The People's and Democratic Republic of Algeria

University of Algiers
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of English

Dissertation in Fulfilment of Requirements for the Magistère's Degree in Linguistics

Using Drama Scripts to Improve Students' Reading Skills in an EFL Context.

Supervised by

Doctor Kamel KHALDI

Presented by

Mohamed BOUFRADJI

Academic Year: 2000 – 2001

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"I Hereby declare that the substance of this dissertation is entirely the result of my investigation and that due reference or acknowledgement is made, whenever necessary, to the work of the other researchers".

Acknowledgements

I would simply like to express my deep gratefulness to all of my professors and students without whom this work would not have been brought to light.

Abstract

This paper is the result of an applied research that was carried out in a reading comprehension course with English majors in their first year at university. Its goal was to investigate the influence that a suitable use of drama scripts in the reading class might have had on students' reading abilities. It also aimed to establish whether such implementation can possibly be, as we assumed initially, a useful medium and a serviceable practice towards the promotion of reading and the improvement of learners' skills in a foreign language environment.

This research was conducted in conformity with the required principles and recommendations of systematic research procedure – experiment, data collection through testing, assessment and analysis of results – and our report on this issue includes all of the significant observations we gathered throughout the practice, along with the relevant conclusions we elicited from its overall outcome. Our hope is that our elucidations and comments will serve some good purpose and will contribute to provide some suitable answers to some of our queries in foreign language learning and add insight into this matter.

Contents

Introduction.

Over the past few years of our teaching commitments in various institutions, we had the fair chance to experience the use of drama in our classes of intermediate and post intermediate levels of English and we were particularly amazed at the favourable receptivity shown by the students toward this somewhat unusual type of activity with which most of them, not to say all, were quite unfamiliar. The students who, for the majority, were simply not acquainted with such possibility in a foreign language class, were always informed right from the start that the goal of the enterprise was genuine learning and that the practice in question would range from the study of selected plays, or extracts of plays (in terms of grammar, lexis, aspects of meaning and of communication), to discussion over content (i.e. plot, characters, settings) and the highlighted issue(s), and on to performing occasionally after going through some rehearsal.

To encourage maximum involvement also, students were advised to bear in mind that everyone of them was to consider himself/herself as a potential actor/actress for the ultimate performance and that the selection for that purpose would be based on the capacity of holding a role that each of them would have developed in the meantime, and also on the efforts that each would have made to live up to the requirements of both the role to act and the teacher's expectations. After that, a plan of action was developed and the steps to go through were described.

Moreover, and in order to make a suitable use and exploitation of drama within the largely accepted communicative approach, we would always direct our choice on contemporary short plays which feature topical or existential issues of common and universal interest and to which learners of English as a foreign language would have fairly easy access owing to the close likeness that the dialogues they include have with those of daily life interactions. Advising teachers on the opportunity of using plays with

students in the language classroom, Richard Via (1971) stresses the convenience of such choice:

> "   The plays written since the mid – 40s will contain the English that you want.
>   Avoid Shakespeare – Shakespeare is absolutely marvellous, the greatest writer in the English language, but his language is not what we use today in daily conversation. He was writing poetry, and for a different time. The structure, vocabulary, and phrases are not what the young people of today need. So use modern plays. Choose a simple, little family drama or comedy that fits your students' needs […] Probably you should choose a short one-act play."   (in Kral, 1994 : 157)

The choice of the plays to exploit with students should meet the expectations they have in using the foreign language they are learning, and knowing that the classroom is perhaps the sole setting where EFL learners are in some contact with the target language, then one particular expectation is to find some life-like opportunities where to put the language they have stored into some concrete practice.

In addition, it should be underlined here that the use of plays or extracts of plays in the foreign language classroom is to be distinguished from a purely literary study of plays which would in that case involve students of advanced level and which presupposes also the setting of other appropriate techniques for that purpose. Thus, it would be suitable to choose plays or extracts of plays in which the language used is fairly accessible to students and, therefore, make the initiative even possible with elementary students as suggested by Gillian Lazar who underlines that:

> "   The overall point to be drawn […] is that extracts from plays can successfully be used at lower levels, provided they are carefully chosen. The tasks and activities designed to exploit then need not differ substantially from those used in ordinary EFL or ESL

lessons. Provided the language is fairly simple, even plays
dealing with fairly difficult subjects can be chosen."

<div align="right">(1993 : 247-248)</div>

During the several opportunities we had in experiencing drama with our former students in our English classes, we noticed that the activities we initiated did arouse their interest and that this interest, which grew bigger as the work proceeded, settled our opinion about the usefulness and pertinence of using drama with language learners. The repetitive character of our observations through the years reinforced our conviction that the use of drama is indeed an interesting way in stimulating EFL learners to take real concern in learning a language that is not part – at least at the moment they are learning it – of their linguistic environment, in inciting them to get committed in a worthwhile practice that may very possibly increase their confidence and supply them with some new positive energy, or simply, in inviting them to get involved in doing something interesting and promising.

More particularly, and owing to the script that students are favoured with as a basic aid when dealing with dramatic activities, drama can fairly be a convenient means for increasing intake on the one hand, and promoting motivation – especially with anxious and shy learners – on the other. Lazar writes on this account :

> "   A strong sense of involvement is fostered which helps to motivate students and encourage them to learn through active participation. (…) Students confidence improves, not least because students have a written text as a basis from which to develop oral skills. Shyer or more inhibited students often find working from a written text or script a less threatening way of doing a roleplay than having to improvise".

<div align="right">(ibid : 138)</div>

Lazar's statement as can be noted is much expressive of the opportunities of learning a new language in meaningful situations that drama can afford learners and the ascending impetus it can diffuse to their motivation. Students may also take advantage from drama activities to favour personal development. This point of view is sustained by Coger and White (1982) who argue that drama "… contributes significantly to the personal development of the participants", and that these participants"… are motivated to develop, rich, flexible, expressive voices."

<div align="right">(in Kral, 1994:175)</div>

In our past experiences, the positive effect that such practice produced on students' learning in general was much noticeable and the practice seemed to be quite profitable in many ways. The propensity of many learners to remain quiet and not commit themselves in classroom work involving an oral use of the target language, by reason of acute embarrassment, is well known and typical to many foreign language classrooms. With the practice of drama, we noted that reluctance to participation for fear of failure decreased ostensibly as we progressed in our activities. That learners' coming out of shell helped us appreciably to identify some of their weaknesses and to work out various strategies to cater for their gaps. Besides, the frequent friendly occasions devoted to some acting, or simply loud reading of extracts in turns, gave many students a fair chance to gradually improve some important para-linguistic components of language such as intonation, articulation, pronunciation, pauses, and sound and clear voice. Quite apparently, practice and opportunities to see classmates at work increased their awareness of these features of language. In communication terms, the exploitation of drama scripts also afforded them some opportunity to learn from those scripts how the target language will be used in native speakers' interactions.

Seemingly, studying extracts from plays supplied them with some concrete patterns of language in use and with quite a few contextual samples of language use.

Now, as far as our very project within this research is concerned, the object was to investigate the potential influence that some particular innovative teaching techniques and material based on drama would have on learners' reading skills.

In other words, we aimed in this study at experimenting with foreign language students at university a way of teaching reading, which we assume to be fairly resourceful in the valorisation of learning and improvement of reading practices, in the hope of examining its impact on learners' reading abilities. The teaching and testing experiment we planned to conduct was arranged to last 40 hours; it utilised two groups of students – an experimental and a control groups, and was broached by a pre-experiment test and closed by a post-treatment one. In terms of experimental teaching content, the experimental group was obviously the recipient for the innovative practice, and the control group was submitted to a traditional teaching of reading including the various well known materials ranging from factual and informative reading selections to accounts of stories and articles.

We strongly believe that using drama scripts to stimulate foreign language learners is a worthwhile teaching-learning practice, and our hope is that the analysis of the results and data we elicited from our experiment and the comments we are making on them will provide some valid support to our claim.

1. Rationale.

In this study we attempted to examine what the use of drama when set up as a meaningful and well thought out practice in the reading class is likely to promote in terms of reading skills development, and whether its implementation is likely to produce some favourable effect. All things considered, the results and observations we derived from the experiment we ran with our students are presented and analysed in this paper and, to some extent, checked against the theoretical assumptions emerging from the related literature.

The focus of this study, which was on the whole a classroom investigation, was essentially the possible improvement of learners' reading competency through exposure to drama scripts. The overall motivation behind it lied in our wish to confirm the posited claim that the exploitation of plays or selected extracts of plays in teaching English as a foreign language could be a useful source of beneficial reading activities and a promising way towards progress and achievement in language learning.

Thus, this study aimed principally at experimenting with university students a particular teaching practice in reading with the view of checking its suitability in promoting reading comprehension. Our object in this paper is to report as objectively and accurately as possible about learners' development across the process, the assessment of which was carried out via post-practice tests designed to measure their achievement and performance.

1.1. Aims and Justifications of the study.

The primary motive that spurred us on to write on the potential benefit that language learners might gain from the practice of drama in the classroom is initially the interest we have always taken in this literary genre and way of entertaining in general, and in its application in our teaching activities in particular. However, and although interest can indeed be a powerful motive in any undertaking, it is highly possible that, alone, it may not be sufficient to justify an academic investigation.

Academic research to be carried out requires at the inception of its conduct the identification of a particular problem or gap of relevance which presupposes the raising of a worthwhile question that is in turn expected to be explored and answered and whose results, were they findings or solutions, presented and discussed.

This underlined, what we wish to add to explain and sustain our initiative is that, firstly, the non-negligible experience on the ground that we had the opportunity to have in using drama has persuaded us strongly of the usefulness of its incorporation in the language class and more particularly in reading. Secondly, our notice in our teaching practices of its large dismissal by many teachers from their concern for various reasons. These range from unawareness of its benefit, or lack of experience as to its ways of implementation, to scepticism as to its feasibility and success in the classroom. In other words, drama as a classroom practice seems to be thinly perceived by many teachers and insufficiently attributed the due interest it deserves.

Besides, and judging by the positive impressions we have always collected from our students about this practice, we felt that there was real worth in looking methodically into this matter. Our attempt aimed at coming up with some observations and results likely to confirm our opinions about it, and which we hope will draw attention to the value of fostering its use in foreign language learning.

On the level of **classroom research**, this study is in keeping with the notion of **exploratory teaching** as discussed by Allwright and Bailey (1991) and commented by Denise Osdeniz (1996) who writes that it

> "   … is a procedure by which teachers can investigate the teaching and learning taking place in their classroom through a process which involves reflecting on an aspect of their practice, gathering information about it and interpreting this information so as to come to a better understanding of what occurs."

> (in Willis and Willis, 1996 : 110)

Accordingly, this study aimed at being in agreement with this concept of exploratory teaching which underlies classroom research and which exhorts teachers to move on not only in trying out new ideas but also in trying to learn as much as possible from doing so (Allwright and Bailey, 1991 : 197). These two authors expand their view arguing that

> "   In fact, you do not even have to try out 'new' ideas to be an exploratory teacher. Any good experienced teacher will no doubt spend a lot of class time on ideas that are tried and trusted. Turning that 'good' teaching into 'exploratory teaching' is a matter of trying to find out what makes the tried and trusted ideas successful. Because in the long run it is not enough to know that ideas do work; we need also to know why and how they work. Until we can throw more light on those issues, successful teaching will remain a mystery."   (ibid)

Following these recommendations, exertion was shown throughout this research to explore every possible avenue linking the use of drama in a foreign language classroom with the potential effects it may have had on learners' language development, in the hope that the outcome would yield promising elucidations and meet our expectations.

1.2. Scope and limitations of the study.

Although drama can be initiated in the classroom at lower levels in the form of short extracts carefully chosen and including fairly simple language as suggested by Lazar (1993) (see 2.3.2.), our focus was restricted more precisely to its use as a stimulating practice likely to give appreciable results with students at an intermediate level. This was so, first because prior to this formal study, our experience in using drama to heighten learners' interest and enhance their knowledge of the language had been only with learners having quite a few years of language learning behind them and, thus, able to understand and use the foreign language fairly properly. Then because the experiment sustaining this post-graduation

research was carried out in the formal context of the university with students starting freshly their first year as English majors. Consequently, the results, observations, impressions and opinions in our paper have been drawn to be examined, contrasted and commented, from a practice that involved students from that level. Those learners were youngsters in their early twenties and had already, completed five years of English learning according to the educational system in effect in Algeria. As to the module in which the experiment was carried out, this was the 'Reading Comprehension Module' scheduled for students in their first year at the Department of English of the Faculty of Letters and Languages at the University of Algiers – Bouzareah.

Moreover, this study, as specified previously, was basically a classroom investigation which aimed at examining the effect that the use of drama texts in reading comprehension might have on students' learning. As a consequence, we mostly placed the focus of our attention to the impact that such practice might have had on their **reading competence** in general, and to the influence it might have provoked in the shaping of their **reading skills** in particular. Finally, it is understood that in doing so, our classes represented our essential sources for data collection (see 3.5. for clarification).

1.3. The research question.

The inquiry at the core of this study as mentioned above aimed at examining the potential effect that the use of drama in the foreign reading class might possibly have had on learners in terms of incitement to improvement of their reading skills.

Our initial assumption on this is that drama in the foreign language classroom can stand as a beneficial practice for the stimulation of EFL learners to take real involvement in their learning. As a matter of fact, the introduction of this practice in language learning is much encouraged by

experts in classroom activities. The related literature to second and foreign language learning abounds with recommendations exhorting teachers to shake off their doubts and foster this use. In an account on literature-based and drama-inspired activities and tasks, Robin Scarcella and Rebecca Oxford (1990:132) underline that

> " Proponents [Brumfit and Carter, 1986; Povey, 1979; Stern, 1985, 1990; Gadjusek, 1988] of a communicative approach to language teaching emphasize that skills should be taught in a realistic context, one possible context being work of literature." (our brackets)

and report after Gadjusek (1988:227) that

> " Literary texts have the potential to provide the basis for intensely interactive, content-based ESL classes because the exploration of literature … constitutes real content".

Indeed, the exploration of literature should not remain the exclusive concern of arts majors or left to specialists of literature only. Any teacher with a good teaching basis including familiarity with the basic techniques for teaching can purport to exploit drama texts and devise resourceful activities to enhance language learning with his classes.

Following on from the postulated argument that drama when used rationally in class is apt to raise students' interest and prompt them to go ahead, we attempted in this study to investigate the following question:

How can the use of drama texts improve learner's reading skills in the foreign language classroom?

1.4. Definition of terms.

By **reading skills**, reference is made to:

1) those skills which are typical of any genre of text study, i.e. general comprehension of overall meaning; detailed understanding of specific ideas, main points, facts, opinions, etc.; building of vocabulary knowledge and problem solving of unknown lexical items in text through the use of clues available in context of use; identification of discourse rules (markers of coherence and cohesion) and their purpose of use to extract meaning efficiently; awareness of function of words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs) and understanding of sentence structure (simple, compound, complex) in order to ensure full comprehension.

2) those skills which are more particularly related to literature reading and which involve more specific skills like interpretation competence in terms of the ability of capturing the various meanings of symbolic and moral concerns, of understanding implied and figurative language, and of being sensitive to the intention and tone of the author.

2. Literature Review.

2.1. What is drama ?

Generally, there is a common tendency among English-speaking laymen to use the words 'drama' and 'theatre' interchangeably. They are not really wrong in doing so actually, for **drama** in standard lexicons is generally defined as 'the composition, presentation and performance of plays[1]' or 'the art of acting in plays[2], and **theatre** – a word which happens to have several entries, thus several levels of use – also, among other things, as 'dramatic literature or art[1]'. We can notice on this account that the borderline between these two familiar words is quite blurred and often, hardly discernible, and that it might well be neither relevant, nor perhaps possible to draw a clear-cut distinction between them. However, a very flimsy distinction, which perhaps only advised men of letters and of the acting profession are aware of, exists in fact between the two terms and comes slipping in between to pull their very meaning slightly apart.

This distinction is best accounted for by Keir Elam who in his book the Semiotics of Theatre and Drama writes :

> "'theatre' and 'drama' : this familiar but invariably troublesome distinction requires a word of explanation in this context (…) 'theatre' is taken to refer (…) to the complex of phenomena associated with the performer-audience transaction : that is, with the production and communication of meaning in the performance itself and with the systems underlying it. By 'drama', on the other hand, is meant that mode of fiction designed for stage representation and constructed according to particular ('dramatic') conventions. The epithet 'theatrical', then is limited to what takes place between and among performers and spectators, while the epithet 'dramatic' indicates the network of factors relating to the represented fiction."

(1980 : 2)

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[1] Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English; Oxford.
[2] Chambers Universal Learners' Dictionary; Edinburgh.

In our present study, what needs to be underlined first is that the language classroom scarcely provides, unfortunately, the authentic theatrical environment which includes, as is known, some conventional and traditional elements without which no play in its real sense can take place. These elements will range from theatrical scenes used as backgrounds to indicate the location of the events of a play, to backstage where the actors withdraw when the action taking place does not require their presence, and to stage lighting, costumes, properties and musical backdrops that help create the appropriate atmosphere (although music can be easily provided in the classroom by the simple means of a cassette-player, for instance). Secondly, what will also be missing in a language classroom is the customary relationship and interaction between the performers and the audience, which, depending on the action in progress, can provoke laughter and sighs, tears and holding of breath, and give rise to bursts of applause and cheers and encores (although this can occur in the classroom if the acting is good and convincing enough). Thirdly, the purpose of our suggesting the inclusion of plays as a potential source of activities in a language course is purely linguistic, communicational and motivational.

Thus taking into consideration this slight difference of meaning between drama and theatre as pointed out by Elam, and using all the reasons enumerated above as a justification for our choice, we shall be using consistently the words 'drama' and 'dramatic' all throughout our paper to favour clarity and easiness of comprehension and to avoid ambiguity and misinterpretation. However, it may well be that we are constrained at one moment or another in our accounts to make a possible use of the words 'theatre' or 'theatrical' to provide some explanation, illustrate a point or back up an argument, in which case the shade or subtlety they may possibly convey will be specified.

The next thing to be said about drama is that among the major literary genres, it is the one which, unlike poetry and fictional prose, features mostly a face-to-face interaction between characters on the one hand (although fictional prose may include some dialogues, and drama in certain acts and scenes some

passages of narrative accounts) and also, on the other hand, the one which – with the exception maybe of poetic drama – includes a type of language closest to the one used naturally by individuals in daily life.

Another typical aspect of drama worth noting relates to the nature of its discourse structure. In actual fact, the discourse structure of drama, depending on the type of play, can be more or less complex to highly complex. If we compare, for instance, a poem to a play, we shall notice readily that with the poem there is merely one level of discourse that is the poet-reader level. Whereas with a play, more than one level are needed to relate meaningfully and reasonably what takes place. Short refers to these structures as 'discourse architectures' and writes :

> "   These architectures, which can also change as a play
> unfolds, are crucial for us to grasp if we are to understand the
> play and react sensitively to it".   (1996 : 172)

In order to make his point clear, he suggests three types of organization :

Type 1 :

Addresser 1	Message	Addressee 1
(playwright)		(audience-reader)
Addresser 2	Message	Addressee 1
(Character A)		(Character B)

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Type 2 :

Addresser 1	Message	Addressee 1
(playwright)		(audience-reader)

Addresser 2		Addressee 1
(Narrator)	Message	(Narratees)
(Singer)		(Characters)

Addresser 3		Addressee 3
(Characters)	Message	(Characters)

Type 3 :

Addresser 1		Addressee 1
(playwright)	Message	(audience-reader)
		(Us)

Addresser 2		Addressee 2
(Narrator)	Message	(Narratees)
(Character A)		(Us)

Addresser 3		Addressee 3
(Characters)	Message	(Characters)
(inc. Character A)		

(Adapted from Mick Short, 1996 : 169, 171, 172).

We may notice in type 3 that the narrator is also a character in the play from which he steps out at times to talk to the audience and deliver his narration. For this specific type of play structure, Short underlines that

> "   Plays with narrators have a mechanism for guiding audience reaction which is not present in plays with a more prototypical dramatic discourse structure".   (ibid)

Two other closely related elements of capital importance in drama are the plot and structure of the play. By plot, we understand the intrigue, the action, or simply, the plan of the events of the story as contrived by the author, and presented in such a way that the audience is able to perceive and understand its development from the beginning to the end. Some plots can be complex and require sharp attention and sustained concentration, and others simple and linear affording, thereby, easy understanding and interpretation. In addition, Plots bear intrinsic logic, that is the end of the story should be a logical outcome of the successive events that have marked the course of the action. By structure, we understand the issue of the arrangement of the events in the plot as designed by the playwright to sustain the play. Structure in a play is an essential element indeed, and perhaps the most significant one to demonstrate its artistic distinction and the genius and mastery of its originator.

Finally, it would be fair enough to close this inventory of the specific characteristics of drama by touching on the language that is specific to it. Broadly speaking, there are two types of language in English drama: the language of poetry typical to romantic drama of the Elizabethan period and best exemplified by William Shakespeare, whose mighty lines were hymns of beauty and glory, and the language of prose, which characterizes modern drama and which, nonetheless, exerts itself quite often to present dialogues that look to a suitable combination of literary achievement and recreation of casual daily speech.

This being said, the common point that brings the two styles together is that in both, the playwrights seek force, wit, authenticity, conviction and plausibility, even though in the case of the language of poetic drama rhetoric and pompousness are unavoidable. But one thing is certain: the quality of the language will without a doubt decide on its acceptance and immortality, or its dismissal and oblivion.

2.2. Why use drama?

The language classroom being perhaps the sole setting where EFL learners are in some contact with the target language, the finding, therefore, of some life-like opportunities where to put their small language capital into some concrete and interesting practice becomes a crucial need, and the quest for such opportunities a major care. It is only this way that they may possibly overcome those feelings of frustration and uselessness in learning a foreign language, which, quite frequently, come to nag them and disrupt their steadiness. Most of the time, learning a language equates for learners with speaking this language much more than with doing exclusively reading or writing. Thus, the learners' need to find an appropriate context where to put to real practice the language they have accumulated after a few years of exposure to formal learning, will grant them reasons to make headway and will double their motivation towards the prospect of achieving acceptable fluency and proficiency. And it happens, as a matter of fact, that drama in EFL contexts can turn out to be a supportive means to respond to this need and fulfil this desire. Lazar argues on this account, stating:

> " Since most plays are rich in dialogue, using a play with students is a useful and exciting way of focussing on conversational language". (1993 : 137)

Consequently, the practice of drama can help the students develop their ability to interact with other people in the target language, something they may need later in the real world, without, yet the threats that real

communication may exercise on their personality in a real context. The 'mask' of the character they represent will provide them with the safety they need at this level of language practice to get out of their shells. The stage fright is surely inevitable but not insurmountable, and gradually the students will gain some easiness in performing and gather the self-confidence they desperately need in using the target language.

On the level of language learning, drama can contribute significantly to a meaningful and contextual presentation and study of some functions, structural and lexical items, and colloquial phrases and other expressions having phatic functions in daily conversation and which should not be neglected if we expect our learners to develop some socio-linguistic competence. Lazar provides support to this and writes:

> " Studying the dialogue of a play provides students with a meaningful context for acquiring and memorising new language. Students often pick up new phrases or formulaic expressions by studying how these are used by the characters in a play, particularly if the text is read or performed in class." (ibid, 138).

On the level of the speaking and listening skills, drama can prove to be very useful in working out speech turn-taking, in improving both pronunciation and intonation, and most interestingly in showing how to put some specific emotions or tones in one's speech such as those of joy, humour, sadness, impatience or sarcasm. Moreover, a maximum use of spoken target language can be encouraged during the rehearsal meetings so that the students find some favourable opportunity to develop their language potential.

Another reason why drama can be advantageous in the language classroom lies in the likeness that characterizes both the language of dramatic dialogues in contemporary plays and that of ordinary conversation, although there are evidently some dissimilarities which would more certainly set them apart than bring them together. But these

will be most likely located in the nature of the two language forms rather than in their aspects. For example, ordinary conversation is mostly a spontaneous act with no preparation beforehand and no rehearsal, whereas dramatic language is written first before it is spoken. This will lead to the fact that the language of an ordinary conversation is somehow thought out before it is uttered and includes, thereby, pauses and fillers, whereas that of dramatic dialogue is straight and smooth because it is already memorized by the character who delivers it. However, by and large, the language of modern prose drama does resemble fairly that of daily speech in many points, and it is this proximity, in fact, that makes it interesting to be exploited in the classroom for the promotion of meaningful language practice.

Last but not least, the excitement and pleasure the students will get from drama activities is an extra powerful motive to prompt them forward and to add animation to their learning. It is largely admitted by teachers and researchers that enjoyment and fun can more often than not be efficient incentives for good accomplishment at school, and if enjoyment comes to liven up the interest, then their combination can but be profitable and rewarding.

2.3. How to use drama in the foreign language classroom?

There are many ways of using drama in the language classroom. Given the fact that a play can either be considered as a performance or as a text, the potential activities when using it will be contrived accordingly. These two approaches of exploitation in the classroom will each in turn comprise a host of various ways to put into practice when promoting drama in language learning. However, and as Gillian Lazar (1993 : 137) points out :

> "   neither of these views are mutually exclusive since
> all performances begin from an interpretation of words on

a page, and without those words, the gestures and
movements of the cast, the sets and costumes, the
lighting and music would be meaningless."

But for the purpose of a clear presentation let us consider them separately.

2.3.1.   Play as a performance.

In the introduction of his book <u>Plays for Reading</u>, Thomas Kral writes :

"   For directors and actors in theatre, real life provides
material for the stage. For teachers and students of EFL,
the stage provides material for language use in real life."

(1994 : V)

In order to reach for a pertinent and beneficial application of drama in
language learning, two interesting ways are suggested:

1) The "**Talk-and-Listen**" system[3], which is quite close to the traditional
performing on stage – the exception being the fact that the actors hold
scripts in their hands –, and in which there is movement, gesticulation,
mutual focus by the actors on one another, use of props and wearing of
costumes;

2) the "**Readers Theatre**" technique[4] also widely known as "Interpreters
Theatre" and sometimes referred to as "Platform Theatre", "Chamber
Theatre", "Staged Reading" or "Story Theatre", and which consists
mainly in standing or sitting on stools, focusing upon an audience,
holding scripts and delivering with a maximized use of vivid
vocalization and facial and physical expressions in order to appeal to the
viewers' appropriate imagination.

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[3] Richard A. Via : "English Through Drama"
        in Thomas Kral's <u>Plays for Reading</u> (1994 : 158).
[4] Leslie I. Coger & Melvin R. White : "Readers Theater : An Introduction"
        in Thomas Kral's <u>Plays for Reading</u> (1994 : 167).

Expanding the notion of the 'Talk-and-listen' system, former actor and Broadway stage director Richard Via underlines its importance and writes that this system

> "   … means that only the person who is going to speak will look at his script. He looks at the script and reads the line to himself. Then he looks at the appropriate character – the person to whom he is supposed to be speaking – and says as much of that line as he can remember. While he speaks, he must be making eye contact with the other person and that person must be looking at him, not reading the script".

He further stresses the importance of listening which develops comprehension and which according to him represents 50 percent of the acting and, by extension, of daily conversation:

> "   You can't be a good actor without listening to what the other person is saying and to the way he is talking to you. The same thing is true in conversation. We so often think that conversation is only speaking. And unless we listen, we cannot know how to respond."

Moreover, Via exhorts us to avoid memorization of plays by students because it "would not be communication and it would not sound like communication". He also informs us that when rehearsing in Broadway, plays are not memorized ; rather, actors use the "talk-and-listen" system. On this account, he writes:

> "   Soon we can look at the beginning of a sentence and know what the line is. But we are *talking* with other actors. Eventually, we put the script down. We have learned the play as conversation. If you memorize a part, it will always sound like memorization, It will come out too fast, the words will not communicate, and we won't understand what is being said. If the student memorizes his part, it will be less likely to have any meaning for him or for his audience."   (author's italics) (in Kral, 1994 : 158-159)

We understand, of course, that in Broadway, the lines of a play when performed on the stage before an audience will be declaimed from memory with no visible scripts, but what is interesting is the fact that this memorization is not a mechanical one (i.e. individual rote learning) ; rather, it is collective and communicative. Besides, the purpose on a stage in Broadway is clearly different from that in a language classroom. On a stage, the purpose is that of imparting an experience and entertaining. In the classroom, it is much more one of acquiring language and learning to communicate.

Via concludes saying:

> "   The student who memorizes will just be reciting words, while the 'talk-and-listen' student continues to grow and to understand the English he is using."
>
>   (in Kral, 1994 : 159)

And that is, in fact, where the pertinence and benefit of such a system lie.

As to 'Readers Theatre', Coger and White in introducing this particular way of presenting literature to an audience, write that this technique

> "   … draws on a wide range of styles ; presentation with stools and stands and no movement, presentation without stools and stands and much purposeful action and interaction of the involved characters, with and without settings, with and without costuming, with and without special lighting, with and without a stage, with and without a theatrical curtain, with and without memorization, with and without multiple casting (one reader taking more than one role) … with or without make-up, with or without music, dance, sound, and mechanical and vocal effect. The strength of Readers Theatre is its flexibility to the material to be performed, to the environment in which it is presented, and to the audience."   (ibid : 165).

Put differently, it is a sort of theatrical practice involving oral interpreters and meant to stimulate the viewers' imagination and to have them experience and enjoy a literary piece in a non-solitary way. Coger and White develop the notion explaining that

> "   basically, Readers Theatre is a medium in which
> two or more oral interpreters employ vivid vocal and
> physical clues to cause an audience to see and hear
> characters expressing their attitudes toward an action so
> vitally that the literature becomes a living experience –
> both for the readers and for their audience. In other words,
> the readers share the attitudes, viewpoints, and actions of
> a literary piece with an audience, causing the audience to
> experience the literature."   (ibid : 168).

They further divide this way of presenting literature in oral group performance into 'restricted', 'semi-restricted' and 'unrestricted'. By 'restricted' we understand the type of presentation in which the performers wear casual clothes, hold scripts in their hands, are primarily stationary, seated on stools, chairs or boxes and use an offstage focus, which means that they face the audience all throughout their performance without ever establishing eye contact with each other. By 'semi-restricted' Readers Theatre, they suggest that some movement and arrangement of characters in some particular grouping is permitted, whereas 'unrestricted' Readers Theatre is usually free, uses various groupings, suggested costuming, and most often lines memorized by all the characters except the narrator. In this kind of presentation also called 'Story Theatre', the narrator moves about, uses offstage focus or looks at the characters on stage and addresses the audience directly.

Furthermore, one major difference between conventional theatre and Readers Theatre pointed out by Coger and White (ibid : 170) is that the former is described as 'representational', the latter as 'presentational'. What ought to be understood by representational theatre is that the illusion of real life created on stage for the audience is so real that the spectators, seated in the darkness of an auditorium and following the action, are gripped in such a way

they forget they are in a theatre. Presentational theatre on the reverse, neither pretends, nor attempts to create this illusion. The audience, of course, may become involved, but without ever forgetting that they are in a theatre and that what is on play may look like life, but is not life. Staging also does not aim at deluding the audience with illusory scenery. There is some use of set pieces, platforms, steps, stools, benches and so on, but the spectators are expected to fill in what is missing with their imagination. Readers Theatre is thus an experience that is primarily driven by the passion of literature, that can be shared intensely by both performers and audience, and which aims at giving life and sense to words in a text with the simple help of evocative vocal and physical resources and a prompt and ready imagination.

The following chart adapted from Coger and White (ibid : 171) shows the differences and proximities among the various types of Interpreters Theatre and conventional drama.

THE RANGE OF INTERPRETERS THEATRE

	CONVENTIONAL READERS THEATRE	FREE READERS THEATRE	CHAMBER THEATRE	CONVENTIONAL PLAYS
	Restricted or semirestricted	Unrestricted		
Material	Play, poems (dramatic and lyric), narrative fiction (epic), nondramatic literature	Poems, narrative fiction, nondramatic literature	Only narrative fiction	Plays only
Focus	Offstage (with occasional on-stage for special effect)	Offstage or onstage	Onstage for scenes and interchange between narrator and characters. Narration offstage to audience	Onstage with a few exceptions
Use of Scripts	Scripts present whether memorized or not	With or without scripts	Usually memorized. Narrator(s) may or may not have script	Always memorized
Movement	None or little movement. Performers stand or sit.	Much movement for psychological relationships	Conventional stage movement. Narrator moves to reveal his role in the story	Complete movement
Costuming	Regular clothing with attention to appropriateness in style and color	Regular clothing or suggested or full costumes	Suggested or full costumes	Fully costumed
Staging	Lecterns, boxes, stools, chairs, benches. May use levels : ladders, platforms, step units, etc.	Stools, boxes, chairs, benches. Levels : ladders, platforms, step units, etc.	Chairs, boxes, benches. Levels : step units, ladders. Occasionally furniture and metaphorical staging devices	Usually complete staging

(Adapted from L. I. Coger and M. R. White, "Readers Theatre : An Introduction" in <u>Plays for Reading</u> by Thomas Kral (1994 : 171))

2.3.2. Play as a text.

The striking feature of plays is that they include a various gamut of dialogues which can provide very interesting opportunities of looking at language in the EFL classroom. In section 2.2., we mentioned the fact that there are indeed some dissimilarities between dialogues of plays and everyday language which may set them somewhat apart from each other (e.g. dialogues of plays are delivered straightforwardly because written beforehand, whereas everyday dialogues are punctuated with pauses, fillers and interruptions along with the inclusion sometimes of incomplete formulations), but this should not stand as a hindrance of some kind ; rather, dialogues of plays should be exploited to enhance meaningful communicative practice and develop fluency in students on the one hand, and to broaden their abilities of interpreting words and sentences which have more than one level of meaning, on the other, by an adequate stimulation of their senses of assumption, deduction, anticipation and conclusion.

For the purpose of using plays to increase reading comprehension, many ways to be initiated in the language classroom are suggested. Gillian Lazar (1993), for example, has developed a whole set of activities ranging from those to accompany the study of mere extracts to those meant to back up the examination of whole plays. These activities are promoted for the sake of broadening students' understanding of conversational discourse and of heightening their capacities to uncover implied meaning lying beneath the surface one in the dialogues of plays. Besides, through the study of dialogues from plays, students are exposed to some important aspects typical of conventional language such as sequences of progression, idiomatic and formulaic expressions, levels of language (formal, casual) likely to reveal status or relationships, etc.

Let us now look at some of the activities advocated by Lazar and designed to increase students' motivation and interest in drama.

A - The use of play extracts.

This type of procedure should not present any difficulty. The main problem, however, lies in the judicious selection of the play from which to draw the extract to be studied in class, and perhaps also in the pertinent choice of the extract itself. Regarding the selection of the play, it is recommended to set one's choice on one whose language fits the students' needs for daily language in terms of vocabulary, structures, phrases, expressions, and at a lesser degree, content. Within this approach, a simple family or social drama or comedy of modern time would do (Via, 1971 – see p. 2) (Lazar, 1993 – see pp. 2, 62). As to the extract, it would be clever to select a short one not exceeding 20 exchanges and whose ideas – despite their removal from context – would still be meaningful, attractive and consistent enough for further expansion and discussion (Lazar, ibid).

Once the extract is read, the students are asked to think about some of the issues of more or less easy access that it features. For example, they may be invited to discuss the setting, the relationship between the involved characters, their moods, the atmosphere, the topic or problem in question, the kind of language used and the possible reasons for such use, the language functions fulfilled by certain lines, mainly those showing ambiguity (reproach, threat, gratitude, promise, apology, etc.), and eventually, the possible sequel of the situation or the conversation if any speculation can be made at this level. Charts including particular information from the extract can also be filled either individually or collectively. Further on, students may be divided into pairs and asked to write mini-dialogues based on the situation highlighted in the extract and which they will perform before their mates in class.

After each presentation, students are encouraged to express overall opinions, and joint correction, re-arrangement or rephrasing can also be initiated.

With post intermediate levels, specific questions devised by the teacher about comprehension and use of the language can also be answered in writing. At advanced levels where over-average command of the language can be shown, a potential alternative could be to have the students compare the language used in two different extracts of two different plays in order to expand their awareness of how language may differ according to setting, situation and social status and roles, or possibly, to have them discuss some cultural features highlighted in a text and compare them with their own. With advanced students also, creative verbal or written communication can be fostered by appealing to students' imagination and sense of extrapolation. Questions such as 'how would you describe the background where this dialogue is taking place?', or 'basing your judgement on the elements in hands, how do you think the characters could be dressed and styled?', or 'write a paragraph in which you relate a possible continuation for the story', or 'write a dialogue that extends the one of the extract and provides an end to the conversation'.

Another interesting technique to check students' understanding and sense of cohesion (i.e. distinction of semantic relations between certain elements of a text in order to ensure a correct interpretation) and coherence (i.e. unity and organization of ideas within a text) is to expose them right from the start to an extract displaying some missing lines which are presented in a jumbled way below the text and to ask them to put these removed lines in the appropriate places. Discussion about the reasons that motivated their choices can also be engaged once the extract is set up in order. It goes without saying here that the teacher should be very careful about what lines to select for removal. His choice should not be meant to create confusion in the students' mind. It certainly has to be a little challenging, but not bewildering.

More specifically, and as far as the vocabulary is concerned, the teacher can also either think of pre-teaching the difficult words included in

the extract, or leave the initiative to students to look up the meanings for themselves in a dictionary. The latter option is a good way to encourage students to be undertaking and responsible for their learning. Such initiative can lead to feelings of satisfaction and achievement that will spur them on to redouble their efforts and make headway.

As follow-ups and wrapping activities, students may be invited to discuss one or more aspects of the topic of the extract (e.g. conflicts between individuals in neighbourhood, at home, or elsewhere and what causes them) in the light of their own experience if any. They may also be asked to comment upon the views or values raised in the extract and whether or not they share them, and eventually, to perform the dialogues and say whose performance was more convincing and natural-like.

B - The use of whole plays.

Unlike play extracts, which can easily be studied during one or two sessions, the use of whole plays can turn to be a little more constraining in terms of time availability, preparation and study. However, the possible constraints that the study of a whole play may present should not be viewed as insurmountable obstacles likely to cause despondency and lead to renouncement. Rather, what ought to be kept in the line of sight is the memorable rewarding and benefit that may be derived from such challenge.

For an effective and practical promotion of such initiative, the problem of shortness of time can shrewdly be solved by, for instance, allowing few weeks for the students to read the play at home and get familiar with its issues. This can be done, for instance, through some activities and tasks designed to guide their reading and clear their way towards an intelligent grasp of plot, themes and characterization. The students may be asked, for example, to read the play and answer questions, or complete charts with information related to the understanding of the setting, the social milieu where the events take place, the characters'

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personalities and their relationships, the story or the intrigue, and the main themes. These assignments will serve the purpose of checking and reinforcing their comprehension of the play before its discussion in class and will at the same time enable them to develop some arguments in order to take part actively in the ensuing talks.

Once the activities are completed in class, the play discussed and its main issue(s) understood, the teacher may initiate a performance by the students in which one or more episodes are acted out. A digest to summarize the most important developments in the story can also be written and delivered in the form of a narration by a narrator, so that the play can be squeezed and some of its scenes be performed for other classes. In this way, this kind of exchanges between classes can tease out, why not, some emulation and be profitable for many students.

2.4. Reading and reading skills.

2.4.1. Reading: A definition.

In people's mind, reading is often associated with literacy and it is a common assumption that a literate person is primarily a person who can read. This shows the importance of reading in life in order for people to understand better and take active part in the world that surrounds them. In instruction in general, and in language learning in particular, reading is considered as a key to success and achievement in high education. It is not surprising, therefore, that for language students who are struggling to meet the requirements of their courses and pass their examination safely and satisfyingly, the need to read in good amount, to learn how to read efficiently in the target language with respect to time and directives and to develop fluency and confidence in reading becomes a crucial matter. But what is reading?

Broadly, reading can be considered as the ability to decode and make sense of written words and the use of this ability to build a correct interpretation of what is being read. In other words, it is the ability to decipher and derive meaning from the written symbols of a text with the ultimate objective of obtaining information from it. Clearly, the deciphering implies word recognition including its various representations (i.e., spelling, phonology, syntax, meaning), whereas the construction of meaning from a whole text will require beside the knowledge of the linguistic features of words, the knowledge of the main text-types, some knowledge of the subject of the text and knowledge of the world (i.e., the cultural and educational background). It is only when these elements are available and their interaction with one another made possible that meaning is constructed and comprehension achieved.

Day and Bamford provide a simple definition for reading:

> "   …reading is the construction of meaning from a printed or written message."   (1998 : 12)

And underline further that

> "   The construction of meaning involves the reader connecting information from the written message with previous knowledge to arrive at meaning – at an understanding."   (ibid)

Grellet explains in her introduction that

> "   Understanding a written text means extracting the required information from it as efficiently as possible."   (1981: 3)

She supports her explanation arguing that

> "   … locating the relevant advertisement on [a] board and understanding the new information contained in [an] article demonstrates that the reading purpose in each case has been successfully fulfilled. In the first case, a competent reader will quickly reject the irrelevant information and find what he is looking for. In the second case, it is not enough to understand the gist of the text; more detailed comprehension is necessary."
>
> (ibid)

2.4.2.   Purpose of reading.

Reading is always guided by motives, and in real life reading purposes vary constantly. Naturally, our motives will be different depending on the kind of reading we are attending to (e.g. reading to find out a particular piece of information, reading a thriller, etc.) and the form the reading takes will also determine the attitude of the reader (e.g. a reader absorbed in a serious academic reading will show sustained concentration and thinking; a reader of a football magazine or that of a comic book will be more relaxed and easy.)

Reading and purposes of reading are generally of two kinds:

− Reading for information (to use it subsequently for some specific aims).

− Reading for pleasure (either for enrichment of background knowledge, or simply, for fun and enjoyment).

Harmer divides them into two broad categories he labels "instrumental" and "pleasurable". By instrumental, he points out the type of reading that

> "   helps us to achieve some clear aim." This "type of reading (…), in other words, takes place because we have some kind of utilitarian or instrumental purpose in mind." (e.g. we read the instructions on a leaflet of a new appliance because we need to know how to operate it.)
>
> (2001 : 200)

by pleasurable, he indicates the

> "   kind of reading … [which] takes place largely for pleasure. Thus people read magazines or spend hours buried in the Sunday paper. Others go to poetry readings … [or] read illustrated cartoons or photo-stories".
>
> (ibid)

However, instrumental and pleasurable reading are not mutually exclusive. Very often, some kind of reading can combine both (e.g. history books) and Harmer suggests that "there is a great deal of 'crossover' between the two categories", but he does not omit to underline that "… a consideration of the two types does at least allow us to consider different receptive skill styles, and helps us to ensure that we do not ignore genres which students need to be able to handle."   (ibid)

2.4.3. Ways of reading.

In reading comprehension, the reasons a reader has for his reading will dictate the type of reading he will adopt. Thus every technique he will use to approach a text will involve a set of adopted skills that come into play to enable him to fulfill successfully his reading purpose. Reading experts agree to recognize four main ways of reading which they identify as: **skimming, scanning, intensive reading, and extensive reading.**

A. Skimming vs scanning.

Skimming is a technique that consists in going quickly through the reading material in order to get the gist of it without attending to the details. The principal object of skimming is to get a general idea of the content of a text and perhaps its tone and its author's intention.

Scanning, like skimming, is also an efficient technique for quick reading. The difference is that with scanning, what matters most is the location of some specific information needed. The typicality of this technique lies in that the other information is ignored, the linearity of the text is not necessarily followed and the only care is the spotting of the reading item considered relevant to the reader's purpose. Unlike skimming, which supposes a quick but complete reading of a passage with the aim of getting a general understanding of what it is about, scanning is a restricted task whose ultimate objective is the finding of a targeted specific piece of information. However, more often than not, skimming and scanning may well follow each other. Grellet underlines that "… these different ways of reading are not mutually exclusive." (1981 : 4) and that

> "   … it is usual to make use of these two activities together when reading a given text. For instance, we may well skim through an article first just to know whether it is worth reading, then read it through more carefully because we have decided that it is of interest. It is possible afterwards to scan the same article in order to note down a figure or a name which we particularly want to remember."   (ibid : 19)

B. Intensive vs extensive reading.

- **Intensive reading.**

Intensive reading suggests the activity of reading short passages in order to extract some specific information. The task is an accurate one and its goal is to read for the search of details. In intensive reading classes, students are required to go through a text very carefully with the final purpose of understanding every word and every sentence in it. Intensive reading which is chiefly conducted by the teacher, who will explain new words and phrases and who will also examine the grammatical structures of the sentences with his students, is meant to increase the learners' linguistic competence (lexical and syntactic) and develop an acceptable comprehension of the logical meaning and the cultural content conveyed and an appropriate acquisition of information. This is ensured with the means of clarifying activities of various sorts at both linguistic (words, structures, cohesion devices, etc.) and content levels (ideas, meaning, plain facts, implied facts, relevant points, etc.). In order for the teacher to raise the students' interest and make the reading class an enjoyable and rewarding session, he will have to adopt several specific roles. Thus he will manage to be an organizer who defines clearly the assignments, an observer of progress who will encourage initiative and intervene only when necessary, a feedback organizer who will check whether the tasks have been completed successfully and locate students' comprehension problems, and a prompter who will draw their attention to certain features of both language and content and throw light on certain ambiguities. (Harmer, 2001 : 213).

Intensive reading is an important way of reading to implement in class in the teaching of English to foreign students. It efficiently helps students to develop various skills and gain fluency and confidence in language in general and in reading in particular. Besides, it offers substantial input in terms of information and uses of language that will further serve communicative purposes and the other language skills that are writing, listening and speaking. Its development becomes therefore a vital necessity.

- **Extensive reading.**

Extensive reading refers to reading at length. It is generally an individual activity based on the reader's personal selection of a reading material that is determined by his own interests and whose purpose is mainly related to pleasure, information and global understanding. In second and foreign language learning it is important for the student who seeks improvement in language and fluency in reading to read a lot out of the classroom, for such reading will increase his faculty of word recognition and develop appropriate automaticity. Davis (1995) reported by Harmer maintains that

> "   … any classroom will be the poorer for the lack of an extensive reading programme, and will be unable to promote development in all aspects as effectively as if such a programme were present".   (2001:204)

and claims further that

> "   … such a programme will make students more positive about reading, improve their overall comprehension skills, and give them a wider passive and active vocabulary".   (ibid)

Extensive reading to be profitable and motivating for language learners should comprise a reading material that needs to be suitable to their linguistic competence in terms of lexis and structures so that access and comprehension are permissible without excessive dependency on dictionaries, which is likely to stand as a potential hindrance to perseverance (Day and Bamford, 1998:8).

One recommended type of reading material for second and foreign language learners is what is known as 'simplified readers'. Harmer describes them as books that

> "   … can take the form of original fiction and non-fiction books as well as simplifications of established works of literature."   (ibid)

and finds that they meet success

> "   … because the writers or adaptors work with specific lists of allowed words and grammar [which] means that students at the appropriate level can read them with ease and confidence."   (ibid)

C. The problem of authenticity.

Reading experts do not miss to point out the problem of authenticity with simplified literature, the danger being in the likelihood that too simplified versions of reading material may bring about unnatural language and simplistic content (Harmer, ibid : 205). On the other hand, authentic material may pose a problem to students in second and foreign language learning in that it can be "extremely de-motivating for students since they will not understand it." (Harmer, ibid).

Harmer defines authentic material as "language where no concessions are made to foreign speakers", but because it is the kind of language that students will undoubtedly encounter if they embark on courses in high education or come into contact with target-language speakers, then its non-inclusion, even at low levels, may turn out to be a failure in producing competent language users.

Besides, Grellet believes that

> "   … Paradoxically, 'simplifying' a text often results in increased difficulty because the system of references, repetition and redundancy as well as the discourse indicators one relies on when reading are often removed or at least significantly altered."   (1981 : 7).

A compromise by experts would be to look to the preservation of the naturalness of language when 'simplifying' (Harmer, ibid), and as suggested by Carter and his colleagues (1998) and reported by Harmer:

> "   Concocted, made up language can be perfectly viable but it should be modeled on naturalistic samples."

>   (ibid)

More pertinently, Grellet advocates that teachers should not hesitate to get the "students accustomed to reading authentic texts from the very beginning", for this, according to her, "does not necessarily mean a much more difficult task on their part." (ibid : 7)

Rather, she claims that the difficulty is much more related to the activities that accompany the text than to the text itself if this one is within the scope of their competence. What she recommends is that the exercises should be graded, not the texts (ibid). The argument behind this is that it is quite normal – and even essential – that foreign language students get the right practice by studying selections, where even if there is indeed spme difficulty with individual word meaning, they will still be able to extract the general point of meaning.

2.4.4. Reading skills: Underlying abilities.

Reading proficiency is deemed to be, together with writing, speaking and listening, one of the cornerstones of communicative competence. Canale and Swane (1980), reported by Oxford and Scarcella (1990:93-94), propose an influential framework of underlying abilities that are assumed to sustain the whole structure of communicative competence. These abilities are applicable to each of the four skills including reading, and are identified as : **grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence**.

- **Grammatical competence** : Includes knowledge of grammar rules, vocabulary, mastery of the elementary mechanics such as the alphabet and the punctuation.

- **Sociolinguistic competence** : Refers to a certain degree of sociolinguistic maturity implying knowledge of the conventional principles and rules in relation with genre,

register, topic, etc., in order to understand the author's purpose.

- **Discourse competence** : Refers to the ability of identifying discourse rules such as markers of coherence (i.e., logical progression, logical relations, order of ideas, writer's perspective, reference to previously mentioned ideas, etc.) and of cohesion (i.e., reference which refers to all the devices that make lexical relationship within a text possible like anaphora – reference to an element previously mentioned, or cataphora – reference to one to be mentioned further; substitution; ellipsis; conjunctions; synonymy; hyponymy) and their purpose of use in order to comprehend the meaning of a text.

- **Strategic competence** : Is related to the strategies used by a reader to compensate for the gaps of his knowledge mainly through guessing. It is the clever exploitation of the clues which can be derived from the linguistic context of a sentence, from background knowledge or from early references in the passage.

2.4.5. The notion of schemata in reading.

Day and Bamford underline that the knowledge that the reader brings to the text is crucial to comprehension. Expanding the point, they explain that

" … the construction of meaning depends on the reader's knowledge of the language, the structure of texts, a knowledge of the subject of reading, and a broad-based background knowledge or world knowledge."   (1998:14)

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Cook (1989) reported by Harmer (2001:199) refers to the knowledge the reader uses to make sense of a text as 'pre-existent knowledge of the world'. Nagy and Herman (1987), mentioned by Day and Bamford remind, however, that this

> "   … knowledge does not consist simply of an unstructured set of individual facts, but rather of organized, interrelated structures or schemata."

>   (ibid : 15)

Schema theory is deemed by many researchers to play an important role in understanding how high-order comprehension processes work, for it provides some description as to how readers might organize and access knowledge (Day and Bamford, ibid). Very plainly, Harmer explains schema theory writing :

> "   Each of us carries in our heads mental representations of typical situations that we come across. When we are stimulated by particular words, discourse patterns, or contexts, such schematic knowledge is activated and we are able to recognize what we see (…) because it fits into patterns that we already know."

>   (ibid)

And to illustrate his definition, he provides an example offered by Tribble (1997) who points out that "… we recognize a letter of rejection or a letter offering a job within the first couple of lines." (ibid)

Harmer develops the point adding that in reading our schematic knowledge will "… tell us what kind of text genre we are dealing with", for recognizing, for example, "… an extract as coming from a novel, we will have expectations about the kind of text we are going to read" which will certainly be different from those which are "… aroused if we recognize a piece of text as coming from an instruction manual." (ibid)

Harmer recognizes the importance of this, for according to him,

> " … knowing what kind of text we are dealing with allows us to predict the form it may take at the text, paragraph, and sentence level. Key words and phrases alert us to the subject of a text, and this again allows us, as we read, to predict what is coming next."   (ibid)

However, the author does not miss to underline that what makes, above all, comprehension possible and communication efficient is shared schemata. One source of problems for some foreign language learners, according to him, is ascribed to the fact that

> " … they have a different shared knowledge of cultural reference and discourse patterning in their own language and culture from that in the English variety they are dealing with",   (ibid)

a reason why they will "have to work doubly hard to understand" (ibid) and improve their reading skills.

2.4.6.   Reading processes.

From a cognitive perspective in the analysis of reading, research on fluent first language reading brought out over the last few decades a number of models and hypotheses connected with the reading process. Nevertheless, researchers agree to maintain that it is unlikely that a single model will operate alone. Rather, these mental processes would quite frequently interact in order to make successful reading possible.

In the field of second and foreign language learning, experts in reading are also agreed to posit that the cognitive interactive processes are very similar to those involved in first language reading.

Alderson and Urquhart (1984) reported by Day and Bamford state in their book <u>Reading in Foreign Language</u> that they

> " … do not, and indeed find it difficult to, draw a clear distinction between first and foreign language learning."

(1998 : 15-16)

In a more technical explanation Wallace (1992:22) quoted again by Day and Bamford, notes in her book <u>Reading</u> that

> "   … we draw on similar processing strategies in the reading of all languages, even where the writing systems are very different."   (ibid)

Consequently, it may be concluded that there is no doubt about the likeness of mental processing between first and second and foreign language reading. As Day and Bamford wrap it up :

> "   … the description of the cognitive processes of fluent reading [in first language] … is also useful in capturing the essence of fluent second language reading."   (ibid)

Of the widely recognized models of the reading process, three constructs deserve attention:

A. The automatic word recognition :

This is believed to be at the basis of fluent reading and is described by Day and Bamford as 'lightning-like' and as

> "   … the initial process of accurate, rapid and automatic recognition of vocabulary"

assumed to

> "   … free the mind to use several simultaneous processes involving reasoning, knowledge of the world, and knowledge of the topic to construct meaning."

In other words, it is "independent of the context in which it occurs", according to these authors, and

> "   … it is what allows skilled readers to read with apparent ease and lack of effort, rapidly breezing through material."

> (ibid : 12)

B. Top-down processing :

This suggests that the reader achieves a comprehensive view of a text. The reader "gets a general view of the reading (…) passage by, in some way, absorbing the overall picture." (Harmer, 2001 : 201) It is a "concept-driven" process (Day and Bamford, ibid : 12) and is started with the help of the reader's schemata which will allow him to reach for appropriate expectations of what he is going to encounter in his reading. Harmer uses a pertinent metaphor to point it out and likens it to the act of "looking down on something from above – getting an overview", and to that of "looking at a forest" as opposed to "studying the individual trees within it", and which is the object of the other reading process that is the bottom-up model.

C. Bottom-up processing :

Unlike top-down processing, bottom-up reading implies the act of studying the details provided by a text in order to figure out the whole meaning. It is, therefore, a "text-driven" process (Day and Bamford, ibid : 12) and it will be – to use again Harmer's metaphorical terms – like

> "   … being in the middle of something and understanding where we are by concentrating on all the individual features."   (ibid : 201)

Thus, learning on bottom up processing implies from the reader to focus on individual language items and attempt to construct meaning by uniting these detailed elements.

Nevertheless, and as underlined earlier in this point, reading comprehension to take place will require a certain degree of combination of all these processes. Thus here and there a reader will use individual

elements to build up a whole, and now and then he will rely on his comprehensive views to interpret the details. As Harmer exemplifies it :

"   … A non-scientist attempting to read a specialist science journal finds this to be the case immediately." (ibid : 201)

2.4.7.   Skills involved.

Reading involves the use of different skills and strategies that are applied and adapted to one's aim when reading. Although categorized as a receptive skill, reading is yet a very active skill involving continuously a number of various skills. Grellet (1981 : 4) provides an interesting list of the main ones that she drew from Munby's Communicative Syllabus Design (1978). They are presented as follows:

- − Recognizing the script of a language.
- − Deducing the meaning and use of unfamiliar items.
- − Understanding explicitly stated information.
- − Understanding information when not explicitly stated.
- − Understanding conceptual meaning.
- − Understanding the communication value (function) of sentences and utterances.
- − Understanding relation within the sentence.
- − Understanding relations between the parts of a text through lexical cohesion devices.
- − Understanding cohesion between parts of a text through grammatical cohesion devices.
- − Interpreting text by going outside it.
- − Recognizing indicators in discourse.
- − Identifying the main point or important information in a piece of discourse.
- − Identifying the main idea from supporting details.

- Extracting salient points to summarize (the text, an idea, etc.). selective extraction of relevant point from a text.
- Basic reference skills.
- Skimming.
- Scanning to locate specifically required information.
- Transcoding information to diagrammatic display.

For our purpose here, we shall restrict our highlight to those skills which are deemed by reading experts to show the most significant value, which come into play most frequently in reading, and which, in fact, embrace almost all those of Munby's list.(Some of them have also been presented already – e.g. skimming, scanning; see 2.4.3. – so it will be needless to mention them again). In our concern these skills are: predicting, anticipating, inferring.

- **Predicting :** Predicting or guessing or making assumptions about what is to come next in a reading passage is thought to be a basic faculty that is activated by readers in any kind of reading style adopted (skimming, scanning, intensive, extensive). This is made possible through the application of their schemata (i.e., knowledge of the world, knowledge of the topic), and further reading will either reinforce their assumptions or invalidate them and thus require from them amendment and rectification.

- **Anticipating :** Anticipating and predicting are, in fact, very close in meaning, but there is actually a thin, yet important difference, which sets them slightly apart. This difference is explained by Grellet (1981:18) in terms of 'motivation'. This connection she makes is shown in the fact that when we are motivated, as she writes,

> " … we start reading the text prepared to find a number of things in it, expecting

to find answers to a number of questions and specific information or ideas we are interested in."

And it is this motivation, as a matter of fact, that will allow anticipation to take place through predictions which are in their turn followed by confirmation or correction.

- **Inferring :** Inferring refers to a strategy which aims at working out a solution to provide meaning to the unknown items of a text. This will be done through the use of all the available clues surrounding those unfamiliar elements including context of use, grammatical, logical, and cultural hints, in order to compensate for missing language.

  This is a very important skill to develop right from the early stages of reading, for its development will help in further levels to cope with all sorts of complexities with little or no apprehension and to succeed in working out alternative solutions and circumvent any potential difficulty.

2.4.8. Difficulties confronting reading in foreign language learning.

Reading is said to be already difficult in the first language. This is so because fluency in reading requires considerable cognitive and linguistic development. In other words, it requires the development of the mental processes (skills) and that of the internal knowledge structures including knowledge of language and that of concepts, and of social and cultural

aspects (schemata). Thus the problems that crop up to challenge foreign learners are principally problems of **input** and of **transfer**.

The problem of **input** is clearly related to words and sentence structures, but experts' opinion is divided on the subject. Texts are judged by some researchers to be more difficult for students to understand if they include longer sentences and longer words than shorter ones (Wallace, 1992 in Harmer, 2001 : 203). Other researchers will ascribe the difficulty of a text simply to the number of unfamiliar words that it contains, and for those researchers it is essential that students who hope for success in reading "have to recognize a high proportion of the vocabulary without consciously thinking about it." (Paran, 1996 in Harmer, ibid).
Out of a care for accommodation Harmer writes :

> "   It is clear that both sentence length and the percentage of unknown words play their part in a text's comprehensibility."   (ibid : 201)

As for **Transfer**, the difficulty is to be accounted for at two levels : a psychological level and a social-cultural level.

The problem at the psychological level of transfer relates to the frequent process of using knowledge from one concept to learn another concept. The fact that foreign readers tend to filter the concepts they learn in the target language through those they already know in their first language makes foreign reading perhaps more laborious than first reading since this requires compound processing sometimes, i.e., using first language to process foreign language.

Problems of social-cultural transfer occur principally by reason of the clear differences in the many social and cultural aspects that exist in different cultures. This results very often in the search for equivalents by foreign readers in their native language and culture to make out meaning. A good example of this happens with idioms and idiomatic expressions. Indeed, the understanding of the very single words that form them may not be

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sufficient to crack their meaning if knowledge of some cultural features of the target language is missing.

As a matter of fact, just as psycholinguists recognize that languages that are similar to ours may be easier for us to acquire grammatically and lexically, sociolinguists have also noted that languages based on culture similar to ours may be easier in terms of social competence.

2.4.9. Useful practices to foster foreign language reading.

As it was suggested in the previous point, achieving fluency in foreign language reading is a long and exacting task, and to aspire to efficiency requires great and constant exertion from learners. Progress and satisfaction also require from the teacher an acute sense of engagement, high expectation of his students, and a good disposition to vary his approaches and diversify his teaching practices.

There are many points to constantly bear in mind and a variety of activities to put into practice when dealing with reading in the classroom. These have to do with some qualities and requisites to take into account when approaching the task and how to proceed to make it successful.
The following are some useful hints to help smooth progress and facilitate the work.

- Make reading a silent activity. This will help students develop efficient strategies such as running one's eyes over the lines of a text to search for a specific detail or piece of information, to move forward and backward swiftly to check a point or confirm an assumption, etc.

- Vary the topics so as to cater for as many learners' interests and needs as possible and so as to expose them and have them

experience various text types. This will increase students familiarity and confidence with various genres.

− Select texts and provide activities which will offer the right amount of challenge. They must neither be too easy nor too difficult, so that tasks are made in a sense 'difficult but achievable' (Scrivener, 1994b in Harmer, 2001:207).

− Use authentic texts whenever possible with insurance, however, that they are accessible. Grellet finds that

> " The difficulty of a reading exercise depends on the activity which is required of the students rather than on the text itself, provided it remains within their general competence."

(1981 : 7)

− Tackle a text by moving from global understanding towards detailed understanding (Grellet, ibid : 6), and from overall meaning including topic, gist, general structure (e.g. main information and supporting facts, or chronological sequence of events, etc.) to function (i.e. What the text aims at : informing, convincing, warning, teaching a moral, etc.) and further on to more specific ideas, vocabulary and grammatical uses. This will help students to feel more comfortable and more confident before a text which may contain unfamiliar lexical items or structures and learn how to figure out general meaning and how to spot key ideas without apprehending too much unknown vocabulary.

− Provoke students' interest and raise their curiosity to know more about the text they are to study by, for instance, inviting them to consider only the title and attempt to anticipate the text content before they come to read it, or discuss the picture

– if any – that accompanies the reading selection. This will on the one hand enhance their skills of anticipation and inference, and on the other hand have them react with more motivation, concentration and commitment(Grellet, ibid).

– Devise meaningful activities that will on the one hand establish the communicative function of reading – for in real life, we often read and then have to write an answer to a report, a letter, etc., or do things with our reading like following directions, making a choice, solving a problem, etc. (Grellet, ibid : 9) – and on the other hand promote its inter-connection with other skills, like writing (e.g. summarizing, writing a sequel for a story, event, etc.) and speaking (reflexion on a text, discussions, debates, appreciation) (ibid : 8).

Besides, comprehension activities will have to be contrived according to the nature of the reading selection. As Grellet advises, they

> "   … should be suited to the texts and to one's reasons for reading them (…) and take into account the author's point of view, intention and tone for full understanding."

> (ibid : 9)

She does not miss also to remind

> "   … that meaning is not inherent in the text, that each reader brings his own meaning to what he reads based on what he expects from the text and his previous knowledge [and] this shows how difficult it is to test competence in reading comprehension and how great the temptation is to impose one's own interpretation on the learners."   (ibid)

– Be extremely careful when dealing with widely known techniques such as pre-teaching vocabulary. Some experts do encourage this practice but with moderation, others are skeptic as to its efficiency and advise against it.

For instance, Harmer writes :

> "   … one way of helping students is to pre-teach vocabulary (…) this removes at least some of the barriers to understanding which they are likely to encounter. However, if we want to give students practice in what it is like to tackle authentic reading (…) for general understanding then getting past words they do not understand is one of the skills they need to develop. By giving them some or all of those words we deny them that chance."   (ibid : 203)

Whereas Grellet finds that

> "   When dealing with a new text, it is better not to explain the difficult words to the learners beforehand. They would only get used to being given 'pre-processed' texts and would never make the effort to cope with a difficult passage on their own."   (ibid : 14)

The best and most efficient way therefore, is perhaps to provide a balance between the two decisions and as Harmer suggests :

> "   We need a common-sense solution to this dilemma : where students are likely to be held back unnecessarily because of three or four words, it makes sense to teach them first. Where they should be able to comprehend the text despite some unknown words, we can leave vocabulary work till later."   (ibid).

- Motivate students and endeavour to make reading an enjoyable experience. Oxford and Scarcella underline that

> "   … positive emotions and attitudes can make reading an enjoyable experience for the learner [and] teachers can exert a tremendous impact on the emotional atmosphere of the classroom."   (1990 : 97)

Day and Bamford view the teacher as

> "   … a role model of a reader for students – an active member of the classroom reading community, demonstrating what it means to be a reader and the rewards of being a reader."   (1998 : 8)

- Provide students with stimulating, informative, and relevant reading. Oxford and Scarcella observe that

> "   The reading material excites the learners and enables them to extend their knowledge."   (ibid).

- Give students the chance to express their ideas and show what positive contribution they are capable of bringing to the reading lesson. Oxford and Scarcella note that

> "   Discussion before reading and discussions and question-answer sessions after the reading stimulate high-level thinking, which in turn whets the students' appetite to learn more."   (ibid).

- Encourage students to read as much as possible on their own out of the classroom, and keep driving into their heads the infallible rule that the more language they expose themselves to the more they will learn and improve.

2.5. Drama Texts as Reading Material: Advantages and Utility.

If we attempt to throw some light on the nature of dramatic texts and activities in terms of language practice in the classroom, a possibly suggestive and suitable way to do so could be to draw a comparison between drama and another close technique of acknowledged interest and wide use in language learning referred to as '**roleplay**'. Although the two techniques address perhaps different skills – our concern here being with drama addressing most principally the reading skills, whereas roleplay has much to do with the oral skills and, at a lesser degree, with writing – yet, and because recent research recognizes the inevitable inter-connection of skills, each of them enhancing the development of the others, then the reading skills may perfectly cross over to listening and speaking in class if discussion over the reading material is to precede or follow, and to writing as well if comprehension is checked and if analysis is required in a written form. In other words, this parallel we are drawing between drama and role play is not of any intruding or confusing kind, but simply practical and quite acceptable since it may prove to be of some relevance in the present explanation. So, this detail being clarified, one first thing to say is that drama and role play share more similarities than they present differences, although some differences are of a salient order. Gilian Porter Ladousse discussing role play writes :

> "   Roleplay belongs to the category of language learning techniques sometimes referred to as **low input-high output**. This means that the teacher-centred presentation phase of the lesson is very short and not all the same as it would be for a controlled practice drill. After a brief introduction, the students plunge into an activity in which accomplishing the task is more important than using the exact word, in which fluency predominates over accuracy. Obviously, the language the students use does not come out of a top hat at the wave of a magic wand and must have been acquired at an earlier stage'."

<div align="right">(1987 : 9)</div>

If we look at this rather long quote (we have cited Ladousse at length so that her account includes some points of essential relevance to serve our comparison), we may indeed note that role play and drama are virtually two opposite techniques in view of their inherent characters, their modes of implementation and the types of outcome they are likely to yield after practice. For example, if role play is presented as a low input-high output technique (i.e., only an example of a situation to role play is presented to students followed by a brief instruction as to how to proceed with expectation from them to generate personal and substantial output to show their abilities), drama would, clearly, be considered as a reverse one (i.e., high input-low output, in view of the fact that a play or even an extract is already a finished product), and if with role play students are advised not to care much about the accuracy of the language but rather concentrate on fluency, with drama, as can be understood, accuracy is already there.

Yet, and despite these differences, some significant common affinities can be identified. For instance, both techniques can be task-based (i.e., accompanied with exercises and activities to open the way and help gain greater insights into language) in order to encourage involvement and reduce inhibition, and both techniques include attempts by the teacher to reassure the shy and anxious students that there is nothing to worry about. Moreover, both role play and drama aim at overcoming feelings of uselessness and reticence as to language practice and at developing satisfactory communicative abilities.

Besides, the mask that both role play and drama can supply students with help greatly those who are worried, reserved and unwilling to partake in conversations about themselves to feel easy and participate properly, for drama and role play can liberate them from the stress of direct implication of their personality, lessen the threats that real communication may occasion if they are carried out in an atmosphere free from tension, and assist them efficiently in gradually building up self-confidence and interest

in learning a foreign language on the one hand, and in promoting personal growth on the other.

We all know that personal development which generates satisfaction is usually synonymous with achievement and success, and one chief criterion for success actually is, for certain, motivation."I find that motivation is vital in the Success of learning a foreign language." (Nunan, 1989 : 49)

This is rather a statement which leaves no doubt as to the momentous role that motivation plays in the leaps towards success. Nunan further suggests that :

> "   Our basic senses – sight, smell, sound, touch and taste – should be stimulated too when we learn a language. This will make the learning experience a very personal one and we will not feel somewhat detached from the language. Most of the time it's reading ink marks from the book or worksheet – it's too 'cognitive'. I feel it's more exciting to touch something besides ink marks and learn a language simultaneously. In that way, we can relate to the language in a more natural and ultimate way and we might remember new words/expressions better".

> (ibid)

In analysing Nunan's words, we are readily inclined to include drama among those practices in the classroom which do stimulate the learners' senses and bring excitement and meaningfulness to their learning. This is all the more true when we consider the fact that when dealing with dramatic activities, say, by reading or acting out an episode or scene, all the participant's senses are on the alert and there is scarcely room for passiveness. Being fully involved implies feeding consistently one's motivation and a motivation that is kept up steady will without a doubt open out opportunities for improvement and perspectives of success.

Moreover, dramatic activities in the classroom can turn out to be a good chance for learners to broaden the social interaction dimension of the language they are striving to acquire. In an introduction about social interaction activities, William Littlewood stresses this necessity:

> "   Social interaction activities add a further dimension to the functional activities (…) : that of a more clearly defined social context. This means that learners must pay greater attention to the *social* as well as the *functional* meanings that language conveys. It also means that the activities approximate more closely to the kind of communication situation encountered outside the classroom, where language is not only a functional instrument, but also a form of social behaviour."

<div align="right">(1981, 1998 : 43) (author's italics)</div>

With the support of this requirement, it would be quite admissible to suggest that drama in the classroom can generously and adequately contribute to strengthen this social dimension of the language which is agreed to be of supreme importance in the shaping of appropriate language behaviours. Consequently, exploiting drama to look at some social implications that language has in social interaction may be a useful means to heighten learners' awareness of this determinant aspect of the language. Very likely, if there is a feeling in learners that the language they are manipulating is not of a synthetic type that is hardly probable in the real world, but rather of a lively kind, then their worries of useless and impractical learning can be reduced sensitively and their motivation to know more and have more can be spurred on agreeably.

Furthermore, and beyond these considerations which have direct implications on learners' language learning and development in the classroom, there is also the underlying and extra opportunity that is suggested to learners who wish to acquaint themselves and develop their

imagination (if they wish to devote time for that privately, of course) with the particular reading of plays which is, presumably, different in certain aspects from that of novels. Wallice and Shepherd draw attention to this difference :

> "   For many of us the business of reading a play is rather unsatisfactory because we continually have the sense that what we are looking at is only words on a page and that those words have yet to come alive in the mouths of real human beings standing on a stage. It is much more pleasant and satisfying to read a good novel, because the novel is designed to be words on a page. Open a novel and you've got everything you need in front of you ; open a play text and you have to start imagining the things that aren't there – how it might look and sound, how an audience might react."

<div align="right">(1998 : 1)</div>

We may assume thus, that those learners, who were possibly not in the know of the virtues of drama as a support in language learning and whose interest is suddenly triggered, are likely to take some pain to look more closely into this literary kind and perhaps find, why not, a new source of inspiration to enrich their living and to help them fulfil themselves.

3. Experiment Design.

3.1. Teaching experiment and research procedure.

In conducting this research project we appealed to the collaboration of 2 groups of students, one of which was the **experimental group** and the other the **control group**. The experimental group was the group with which we implemented the teaching experiment through the innovative material, that is the teaching of reading comprehension through drama texts and activities. The control group was submitted to an ordinary formal teaching of reading that was carried out through the use of the various traditional well-known material ranging from accounts of stories and literary passages to informative texts and articles. In other words, this group did not receive the content that was experienced by the experimental group.

Nevertheless, and simply to avoid misunderstanding, we will not omit to underline that our assumption about the usefulness of including in our classes the study of drama texts among the reading activities does not on any account mean that we should teach reading only through this genre if we want to create interest in our students and improve their competencies. Our point is that we should only not miss to cater for it in our teaching activities and offer room for such exploitation. It is a matter of course that this is to be done in absolute conjunction with all the other text genres and types. Simply, the problem we were faced with and the reason why we did not provide any other reading content for the experimental group was that if we did so, this might have very likely distorted the subsequent results and we might have failed to check what we intended to check and substantiate our point of view. This is so, because internal validity (i.e. whether the research design is such that we can confidently claim that the outcomes are a result of the experimental treatment) would have been put under threat. As a consequence, telling whether the learners' ultimate production was indeed due to their exposure to drama texts and

accompanying activities,or whether it had been influenced by their learning through some other kinds of reading material would not have been really permissible. So, for the purpose of ruling out any kind of influence and remaining impartial in our work, we found ourselves with no other choice than having our whole teaching experiment with the experimental group based on no other reading type but the drama type.

In addition, an important step we took right at the outset of the experiment was to gauge the learners' abilities in reading comprehension of both groups so that a general appreciation of their respective levels was made possible. This was done through what is known as **pre-experiment test**. It was a test in reading comprehension of a standard type which included reading selections that were accompanied by a set of exercises and whose results were to serve as a primary data base for the further comparisons with the final outcomes.

We believed that to be able to obtain a reliable and objective assessment of learners' performance and purport to a relevant analysis and interpretation of their outcomes, it was important that a measurement of their differences should be completed. This would considerably help to determine where and how they benefited most from the learning they received.

3.2. Description and rationale of the experiment teaching content.

The teaching content in this study was essentially based on the exploitation of some play extracts the express purpose of which was, on the whole, to enhance reading comprehension through some widening of both learners capacities of interpreting meaning and their faculties of making assumptions and anticipations, and also of drawing inferences and conclusions.

Besides, considerable opportunities were offered to students to foster effectively their building of **vocabulary knowledge**. Convinced of the fact that vocabulary is indeed a very important factor for text comprehension and recognized as both a determinant and a difficult aspect of language (Harmer, 2001; Grellet, 1981; Day and Bamford, 1998) (see pp. 51, 101), we proceeded in such a way as to give it due consideration in our teaching experiment. Consequently, we were not sparing in affording our learners as much practice as possible, and in raising their awareness of the importance of its development. In the meantime, and with the view of making global understanding of texts sufficiently permissible, some **grammatical features** of particular interest appearing in the extracts were highlighted, and knowledge of some basic structural rules (e.g. word function, tenses, prefixes, sentence structure) was strengthened.

Similarly a fairly good number of **discourse components** of specific import, like coherent elements (e.g. logical progression, logical relations, order of ideas, reference to previously mentioned ideas) and also cohesive referents, whose role is to ensure a correct interpretation of meaning by establishing the semantic relations between certain elements of a text, were emphasized (e.g. reference through pronouns, synonyms, antonyms, ellipsis, conjunctions). These we believed were essential components to be spotlighted and attended to. In fact, and as stressed in Canale and Swane's (1980) authoritative framework of underlying abilities proposed to support

the concept of communicative competence (see 2.2.4. pp. 38, 39), discourse competence is together with the grammatical, the sociolinguistic and the strategic ones, a very important column of the said concept. Thus, granting it deserved attention in our teaching was simply needful.

On the level of **comprehension of general meaning**, we sought to put adequate accent on the recognition and interpretation of main ideas, key facts, and also implied meaning. The fairly appreciable practice the students received was focussed chiefly on how to relevantly identify the prominent ideas of an extract, how to construct specific meaning by exploiting all of the given information and details of distinct interest in the text, and how to best describe and summarize some central facts without, yet, taking back the very words of the text.

In addition, and knowing how plentiful drama scripts are of language subtleties, peculiar allusions and messages, unusual witticism, and indirect statements, a special effort was produced to draw students' attention on the significance of perceiving the very frequent figurative meanings encountered in texts, and to sensitize them on the necessity of going sometimes beyond the expressive lines to touch the covert implications and hidden intentions.

Seven extracts had been selected with this end in view. These extracts are from:

- Lower Depths,   (by Tunde Ikoli)

- Hello and Goodbye,   (by Athol Fugard)

- The Dumb Waiter,   (by Harold Pinter)

- The Oyster and the Pearl,   (by William Saroyan)

- People in the Wind,   (by William Inge)

- The Other Player,   (by Owen G. Arno)

- Return to Dust,   (by George Bamber)

The three first extracts (Lower Depths, Hello and Goodbye, The Dumb Waiter) and their corresponding activities were suggested for classroom use by Gillian Lazar (1993) (see 2.3.2. for detailed account about the use of plays with foreign learners). However, a personal touch of our own initiative was brought to the activities to make the exploitation of the extracts as advantageous as possible. The four other extracts (The Oyster and the Pearl, People in the Wind, The Other Player, Return to Dust) were of our own choice and decision.

For reasons of practical and smooth training, the extracts ranged from short and simple to longer ones. They were graded so out of a mere care for progressive initiation and practice, and each of them was followed by a set of activities and tasks of various kinds meant to address a large number of skills involved in reading and which we think to be of salient importance in the development of acceptable reading competence.

The reason why we think that these selected extracts were substantial and meaningful enough to make their further exploitation rich and interesting is that, firstly, the selection was based on the rational belief that if students' interest is triggered rightly and if they sense that the challenge is appropriate and stimulating, then this should normally bring about the right commitment that would lead to achievement and satisfaction. The notion of '**manufacturing success**' through appropriate challenge is pinpointed by Geremy Harmer who writes on this issue:

> "   … by getting the level of challenge right (in terms of language, text, and tasks) we can ensure that students are successful. […] Each time we offer them a challenging text which we help them to read successfully, we dilute the negative effect of post experiences, and create ideal conditions for future engagement."   (2001 : 208).

Secondly, we set our choice on these extracts in accordance with the **recommendations** that in using plays or extracts of plays in a foreign

context of language learning, the best would be to make use of small contemporary drama or comedy (Via, 1971, in Kral, 1994) (see introduction – p. 2) introducing some worldwide existential issues like family relationships, human conflicts, moral problems, social predicaments, and others, likely to provoke students' readiness to get committed actively in the discussions, tasks and activities they are assigned to during their study. Lazar also writes on this account:

> "   The human conflicts, moral dilemmas or political issues communicated in a play engage students intellectually and emotionally, and can provide a valuable source of discussion."   (1993 : 138).

Thirdly, the selection of the extracts was arranged so as to include different uses of **varieties of language**. These are presented not only in the conversational form that is typical to drama scripts, but also – as it is always provided at the beginning of a script – in a descriptive one when this serves the purpose of describing, for example, scenes, settings, or backgrounds to plays. In other words, these varieties are simply adequate exponents to the most frequently used registers of language, which are:

- dialectal/informal language as used by lower social class individuals (e.g. Hello and Goodbye, Lower Depths, The Dumb Waiter, People in the Wind). It features short and very simple sentences whose economy and brevity combine to increase the sense of action, urgency, panic, or tension;

- standard/neutral language as practised by lower middle class people and much adequate for light comedies (e.g. The Oyster and the Pearl);

- formal/elaborate language appropriate for serious matters and formal attitudes, relationships and context (e.g. The Other Player, Return to Dust).

As was pointed earlier (see p. 28), coverage of the different registers is essential if we purport to heighten our students' awareness of this important aspect of language. Knowing about some features related to the pragmatics of language (i.e., choice of language according to the degree of formality of a situation, social status, setting, relationships among individuals) can be much relevant to their comprehension and can add insight to their understanding of the language.

Lastly, and regarding the **grammatical structures,** we proceeded in such a way that all of the important or recurrent grammatical items offered in the selected texts would be considered, and that as many features and rules connected to appropriateness of use as possible would be sorted and either introduced (if students were not yet familiar with them) or recycled in context for a better grasp. This included:

- the use of the modals 'can' and 'could' (Extract 1).

- the use of 'would' as conditional and 'would' used to describe repeated actions in the past (Extract 2).
- identification of function of words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs) (Extracts 1, 6, 7).
- coordinate conjunctions and the purpose they fulfil (Extract 4).
- identification of short forms of verbs in various tenses (Extract 5).
- formation of antonyms with the means of prefixes (un – im – il – in – ir – dis) (Extract 7).

(See Teaching Content – Appendix 1 – for detailed specifications).

In any case, the study of structures was not at the core of our purpose, for our purpose had to do more with improving comprehension and interpretation of meaning, and on a wider scope, of reading competence than with grammar. Time restrictions also did not permit a comprehensive and in-depth look into grammar, but we did not miss to

allocate some of our time to that and draw students' attention to all of the interesting grammatical items included in the extracts that were studied.

As for the **activities** designed for the practice, these varied from one extract to another and were contrived in such a way as to foster as many involved skills in reading as possible, most of which were directly considered from Munby's (1978) renowned list (see exhaustive list, pp. 44, 45). They also answered the request that reading activities should be devised meaningfully, so that they would both establish the communicative function of reading and foster its inter-connection with other skills, like writing, when students are asked to summarize for instance, and speaking, when they reflect on a text and discuss its issues (Grellet, 1981 : 8, 9).

Over and above, they were constructed in compliance with the recognized phases that should normally sustain any effective reading session, i.e. the pre- and post-reading phases, and were prepared in such a way as to encompass all of the reading skills mentioned also under 1.4. (see also Appendix 1 for a detailed presentation).

To begin with, and as far as the **introduction phase** is concerned, this was actually, allowed due account in our successive reading sessions, and a lot of care was put into its progress. As a matter of fact, and as we wrote earlier (see p. 49), students' interest and curiosity to know more about what they are to read have to be provoked and raised if adequate commitment and concentration are hoped for(Grellet, 1981:6).

Therefore, giving learners a fair chance in the pre-reading phase (and also, of course, in the post-one) to voice their opinions about some matters and demonstrate the good things they can contribute in a text study is much encouraged in the reading class. Oxford and Scarella (1990 : 97) (see p. 52) view that discussions prior and after reading provoke high-level thinking which will, accordingly, arouse the students' eagerness to learn

more. This, we think, was catered for much suitably during our classes, and real involvement by many students was noticed, much to our content.

As an illustration to the practice we initiated, the learners were, for instance as a warm-up for the extract 'Lower Depths', called to discuss the title and speculate about what it suggested to them in order to stimulate their sense of anticipation. Taken separately, the meaning of the two words of this title was certainly known to them; only, they were far to know that the allusion was to the poor districts or slums of a town. The same thing was experimented with the title of Extract 7 'Return to Dust', where students were largely agreed on its connotation with the death of someone or the extinction of something, and were not the least suspicious of the fact that it had to do with an incredible scientific experiment, whose objective was to shrink a human being to a very tiny dimension, and which turns to a tragedy after a laboratory accident. What was noticed here is that this early unexpected disclosure really whetted students' curiosity and sparked off some really enthusiastic reading. This shows fairly clearly how useful and stimulating such starting activity can be for a favourable continuation of the work. Then, students were, for example, exposed right from beginning to the extract which presented some missing lines that were given separately in a sort of jumbled way, and were asked to re-arrange them in the text. This kind of activity was meant to benefit their knowledge of cohesion and coherence and it surely added to their faculty of understanding and interpreting. It was eventually extended to some useful discussion about the reasons which prompted their arrangement, and the relations between the lines of the dialogue which helped them to put everything in its right place. And this was, actually, fairly manageable and much profitable to them owing to the simplicity of the dialogue and its question/answer construction.

Another way of approaching an extract was – as this was the case with extract 2 from 'Hello and Goodbye' (see Appendix 1) – to anticipate the

surface issue of the extract and start a discussion about the differences and conflicts that could take place in a home among individuals of a same family and which quite often would break out to disrupt the peacefulness of home life. Learners were requested also to account for some of their personal experiences, and what they usually did on their sides to relieve the tension when they were confronted to such situation. Here again it was noticed that students were really excited to talk about their own experiences in relation with the issue, and it seemed that they were really carried away by the opportunity.

With regards to **vocabulary**, new items and phrases were taught principally through exercises. In our practice, however, we cautiously avoided to set about it by pre-teaching the vocabulary. This is, actually, one technique among others advocated for easier understanding of texts, but it does not seem to meet with general consent amid classroom specialists, for it is deemed to get students into the undesirable habit of 'pre-processed' texts (Grellet, 1981 : 14), and to deprive them of a fair chance to tackle 'authentic reading' and learn how to cope with lexical difficulties and surmount them on their own (Harmer, 2001 : 203) (see detailed viewpoints, p. 51). Consequently, we opted for the post-alternative, and always proceeded methodically so as to make sure that collective check would be run only after the job had been completed individually. This was done, for example, through matching of words with their appropriate definitions (Extracts 1, 2, 5), matching of words with their antonyms (Extract 7), individual use of a dictionary (Extracts 4, 6), identifying items fulfilling a particular purpose and using them in sentences of their own to show that their use was well understood (Extracts 2, 4), identifying items fulfilling a particular purpose and explaining such use (Extract 1), detecting the formal/informal character of the language used in the extract and justifying it by picking words and phrases (Extracts 2, 5), or completing a description of some of the facts and events of an extract with adequate words and phrases (Extract 6).

In terms of **content**, **ideas** and **key facts** including topic, setting, atmosphere, characters, moods and issue(s) involved in the extracts, these were, similarly, considered first through activities and then discussed during the correction phases. As we wrote above (see p. 63), improving reading comprehension and competence was a central object in the teaching experiment of our study. Accordingly, helping students to extract and construct meaning and, subsequently, account for it concisely and pertinently, was a primary concern in our practice. Likewise and as we put it earlier, suggested meanings conveyed by some smart hints, tactful insinuations, points of pertinent irony, indirect reproaches, puns, refined opinions, and figurative expressions, were also granted particular interest, for we know how important a matter this is in shaping thorough ability of interpretation. Quite properly thus, a good deal of various activities were arranged to achieve this goal.

To illustrate, students were, for example in activity 3 following Extract 4 (The Oyster and the Pearl), handed a sort of data sheet to be completed with information including the kind of play, setting, names and occupations of the two main characters, the particularities about their attitudes, their social status, and their temperaments and moral traits. In other instances, students were encouraged to infer some content meaning not explicitly stated and to draw some conclusions by going outside the text, i.e., beneath the surface meaning. This was done through answering questions carefully designed to direct students in their search for the concealed meanings and allusions implied in the extracts (e.g. Activity 4, Extract 1; Activity 4, Extract 2; Activity 2, Extract 3; Activity 2, Extract 4; Activity 5, Extract 5; Activity 3, Extract 6; Activity 5, Extract 7).

Or, students were made sensitive to the importance of recognizing every piece of key fact necessary for the construction of adequate meaning, and were made to demonstrate their abilities by providing detailed answers to some particular queries. This occurred, for instance, in Activity 5, Extract 4 and Activity 6, Extract 7. On top of this, and as this happens much

frequently in any reading class, we should not forget all those casual bits of discussion that would come up offhand and unprepared during the lessons, when a student would, for instance, make a query about something that still puzzles him or that he finds ambiguous. There were quite a few instances suchlike in our repeated experiences and they were always welcome when they brought about some additional understanding and a new interest.

As to gist, this was, generally, immediately surrounded at the start of the comprehension practice stage, so that students become sufficiently confident to proceed safely with the deeper and more complex points that were to follow. This exercise was mainly carried out either with the means of a question(s) of general aspect (e.g. what is the situation about? What is the general point of this dialogue? What does the scene introduce?) (in Extracts 1, 4, 6, 7), or through the 'True/False/Unavailable type of activities as was the case with Extracts 2, 3, 5. Nevertheless, it must be pointed out here that the quality of this kind of practice was always heightened with the specific request from students to back up their decisions with appropriate justifications when the answers were other than 'True. This was, understandably, done to make sure that their answers were not a simple result of pure luck, but the demonstration of acceptable understanding. (For broader description, see teaching content – Appendix 1).

Ultimately, the **closing stage** was always enhanced with some follow-ups and wrapping activities where learners were made to express some of their opinions about the attitudes or values raised in the extract they have studied. Accordingly, they were called to either work individually or in pairs, and write sequels of their own imagination and contrivance and which they were asked to present to their mates by the end. This practice was meant to give students the fair opportunity to demonstrate their ability to create and provide a suitable and likely continuation to a scene on the one hand, and on the other, to reinforce their skill of writing simple dialogues or small accounts based on a given

situation. For example, at the end of the study of Extract 2 (Hello and Goodbye), students were requested to write out as an extention activity a short continuation to the dialogue in which they were supposed to bring out either of two possible turns of events suggested to them in the direction of the task. The many productions we collected from them were really surprising, not to say amazing for some of them, and we were much satisfied at the effort and seriousness they displayed in writing such fairly good dialogues (see exhaustive comment and samples, pp. 139 – 143). The same was experienced with Extract 6, and again about the same achievements were acknowledged. Another kind of assignment was implemented with Extract 3 where students were asked to write this time a short imaginative summary in which they were assigned to produce an original end to the situation brought about in the extract. Here as well, real promising attempts were made and some very adequate paragraphs were constructed. In other cases, when the extract was taken from a short one-act-play, copies of the rest of the play were handed to students to be read at home, and either a discussion during the following class, or a small written commentary as a home assignment, were planned as a closing step. This was done with the 'Oyster and the Pearl', 'People in the Wind', 'The Other Player', and 'Return to Dust'. Finally, and to give the dramatic basic character of the extracts its due part and, thus, fairly offer room to some 'performance', some loud reading of the extracts was always properly initiated by the end of a study. In this concluding phase, particular emphasis was placed on some para-linguistic features of rightful importance, such as appropriate intonation, articulation and naturalness of speech. (See Appendix 1 including the extracts and the activities that accompanied them for a better idea on the various procedures we followed in our exploitation.).

3.3. Population.

The subjects were students that composed two groups of freshmen at the Department of English Studies of the Faculty of Letters and Languages, Bouzareah – Algiers. These students were freshly registered in the first year of a course made of four and preparing the majors for a 'Licence' (B.A.) in English. They were supposed to have just passed their 'Baccalaureat' and were assumed to be at an intermediate level of proficiency in English.

3.4. Time span.

The teaching experiment lasted 40 hours at the rate of 2 hours per weekly session, that is 20 weeks on the whole.

3.5. Data collection procedure and instruments.

The very object of our study, as already stated, was to examine the effect that a drama-based reading practice may have on learners' reading skills.

Equally, the experimental method on which this study was based is what Brown refers to as 'differential-group experiment' :

> "   … the experiment may take numerous forms, but most commonly, it is in the form of a differential-group or intervention experiment. A *differential-group experiment* might compare the performance of two groups on a test : one group that obviously has the construct and another group that clearly does not …"
>
> (Brown 1988, in Nunan 1992:17) (author's italics)

And if we model our present research principles on Brown's framework (1988), we will readily notice that they are for the most part in utter agreement with his requirements. Brown supports his conception of good experimental research with 5 essential qualities which are: systematicity, logic, tangibility, replicability, and reductivity. Consequently, we can purport to say that our project was indeed:

- **Systematic**, which means, according to Brown, that it follows clear procedural rules.

- **Logical**, i.e. it proceeds in a step-by-step progression with respect to the 3 components of research that are: question formation, data-collection, and analysis.

- **Tangible**, i.e. data are collected from the real world.

- **Replicable**, i.e. an independent researcher should be able to reproduce it under similar conditions, for it displays maximal external reliability.

- Now our hope is that it is **reductive** by the end, in the sense that it should be able, always according to Brown, to reduce the inevitable confusion that language and language teaching present quite often, by establishing some patterns and relationship to explain some facts and certain phenomena.

Thus data collection in the present study was carried out by means of an elicitation procedure relying on 2 tests: a pre-experiment test and a post-experiment test. The **pre-experiment test**, as introduced previously (see 3.1.), served the purpose of appraising the level of proficiency of both control and experimental groups and was administered a week before the beginning of the teaching experiment. The **post-experiment test** was administered at the termination of the experiment and was administered **twice,** at an interval of 1 week. This testing method known as **test-retest** is widely used by researchers and testers in order to have two sets of scores for efficient comparison and thus ensure a maximal reliability of the scores produced by the subjects tested. However, and as any method, it can have some weakness. Hughes warns us against that writing:

> "   The drawbacks are not difficult to see. If the second administration of the test is too soon after the first, then subjects are likely to recall items and their responses to them, making the same responses more likely and the reliability spuriously high. If there is too long a gap between administrations, then learning (or forgetting!) will have taken place, and the coefficient will be lower than it should be. However long the gap, the subjects are unlikely to be very motivated to take the same test twice, and this too is likely to have a depressing effect on the coefficient."

(1989 : 32)

and suggests that :

> "   These effects are reduced somewhat by the use of two different forms of the same test (the *alternate forms* method)."   (author's italics) (ibid)

but agrees to recognize that : "However, alternate forms are often

        simply not available."   (ibid)

To resolve this problem in our present study, we adopted the **test-retest approach** using the **alternate form of the post-test** with as much relevance and objectivity as common sense and perspicacity permitted in order to guard the reliability of the testing against any threat.

Another problem of some sensitive nature that we were aware of and that we apprehended in the assessment of students' outcomes at the end of the experimental teaching through a post-practice test lied in the risk that the test items would be too partial to the experimental teaching content and unjust to the traditional one. We believe that if such was the case, this would give an unfair advantage to the former to the detriment of the latter. Nunan (1992 : 186) draws attention to the dilemma that a researcher may be confronted to at the construction of the appropriate assessment tools when the concern is to demonstrate the relative merits of a teaching programme, and on the danger of showing a preferential treatment to one teaching content at the expense of the other when it comes to assess the subjects taking part in a differential-group experiment through testing.

The compromise which seems to meet acceptance and agreement according to the author is inspired by Beretta and Davies (1985) who advocate a strategy which consists in devising a test which would contain at the same time programme-specific and programme-neutral measures. (ibid :186). In this way, neither of the two groups would be in a position of disadvantage in comparison with the other and neither group would claim superiority on the other in terms of scores because both would have somehow enjoyed some advantage.

Again here, we tried to be as much sensitive as possible to these considerations and we exerted ourselves to be as much careful and fair as possible in our contrivance of the test in such a way that the validity and

reliability of the research would be more than less safeguarded and so that the pre- and post-practice assessment data obtained would be adequate with our investigation and would effectively contribute to entail the analysis that would hopefully enable us to answer the question we initially asked.

3.6. Test construction and format: Rationale.

There was specification in the previous section (3.5.) that in the experiment sustaining the present study, 2 tests were employed to assess the performance of the students taking part in it: a pre- and post-experiment tests (for further description and explanation, see 3.7., 3.8., 3.10., 3.11., and Appendices 2 and 4). These tests, whose primary role was to secure the validity and reliability of the research, served the purpose of gathering data in the form of scores which were to be subsequently analysed and discussed in our hope that their analysis and discussion in our paper was of genuine assistance in enabling us to collect the evidence we needed to back our original claim that an efficient inclusion of dramatic texts and activities in the foreign language classroom is much apt to entail improvement of the reading skills.

These tests were constructed and formatted in such a way as to include in their content elements that would contribute as fairly as possible to respond to the experiment objective. The objective of the teaching experiment being the earnest attempt to promote the development of the reading skills in an EFL context, test items and activities were carefully selected and contrived in order to address this aim adequately.

The tests were essentially assumed to test reading competence; thus they took into account an as adequate balance as possible between discrete-point tasks (i.e. testing of one element at a time, e.g. scanning a passage which contains many discrete pieces of information) and integrative tasks (i.e. tasks which require from the learner the combination of several

language elements, for example, a summary account in which abilities in both language use and interpretation of meaning are shown).

Also, and for the preservation of acceptable reliability, learners were presented with more than one passage, and tasks included enough items so that achievement is really representative of their competence. Thus the format for the two tests was as follows:

3.6.1.   Pre-experiment test:

This was simply meant to establish the general level of learners' proficiency in reading before the launching of the experiment. Three reading selections were arranged with this end in view, and each of them was accompanied by a set of activities highlighting the following techniques: Defining lexical items, showing comprehension of key points, showing adequate interpretation by summarizing main ideas, showing understanding of details, demonstrating summary skills by accounting for comprehension of main points, guessing meaning of words from context, and identification of referents.

What was meant primarily by the pre-test as mentioned before was to obtain useful indications about learners' general abilities in both the experimental and the control groups. Thus we could safely assume that the selected samples were sufficiently representative for the purpose of this initial assessment. The decision about the number of texts included (i.e. three of them) was dictated mostly by concerns of reliability. Hughes provides this recommendation towards successful test construction in reading and writes:

> "   In order to obtain acceptable reliability, include as many passages as possible in a test, thereby giving candidates a good number of fresh starts."   (1989:119)

- **Description of the pre-experiment test:**

The pre-experiment test consists of 3 reading selections followed by a set of exercises based on some of the various techniques described under 3.6.1.. The texts which are of different kinds and which feature different topics are fairly short.

- **Scoring:**

The three sets of tasks following reading are scored out of 20 marks which is, in fact, the scoring scale on use in our educational system.

- **Testing techniques and items :**
− **Part 1 :** (7 marks)
  1. Matching of words and phrases with their definitions to check knowledge of vocabulary.   (8 items)
  2. True / False / Information not given/answers to check understanding of general meaning and key points.   (5 items)
  3. Complete answers to check ability of reporting briefly about comprehension and interpretation of mean ideas.   (2 items)
− **Part 2 :** (6.5 marks)
  1. Right / Wrong / We don't know / answers to check comprehension of details.   (7 items)
  2. Full answers to check ability of comprehending and summarizing main ideas.   (2 items)
− **Part 3 :** (6.5 marks)

  Agree / disagree / answers to check various aspects of reading ability including : vocabulary, referents, understanding of key points, understanding of details.   (13 items)

- **Timing:**

2 hours are allotted for this test.

Average time for the treatment of each part : 40 minutes.

3.6.2. Post-experiment test:

As it was underlined under point 3.5., the danger of such post-experiment practice test lied in the likelihood that its items would provide an unfair advantage to the experimental group at the expense of the control one. The fair measure, therefore, and as suggested by Beretta and Davies (1985) (see 3.5., 3.10.), was to include two selections: one which was experimental content-specific and the other neutral. The post-test and retest were alike in format, and each of them included 2 reading passages each of which was followed by a set of exercises based on the same following techniques: Defining lexical items in context of use, showing understanding of general meaning and key facts, and demonstrating ability of comprehending and accounting for main ideas and implied meaning. A detailed scoring key with a clear assignment of marks for each set and for each response is provided in what follows.

• **Description of the Post-experiment test:**

The post-test and the retest are alike in format. They consist of 2 reading selections each, of which one is a dialogue (i.e. programme-specific) and the other a narrative (programme-neutral), and are followed by a set of exercises based on some of the techniques introduced under 3.6.2.

- **Scoring:**

The two sets of exercises following the reading selections in each of the tests are scored out of 20 marks, which is the official scoring scale on use in our educational system.

- **Testing techniques and items :**

The techniques used in both tests are the same as understood for maximal validity and reliability. Each test includes the following:

– **Part 1 : Techniques and items following the dialogue :** (10 marks)

1. Matching of words and phrases with their definitions to check knowledge of vocabulary.   (8 items)

2. True / False / Information not given answers to check understanding of general meaning and key facts.   (8 items)

3. Complete answers to check ability of accounting for main ideas and implied meaning.   … (3 items)

- **Part 2 : Techniques and items following the narrative:** (10 marks)

1. Matching of words and phrases with their definitions to check knowledge of vocabulary.   (8 items)

2. True/False/Information not given answers + picking of sentences from text for justification of points to check understanding of general meaning and key facts.   (8 items)

3. Selection of adequate adjectives + complete answers to check ability of interpreting and accounting for main ideas and implied meaning.   (4 items)

- **Timing:**

2 hours are allotted for this test.

Average time for the treatment of each part : 60 minutes.

3.7. Experiment and Administration of Tests.

The experiment started in early January 2002 and lasted until mid June. On the whole, it was carried out in fairly acceptable conditions and the 40 hours of timespan that were planned to be covered were completed safely within time limit.

Two groups from the first year took part in the experiment as it was intended, and they included 24 students in the experiment group and 26 others in the control group, who attended the experiment regularly from beginning to end and who sat for all the tests (3 in all) designed to assess and compare their performances. The experiment was opened by a pre-experiment test whose purpose was to help us establish the general level of these new students at university and have an insight into their abilities in reading, and was concluded with a post-test and then a re-test for efficient comparison and reliability of scores. (see Appendix 2 and 4 for tests).

3.8. Pre-testing.

Once the pre-test was administered and students' papers marked, it was noticed first that the means for the two groups were very close: **11.45** for the first and **11.64** for the second; and so were the standard deviations (i.e. the way the scores are distributed around the mean): **2.02** for the first and **2.37** for the second.

Basing our process and judgement on Nunan's sound reminder and inferential statement that

> "   … it is crucial that we have information on the central tendency (in the form of mean scores) and dispersion of the scores (in the form of standard deviations). While it is clear that two sets of scores with widely differing means will have come from samples from different populations, it is also the case that scores with widely differing standard deviations would also indicate that they are from different populations. We need both types of information because scores can have very similar means, but quite different standard deviations, which would indicate that they come from different populations."

(1992 : 29) (Author's parentheses).

we were in a position to admit that the two groups were much similar in performance and that the students forming them were distributed much equitably.

Nevertheless, it was decided that the group with the slight advantage in the mean score **(11.64)** would be the control group and the other with the lower mean **(11.45)**, the experimental one. (see Table A – Appendix 3). This was done out of considerations of objectivity and credibility to our experiment, for if any assumption there was by the end of the experiment that the experimental treatment enhanced and improved anything, then it would have to be demonstrated with the group showing the "lower" aptitude, although in our present case we could not really speak of any serious gap and real difference in aptitudes, the means and standard deviations being virtually the same.

Experimental Group (24 Students)			Control Group (26 Students)		
Category of Scores*	Number of Students	Percentage	Category of Scores*	Number of Students	Percentage
Below 10	4	16.6%	Below 10	6	23%
Between 10-12	11	45.8%	Between 10-12	10	38.4%
Between 12-14	6	25%	Between 12-14	7	26.9%
Between 14-16	3	12.5%	Between 14-16	2	7.6%
Above 16	-	0%	Above 16	1	3.8%

* scores to be read out of 20.

Table 1. Assessment per Categories of Scores on Pre-test.

Figure 1. Histogramme of Scores per Categories on Pre-test.

Figure 2. Graph of comparative assessment per categories of scores on Pre-test.
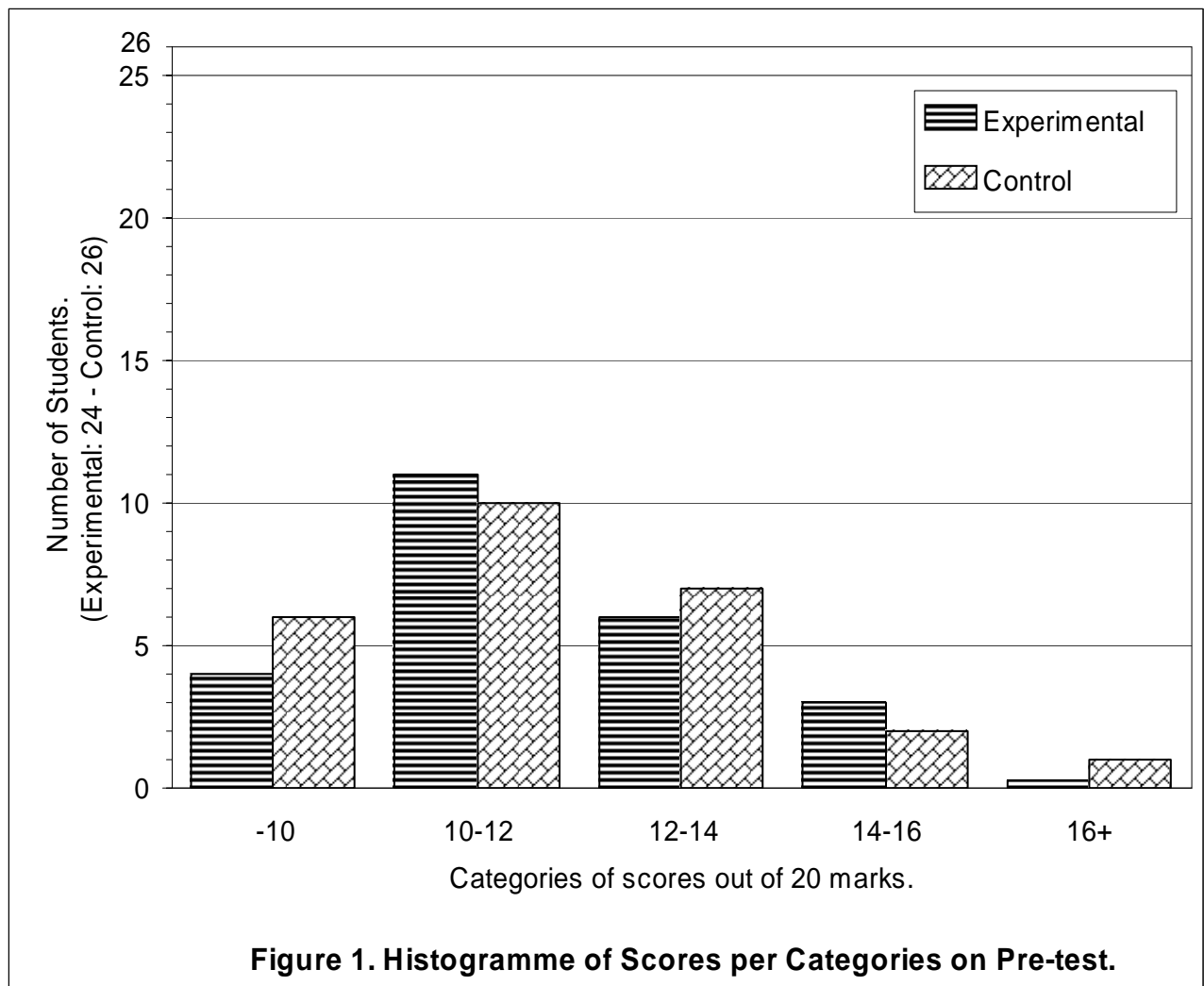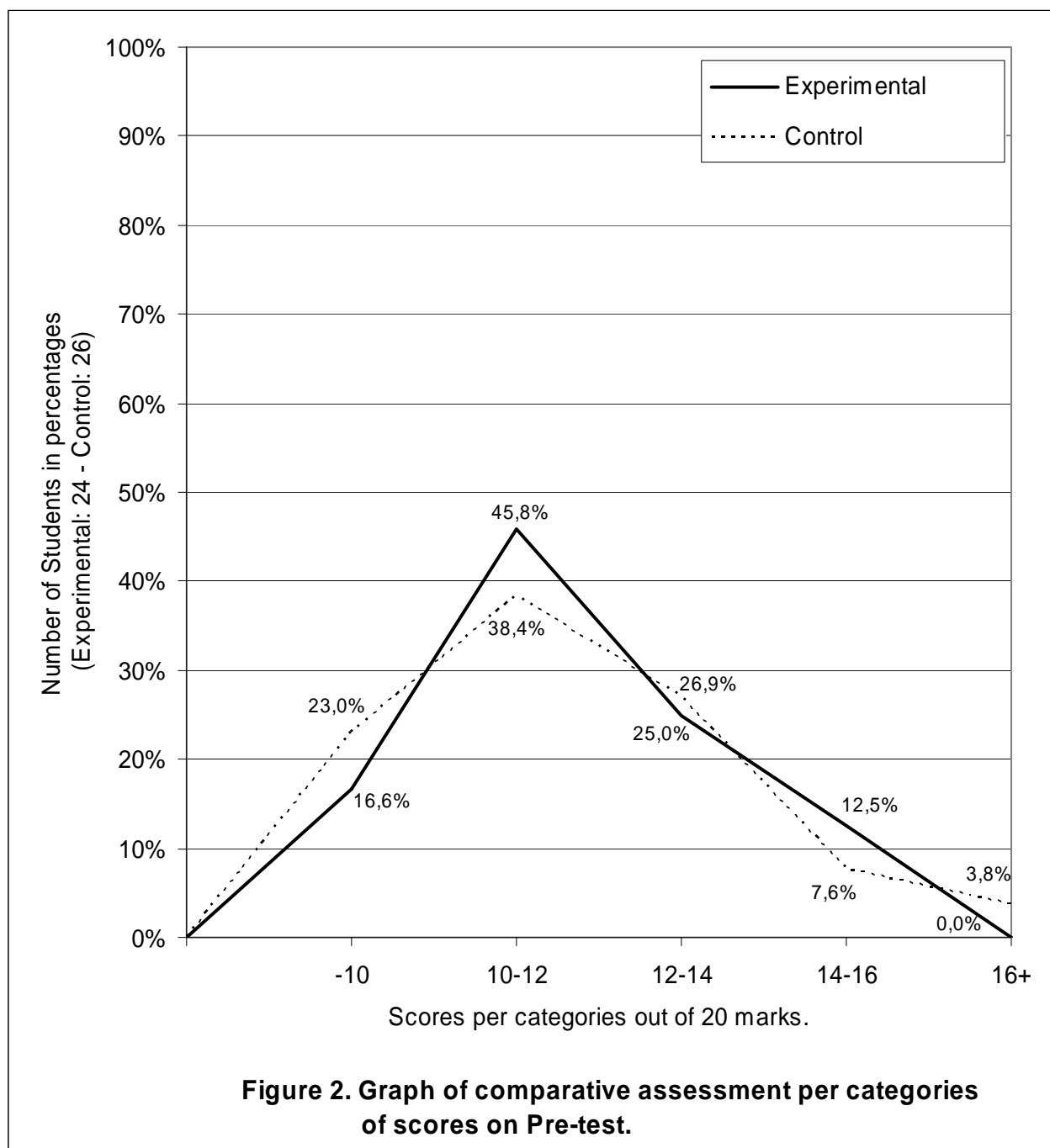
As can be seen from Table 1 and Figure 1, there is a noticeable similarity between the results in both groups, and the scores achieved are fairly balanced in terms of both overall means (**11.45** for the experimental group versus **11.64** for the control one) and standard deviations (**2.02** vs **2.37**, respectively), and also in terms of percentages by categories of scores: **4** versus **6** scores in each group, respectively, were below average (**16.6%** vs **23%**) **11** versus **10** students scored between **10** and **12** marks (**45.8%** vs **38.4%**); **6** versus **7** scores were between **12** and **14** marks (**25%**

vs **26.9%**); **3** versus **2** students obtained good scores ranging between **14** and **16** marks (**12.5%** vs **7.6%**), and only **1** student in the control group managed to obtain an outstanding score of above **16** marks (**3.8%**), whereas there was none in the experimental group.

Starting from these first indications, we could reasonably assume that aptitude existed in equal quantities in both the experimental and control groups and that the two groups were about the same. This observation is indeed of significant importance to the continuation of the experiment, for it reinforced our conviction that the internal validity of our experiment (i.e. whether the experimental design is such that we can confidently claim that the outcomes are the results of the experimental treatment) would be guarded against the threat of disparity of levels between the groups which might very likely affect its outcome, and that if further on there were any claim on our part that differences had come about on the post-experiment tests, then they would be due to the experimental treatment and would not be caused by any initial inequality or imbalance between the groups.

Prompted by this conviction, we launched the experiment the week following the administration of the pre-test.

There was expectation before the start of our investigation that the number of students to be taking part in the experiment would extend to approximately 40 students in each group. However, many registered students in either group never turned up to the classes, seemingly by reason of their repeating the year. It is quite commonplace at university that students in such situation would scarcely show any eagerness to proper attendance. Consequently, we found ourselves dealing (as was specified before) with 24 regular students in the experimental group and 26 in the control group, and all of them freshly registered. So, right after the correction of the pre-test with the students and a first insight for them into how to approach a university reading paper, we launched the experiment.

3.9. The Teaching Experiment.

The experiment took place as was said above in fairly adequate conditions. The experimental students, whose curiosity and interest grew as we advanced and for whom such experience was much of a novelty, seemed to take real enjoyment in dealing with drama scripts in English. Little by little and class after class, hesitation declined and commitment and confidence in taking part in the activities and in showing positive attitudes were being displayed. By the middle of the experiment their excitement and bustle became much perceptible.

The study of drama extracts seemed to have met some favourable welcome, and students were much amazed at how much they could get out of very simple and rather short dialogues, especially with the three first extracts (see 3.2. where a detailed account of the use of material is provided). The extracts extended in length as we proceeded and were opened with fairly long descriptions of scenes and settings, but this did not seem to worry them or check their enthusiasm for all that, and they went on serenely in their work. More than this, it was also noticed soon after the 4th extract was completed in class that many students' impatience of reading the complete play from which the extract would be taken was now manifested so conspicuously that they would anticipate and ask for a copy of it quite before the study of the related extract was over. This was good indication for us to note that the experience seemed to be as gripping as we wished it to be, that the apprehension of reading a complete literary work – were it simply a short one-act play – was being lifted gradually, and that it was already provoking in many of the learners some genuine eagerness of reading.

Meanwhile, the control group was experiencing as agreed and planned a more traditional way of reading through the various well-known materials designed for that purpose and exploited in any ordinary reading class. Diverse texts of factual content, short articles and accounts of stories were used and the course was completed in as equally satisfying conditions as with the experimental group.

3.10. The Post-testing and Retesting.

Three important decisions in the administration of the post-tests were made. The first one was to proceed through the test-retest method in order to have two sets of scores which would make efficient comparison of results possible and thus increase the reliability of the scores.

The second was to resolve the problem of reliability and efficacy of testing through the alternate forms method as suggested by Hughes (1989) (see 3.5. – pp. 68, 69) and which advocates the use of two different tests in the test- retest operation, instead of a same one being administered twice. Our worry that students might very likely be inadequately motivated to take the same test twice added to our cautiousness and urged us to follow Hughes' wise recommendation and contrive two different forms of the post-test.

Finally, the third decision, which had to do with finding solutions to both issues of fairness towards both experimental and control groups in terms of teaching content on which to base the test design, and that of impartiality of assessment tools (i.e. test content and items), impelled us to include both 'program-specific and program-neutral measures' as suggested by Beretta and Davies (1985, in Nunan, 1992 : 186) (see 3.5. – p. 69).

The post-test and re-test were administered a week after the teaching experiment was completed and were administered within a one-week interval. As was said earlier, they were formatted in such a way as to give equal chances to both groups and preserve as much acceptable reliability as possible. On that account, they were very similar in design, yet different.

Each of them included 2 reading selections – a dialogue and a narrative – and each selection was followed by a set of testing items based on the various techniques described under 3.6.2. and Appendix 4, and in sufficient number, we believe, so as to make performance genuinely expressed and accomplishment by students truly representative of their overall competence.

Experimental Group (24 Students)			Control Group (26 Students)		
Category of Scores*	Number of Students	Percentage	Category of Scores*	Number of Students	Percentage
Below 10	-	0%	Below 10	5	19.2%
Between 10-12	5	20.8%	Between 10-12	7	26.9%
Between 12-14	8	33.3%	Between 12-14	10	38.4%
Between 14-16	8	33.3%	Between 14-16	4	15.3%
Above 16	3	12.5%	Above 16	-	0%

* scores to be read out of 20.

Table 2. Assessment per Categories of Scores on Post-test.

Figure 3. Histogramme of Scores per Categories on Post-test.
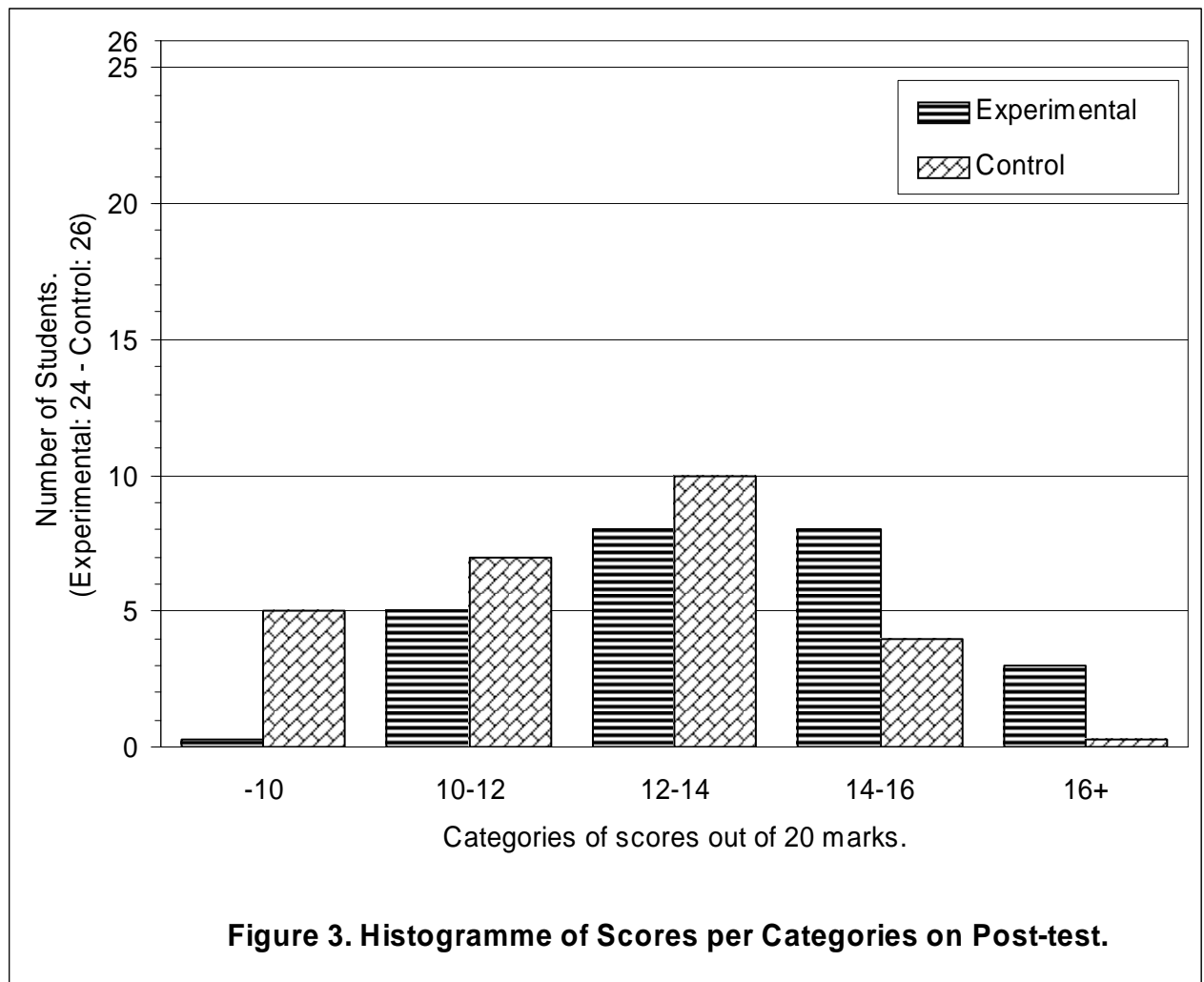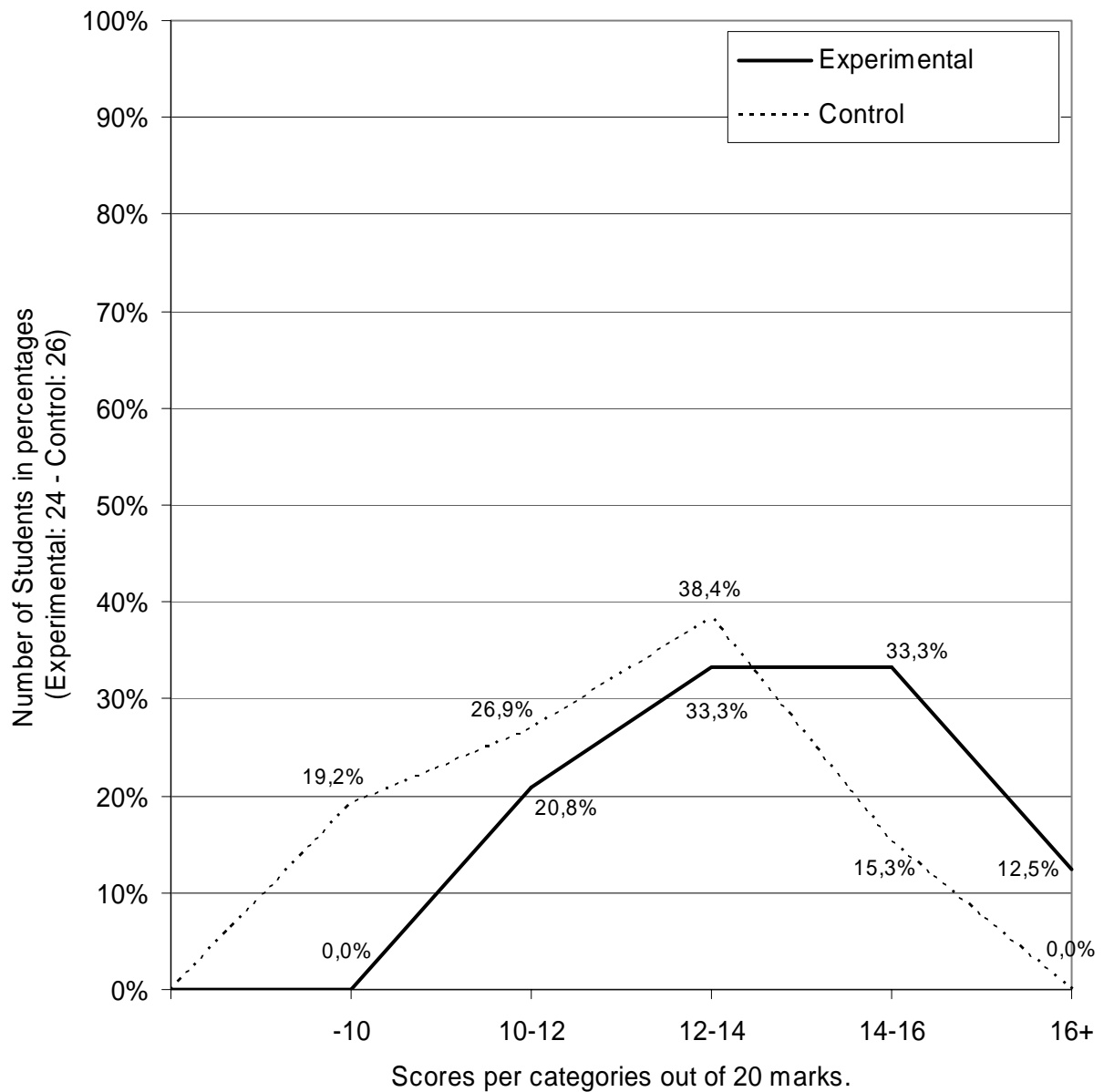
Figure 4. Graph of comparative assessment per categories of scores on Post-test.

Experimental Group (24 Students)			Control Group (26 Students)		
Category of Scores*	Number of Students	Percentage	Category of Scores*	Number of Students	Percentage
Below 10	-	0%	Below 10	5	19.2%
Between 10-12	2	8.3%	Between 10-12	5	19.2%
Between 12-14	10	41.6%	Between 12-14	13	50%
Between 14-16	5	20.8%	Between 14-16	3	11.5%
Above 16	7	29.1%	Above 16	-	0%

* scores to be read out of 20.

Table 3. Assessment per Categories of Scores the Retest.

Figure 5. Histogramme of Scores per Categories on Retest.
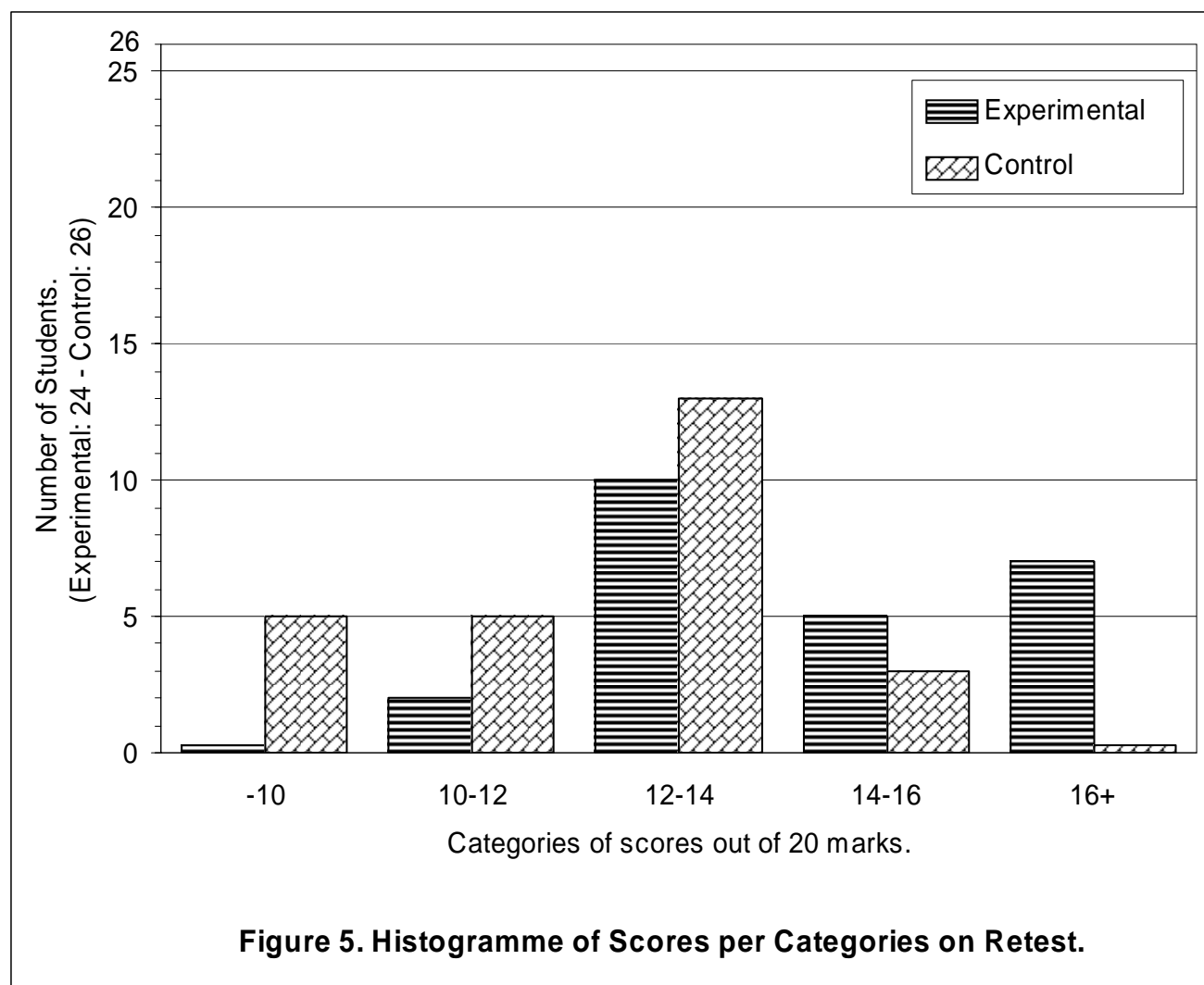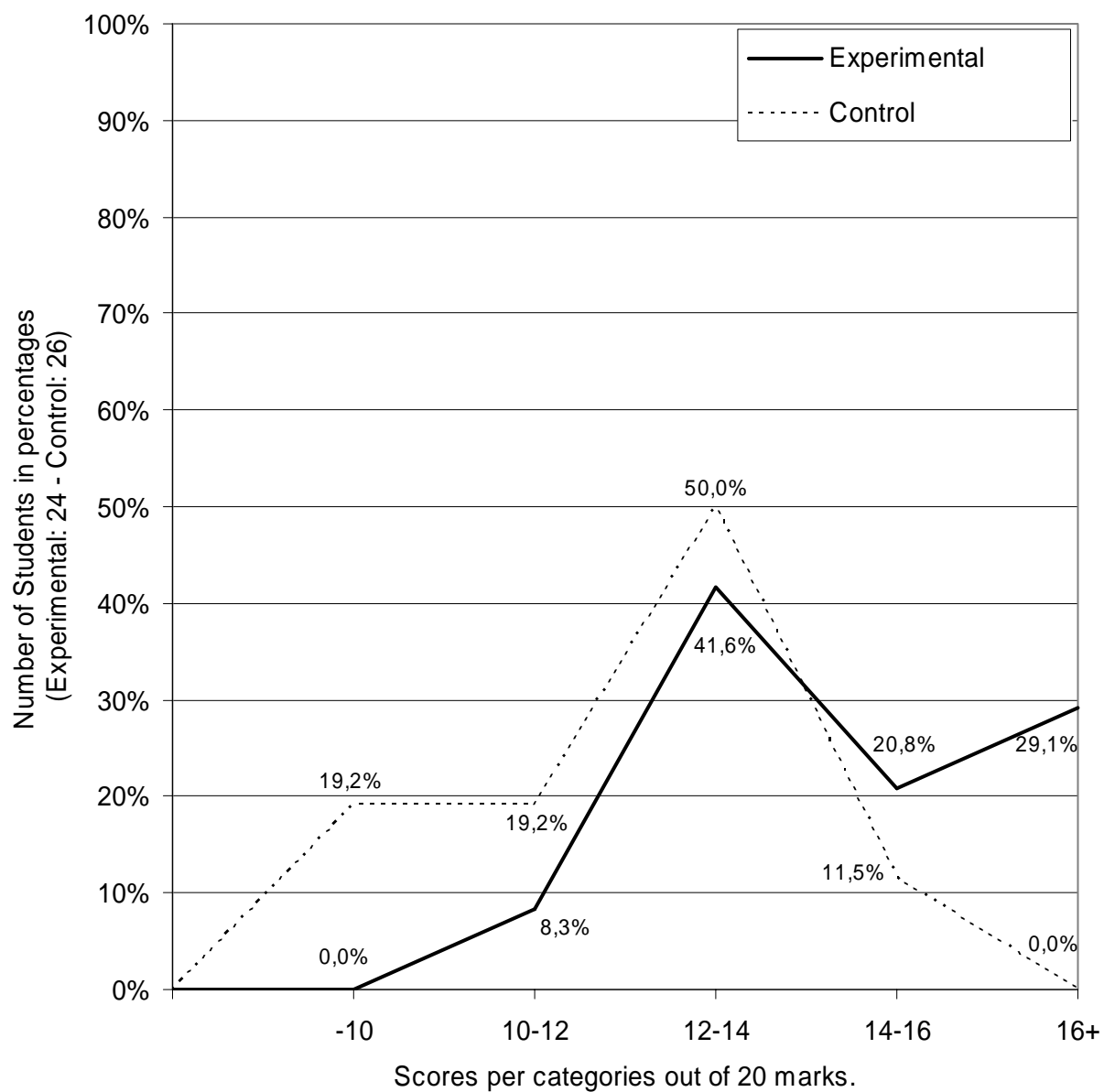
Figure 6. Graph of comparative assessment per categories of scores on Retest.

3.11. Validity and Reliability of the Tests.

Before we start looking into the results and figures, a word on the validity and reliability of the post experiment tests would be useful and suitable. As a matter of fact, these two issues were for us a central concern right from the outset of this study, and all along we exerted ourselves to the best of our skill to grant them the due attention and interest they call for. We simply hope that our effort was equal to our awareness of the matter.

Considering all of the rigorous decisions described earlier and which we employed ourselves to apply scrupulously in our procedure, we think we may reasonably advance that by and large, we were very wary in our steps as to the implications that these two sensitive aspects may have in a research, and that we endeavoured rightly to progress all throughout in keeping with the requirements and specifications in effect in this matter.

Validity in our present study required from us on the whole that the measurement in our object is as adequate and accurate as possible. Our aim being to assess the outcomes of two groups of learners in reading, one which had undergone an experiment and used the innovative material and the other which had fulfilled its course using some more traditional one, we proceeded in our construction of the tests meant for this assessment in such a way as to cater duly for a content that would comprise appropriate patterns of reading skills with which our teaching was especially concerned. Anastasi (1982) reported by Weir defined content validity of tests as:

> "   … essentially the systematic examination of the test content to determine whether it covers a representative sample of the behaviour domain to be measured."

> (1990 : 25)

and provided a set of useful guidelines for establishing content validity, among which she highlighted the following:

1. "the behaviours domain to be tested must be systematically analysed to make certain that all major aspects are covered by the test items, and in the correct proportions";

2. "the domain under consideration should be fully described in advance rather than being defined after the test has been prepared."

<div align="right">(ibid)</div>

This was what we actually did under sections 3.6., 3.6.1., 3.6.2., when we described our intent in the design of the tests, and also at the opening of the previous section when we underlined the three decisions we brought to application in our construction of the tests. Moreover, and sensing that this might possibly not be enough, we also took particular account of Hughes's point of view about the matter and did our best to translate properly his recommendations in our specifications. Hughes writes:

> "   The test would have content validity only if it included a proper sample of the *relevant* structures. Just what are the relevant structures will depend, of course, upon the purpose of the test. […] In order to judge whether or not a test has content validity, we need a *specification* of the skills or structure etc. that it is meant to cover. […] It isn't to be expected that everything in the specification will always appear in the test; there may simply be too many things for all of them to appear in the test. A comparison of test specification and test content is the basis for judgements as to content validity."

<div align="right">(1989 : 22) (author's italics)</div>

Bearing these in mind permanently, we looked to be as observant of these measures as possible and we expect they were fairly reflected in our contrivance.

As for **reliability**, this is to be accounted for at two levels: first, in terms of the initiatives meant to increase this important aspect and that we took in our design of tests prior to their administration, and then in terms of the estimation of reliability through correlation coefficients that we have worked out from the scores obtained by the students in the post-experiment tests.

So, regarding the pre-administration initiatives, there was mention early in the previous section that particular care to test and then retest the students at the termination of the experiment was to be shown for maximal reliability and efficient comparison of scores, and that in this operation the option of administering a same test twice was discarded in favour of the alternate forms method, i.e. administration of two different tests of similar design, content and samples in two sessions at a week interval. In addition to this, due regard was paid to the safeguard of the equity of the tests through an objective inclusion of reading selections of both experimental-specific and neutral types.

These three measures which were all applied and implemented to the letter represent in our view a big part of importance in the assurance of acceptable reliability, and we hope they are perceived and recognized as such and meet approbation.

Secondly, in terms of estimating reliability through statistical operations, this can be completed through the calculation of the correlation coefficients which allow us to compare the reliability of tests. A rationale for this type of estimation is provided by Hughes who explains that

> "   It is possible to quantify the reliability of a test in the form of a *reliability coefficient*. Reliability coefficients […] allow us to compare the reliability of different tests. The ideal reliability coefficient is 1 – a test with a reliability coefficient of 1 is one which would give precisely the same results for a particular set of candidates regardless of

when it happened to be administered. A test which had a reliability coefficient of zero (and let us hope that no such test exists!) would give sets of results quite unconnected with each other […] It is between the two extremes of 1 and zero that genuine test reliability coefficients are to be found." (ibid, 31-32) (author's italics)

and who elaborates further that this quantification is the same for both tests constructed along the split half method or the alternate forms method (ibid, 33).

In our present concern, it happened actually that the correlation coefficient we obtained from the post-test and retest with the experimental group amounted to **0.77**, and that with the control group to **0.64**, which suggest fairly acceptable reliability. (see Table D – Appendix 5).

Nevertheless, Hughes extends further on the issue and pinpoints that a correlation coefficient which is meant to establish the strength of the relationship between two sets of scores, can be estimated with greater precision with tests administered under the split half or the alternate forms method and that there is possibility to estimate again the reliability of the full test, i.e., the test + the alternate form (in our case, the post-test + the retest), which should be more important.

" The strength of the relationship between [the] two sets of scores is given by the correlation coefficient […] This coefficient relates to [the] two *half tests*. But the full test is of course twice as long as either half, and we know that the longer the tests, other things being equal, the greater will be the reliability. […] By means of a simple formula (the Spearman – Brown prophecy formula) it is possible to estimate the reliability of the whole test."

The formula to use is:

$$\text{Reliability of whole test} = \frac{2 \times \text{Coefficient for split halves}}{1 + \text{Coefficient for split halves}}$$

(ibid : 158) (author's italics) (our brackets)

This formula which is also applicable for alternate forms tests will produce in our case:

1. Experimental group : $\dfrac{2 \times 0.77}{1 + 0.77} = \dfrac{1.54}{1.77} = 0.87$

2. Control group   : $\dfrac{2 \times 0.64}{1 + 0.64} = \dfrac{1.28}{1.64} = 0.78$

So using this formula, we obtain a correlation coefficient of **0.87** for our experimental group and a correlation coefficient of **0.78** for the control one, which indicate fairly high reliability.

This is for validity and reliability. Let us now proceed with the presentation and analysis of the scores.

4. Presentation and statistical Analysis of the Scores.

Table B (Appendix 5) shows the scores obtained by the two groups on the post-experiment test. It can be readily noticed that while the standard deviations are again very close (**2.09** for the **experimental** versus **2** for the **control**) and reveal a narrow dispersion of scores, a thing which confirms once more that the groups are fairly balanced within, the means are this time much different: **13.56** for the **experimental** group and **11.87** for the **control** one. Are we for all that in a position yet to claim that the experiment has produced the expected results? Not yet. We still have to look at the scores secured in the retest, at the distribution of all these scores within each group and then compare everything with account of the pre-experiment achievements.

Much to our convenience, what was observed with the post-test repeated itself with the retest and about the same results were obtained by both groups, confirming thus their consistency and responding thereby positively to our expectations. The retest as can be seen from Table C (Appendix 5), produced a mean of **14.22** for the **experimental** group and one of **11.85** for the **control**, and standard deviations of **1.72** and **1.86**, respectively. This indicates at first sight that the performance mean for the experimental group increased appreciably, climbing from **13.56** to **14.22** (**+0.66**), whereas that of the control remained virtually the same, not to say – although the difference is a minor one – dropped down from **11.87** to **11.85** (**-0.2**). The other meaningful result is related to the standard deviations which decreased for both groups, falling from **2.09** to **1.72** and from **2** to **1.86**, respectively, and showing a lesser dispersion of scores and marking consequently a consistent homogeneity in competence within each group.

With regard to percentages by categories of scores (see Table 2), the distribution in relation with the post-test was as follows:

In the category below average, no student in the experimental group scored below **10** marks, whereas there were **5** in the control group, which makes **0%** against **19.2%**. In the category ranging between **10-12** marks, there were **5** and **7** such scores, respectively (**20.8% vs 26.9%**). In that between **12-14** marks, there were **8** (**33.3%**) and **10** (**38.4%**) on each side, respectively. **8** (**33.3%**) and **4** students (**15.3%**) on each side respectively ranked in the category between **14-16** marks, and eventually, **3** students (**12.5%**) managed in the experimental group to secure outstanding scores of above **16** marks, whereas there was none in the control (**0%**).

Compared with the percentages derived from the pre-experiment test we can observe what follows:

Category of Scores*	Experimental Group (24 Students) Differences acknowledged between pre- and post-tests	Control Group (26 Students) Differences acknowledged between pre- and post-tests
Below 10	4 students (16.6%) vs 0 students (0%)	6 students (23%) vs 5 students (19%)
Between 10-12	11 students (45.8%) vs 5 students (20%)	10 students (38.4%) vs 7 students (26.9%)
Between 12-14	6 students (25%) vs 8 students (33.3%)	7 students (26.9%) vs 10 students (38.4%)
Between 14-16	3 students (12.5%) vs 8 students (33.3%)	2 students (7.6%) vs 4 students (15.3%)
Above 16	0 students (0%) vs 3 students (12.5%)	1 students (3.8%) vs 0 students (0%)

* scores to be read out of 20.

Table 4. Comparison between assessment per categories of scores on pre- and post-tests.

As can be noticed from Table 4, the overall appreciation that these percentages suggest is slightly in favour of the experimental group. As a matter of fact, some sensitive improvement is recorded in all categories for the experimental group, whilst with the control this occurs only in three categories and in less marked importance. This is all the more

demonstrated by the fact that all of the students concerned with improvement in the experimental group shifted to an upper category and were by far in a more important number: **17** students out of **24** against only **7** out of **26** in the control (see Table 5). In addition to this, **4** students in the experimental improved their scores but by remaining in the same category; there were **10** of them in this case in the control group. But in terms of regression, the more significant rate was noticed in the control group. As a point of fact, they were **9** students in that case, **5** of which dropping to a lower category and **4** remaining in the same, whereas there was none in the experimental group downgrading to a lower category and only **1** case of drop within the same category and with a very narrow loss. As to utter stability of scores, there were **2** students in that situation and both with scores above average in the experimental group, and **1** with an average score in the control one. Recapitulated, we have the following figures:

	Experimental Group (24 students)		Control Group (26 students)	
	Number	**Percentage**	**Number**	**Percentage**
Scores moved up to an upper category	**15**	62.5%	**7**	26.9%
Scores improved within same category	**6**	25%	**9**	34.6%
Downgraded scores to a lower category	**-**	0%	**5**	19.2%
Downgraded scores within same category	**1**	4.1%	**4**	15.3%
Stabilized scores	**2**	8.3%	**1**	3.8%

Table 5. Summary Table of Compared Scores Tendencies between Pre- and Post-test.

Read another way, we come to observe from Table 9 that **21** (15 + 6) out of **24** scores, that is **87.5%** (62.5 + 25%), were on the up for the experimental group versus **16** (7 + 9) out of 26 scores that is **61.5%** (26.9% + 34.6%), but then **12** out of the **21** scores that moved up in the experimental ranked in the higher categories (i.e. above **14** marks) and **9** in the intermediary ones (i.e. between **12-14** marks), whereas only **2** scores out of **16** on the up in the control were recorded in the higher categories, the others falling either in the intermediary (**5** of them), or in the average ones (**9** of them).

In terms of regressing performances, none to a lower category was recorded in the experimental group (**0%**) against **5** in the control (**19.2%**); as for the downgraded scores within the same category, there was **1** (4.1%) and **4** (15.3%) on each side, respectively.

This was for the comparison between the two groups on pre- and post-tests.

Now, if we compare the performances of both groups on post – and retests [see Table D (Appendix 5)], again we can notice how the performances of many students from the experimental group were ameliorated, by contrast with those of the control group which remained for most of them approximately the same or increased by a narrow margin. Besides, the improved scores recorded in the experimental group were ranked in the high categories of scores, which was not the case for those in the control group. Translated into Figures, we have **15** students (62%) in the experimental group who improved their scores, **8** of which (33.3%) by moving to an upper category. **5** (20.8%) against **7** (26.9%), respectively, managed to stabilize their scores, and only **4** scores (16.6%) in the experimental group dropped slightly, but, here, they were in the highest category; whereas **9** drops (34.6%) were recorded in the control group, among which **2** were in the intermediary category and the others either in the average or below average one.

The table below shows the differences recorded on the post- and retests:

	Experimental Group (24 students)		Control Group (26 students)	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Scores moved up to an upper category	**8**	33.3%	**7**	26.9%
Scores improved within same category	**7**	29.1%	**3**	11.5%
Downgraded scores to a lower category	**4**	16.6%	**6**	23%
Downgraded scores within same category	**-**	0%	**3**	11.5%
Stabilized scores	**5**	20.8%	**7**	26.9%

Table 6. Summary Table of Compared Scores Tendencies between Post- and Retests.

The last step in the description of scores we are providing here will consist in looking into post- and retests as a unified performance, or in other words, as a full test. The scores are presented in Table E (Appendix 5) and it gives an ultimate clear picture of what the students of both experimental and control groups were exactly able to perform at the termination of the practice they had experienced in their module of reading comprehension.

As is fairly clear from Table E, the results drawn from students' amalgamated scores in both post- and retests are for the most part unmistakably corroborative of their results when considered separately. The overall means are confirmed in their nearness to the initial ones from which they proceed: **13.89** (product of **13.56** + **14.22**) for the experimental group versus **11.86** (product of **11.87** + **11.85**) for the control; the overall standard deviations are verified for their constancy and consistency, and for their testimony to an appropriately balanced dispersion of competence within each group: **1.80 vs 1.75**, respectively; and the overall correlation coefficients (**0.87** vs **0.78**) are checked for their demonstration of acceptable reliability of both post-test and retest and of adequate relationship between the sets of scores. (see pp. 86, 87, 88 for this last point).

Assessed by categories of grades, these results give the following distribution:

Experimental Group (24 students)			Control Group (26 students)		
Category of Scores*	Number of Students	Percentage	Category of Scores*	Number of Students	Percentage
Below 10	-	0%	Below 10	4	15.3%
Between 10-12	4	16.6%	Between 10-12	7	26.9%
Between 12-14	8	33.3%	Between 12-14	12	46.1%
Between 14-16	7	29.1%	Between 14-16	3	11.5%
Above 16	5	20.8%	Above 16	-	0%

* scores to be read out of 20.

Table 7. Compared Amalgamated Scores Assessment per Categories of Scores on the Post- and Retest Unified.

Figure 7. Histogramme of Scores per Categories on Post- and Retest Unified.
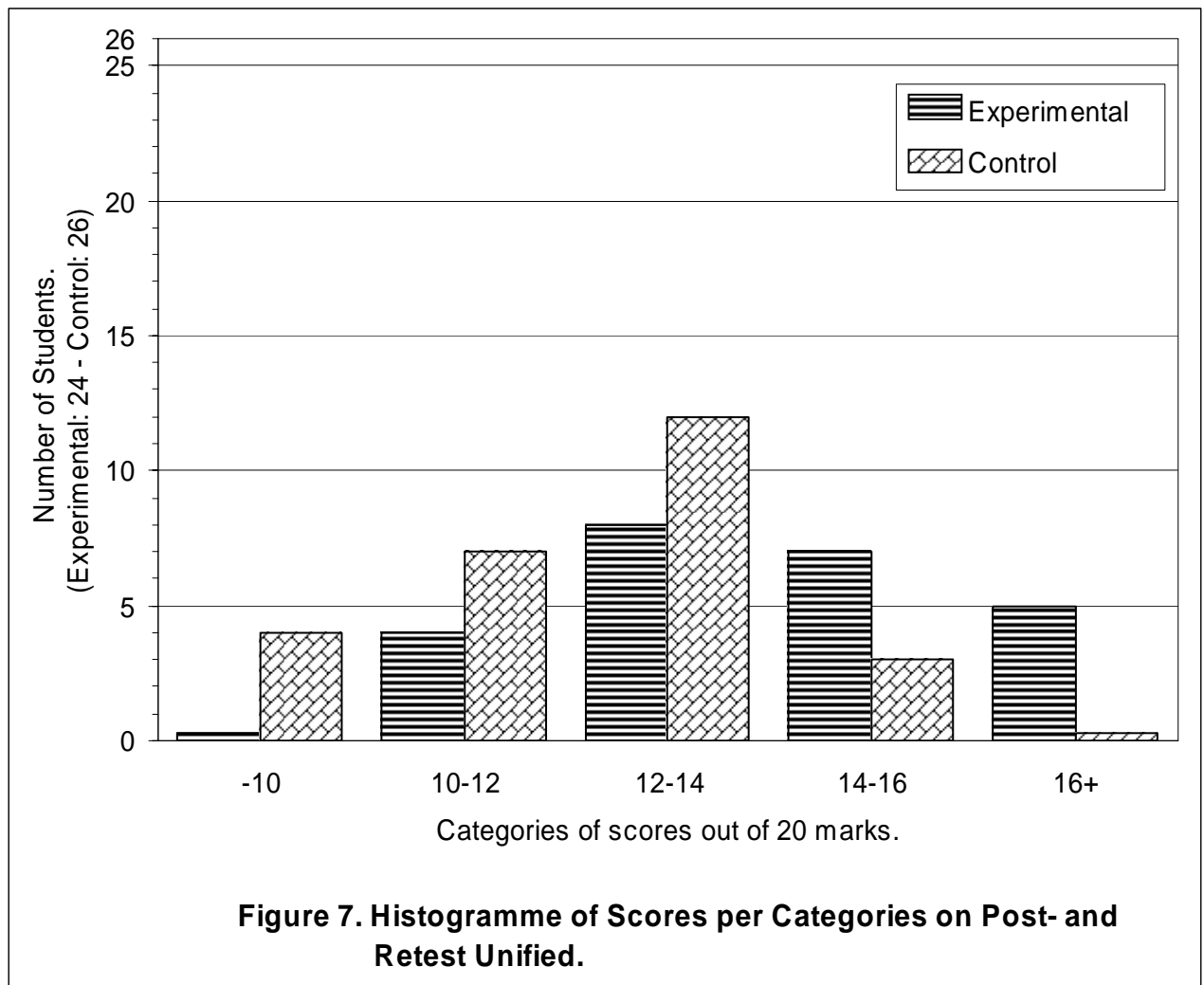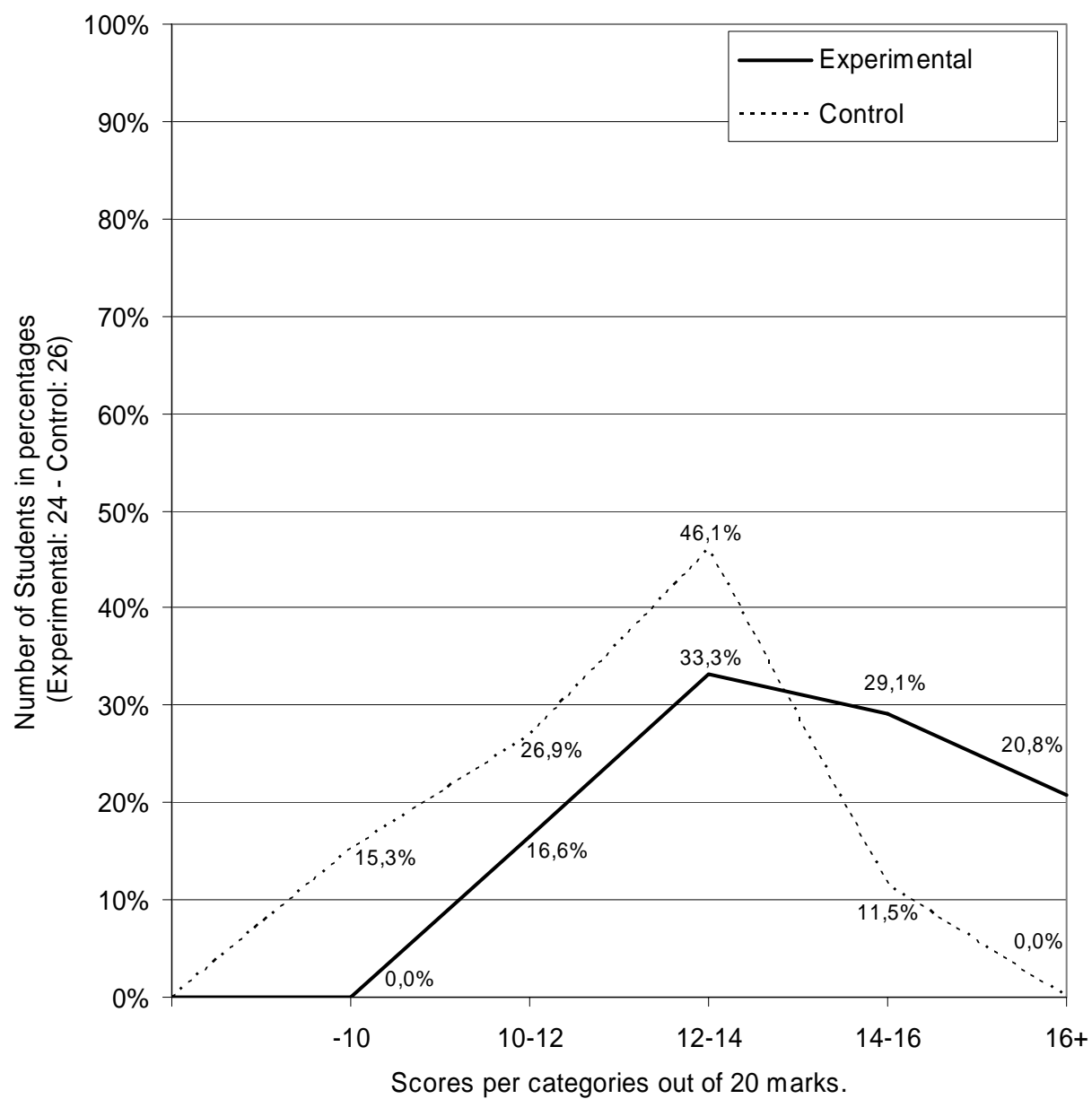
Figure 8. Graph of comparative assessment per categories of scores on Post- and retest Unified.

In reading these Figures two facts of relevance are worth being highlighted: The first meaningful point of note is that no student in the experimental group scored below average, whereas there were **4** who did in the control group (**15.3%**). The second indicative fact is that **12** students (**50%**) in the experimental group ranked in the high categories (i.e. above 14 marks) of which **5** were in the top one (20.8%), whilst only **3** were recorded with scores between 14-16 marks in the control group (**11.5%**) and none above.

These two interesting indications are much significant in our observations in that when compared with the scores obtained in the pre-experiment assessment through the pre-test [see Table A (Appendix 3) and Table 1] and the findings we derived from our investigation, what we notice plainly is that improvement in all respects is by far more acutely perceived with the experimental group, whereas with the control group it is, rather, stabilization with slight improvement in some cases which seems to be the predominant tendency.

This is largely demonstrated as was said above by the fact that all of the experimental students managed to secure a pass score, that nearly all of them were on the up, and that a good number of them was able to score highly.

Are we now in a position to assert in safety that the experiment has indeed brought out differences of achievement between the experimental students and the control ones? In terms of global performance and scores, the answer would be, quite honestly, yes, and it would even not be an overstatement to opine that the differences are most noticeably marked differences.

But are we in a reasonable position at this level to claim that these results, which we deem to be quite positive in our present purpose, are utterly and undisputably the express outcome of the experiment we carried out? Not quite. We still need to look into other aspects and that is what will be the object of the next chapter.

5. Discussion of Results.

In this study, we are chiefly concerned with reading skills and with the outcomes of a teaching-learning experiment involving an innovative technique and an ordinary one that 2 groups experienced in parallel during a full course under our conduct and supervision. The ultimate objective of our undertaking being to demonstrate the resourcefulness and merits of a relatively unusual teaching procedure, our action therefore, presupposes a measurement of and a comparison between students' abilities and attainments in reading comprehension by the end of the experiment.

However, before any discussion on outcomes is started, three important aspects in the issue of outcome-oriented assessment in language learning are to be considered (or re-considered) in order for us to give further on a clearer insight, hopefully, on the results of our investigation.

The first of these aspects has to do with the factors that have to be taken into due account in an evaluation. In his book <u>Research Methods in Language Learning</u>, Nunan writes:

> "   The researcher who uses assessment data as the key element in an evaluation has to give careful considerations to three factors. These are (1) the nature of the evidence to be used, (2) the relationship between the evaluation and the program goals, and (3) the appropriate measurement instruments to be used. The first factor takes us […] to construct validity, and the importance of operationalising the constructs underlying one's research. The product-oriented evaluator, no less than other researchers, has to be able to define whatever it is that he or she is trying to measure – for our purposes, language proficiency. However, such a definition needs to be consistent with the goals and objectives of the program. It would be unfair of the evaluator to operationalise language proficiency solely in grammatical terms and apply this to the evaluation of a program designed to develop interactional skills."   (1992 : 186)

This factor in our paper, i.e. defining constructs, was considered in the description and rationale of the experiment teaching content that we provided under 3.2.

Nunan carries on writing:

> "   The other crucial consideration for an evaluator concerned with learning outcomes relates to the measuring instruments to be used. Here the evaluator must consider whether the instrument is actually measuring what it purports to measure. In the final analysis, however, the researcher needs to use some sort of instrument of assessment procedure for arbitrating between different programs."   (ibid : 186)

These two last issues in our concern, i.e., relating outcomes to goals and the appropriateness of the measuring instruments, were considered under 3.6., 3.6.1. and 3.6.2. when we described test construction and format and also in Appendix 2 and 4 when we described tests content and instruments.

The next important aspect that we wish to draw attention to is related to the fairness we need to show to the programmes under evaluation and comparison. According to Nunan,

> "   The issue of 'fairness' can be a major problem when the evaluator is attempting to compare the relative merits of two different programs, as Beretta (1986b) shows. In his article, Beretta addresses the question of how we can get information for comparative purposes about the effects of different language teaching programs. The central problem here is to find a means of measuring student outcomes which is fair to both of the programs being evaluated and does not discriminate against one of the programs."   (ibid : 186)

This care on our part was shown under section 3.5. when we presented the data collection procedure and instruments.

Finally, the last aspect of importance in this reminder refers to the additional step to include in the discussion of results so that our judgement is made, as far as possible, more objective and effective. This has to do with accounting for some of the things that took place in the classroom during the experiment and the account of which could possibly add to our understanding. Nunan makes reference to Long's arguments on this issue and writes:

> " Ideally, product-oriented evaluator needs more than pre- and post-program assessment data from control and experiment groups (Long 1984). Assessment data will tell us what learners can or cannot do (and, if we are lucky, what the learners can or cannot do as a result of taking part in the program). However, it will not always tell us why objectives have been achieved and why other objectives have not been achieved. In order to make such judgements, the evaluator needs access to information about what went on inside the classrooms themselves. Long (1980) argues this point in an article in which he refers to the classroom as a 'black box'. Particularly when attempting to evaluate and compare two different programs, it is impossible to say what made the difference (if indeed there was a difference) without access to data about what went on within the classroom. One might also want information on a range of other factors and issues which might affect learning, such as institutional facilities, the prevailing intellectual and emotional climate, relationships between administrative and teaching staff, and so on."   (ibid : 189) (Author's parentheses)

This is what we shall do our best to highlight and relate in our discussion in the hope that our attempt is relevant and beneficial to our comment on the perspectives of the issue, and more particularly in answering the question guiding our research, that is how could improvement through our teaching-learning experiment be achieved, if improvement there was.

In the previous chapter, we observed that the results emerging post-experimentally were consistent with our expectations by reason mainly of

the fact that the differences recorded were much noticeable and that the students in the experimental group outranked in a good measure their peers in the control group. This was all the more conspicuous in that the outranking occurred twice: in the post-test and in the retest.

Furthermore, this first important notice was reinforced and supported not only by the differences that marked the overall means (**13.56 + 14.22** for the experimental group versus **11.87 + 11.85** for the control), but also by the fact that all of the experimental students obtained pass marks in both tests, that improvement was much more recorded in the experimental group than in the control one, and that the improved scores in the former fell in good proportion into the high categories of scoring.

However, and despite these very suggestive outcomes, the improvement in question needs before any conclusive claim to be scrutinized and commented. This is what we shall apply ourselves to do next.

The initial assumption underlying our paper suggests that exposure of students to drama scripts in the reading class can be an interesting practice to enhance the reading skills. The representative samples of reading skills that we included in our tests to be measured involved mostly

1) handling vocabulary through appropriate guessing of word meaning from context;

2) comprehension of general meaning and understanding of key facts;

3) accounting for comprehension of main ideas and implied meaning.

In our inclusion of these samples of skills, we were very attentive to the experts' specifications on this matter and were directed more especially, as we mentioned under 3.11.(pp.84, 85), by Anastasi's guidelines (1982, in Weir, 1990 : 25) and Hughes's recommendations (1989:22) for the security of content validity in our tests. Our principal reason for such selection lies

in the fact that these samples form in our conviction the most representative illustration of the reading skills.

In our following discussion, we shall look at vocabulary in a first place, then deal with comprehension of general meaning and understanding of key facts together, and eventually move on to account for comprehension of main ideas and of implied meaning, and again treat them in association. The reasons why these last two skills will be considered conjointly will be explained subsequently when the points are tackled.

1)   **Vocabulary** was granted considerable importance and part in the tests, and so it was during the experiment, for it is well known how sensitive an aspect of learning it is in reading comprehension:

> "   But the most difficult aspect of reading for language learners is vocabulary. Students need help both in understanding unknown words and in building their vocabularies."   (Day and Bamford, 1998 : 98)

During the experiment, the students were encouraged to shake off their apprehension of unknown words, not to rush immediately for their dictionaries, and to allow for some reflection and try to crack the meaning of a word by looking at its surroundings and find the helpful clues which can possibly permit them to do so. The suitable techniques used for such application were various. They included, for instance, the identification of word parts to make the distinction of semantic relations possible, the detection of reference and substitution pronouns and determiners to establish appropriate connections, and the search for synonyms and antonyms, or superordinates and hyponyms when possible, to ensure correct interpretation and comprehension. At the beginning, this was done with our assistance and under our guidance on how to look, where to look and how to relate, but soon they started to recognize the efficiency of the strategy of understanding words in context, and gradually, they exerted themselves to do it on their own.

Prior to the experiment when the initial appraisal of students' abilities through the pre-test took place, this last included **11** items of vocabulary to be solved out. In the post- and retest the number of items was increased to **16** in each for a more effective assessment. The following samples are an illustration of the items and phrases involved in the successive tests of our experiment. The testing technique on which assessment of lexical knowledge was essentially based was the reliable and well-known matching technique, widely used in testing owing to the guaranteed accuracy and safety it offers for an objective evaluation of this skill. (See Appendices 2 and 4 for complete sets of items).

- **Pre-test:**

unusual	: uncommon
used up	: finished
track down	: find
heard about	: got news of
expect too much	: build up my hopes
was able	: managed
satisfactory agreement	: acceptable arrangement
to be honest	: frankly speaking

- **Post-test:**

testimony	: deposition; declaration
testify	: to give evidence
witness	: person who was present at an event and who can describe it
convict	: to condemn; to declare in law court that someone is guilty of a crime (by a judge or a jury)
nonsense	: foolish talk
take revenge	: deliberate infliction of injury in return for injury received

relatives   : kin; kinsmen

ring off   : to interrupt a phone call

- **Re-test:**

cosy   : warm and comfortable

I'd rather   : would prefer

contaminated   : influenced seriously

suburban   : around the city

conveniences   : useful and helpful appliances, facilities and arrangements

chores   : unpleasant and tiring work

gorgeous   : magnificient, superb, splendid

ungrateful   : not thankful

    The following tables show students' achievements in all of the three tests.

Number of correct answers out of 11 items	Experimental Group (24 students)		Control Group (26 students)	
	Number of students	Percentage	Number of students	Percentage
5	2	8.3%	5	19.2%
6	4	16.6%	6	23%
7	2	8.3%	2	7.6%
8	4	16.6%	3	11.5%
9	1	4.1%	6	23%
10	2	8.3%	1	3.8%
11	9	37.5%	3	11.5%

Table 8. Students' Performance in Vocabulary on Pre-test.
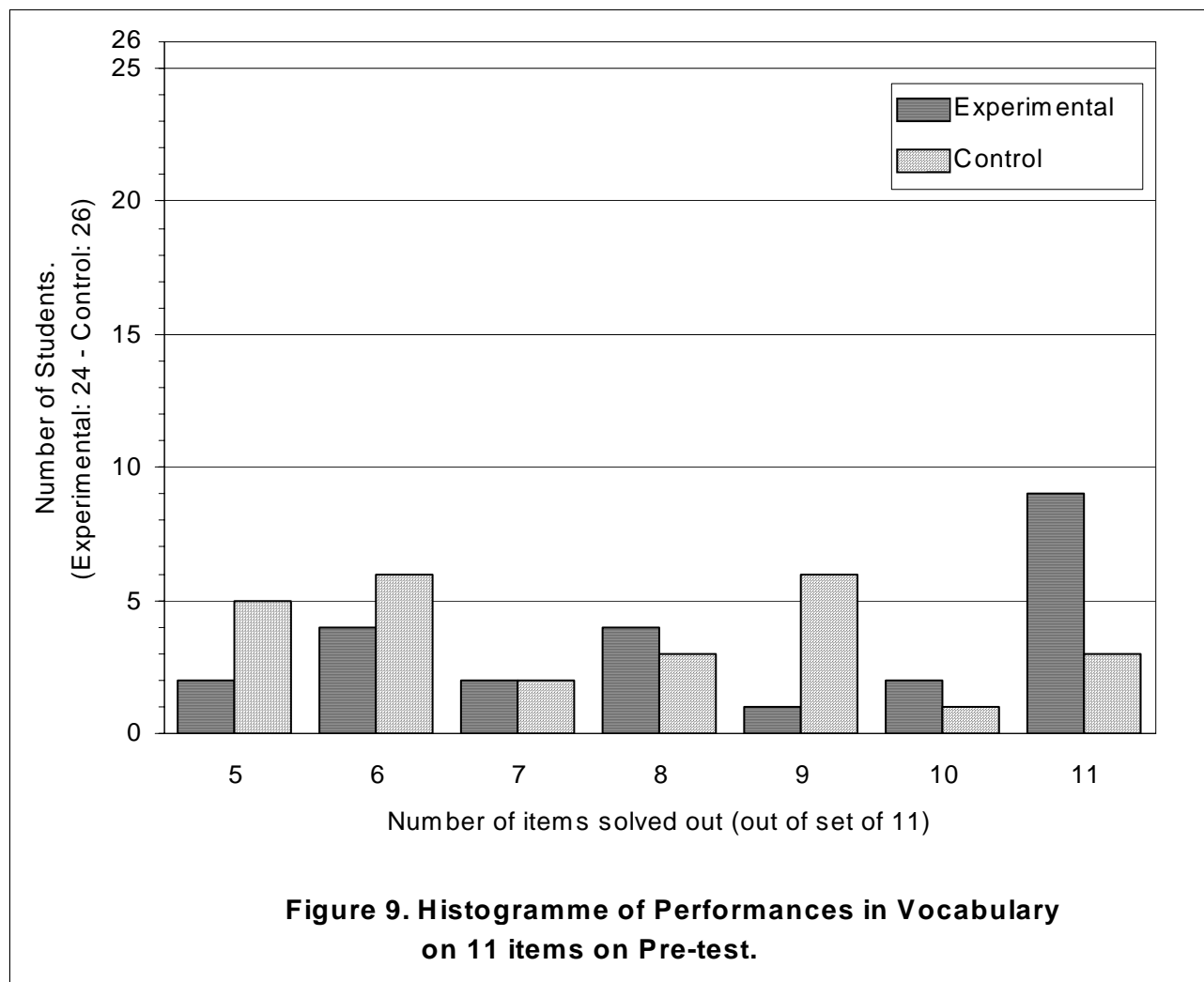
Figure 9. Histogramme of Performances in Vocabulary on 11 items on Pre-test.

Number of correct answers out of 16 items	Experimental Group (24 students)		Control Group (26 students)	
	Number of students	Percentage	Number of students	Percentage
8	-	-	2	7.6%
9	1	4.1%	1	3.8%
10	2	8.3%	4	15.3%
11	2	8.3%	1	3.8%
12	4	16.6%	3	11.5%
13	1	4.1%	1	3.8%
14	12	50%	10	38.4%
15	-	-	-	-
16	2	8.3%	4	15.3%

Table 9. Students' Performance in Vocabulary on Post-test.

Figure 10. Histogramme of Performances in Vocabulary on 16 items on Post-test.

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Number of correct answers out of 16 items	Experimental Group (24 students)		Control Group (26 students)	
	Number of students	Percentage	Number of students	Percentage
6	-	-	2	7.6%
7	-	-	-	-
8	2	8.3%	-	-
9	-	-	-	-
10	1	4.1%	-	-
11	3	12.5%	3	11.5%
12	1	4.1%	6	23%
13	3	12.5%	2	7.6%
14	10	41.5%	10	38.4%
15	-	-	-	-
16	4	16.6%	3	11.5%

Table 10. Students' Performance in Vocabulary on Retest.

Figure 11. Histogramme of Performances in Vocabulary on 16 items on Retest.
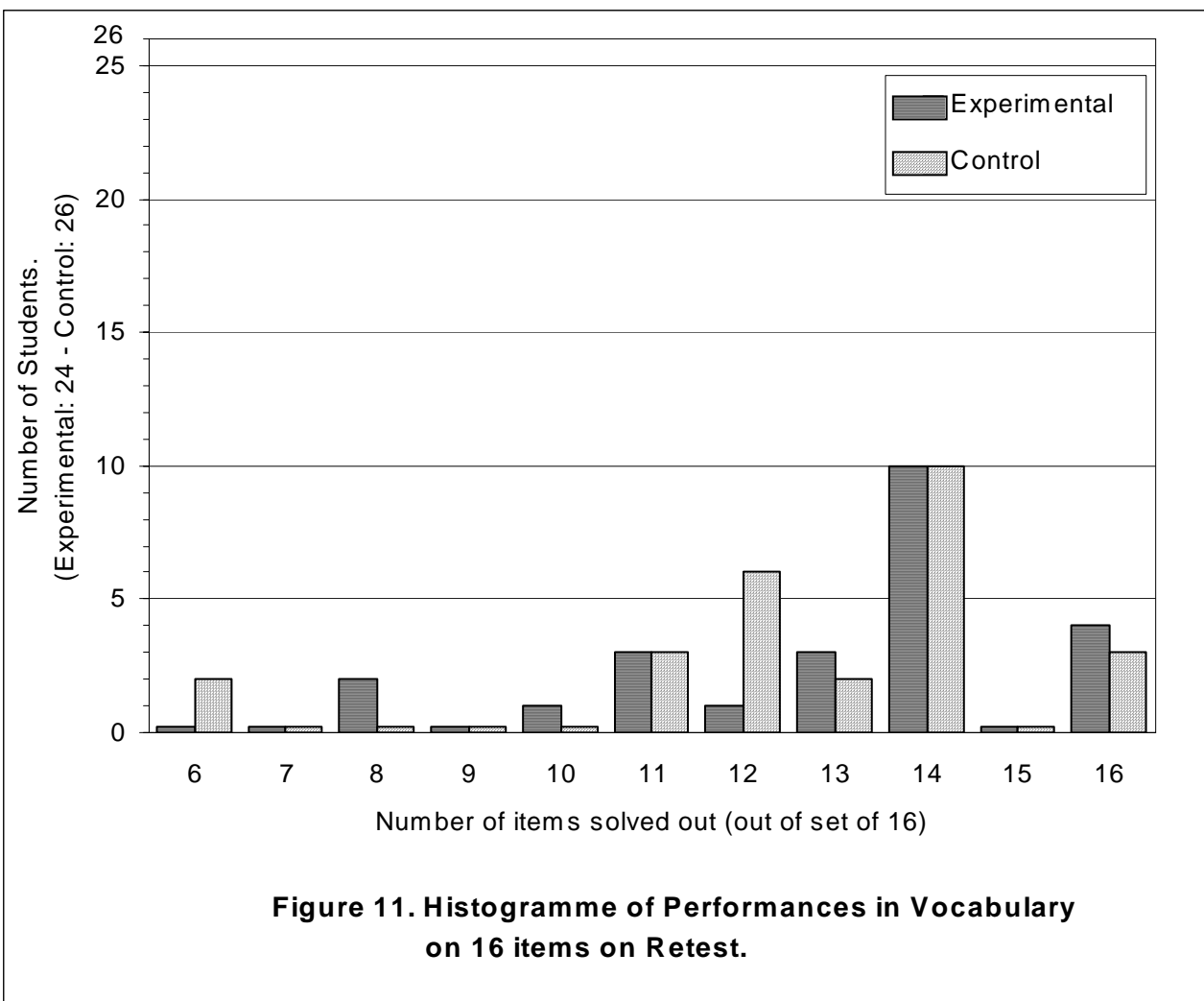
What can be noted from the performances on the pre-test (Table 8) is that prior to the experiment, the experimental group showed a slightly better aptitude for understanding vocabulary than the control group. This was demonstrated by the fact that **6** students (**25%**) in the experimental group were in the average portion of scoring against **11** students (**42.3%**) in the control, that **18** students (**75%**) versus **15** (**57.6%**), respectively, were above average, and that **9** experimental students (**37.5%**) managed to sort out all of the given items against only **3** (**11.5%**) control ones.

As for the post-test (Table 9), the performances in vocabulary in both groups were somewhat close, with the exception of the fact that the number of experimental students to have solved out all of the items fell from **9** on the pre-test (**37.5%**) to **2** (**8.3%**) on the post-test. However, this is not to be perceived negatively, for the number of vocabulary items on pre-test was less important than that on post-test (**11 vs 16** items, respectively), and also, for **12** students (**50%**) this time were able to solve out **14** items of the **16** given (i.e. **87.5%** of the items) which is at any rate a very good proportion of success indeed. In the control group, they were **10** students (**38.4%**) in that position, and **4** students (**15.3%**) were recorded in the top position.

This outcome was to be confirmed in the retest where the results were in some way maintained in about the same proportions. The major difference perhaps being the fact that **2** students (**7.6%**) with scores well below average were accounted for in the control group, whereas none of such appeared in the experimental. Another interesting fact was that the number of students in the experimental group with top scoring rose to **4** students (**16.6%**), whereas in the control group it dropped from **4** to **3** students (**11.5%**).

These figures illustrating students' achievements in vocabulary suggest that the performances were almost equally the same when we compare the two groups – although a slight advantage seems to lean towards the experimental group –, and that, on the whole, they were quite positive. When we consider the established fact that out of a set of **16** vocabulary items given twice to students on two distinct sessions (i.e. post- and retests), **19** students out of **24** (i.e. **79%**) a first time and then

18 students out of **24** (i.e. **75%**) a second time managed to solve out more than **12** items (i.e. more than **75%** of the items), we may acknowledge that these results are indeed appreciable results and that students' accomplishment in this skill is fairly noticeable.

Nevertheless, we will not miss to underline here that with this first sample of skills considered in our discussion, the results of the experiment were positive in both the experimental and control groups. It seems that under both types of teaching techniques and material, i.e. the innovative and the traditional one, students enjoyed equal benefit and improvement, the difference being a very minor one.

Let us see now what it was like in the other skills.

2)   The next representative sample of skills to be considered is related to **comprehension of general meaning and understanding of key facts**. These two reading skills are to be associated with what is referred to in the language teaching jargon as 'skimming' and 'scanning', respectively, two identified techniques recognized as basic and seminal in reading. Because of their closeness in character, in that both are considered efficient techniques for quick reading and understanding of gist for the former, and of specific key facts for the latter, we have decided to account for them in combination for reasons of practicality and efficacy. We note here that in the same way, they were arranged in combination in the tests under one same format, the 'True – False – Information not given' format. Beside the reasons of practicality and efficacy, our decision was motivated as equally by one of the points on the issue made by Grellet (1981 : 4, 19) who specified that "these two different ways of reading are not mutually exclusive" and that "it is usual to make use of these two activities together when reading a given text" (see 2.4.3.). Thus, we believe it would be just adequate to look at them together.

During the teaching-learning experiment, a special emphasis was put on these two ways of reading and we were not sparing in including enough activities designed for this purpose so that students receive concrete training and find adequate scope for their improvement. In doing so we

proceeded in such a way as to not only trigger their interest but also to keep it as vivid and steady as possible all along, and allow them, therefore, to gain efficiently by their reading. We all know how important it is that students develop appropriate skills in running through a text quickly and get a general picture of its content or the specific ideas and pieces of information underlying it. As teachers, our overall aspiration is, as agreed, to enable learners to become successful and confident readers; thus one fundamental requirement toward this goal is to provide them with the appropriate tools that will heighten their interest on the one hand and promote their commitment on the other. In our experimental action with our students, we applied all our energies to cater for this and transfer our intention from the stage of a hope to that of a real possibility. This was demonstrated by a permanent stimulation of students' curiosity and participation, by a constantly renewed incitement to show responsible and active attitudes in their engagement and learning, by a continuous draw of attention to the necessity of locating and decoding clues in a text so that their awareness of reading as essentially a matter of problem-solving task is raised, by a regularly repeated encouragement to develop hypotheses, guesses and predictions on their own to enrich reflection and derive meaning, and by continual promptings to take up the challenge they were faced with.

On the whole, it seemed that this was not vain, and by the first third of the experiment we did notice, as a matter of fact, an appropriate display of the businesslike attitudes we were expecting from them. From class to class we noted that many students started to show more and more concern and involvement as we moved along and to exhibit more and more suitable interactional behaviours in the debates and exchanges occurring during the classes. It was a pity, though, that this did not generalize and extend to all of them. A good few in either group remained, despite our support, shy and diffident virtually all throughout the process.

In terms of assessment of performances on tests, the results appeared to be quite meaningful. But before looking into them, let us just remind here that for these skills of understanding general meaning and key facts,

the pre-test included 21 items, whereas the post- and retests comprised 16 items each out of a care of balance. The reason why the number of items is more important in the pre-test is simply because that test, unlike the post-experimental ones, was to be administered only once, and knowing this, we thought it useful to include as many items as possible so that our pre-experimental appraisal is made as properly effective as possible.

Number of correct answers out of 21 items	Experimental Group (24 students)		Control Group (26 students)	
	Number of students	Percentage	Number of students	Percentage
10	-	-	-	-
11	1	4.1%	2	7.6%
12	3	12.5%	2	7.6%
13	-	-	1	3.8%
14	3	12.5%	1	3.8%
15	3	12.5%	9	34.6%
16	3	12.5%	2	7.6%
17	8	33.3%	3	11.5%
18	1	4.1%	3	11.5%
19	2	8.3%	2	7.6%
20	-	-	-	-
21	-	-	1	3.8%

Table 11. Students' Performances in Comprehension of General Meaning and Understanding of Key Facts on Pre-test.
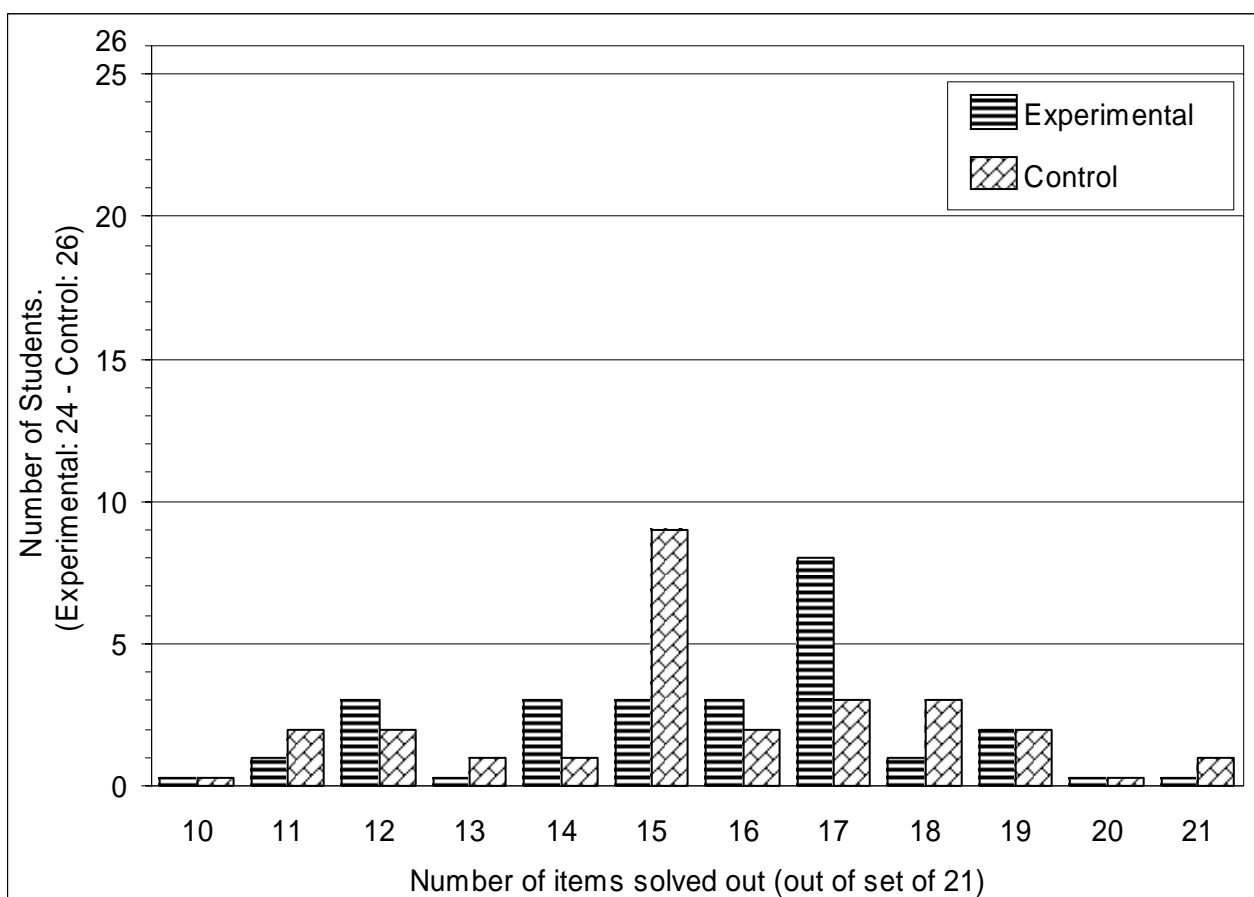
Figure 12. Histogramme of Performances in Comprehension of General Meaning and Understanding of Key Facts on 21 items on Pre-test.

Number of correct answers out of 16 items	Experimental Group (24 students)		Control Group (26 students)	
	Number of students	Percentage	Number of students	Percentage
7	-	-	-	-
8	1	4.1%	1	3.8%
9	1	4.1%	7	26.9%
10	-	-	7	26.9%
11	6	25%	4	15.3%
12	4	16.6%	3	11.5%
13	5	20.8%	3	11.5%
14	4	16.6%	-	-
15	2	8.3%	1	3.8%
16	1	4.1%	-	-

Table 12. Students' Performances in Comprehension of General Meaning and Understanding of Key Facts on Post-test.

Figure 13. Histogramme of Performances in Comprehension of General Meaning and Understanding of Key Facts on 16 items on Post-test.

Number of correct answers out of 16 items	Experimental Group (24 students)		Control Group (26 students)	
	Number of students	Percentage	Number of students	Percentage
7	-	-	1	3.8%
8	-	-	2	7.6%
9	-	-	5	19.2%
10	-	-	6	23%
11	6	25%	4	15.3%
12	8	33.3%	4	15.3%
13	4	16.6%	2	7.6%
14	4	16.6%	1	3.8%
15	2	8.3%	-	-
16	-	-	1	3.8%

Table 13. Students' Performances in Comprehension of General Meaning and Understanding of Key Facts on Retest.

Figure 14. Histogramme of Performances in Comprehension of General Meaning and Understanding of Key Facts on 16 items on Retest.
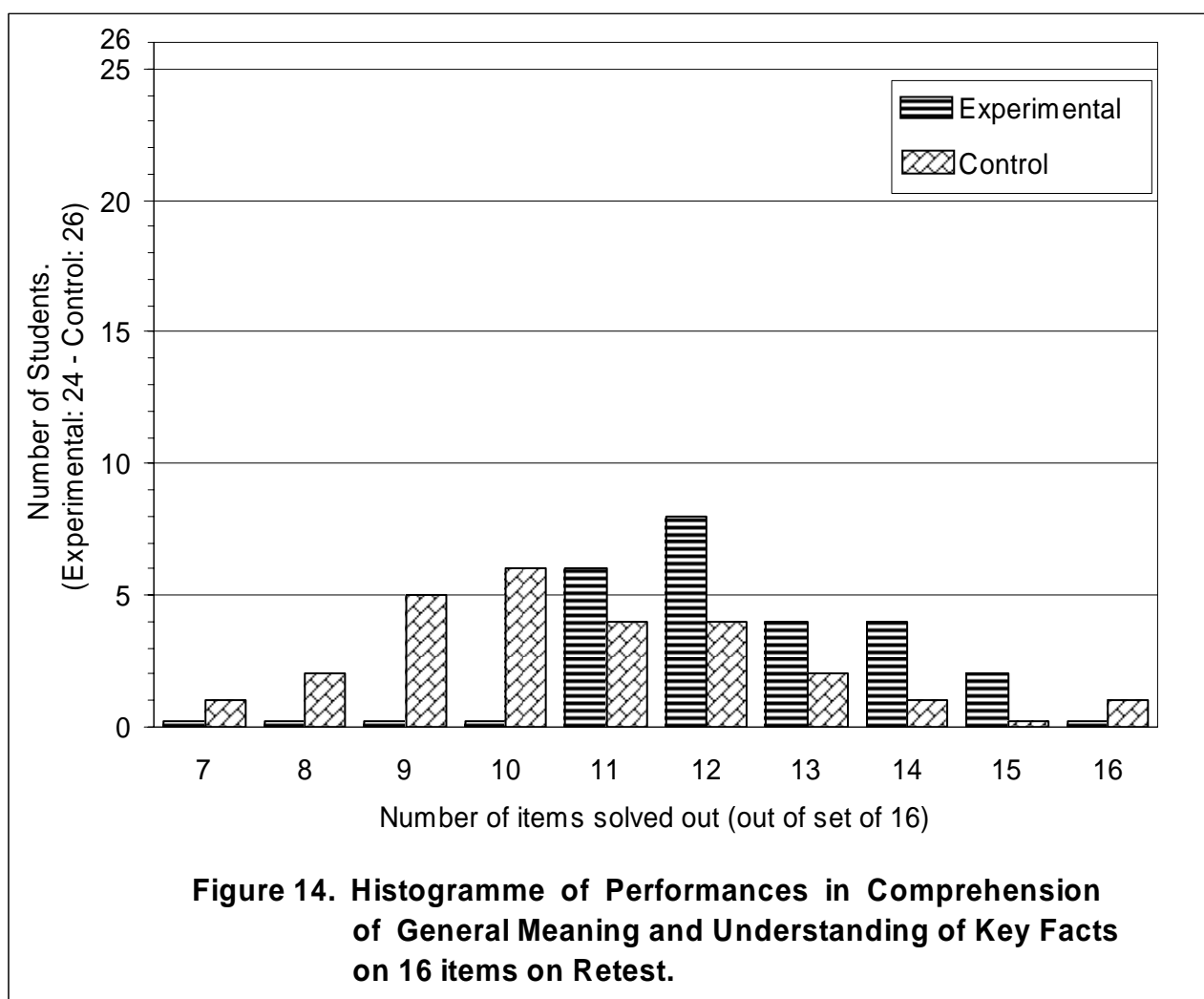
What can be retained from these achievements by students in the skills of understanding general meaning and key facts on the pre-test is that, on the whole, they all managed to obtain above-average marks and that the majority was able to produce above **14** correct answers (i.e. more than **65%** of the items). They were **20 students** out of 24 (**83.3%**) in the experimental group and **21** out of 26 (**80.7%**) in the control group to do so, with only **1** case (**3.8%**) of full scoring (**21** correct items) in the control group, all the others stopping at **19** correct items. At first sight, this looks quite good and much promising for the rest. However, it should be specified here that unlike the post- and retests whose contents were based on specific programmes that were taught properly during a full experimental course, the content of the pre-test was contrived on the assumption – though strong – that it should fit to gauge abilities of students who had been doing with English for more than 5 years according to

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standards, i.e., who were in an approximately intermediate level. Not knowing exactly what sort of learning they had had previous to their start at university, yet knowing that it would certainly admit lots of differences, we applied ourselves to construct a test that would best help us to investigate the presumed competence they were supposed to have. Of course, we might think here that that portion of the test in question in this section was too simple to serve the purpose of effective appraisal, but again we had no choice and no real alternative. We simply had to construct something adequate to their supposed level. In any case, this should not stand as a major hurdle. As we mentioned earlier, the pre-test was simply meant to help us have an insight about students' aptitudes in reading comprehension. Furthermore, this aspect of the question was to be settled in the post-experiment tests, which are more important in our purpose, for there, we were in a better posture to decide more objectively on what to include in the tests and in what amount.

Now, as to the post-experimental tests, what is surely visible this time is that the differences between the experimental group and the control one are rather clear-cut in both the post- and the retest as well. As is obvious from Table 12, the experimental students were better than the control ones. This is demonstrated by the fact that first, nearly all the students in the experimental group (**22** students, i.e. **91.6%**) succeeded in producing more than **11** correct answers out of a set of **16** (i.e. more than **68%** of the items), whereas they were only **11** (**42.3%**) in that situation in the control group; next, there were **7** students (**29.1%**) in the experimental who managed to answer correctly more than **14** items (i.e. more than **87.5%** of the items), against only **1** student (**3.8%**) in the control; and eventually, only **2** students (**8.3%**) versus **15** (**57.6%**), respectively, were in the average portion of answers (i.e. between **8** and **10** correct answers).

It follows from this that the experimental students' performance in dealing with comprehension of general meaning and key facts was well above that of the control ones, and this becomes all the more certain when these results were repeated, with even slight improvement, on the retest (see Table 18) where once again, the experimental students were much

better than their control peers and where all of the **24** of them (**100%**) managed to secure more than **11** correct answers out of a set of **16** (i.e. more than **68%** of the items), whereas they were only **12** (**46.1%**) in that case in the control group, the others scoring around average (**13** students, i.e. **50%**), and **1** student (**3.8%**) below average.

It appears from this that the experimental students were more equal to the task of understanding general meaning and key facts than the control ones. Their performance shows that despite the fact that test items were made more difficult than those which appeared in the pre-test, they were able to make good achievements, which was not really the case, unfortunately, with the control students. We may possibly think that the experimental students were smarter and more skilful in turning to their advantage the learning they received during the experiment and in coping with the demands of the final assessment. This could be explained by the fact that all throughout the learning process, they showed better perserverance, as we noticed, and a sharper sense of commitment that could have been furthered, it would seem, by better sustained attention and effort.

Let us turn now to the last representative sample of skills in the tests and comment on students' achievements in terms of accounting for comprehension of main ideas and implied meaning.

3)   It will be noticed here again that the two skills of **accounting for comprehension of main ideas and** that of **implied meaning** are associated for the simple reason that more often than not the latter is part of the former when it comes to consider learners' abilities of interpretation. It is understood that when students are requested to demonstrate in writing some adequate understanding of main ideas, implied meaning should in one way or another be reflected in their interpretations. It is an essential component in comprehension inherent to the process of constructing and decoding meaning, and it would be just meaningful and useful not to treat the two skills separately.

In the pre-test, the students' dispositions to summarize their interpretations of meaning were assessed with the means of **4** items. It was

in our opinion a sufficient amount of items to serve our purpose of building a first broad idea about their abilities. These items were in the form of questions to which students were requested to provide complete answers using, within limits of possibility, their own constructions and words. Each answer should summarize properly their comprehension of a main point or points, and the number of sentences to produce would, according to the nature of the point under scrutiny, vary between 4 to 8 to the maximum. In the post- and retests, however, the number of items was more important (**8** items each) for a more effective and reliable assessment, and the types of activities designed to check duly the abilities in the two skills also varied in format so that the student's achievement is really representative of his or her abilities. It is important to remind here that unlike the pre-test where our decisions were somehow approximate and mostly dictated by assumptions, the post- and retests were elaborated according to the experiment objectives and the activities that underlay them. Thus the testing of the two skills was not merely arranged through direct questions this time, but also included sentences to be completed with meaning derived from the text and possibly reworded. Along with that were some adjectives to be selected from a given set and used to describe in the best way some specific facts which are not presented plainly in the reading selections, and which could refer, for instance, to characters' attitudes, moods, etc.

What we noticed when we marked the pre-test papers was that a good many students wrote very awkwardly and that for quite a few the constructions were much inadequate in terms of both meaning and language use, poorly organized, and included lots of mistakes of all sorts: spelling, punctuation, grammatical structures, etc. At that moment, we really felt a feeling of anxiety at that first assessment, for the prospects looked somewhat worrisome and unpromising. But we strove not to give in to doubt and despondency for all that and we carried on. The point was to try and see what was to be done about it.

In this examination of students' achievements in the skills of accounting for main ideas and implied meaning in our present discussion,

we have decided, by reason of the different character of assessment of these two skills compared with that of the two previous ones where students' answers would either be right or wrong and therefore not pose problems of scoring, to proceed in our descriptive comment through categories of levels of production featuring the abilities and weaknesses shown by the students in their tests. These categories which cover the most accepted and frequent possibilities are :

1. Much inadequate answers + weaknesses in grammar and language use.

2. Fairly adequate answers + weaknesses in grammar and language use.

3. Fairly adequate answers + fairly good control of grammar and language use.

4. Completely adequate answers + good control of grammar and language use.

The performances by students in these skills were as follows:

	Experimental Group (24 students)		Control Group (26 students)	
	Number of students	Percentage	Number of students	Percentage
• Much inadequate answers + weaknesses in grammar and language use.	**13**	54.1%	**19**	73%
• Fairly adequate answers + weaknesses in grammar and language use.	**7**	29.1%	**7**	26.9%
• Fairly adequate answers + fairly good control of grammar and language use.	**4**	16.6%	**-**	-
• Completely adequate answers + good control of grammar and language use.	**-**	-	**-**	-

Table 14. Students' Performances in Accounting for Comprehension

of Main Ideas and Implied Meaning on Pre-test.

* Category 1 : Much inadequate answers + weaknesses in grammar and language use.
Category 2 : Fairly adequate answers + weaknesses in grammar and language use.
Category 3 : Fairly adequate answers + Fairly good control of grammar and language use.
Category 4 : Completely adequate answers + good control of grammar and language use.

Figure 15. Histogramme of Performances in Accounting for Comprehension of Main Ideas and Implied Meaning on Pre-test.

	Experimental Group (24 students)		Control Group (26 students)	
	Number of students	Percentage	Number of students	Percentage
• Much inadequate answers + weaknesses in grammar and language use.	**8**	33.3%	**12**	46.1%
• Fairly adequate answers + weaknesses in grammar and language use.	**6**	25%	**11**	42.3%
• Fairly adequate answers + fairly good control of grammar and language use.	**8**	33.3%	**3**	11.5%
• Completely adequate answers + good control of grammar and language use.	**2**	8.3%	**-**	-

Table 15. Students' Performances in Accounting for Comprehension of Main Ideas and Implied Meaning on Post-test.

* Category 1 : Much inadequate answers + weaknesses in grammar and language use.
Category 2 : Fairly adequate answers + weaknesses in grammar and language use.
Category 3 : Fairly adequate answers + Fairly good control of grammar and language use.
Category 4 : Completely adequate answers + good control of grammar and language use.

**Figure 16. Histogramme of Performances in Accounting
for Comprehension of Main Ideas and Implied
Meaning on Post-test.**

	Experimental Group (24 students)		Control Group (26 students)	
	Number of students	Percentage	**Number of students**	Percentage
• Much inadequate answers + weaknesses in grammar and language use.	**7**	29.1%	**13**	50%
• Fairly adequate answers + weaknesses in grammar and language use.	**7**	29.1%	**9**	34.6%
• Fairly adequate answers + fairly good control of grammar and language use.	**6**	25%	**4**	15.38%
• Completely adequate answers + good control of grammar and language use.	**4**	16.6%	**-**	-

**Table 16. Students' Performances in Accounting for Comprehension
of Main Ideas and Implied Meaning on Retest.**

* Category 1 : Much inadequate answers + weaknesses in grammar and language use.
Category 2 : Fairly adequate answers + weaknesses in grammar and language use.
Category 3 : Fairly adequate answers + Fairly good control of grammar and language use.
Category 4 : Completely adequate answers + good control of grammar and language use.

Figure 17. Histogramme of Performances in Accounting for Comprehension of Main Ideas and Implied Meaning on Retest.
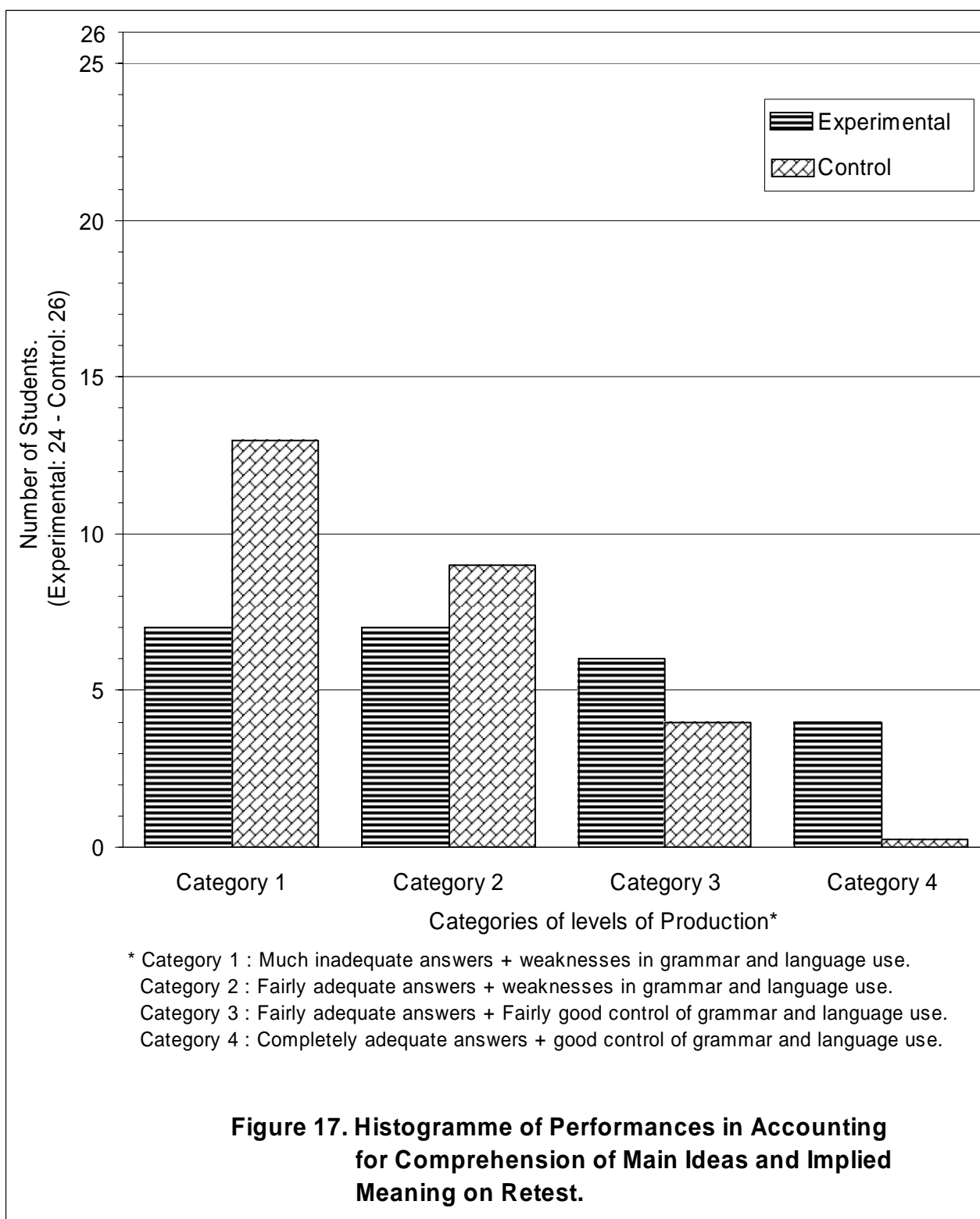
As can be seen from Table 14, the figures shown illustrate our initial observation stated above that the students' performances in the two skills of accounting for comprehension of main ideas and implied meaning on pre-test were for the most part inadequate and poor. For the majority of the students in both groups (**54.1%** in the experimental and **73%** in the control) the results were very low and quite alarming. **11** students (**45.8%**) in the experimental group managed to produce fairly adequate answers of which only **4** (**16.6%**) showed fairly good control of grammar and language use, whereas they were only **7** (**26.9%**) in the control to give fairly adequate answers but all of them, yet, uncovering real gaps in grammar and language use. There were no students on either side as can be noticed, to produce completely adequate answers backed by some good control of grammar and language use.

So, unlike the performances made in the previous skills, i.e., comprehension of general meaning and key facts, which were more than less promising as we mentioned above, here the productions were much inadequate. This could be explained by the fact that abilities in the previous sample were to be shown merely by "True – False – Information not given" answers, whereas when it came to demonstrate one's ability of understanding through appropriate writing, the task unveiled seriously the students' imperfections and lack of mastery in writing. What we may derive from this, therefore, is that if indeed there were some adequate aptitudes in understanding properly the general meaning of a text and its key facts through simply agreeing or disagreeing, a lot remained to be done when the duty was to account intelligibly with two or three sentences for the comprehension of main ideas and implied meaning. On account of this observation, decision was taken to cater as much as possible for this deficiency, and lots of activities aiming at arising students' awareness of writing correctly and simply small pieces of accounts to express concisely understanding of main ideas and implied meaning, were arranged during the experiment with both groups.

Unfortunately for us, however, not too much was to be fulfilled subsequently as a result of our effort, and only few students seemed to have taken advantage of this. Nevertheless, it is fairly understood that in our

position we could not have greater ambition than reason in this, for our duty was more confined to reading than it was related to writing, and time limitations (2 hours per week) would certainly not permit to provide for everything. Such job of ameliorating and upgrading requires more than that time volume certainly, and also the efficient conjunction of other teachings like writing, grammar, and so forth.

Anyway, the results in the post-test showed as we have just pointed out a slight improvement. As can be seen from Table 15, the number of students in the experimental group who rose to the challenge and task of producing adequate answers in every respect is now **2** (**8.3%**) versus **none** in the control group. The number of students with severe inadequacies dropped on either side – from **13** (**54.1%**) to **8** (**33.3%**) in the experimental and from **19** (**73%**) to **12** (**46%**) in the control –, but is still regarded important in the control group. The portion which seemed to have enjoyed some improvement in the experimental group is that which included the students who managed to mend somehow their imperfections in grammar and language and produce fairly adequate answers. They were **4** (**16.6%**) previous to the experiment, they were **8** (**33.3%**) on the post-test. In the case of the control group, only **3** students (**11.5%**) managed to shift up to that category. Whereas in the category concerned with students who could now produce fairly adequate answers but still with some mistakes in grammar and language use, the more important change was noticed in the control group where they were **7** such students (**26.9%**) prior to the experiment and were now **11** (**42.3%**).

By and large, we may acknowledge some progress – with a slightly apparent advantage for the experimental group, but this was achieved only by a small number of students.

The retest displayed, on the whole, about the same results (see Table 16). There were virtually no major differences except for the fact that **2** other students from the experimental group managed to fill their gaps and produce completely adequate answers with good control of grammar and language use, making thereby the number of such cases climb to **4** (**16.6%**). And if this may possibly not be perceived as an important

advancement to cause any major impact on the whole, it will at least reinforce our idea that progress is indeed possible if students exert themselves more to make up for lost time, and if some basic conditions like adequate time, means, and opportunities for innovative initiatives are gathered.

So, although it was not perhaps as observable as it was with the skills of comprehension of global meaning and key facts that we discussed previously, there was somehow a relatively small part of improvement by students post-experimentally in the skills of summarizing comprehension of main ideas and implied meaning. For instance, at the simple computation and observation that between the pre-test and the retest, the combined number of students who answered and accounted for their understanding adequately/accurately and fairly adequately/fairly accurately climbed from **4** to **10** out of **24** students (i.e. from **16.6%** to **41.6%**) in the experimental group versus **0** to **4** out of **26** students (i.e. from **0%** to **15.3%**) in the control group – marking thus a rise by **25%** and **15.3%**, respectively –, there is some justification and reason to agree that there was indeed some improvement. Of course, a lot remains to be done as we said, but we do have here some appreciable signs of progress in interpreting meaning of texts when the training for such purpose is fostered by the recourse to drama scripts, and we do have also some unmistakable marks of difference between achievements resulting from the inclusion of this innovative way of teaching and learning reading comprehension and those from a more conventional one.

6. Some inferences.

In the light of all the students' results so far, we think that we can possibly advance now that the use of drama scripts in the reading class for foreign learners can contribute sensitively to develop some abilities in reading and that it can improve fairly expressively the reading skills. This is first suggested by the positive differences recorded with the experimental students between the pre-experiment appraisal of their abilities and the post-practice assessment of these, and which were more noticeable than those observed with the control students. Then, it is indicated by the more important number of individual good scores recorded twice – on post- and retest –, and which bear witness to not only outdoing but also to progress and constancy of progress as well. Lastly, it is shown by the better overall means noted also twice for the group and which unmistakably attest to some good achievement. Moreover, this positive observation is also reinforced by the appreciable improvement demonstrated by the experimental students in terms of vocabulary knowledge – though this was shared about as equally by the control ones –, by the remarkable improvement exhibited in the skills of understanding general meaning and key facts and in which they outclassed their fellows in the control group, and finally, by the moderate but promising progress they showed in the skills of accounting for interpretation of main ideas and implied meaning and where they proved a little more equal to the task than their control peers.

These elements in hands, combined with our observations and interpretations of students responsive attitudes during the experiment and the rather favourable reception they showed to the practice of reading drama extracts and their eagerness to make the most of it, would let us think that this kind of incorporation in a course of reading comprehension is much seminal and promising. This could possibly be explained by our notice during the experiment that dealing with drama seemed to increase students' attention and motivation, for they seemed to find it much adequate to their needs and interests in that it offered them some good opportunities for exposure to language as somewhat used in natural contexts and which might have been felt as somewhat practical and useful.

On the other hand, drama scripts can also provide students with themes, topics and situations which can be so life-like – especially with contemporary drama – and so close to their concern that they are readily gripped and carried away into their discovery, discussion and study. In some way, it changes them a little from the too often academic and formal language of some other genres of texts and offers an alternative of more humane and existential issues where characters interact, clash, conspire, argue, reason, and even philosophize and all through a language that will certainly serve some good purposes. Of course, the academic language of formal texts, passages and articles is needful to their learning, but the language and topics of drama texts look more practical and seem to bring some freshness, some liveliness and some cheerfulness to their classes. This does not mean, however, that the language included in the scripts was purely and always colloquial and informal. In some plays it included dialogues from a quite formal register, as was the case, for instance, with the extract culled from the one-act play 'The Other Player' that we proposed in our experimental teaching content. This brings us to the next consideration on the usefulness of drama extracts that the experience of various registers by students is another interesting aspect of learning that should not be disregarded in the learning they receive, for it would clearly contribute to develop relevantly their awareness of the different levels of language use that may occur with the change of settings, classes, or circles.

The next advantage that seems to make the exploitation of drama scripts interesting in the foreign language class is the concrete possibilities that such practice offers in terms of interaction with the teacher about the issues underlying the extract studied in the reading session. The host of tasks and activities that can be organized for the purpose of reflecting on the reading material and exploring the ideas raised within provides some good opportunities for students to express their views, make comments and share some debate that will undoubtedly foster such strategies in the process of reading as speculating, predicting, guessing, making hypotheses and inferring, and which are considered as extremely important, not to say vital, towards the goal of deriving meaning and working out solutions to the hidden senses of a text. These opportunities of interaction can very

likely be conducive to concern and permanent alertness which will enable the students to remain active participants all throughout the reading process.

During our experiment, we indeed noticed that students' involvement and participation grew more and more noticeable as we advanced. Students seemed to appreciate the fact that many difficulties can be surmounted in their quest of meaning when a friendly exchange of views and opinions in a relaxed atmosphere is made possible, with the teacher as a sort of moderator to encourage the talks and keep them going on through hints and prompts. The multiplicity of points of view and arguments ensuing from this helps in a good way achieve comprehension and learn how to peer adequately into a text by looking at the clues scattered throughout if one aims at cracking some of the implied meaning it harbours.

As a matter of fact, this role of the teacher as a facilitator in the process of understanding meaning and as an advisor prompting learners' awareness and exhorting students to develop and use appropriate strategies to reach comprehension is stressed by Silberstein who reports Clarcke and Silberstein (1977) writing:

> "it becomes the responsibility of the teacher to train
> students to determine their own goals and strategies for a
> particular reading … to encourage students to take risks,
> to guess, to ignore their impulses to be always correct."

(1994 : 10)

With the practice we initiated in our experimental course with drama scripts, we came to notice indeed that by and by students started to release themselves more and more from the apprehension of unknown meaning. They seemed to have understood that the development and putting into effect of some reading strategies on their own was essential in understanding the meanings of a text and that this was not, as they might possibly have thought before, an impossible task.

The following feature of learning that can be of good benefit to students dealing with drama scripts in reading is to be accounted for in

terms of the writing opportunities that such practice offers through the exploration and exploitation of an extract.

The activities that can be designed to improve writing abilities are various and multiple. These can range from the writing of brief summaries to answer some questions in relation with the happenings, attitudes, and issues either stated or to be inferred from the passage, to that of a more creative nature like the writing of an imaginary descriptive paragraph about the setting or the portrait of a character involved in the events, or the contrivance of a sequel in a dialogue form to the extract studied in class. On this perspective, Scarcella and Oxford write:

> "In the dramatic monolog, for instance, each student selects one of the characters in a literary work and taking into consideration the character's feelings, ideas, and style of speech, assumes the role of the character and writes about a particular situation or issue. The dramatic dialog, which is similar to the dramatic monolog, involves writing conversations between the characters of a story, play, or poem."

(1990 : 133)

This, we experimented with our students and we were surprised at what they could achieve and create when they are spurred adequately. For example, after the study of the second extract of our experimental teaching content from "Hello and Goodbye" by Athol Fugard (see extract 2, Appendix 1), we requested our students to write as a homework a short continuation of the dialogue between the characters Johnnie and Hester in which they will either bring out Johnnie's suspicion towards his sister's unexpected arrival, or Hester's disappointment to see that the real facts did not match her plans. Here are 3 examples we have selected from what the students wrote to illustrate our point. There were very few mistakes in the original drafts. Those mistakes which have been corrected here were for most of them misspelling mistakes. But there has been no editing on our part. The dialogues have been preserved in their original writing.

Sample 1: Kahina chose to highlight "**Johnnie's suspicion towards his sister's unexpected arrival**". This is what she wrote:

Dialogue:

(Johnny stopped and just went on looking at his sister)

Hester:　What? Why are you staring at me like that?

Johnny:　Well, I'm just surprised to see you here. It seems so strange.

Hester:　Why do you say that? I've just come back to visit my old father. There's nothing strange in doing this.

Johnny:　I don't think so.
　　　　　 (Hester didn't answer. She looked away from her brother)

Johnny:　I wonder what you've been doing during all these years.

Hester:　I've been working.

Johnny:　Working … . Yes …

Hester:　I had to change my way of life.

Johnny:　Perhaps you've changed it, but your behaviour is still the same.

Hester:　Why don't you mind your own business instead of behaving like a cop?

Johnny:　I just wanted to know why you left us.

Hester:　I couldn't stand living here any more.
　　　　　 I couldn't stand looking at your faces every day. I had to go. To earn some money.

Johnny:　… and now that you've lost everything you've decided to come back.

Hester:　What do you mean?

Johnny:　You've heard about father's accident, haven't you? This is why you came back.

(Hester remained silent for a long moment and then replied)

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Hester: I see that you're no longer a little child, you've grown up now, you can understand.

Johnny: I was right, then.

(Hester didn't answer and left)

Sample 2: Manel chose to highlight "**Hester's disappointment to see that the real facts did not match her plans**". This is what she wrote:

Dialogue:

Hester: Let's forget about those little things and talk about some serious ones.

Johnny: Like what?!

Hester: What source of means do you live on?

I know that you don't work.

Johnny: You know as well as me that it is our father's pension.

Hester: It must be an important one.

Johnny: I see now, you'd be really disappointed.

Hester: Look, I really need this money, I'm gonna get it no matter what.

Johnny: Even if it is 5 or 8£.

Hester: What?! What you mean 5£?

Hester went over to the bed of his father, took violently the box. Only 3£ were left.

Hester *(with anger):* All this trip for 3£! You are badly off and will always be.

Johnny: Nobody invited you to come.

Hester: And I'm gonna leave right now, nothing much expected from miserables.

Johnny: Hit the road Hester, don't you ever come back.

(Hester took the 3£, her suitcase and went out.)

Sample 3: Lina chose to highlight "**Johnnie's suspicion**". This is what she wrote:

Dialogue:

Johnny: Hester, why did you come back home suddenly?

Hester: I feel that you are not happy to see me.

Johnny: This is not important, I want to know why did you remember us only after 14 years?

Hester: I learned that dad was ill.

Johnny: Today, he is better and he doesn't need your presence, but I'm sure that there is another reason for your coming.

Hester: You are right, I learned about father's compensation and I hope that he will help me with some money because I am in a very bad situation.

Johnny: You are a very selfish and heartless girl. And you know you have no right in this pension because you had forgotten both of your task of being a sister and a daughter.

Hester: I realize that I was wrong when I decided to come back because I have no part in your life.

Johnny: Exactly, so take your suitcase and forever goodbye.

As can be noticed, this looks rather promising as creative writing. Of course, there is some clumsiness and perhaps inadequacies, but we find it quite satisfactory on the whole, and we will not conceal that these productions and others as well, really rejoiced us at their reading and drove us, as a result, to promote earnestly this approach in our classes and cater for the students' needs to create and express their ideas in writing. The ultimate outcome on this aspect of learning was fairly positive we would say, and by the end of the experiment we indeed took note of the more pronounced carefulness and tidiness that a good proportion of the students showed now in their attempts of writing simply and adequately.

All things considered, we think that there were some good signs of progress and that students seemed to have benefited in a good measure from the practice they had both in class and at home at this level of learning that is writing.

The last account we will provide in this discussion to back our initial claim on the usefulness of drama scripts in reading will encompass the prospect of skill integration that such practice offers room to in language learning. Generally, when we talk of skills in language learning, we refer to them individually as if they were isolated and independent from one another. Yet, this is hardly the case, not to say impossible. Most of the time skills are inter-connected, each of them involving two or more others. In fact, very frequently during a lesson, one skill is at the centre of interest and the others revolve around it, and it is only if this permanent interaction is fostered that rich learning experiences can be expected. Recent research has stressed the importance and benefit of integrating all the skills in the learning process, for such promotion prepares the learners to become functional further on in their use of the target language and there from opens up credible prospects for competence in communication.

> "   Language skills can and should be integrated in
> ESL classes for the purpose of providing extensive
> practice in real-life communication."

<div align="right">(Scarcella and Oxford, 1990 : 91)</div>

This principle can also and fairly be applied to EFL learning, and as a matter of fact, it happens that the exploitation of drama scripts in the reading class can allow for that very significantly. We all know that a meaningful and life-like content of language will surely enhance students' motivation and heighten their interest. Due to their authentic and inspiring character, drama scripts can offer a rich learning content that will make the activation of all the skills at the same time very possible and, thereby, the learning experience much consistent and successful. Besides, a suitable exposure of learners to some authentic kind of language supported by interesting and motivating activities, which forward the coalition of all the skills (reading, listening, speaking, writing), will obviously offer many conveniences for both learners and teacher. For example, skill integration can help learners improve in both the chief skill under shaping (in our concern, reading) and the subsidiary ones concurrently. For the teacher adopting it, it will permit a better appreciation of either learners' overall progress, which can, as understood, be shown in all the skills operating at the same time or in alternation, or the possible disparities between the skills, and thus will enable him or her to take the right measures that will mend and compensate for some deficiencies.

As a point of fact, this way of proceeding combined with the opportunities of skill integration that drama scripts afforded us in our experiment and experience, helped us make many observations and judgements about students' strong and weak points, which allowed us furtherly to take some decision about what to cater for in priority, rectify, insist on, re-teach or reinforce to the best of our possibilities. This way of doing was, we believe, of good benefit for us and the students. During our classes, students found lots of opportunities to use language, correct some of their imperfections in pronouncing words and producing appropriate stress and intonation, listen, construct meaning, reformulate discourse, read, and write, and this was on the whole much positive and profitable to them.

By and large, we honestly think that this experience, though short, was fairly rich in learning in general, and much challenging and favourable to the improvement of reading in particular.

7. Practical Pedagogical Implications.

The analysis and discussion of the results emerging from our experiment have shown that the outcomes are in some good measure in agreement with our initial assumptions about the appropriateness of using drama scripts to improve the reading skills in the EFL classroom. It will perhaps not be an overstatement to say that these results do present some concrete evidence for the justification of our initial claim and thinking over the matter.

In our experiment we applied this practice as a means to implement in the foreign language reading class with freshmen at university more particularly, and with the intent of improving their reading skills. In other words, it is a practice meant more precisely to heighten their awareness in reading and improve their competence in the same way that the practice of other genres of texts would purport to. Therefore, and as we suggested it in our introduction, it should not be assimilated with the specific approaches of literature. It would be understood consequently, that a possible inclusion of drama extracts or complete one-act play scripts would best suit the needs of learners in intermediate levels of general English at large, and more particularly, students of the first year at university majoring in English and preparing for a subsequent confrontation with works of literature introduced later in the second year of their course.

It has been noticed in the Department of English of the Faculty of Letters and Languages at the University of Algiers that many students entering the second year and finding themselves abruptly exposed to novels and plays seem to find it much troublesome to meet the requirements of literary studies, and appear to have a hard time indeed approaching classical works and grappling with literary conventions. Therefore, we tend to think that a reasonable and progressive preparation for this task becomes crucial and that students do need at an early stage of their studies some acquaintance and familiarization with literary materials in order to shape

some adequate strategies of approach and lessen their anxieties and apprehensions. Some basic use of drama scripts arranged by the teachers in the module of reading comprehension will certainly do students a good service and initiate them gently to some general features typical to the exploration of literary works, like characterization, setting, plot etc., and help them learn how to peer adequately into this genre with the goal of extracting and deriving not only overt but also covert and figurative meaning as well.

On the level of writing, this will also prepare them to make some real attempts at producing appropriate answers and short accounts including simple and sound sentences on either level of content or accuracy of writing. This preparatory exercise will certainly be of good profit for the students at this stage of their studies in that it will enable them to develop some ability and efficacy that many of them are desperately in need of, so that down the road they can manage to tackle adequately longer stretches of accounts in the various modules of their course.

Furthermore, this incorporation of drama scripts in their classes of reading will surely contribute pertinently the development of students' communicative competence. We all know that in a foreign context of language like ours, the classroom remains the sole place where this competence is likely to be developed, and the classroom being in one way or another an artificial setting, this competence will best be acquired under an optimal action of input, interaction and output. Therefore, for the purpose of shaping some communicative competence in the most promising way, models of communicative situations closest possible to real life need to be brought to the classroom in order to allow genuinely for life-like opportunities of communicative behaviour. This can be made possible by exposing the learners to a type of input presenting as much authentic language as possible so that the kind of interaction that it brings about will increase their chances for a communicative use of language between them

and the teacher and among themselves, and will, thereby, allow for the emergence of some meaningful and acceptable type of output. Luckily, the exploitation of drama scripts can offer room for that, owing to the communicative perspectives it presents and also to the interesting interchanges that such exploitation may foster either during the discussion over the script in study, or during the rehearsal meetings that can be arranged for subsequent performing.

We have good faith in the potential and virtue of this kind of practice and we do recommend its taking into due consideration by teachers dealing with reading comprehension and its integration among their activities and programmes. It will very likely meet many learners' interests and needs and will certainly increase their confidence and motivation.

8. Summary and Conclusion.

Basically, the object of this study was to investigate the effects that some particular innovative teaching techniques and materials based on drama might have had on learners' reading skills in terms of improvement and benefit, and in terms of the ways through which this improvement and benefit would be manifested. Put differently, this classroom study aimed to inquire into the possible improvement that exposure to drama scripts in the reading class might have generated with students in their first year of English studies at university.

This investigation was conducted through an experiment that involved two groups of learners, one of which was the experimental group and the other the control one. The experiment proceeded through the required steps and kept scrupulously to the current empirical principles of research procedure. It was initiated, as recommended, with a pre-experiment test appraisal of standards and for efficient comparative assessment and reliability, and was closed with two post-practice ones, i.e., a post-test and a retest. The experiment during which the experimental group was put through the practice under examination – i.e., extracts of plays – and the control group exposed to a traditional reading content, lasted 40 hours and its progress was on the whole quite satisfactory. In either group students put their minds to it and showed about equal steadiness and cooperation, although at no time were they aware that their learning was taking place within the framework of a post-graduation investigation. We thought from the beginning that it was of no use advising them of that lest they should be cramped by some kind of inhibition that could possibly affect the easy course of the project. And thus, we judged it wiser to keep them in ignorance of that.

The results we derived from the assessment of the students at the termination of the experiment combined with the observations we collected all throughout the exercise converge to show that the different programmes and practices through which our groups were taught reading yielded indeed some differences of fairly marked significance in outcome. They also stand in favour and support of our original assumptions and claim about the efficiency of experiencing drama scripts with students in their reading

classes. As a matter of fact, this was demonstrated by the fact that on either post- or retest, the experimental students outdid their peers in the control group, and on both tests improvement was on their side and differences at their advantage either when we compare their pre- and post-experiment accomplishments, or when we do that with the two post-practice ones, i.e., accomplishments at post- and retests. On the opposite side, the performance recorded by the control students remained on the whole about the same and no marked change distinguished their outcomes.

In a more elaborate way, we also demonstrated in our discussion of results that improvement for the experimental group was, contrary to that in the control one, relatively shown at practically every level, i.e., in vocabulary knowledge, in the comprehension of global meaning and key facts, and in the interpretation and accounting for main ideas and implied meaning – although perhaps at a lesser degree in the last one. Those appreciable outcomes by the students of the experimental group were noticeable enough and the improvement they exhibited sufficiently conspicuous to let us conclude safely and with no magnification that those outcomes and that improvement were indeed the end result of exposure to the experimental innovative content and practice to which they were submitted during their course. Very seemingly, the type of reading experience that both groups enjoyed each on their side had a different incidence on them. While the control students seemed not to have turned it to some real good account and not to have pulled themselves forward although they showed sincere exertion all along the course, the experimental ones managed fairly adequately to make the most of it and to translate it into real good achievement. All things considered, this could be ascribed, as we commented on it in our discussion, to some factors that distinguished peculiarly the practice in question, like *the novelty of the practice itself, *the unusual kind and quality of some activities that whetted students' curiosity and prompted them to take real interest and involvement in the task, *the catching and life-like character of the topics and the situations underlying them, *the variety and vividness of the language they encountered in that practice, *the stimulating challenge they were called on to tackle in that experience,*the fairly substantial amount of communicative language patterns they were provided with, *the many

opportunities they were rightly afforded to express ideas and opinions, to interact adequately, and to concretely manipulate some language in class, and thereby, broaden their knowledge of language use, *the promotional perspective of fostering some strategies of value in the reading process (like exploiting clues, making assumptions, guessing, predicting, speculating, anticipating, inferring etc.), and finally, *the genuine possibility of enjoying some rich reading material and learning sessions in which themes and issues were so close to their concerns and interests, and during which all of the chief skills (i.e. reading, speaking, listening, and writing) were exercised alternately.

In the final analysis, it is our belief that **1)** there is some good evidence in our findings to support our position on the pertinence and usefulness of including beside other reading genres this kind of material and practice in one's reading classes with foreign language learners, and that **2)** there are some serious grounds for us to think that such introduction will, without a doubt, contribute concurrently to the enhancement of strategies and abilities on the one hand, and to the raising of interest and enjoyment of reading on the other. Richard Day and Julian Bamford (1997) remind us that

> "   The primary consideration in all reading instruction should be for students to experience reading as pleasurable and useful. Only then will they be drawn to the reading they must do to become fluent readers. And only then will they develop an eagerness to learn new skills to help them become better readers."

<div align="right">(in Day and Bamford, 1998 : 164)</div>

In our opinion, using drama scripts with students striving to build some reading competence in a foreign language learning context offers an ideal scope for these recommendations to take shape. With such practice implemented appropriately, we are fairly confident to venture to assume that eagerness bound with improvement will without fail materialize in the reading classroom.

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Appendices.

Appendix 1.

Experiment Teaching Content.

Extract 1 : From Lower Depths
by Tunde Ikoli

Scene : The following dialogue is extracted from a play by Tunde Ikoli called *The Lower Depths*. The scene of the play is a house in a poor **neighbourhood** of London. The house includes many rooms which are **rented** by workers who are **badly off**. The dialogue you are going to read takes place between two **lodgers** called Teacher and Rutter.

Script :

Teacher : D'you have a spare tea bag ?

Rutter : No.

Teacher : Perhaps I could share the one you have ?

Rutter : No.

Teacher : No ?

Rutter : That's right. No !

Teacher : But why ?

Rutter : Buy your own.

Teacher : I would if could but I can't.

Rutter : So, what d'you want me to do about it ?

Teacher : A cup of tea, please ?

Rutter : No.

Teacher : I see … what's happened to the fellowship of man, brotherly love ?

Exploitation :

Title of play	Author	Aims and skills involved	Activity type	Timing
Lower Depths	Tunde Ikoli	- Checking students' understanding and sense of cohesion and coherence; - Sensitizing students about how words in the language of a reading passage are central to its meaning; - Understanding relations between the parts of a text; - Inferring content meaning not explicitly stated; - Interpreting meaning by going outside the text.	- Re-ordering of lines + gap filling; - Matching of lexical items with definitions - Short answers to check ability of comprehending meaning beyond the words of the text.	3 hours

Activity 1 : *Some lines of the dialogue have been removed and are given in a jumbled way below the text. Read and decide where to put each of the missing line.*

Teacher : D'you have a ***spare*** tea bag ?
Rutter : No.
Teacher : ……………………………
Rutter : No.
Teacher : ……………………………
Rutter : That's right. No!
Teacher : But why ?
Rutter : Buy your own.
Teacher : ……………………………
Rutter : So, what d'you want me to do about it?
Teacher : A cup of tea, please ?
Rutter : No.
Teacher : ……………………………

Missing lines :
1. I would if I could but I can't.
2. I see … what's happened to the ***fellowship*** of man, brotherly love ?
3. no ?
4. perhaps I could ***share*** the one you have ?

Activity 2 : *Can you say what kinds of relations between the lines in the dialogue helped you to put the missing lines in the right places.*

………………………………………………………………………………………………….
………………………………………………………………………………………………….
………………………………………………………………………………………………….
………………………………………………………………………………………………….

Activity 3 : *Read both the introduction to the scene and the dialogue and match these words with their definitions. Decide which is **noun**, **verb** or **adjective**.*

1. depth
2. neighbourhood
3. rented
4. badly off
5. lodgers
6. spare
7. share
8. fellowship

a. additional to what is needed or used
b. friendhip
c. have or use with someone, give part of something to somebody else
d. district, area, surroundings
e. occupied or used in return for a fixed regular payment
f. poor, without means, miserable
g. opposite of height, distance from the top of something down
h. persons paying for rooms they occupy in somebody's house

1. ………. 2. ………. 3. ………. 4. ………. 5. ………. 6. ………. 7. ………. 8. ……….

Activity 4 : *Read and answer*

1. In line 3, Teacher makes a request of Rutter and uses a specific language. He uses 'perhaps' and 'could'. What do you think is the reason ?
   If he said, for instance, "Can I share the one you have ?, would this change something ? if yes, what and how ?
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………….
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………….
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………….

2. In line 5, Teacher repeats Rutter's 'No' of the previous line.
   What does this show ?
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………….
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………….
   ………………………………………………………………………………………………….

3. What do you think Teacher means to say by ' … what's happened to the fellowship of man, brotherly love ?'.
   What do you think are his feelings in saying this ?
   ……
   ……
   ……
4. In the light of what you have read, what kind of person do you think Rutter is ? Teacher is ?
   ……
   ……
   ……
5. What do you think the relationship between the two men is ?
   ……
   ……
   ……

Closing Activity : *After the answers are discussed, have several pairs of students perform the extract, placing emphasis on intonation and naturalness of speech.*

Extract 2 : From Hello and Goodbye
by Athol Fugard

Scene : *The scene is set in a shack in a sordid district of a ghetto somewhere in South Africa. Johnnie and his elder sister, who has been away from home for about fifteen years and who has just got back, are recalling some memories of their childhood.*

Script :

JOHNNIE : You used to throw stones at me.

HESTER   : Not really.

JOHNNIE : You did, you know.

HESTER   : I mean I never really aimed at you.

JOHNNIE : (*persistent in his memory*) Once or twice …

HESTER   : When you wouldn't go back!

JOHNNIE : … they came quite close.

HESTER   : 'Where you going, Hester ?' 'Can I come with Hester?'

JOHNNIE : Because you were supposed to look after me.

HESTER   : Didn't I?

JOHNNIE : Not always.

HESTER   : What you complaining about? You're still alive.

JOHNNIE : That's true.

Exploitation :

Title of play	Author	Aims and skills involved	Activity type	Timing
Hello and Goodbye	Athol Fugard	- reading for details; - using imagination to go beyond the text; - improving students oral abilities; - raising students' awareness of grammatical uses and language type; - reinforcing students' ability to contrive dialogues based on a given situation;	- talking about one's own experiences before reading a text; - explaining words by selecting appropriate definitions; - studying the language used in the text; - checking comprehension of text through true/false answers; - speculating about setting and characters; - expanding the story by writing a sequel to the dialogue;	4 hours

Activity 1 :   *Pre-reading discussion*
- *Introduce the topic about relationships between brothers and sisters by asking students to think about some of the differences which can cause conflicts at home between them and the reasons for their disputes.*
- *Ask students to relate about their own relationships with their brothers and sisters if they have any, whether they get along well with them and what they like or dislike about them.*

Activity 2 :   *Explain the words by choosing the appropriate definitions*

1. 'shack'	means:	**A1.** a hut	**B1.** a villa	
2. 'sordid',	means:	**A2.** poor and comfortless	**B2.** opulent and comfortable	
3. 'ghetto'	means:	**A3.** poor part of a city in which people of underprivileged classes live	**B3.** smart section of a city in which well-off people live	
4. 'recall'	means:	**A4.** to remember	**B4.** to joke about	
5. 'memories'	means:	**A5.** souvenirs	**B5.** remembrances	
6. 'persistent'	means:	**A6.** determined	**B6.** unsure about	
7. 'close'	means:	**A7.** distant	**B7.** very near	

Activity 3 :   *Answer **True (T), False (F),** or **Information not given (ING).***

1. Johnnie lives in a slum ………………………
2. Johnnie is younger than Hester ………………………
3. Johnnie is aged about twenty. ………………………
4. When he was little Johnnie would try to follow his sister when she went out. ………………………
5. Hester would not appreciate that. ………………………
6. She used to dissuade him and turn him a way by locking him up. ………………………
7. Johnnie wanted to follow his sister because he was afraid to stay alone. ………………………
8. Hester does not seem to appreciate the reproach that her brother is making to her. ………………………

Activity 4: *Use the elements given to you in the text and your guessing ability and answer these questions:*
1. How would you describe the place where the situation takes place ?

………………………………………………………………………………………………..
………………………………………………………………………………………………..
………………………………………………………………………………………………..

2. What kind of person do you think Hester is ?

………………………………………………………………………………………………..
………………………………………………………………………………………………..
………………………………………………………………………………………………..

3. What kind of person do you think Johnnie is ?

………………………………………………………………………………………………..
………………………………………………………………………………………………..
………………………………………………………………………………………………..

4. How do you think they feel about each other ?

………………………………………………………………………………………………..
………………………………………………………………………………………………..
………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Activity 5 :
- *Once the students have answered the questions and confronted their opinions, teacher hands out this extension of the background as provided by the author. The extension is discussed briefly for new reconsiderations if the students' initial judgement was different from the author's :*

Background:

Johnnie is living with his father in a two-room shack in Valley Road. The father is blind and a cripple … victim of a blasting accident when he worked for the South African Railways. Johnnie looks after him – feeding, washing, dressing, carrying. They exist on the old man's pension. One night, after ten years absence, his sister arrives back unexpectedly at the little house. All she possesses in the world she has with her in an old and battered suitcase. Her purpose is revealed. She believes the old man was paid 'hundreds of pounds' compensation by the S.A.R. for the accident. It is in a box under his bed. She wants the money. Is ready to steal. Eventually, even prepared to kill the old man to get it. None of these possibilities happens. She leaves Johnnie and the old man together.

Activity 6 : *Two verb forms are used in the text to show habits and repeated actions in the past. What are they ? Use them in 2 examples of your own.*

………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………

Activity 7 :
1. *The language used in the text is*
   a. informal and direct   b. formal and refined
2. *Justify your answer by providing 3 examples from the text.*

………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………

Activity 8 :
- *Students are then made to act out the dialogue in pairs.*
- *Extension Activity : (To be done as a home task) Now that you are familiar with the story of 'Hello and Goodbye' and with its characters, write a short continuation to the dialogue between Johnnie and Hester in which you will either bring out Johnnie's suspicion towards his sister's unexpected arrival, or Hester's disappointment to see that the real facts did not match her plans.*

Extract 3 : From The Dumb Waiter
by Harold Pinter

Script :

BEN :   What's that ?

GUS :   I don't know.

BEN :   Where did it come from ?

GUS :   Under the door.

BEN :   Well, what is it ?

GUS :   I don't know (*They stare at it.*)

BEN :   Pick it up

GUS :   What do you mean ?

BEN :   Pick it up!

        (*Gus slowly moves towards it, bends and picks it up.*)

        What is it ?

GUS :   An envelope

BEN :   Is there anything on it ?

GUS :   No.

BEN :   Is it sealed ?

GUS :   Yes.

BEN :   Open it.

GUS :   What ?

BEN :   Open it!

Exploitation :

Title of play	Author	Aims and skills involved	Activity type	Timing
The Dumb Waiter	Harold Pinter	- skimming and understanding of gist; - understanding specific use of language. - Extrapolating text and creating;	- True/false/we don't know/ answers to check understanding of main points; - Short answers to check ability of comprehending purpose of the language used and of speculating about the kind of situation involved; - Writing sequels of dialogue based on a selected situation;	4 hours

Activity 1 :   *Read quickly the script and answer **True / False / We don't know***.

1. Ben and Gus are most probably in a room. ………………………

2. They both sound surprised and nervous. ………………………

3. Ben sounds authoritative. ………………………

4. Ben sounds more anxious than Gus. ………………………

5. The letter is anonymous. ………………………

Activity 2 :   *Read again and answer using your guessing ability when necessary.*

1. What kind of atmosphere does the situation suggest ?

    ………………………………………………………………………………………..

    ………………………………………………………………………………………..

    ………………………………………………………………………………………..

2. What sort of sentences are used for that ? Why, in your opinion ?

    ………………………………………………………………………………………..

    ………………………………………………………………………………………..

    ………………………………………………………………………………………..

3. What do you think Gus and Ben could be ?

    ………………………………………………………………………………………..

    ………………………………………………………………………………………..

    ………………………………………………………………………………………..

4. What do you think the situation could be ?

    ………………………………………………………………………………………..

    ………………………………………………………………………………………..

    ………………………………………………………………………………………..

Activity 3 :   *Here are 4 possible descriptions of Gus and Ben. Choose the one you like best and write a continuation for the dialogue between the two men. Work in pairs.*

a) Gus and Ben are two brothers, who share the same house. They are getting old now, and cannot always see or hear very well. Ben is older than Gus and likes to tell him what to do.

b)
   Gus and Ben are two hired killers who work together. They are nervously waiting for orders from a mysterious boss who wants them to kill someone for him.

c) Gus and Ben are two students who share the same room. Gus is very quiet and shy, but Ben is very confident.

d) Gus and Ben are two secret agents. They are in a hotel room waiting for their contact to join them.

- *Once the dialogues are completed, several pairs of students are asked to read out their productions to the class who will try to guess which one of the descriptions given above has been chosen for the completion of the dialogue.*
- *Ask the students to guess the real version from the four above in the actual play.*

Activity 4 : *In the dialogue, Gus uses* 'What do you mean ?' *and* 'What' *?*
- *What communicative purpose do they serve?*
- *Complete the following dialogues by inserting one of these phrases.*

1. Sue   : Look, Jim, I think you're a lovely person, but I don't think things are going very well between us at the moment.

   Jim   : ……………………………………….

   Sue   : Well, I think it's better if we don't see each other for some time. We need to think our relation over.

2. Maria   : Where did you put the butter ?

   Pete   : ……………….

   Maria   : If you turn off the television, you'll be able to hear me!

3. Billy   : We won, we won the match!

   Billy's Mother : ……………………

   Billy   : Yes, I know … it's a great surprise!

4. Mrs Kelly   : I don't think I can stay late to work any more.

   Mr Young   : ……………………………..

   Mrs Kelly   : Well, my husband is starting to complain about my late hours.

Activity 5 : *Follow-up*
Work in pairs in try to complete the following text about Gus and Ben. Use your imagination and try to produce something original.

Gus and Ben are …………………………………………………………………………………

They live ……………………………………………………………………………………………

Gus is ………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Ben is ………………………………………………………………………………………………..

One day, …………………………………………………………………………………………….

…….

…….

…….

So, ……………………………………………………………………………………………………...

…….

…….

But, …………………………………………………………………………………………………….

…….

…….

Extension Activity : *Students perform the extract. Emphasis is placed on intonation, body language, and naturalness of speech.*

Extract 4 : From THE OYSTER AND THE PEARL
By William Saroyan

ABOUT THE PLAY:

"The **Oyster** and the Pearl" is a sentimental comedy. The play has humor, a happy ending, and demonstrates **faith** in the **basic** goodness of human nature. It reflects the author's attitude toward life and people, whom Saroyan finds eminently fascinating and wonderful, although a little "**odd**" at times.

Although there is a story line, that is not the author's main concern. He wants the reader/viewer to enjoy, to relax, to "play" as the play progresses. There is no clearly defined **plot** nor is there an attempt to establish a strong "hero" figure. Saroyan wants to examine the possibilities of life and the people who play a part in it. Yet he also has something serious to say.

SCENE : *Harry Van Dusen's barber shop in O.K.-by-the-Sea, California, population 909. The sign on the window says : HARRY VAN DUSEN, BARBER. It's an old-fashioned shop, crowded with* **stuff** *not usually found in barber shops … Harry himself, for instance. He has never been known to put on a barber's white jacket or to work without a hat of some sort on his head : a stovepipe, a derby, a western, a homburg, a skullcap, a beret, or a straw, as if putting on these various hats somewhat expressed the quality of his soul, or suggested the* **range** *of it.*

On the walls, on shelves, are many **odds and ends***, some apparently washed up by the sea, which is a block down the street:* **abalone** *and other shells, rocks, pieces of* **driftwood***, a life jacket, rope, sea plants. There is one old-fashioned chair.*

When the play begins, Harry is seated in the chair. A boy of nine or ten named Clay Larrabee is giving him a haircut. Harry is reading a book, one of many in the shop.

Exploitation :

Title of play	Author	Aims and skills involved	Activity type	Timing
The Oyster and the Pearl	William Saroyan	- to train students to run through a text rapidly in order to locate specific information; - skimming-anticipating; - encourage students to guess meaning from context; - increase students' language awareness; - help students understand implied meaning and figurative language; - reading for details;	- skimming and completing; - guessing meaning of words by utilizing clues in context; - identifying coordinate conjunctions in a text and explaining their purpose. - Answering content questions to demonstrate proper comprehension.	6 hours

Script :

CLAY. Well, I did what you told me, Mr. Van Dusen. I hope it's all right. I'm no barber, though. (*He begins **to comb** the hair.*)

HARRY. You just gave me a haircut, didn't you?

CLAY. I don't know what you'd call it. You want to look at it in the mirror? (*he holds out a small mirror.*)

HARRY. No thanks. I remember the last one.

CLAY. I guess I'll never be a barber.

HARRY. Maybe not. On the other hand, you may turn out to be the one man hidden away in the **junk** of the world who will bring **merriment** to the tired old human heart.

CLAY. Who ? Me ?

HARRY. Why not ?

CLAY. Merriment to the tired old human heart ? How do you do that ?

HARRY. Compose a **symphony**, paint a picture, write a book, invent a philosophy.

CLAY. Not me! Did you ever do stuff like that ?

HARRY. I did.

CLAY. What did you do?

HARRY. Invented a philosophy.

CLAY. What's that ?

HARRY. A way to live.

CLAY. What way did you invent?

HARRY. The Take-it-easy way.

CLAY. That sounds pretty good.

HARRY. All philosophies sound good. The trouble with mine was, I kept forgetting to take it easy. Until one day. The day I came off the highway into this barber shop. The barber told me the shop was for sale. I told him all I had to my name was eighty dollars. He sold me the shop for seventy-five, and **threw in the hair-cut**. I've been here ever since. That was twenty-four years ago.

CLAY. Before I was born.

HARRY. Fifteen or sixteen years before you were born.

CLAY. How old were you then?

HARRY. Old enough to know a good thing when I see it.

CLAY. What did you see?

HARRY. O.K.-by-the-Sea, and this shop – the proper place for me to stop. That's **couplet**. Shakespeare had them at the end of a scene, so I guess that's the end of this haircut. (*He gets out of the chair, goes to the **hat tree**, and puts on a derby.*)

CLAY. I guess I'd never get a haircut if you weren't in town, Mr Van Dusen.

HARRY. Nobody would, since I'm the only barber.

CLAY. I mean, **free of charge**.

HARRY. I give you a haircut free of charge, you give me a haircut free of charge. That's **fair and square**.

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Activity 1: *Read the whole passage and try to guess from context the meaning of the following words and phrases which appear in heavy type in the text. In doing so you will try to locate the clues which will help you find out the meaning you are after. These clues can be either before or after the words and phrases in question. Use a dictionary if you cannot manage.*

Oyster : …………….……………...……   faith : ………………………………….…

basic : …………………….……………..   odd : ………………………………….…..

plot : …………..……………….…………   stuff : ……………………………………

range : ……………………………….……   odds and ends : …………………………

abalone : ………………………………….   driftwood : ……………………………....

to comb : …………………………………   junk : ……………………………………

merriment : ……………………...………..   symphony : ……………………………..

threw in the hair-cut : …………………….   couplet : ………………………………...

hat tree : ………………….………………   free of charge : …………………………

fair and square : …………………………..

Activity 2: *Read the passage again and answer shortly these questions :*

a) Taking into account the description given to you at the beginning of the text about the author's attitude, how would you, in your turn, describe the author. Use one sentence starting with :
'The author seems to be someone who …………………………………………………………...
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………

b) What do you understand by the sentence : 'Yet he also has something serious to say.' ? What would you expect to find further in the play when you read this sentence ? can you illustrate with examples ?
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………

c) What do you understand by the sentence : '… Harry himself, for instance.'
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………

d) Why do you think Harry bought the barber shop ?
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………

e) What does Harry think of his presence in town ?
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………

f) What kind of person does Harry seem to be ?
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………

g) How does Clay sound in talking to Harry ?
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………

Activity 3: *Run quickly through the passage and provide the following information. Use single words, phrases or short sentences to complete the task.*

    Kind of play : …………………………………………

    Setting :

        Place : ………………………………………….

        Town : ………………………………………….

    Names of characters :

        Character 1 : …………………………………….

        Character 2 : …………………………………….

    Occupation of characters :

        Character 1 : …………………………………….

        Character 2 : …………………………………….

    Particularities about the characters :

        Character 1 : …………………………………….

        Character 2 : …………………………………….

    Personalities of the characters :

        Character 1 : …………………………………….

        Character 2 : …………………………………….

Activity 4: *The passage includes a good many* 'coordinate conjunctions'.
      For example, in the introduction we have:
        'The play has humor, a happy ending, **<u>and</u>** *demonstrates faith in the basic goodness of human nature.'*

  1. Can you pick up some other sentences including other coordinate conjunctions.
      ……………………………………………………………………………………………………….
      ……………………………………………………………………………………………………….
      ……………………………………………………………………………………………………….
  2. What are the seven coordinate conjunctions in the English language ?
      ……………………………………………………………………………………………………….
      ……………………………………………………………………………………………………….
  3. What is their purpose ? What function does each of them fulfill ?
      ……………………………………………………………………………………………………….
      ……………………………………………………………………………………………………….
      ……………………………………………………………………………………………………….
  4. Can you write 4 examples of your own including a coordinate conjunction.
      ……………………………………………………………………………………………………….
      ……………………………………………………………………………………………………….
      ……………………………………………………………………………………………………….

Activity 5: *Read and answer in detail.*

1) How would you explain the sentence : '… as if putting on these various hats somewhat expressed the quality of his soul, or suggested the range of it.' ?
………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………

2) Why do you think Harry did not want to look at himself in the mirror after Clay finished to give him a haircut ?
………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………

3) What do you think Harry meant to say by '… you may turn out to be the one man hidden away in the junk of the world who will bring merriment to the tired old human heart.' ?
………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………

4) Can you explain Harry's 'philosophy' of life ? What do you think it consists in ?
………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Activity 6: *Hand a copy of the play to students and ask them to read it at home. Tell them to be ready to answer some questions on the most important happenings in the story.*

Extract 5 : From PEOPLE IN THE WIND
By William Inge

The scene of the play is the corner restaurant of a small country town in Kansas. The restaurant serves also as a ticket agency and rest stop for the bus lines operating in the area. It is the last stop on the Greyhound Line from Kansas City to Wichita.

It is close to midnight and the restaurant is empty of customers. It is a **dingy** establishment with few modern improvements, illuminated by two **naked** lights hanging from the ceiling on **dangling** cords. Picture calendars and pretty-girl posters decorate the **soiled** walls. The atmosphere, like the **candied doughnuts** under a glass cover on the counter, is left over from yesterday.

Two young women, in uniforms that have lost their **starched freshness**, are employed behind the counter. Elma is a **scrawny**, big-eyed girl just out of high school. Grace is a more **seasoned** character in her thirties. A bus is expected in soon and they are checking, somewhat **lackadaisically**, to see that everything is ready. A **tiny** radio keeps them supplied with dreamy dance music while they work, and Elma likes to **hum** or sing the tunes she happens to know. Outside there is a strong prairie wind that sounds angry with intent to destroy. It comes and goes, creating a great **blast** against the windows and seeming to shake the very foundation of the **frail** building, and then **subsiding**, leaving a period of uncertain quiet.

Exploitation :

Title of play	Author	Aims and skills involved	Activity type	Timing
People in the Wind	William Inge	- Help students to reach a detailed understanding of a passage;	- matching words with their respective meaning; - true/false/we don't know answers to check understanding of main points; - spotting contracted forms of verbs and recognizing their tenses; - locating informal language and rewriting it in standard form; - checking full comprehension by answering reference/inference questions and by explaining some sentences;	7 hours

ELMA.   Listen to that wind, Grace.

GRACE.   (*unconcerned.*) Yah!

ELMA.   (*Going to the entrance to look out the plate-glass window.*) it's blowing things all over the street. It always makes me feel sorta **scared**.

GRACE.   Come back here and help me. The bus is going to be here in a minute and we gotta have things ready.

ELMA.   I bet the bus'll be late tonight, with all that wind.

GRACE.   Wind don't mean anything to one of those big **steel** busses.

ELMA.   I'd hate to be riding the bus, a night like this.

GRACE.   Why ?

ELMA.   I'd be afraid the wind'd push the bus right off the road into a **ditch** somewhere.

GRACE.   Not one of them big steel busses.

ELMA.   The wind's awful strong. (*Now the bus draws up before the restaurant its great engine coming to a slow stop.*)

GRACE.   (*Checking with the clock on the wall.*) Here it is, right on time. I guess the wind didn't push it into no ditch.

ELMA.   Just the same, I'm glad I'm not on it tonight. I'm glad I've got my home to go to and a nice warm bed to sleep in.

GRACE.   Fill some water glasses, kid. There's fresh coffee. That's about all anyone'll want. The doughnuts are left over from yesterday, but it'll be O.K. to serve 'em. Remember, we got no cheese. We got ham but no cheese.

ELMA.   (*Dutifully repeating.*) No cheese! (*Now the door swings open and a young girl enters as though driven. In her early twenties she is quite pretty in a delicate blond way. She wears no hat and her hair is blown wild about her face. Her clothes are mainly fragments of **finery** from a **sojourn** in Kansas City, a **skimpy** jacket trimmed with fur, a most impractical dress of **sequins** and net, and gilded sandals that expose brightly enameled toenails. She **lugs** in a worn and beaten suitcase which she drops by the door. There is something tense in her **demeanor**. It takes all her strength to push the door closed again. Then she rushes breathlessly to the counter and **solicits** the sympathetic attention of Grace and Elma, strangers to her.*)

GIRL.   There's a man on that bus. He's after me. (*Elma and Grace look at each other.*) He'll be in here in a few minutes. Is there any place I could hide ?

GRACE.   Well … there's the restroom, honey, but it's out in back.

GIRL.   In back?

GRACE.   This is just a country town, honey.

GIRL.   Oh!

GRACE.   (*Sizing up the girl.*) There's a little hotel across the way, but they'd have to get outa bed to let you in.

GIRL.   I don't want to be any trouble.

ELMA.   (***Intrigued.***) Is the man somebody you know?

GIRL.   I never saw him before in my life. He's a cowhand from a ranch somewhere. He's been to Kansas City, riding in the big rodeo and showing cattle. He's **mean** and **crude** and …

Activity 1 :   *Read the text and explain the meaning of the words in heavy type in the text by circling the letter next to the best answer.*

1. 'dingy'   means :   **a.** shabby and not comfortable.   **b.** smart and clean
2. 'naked'   means :   **a.** weak   **b.** without cover
3. 'dangling'   means :   **a.** hanging   **b.** thick
4. 'soiled'   means :   **a.** dirty, filthy   **b.** bright
5. 'candied'   means :   **a.** sweet and coated with sugar   **b.** spoiled
6. 'doughnuts'   means :   **a.** sandwiches   **b.** a kind of cakes
7. 'starched freshness' means :   **a.** firmness, hardness   **b.** softness
8. 'scrawny'   means :   **a.** thin, bony   **b.** fat
9. 'seasoned'   means :   **a.** experienced, mature   **b.** shy, reserved.
10. 'lackadaisically'   means :   **a.** attentively   **b.** without interest, lifelessly

11. 'tiny'   means :   **a.** powerful   **b.** small
12. 'hum'   means :   **a.** make a continuous sound with the lips   **b.** play with an instrument
13. 'blast'   means :   **a.** big sound   **b.** gentle sound
14. 'frail'   means :   **a.** large   **b.** fragile
15. 'subsiding'   means :   **a.** becoming less strong   **b.** increasing
16. 'scared'   means :   **a.** sad   **b.** afraid
17. 'steel'   means :   **a.** a strong metal   **b.** ugly
18. 'ditch'   means :   **a.** hole   **b.** a trench along the roadside

19. 'finery'   means :   **a.** gay and elegant dress   **b.** leather
20. 'sojourn'   means :   **a.** a visit, a stay   **b.** a shop
21. 'skimpy'   means :   **a.** heavy   **b.** lightweight, thin
22. 'sequins'   means :   **a.** small decorations made from metal on clothes   **b.** holds

23. 'lugs'   means :   **a.** pulls or drags with effort
24. 'demeanor'   means :   **a.** aspect, look   **b.** behaviour, conduct
25. 'solicits'   means :   **a.** requests, asks kindly   **b.** shouts at
26. 'intrigued'   means :   **a.** astonished.   **b.** puzzled
27. 'mean and crude'   means :   **a.** bad-tempered and indecent   **b.** friendly and kind

Activity 2:   *Answer with **True** (T), **False** (F), or **we don't know** (?).*

    1. The restaurant is a coaching inn.   ……………………
    2. It's a windy night.   ……………………
    3. The restaurant is crowded with diners.   ……………………
    4. Grace does not seem to be upset by the wind. ……………………
    5. The bus is late tonight.   ……………………
    6. The girl who enters is in a sort of panic.   ……………………
    7. The man after her is an acquaintance.   ……………………
    8. The man wants to harm her.   ……………………

Activity 3:   *The script includes some contracted verb forms (example :* it's blowing things*). Can you pick them out ? What tenses do they express ?*

………..

………..

………..

Activity 4: Some language between Elma and Grace is quite informal and makes use of some unusually contracted phrases and some non-standard verb and pronoun forms. What are they ? can you re-write them in their acceptable standard form ? Why do you think the author is using them like that in the script ?

…………………………………………174…………………………………………………..
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……………………………………………………………………………………………………..
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Activity 5: Read again and answer.

1. What kind of atmosphere does the description of the scene by the author succeed to produce ?
…………………………………………………………………………………………………..
…………………………………………………………………………………………………..

2. What are the two things which contribute to produce this atmosphere ?
…………………………………………………………………………………………………..
…………………………………………………………………………………………………..

3. What kind of person do you think Elma is ?
…………………………………………………………………………………………………..
…………………………………………………………………………………………………..

4. What kind of person do you think Grace is ?
…………………………………………………………………………………………………..
…………………………………………………………………………………………………..

5. Explain the sentence : 'Now the door swings open and a young girl enters as though driven.'
…………………………………………………………………………………………………..
…………………………………………………………………………………………………..

6. Explain the sentence : 'There is something tense in her demeanor.'
…………………………………………………………………………………………………..
…………………………………………………………………………………………………..

7. What does the girl want to do ?
…………………………………………………………………………………………………..
…………………………………………………………………………………………………..

8. What meaning can you derive from the sentence : 'There's a hotel across the way, but they'd have to get outa bed to let you in ?
…………………………………………………………………………………………………..
…………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Extension Activity: Hand a copy of the complete play and ask students to read at leisure at home. Its plot and end can be discussed in class the following week.

Extract 6 : *From THE OTHER PLAYER*

By Owen G. Arno

The setting of this play, a boy's **dormitory** room in an American preparatory school, tells the reader something about the kind of people he will meet and what their backgrounds will be. A prep school is a private high school where boys live away from home and prepare for college. Many of these boys are **wealthy**, their fathers **donating** generously to the school. But no gifts can exempt the boys from the keen competition and academic pressure of a private school. There are traditions to **uphold**, especially for the boy whose father attended the school before him.

CHARACTERS

Dr. Becker, *headmaster; in his late forties.*
Corlin, *father of a student; in his late forties.*
Peter Cross, *a student at the Grey-Matthews School.*

SETTING

A room in a dormitory of the Grey-Matthews School for Boys in New England. It is a morning in late June.

*The curtain rises on one of the larger rooms in the dormitory of a new England preparatory school known as the Grey-Matthews School for Boys. Though in more active periods the room has an air of cheerfulness about it, at the present time there is something **disconcertingly** quiet about the place, and the **utter** tidiness gives the room an atmosphere **lacking** warmth. At Stage Left is a large oak door which leads out to a hallway that we cannot see. At the Back left corner of the room is an enormous chest of drawers, and near the bureau is a small bed. To the Right of this bed is a chair, and directly behind both the chair and the bed is a large window which **exudes** a flood of sunlight. At the back, too (Stage Right), is a bookcase, on top of which rests an **assortment** of gold and silver trophy cups, together with sheets of wood which lean against the back wall. **Tacked onto** the sheets of wood are a number of medals. Near the bookcase against the Right wall, are a desk and chair. There are two additional beds in the room, of the same size as the first: one of them is Down Right, the other is near the back, between the bookcase and the window. At the present moment, between the chest of drawers and the first bed, are two suitcase resting on the floor.*
*At curtain, there is no one on stage. Presently, however, the door to the room opens, and two men enter: Dr. Becker, followed by Corlin. The latter is a man in his late forties. His clothes are expensive but **drab**. One has the feeling immediately that this is a man who has never really had a fair share of pleasure in life. He appears, at this moment particularly, **wan** and tired. Dr. Becker is about the same age as Corlin and dressed in the traditional **garb** of a prep school headmaster, from the grey suit and vest to the pipe **precariously** balanced in his mouth. Dr. Becker appears **articulate** and **self-assured**, both traits having been carefully developed through the years.*

Exploitation :

Title of play	Author	Aims and skills involved	Activity type	Timing
The Other Player	Owen G. Arno	- help students to reach a detailed understanding of a passage; - help students to crack the meaning of both stated and implied information;	- guessing the meaning of words from context; - guided short answers through completion of sentences; - free short answers from direct reference questions, or from inference questions; - summary writing;	7 hours

Script:

DR. BECKER.	(*Smiling gently*). This is his room. I suppose you've seen it before, Mr. Corlin. (*Corlin stares about the room, attempting to take it all in. As he does this, his anguish is noticeable, but he tries to keep it under control*).
CORLIN.	Yes. of course. I was here only last spring. (*Corlin moves over to the bed nearest the window. Absentmindedly, he smooths down the cover with the palm of his hand.*)
DR. BECKER.	We tried to leave his things-as he had left them. But I must say we took the liberty of tidying up the drawers a bit. Not that they were **messy**, you understand.
CORLIN.	(*Vaguely*) … Of course.
DR. BECKER.	… On the contrary, Jeffrey was a very tidy young man.
CORLIN.	Yes, he was, wasn't he?
DR. BECKER.	(*indicating the medals and trophies on the bookcase*). These, of course, are all of his medals and **trophies …** those that he won this past year, at the tennis matches and at the **track**. I suppose you've seen them, also.
CORLIN.	(*Crossing to the bookcase*). I believe I've seen some of them. (*Noticing one of the cups*). But this is new, isn't it? I see it was another **award** he received for his tennis playing.
DR. BECKER.	That' right. (*In a low voice*). He was quite an athlete, your young man.
CORLIN.	I know, (*He picks up the cup to read the inscription.*)
DR. BECKER.	The staff had that one especially **engraved** for Jeffrey. We asked him what he wanted to have inscribed on it … (***Chuckling***,) which was, I suppose, a little irregular. But we wanted to make sure it would please him.
CORLIN.	That was very thoughtful of you.
DR. BECKER.	(*Still smiling gently*). I'm afraid he may have been a little embarrassed by our gesture. He was always such a modest boy. In fact, he told us, at first, that he didn't even want us to put his name on the cup.
CORLIN.	I notice you did, anyway.
DR. BECKER.	We certainly did. It was our way of letting him know how all of us felt about him-and what a delight it was having him as a student here. Also, I must admit, a top athlete makes a school an especially exciting place. And it isn't often we **come across** one like Jeffrey at Grey-Matthews.
CORLIN.	(*Smiling weakly*). I've seen some of your other students play, and they're all really quite superior, too.
DR. BECKER.	Perhaps. But none of them was as **outstanding** as your son, Mr. Corlin. I want you to believe that, and I hope you don't think I'm **merely** saying it because … of what happened. We may not have too frequent a chance to chat in the future, you and I … at least not like this. (*With a smile*). I hope this isn't **impertinence** masking as a school principal's *prévenance*, Mr. Corlin.
CORLIN.	(*Confused, not really understanding what he means*). What I **value** most is your wanting to speak to me about Jeffrey at all. As a matter of fact, I welcome anything you might have to tell me … no matter how insignificant it may seem. In a sense, that's one of the reasons why I felt I had to come back here … to see his room … to speak to his instructors … to touch the very things he himself touched. My family tried to discourage me from coming here. They told me it would be turning his death into a kind of obsession. But I'm glad I didn't listen to them. I believe that once this sojourn … is over, I'll have brought a certain end to everything. Am I making myself clear, Dr. Becker?
DR. BECKER.	Of course. And that was why I had to tell you how admired Jeffrey was.
CORLIN.	… You must feel free to tell me other things about him … the things he did, the things he thought … because this is perhaps the last **glimpse** I'm being permitted to see of them.
DR. BECKER.	He was an intelligent young man …
CORLIN.	Yes, that I know.
DR. BECKER.	He created the appearance of a fine boy from a good background.
CORLIN.	But what about his interests? Or was being a star athlete the only thing that **mattered** to him?

Activity 1: *Explain the following items printed in heavy type in the text with your own words. You may either use other words having the same meaning, or short sentences to complete your task. Use a dictionary only when necessary.*

– dormitory ……………………… – wealthy ……………………… – donating …………………………
– uphold ………………………... – disconcertingly ……………….. – utter …………………………...
– lacking ……………………….. – exudes ………………………… – assortment ……………………..
– tacked onto …………………… – drab …………………………… – wan ……………………………
– garb …………………………… – precariously …………………... – articulate ………………………
– self-assured …………………… – anguish ……………………….. – messy …………………………..
– trophies ……………………….. – track …………………………... – award …………………………..
– engraved ……………………… – chuckling ……………………... – come across …………………...
– outstanding …………………… – merely ………………………… – impertinence …………………..
– prévenance …………………… – value ………………………….. – glimpse ………………………..
– mattered ……………………….

Activity 2: *Read the introduction to the play and complete with words or phrases which will translate the meaning of the text. Say what kind of word is needed and why.*

1. A preparatory school is a private school where students ……………………… to go home during the week.

2. Although their parents contribute generously for the school, there is no preferential ……………………… for the boys.

3. The students should ……………………… to satisfy their parents and ……………………… the school's expectations.

4. The Grey-Matthews school seems to have some ……………………… traditions and regulations.

5. Mr. Corlin comes to pay a visit to the school at a time the students ………………………….……

6. The dormitory is ……………………… and very …………………………………………………….

7. Mr. Corlin looks very ……………………………………………………………………………….

8. Judging by his appearance, he seems to be a man who has ………………………………………...

9. Dr. Becker is the typical representation of the ………………………………………………………...

10. He seems to be someone who does his job with ………………………………………………………

Activity 3: *Now read the script and answer these questions.*

1. Mr. Corlin comes to the Grey-Matthews school with a specific purpose in mind. What does he plan to do ?
   ……
   ……

2. Does this part of the conversation reveal anything about the relationship between Jeffrey Corlin and his father ?
   ……
   ……

3. Do you think Mr. Corlin was a good father? Explain your answer.
   ……
   ……

4. What do Dr. Becker's words reveal about Jeffrey's character ?
   ……
   ……

5. What are your feelings about Mr. Corlin?
   ……
   ……

6. What do you think will happen next.
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………….……
   ……

Activity 4: *Can you imagine a dialogue marking the end of the conversation between Mr. Corlin and Dr. Becker ? (about 12 lines)*

Extension Activity: *The rest of the play is handed out to the students. They will be asked to read it at home and then write a summary of what happened next.*

Extract 7 : From RETURN TO DUST
By George Bamber

Bamber's excellent play develops a theme familiar to anyone who has read *Gulliver's Travels*: By changing a man's size, you change his **perception** of reality, a theme frequently treated by writers of fantasy and science fiction.

In *Return to Dust* a laboratory accident has **disastrous** results. The "hero" is turned "victim" of his own invention by **shrinking** him to such small dimensions that ordinary objects take on **monstrous** proportions that **threaten** his very life! In this dramatically modified environment, the central character, growing **tinier** by the minute, desperately **struggles** to get an **antidote** before he disappears.

CHARACTERS

James Howard, a research scientist
Miss Pritchart, a secretary
Dr. Bader, Director of Research

Exploitation :

Title of play	Author	Aims and skills involved	Activity type	Timing
Return to Dust	George Bamber	- speculating about text content by discussing title; - recognizing meaning of words through dictionary usage/group work; - identifying word meaning through antonymy - scanning - reading for details and extrapolating text	- discussing title before reading a text; - defining with help of dictionary; - matching lexical items with antonyms; - short answers to check understanding of main points; - long answers to check detailed comprehension; - discussing setting;	5 hours

Script:

ACT ONE

[*Music: Up and out*]

James : Testing … one two three. Testing-testing. Attention, Dr. Warren Bader, Department of **Pathology**, School of Medicine, State University. Dear Dr. Bader: This is James Howard, Research Fellow in Pathology speaking. Ahhh, I don't know quite how to begin. At the moment I am seated on the tape recorder that is recording this message to you. As a point of fact, by the **yard stick** on my desk, I stand exactly one foot, one inch tall and I am **steadily** decreasing in size. Ahhh-hem. I am on top of my desk; I climbed up here before I should shrink to a point where I could be physically **unable** to get from the floor to the chair and thus to the desk top, and the telephone.

Ahh, it is very strange experience to find one's desk an **insurmountable** object, like a mountain, to climb. However, the phone is by my side now and since it is my last contact with the outside world, it is **imperative** that I do not become separated from it. I have been trying to reach you by phone since eight this morning. As you are not at home, and have not yet arrived at your office, it **occurred** to me there exists a **distinct** possibility that I might not be able to contact you before it becomes too late. I calculate that if I continue to shrink at my present **rate** of speed, it is possible that I will become invisible to the human eye sometime before midnight.

Since you are the only person with an **adequate** scientific background and technical knowledge to save me, it is imperative that my last **whereabouts** is known to you in the event that I cannot contact you by phone. [*Quickly*] I'm confident that it will just be a matter of moments before I do; this recording is merely a precaution.

As you will have discovered by now, I have gone against your orders and pursued my theory of cancer cell growth by working at night after my regular duties. This is the same theory I proposed in publication December 1, 1957, and which you publicly **ridiculed** in the *Scientific American Journal*, September 3, 1958. unfortunately, you were wrong, Dr. Bader. The biochemical agent not only stops abnormal cell division, but reduces the existing cells in physical size until the neutralizer is induced. [*Groping for proof*] The fact that I have shrunk from five and one half feet to one foot should be proof beyond **refutation**, though my condition is the result of an accident.

While trying to introduce a more powerful **catalyst** in the laboratory last night, I **inadvertently** created an uncontrolled reaction which manifested itself as a white **mist** which filled the entire lab. The mist lasted no more than a few seconds and as I could observe no effects other than this, I continued working. When I got home, I descended into one of the deepest and blackest sleeps I have ever experienced. I awoke this morning to discover myself literally lost in a sea of blankets.

I had shrunk five during the night. Naturally, my first reaction was one of panic, but I soon realized that my only salvation was to remain calm until I contacted you. You'll find a more complete report of my theory, and the experiments which I've conducted to prove it, in the uncompleted thesis here on my desk. [*Trying to conceal his pride*] My thesis, Dr. Bader, will open the door to a cure for man's worst disease: Cancer. Ahhh-hem.

As for myself, you'll find detailed instructions on how to reverse the action which I've accidentally initiated upon myself. You'll find this on pages [*grunting*] 79.

[*Sound: Exaggerated sound, as if the first page of a manuscript were being turned close to a microphone*]

James: … through 82, yes, that's right: 79 through 82. No matter how small I may become, even microscopic, you will be able to reverse the process if you follow the instructions on those pages. [*he grunts, as if dropping the leaf of a heavy book*]

[*Sound: The **swish** and **thud** of page and book cover closing*]

Activity 1: *Before you start reading the passage, consider the title and try to say what:*
- you think you understand from it.
- it suggests to you.
- you think the passage will be about.

Activity 2: *Use your dictionary and explain the meaning of the words printed in heavy type in the text. Decide on the function of each of them.*

Activity 3: *The following words are antonyms to some of the words from Task 1. They are jumbled up. Decide of the acceptable combinations.*

<div align="center">

capable – praised – optional – expand – insufficient – successful
– reveal – bigger – deliberately – approval – fuzzy -

</div>

Activity 4: *In English, very often the negative meaning of words is not given by completely different words. We simply use 'prefixes' for that.*
Prefixes are small elements of language structure which are affixed to the front of words in order to produce their opposite meaning.
These prefixes are : **un-**, **im-**, **in-**, **il-**, **ir-**, *and* **dis-**.
Examples :   *regular #* **ir***regular*
            correct # **in***correct*
            polite # **im***polite*
            logical # **il***logical*
In our present text we have some samples like:
            un*able*   -   **In***surmountable*
How would you form the opposites of these words? Which prefixes would you add?

acceptable	: ……………………	*attentive*	: ……………………
accessible	: ……………………	*favourable*	: ……………………
active	: ……………………	*friendly*	: ……………………
responsible	: ……………………	*honest*	: ……………………
advantage	: ……………………	*visible*	: ……………………
to obey	: ……………………	*to lock*	: ……………………
competent	: ……………………	*patient*	: ……………………
complete	: ……………………	*possible*	: ……………………
accurate	: ……………………	*to pack*	: ……………………
decided	: ……………………	*to wrap*	: ……………………
intentional	: ……………………	*to appear*	: ……………………
easy	: ……………………	*relevant*	: ……………………
comprehensible	: ……………………	*decent*	: ……………………

Activity 5: *Read the text again and answer shortly.*
1. Where is James Howard in this first act?
   …………………………………………………………………………………………..
   …………………………………………………………………………………………..
2. Where is he seated exactly?
   …………………………………………………………………………………………..
   …………………………………………………………………………………………..
3. What is he doing?
   …………………………………………………………………………………………..
   …………………………………………………………………………………………..
4. What has he tried to do before that?
   …………………………………………………………………………………………..
   …………………………………………………………………………………………..
5. What is his problem? What's happening to him?
   …………………………………………………………………………………………..
   …………………………………………………………………………………………..

6. What was he working on before the accident happened?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………..

…………………………………………………………………………………………………..

7. What caused his problem?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………..

…………………………………………………………………………………………………..

8. Why is there emergency for him?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………..

…………………………………………………………………………………………………..

9. Is there a solution to his problem?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………..

…………………………………………………………………………………………………..

10. What does it consist in?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………..

…………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Activity 6:   *Give complete answers to these questions :*

1. How is John Howard preparing to solve his problem?
   Give the steps in order.

   …………………………………………………………………………………………………..

   …………………………………………………………………………………………………..

   …………………………………………………………………………………………………..

2. How did the accident happen ? Describe it in few sentences.

   …………………………………………………………………………………………………..

   …………………………………………………………………………………………………..

   …………………………………………………………………………………………………..

3. In his position of a scientist, do you think he was right or wrong to pursue his experiments against his director's orders? Justify your answer.

   …………………………………………………………………………………………………..

   …………………………………………………………………………………………………..

   …………………………………………………………………………………………………..

4. Do you think he has a chance of becoming normal again? Why, in your opinion?

   …………………………………………………………………………………………………..

   …………………………………………………………………………………………………..

   …………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Extension Activity:

1. The rest of the play is handed to students to be read at home.
2. Specify that another discussion will take place the following class.
3. discuss this question with them :
   Is the ending of the play in keeping with the title? Can you think of other possible titles?

Appendix 2.

Student's name : ……………………………

Group : …………

Test 1 in Reading Comprehension

Read the following passages and answer the questions below.

Section 1 :

An *unusual* collector

James Garfield started collecting telephone-cards without really noticing it. When a card was underline finished, instead of throwing it away, he kept it. One day he realised that he had enough to start a collection. That was ten years ago and now what was once a hobby dominates his life. He spends much of his time on the phone speaking to other enthusiasts and trying to find cards to add to his 5,000-strong collection. "The other day I heard about a very early Japanese one. That particular one is very rare so I didn't want to expect too much. I discovered it was owned by another collector, but I was able to offer him one that he wanted; I wasn't certain whether the deal would succeed or not for 24 hours, but in the end we reached a satisfactory agreement."

And what does James's wife think of his obsession? "He's mad" she says, "but at least he can laugh at himself! And to be honest, his enthusiasm is beginning to affect me – I mean I was really excited when he got the rare Japanese one."

1. *Match the words and phrases underlined in the text with their definitions. Write the letters of the corresponding definitions in the spaces next to the appropriate numbers provided below.* **2 marks**

1. unusual	a. build up my hopes
2. finished	b. frankly speaking
3. to find	c. uncommon
4. heard about	d. acceptable arrangement
5. expect too much	e. managed
6. was able	f. used up
7. satisfactory agreement	g. got news of
8. to be honest	h. track down

1. ……… 2. ……… 3. ……… 4. ……… 5. ……… 6. ……… 7. ……… 8. ………
   0.25   0.25   0.25   0.25   0.25   0.25   0.25   0.25

2. *Answer with **True** (T), **False** (F), or **Information not given** (ING).* **2.5 marks**
   1. James started collecting phone cards by chance. …………0.5
   2. His hobby turned into a real passion. …………0.5
   3. The rare card missing in James's collection was owned by a Japanese collector. …………0.5
   4. James was able to buy the rare card at a reasonable price. …………0.5
   5. James's wife looks at her husband's obsession with disapproval. …………0.5

3. *Answer these questions using your own words.* **2.5 marks**

   1. To what extent collecting phone-cards has become so central in James's life ?

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………… 1.25

   2. What is his wife's attitude towards his obsession ?

   …………………………………………………………………………………………… 1.25

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………

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Section 2 :

At the doctor's

Doctor : Now then, Mr. James, what seems to be the matter?

Patient : I just can't sleep, doctor.

Doctor : I see. And how long have you had this problem?

Patient : Oh, for about two months now.

Doctor : Two months. Do you have headaches?

Patient : Sometimes.

Doctor : Fever?

Patient : No.

Doctor : Are you having any family problems?

Patient : No, not really. My wife and I get along pretty well.

Doctor : And how about work?

Patient : Well, I have been working a lot lately – 10 to 11 hours a day.

Doctor : Maybe you should take a vacation and just relax for a while.

Patient : Yeah, well, I can't right now. We're in the middle of some important business.

Doctor : I see. And this business, is it going well?

Patient : Well, it doesn't look so good at the moment.

Doctor : So, you're worried about that?

Patient : Yeah, I guess so.

Doctor : Do you like your job, Mr. James?

Patient : Oh, it's all right.

Doctor : Well, maybe you should consider a job change – something less stressful.

Patient : Yeah, well, it's pretty hard to find a new job at my age, you know.

Doctor : Yes, I understand, but you really ought to slow down.
You're going to kill yourself at this rate.

---

1. *Read this conversation between a doctor and his patient and answer **that's right**, **that's wrong**, or **we don't know**.*   ***3.5 marks***

1. *Mr James suffers from insomnia.* …………………………….. *0.5*
2. *His problem started a couple of months ago.* …………………………….. *0.5*
3. *Sometimes his problem is accompanied by fever.* …………………………….. *0.5*
4. *He has household problems.* …………………………….. *0.5*
5. *He often has quarrels with his wife.* …………………………….. *0.5*
6. *He has been working at a rate that seems to affect his health.* …………………………….. *0.5*
7. *He is going to start looking for a new job soon.* …………………………….. *0.5*

---

2. *Answer these questions using complete sentences.*   ***3 marks***

1. *What do you think are two major reasons for Mr James' problem ?*

   ……

   ………………………………………………………………………………………………… *1*

2. *What did the doctor advise him to do ?*

   ……

   ………………………………………………………………………………………………… *2*

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Section 3 :

Gold

1 It is only a shiny, yellowish metal, but it is one of the most valuable metals on earth.
2 Since the beginning of time, men have looked for this extremely valuable item, gold.
3 Gold is soft and easy to form into different objects. If it gets wet, it does not rust like
4 iron or other metals. Acids do not change it. One important reason that gold is so
5 valuable is that it is scarce.
6 Due to its softness, gold must be combined with other metals to harden it and give it
7 strength. By hardening gold, people can then make coins and jewelry with it. Metals
8 commonly mixed with gold are nickel, platinum, and copper. Gold jewelry bears a
9 number and the letter *k*. The *k* means karat (carat), which is a measure of the amount of
10 pure gold in the jewelry. Pure gold is 24k. Therefore, a necklace which is 14k is fourteen
11 parts gold and ten parts other metal.
12 Many countries utilize gold for certain coins, but this practice is not as common now
13 as it once was. The United States, for instance, stopped making gold coins in 1933.

Read the text carefully and answer <u>that's right</u> or <u>that's wrong</u>.   *6.5 marks*

a. *The word '**shiny**' in line 1 means : **precious**.*   a. ……………………………   *0.5*

b. *The word '**soft**' in line 3 is the opposite of : **hard**.*   b. ……………………………   *0.5*

c. *The word '**scarce**' in line 5 means : **easy to find**.*   c. ……………………………   *0.5*

d. *The pronoun '**it**' in line 13 refers to : **gold**.*   d. ……………………………   *0.5*

e. *Gold is shaped easily.*   e. ……………………………   *0.5*

f. *Gold is not affected on contact with water.*   f. ……………………………   *0.5*

g. *The scarceness of gold makes its precious value.*   g. ……………………………   *0.5*

h. *Because gold is soft, it is not shaped alone.*   h. ……………………………   *0.5*

i. *Acids are used to harden gold more and more.*   i. ……………………………   *0.5*

j. *Gold is often mixed with other metals to give it more vigour.*   j. ……………………………   *0.5*

k. *Jewelries are marked in karat to indicate their fineness.*   k. ……………………………   *0.5*

l. *If a ring is marked 12k, then its percentage of gold is 50.*   l. ……………………………   *0.5*

m. *In the past gold was also used to make money sometimes.*   m. ……………………………   *0.5*

Appendix 3.

Table A. Scores on Pre-test*.

Experimental Group (24 Students)		Control Group (26 Students)	
Student	**Score obtained**	**Student**	**Score obtained**
Student A1	14.25	Student B1	16.50
Student A2	12.75	Student B2	7.50
Student A3	11.00	Student B3	10.25
Student A4	10.75	Student B4	14.75
Student A5	7.50	Student B5	15.50
Student A6	12.25	Student B6	13.00
Student A7	13.25	Student B7	11.25
Student A8	12.00	Student B8	9.50
Student A9	8.00	Student B9	10.25
Student A10	11.25	Student B10	12.50
Student A11	12.25	Student B11	10.75
Student A12	14.25	Student B12	8.25
Student A13	10.75	Student B13	14.00
Student A14	15.50	Student B14	11.50
Student A15	8.00	Student B15	14.00
Student A16	12.25	Student B16	15.25
Student A17	13.00	Student B17	12.50
Student A18	12.00	Student B18	12.25
Student A19	8.50	Student B19	11.50
Student A20	12.00	Student B20	9.25
Student A21	11.00	Student B21	8.50
Student A22	10.00	Student B22	10.50
Student A23	10.75	Student B23	11.00
Student A24	11.75	Student B24	11.00
		Student B25	12.75
		Student B26	8.75
Sum of the scores	**275**	**Sum of the scores**	**302.75**
Mean	**11.45**	**Mean**	**11.64**
Standard deviation	**2.02**	**Standard deviation**	**2.37**

* All scores to be read out of 20.

Appendix 4.

University : *Algiers-Bouzareah*
Department : *English Studies*
Instructor : *Mr. M. Boufradji*

Academic Year : 2002/2003

Module : *Reading*
Level : *1st Year*
Groups : *7 & 9*
Timing : *2 hours*

Student's name : ……………………….

Group : …………

Test 2 in Reading Comprehension

Read the following texts and complete the tasks that follow.

Text 1:

NELSON : *"Hullo!"*

CLAYTON : *"Chief Inspector? Phillip Clayton speaking."*

NELSON : *"Good morning, Mr. Clayton. I'm glad you've called me. Your **testimony** will help us a lot."*

CLAYTON : *"I'm sorry, Inspector, but I won't **testify** against them."*

NELSON : *"You can't be serious, Mr. Clayton! You are the only **witness**. We need you to **convict** the three men we've arrested."*

CLAYTON : *"I am afraid I can't help you, Inspector, You know what they do to those who denounce them! I don't want to live in permanent fear."*

NELSON : *"The police will protect you, Mr. Clayton, I promise you."*

CLAYTON : *"**Nonsense**! How long will you protect me? They never forget. Besides, they may **take revenge** on any member of my family. Will you protect all my **relatives**?"*

NELSON : *"It's every man's duty to denounce criminals. Let me appeal to your sense of honour, Mr. Clayton."*

CLAYTON : *"Don't make things difficult for me, Inspector. I know I'm not a hero. But can you tell me what use a dead hero would be to my family?"*

NELSON : *"I understand, Mr. Clayton, but have you realized that your family, and other families as well, may fall victims of crime if nobody wants to testify against murderers?"*

CLAYTON : *"... I guess there is no way out, whatever solution I choose. Give me some more time, will you, Inspector. I have to think it over. I must **ring off** now, there is someone at the door. Goodbye, Inspector."*

1. **Match the words in heavy type in the text with their definitions.**   *2 marks*

1. testimony	a. foolish talk
2. testify	b. deliberate infliction of injury in return for injury received.
3. witness	c. to interrupt a phone call.
4. convict	d. to give evidence.
5. nonsense	e. person who was present at an event and who can describe it.
6. take revenge	f. deposition; declaration
7. relatives	g. kin; kinsmen
8. ring off	h. to condemn; to declare in a law court that someone is guilty of a crime (by a judge or a jury).

1. ………… **2.** ………… **3.** ………… **4.** ………… **5.** ………… **6.** ………… **7.** ………… **8.** …………
 0.25   *0.25*   *0.25*   *0.25*   *0.25*   *0.25*   *0.25*   *0.25*

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2. Answer with True (T), False (F), or Information not given (ING).   *4 marks*

1. The conversation is a face-to-face conversation.   ……… *0.50*
2. Mr. Clayton is at the police precinct.   ……… *0.50*
3. He saw a crime being committed some time ago.   ……… *0.50*
4. He is afraid of what will happen if he identifies the supposed culprits.   ……… *0.50*
5. Inspector Nelson has some trouble convincing him to give evidence.   ……… *0.50*
6. Nelson's arguments are not persuasive.   ……… *0.50*
7. Mr. Clayton thinks he is in a real dilemma.   ……… *0.50*
8. He needs second thoughts.   ……… *0.50*

3. Answer in your own words and with complete sentences.   *4 marks*

1. Why is Mr. Clayton's testimony important for the police?

………………………………………………………………………………   *1*

………………………………………………………………………………

2. Why is Mr. Clayton worried and troubled?

………………………………………………………………………………   *1*

………………………………………………………………………………

3. Why, do you think, is the decision difficult to make?

………………………………………………………………………………   *1*

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

Text 2:

When the train came into the station George felt **relieved**. He **scampered** hurriedly aboard. Helen White came running along Main Street hoping to have a parting word with him, but he had found a seat and did not see her.

George **glanced** up and down the car to be sure no one was looking, then took out his **pocketbook** and counted his money. His mind was occupied with a desire not to appear green. Almost the last words his father had said to him concerned the matter of his behaviour when he got to the city. "Be a **sharp** one," Tom Willard had said. "Keep your eyes on your money. Be **awake**. That's the ticket. Don't let anyone think you're a **greenhorn**."

After George counted his money he looked out of the window and was surprised to see that the train was still in Winesburg.

The young man, going out of his town to meet the **adventure** of life, began to think but he did not think of anything very big or dramatic. Things like his mother's death, his departure from Winesburg, the uncertainty of his future life in the city, the serious aspects of his life did not come into his mind.

Adapted from Winesburg, Ohio (1919)
By Sherwood ANDERSON

1. *Match the words in heavy type in the text with their definitions.*　　*2 marks*

1. relieved	a. looked quickly.
2. scampered	b. smart, alert and clever.
3. glanced	c. wallet.
4. pocketbook	d. vigilant.
5. sharp	e. eventful happenings.
6. awake	f. someone inexperienced.
7. greenhorn	g. rushed into, hasted into.
8. adventure	h. filled with a sensation of ease.

1. ……… **2.** ……… **3.** ……… **4.** ……… **5.** ……… **6.** ……… **7.** ……… **8.** ………
　0.25　　　*0.25*　　　*0.25*　　　*0.25*　　　*0.25*　　　*0.25*　　　*0.25*　　　*0.25*

2. **Pick out <u>3 adjectives</u> from the list below which best describe George Willard's attitude and write them in the spaces provided.**　　*1.5 marks*

impatient – excited – puzzled – sick – angry – thoughtful – nervous – embarrassed

1. ………………………　　*(0.50)*

2. ………………………　　*(0.50)*

3. ………………………　　*(0.50)*

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3. Answer with True (T), False (F), or Information not given (ING). **2.5 marks**

1. "George felt relieved" suggests the idea that the train was late. ……… 0.50
2. Helen white wanted to bid farewell to George and see him off. ……… 0.50
3. George was determined to behave according to his father's advice. ……… 0.50
4. The train had some engine trouble. ……… 0.50
5. A lot of sad memories and growing worries rushed into his mind. ……… 0.50

4. Finish these sentences about George. You can use your own words, but do not change the main ideas in the text. **2.25 marks**

1. George was so anxious to leave Winesburg and start his journey that he ………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………… 0.75

2. His concern and care to appear mature were so big that he ………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………… 0.75

3. For George, departure not only meant leaving his hometown but also …………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………… 0.75

5. Can you explain the meaning of the sentence by George's father : "That's the ticket" **1.75 marks**

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

University : Algiers-Bouzareah
Department : English Studies
Instructor : Mr. M. Boufradji

Academic Year : 2002/2003

Module : Reading
Level : 1st Year
Groups : 7 & 9
Timing : 2 hours

Student's name : ……………………….

Group : …………

Test 3 in Reading Comprehension

Read the following texts and complete the tasks that follow.

Text 1:

MATT : *"Have you made a decision? When shall we leave?"*

LIZA : *"I've thought it over, Matt, and to tell you the truth, I don't feel like living on that farm in the country."*

MATT : *"How can you say such a thing? It's the most beautiful place on earth. You will be freer there."*

LIZA : *"Free for What? I like it here. I enjoy seeing all those **cosy** little houses with nice flowers, and chatting with my neighbours from time to time. I mean there is life for me here. I won't be able to see many people if I live in your farm."*

MATT : *"**I'd rather** you thought of me and not of your neighbours. You speak as if you didn't love me. You have been so **contaminated** by the **suburban** way of life that you have forgotten what the country looks like."*

LIZA : *"It's easy for you to say that. You seem to forget that I won't enjoy as many modern **conveniences** on your farm. And since I am sure that you won't have enough time to help me with the household **chores** I'd rather stay here"*

MATT : *"And spend all your evenings in the movie-theatre instead of contemplating the **gorgeous** sky! I hate the cinema."*

LIZA : *"Oh, how can you say that?! How **ungrateful** you are since it's where you saw me for the first time."*

MATT : *"Liza, I pray you, I will die if I stay here, but you're my tender wife and I can't live without you. Besides, that heritage should be looked after; I mean my father would rest in peace really if he knew that we are taking care of it. That farm isn't as horrible as you seem to think. You will like it, you'll see."*

LIZA : *"... you think so?"*

MATT : *"Yes, sure!"*

LIZA : *"Give me more time, please."*

1. *Match the words in heavy type in the text with their definitions.*   **2 marks**

1. cosy	a. influenced seriously
2. I'd rather	b. unpleasant and tiring work
3. contaminated	c. would prefer
4. suburban	d. warm and comfortable
5. conveniences	e. not thankful
6. chores	f. magnificient, superb, splendid
7. gorgeous	g. around the city
8. ungrateful	h. useful and helpful appliances, facilities and arrangements that make life easy

1. ………… 2. ………… 3. ………… 4. ………… 5. ………… 6. ………… 7. ………… 8. …………
   0.25   *0.25*   *0.25*   *0.25*   *0.25*   *0.25*   *0.25*   *0.25*

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2. *Answer with True (T), False (F), or Information not given (ING).*　　　　*4 marks*

1. *Matt has just inherited his father's farm.*　　　　………　*0.50*
2. *It seems to be a little difficult for him to convince his wife to settle in the country.*　　　　………　*0.50*
3. *Liza seems to be hesitant and reticent.*　　　　………　*0.50*
4. *She is afraid she cannot manage to adapt to life on a farm.*　　　　………　*0.50*
5. *Matt does not like his neighbours.*　　　　………　*0.50*
6. *Liza does not like the country-side.*　　　　………　*0.50*
7. *Matt wants to keep the farm because his father told him.*　　　　………　*0.50*
8. *Liza agrees to follow Matt.*　　　　………　*0.50*

3. *Answer in your own words and with complete sentences.*　　　　*4 marks*

1. *Why is Matt so excited about living on the farm?*

………………………………………………………………………………………………　*1*

………………………………………………………………………………………………

2. *Why is Liza so undecided about living on the farm?*

………………………………………………………………………………………………　*1*

………………………………………………………………………………………………

3. *Do you think that Matt's arguments are persuasive? Why?*

………………………………………………………………………………………………　*1*

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

Text 2:

Use the weekend positively, Zoe told herself. Don't just sit back and let Lowell do this to you. Make good use of his absence. Now is your chance to see Sir Howard. He got him a job before. He'll get him another. Use your **gumption**. Move.

It was a bright breezy Saturday morning and the drive to Sir Howard's country house in Worcestershire was pleasant. Zoe arrived without a preliminary phone call.

"How is Lowell?" Howard asked, and sat back to listen while she told him.

Sensing that he might know the truth already, Zoe didn't bother wrapping it up in a tissue of excuses. Lowell hadn't liked his job. It hadn't **suited** his temperament. He had resigned. Since then he had been spending his time renovating a property that had been left to him. Perhaps Howard knew about the **cottage**?

Zoe described the state of the place. "In time, when Lowell has improved it, it will be sold. But not for very much. It's the long-term prospect of his unemployment that worries me. It isn't good for him emotionally. And, of course, we need the money. My salary is **adequate**, though our standard of living has dropped. It's the future that **bothers** me. The present state of affairs just can't go on."

Can't go on for whom? Howard **wondered**. This very positive young woman had married his nephew when his career was on the up. In the normal way Lowell would have stayed at the top of his musical career for a long time, and they would have lived together richly – in every sense of the word. Failure was **impoverishing** – again in every sense of the word. The garland of success had been brutally removed and it would take a good marriage to survive its loss.

"Love him?" he asked **bluntly**.

The question coming from this large bluff man with the small astute eyes was both surprising and embarrassing. Zoe looked past him and at the sweeping lawn outside the French window. "Of course."

B.M. GILL, *Dying to meet you (1989)*

1. Match the words in heavy type in the text with their definitions.   *2 marks*

1.	gumption	a.	in a direct manner, without ceremony
2.	suited	b.	asked himself
3.	cottage	c.	matched, corresponded with
4.	adequate	d.	worries
5.	bothers	e.	brain, commonsense
6.	wondered	f.	small house
7.	impoverishing	g.	appropriate and acceptable
8.	bluntly	h.	causing to become poor

1. ……… 2. ……… 3. ……… 4. ……… 5. ……… 6. ……… 7. ……… 8. ………
  0.25   0.25   0.25   0.25   0.25   0.25   0.25   0.25

2. Pick out _3 adjectives_ from the list below which best describe Zoe's attitude and feelings and write them in the spaces provided. *1.5 marks*

mad – worried – stressed – good-humoured – hopeless – enthusiastic – indifferent – hopeful

1. ……………………………   2. ……………………………   3. ……………………………
       0.50   *0.50*   *0.50*

3. Answer with True (T), False (F), or Information not given (ING). *2 marks*

1. Sir Howard was expecting Zoe's visit. ……… 0.50
2. Sir Howard is Lowell's uncle. ……… 0.50
3. Lowell has inherited a modest country house. ……… 0.50
4. The young couple cannot possibly survive on the money they now have at their disposal. ……… 0.50

4. Are these statements _right_ or _wrong_? _Justify_ your answer by writing a sentence from the text in the given space. *2.5 marks*

1. Sir Howard was expecting Zoe's visit.

………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………
                                                                        0.50

2. Sir Howard is Lowell's uncle.

………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………
                                                                        0.50

3. Lowell has inherited a modest country house.

………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………
                                                                        0.75

4. The young couple cannot possibly survive on the money they now have at their disposal.

………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………
                                                                        0.75

5. Answer this question in your own words. *2 marks*

What is the purpose of Zoe's visit to Sir Howard?

………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………

Appendix 5.

Table B. Scores on Post-test*.

Experimental Group (24 Students)		Control Group (26 Students)	
Student	**Score obtained**	**Student**	**Score obtained**
Student A1	14.50	Student B1	14.50
Student A2	12.25	Student B2	8.75
Student A3	11.50	Student B3	11.50
Student A4	10.75	Student B4	13.75
Student A5	10.25	Student B5	14.50
Student A6	13.50	Student B6	13.75
Student A7	15.00	Student B7	11.75
Student A8	17.00	Student B8	9.75
Student A9	10.25	Student B9	10.75
Student A10	13.00	Student B10	12.25
Student A11	15.50	Student B11	9.00
Student A12	15.50	Student B12	8.00
Student A13	14.75	Student B13	12.75
Student A14	17.25	Student B14	12.75
Student A15	10.75	Student B15	14.25
Student A16	12.25	Student B16	13.75
Student A17	16.75	Student B17	13.00
Student A18	15.50	Student B18	13.75
Student A19	12.50	Student B19	12.25
Student A20	13.00	Student B20	10.00
Student A21	14.00	Student B21	10.50
Student A22	14.00	Student B22	10.50
Student A23	13.75	Student B23	10.50
Student A24	12.00	Student B24	12.00
		Student B25	15.00
		Student B26	9.50
Sum of the scores	**325.50**	**Sum of the scores**	**308.75**
Mean	**13.56**	**Mean**	**11.87**
Standard deviation	**2.09**	**Standard deviation**	**2**

* All scores to be read out of 20.

Table C. Scores on Retest*.

Experimental Group (24 Students)		Control Group (26 Students)	
Student	**Score obtained**	**Student**	**Score obtained**
Student A1	14.25	Student B1	14.25
Student A2	12.50	Student B2	11.50
Student A3	11.00	Student B3	13.00
Student A4	10.75	Student B4	10.25
Student A5	12.75	Student B5	12.25
Student A6	13.00	Student B6	13.00
Student A7	14.00	Student B7	14.00
Student A8	15.25	Student B8	7.75
Student A9	13.00	Student B9	12.50
Student A10	13.75	Student B10	13.25
Student A11	16.50	Student B11	8.75
Student A12	16.75	Student B12	8.50
Student A13	13.50	Student B13	12.25
Student A14	16.75	Student B14	12.25
Student A15	14.50	Student B15	13.00
Student A16	12.50	Student B16	14.75
Student A17	16.50	Student B17	12.50
Student A18	16.00	Student B18	13.25
Student A19	13.00	Student B19	9.50
Student A20	13.75	Student B20	8.75
Student A21	16.25	Student B21	11.50
Student A22	16.00	Student B22	11.75
Student A23	15.25	Student B23	12.50
Student A24	13.50	Student B24	12.25
		Student B25	13.50
		Student B26	11.50
Sum of the scores	**341.50**	**Sum of the scores**	**308.25**
Mean	**14.22**	**Mean**	**11.85**
Standard deviation	**1.72**	**Standard deviation**	**1.86**

* All scores to be read out of 20.

Table D. Comparison between Scores on both Post-test and Retest*.

Experimental Group (24 Students)			Control Group (26 Students)		
Student	Score on Post-test	Score on Retest	Student	Score on Post-test	Score on Retest
Student A1	14.50	14.25	Student B1	14.50	14.25
Student A2	12.25	12.50	Student B2	8.75	11.50
Student A3	11.50	11.00	Student B3	11.50	13.00
Student A4	10.75	11.75	Student B4	13.75	10.25
Student A5	10.25	12.25	Student B5	14.50	12.25
Student A6	13.50	13.00	Student B6	13.75	13.00
Student A7	15.00	14.00	Student B7	11.75	14.00
Student A8	17.00	15.25	Student B8	9.75	7.75
Student A9	10.25	13.00	Student B9	10.75	12.50
Student A10	13.00	13.75	Student B10	12.25	13.25
Student A11	15.50	16.50	Student B11	9.00	8.75
Student A12	15.50	16.75	Student B12	8.00	8.50
Student A13	14.75	13.50	Student B13	12.75	12.25
Student A14	17.25	16.75	Student B14	12.75	12.25
Student A15	10.75	14.50	Student B15	14.25	13.00
Student A16	12.25	12.50	Student B16	13.75	14.75
Student A17	16.75	16.50	Student B17	13.00	12.50
Student A18	15.50	16.00	Student B18	13.75	13.25
Student A19	12.50	13.00	Student B19	12.25	9.50
Student A20	13.00	13.75	Student B20	10.00	8.75
Student A21	14.00	16.25	Student B21	10.50	11.50
Student A22	14.00	16.00	Student B22	10.50	11.75
Student A23	13.75	15.25	Student B23	10.50	12.50
Student A24	12.00	13.50	Student B24	12.00	12.25
			Student B25	15.00	13.50
			Student B26	9.50	11.50
Sum of the scores	**325.50**	**341.5**	**Sum of the scores**	**308.75**	**308.25**
Mean	**13.56**	**14.22**	**Mean**	**11.87**	**11.85**
Standard deviation	**2.09**	**1.72**	**Standard deviation**	**2**	**1.86**
Correlation Coefficient	**0.77**		**Correlation Coefficient**	**0.64**	

* All scores to be read out of 20.

Table E. Students' Overall Performance including Post-test and Retests*.

Experimental Group (24 Students)				Control Group (26 Students)			
Student	**Score on Post-test**		**Mean**	**Student**	**Score on Post-test**		**Mean**
	Score on Retest				**Score on Retest**		
Student A1	(14.50	+ 14.25)	14.37	Student B1	(14.50	+ 14.25)	14.37
Student A2	(12.25	+ 12.50)	12.37	Student B2	(8.75	+ 11.50)	10.12
Student A3	(11.50	+ 11.00)	11.25	Student B3	(11.50	+ 13.00)	12.25
Student A4	(10.75	+ 11.75)	11.25	Student B4	(13.75	+ 10.25)	12.00
Student A5	(10.25	+ 12.25)	11.25	Student B5	(14.50	+ 12.25)	13.37
Student A6	(13.50	+ 13.00)	13.25	Student B6	(13.75	+ 13.00)	13.37
Student A7	(15.00	+ 14.00)	14.50	Student B7	(11.75	+ 14.00)	12.87
Student A8	(17.00	+ 15.25)	16.12	Student B8	(9.75	+ 07.75)	08.75
Student A9	(10.25	+ 13.00)	11.62	Student B9	(10.75	+ 12.50)	11.62
Student A10	(13.00	+ 13.75)	13.37	Student B10	(12.25	+ 13.25)	12.75
Student A11	(15.50	+ 16.50)	16.00	Student B11	(9.00	+ 08.75)	08.87
Student A12	(15.50	+ 16.75)	16.12	Student B12	(8.00	+ 08.50)	08.25
Student A13	(14.75	+ 13.50)	14.12	Student B13	(12.75	+ 12.25)	12.50
Student A14	(17.25	+ 16.75)	17.00	Student B14	(12.75	+ 12.25)	12.50
Student A15	(10.75	+ 14.50)	12.62	Student B15	(14.25	+ 13.00)	13.62
Student A16	(12.25	+ 12.50)	12.37	Student B16	(13.75	+ 14.75)	14.25
Student A17	(16.75	+ 16.50)	16.62	Student B17	(13.00	+ 12.50)	12.75
Student A18	(15.50	+ 16.00)	15.75	Student B18	(13.75	+ 13.25)	13.50
Student A19	(12.50	+ 13.00)	12.75	Student B19	(12.25	+ 09.50)	10.87
Student A20	(13.00	+ 13.75)	13.37	Student B20	(10.00	+ 08.75)	09.37
Student A21	(14.00	+ 16.25)	15.12	Student B21	(10.50	+ 11.50)	11.00
Student A22	(14.00	+ 16.00)	15.00	Student B22	(10.50	+ 11.75)	11.12
Student A23	(13.75	+ 15.25)	14.50	Student B23	(10.50	+ 12.50)	11.50
Student A24	(12.00	+ 13.50)	12.75	Student B24	(12.00	+ 12.25)	12.12
				Student B25	(15.00	+ 13.50)	14.25
				Student B26	(9.50	+ 11.50)	10.50
Sum of the scores			**333.44**	**Sum of the scores**			**308.44**
Overall Mean			**13.89**	**Overall Mean**			**11.86**
Overall Standard Deviation			**1.80**	**Overall Standard Deviation**			**1.75**
Overall Correlation Coefficient			**0.87**	**Overall Correlation Coefficient**			**0.78**

* All scores to be read out of 20.