CHAPTER -I

INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER ONE

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is an important skill, but the least understood one in academic context (Grabe, 1991; Hatch, 1979; Nuttall, 1996; Paulston, 1979; Routman, 1996). It is a common practice among teachers, researchers, and test developers to look upon this construct from an analytic point of view (e.g., Grabe, 2009, 1997, 1991; Alderson, 2000). Reading plays a crucial role in the field of English as a foreign language (EFL) instruction (Goodman, 1976; Nuttall, 1996; Paulston, 1979; Rivers, 1981). Therefore, it is through reading that students may use authentic sources such as newspapers, magazines, and books in the target language. Along the same line, Rivers (1981) emphasizes the development of the reading skill as it enables the students to use the literature and periodical, or scientific and technical journals in a target language.

Despite the importance attached to the skill of reading, it has been considered as “the least understood process” (Grabe, 1991, p. 30) in language teaching and testing context. According to Grabe (1991), there is rarely a common view towards the nature of reading comprehension. Sometimes, reading is referred to as a passive or receptive skill; sometimes, it is referred to as meaning created activity (Swaffar., Arens and Byrnes, 1991). In this regard, Broughton (1994) states that:

Reading is a complex skill that involves a whole series of lesser skills. In discussing the complex nature of reading skills it was pointed out that reading involves correlating elements of language with meaning (p. 94).

Some scholars support the idea of multifaceted view of reading comprehension (e.g., Celce Murcia, 1991; Swaffar, 1991; Weir, Hughes & Porter, 1990), while others support the binary nature of reading comprehension (Gough & Juel, 1991; Tunner & Hoover, 1993, both cited in Grabe, 1997). Although there is no agreement on the nature of reading comprehension as a construct, most scholars have proposed different methods for teaching and testing reading comprehension in the

According to Grabe (1997) and Hudson (2007) reading comprehension is a combination of two abilities of word recognition and inference ability. Chastain (1988), referring to reading as a basic decoding skill, defines the ultimate goal of reading as gaining meaning from those word sequences, not reading individual words or sequences of words.

On the other hand, some scholars define reading comprehension as a multidivisible construct. Underwood and Batt (1996) define reading as an information processing skill consisting of a number of cognitive sub-skills. Higginbotham and Burton (2000) define reading as a thinking process which involves concentration, prediction and anticipation. Kern (1989) believes “reading in any language is cognitively demanding” (p. 135). In his view, reading involves the coordination of attention, memory, perception and comprehension processes. Regarding the multi­divisibility of reading comprehension, Nuttall (1996) suggested three steps for approaching reading in the classroom:

“the problem should be recognized to solve it and also a clear purpose in reading should be considered and, finally, students should be equipped for the journey with all the tools at their disposal” (p.96).

As language teaching is changing, language testing as an important part of language teaching is changing alongside teaching. However, in spite of the fact that teaching is moving towards learner-centeredness, language testing does not pay adequate attention to learners. Due to a lot of problems that are raised regarding language testing, language assessment as a means of measuring students’ performance and also involving them in assessing themselves has recently occupied a huge place in the realm of language teaching.

“Assessment is a universal feature of social life. Throughout history people have been put to test to prove their capabilities to establish their credentials”
Testing is an inseparable part of language teaching. No one can deny the role of testing in educational settings. For years scholars have talked about testing and its significant role in language teaching. In the past, testing and teaching were treated as different tools in classroom environment. Nowadays there is a tendency toward combining testing and teaching in order to enhance learning (Lynch, 2003).

“Assessment may be defined as any method used to better understand the current knowledge that a student possesses” (Dietel, Herman, & Knuth, 1991, p. 1). This implies that assessment can be as simple as a teacher’s subjective judgment based on a single observation of student performance, or as complex as a five-hour standardized test. The idea of current knowledge implies that what a student knows is always changing and that we can make judgments about student achievement through comparisons over a period of time. Assessment may affect decisions about grades, advancement, placement, instructional needs, and curriculum.

“Assessment is a fact of life for teachers, it is an organic part of teaching and learning; and using assessment evidence is part of the planning process (Lambert, & Lines, 2000, p. 2).” Morgan, Dunn, Parry, & O’reilly (2004) believe that gradual tendency towards assessment procedures is growing up. Test-makers believe that new assessment procedures influence learning a lot.

“Language testing differs from testing in other content areas, because language teachers have more choices to make. The various kinds of language assessments are classified into three broad categories: (a) selected-response assessments (including true-false, matching, and multiple-choice assessments); (b) constructed-response assessments (including fill-in, short-answer, and performance assessments); and (c) personal-response assessments (including conference, portfolio, and self- or peer-assessments)” (Brown and Hudsen, 1998,p.107).
“Learner assessment is conducted in English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a foreign Language (EFL) educational programs for many reasons—to place learners in appropriate instructional levels, to measure their ongoing progress, to qualify them to enroll in academic or job training programs, to verify program effectiveness, and to demonstrate learner gains in order to justify continued funding for a program. Because of this multiplicity of objectives, learner assessment involves using a variety of instruments and procedures to gather data on a regular basis to ensure that programs are "identifying learners' needs, documenting the learners' progress toward meeting their own goals, and ascertaining the extent to which the project objectives are being met" (Burt, & Keenan, 1995,p.70).

“The primary purpose of a teaching/learning task is to promote learning, while the primary purpose of an assessment task is to collect relevant information for purposes of making an inference or decisions about individuals- which is not to say that assessment tasks have no potential for promoting learning, but simply that this is not their primary purpose “(Alderson, 2000, p.203).

Short (1993) stated that integrated language and content instruction has become a popular alternative to traditional ESL/EFL instruction. Researchers have recommended this instructional approach to develop students' academic language ability and facilitate their transition to mainstream classes. Practitioners have also favored this approach for several reasons: to prepare students for mainstream classes, increase student motivation and interest with content themes, and make ESL/ESL students feel part of the mainstream school curricula. Over the past 10 years, much progress has been made in developing, implementing, and refining strategies and techniques that effectively integrate language and content instruction. However, the issue of assessment is still being resolved. Neither traditional language tests nor content achievement tests are adequate. The difficulty with assessment centers on isolating the language features from the content objectives so one does not adversely influence the other.
Regarding language skills, Alderson (2000 and 2005) says that reading as one of the major language skills has drawn a lot of attention. Assessing reading is such a difficult task for every teacher and test maker. The problems lie in the both reliability and validity of language tests. The movement towards authentic, performance-based assessment in ESL/EFL reading comprehension, therefore, has been an attempt to achieve a more appropriate and valid representation of students’ communicative reading competencies than that derived from standardized objective tests. The purpose of this study is to compare the relationship between effective reading tasks and proficiency among Indian and Iranian Students. According to Bachman and Palmer (1996), as distinguishing sub-skills from one another is not clear, the best way to approach reading, speaking, writing and listening is through implementing of target tasks within educational settings.

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Undoubtedly reading is one of the most important skills in EFL and ESL context. There is a huge array of research, literature, articles and books written to smooth the path toward mastery of reading comprehension ability. EFL/ESL teachers often find it difficult to gather all this information and get a clear picture of reading construct.

Educational settings can help students become independent readers and writers through a balanced literacy program. The components of a balanced literacy program includes reading aloud, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, etc. These elements and factors should be considered while writing curriculum, doing assessment and teaching in the classroom.

Thus, an awareness of effective and authentic assessment should be heightened in education; teachers and schools through to policy makers should cooperate to ensure desirable innovative practices in assessment and embedded them throughout the educational system (Forbes, 1996). Assessment in a whole language-based classroom is ongoing, it is an integral part of the program design and helps drive the process of developing curriculum. One of the goals of a whole language
program is to empower learners by helping them to become more self-directed, to identify and work towards their own goals for learning, literacy, and life (Joughin, 2009). A logical outgrowth of that goal is to incorporate learners' self-evaluation into the overall assessment activities of a program. Both learners and teachers need to know why they do what they do in a classroom so that they can have a sense of progress, as well as make decisions about future directions. One great motivator, especially in adult basic education, is for learners to clearly see and feel their own growth. Standardized tests do not measure growth in self-esteem, life skills, empowerment, community involvement, and self-confidence, nor do they truly measure the literacy skills that adult learners make in many programs (VanDerHeyden & Witt, 2008).

"Billions of dollars are spent each year on education, yet there is widespread dissatisfaction with our educational system among educators, parents, policymakers, and the business community. Efforts to reform and restructure schools have focused attention on the role of assessment in school improvement. After years of increases in the quantity of formalized testing and the consequences of poor test scores, many educators have begun to strongly criticize the measures used to monitor students' performance and evaluate programs. They claim that traditional measures fail to assess significant learning outcomes and thereby undermine curriculum, instruction, and policy decisions"(Dietel, Herman, & Knuth, 1991: 2).

As Duzer (2002) mentioned, one way to test language development is through the use of standardized tests, which are developed according to explicit specification. Test items are chosen for their ability to discriminate among levels, and administration procedures are consistent and uniform. Despite the advantages, standardized tests have limitations. The result will have meaning to learners and teachers only if the test content is related to the goals and content of the instructions. There is concern, however, that standardized test may not be able to capture the incremental changes in teaching (Brown, 2004). Successful implementation of effective tasks will be more likely to occur when professional development occurs across educational systems," especially reading assessment" with fidelity to meet the academic needs of the students" (Brown, 2004: p.87).
This research is an endeavor to tackle with those factors and tasks, which are effective in assessing reading comprehension. Hence, the main aims of the present study can be classified into two categories. One the one hand, an attempt will be made to determine if university students’ reading assessment and task-consciousnesses (performances) are related to language proficiency or task type in any meaningful way. On the other hand, Indian and Iranian participants’ reading assessment and task-performances are compared to determine which of these factors accounts for a larger percentage of their scores variances. As such, the present study has a number of purposes. First, it will investigate whether these students manifest meaningful differences in their performance on different tasks. Moreover, it will also try to manifest which type of treatment (oral, written and oral-written) will result in better performance on reading assessment across different proficiency levels. Finally it will determine the interaction effect of each independent variable on participants’ assessment and task-performances.

1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Pre-reading Questions:

1. Is there any significant difference between pre-reading scores of Iranian and Indian students?

2. Is there any significant difference between pre-reading scores of male and female students?

3. Does the interaction of gender and nationality yield any significant difference in the participants’ pre-reading scores?

Post-reading Questions:

4. Is there any significant difference between post-reading scores of Indian and Iranian students?

5. Is there any significant difference between male and female students’ post-reading scores?
6. Does the interaction of gender and nationality yield any significant difference in the participants’ post-reading scores?

**Reading Gain Scores Questions:**

7. Is there any significant difference between reading gain scores of Indian and Iranian students?

8. Is there any significant difference between reading gain scores of low- and high-proficiency students?

9. Is there any significant difference in reading gain scores of male and female students?

10. Is there any significant difference between reading gain scores of the students in the three treatment groups, namely oral, written and oral-written groups?

11. Is there any significant difference in the students’ reading gain scores due to the interaction of nationality and language proficiency?

12. Is there any significant difference in the students’ reading gain scores due to the interaction of nationality and gender?

13. Is there any significant difference in the students’ reading gain scores due to the interaction of nationality and treatment type?

14. Is there any significant difference in the students’ reading gain scores due to the interaction of language proficiency and gender?

15. Is there any significant difference in the students’ reading gain scores due to the interaction of language proficiency and treatment groups?

16. Is there any significant difference in the students’ reading gain scores due to the interaction of gender and treatment type?

17. Is there any significant difference in the students’ reading gain scores due to the interaction of nationality, gender, and language proficiency?
18. Is there any significant difference in the students’ reading gain scores due to the interaction of nationality, language proficiency and, treatment type?

19. Is there any significant difference in the students’ reading gain scores due to the interaction of nationality, gender and, treatment type?

20. Is there any significant difference in the students’ reading gain scores due to the interaction of language proficiency, gender, and treatment type?

21. Is there any significant difference in the students’ reading gain scores due to the interaction of nationality, language proficiency, gender, and treatment type?

1.4. STATEMENT OF THE NULL HYPOTHESES

In order to answer the abovementioned research questions empirically, the following null hypotheses were promulgated:

Pre-reading Hypotheses:

$H_{01}$ There is no significant difference between pre-reading scores of Iranian and Indian students.

$H_{02}$ There is no significant difference between pre-reading scores of male and female students.

$H_{03}$ The interaction of gender and nationality does not have any significant effect on the students’ pre-reading scores.

Post-reading Hypotheses:

$H_{04}$ There is no significant difference in post-reading scores of Indian and Iranian students.

$H_{05}$ There is no significant difference between male and female students’ post-reading scores.
The interaction of gender and nationality does not have any significant effect on the students' post-reading scores.

**Reading Gain Hypotheses:**

**H07** There is no significant difference in reading gain scores of Indian and Iranian students.

**H08** There is no significant difference in reading gain scores of low- and high-proficiency students.

**H09** The interaction of gender and nationality does not have any significant effect on the students' reading gain scores.

**H10** The interaction of treatment type and nationality does not have any significant effect on the students' reading gain scores.

**H11** There is no significant difference in the students' reading gain scores due to the interaction of nationality and language proficiency.

**H12** There is no significant difference in the Indian and Iranian students' reading gain scores due to the interaction of nationality and gender.

**H13** There is no significant difference in the Indian and Iranian students' reading gain scores due to the interaction of nationality and treatment type.

**H14** There is no significant difference in the Indian and Iranian students' reading gain scores due to the interaction of language proficiency and gender.

**H15** There is no significant difference in the Indian and Iranian students' reading gain scores due to the interaction of language proficiency and treatment type.

**H16** There is no significant difference in the students' reading gain scores due to the interaction of gender and treatment type.
There is no significant difference in the students’ reading gain scores due to the interaction of nationality, gender, and language proficiency.

There is no significant difference in the students’ reading gain scores due to the interaction of nationality, language proficiency, and treatment type.

There is no significant difference in the students’ reading gain scores due to the interaction of nationality, gender, and treatment type.

There is no significant difference in the students’ reading gain scores due to the interaction of nationality, gender, and treatment type.

There is no significant difference in the students’ reading gain scores due to the interaction of nationality, language proficiency, gender, and treatment type.

1.5. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Reading: Reading is not a passive, but rather an active, and in fact an interactive, process has been recognized for some time in native language reading but it is only recently that second/foreign language reading has been viewed as an active rather than a passive process. Reading is an ability to extract information from the passage and comprehend the meaning of the text (Barrett, 1968; Richards & Schmidt, 2010).

Reading Proficiency: Reading proficiency can be described as more than simply the ability to decode the written words in the text; it is also the active creation of meaning in an interactive process between information in a text and the reader’s knowledge. For fluent reading in the L2, this to a large extent depends upon language proficiency in general and vocabulary knowledge in particular (Alderson, 2000; Hellekjaer, 2009).

Task: Kunnan (1998, pp. 20-21) defines task as “the open-ended stimulus serving to elicit the examinee’s performance to be evaluated. In language testing, examples of performance include a written response to an essay prompt, an oral response to an interviewer’s questions or instructions to role play, or a physical response to instructions given in the target language. Ur (1996) states”...setting questions to
answer, whether before or after a text” and “...giving the learners a set of titles together with a set of extracts from different newspaper articles or stories and asking them to match the titles to the appropriate extracts’” as examples mentioned in IELTS reading texts.

**Test:** “Tests are developed or selected (if standardized), administered to the class, and scored. Test results are then used to make decisions about a pupil (to assign a grade, recommend for an advanced program), instruction (repeat, review, move on), curriculum (replace, revise), or other educational factors “(Kubiszyn, & Borich, 2003:50).

**Assessment:** Assessment in a whole language-based classroom is ongoing. It is an integral part of the program design and helps drive the process of developing curriculum. One of the goals of a whole language program is to empower learners by helping them to become more self-directed, to identify and work towards their own goals for learning, literacy, and life. A logical outgrowth of that goal is to incorporate learners' self-evaluation into the overall assessment activities of a program (Lynch, 2003).

**Performance assessment:** It is also known as alternative or authentic/effective assessment. It is a form of testing that requires students to perform a task rather than select an answer from a ready-made list. For example, a student may be asked to explain historical events, generate scientific hypotheses, solve math problems, converse in a foreign language, or conduct research on an assigned topic. Experienced raters, either teachers or other trained staff, then judge the quality of the students’ work based on an agreed-upon set of criteria. This new form of assessment is most widely used to directly assess writing ability based on text produced by students under test instructions (Lynch, 2003).

**Conferencing:** Individual reflection followed by discussion in pairs and foursome, and provides suggestions on timing and approaches to engaging participants in oral discussions to solve their problem and approaching task (Allderson, 2000).
Introspection: Introspection or think-aloud can be used to help students in answering traditional tests, for validating tests processes and strategies (Alderson, 2000). O'Malley & Valdez Pierce (1996) mentioned that think-aloud is interactive and concentrates on active construction of meaning that focus on the use of prior knowledge. Readers identify key elements and condense important information into their own words during and after reading in order to solidify meaning in an oral summarizing format.

1.6. THE LIMITATIONS AND THE DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Like many other studies, this study suffers from some delimitation. In interpreting the results of the present investigation, the following delimitations were considered. First, all of the students are Indian and Iranian. Second, only oral, written and oral-written treatment was used as common technique of task-consciousness activities. Third, the selected passages were merely obtained from Cambridge IELTS books (3-6). Fourth, subjects are selected from the population of university students majoring in English program (Literature, Teaching and Translation). Fifth, they are under-graduate and post graduate students. Sixth, language proficiency of the subjects is limited to low and high. Seventh, two types of knowledge are investigated in this study: general language proficiency and reading ability.

1.7. MAJOR OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH

The present research is conducted to:

1. assess the language proficiency of EFL/ESL Learners,
2. evaluate the reading ability of EFL/ESL Learners,
3. augment the reading competence of EFL/ESL learners,
4. empower the functional competence of EFL/ESL learners,
5. advance the creative assessment skills of the EFL/ESL learners,
6. enlarge the pragmatic competence of EFL/ESL learners,
7. fortify gender free language use in EFL/ESL contexts,

8. boost the relevance of reading through selection of appropriate assessment tasks,

9. amalgamate dynamic learning conscious-raising tasks in teaching and assessing reading comprehension,

10. amass, warning and bring Indian and Iranian students to higher learning and scholarly research,

11. Contribute to the body of knowledge in English language education in EFL/ESL contexts following pedagogic task-based teaching and testing.

1.8. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Assessment has the power to change people’s lives (Shohamy, 1995). The effect of assessment may be positive or negative, depending on a number of factors, ranging from the way the assessment procedure or test is constructed to the way it is used. Effective assessment procedures are assessments that have been designed to ensure, as far as possible, valid and fair information on the student’s abilities and progress (Banta, Jones, & Black, 2009). Comprehensive assessment in a task-based approach emphasizes teachable skills related to the curriculum that informs decision-makers about what to teach and how to assess learning (Beglar & Hunt, 2002). It has been empirically found that the techniques of assessing reading comprehension affect the test-takers performance. If only one or more models of assessment tasks prove to be more valid tests of reading, the EFL/ESL teachers should emphasize the use of them as testing devices in their classes (Bryan & Clegg, 2006). When the reading ability is shown to have improved through one or more assessment techniques more validly, the textbook writers can include them in their textbooks to be practiced by the EFL/ESL learners. Today, professional organizations and the professional literature support critical thinking in the classroom and suggest teachers to guide students in developing higher level thinking skills in their reading comprehension. The use of standardized testing most likely derives in part from their relative ease of
administration and what is viewed by some as their reliable and objective, quantitative data on the achievement, abilities, and skills of students-data that are free from individual judgment (Messick, 1995). Because the tests and the conditions are (theoretically) constant, they are thought to be useful indicators of individual progress over time (pre- and post- testing). Thus, by extension, they are thought to be useful indicators of program effectiveness.

So, despite the relative ease of administrating tests, few adult educators are satisfied with the quality of information revealed and many more are deeply dissatisfied with the effects such testing has had on teaching and learning process. The call for alternative forms of assessment is coming from all directions, including many mainstream and professional organizations and educators.

The demand for effective assessment to multiple-choice tests has grown among language and content educators who want more accurate measures of their students' knowledge. For some educators, alternative measures may simply entail incorporating open-ended questions and essays into existing tests. For others, alternative assessment would be organized to permit students to demonstrate their knowledge and abilities over a long period of time, as through portfolios. Still others look at authentic assessment as the solution- requiring students to conduct tasks that mirror the use of the concept or operation or manipulative in the real world (Bound & Falchikove, 2007).

The assessment will require students to demonstrate why they believe something, how they know something is correct, and what terms mean, using real objects and phenomena (Bound & Falchikove, 2006).

Hancock (1994) stated that one useful way to think about assessment is to contrast it with testing, an ever-present factor that confronts teachers and students in all disciplines. Tests have come to be an accepted component of instructional programs throughout the world. Sometimes tests are justified on the basis of accountability: are students learning what they are supposed to be learning? Decision-makers need this type of evidence in order to make judgments about how to spend
resources, for example. Sometimes, tests are viewed as feedback for language students concerning their progress. Many of the reigning theoretical assumptions on which contemporary testing and assessment rely are based on behaviorist views of cognition and development. Nowadays alternative ways of thinking about learning and assessing learning are needed. A new assessment initiative in foreign and second language study should acknowledge the effect of context on performance and provide the most appropriate contexts in which to assess competence, including ones that involve the individual in making self-assessments.

According to some scholars (e.g., Weeden, Winter, & Broadfoot, 2002), promoting learners’ learning is the principal aim of schools. Assessment lies at the heart of this process. It can provide a framework in which educational objectives may be set and learners’ progress charted and expressed. It can yield a basis for planning the next steps in response to learners’ needs. It should be an integral part of the educational process, continually providing both “feedback and feed forward”. It therefore needs to be cooperated systematically into teaching strategies and practices at all levels.

“Just as assessment affects student learning and motivation, it also influences the nature of instruction in the classroom. When assessment is integrated with instruction, it informs teachers about what activities and assignments will be most useful, what level of teaching is most appropriate, and how summative assessments provide diagnostic information. During instructional activities, informal, formative assessment helps teachers know when to move on, when to ask more questions, when to give more examples, and how to respond to student questions. Standardized test scores, when used appropriately, help teachers understand student strengths and weaknesses in order to target further instruction” (McMillan, 2000, p. 4).

“The nature of assessment influences what is learned and the degree of meaningful engagement by students in the learning process. While researchers contend that assessments should be authentic, with feedback and opportunities for revision to improve, rather than simply audit learning, the more general principle understands how different assessments affect students. Will students be more engaged
if assessment tasks are problem-based? How do students study when they know the test consists of multiple choice items? What is the nature of feedback, and when is it given to students? How does assessment affect student effort? “(McMillan, 2000: 3).

The main issue for alternative or effective approaches is to make the assessment process participatory. Creative tools are being designed to assist adult learners to assess themselves as they improve their skills and to help adult educators set up structures for improving learning opportunities. These new and innovative approaches to assessment are designed to be an on-going part of curriculum (Knight, 2006). They inform the development of a curriculum which is based on the learners evolving progress. In this way they are more useful to students and teachers than traditional tests at the completion of a course (Yamashita, 2008).

Short (1993) maintained that there are several reasons to assess student learning in the classroom: to place students in classes, to measure student progress and achievement, to guide and improve instruction, and to diagnose student knowledge of a topic before it is taught. Such assessment must be carried out carefully. Educators now acknowledge that standardized tests with short answer or multiple-choice items do not provide an accurate picture of student knowledge as a whole; therefore, it is inappropriate to base placement, achievement levels, and instructional plans solely on standardized test results. Although school systems will continue to use standardized tests to measure and compare student progress, alternative assessment must also become part of the student evaluation package (Duzer, 1999).

In a Standards-based classroom, assessment is an integral part of instruction and is aligned with the curriculum. The teacher collects evidence of the students' knowledge, their ability to use that knowledge, and their disposition toward learning. Student performance is monitored to promote learning, to adjust instruction, and to report progress. Students evaluate their own learning using criteria specific to the activity (Salinger & Chittenden, 1994; Wolf, 1995b).
In fact, assessment and evaluation of reading should reflect the objectives of the curriculum and should assess both process and product. As well, assessment techniques should consider students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes and should be consistent with the instructional strategies used (Carlson & Christenson, 2005).

A major assumption behind assessment is that learners are capable of evaluating themselves, that they have explicit goals, and that a process of evaluation will make them more motivated and aware of their own learning process. This process can make learning more meaningful and encourage learners to become active in shaping their own learning environment (Seliger, 1983).

Effective assessment uses activities that reveal what students can do with language, emphasizing their strengths instead of their weaknesses. Alternative assessment instruments are not only designed and structured differently from traditional tests, but are also graded or scored differently. Because alternative assessment is performance based, it helps instructors emphasize that the point of language learning is communication for meaningful purposes (Race, 1996).

Effective assessment methods work well in learner-centered classrooms because they are based on the idea that students can evaluate their own learning and learn from the evaluation process. These methods give learners opportunities to reflect on both their linguistic development and their learning processes (what helps them learn and what might help them learn better). Effective assessment, thus, gives instructors a way to connect assessment with review of learning strategies (Trudy, Jones, & Black, 2009).

Successful use of effective assessment depends on using performance tasks that let students demonstrate what they can actually do with language. Fortunately, many of the activities that take place in communicative classrooms lend themselves to this type of assessment. These activities replicate the kinds of challenges, and allow for the kinds of solutions, that learners would encounter in communication outside the classroom.
With effective assessment, students are expected to participate actively in evaluating themselves and one another. Learners who are used to traditional teacher-centered classrooms have not been expected to take responsibility for assessment before and may need time to adjust to this new role. They also may be skeptical that peers can provide them with feedback that will enhance their learning.

Instructors need to prepare students for the use of effective assessments and allow time to teach them how to use them, so that effective assessment will make an effective contribution to the learning process.

Instructors should plan to introduce alternative forms of assessment gradually, in conjunction with traditional forms of testing. Using a combination of alternative assessments and more traditional measures allows the instructor to compare results and obtain a more comprehensive picture of students' language performance than either alternative or traditional measures alone would provide.

Moreover, regarding assessing reading, language instructors are often frustrated by the fact that students do not automatically transfer the strategies they use when reading in their native language to reading in a language they are learning. Instead, they seem to think reading means starting at the beginning and going word by word, stopping to look up every unknown vocabulary item, until they reach the end. When they do this, students are relying exclusively on their linguistic knowledge, a bottom-up strategy. One of the most important functions of the language instructor, then, is to help students move past this idea and use top-down strategies as they do in their native language in order to assess their knowledge well.

Effective language instructors show students how they can adjust their reading behavior to deal with a variety of situations in language assessment, types of input, and reading purposes. They help students develop a set of reading strategies and match appropriate strategies to each reading assessment situation. As Draper and Wesche (1992) stated “literacy educators have repeatedly issued calls for the teaching of reading and writing across the curriculum” (p. 927).
Instructors want to produce students who, even if they do not have complete control of the grammar or an extensive lexicon, can support themselves in communication situations. In the case of reading, this means producing students who can use reading strategies to maximize their comprehension of text, identify relevant and non-relevant information, and tolerate less than word-by-word comprehension in their reading tests.

By raising students' awareness of reading as a skill that requires active engagement, and by explicitly teaching reading strategies, instructors help their students develop both the ability and the confidence to handle communicative situations that they may encounter beyond the classroom. In this way they give their students the foundation for communicative competence in the new language.

While in traditional testing the role of test has always been as a criterion to assess students' true ability. No attention has been paid to learning. Hence, reading comprehension as a general skill in language learning has been of great concern to EFL/ESL learners (Yamashita, 2008). In this study researcher tries to highlight the role of Effective assessment tasks in reading.