre-reading - Image brain storming:

-The students are shown some pictures of cartoon characters both human and animals (a lamb, kitten, tiger, wolf, and fox). Ask the students to say out loud the first word that comes to their minds to describe that character (e.g. good, nice, bad, evil, wicked, mysterious). The teacher writes on the board the students’ answers.

-Then, the teacher shows the students some pictures of different places at different times (morning, afternoon, night), seasons, (for example: field in the sun, rocky beach in the storm, desert, hill with flowers, dark forest, jungle), and asks them to think of words that would describe the places they see. The teacher writes the students’ answers on the board for all to see.

-The following prompts are used to generate discussion: Ask the students to think of a time that they were asked and warned not to do something but decided to ignore it and do it anyway and ended up in trouble.

- What do they think about rules? What are they for? And when are they most important? How do they deal with rules now?

Students in groups listen to each other’s stories, and discuss them.

Pre-teach Words:

Give the students the definition of symbol? What is means in literature? Kinds of symbols? and what is the effect of symbolism?

- Ask students to keep track and note any symbols they see in the text. Give an example of a symbol? for example, a heart is a symbol of love? Ask the students to think of any other symbols they know of?

Skimming:

- Without giving the name of the story, the teacher asks the students to read the first and second paragraph of the text and then choose from a set of choices what they

think that the paragraphs are about. It is important that the students only read the paragraph once, and decide what it describes.

Questions like:

What questions does the 1st paragraph answer? What, Who, Where, When, etc.

Then they read the second paragraph: the teacher asks the students questions like: What does the mother ask the little girl to do? What do you think she will do? Do you think she will listen to what her mother asked?

While reading:

Diagram Completion:

- The teacher asks the students to read the text silently. Pointing out that she/he has previously removed a section from the text and marks the location of the missing section.
- The students are given a range of events that might fit the gap and have to choose the correct or missing one by completing the missing part of the plot.
- The students have to think about the missing part of the plot as they read the rest of the story, and think about the sequence of events.

The teacher scaffolds the students' task completion by giving an example and modeling think aloud the kind of question and reasoning involved. The teacher uses the plot diagram as a guide to help students make connections between parts of the text and use contextual clues to try and reach a possible answer.

Post-reading:

Jigsaw reading:

After the students have read the story, ask them to try to identify the main events in the story, and therefore, understand the development of plot.

- Ask the students to look back at the missing part in the text, and make a decision about the missing part/word by choosing from a range of events. This activity can be done in pairs or groups as they desire.
- They students write down their answers and fill in the space that the teacher has provided in the text, and share their answers with the class, and answers are put on the board and discussed.
- Then, have the students arrange themselves into groups of three, or they may wish to stay in the same groups, and ask them to identify and put the significant events of the text into the plot diagram that was given at the beginning of the lesson.

- The students have to relate the events they have provided to the plot and arrange the events into the plot structure and write them on the diagram.
- The students then share their answers with the class; this gives them a chance to look for similarities or differences between the groups.
- The groups have to explain to the other groups their decisions and justify them.

Appendix 7: Lesson 5 ‘The Birthmark’

Aim: To encourage and develop close critical reading. To help the students make speculations about the characters, and how to view them by using contextual clues. Explore and determine figurative language and how they affect writer intentions and point of view, to understand the characters of the story.

Pre-reading:

-The teacher introduces the story to the students. “Today we are going to read The Birthmark, by Nathaniel Hawthorne. It is about a newly married couple. The teacher tries to elicit some responses from the students by guiding them with questions like: How would you describe marriage life for newlyweds? How does a man/woman who has just been married feel, think, and act with his new bride/groom? Is it possible to judge whether a marriage is going to work from the first few months?

Pre-teach vocabulary:

The teacher starts the lesson by asking the students to read the vocabulary to give them a basic understanding of words they will come across in the story.

Remarkable: likely to be noticed for being common or extraordinary.

Union: an act of joining two things or more together.

Imperfection: A small flaw or part.

Deform: If something deforms, its usual shape changes and becomes spoiled.

Questionnaire:

- Can you think of some inventions that exist today that are for making things better.
- What did you think of the results? Are they for the better or did they make things worse?
- Do you think that it is right to use science to change how people look?
- Do you think that a person who is a workaholic usually has an unstable marriage/relationship? How?

The students can think of answers to these questions individually. Then they are given time to discuss their answers with the person next to them (in pairs). This gives them a chance to explore new ideas.

While reading:*Characterization grid*

-The students are asked to take notes as they read about Aylmer and Georgina and classify them according to the characterization grid below. Information could be of two kinds: ‘specifically stated’, or ‘suggested’. It could be about appearance, qualifications, likes, dislikes, etc. The teacher can model for the students how this classification could be made by reading the first paragraph to: “His love for his young wife could only be the stronger of the two if it could link itself with his love of science”. The teacher shows the students that information about Aylmer will go in the row of Aylmer, while information about Georgiana will go in the row next to her name, and information that they share in common will go in the bottom row.

Character	Facts from the text	Inferences
Aylmer		
Georgiana		
Both Aylmer & Georgiana		

Post-reading:

After the students have completed reading the story silently, they are asked to answer the following comprehension questions: (inferencing)

1. The main character in the story is:
 - a) Aylmer, a chemist
 - b) Aylmer, a plastic surgeon
 - c) Georgiana, Aylmer’s assistant

2. Aylmer loves:
 - a) His wife unconditionally
 - b) Science first and foremost
 - c) Cooking

3. What is Aylmer’s assistant’s name:_____.

4. Georgiana finally came to realize Aylmer’s career as :
 - a) A success
 - b) A Failure
 - c) In the process of improvement

5. Think of how the author describes the birthmark; describe what you think it looks like?
6. Do you think Georgiana is convinced that she needs to remove the birthmark (yes/no)? Would you react in the same way, or differently? Why?
7. Based on the information you have about Aylmer, what sort of man do you think he is? _____.
8. If you had a chance to talk to Aylmer before he executed his experiment on his wife, what would be your advice to him on the issue of scientific research and the desire to control nature?

Post-reading Discussion:

The teacher asks the students to discuss the following questions in groups of 4...

- 1) How do you think Aylmer feels after the death of his wife? Would you forgive yourself if you were in his position?
- 2) Who do you believe is the victim in this story, Aylmer, or Georgiana, or both? Explain your answer? Why?

The students then share their ideas with the teacher in a whole class discussion

Follow-up:

Storyboard:

- The students are asked to first put themselves into groups of 3.

- 1) The students are asked to record their ideas and thoughts about one of the characters in the story (Georgiana/Aylmer) by recording them in a response journal.
- 2) These journals are then shared between the groups to build up their thinking and extend their responses.
- 3) The students make use of their shared responses to create a storyboard for the story plot.

It is necessary for the teacher to model for the students what they are expected to do to help them understand how they can carry out the task.

Appendix 8: Lesson 6 ‘The Open Window’

Aim: To teach how point of view is reflected in the meaning of the text and how the characters are understood.

Pre-reading:

Activate schema: Discussion

The teacher starts the lesson by asking question to generate discussion.

1. How would you treat a guest?
2. What do you normally do when you have a visitor?
3. What would you normally say to him?
4. What happens if you were asked to keep the guest company as your parents are getting ready? Would you chat with them? What else do you do to keep them company?

Thinking about the title (Prediction)

The students are told that they will be reading a story called ‘The Open Window’.

- The students are asked to think of the title of the story and guess what they think the story is about. (Tell me what you think “the open window” suggests?)
- The teacher can use questioning strategies to guide the students’ thinking by asking questions like: What is a window? Are there any other meanings that you have for ‘window’? Is it normal for a window to be open? When are window usually left open? Why? What happens when a window is left open? Why?
- The students call out their suggestions, and all suggestions are accepted.

The teacher writes their ideas on the board for the students to jot down and use later for the follow-up task to see if their predictions are accurate.

While-reading:

Signpost questions:

They are given some questions to think about as they read the story. This can help them understand the plot of the story.

- Who is Vera?
- Who is Mr. Nuttel?
- Why does Mr. Nuttel come to Vera's house?
- Why is the window open?
- Why does Mr. Nuttel run away?
- How does everybody react to Mr. Nuttel's behaviour after he leaves?

- Why does Vera tell everyone that Mr. Nuttel was afraid of dogs?

Listening:

The teacher provides a short video for the students to watch. The video is about seven minutes long. The students can be given a chance to note down some comments as they listen and follow the story.

The students are then given worksheets for character sketching. They try to choose from a list of statements used in the story their implications about the characters; their personalities, and qualities.

_ Choose the most suitable adjectives to describe each of the following sentences/ phrases in reference to each of the three characters outlined in the table. You can use the same word for more than one character *if* necessary. You can also come up with your own suggested adjectives.

Character	Phrase/statement	adjective
Vera		
Framton Nuttel		
Mrs. Sappleton		

In groups of three the students discuss their answers and comments about the plot of the story, and the table. This can help the students make up a clearer image of the characters and how they are characterized in the text.

Post-Reading:

In line 87, what do you think “at short” means?

- a) At short distance
- b) At short notice
- c) Very short period of time
- d) A place called short

The students are given a chance to watch a very short movie version of the story (it is an 11 minute video) and then the students are given a worksheet with some statements to elicit some responses. They can think about the following question for later discussion as they watch they video.

1. Do you think Vera’ joke was funny? Why?
2. According to the narrator, Mr.Nuttel suffers from a mental illness and nervous condition. He has come to the village to get better and regain his health. This suggests that:
 - a) People should treat him nicely and give him food.
 - b) People should be sensitive and careful when they are with him.
 - c) People should be tough and harsh with him.
3. Vera’s story to Mr. Nuttel was said in confidence? Do you think that Mr.Nuttel felt that Vera was telling him a secret? Why? Use reference from the text to justify your answer?
4. Choose from the set of factors why you think Framton Nuttel believed the story told by Vera?
 - a) The window is open on an October afternoon.
 - b) The aunt thinks that they will come through that window one day.
 - c) The bodies of the three men and their dog were never found.
 - d) Vera’s remark “Do you know, sometimes on still, quiet evenings like this, I almost get a creepy feeling that they will all walk in through that window “.
 - e) Mrs. Sappleton immediately comments on the open window, by explaining that her husband and two brothers are coming in through it when they come home from shooting.
5. At the end of the story Vera explains to her aunt that Mr. Nuttel was probably afraid of the dog (Spaniel), and told her a short incident he had with dogs. Is Vera’s story true or untrue? How would you describe Vera?

6. The author describes Vera as a self-confidant and sophisticated girl, what other qualities can you give to describe Vera.
7. Was the ending of the story predictable?
8. Did you like/ dislike this story? Why?

In groups of 4 the students share and discuss their answers. The whole class can then discuss the questions and share the answers. The teacher monitors and guides the discussion by asking the above questions, and furthering their thinking by placing more emphasis on their personal responses.

Follow-up:

Diary Entry:

This activity tries to help students understand the narrative point of view. The teacher asks the students to:

_ Write a diary entry describing the events from Vera's perspective. Think about these questions to guide your thinking:

- Who came to visit you today?
- How would you describe him?
- What did you know about him?
- What did you notice about him? Why?
- What did you do/say to him?
- Do you have regrets about what happened to him? Or do you think that he had it coming?

Explain why?

Appendix 9: Lesson 7 ‘The Story of an Hour’

Aim: The students will become conscious to figurative language in creating the mood and how it relates the character’s intentions with the overall theme of the story. The students will make evaluations of the text, and also relate it to the historical background of that time and their own culture.

Pre-reading:

Pre-teach vocabulary:

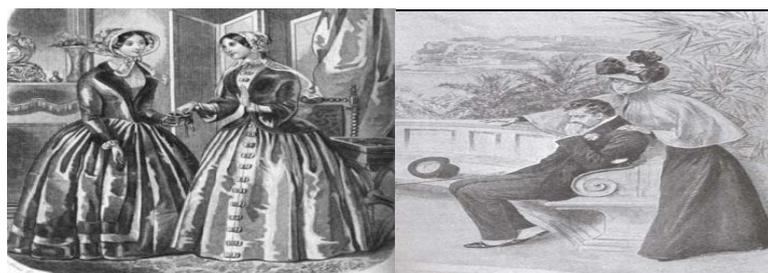
An Epiphany: according to the Cambridge dictionary is a moment when you suddenly feel that you understand, or suddenly become conscious of, something that is very important to you. (a moment of sudden or great realization).

Building historical background information:

- The teacher tells students that the story was written in the 19th century and published in 1894.
- Students are given a worksheet with background information and two photos.
- Ask the students to first look at the photos of women from the 19th century.
- The students are then asked to write down any words or phrases that come to mind when they see the pictures. This should only take 3-5 minutes.
- The teacher reads the background information about women in 19th century America.

The Role of Women in 19th- Century America

Women living in the United States in the 19th Century, or the 1800s, had few rights. Women were not allowed to vote. Very few women went to college. Education was considered only important for men. Women were expected to marry a man and give birth and raise his children. If women worked, they had to give their wages to a man. Women could not get divorced, even if their husbands abused them. However, many women worked very hard to gain equal rights. By the late 1800s, women had formed a movement to gain the right to vote. In 1920, women in the United States were allowed to vote for the first time.



This could help start a whole class discussion or debate about women rights, and the role of women in society in the student's own culture.

- Ask the students to read the first paragraph of the story.

Knowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband's death.

Elicit some responses from the students by asking them questions like:

- _ How many characters are introduced in this paragraph?
- _ What are their names?
- _ What happened?
- _ Who died?
- _ Who was suffering a heart problem?

Introducing Irony:

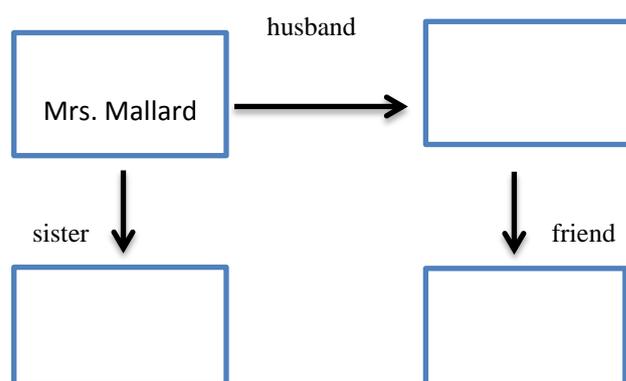
The teacher explains the types of irony to the students and gives definitions for the kinds of irony.

1. *Situational irony*: the writer or speaker says something, but actually means something else.
2. *Verbal Irony*: is a statement in which the meaning that a speaker implies differs sharply from the meaning that is ostensibly expressed
3. *Dramatic irony*: involves a situation in a play or a narrative in which the audience or reader shares with the author knowledge of present or future circumstances of which a character is ignorant

While reading:

Now the teacher reads the second paragraph and asks the students to pay attention to Mrs. Mallard's reaction to the news, and what does this say about her and note down any comments in their copies of the story to be kept for later reference.

Then ask the students to work in pairs and identify the relationship between the characters and place them in the chart below (adopted from -----).



- The teacher continues reading the story aloud to the students to paragraph 3. When they get to the fourth paragraph the students are asked to pay attention to the scene and keep notes of the descriptive language.
- The students follow the teacher. They are given some of the definitions for the difficult words in their copies of the story for better comprehension.

After the teacher has completed the story the students can be given the following tasks:

Post-reading:

Analyse the text:

- After reading the text, the teacher asks the students to work in small groups of 3-4 and look at the following worksheet with extracts from the text, then work together and answer the questions about each line of the extract:

Knowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband's death. It was her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentences; veiled hints that revealed in half concealing.

Josephine told Mrs. Mallard about her husband's death. Chopin uses a set of phrases to describe the manner the news was broken to her. Can you write them down?

2)

4)

5)

What does this reveals about Mrs. Mallard's overall state (Is she considered weak or strong).

There stood, facing the open window, a comfortable, roomy armchair. Into this she sank, pressed down by a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul.

Chopin stresses the physical exhaustion that Mrs. Mallard was in. What words or phrases does she use to convey this?

She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all aquiver with the new spring life. The delicious breath of rain was in the air. In the street below a peddler was crying his wares. The notes of a distant song which some one was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves.

There were patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds that had met and piled one above the other in the west facing her window

How is nature portrayed and characterized in these lines? Can you indicate the phrases that describe nature? Use the underlined words to complete the phrases:

_____ with _____.

The _____ breath of _____.

_____ sparrows were _____.

There were _____ of blue _____.

Do you think that these phrases have a positive or negative effect?

What does the “open window” symbolise:

She sat with her head thrown back upon the cushion of the chair, quite motionless, except when a sob came up into her throat and shook her, as a child who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams.

In this line, there is a comparison between _____ and a _____.

This indicates (happiness / grief/ anger)

She was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines bespoke repression and even a certain strength. But now there was a dull stare in her eyes, whose gaze was fixed away off yonder on one of those patches of blue sky. It was not a glance of reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought.

What are the two main qualities about Mr. Mallard that the writer used which are in some ways contrasting each other?

beautiful / old

supressed/ weak

supressed/ strong

There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the color that filled the air.

Chopin (author) indicates that Mrs. Mallard's epiphany was a result of the mood she was experiencing. Can you indicate (underline) what words or phrases that she uses to create an image? How well was she able to portray that image through her choice of words?

What does this image say about Mrs. Mallard's feelings? Use only adjectives.

When she abandoned herself a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under her breath: "free, free, free!" The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. They stayed keen and bright. Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body.

Compare the meaning of the word abandoned in this paragraph, to the one in the 3rd paragraph.

Choose the words that describe Mrs. Mallard's feeling in both paragraphs?
(grief, liberated , oppressed , stimulated, powerless)

She did not stop to ask if it were or were not a monstrous joy that held her. A clear and exalted perception enabled her to dismiss the suggestion as trivial. She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and gray and dead. But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome.

In this paragraph Mrs. Mallard was feeling torn between her _____ and _____ for her _____ death, and her _____ and _____ about her coming life.

(husband's , happiness, sadness, joy , grief)

The word *monstrous* means: _____

Shocking and outrageous. b) Evil and dangerous. C) Cheerful and marry.

The meaning of *save*: _____

Full b) rescue c) except

Was Mr. Mallard a good husband? Why? Give textual evidence to back up your answer?

"Free! Body and soul free!" she kept whispering.

Why do you think Mrs. Mallard was saying these words? Why was she free?

Someone was opening the front door with a latchkey. It was Brently Mallard who entered, a little travel-stained, composedly carrying his grip-sack and umbrella. He had been far from the scene of accident, and did not even know there had been one. He stood amazed at Josephine's piercing cry; at Richards' quick motion to screen him from the view of his wife. But Richards was too late. When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease - of joy that kills.

Who came home? _____

Why was everyone surprised? _____

Doctors indicated that Mrs. Mallard's death was a result of _____. Is this true?

Explain?

- After the groups have completed the chart and answered the questions. Groups can share their answers with the rest of the class.

Class discussion:

The teacher uses the students' interpretations and responses to the text so far to initiate a whole class discussion where students explore the following questions:

- What did you think of the ending?
- Was the ending ironic? In what way?
- In what ways can you identify with Mrs. Mallard's situation?
- Do you feel that Mrs. Mallard's marriage to her husband, Mr. Mallard, is the cause of her misery or weakness?
- How can marriage shackle women's freedom in your society? At what point would you feel that a woman's freedom in your culture is related to marriage?
- Do you agree/disagree with how society views a perfect marriage in your culture?
- What is the author's attitude towards grief as opposed to freedom? Which one do you believe is more prominent in her story? How do you think the author feels about freedom?

Follow-up: *Writing task: Ironies in the story*

- In small groups of 3, write a new version of the story that extends Mrs. Mallard's happiness over her new freedom? How do you think Mrs. Mallard's life would have been after the death of her husband? It is important that you try to highlight your ideas and attitudes towards the situation.

Appendix 10: Lesson 8 'The Wasteland'

Aim: to determine the role of vocabulary choice in the understanding of the text, and the how it can reflect writer's attitudes, and beliefs, Also, pay close attention to figures of speech especially symbol and metaphor, and how they help set the mood. Also, students focus on identifying the setting of the story by making textual connections.

Pre-reading:

Activating background knowledge:

- Students can be shown some pictures and through brainstorming think of words around the topic.



Pic 1



pic 2

- The teacher asks the students to respond to the pictures above. She/he can ask question to guide the students thinking:

- Who is the person in picture 1. What do you know about him, what does he do?

- look at the second picture, what do you see? What is the woman pointing to? What is written on the door? What does that indicate to?

- The teacher informs the class that they are going to listen to her read out some background information about the author "Alan Paton". (the information should not be too long that it diminishes the rest of the lesson). The aim of this is to help the students deal with cultural difficulty, and activate specific schemata.



Alan Paton (1903-1988) was a South African author and an anti-**apartheid** activist. He was a white man who fought for black rights. He was interested in politics. He wrote a novel about South Africa and his love for his country. The story is one of a collection from his book "Tales of a troubled land", published in 1961.

- The teacher explains the meaning of apartheid, and provides a definition.

Apartheid: (In South Africa) a policy or system of segregation or discrimination on grounds of race.) Adopted as a slogan in the 1948 election by the successful Afrikaner National Party, apartheid extended and institutionalized existing racial segregation. Despite rioting and terrorism at home and isolation abroad from the 1960s onwards, the white regime maintained the apartheid system with only minor relaxation until February 1991. (*Separation of races.*)

Questioning:

- The teacher asks the students the following questions to elicit some responses.
 - _ Have you ever been afraid?
 - _ Think of the time you have been in great fear, think of your feelings and thoughts at that situation.
 - _ What did you think of, what kinds of sounds can you hear?
 - _ How did you act, did you run away, or did you confront your fear?
 - _ How did things end for you?

Skimming and scanning:

- The students are given a copy of the text each. Some words have been underlined by the teacher, and the title of the story has been removed from their copy.
- The teacher asks the students to read the first paragraph of the text.

The moment that the bus moved on he knew he was in danger, for by the lights of it he saw the figures of the young men waiting under the tree. That was the thing feared by all, to be waited for by young men. It was a thing he had talked about, now he was to see it for himself.

_ Choose a colour to describe this first paragraph (red/ black/ white/ green/ pink)

_ Who was in danger?

_ What was feared by all people?

The teacher then asks the students for their answers and their answers are written on the board. The students are asked to read the rest of the story silently and think about the setting, the characters, and the plot. The story is previously divided by the teacher into sections. As the students read the text they are given the while-reading activities to help them process the text.

While-reading:

- The teacher puts the students into pairs; they have to provide a heading for each section of the text. The first section is given by the teacher as an example. The teacher models the kind of thinking and questioning required.

Diagram:

The students are given a diagram (plot structure diagram) they have to write one sentence in each part of the diagram that summarises the development of the plot. The aim of this lesson is that the students understand the order of the events, and how they can fit into the narrative structure; exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, denouement. They will also have to refer to the text to indicate a sentence or paragraph showing the point where each stage in the plot structure is signposted.

Post-reading:

The teachers, also raises questions about the role of the narrator, and how he describes the man's fear throughout the story.

Fear: ask students if they have ever feared for their life. How does the writer create tension and guide our imaginations on the kind of fear portrayed in the story? The students work in groups of three to respond to the question.

Evaluation:

The teacher asks the students to work in groups of three to answer the following question. How does the writer (author) get us to empathise with the main character? Refer to the text for examples?

Debate (discussion):

The teacher informs the class that they will be having a debate about the values depicted from the story. The class is divided into two large groups.

- What does this story say about the son? What are his motives can you in anyway justify his action? What circumstances do you believe led to his actions?

Follow-up:

Diary entry:

-The students are given this activity to think about at home to work on. They are asked to write a diary entry about (the father) and try to cover the following points:

- What happened today at the wasteland (summary)?
- What are your feelings about what happened (sadness, shock, disappointment, disapproval, condemnation, blame, ruthlessness, forgiveness, etc.? why?
- what would you say to other parents who have kids?

Appendix 11: Lesson 9 ‘Incarnations of Burned Children’

Aim: The aim of this lesson is for the students to read and analyse different writing styles, and process and understand the role of lexical and syntactic choice on the overall meaning and message of the text.

Pre-reading:

Graphics, guided imagery, and discussion:

-The students first look at a picture of a little boy trying to reach for a pot on the stove. This will activate their prior knowledge of danger, burns, negligence, etc. The teacher could help students set a purpose by saying:

-What do you see in this picture? What is the girl trying to do? Is there anyone next to him? Where do you think her mummy and daddy are? What do you think will happen?



The teacher takes note of their ideas. The students take notes in their response journals too to return to them later after reading.

After the students make predictions about what the topic of the picture is, their schema of danger will be activated. The teacher then stimulates their imagination through guided imagery by saying:

-Imagine that you were the parent of the child, how would you feel if the child got hurt? What would you do? How would you deal with the situation?

Students share and discuss their ideas with the teacher in a class discussion.

Key words/phrases:

- *in the title:* incarnation(s):

The teacher writes some definitions of the word incarnation on the board. The students write them down in their notebooks, and can choose the most suitable meanings and its

significance to the story later on after they finish the story. This will help the students to make the necessary connections as they interpret the overall theme and message of the story.

1. A person who embodies in the flesh a deity, spirit, or quality: (In Christian theology) the embodiment of God the Son in human flesh as Jesus Christ.
2. (With reference to reincarnation) each of a series of earthly lifetimes: The form taken by a person or thing during an incarnation.
3. a particular physical form or state.

A phrase from the text: If you've never wept and want to, have a child. This clarifies to the students the meaning of the phrase and how it is relevant to the story as a whole.

The teacher can ask the students to predict the meaning of 'weep'.

Cry 2) Smile 3) Eat 4) fall

The teacher asks the students to make predictions about what the title of the text suggests about the story, what they think it is about. (*Incarnations of Burned Children*).

The teacher asks the following questions to guide their thinking:

- _ What do you think the story is about?
- _ What does the title of the story suggest about the mood of the story?
- _ Do you think the story is going to be a happy, light-hearted story, a sad and heart-breaking one?
- _ Do you think the verb in "burned children" refers to the key theme and events taking part in the story, or do you think it is symbolic or metaphoric?
- _ Why do you think the title is in the plural form?
- _ What do you think the word incarnation means?
- _ What does this phrase say about the story, the events, and the outcome? Through this activity the teacher can help the students to construct an imaginative and more contextualized idea about the meaning of the text and the themes that are raised.

- All the students' suggestions can be accepted at this point, and can be written on the board for later discussion?

- The students are provided with a glossary of terms, to help them understand the story they are going to read. These words include the following:

While-reading:

- The teacher reads the second sentence (to line 10 “so she was almost frozen”), and asks the students to look for clues about the setting as they listen to the next sentence and note any ideas down in their response journals.
- Then the students are given a chance to think about what they have already listened to. The teacher guides their thinking by asking questions like: What happened? where are they? Who screamed, and why? Where are the characters (mommy, daddy, and child)?

Do it yourself (DIY) questionnaires:

- The students can be divided into groups, or the whole class can be divided into two or three large groups (A, B, and C). Each group is responsible for a section of the text and is asked to provide questions for their part of the text.
- As they read they have to try to think of some questions to ask their classmates for the section they were assigned.
- The teacher models for the students the kind of questions they are encouraged to pose in order to give them an idea of what they are expected to do. The groups then share their answers with each other by choosing one student from each group to share with the whole class their answers.
- After the teacher has finished reading the story out loud, and the students have completed writing down their responses, they are asked to complete the following tasks for analysing the text.

Textual analysis:

- The students are given 2 or 3 extracts from the text (sentences, or whole paragraphs). These are provided in slips. In groups (3-4) the students work together to answer the answers enclosed in the paper slips. Each slip has a quote taken from the story. The slips are arranged so that the students start from the beginning and build on their understanding until they reach get to the end of the story. Though the quotes may be the same, each group will have different slips than the others as the questions may change from one group to the other. The aim of this is to create diversity of thinking between the different groups for later discussion. The following worksheet contains a sample of the slips given to the students.

“The Daddy was around the side of the house hanging a door for the tenant when he heard the child's screams and the Mommy's voice gone high between them”. “He could move fast, and the back porch gave onto the kitchen, and before the screen door had banged shut behind him the Daddy had taken the scene in whole”

Why are the words Daddy and Mommy capitalized? _____

“his eyes rolled up and mouth open very wide and seeming somehow separate from the sounds that issued”. And the mommy “matching the screams with cries of her own”.

Who is screaming? _____

Why? _____

“the Daddy moving quickly and well and his man's mind empty of everything but purpose, not yet aware of how smoothly he moved or that he'd ceased to hear the high screams because to hear them would freeze him and make impossible what had to be done to help his child”.

By shutting out the child's screams, the Daddy was able to act quickly, however, ironically he

_____ .

What do you think the author's is trying to say in this line “his mind is empty of everything but purpose”? what is the focus on? _____

The child's “screams were regular as breath and went on so long they'd become already a thing in the kitchen, something else to move quickly around”.

-The child's screams were his way of

“the Daddy bent in and was face to face with the child on the table's checkered edge repeating the fact that he was here and trying to calm the toddler's cries but still the child breathlessly screamed”

_ The daddy was trying to _____.

_ the word breathlessly indicates _____

“their baby's diaper burned their hand and they saw where the real water'd fallen and pooled and been burning their baby all this time while he screamed for them to help him and they hadn't, hadn't thought”.

The meaning of *pooled*: a) gathered and collected b) dripped c) evaporated

What do you think is the writer's attitude? Do you think he blames the parents for how things have turned out to be for the child?

“the Daddy lifted him like a newborn with his skull in one palm and ran him out to the hot truck and burned custom rubber all the way to town and the clinic's ER with the tenant's door hanging open like that all day until the hinge gave”.

-The word hinge was mentioned more than once. What do you think is its meaning in this line?

a) turning point b) door handle b) joint

- After the groups have finished answering their slips on the worksheet, each group can share their slips and worksheets with another group so that they can read their answers to the questions given. The worksheets are then given to the teacher to keep, and save in a response box which all student can have access to.

When all groups have answered their questions and analysed the sentences given, all groups share their answers with the teacher and the rest of the students.

Classroom discussion:

The students use their previous understanding of the slips given to generate a discussion about the possible meaning of the text. The teacher's role here is to facilitate the discussion by questioning, rephrasing any ideas that the students have come up with, elicit some ideas and responses from them, point them to take other views and different perspectives, and generate more ideas for discussion. It is the students who do the talking and exploring.

Post-reading:

After the discussion the teacher gives out the following work sheet for the students to work on in pairs.

Choose a moral: this task is given to help draw out ideas about the text, and values of the work.

“Incarnations of Burned Children” is considered unusual, and perhaps does not have a moral in the traditional sense. However, if you were asked to provide one what would it be. Choose one of the following as a possible moral for the story. If you are not able to find a suitable moral from the list you can provide your own. Indicate the reason behind your choice.

Moral 1:

Moral 2:

Moral 3:

Moral 4:

Moral 5:

Your moral:

The reason for your choice:

Connotations:

The teacher asks the students to look at some words or phrases in the text, and figure out their connotative meaning. The words and phrases are underlined in the text. The aim of this activity is to help the students identify writer's attitude and intention of the use of certain language. It also sensitises them to the metaphoric dimensions of words. It can also make some assumptions about writing style. Students could be asked to fill in the following table:

Word /phrase	Meaning/
“The burner’s blue jet” (line 5)	
“As its arms extended” (lines 5-6)	
“Hot truck” (line 59)	
“Burned custom rubber” (line 59)	
“It’s self’s soul so much vapor aloft (line 65)	

Questions for discussion:

- “the Daddy kept saying he was here he was here, adrenaline ebbing and an anger at the Mommy for allowing this thing to happen just starting to gather in wisps at his mind's extreme rear still hours from expression”.

Why do you think that is the father’s attitude towards the mother? Is it justifiable? Can you find evidence for your view in the text? Would you feel the same way if you were in the Daddy’s position?

Create a dialogue

- The students are asked to get in pairs, they can choose their partners.

The students try to write a dialogue or a monologue that captures the thoughts the characters were thinking or saying at a particular time in the situation. Students can use speech bubbles to write down their predictions of what a character is saying or thinking. They can either draw their own scenarios or use a storyboard. It is up to the students to choose the timing; it could be at the beginning, middle or at the end of the story.

Follow up:

This section is for the students to work on at home after the lesson. It is a very efficient way to extend the students thinking by collaboratively creating meaning, and building on each other’s individual responses. It would be more helpful if it is followed by whole classroom discussion, where they could share their ideas, and different perspectives, and get a chance to fully developing an understanding and appreciation of the story.

Internet blogs:

The students are given some questions to help them to think more about the text, and continually transact with it, then write their comments on a blog set for the whole class where they can have open discussions about their interpretations. Only students taking the course access to the blog, they can be from other classes or different groups. This provides more variety in response, and therefore students will be open to different possibilities and a range of ideas. They can discuss, evaluate debate, agree to, and disagree with interpretations from other students, and they will be able to defend, justify, and refer to textual clues to back up their ideas. In addition, they will shape and reshape, and sometimes rethink and revise their own interpretations. The students can choose 2-3 questions to answer; they can also answer all if they wish to.

- 1) The reader is plunged in into the middle of the action. The horrific incidents was not described by the writer, and the reader only witnesses through the vivid imagery what happens afterwards, why do you think that part was left out?
- 2) What do you think is the function of the door? How can you relate the unfolding of events with the door that the father was trying to hang at the beginning of the story? Does it have a symbolic meaning in the story?
- 3) In the line “If you’ve never wept and want to, have a child.” What do you think is the writer’s attitude, and how can you explain narrative point of view based on this statement?
- 4) What do you think was the purpose of Wallace’s use of very long, descriptive sentences?
- 5) What do you think happened to the child? Do you think he lived or died? If he lived describe his life, and if you think he died describe his parent life after his death?
- 6) The story’s realism is portrayed in the most imaginative and extraordinary way. How can you relate to the reality of what happened in the story?

The teacher has access to the student blogs, her/his job is to monitor the discussion, and provide the students with encouraging comments of her/his own. Part of the teacher’s role is to guide the students thinking by paraphrasing, and summarising what has already been said by others, and asking for clarification if needed.

Glossary

Adrenaline: a hormone secreted by the adrenal glands and by some nerve endings that increases the speed and force of heart contraction.

Tenant: a person who pays rent for the use of land or a building

Scarlet: bright red

Hysterical: unable to control your feelings or behaviour because you are extremely frightened, angry, excited, etc.

Burners: the part of a cooker, light, etc. that produces flame or heat

Swaddled: to wrap a baby tightly in cloth

Soles: the bottom part of the foot that touches the ground when you stand or walk, or the bottom part of a shoe that touches the ground, usually not including the heel.

Tinged: marked or shaded with something.

Appendix 12: Lesson 10 ‘The Tell-Tale Heart’

Aim: Read and understand the Gothic Horror fictions and use critical reading skills to analyse the text and create new meanings and experiences from the text. Draw on their personal experience to construct new ideas that reflect their understanding of the text, and the many possible meanings it can have.

Pre-reading:

Guided Imagery:

The students are asked to imagine that they are in dark room alone, they can see nothing and can hear nothing except for the sound of water dripping from a sink tap. They are told that this sound is constant, and there is no way to stop it because the room is locked, and the sound is coming from the next room. The sound of the dripping water from the tap becomes the only thing that they hear and it takes over their senses.

The students are then asked some questions for discussion:

- _ How would you feel?
- _ What would you do?
- _ Do you think that this situation can change your personality?
- _ What can this situation do to you after a while,

Making predictions + class discussion:

Ask the students to make predictions about the title of the story.

_The teacher explains to the students that this tale is from Gothic fiction, and explains what it is. Teacher: Gothic fiction is “*a type of fiction which develops a brooding atmosphere of gloom and terror, represents events that are uncanny or macabre or melodramatically violent, and often deals with aberrant psychological states*” (Abrams, 1999: 111).

Pre-teaching vocabulary:

The teacher asks the students to match some key words from the text with their dictionary definitions. This can help them deal with some of the difficult words in the text, and as they read the text make the necessary associations. The questions is as follows:

_ Match the words to their appropriate definition. The words are underlined in your copies of the story. (the words are underlined in the students' copy of the story).

While-reading:

Listening activity:

The text is divided into five sections.

The teacher reads the first two paragraphs of the story, and asks the students about their impression of the main character (narrator) so far. The students use the definitions they were given to help them with comprehending the text.

As the teacher continues to read, the students follow, and have to look for quotes from the text that denotes certain qualities or features. They can underline, or highlight that part in their copies of the story.

Find word or statements in the text that describe or imply the following:

Feature	Quotes
The narrator's fear	
The effect of the old man's	
Eye	
The importance of time	
Madness	
Invasion of privacy	
The old man's	
hopelessness	
Power	

The teacher then asks the students for their answers and students note them down in their worksheets. Each feature is given a number so that the students can number the quotes that they have not included and number them in their copies of the text.

Do it yourself DIY questionnaires:

(this would be an interesting task, creative, and helps them understand the text, and try to overcome the challenging structure, language, and style). Sharing the questions with each other and with the class helps them guide their thinking and responses, set target ideas that they will need to reconsider, and try to analyse in order to find answers to. The imagination helps them by guiding their thinking, and setting purpose for their reading.

- The students read and try to write down some questions that they can think of for sections or parts of the text.

They can be divided into groups, or the whole class can be divided into 2 or 3 A,B, and C large groups. Each group is responsible for a section of the text, and are asked to provide questions for their part of the text.

The groups then share their questions with each other by choosing one student from each group into a smaller pair, with each person form a group

Post-reading:

The teacher asks the students to get in small groups (3-4) and work on answering the following questions about story?

_ In the story “The Tell-Tale Heart” the narrator is going through a psychological and probably emotional dilemma. In pairs try to note down what you know about his dilemma, and how do you think he reached a decision. Indicate whether you agree or disagree with his doing? Why/why not?

_ What do you think is the relationship between the narrator and the old man? Who do you believe is actually the victim in this tale? Why?

_ The narrator seemed to be tortured by the crime he committed, refer to the text to indicate how this can be inferred? What are the reasons behind this torment?

_ The story is told from a first person point of view, however at times the narrator takes a third person omniscient (all knowing)perspective, can you identify where he does, and can you rely on his comment or not?

_ Imagine that the narrator’s tale was actually a dream, or even a lie? What evidence from the text can you find to argue for such possibility? If not, why?

Characters/Characterization:

- The students work with a partner to complete this task. The teacher assigns either A or B to each pair, so that the class is divided into two main groups, one working on A and the other on B:

The author provided very little information about the old man, can you give a character sketch describing the old man. Refer to the text for evidence?

Can you draw quick sketch of what you think the narrator looks like (appearance)? Justify your choice of detail.

The students then share and discuss their answers with the teacher and the class.

Questions for whole class discussion:

After the students have read the story, they are asked to work in groups of 4 to answer the following questions about the text .It is important that the teacher guides the discussion, tries to elicit different responses from all the students, and at times rephrase interpretations for them to help other students make use of their peers views and perspectives. As the discussion takes place, and students are exploring possibilities, they will come up with further questions that can help them make more sense of the text.

The actual plot takes part before the beginning of the story. The story therefore ends with the narrator trying to prove his sanity, and his very sound, and also intelligent mind. To what extent do you actually agree with how the narrator has identified himself, does he actually convince you (the reader) of his sane and cunning mind? Why?

Follow-up:

Response journals:

The students usually write down their thoughts about a story in their response journals. The students will be given some further questions to think about as homework that help them relate to the text on a more personal level. Students will jot down their thoughts, and the response journals are then given to the teacher to see. The response journals will be kept. Students will have access to the response journals and can read them at any time.

Drama (Role-play):

-The class is divided into four large groups. Each group is given a section of the story where they have to tell the story as a comic strip. Comic strips are not used for students to demonstrate their artistic attributes, but rather for the opportunities for dialogue, monologues, and thought bubbles that they create for the characters in the story. The students can also choose to view the story from a different perspective. The scenes can include thoughts about small details, such as objects, sounds, and so on. The teacher will have to model for the students the kind of questions and details they need to consider when carrying out this project. The teacher can use a previously prepared slide to do part of the story together.

After each group has created their versions of the sections assigned to them, they can get together at the end of the course and create a dramatic version of the story. The students make use of the different interpretations and perspectives they come up with within each group on what happens in the story.