CHAPTER TWO

Reading Programmes and Teaching Methods
1. Introduction

We find it logical to provide a brief summary of the nature of approaches and methods in language teaching, and of the factors and conditions that affect learning. This is simply because learning to read better is not only a part of necessary formal learning of a language, it also affects in enhancing or retarding the process of learning the language. The study under investigation is related to language teaching and to the extent that teaching of reading could amount to language teaching. It should be admitted that however precise we might be, we cannot be comprehensive, due to the vastness and complexities of the subject.

The so called “Reading Methods” of the 50’s and the 60’s were perhaps based on this perception of the relationship between the two: learning a language and learning to read the language.

Learning to read a text – to interpret a literary text – is also the target of a MT language programme, albeit at a different level of understanding. For a second/foreign language programme teaching of reading can complement a language teaching programme to the extent that whatever else the approach/ method/ procedure being followed the core can be through a well-devised reading method. In other words ‘To what extent can reading methods complement overall FL teaching methods and models?’ is the question we wish to explore.
In this chapter we propose to examine the FL pedagogical context and the background studies in the area of teaching of reading especially EFL. We begin by defining the terms like Method, Approach.

2. **Approach, Method and Procedure**

Edward Anthony (1963:63-7) proposed a distinction between the three concepts. He argues that:

The arrangement is hierarchical. The organisational key is that techniques carry out a method which is consistent with an approach...

...An approach is a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning. An approach is axiomatic. It describes the nature of the subject matter to be taught...

...Method is an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no part of which contradicts, and all of which is based upon, the selected approach. An approach is axiomatic, a method is procedural. Within one approach there can be many methods...

...A technique is implementational - that which actually takes place in a classroom. It is a particular trick, stratagem, or contrivance used to accomplish an immediate objective. Techniques must be consistent with a method, and therefore in harmony with an approach as well. (Cited in Richard's and Rogers 1986:15).

Richard's and Rogers (1986) elaborated upon Anthony's model. They claim that "it fails to give sufficient attention to the nature of a method itself... It fails to account for how an approach may be realized in a method, or how method and technique are related" *(op.cit:16)*. The following paragraphs contain a summary of Ricahrds and Rogers' discussion and revised model of Anthony's.

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2.1 Approach

Approaches in the context of FL/SL pedagogy are based on two kinds of theories – one, the theories about the nature of language (linguistic theories) and two, the theories about the nature of language learning, be it MT or OT (other tongue). They are briefly reviewed below.

**Theory of Language:** There are three different theoretical views of language proficiency which "explicitly or implicitly current inform approaches and methods in language teaching" *(ibid:16-17).* The first of the three is the *structural view*, which views language as a systems of structures and 'related elements for coding of meaning'. The principal target is the mastery of these elements, whether they are phonological, grammatical or lexical. It is embodied in the Audiolingual Method, Total Physical Response, and the Silent way.

The second view of language is the *functional view*, which views language as 'a vehicle for the expression of functional meaning'. Its emphasis is focused upon the semantic and communicative dimension, and the content of language teaching is based on categories of meaning and function. A good example of the functional approaches is the Notional syllabuses, the Communicative Approach, and the English for specific purposes (ESP) movement.
Within one framework of socioculturally defined functions of language another view is—according to Richard's and Rogers (1986)—the *interactional view*. They assert that:

It sees language as a vehicle for the realisation of interpersonal relations and for the performance of social interactions between individuals. Language is seen as a tool for the creation and maintenance of social relations ... Interactional theories focus on the patterns of moves, acts, negotiation, and interaction found in conversational exchanges" (p.17).

The third view is the cognitivists' point of view that language is innate and can only be described in terms of cognitive processes involved in learning and using the language structures.

*Theory of language learning*: Some language methods are derived from theories of language learning. Richard and Rogers (1986) say that the underlying learning theory of an approach or a method responds to two questions:

- What are the psycholinguistic and cognitive processes involved in language learning?
- What are the conditions that need to be met in order for these learning processes to be activated?

The first question investigates the learning processes, such as habit formative, induction, inferences, and generalisation. The second one emphasises "the nature of the human and physical context in which language learning takes place" (*ibid.*:18). The authors give some examples
of how a method can be derived from a theory of language learning, mainly the Natural Approach which is built on Stephen Krashen's Monitor Model.

They conclude by arguing that approach does not specify or dictate a set of procedures or techniques and activities. In fact what links approach to procedure (termed technique in Anthony's model) is what they called 'design', discussed in the following section.

2.2 Design

An approach leads to a method by means of developing 'a design for an instructional system', i.e. language teaching programme. At this level a number of issues are considered:

- the objectives of a instructural system,
- the selection and organisation of the language content, i.e. the syllabus within that instructural system,
- the syllabus within that instructural system,
- the types of learning tasks and teaching activities
- the roles of the learners
- the roles of the teachers
- the roles of the instructional materials.
Objectives: Objectives of a method are influenced by the theories of language and language learning, from which that method is derived. The specification of particular learning objectives, however, is a outcome of design, not approach. Some methods, for example, patterns and drills of the 40's and 50's concentrate on the oral and structural skills, because of structural linguistic and behaviouristic theories of learning, whereas other place emphasis on grammar and vocabulary, and so on. Thus, objectives influence the teaching procedures and classroom activities and techniques.

The syllabus: The selection and organisation of syllabus are directly influenced by the method adopted in a language programme. The selection of language items (words, sentence constructions, functions, topics, etc.) is carry out by a predetermined set of criteria for syllabus design. To quote Richard's and Rogers (1986:21):

...one makes decisions about what to task (subject matter) and how to talk about it (linguistic matter). ESP courses, for example, are necessarily subject-matter focused. Structurally based methods, such as Situational Language Teaching and the Audiolingual Method, are necessarily structurally focused. Methods typically differ in what they see as the relevant language and subject matter around which language teaching should be organised and the principles used in sequencing content within a course.

Learning and teaching activities: the different types of learning and teaching activities stem basically from the different methods adopted in a language course.
Learner roles: The way a method views the roles of the learners in the classroom will considerably influence the design of instruction.

Teacher roles: The role of the teacher in the classroom is usually determined at the approach level, that means the teacher follows the 'policy' of the approach adopted for the instructional system. For some methods the teacher is regarded the source of knowledge, whereas for others he/she is seen as catalyst, consultant, guide, and model for learning.

Teachers’ roles, therefore, can be related to the following four issues:

- the types of functions teachers are expected to fulfill;
- the degree of control the teacher has over how learning takes place;
- the degree to which the teacher is responsible for determining the content of what is taught; and
- the intersectional patterns that develop between teachers and learners.

2.3 Procedure

This is the last level within a method; it differs from Anthony’s (1963) technique in the sense that it is broader. According to Richards and Rogers (1986:26) it “encompasses the actual moment-to-moment techniques, practices, and behaviours that operate in teaching a language according to a particular method”.
The level of procedure in a method realizes three dimensions:

- the use of teaching activities (drills, dialogues etc.)
- the ways in which particular teaching activities are used for practising language.
- the techniques used in giving feedback to learners in the classroom.

To conclude, from our experience as language teachers we all know that there exists no particular method or approach teachers follow in a language course. Eclectic methods are usually dominant, even if materials require a particular method. We admit that organisation and presentation of instructional materials influence the teaching style. But one should remember that intensive and long language programmes adopt different methods and approaches in teaching language, and resolve to certain methods when teaching specific language skills, such as grammar and vocabulary.

One last point to be highlighted in this presentation is concerned with terminology. In the field of applied linguistics it seems that there is no consistency in the use of the term ‘method’. In her discussion on the evolution of method, Narang (1996) rightly points out that “the term ‘method’ has been in use at times referring to the techniques of presentation, and sometimes highlighting one or the other aspect of material presentation” (p.19). Her argument goes to conclude that:
An effective language teaching programme is the one that treats *methodics* of rewriting a linguistic grammar in the form of a pedagogical grammar, and the *methodology* of syllabus and the text preparation, and third, the *method* of presentation, all as equally important. These three M's that are integral components of any language teaching programme are inseparable, interdependent and equally important and therefore must receive equal attention of the pedagogues. The success or failure of a (language teaching) programme depends not only on the choice of a method but more on the right matching of the three M’s. (Narang 1996: 19).

3. **Factors and Conditions Affecting Learning**

Learning can get affected from one situation to another, due to circumstances surrounding the learning ‘environment’. These circumstances are referred to here as factors and conditions. *Factors* here refer to those needs and expectations of the society which in turn get influenced by the socio-political and cultural-educational policies of the administration authority for educational planning. These may be said to be the external factors. On the other hand, with the internal factors and conditions of learning we mean the psychological and mental elements, such as personality and motivation. Both are discussed in brief.

Some of the factors that may highly affect language teaching and learning are those social, cultural, political and educational pressures reflected in needs of the society, perceptions of the people, goals of the state, and the prestige that a language bestowed on its users (Narang, 1996). Attitudes towards the FL/SL play a major role not only in learning but in creating effective language programmes. Narang (1996: 34) argues that “socio-economic factors bring better job opportunities due to the knowledge of a
particular language [which in turn] can always motivate a learner better for learning that particular language [...] Socio-economic reasons can bring about changes in the methods/methodology of language teaching as well". This is true as one can find the methods of teaching a language adopted, say, in Europe and middle Africa are quite different, due probably mainly to technology and resources available.

Later, she argues that "Socio-political pressures of various kinds can also bring about changes in language pedagogy, both in materials as well as methods" (op.cit: 35). The good example, amongst others, is the change in methods during World War II. This is also the case for ESP, having different methods and distinctive materials so as to enable science students cope with the 'floods' of information and new knowledge, which do not emerge from their own society or at least in their mother tongue. Other important factors include teachers' experiences, choice of media and facilities available for teaching, and time available/devoted to a language course. Moreover, some other factors are related to the theories of learning (e.g. behaviourism) or methods of teaching (e.g. audiolingualism). Also, there are factors which come from within the learner such as motivation, aptitude, personality, age, and attitude towards learning a language, and/or towards the community of the target language: “A positive attitude motivates and thus helps in learning the language better while a negative attitude hinders the process of learning” (op cit., p.38).
Spolsky, (1989) discusses the conditions of language learning. We list some of those conditions in continuation with what has been mentioned above.

- A general theory of second language learning deals with the learning of a second or later language by a human being who has already learned a first language.

- A learner’s expectations of the outcome of language learning interact with the learner’s personality to control the selection of preferred learning strategies.

- The greater a learner’s aptitude, the faster he or she will learn all parts of the second language.

- The more time spent learning any aspect of a second language, the more will be learned.

- The more motivation a learner has, the more time he or she will spend learning an aspect of a second language.

- A learner’s attitudes affect the development of motivation.

- The social and individual values which underlie language choice also determine the value an individual assigns to the learning of a specific language.

- In formal language learning situations, multiple opportunities to observe and practise the new language can be provided. The more these match other relevant conditions (the learner, the goals, the situation), the more efficient the learning will be.
4. **Training and Development of Meaning**

Jenkinson (1979) suggests three-stage approach for meaning development: construction, interpretation and evaluation. He lists a number of abilities under each stage, which may be viewed as objectives of the reading programme. These abilities are given below.

4.1 **Construction for meaning**

The following abilities must be developed to construct complete meaning:

- To recognize and understand words or groups of words that are meaningful as units.
- To realise the appropriate vocabulary of meanings and to understand nuances of meanings between words.
- To detect figurative language and interpret the effect upon meaning.
- To recognize the function of grammar and syntax in controlling meaning.
- To interpret typographical devices as clues to meaning.
- To grasp the literal meaning, or to understand direct statements made by the author.
- To identify parallel statements.
- To recognize paraphrases.
- To identify things mentioned most frequently.
- To recognize topic sentences and where divisions might come in a single paragraph.

- To state the main topics of separate paragraphs.

- To understand the main idea in a passage.

- To follow the sequence of ideas and to anticipate this sequence.

- To understand the basis on which a passage is organised.

4.2 **Interpretation of Meaning**

Interpretation will include the following abilities:

- To understand the meaning of words and to realise the affect of the context upon meaning.

- To understand why the author included or excluded certain things.

- To assess the relevance of the materials.

- To summarise the passage.

- To select a suitable title.

- To identify the type of passage, e.g. fiction, description.

- To be able to recognize and state the author's purpose in words.

- To keep the question or problem in mind while reading for the answer.

- To establish a purpose for reading.

- To see the motives of the author.

- To draw and support conclusions.
- To make inferences or predictions.
- To identify the tone of the passage.
- To determine the author's attitude towards the reader.

4.3 Evaluation of Meaning

The last stage which is targeted by any reading programme, includes the following abilities.

- To appraise the passage of its ideas, purpose and presentations.
- To maintain an objective attitude which demands proof and checking of sources.
- To recognize objective evidence and to distinguish between fact and opinion.
- To be aware of basic assumptions the author expects the reader to take for granted.
- To make critical judgements, such as (a) to evaluate statements that conflict with or contradict one another, and (b) to judge if an argument is supported
- To identify valid objection not answered by the author.
- To detect special pleading such as emotional appeal or propaganda.
- To judge the effectiveness of devices used by the author, e.g. metaphor, simile – etc.
To understand that mateirals will differ greatly in validity and reliability because of the time written, pressure of circumstances, bias of writers, and many other factors.

To achieve the objective of a reading programme, we need to specify the desired skills and the required activities and teaching methods. For example, the classroom activities and exercises for an intermediate stage can focus on the following abilities.

- Use context clues to enrich vocabulary.
- Know direct explanations of phrases and sentences.
- Know the use of typographical exercises, such as italicised and bold words.
- Recognize synonym or definition of unknown words.
- Know the function of comparison or contrast.
- Understand figures of speech.
- Evaluate total context.

On the other hand, comprehension assessment is to determine the learner’s comprehension of the text and the degree of comprehension. This ‘assessment’ in the above context, does not mean ‘testing and evaluating’ students’ comprehension. It implies that comprehension training can be enhanced through reading tasks and exercises. For example, students can be given tasks like: matching topic sentences with paragraphs, references,
Comprehension questions, normally based on a reading passage, can be divided into four types:-

1. *Direct questions* or *local* comprehension, where answers can be directly taken from, and explicitly found in, the text.

2. *Indirect questions*, or *global* comprehension, where the reader tries to understand the whole to be able to answer.

3. *Questions of inference*, or *interpretative* comprehension, where finding the suitable answer requires the reader to infer from the text, based on both understanding of the text and reasoning. This type of questions can be either global or local.

4. *Questions of evaluation*, or *critical* comprehension, answers of which are based and dependent upon the reader’s critical judgement and evaluative opinion. This type of questions are generally global.

Grellet (1981) builds all his practice exercises on four main ways of reading.

1. *Skimming*: quickly running one’s eyes over a text to get the gist of it.

2. *Scanning*: quickly going through a text to find a particular piece of information.

3. *Extensive reading*: reading longer texts, usually for one’s own pleasure.

4. *Intensive reading*: reading shorter texts, to extract specific information.

It should be noted that these different ways of reading are not mutually
exclusive. For example, the reader may skim through a passage to see what it is about before deciding whether it is worth scanning a particular paragraph for the information which the reader is looking for.

Davis (1989) (cited in Davis, 1990) argue that the best way to begin a programme for enhancing reading speed is first to remove causes of slow reading: that includes too small a sight vocabulary, weaknesses in vocabulary knowledge and comprehension; word recognition difficulty, over-analysis, insufficient use of context; lack of phrasing and vocalization. The fact is, then, that in order to make readers read fast and effectively, first we have to teach them good habits of reading through special programmes (see Pattanyak 1977). Detailed analysis for reading skills with exercises to develop those skills are presented in Grellet (1981).

5. Teaching Reading Comprehension

In chapter one we discussed the aims of this study. One main aim is that arriving at a reading programme which will enable students to read faster with a higher comprehension rate. Here we review the literature of teaching reading as a foreign or a second language. This presentation should be useful for any language programme, and should be known to both curriculum writers and language teachers alike. In theory, we deal with strategies and skills separately, in practice, however, they can be integrated simultaneously in classroom activities.
We discussed how skills and strategies can be improved by means of training. That training is mainly represented by tasks and exercises where skills and strategies are integrated. In this section they are treated separately: first strategies followed by skills. One should note that not all activities are suitable for all levels, so that where some activities might be only relevant for the elementary level, some are suitable for the intermediate and advanced level. In brief, most of the discussion is of great importance to all levels, but in varying degrees.

Finally, the difference here is made between intensive reading (reading for accuracy) and extensive reading (reading for fluency). Intensive reading is the reading activities which are directed and instructed in the classroom, and involving usually short texts. Extensive reading, on the other hand, is that reading which involves longer texts and usually carried out outside the classroom. Graded readers are a good example of the material used for teaching extensive reading.

The following two sections mainly focus on intensive reading, followed by a short section on the teaching of extensive reading and its importance and function for any reading programme.

5.1 The teaching of reading strategies: the meta-cognitive elements

As we noted in chapter one earlier that cognitive strategies are the more familiar mental processes which enable one to read, and which can be
labeled as reading skills. Metacognitive strategies are more concerned with thinking about the reading experience itself, in which the learner becomes aware of what he is doing and how it should be done. This shows the importance of teaching strategies to learners so as to make their reading more effective and more successful.

In this section we present a model of teaching metacognitive strategies as suggested by many researchers. (See Williams 1984). However, generally speaking, the best procedure for strategies training involves:

a sequence of first helping students identify strategies they are already using, then presenting and explaining a new strategy, with a rationale for using it. At this stage the teacher might model the strategy. This is followed by practicing it, at first with substantial support of 'scaffolding' but gradually reducing this to encourage autonomous use. Finally, students are helped to evaluate their success.²

Thus, strategy training involves identification of the strategy according to objective and purpose; then, presenting the strategy and naming it, so that learners became more aware of its use; after that, they are given the guidance and practice of how to use it, and finally they are motivated to continue using and retaining it by means of evaluating their success.

Following Urghurat and Weir (1998), we will adopt the distinction made between pre-reading (previewing and predicting) strategies, while-reading (self-questioning and self-monitoring) strategies and post-reading

(evaluation) strategies. We draw from different sources to write this section, but we would like to acknowledge that its structuring and most of its content is mainly drawn from the up-to-date work referred to above.

5.1.1 Pre-Reading Activities:

(a) Previewing: Urquhart and Weir (1998: 184) argue that "Previewing can be used to make a decision whether to read a book, an article or a text". Previewing strategies can involve a number of strategies, each of which can be used appropriately according to text type and the reader's purpose. They might involve:

- thinking about the title
- checking the edition and date of publication
- reading the table of contents quickly
- reading appendices quickly
- reading indices quickly
- reading the abstract carefully
- reading the prefaces, the foreword and the blurb carefully.

Previewing helps students recognize the difficulty level of a text and comparative difficulty with other texts in the same field; it also helps in deciding which book to read for a particular purpose. This is true when English is taught for academic or other specific purposes. Those kinds of
strategies, which can be seen as a part of study skills course, take their importance and value for teaching from the amount of time they may take when they prevent unnecessary readings which are of no value or no relevance to one's interests and purposes.

(b) **Prediction:** This type of strategy is used to anticipate the contents of a text; to make hypotheses about what propositions, ideas, information and the like it might contain. It can be trained by sensitizing, thinking about the subject and asking oneself related questions (see Grellet 1981). It seems to be a case of activating background knowledge, which assist the reader in establishing the text structure, which in turn is an aid of comprehending, and interacting with, the text in general.

5.1.2 **While-Reading Strategies**

(a) **Self Questioning:** A good reader is characterised as critical and self-questioning, a person who can make inferences, monitor understanding and attend to the style and structure of the text. Students can be taught to "interrogate" a text, as Nuttal (1985) terms it, by means of providing an example by the teacher interrogating a text, particularly a difficult part of it.

(b) **Self-Monitoring:** Monitoring comprehension is checking whether understanding a text is taking place or not; whether this understanding fits with what the reader already knows about the topic. It can be viewed as
both a remedial strategy, to adopt a different strategy when comprehension fails, and awareness-creating strategy, helpful in keeping purpose in mind.

5.1.3 Post-Reading Strategies

_Evaluation_: These strategies are concerned with the reader's opinion and personal response, giving his reaction and appreciation towards a text. It can be improved by means of writing summaries, conducting oral discussion in the classroom, relating one's knowledge to the text content.

5.2 The teaching of reading strategies: the cognitive elements

Earlier in Chapter 1, we talked about top-down (reader-driven) and bottom-up (text-driven) processes. Both processes are involved in any reading, but they differ in magnitude according to purpose and the linguistic level of the reader. Teachers, therefore, should incorporate classroom activities which should, in turn, encourage L2 readers to use appropriate combinations of both processes according to text type and purpose.

Cognitive strategies may range from macro activities, such as scanning or skimming, down to micro activities, such guessing the meaning of an unknown word (See Hosenfed 1984). Urghuart and Weir (1998: 188-189) list the following characteristics for the cognitive strategies:

- They are essentially problem solving on whatever level, macro or micro.
• they are goal oriented
• they are purposeful
• they involve efficiency and selection
• in the case of expeditions strategies, they also involve speed.
• they are consciously adopted
• they are, by implication, directly transferable.

5.2.1 Individual tasks at the local level

(a) Automacity in word recognition: In the bottom-up process of reading, recognizing a word is considered to be the second step-after letter decoding. And, of course, it is regarded as a symptom of slow reading. However, even fast readers and top-down processes resolve to it when confronted by ambiguous and new, difficult words. But overall, it takes less time than guessing the meaning of an unknown word. What learners need is training in recognising words contextually in the text from the first sight; that is to say, they need to develop automaticity in word recognition in order to become fast readers. This will also enable them to concentrate on the global meaning and the discourse of the text and relate it to what they already knew, rather than understanding merely at the local level, where they will find it difficult to relate the discontinuous pieces of information to one another in order to come to the overall meaning of the text. The question is: How to achieve it?
(b) **Vocabulary Acquisition**: The case of vocabulary acquisition is the reverse of word recognition. In the former, it is the matter of familiarity of new items, i.e. knowing the meaning of new vocabulary, whereas, in the latter, it is a matter of automatic decoding. L2 learners are supposed to learn lexis first in order to be able to use them actively in their reading and comprehension, where in a later stage they are supposed to be automatic processes.

Applied linguists admit that learning vast repertoire of vocabulary is a problem. For this purpose they recommend 'extensive reading, which allows the repetition of new words in different contexts (Apparently 12 times is the recommended dose). Thus, it makes acquiring a new word simple, helps in its retention, and facilitates its use. How many words does a reader need to be able to read independently? This question is not yet satisfactorily answered. Some suggest 5000 words, and some recommend less than that figure but not less than 2000 (See Nuttal 1985). Urquhart and Weir (1998:196) assert that "correlation between knowledge of word meanings and ability to comprehend passages containing these words are high and well established in L₁ reading studies".

Teaching vocabulary can be a useful tool, and directed instruction can help learners increase their word lexicon. In extensive reading, learners face many unknown words, and they will waste their time if they always refer to
the dictionary. Therefore, Nation and Coady (1988) suggest the following strategy. The strategy presupposes two things; firstly that the learners are able to follow the ideas in the text they are reading, that is, that they have sufficient command of vocabulary, grammar and reading skills in order to achieve basic comprehension of the text, and secondly that the learners bring some relevant background knowledge to the text.

This strategy consist of five steps:

1. Finding the part of speech of the unknown word.

2. Looking at the immediate context of the unknown word and simplifying this context if necessary.

3. Looking at the wider context of the unknown word. This means looking at the relationship between the clause containing the unknown word and surrounding clauses and sentences.

4. Guessing the meaning of the unknown word.

5. Checking that the guess is correct.

(c) Grammar: In the majority of language programme grammar is taught separately, in spite of the fact that some reading courses incorporate grammar exercises in the reading activities. Knowing the syntactic structures of sentences will free up the learners processing of text understanding. Surprisingly not so much research has yet been done on the relationship between grammatical knowledge and reading ability, so that
specially designed activities can be recommended and which should be based on the findings of the established literature in this area.

5.2.2. Individual tasks at the global level

(a) Reading Text Carefully: One main purpose of careful reading is to get the explicitly stated main ideas and information. The reader has to go thoroughly through the text from beginning to end. Sometimes, he has to make a few regressions in a passage, it is necessary for better comprehension and critical reading.

Urquhart and Weir (1998:202) argue that such a reading 'style' is "a bottom-up sequential process with some limited top-down processing". They claim that such a process might involve:

- separating explicitly stated main ideas from supporting detail by recognising topic sentences.
- generating a representation of the text as a whole.
- understanding the development of an argument or logical organisation.

However, in some texts the ideas may be implicitly stated. Learners, then, need to be trained as to how to form an inference based on information provided by the text. (This is different from the inference which is discussed below, in which the reader rely mainly on his knowledge of the world).
This kind of inference might involve:

- informational inferences of either referential nature (to answer questions of *what* and *which*) or spatiotemporal nature (to answer questions of *why* and *how*)

- explanatory inferences which are concerned with cause and enablement (to answer questions of *why* and *how*)

Hoey's (1991:224) suggests that a reading purpose will involve a particular reading strategy as shown Table 2.1 below.

**Table 2.1: Showing a reading purpose with the suitable strategy:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typical reading purposes</th>
<th>Typical reading strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To check on information</td>
<td>Use the index and scan the relevant paragraphs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To seek clarification</td>
<td>Use the index and/or contents and read carefully the relevant paragraphs or sections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To check whether something is relevant to one's area of specialism</td>
<td>Skim the whole or part of the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To support a position</td>
<td>Skim the whole and read quickly the relevant parts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To provide oneself with background information for one's area</td>
<td>Do the same, or read quickly the whole of or part of the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To evaluate e.g. for a colleague, a student, or a journal</td>
<td>Read carefully and make evaluative notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To revise for an examination</td>
<td>Read carefully and make factual notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To inform oneself about a new area</td>
<td>Read carefully and (probably) make no notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To translate into another language</td>
<td>Read with total comprehension, sentence by sentence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(b) **Inferencing**: This type of inferencing is quite distinctive from the other type of inference. The previous one can be termed as *prepositional* inferencing, and this as *pragmatic*. The former is based on the text and its content, whereas in the latter the reader goes outside the text and uses his own schemata to arrive at a conclusion. Urquhart and Weir (1998: 203) give a clear explanation of the nature of this activity that: "With reference to their own background knowledge and experience, the readers would try to interpret, respond to, evaluate and possibly apply the writer's message(s) contained in the text".

(a) **Text Selection**: Selecting suitable texts for language learners has received considerable debate and discussions among applied linguistics. Whether to use adapted, language-oriented texts, or to give the learners texts suitable for their interests and future career; simplified or authentic. We will briefly touch upon this later in this section. Nuttal (1985) devotes a whole chapter for text selection. She offers a number of criteria for text selection. The main ones are:

- *readability*: how difficult the text is in terms of lexis and the learner's linguistic competence.

- *suitability of content*: it is necessary that the text should interest the reader, and should be suitable for his age and experience.

- *exploitability*: how well it can help the reader develop and improve his reading ability. It should illustrate how language can be exploited to achieve a purpose.
Urquhart and Weir (1998) suggest that appropriate texts can be selected in terms of:

- intended audience
- intended purpose
- source
- length
- lexical range
- rhetorical structure
- topic familiarity
- relationship to background knowledge
- channel of presentation

(d) **Background Knowledge Activation**: Schemata and background knowledge received comparatively wider treatment in chapter one. Earlier (section 5.1), we considered how background knowledge can be activated to aid understanding, through pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading activities. Here we are interested to discuss how background knowledge of understanding the text structure can aid comprehension and help in writing summaries.

(e) **Text Organisation**: As discussed earlier in chapter one that background knowledge plays a role in retention, referential comprehension
and fast recall. Text organisation schemata aid comprehension, for example in the story structure: setting, problem, goal, action, and outcome. Other examples can be those of descriptions (processes, places, people etc.) classifications and argument. Information transfer exercises, which normally found in the so-called communicative syllabi, aim to create the learner's awareness of text structure.

The most powerful exercises are those of jigsaw reading in which the class is split into groups and given only partial information on a topic situation or story. Then groups are reorganised by taking a member from each group to form the new group. Every member of the new groups has different information. So all members in a group work together to arrive at the complete story or to come to a solution to the puzzle. Good exercises books in jigsaw reading are those of Geddes and Sturtridge, 1982. One drawback is that they are time-consuming, and suitable for intermediate and advanced levels. One main advantage is that learners can be forced to communicate about something they know, naturally not artificially.

This brief summary can be concluded by quoting Pearson and Fielding (1991:832):

It appears that any sort of systematic attention to clues that reveal how authors attempt to relate ideas to one another or any sort of systematic attempt to impose structure upon a text, especially in some sort of visual representation of the relationships among key ideas, facilitates comprehension as well as both short term and long term memory for the text.
6. **Expeditious Reading Skills**

Expeditious reading skills are those skills which have to do with rapid reading such as skimming, scanning and search reading. They are different styles of reading and can be said to be on the opposite line of *careful reading*. Much has been said about careful reading, but less has been said on the 'theory' of expeditious skills, as for example how readers process the texts quickly and selectively to extract the important/required information in line with the intended purpose.

We do not involve ourselves in depth in discussing them in this section. Yet, we try to explain what is meant by these three main types of reading styles. Theoretical suggestions for practical purposes are given in the end of every subsection. For the interested reader, however, it will be advisable if he/she refers to the recommended references.

6.1 **Skimming**:

*Urquhart and Weir* (1998:213) point that skimming:

involves processing a text selectively to get the main idea(s) and the discourse topic as efficiently as possible, which might involve both expeditious and careful reading and both bottom-up and top-down processing. The focus may be global or local and the rate of reading is likely to be rapid, but with some care. The text is processed quickly to locate important information which then may be read more carefully.

We devoted a section in the questionnaire of this study in order to know the most frequent uses of skimming with the undergraduate learners. Four main purposes behind the use of skimming seem to be of interest to
students, and it appears that they are aware of. These are:

- To get the main idea in the text.
- To get a general impression about the text.
- To find a certain fact within the text.
- To get an answer for a specific question.

Where appropriate to text type skimming might involve the following decisions:

- identifying the source
- reading titles and subtitles
- reading the abstract carefully
- reading the introductory and concluding paragraphs carefully
- reading the first and last sentence of each paragraph carefully
- identifying discourse markers
- noting repeated key content words
- identifying markers of importance
- skipping clusters of detail
- glancing at any non-verbal information.

6.2 Search reading:

The purpose of search reading is to locate information on predetermined topics. This reading style may be seen as a higher sequence of skimming. It can be rapid and selective, with more attention and careful reading where
necessary. In this respect, it appears similar to skimming in utilising both processes of reading: bottom-up top-down. And it is different from scanning (see below) in that the time of attention given to the text tends to be longer, and that it "goes well beyond the mere matching of words". (ibid: 215).

Where appropriate, it might involve, among others, the following decisions;

• using formal knowledge of text structure for locating information

• using titles and subtitles

• glancing at words and phrases in the same semantic field

6.3 Scanning:

This skill, or cognitive reading strategy, involves looking quickly through the text to locate a specific word or a particular symbol, e.g. a name or date. Comprehension is not important, and the rate of reading is normally fast and rapid. Scanning is mostly used in reviewing indexes or directories, and at times when looking for particulars in classified advertisements in newspapers, or going quickly through a schedule at a train station.

7. Extensive reading

The distinction between intensive and extensive reading has become fossilised; intensive reading is confined to the classroom with short texts
accompanied by activities and controlled practices; extensive reading is viewed as reading longer texts in the library or at home, and at times reading lengthy texts silently in the classroom can be also of this type, the purpose is either pleasure or practice, or both.

Davis (1995-329) defines an extensive reading programme as:

a supplementary class library scheme, attached to an English course, in which pupils are given the time, encouragement, and materials to read pleasurably, at their own level, as many books as they can, without the pressures of testing or marks. Thus, pupils are only competing against themselves, and it is up to the teacher to provide the motivation and monitoring to ensure that the maximum number of books is being read in the time available.

Extensive reading should normally be at the level of the students or slightly below it. (See for example Williams 1984 and Hedge 1985). In language programmes, extensive reading is often practised through using graded readers, usually assigned in the course holidays, e.g. weekends or semester holidays as it is the case at Sana'a University, Yemen. Hill and Reid-Thomas (1988:44) describe a graded reader as

"either a simplified version of an original work or a 'simple original', i.e. an original work written in simple English. In either case it is written to a grading scheme which may be set out in terms of vocabulary, sentence structure, and, in some cases, content.

Day & Bamford (1998, pp.45-46 & 120) list a number of Goals for an extensive reading programme in which students can:

- Have a positive attitude toward reading in the second language.
- Have confidence in their reading.
- Have motivation to read in the second language.
• Reading without constantly stopping to look up unknown or difficult words in the dictionary.

• Have increased their word recognition ability.

• Know for what purpose they are reading when they read.

• Read at an appropriate rate for their purpose in reading.

• Know how to choose appropriate reading materials for their interests and language ability.

Earlier they argued that for teachers it will be a more useful way of understanding the complexity of extensive reading through a description of the characteristics that are found in successful extensive reading programmes.

1. Students read as much as possible, perhaps in and definitely out of the classroom.

2. A variety of materials on a wide range of topics is available so as to encourage reading for different reasons and in different ways.

3. Students select what they want to read and have the freedom to stop reading material that fails to interest them.

4. The purposes of reading are usually related to pleasure, information, and general understanding.
5. Reading is its own reward. There are few or no follow-up exercises after reading.

6. Reading materials are well within the linguistics competence of the students in terms of vocabulary and grammar.

7. Reading is individual and silent, at the student’s own pace, and, outside class, done when and where the student chooses.

8. Reading speed is usually faster rather than slower as students read books and other material they find easily understandable.

9. Teachers orient students to the goals of the programme, explain the methodology, keep track of what each student reads, and guide students in getting the most out of the programme.

10. The teacher is 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.

8. **Conclusion**

There is a linear, interdependent relation between reading comprehension and language ability. That is to say, the higher the linguistic competence a learner has, the better comprehension he/she gets from reading. Likewise, the greater reading ability the better the FL/SL competence. It is established in research on reading that those learners who read more in the foreign language have the following advantages:

- gains in vocabulary
better use and usage in both lexis and structure

higher retention and activation of passive vocabulary

improvement in spelling and style of writing

motivation and positive attitude towards the second/foreign language learning

faster improvement in language performance

building confidence in language learning

Day and Bamford (1998, pp. 33-38) report the findings of a number of different studies conducted in many countries on the benefits of extensive reading. They all support one or more of the above-mentioned advantages of extensive reading.

In this study we are of the view that the reading method should be extensively used in any language programme. Reading—as a language skill—has its advantages on the other skills. Learners spend more time in reading because of the availability and easy access of the reading matter found in newspapers, magazines, novels, text-books...etc. It is a receptive skill, therefore, not much effort is required as in speaking or writing. The learner can read at his/her own pace, and not according to the pace of the speaker (in the case of listening). He/she has the choice of looking up the
meaning of unknown words. Above all, in the academic field, I believe that we read more than we speak, listen or write.

The earliest method in language teaching is probably the Grammar-Translation Approach, which mainly depends on reading texts involving a continuous practice on graded grammatical rules and intensive exercises on translation. However, one of the earliest monolingual methods in language teaching is the ‘reading method’, advocated by Michael West (1926). He argued that reading was more useful to Indians learning English than speaking. The principle feature of this method is restricting the goal of language teaching to training in reading comprehension, because it is an attainable and practical objective. (See Mackey, 1965 and Stern, 1983). To conclude, learners can have better language competence through reading, and they can be efficient readers through reading, too.