Curriculum & Instruction Dept
Faculty of Education

Teaching English as a Foreign Language from a New Literacy Perspective

A Guide for Egyptian EFL Student Teachers

By

Dr Mahmoud M. S. Abdallah

Associate Professor of Curriculum & English Language Instruction

(TESOL/TEFL Methodology)

Faculty of Education

Assiut University

Teaching English as a Foreign Language from a New Literacy Perspective: A Guide for Egyptian EFL Student Teachers

Dr Mahmoud M.S. Abdallah (PhD in Education, University of Exeter, England, UK)
Associate Professor of Education: Curriculum, English Language Instruction & Applied Linguistics (TESOL/TEFL/ELT)
Faculty of Education,
Assiut University
Assiut, 71515
Egypt

Contact Info: **Mobile:** (+2) 01011953743 **Office:** (002) 0882423843
E-mail: *msayed40@yahoo.com*
mahmoud.abdallah@aun.edu.eg
msayed40@gmail.com

Academic Profiles:
https://life.aun.edu.eg/education/mahmoud-mohammad-sayed-abdallah
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Mahmoud_Abdallah
https://aun.academia.edu/DrMahmoudAbdallah
http://scholar.google.com.eg/citations?user=7_RbCRcAAAAJ&hl=en
http://eprofile.exeter.ac.uk/mahmoudabdallah

Social Networks: *https://twitter.com/DrMahAbdallah*
https://www.facebook.com/drmahmoud.abdallah
https://www.linkedin.com/in/mahmoud-abdallah-4a7179110
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCE7d85N312A4Aa--kJxOmlQ

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

Teaching English as a Foreign Language from a New Literacy Perspective is both a **guide** for Egyptian EFL student teachers (i.e. prospective teachers of English enrolled in pre-service EFL teacher education programmes provided by colleges of education at the undergraduate stage), and a **resource book** for EFL teacher educators teaching the TESOL/TEFL Methodology courses for EFL student teachers. The book is intended to be an **updated** resource in the field that considers the new reality of English language learning. This new reality has been considerably shaped by the technological innovations and the subsequent new literacy practices that have recently come to the fore with the unprecedented influence of the Web in our life. Moreover, the book is the culmination of my theoretical and practical experience as a teaching assistant of TESOL/TEFL Methodology who has been working with Egyptian EFL student teachers for more than 10 years. Along with the basic knowledge that EFL student teachers need to gain and the teaching skills they need to develop, the book also conveys my understanding of how TESOL/TEFL should be tackled within the Egyptian context in the light of the new literacy challenges imposed by the 21st century, and the sub-sequent new literacy theories that have been recently influencing language teaching and learning. In addition, it tackles the main language aspects (e.g., vocabulary and grammar) and the main language skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing) from a new literacy perspective that recognises the important role of many Web-based facilities (e.g., Google, E-mail, Chat, Wikipedia, and Facebook) as online spaces for learning and practising English as a foreign language.

Many reasons motivated me to write this book, which I can summarise as follows:

- My PhD study in the UK which exposed me to different perspectives of viewing teaching English as a foreign language, especially as far as new technologies are concerned;
- The new literacy theories that have been changing how we, as language teacher educators, should view and teach the TESOL/TEFL Methodology courses in our home

countries. Egyptian EFL teacher educators, for example, still include the same content and the same ideas all over again and again every year. For me, much of this content has become outdated since new literacies based on new technologies, especially the Web, have come to the fore in this ICT-dominated age;

- My strong desire to address the new dimensions of language skills that new technologies, especially the Web, have been imposing upon the educational context in general, and the pre-service EFL teacher education programmes in particular;

- A motivation to provide practical guidelines to EFL student teachers at Egyptian universities that link theory to practice and address the specific Egyptian context. Throughout my personal experience as an EFL teacher educator, I realised that student teachers favour direct practical advice and tips relevant to the Egyptian context and the real classroom situations they are exposed to in their local teaching practice sessions. Sometimes, TESOL/TEFL Methodology courses include many theoretical discussions and arguments based on the writings of main authorities in the field without adaptation. This creates a wide gap between theory and practice that isolates TESOL/TEFL from the local context;

- There is scarce in Egyptian TESOL/TEFL resources tailored to meet our specific contextual needs. Hence, Egyptian EFL teacher educators need to establish their own resources to utilise in designing their TESOL/TEFL Methodology courses and also to update their knowledge base;

- The current Egyptian pre-service EFL teacher education programmes provided at the Egyptian universities do not take into account the Web as a new technology and the many facilities/tools it provides, in the process of preparing prospective teachers of English. My argument (as I stated in my PhD study) is that those student teachers need in their education programme to master the lifelong learning skills that will benefit them after graduation. These skills will naturally transfer to their prospective students in public schools;

- I feel with a persistent need to contextualise or, as I phrase it, to **_Egyptianalise_** the TESOL/TEFL process to make it clearer and more understandable and relevant to the wide audience of EFL student teachers and teacher educators in Egypt;

- I need to address a wider audience world wide, especially in developing nations, who experience similar circumstances and thus need to develop TESOL/TEFL in their

nations. Sharing my experience with a wider audience might open new horizons for global discussion and dialogue that should provide insights for improving our teaching practices.

From a learning perspective, by the end of this book or course, EFL student teachers are expected to be able to:

- Come to grips with the main terms and acronyms used in the TESOL/TEFL field;
- Apply in their teaching practice sessions the main ideas and guidelines related to teaching English as a foreign language;
- Identify the wide range of those methods available for teaching English as a foreign language and the advantages/disadvantages of each method;
- Understand the influence that the rapid developments in new technologies such as the Web has on the nature of the English language teaching/learning process;
- Know how to teach certain language aspects (e.g., vocabulary and grammar) and identify the proper techniques that they can use to communicate the meaning of these new language items;
- Explore the wide range of the appropriate methods, strategies, and techniques that they might use for teaching the main language skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing) within the Egyptian context.

Mahmoud Abdallah
Exeter, England (June, 2011)

_____

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

First, and foremost, I thank Allah for inspiring me to accomplish this work. Second, I'd like to thank my main PhD supervisor, Prof. Rupert B. Wegerif at Graduate School of Education, College of Social Sciences and International Studies, University of Exeter, England, UK, for his kind support and useful ideas. Many thanks go to all those Egyptian EFL teacher educators and inspectors of English language teaching at Assiut educational administrations and directorates who shared with me their insights, experience, and opinions. Special thanks go to my brother Mr Bassuni F. S. Abdallah, General Inspector of English Language Teaching at Al-Badari educational directorate, Assiut, Egypt, for his interesting discussions and useful advice. I feel grateful to Dr Salwa M. Elsayed, senior lecturer of Curriculum & TESOL/TEFL Methodology at Assiut University Faculty of Education for her support and insights. Many thanks go to my family for their kind support and encouragement. Finally, endless thanks go to the Egyptian government represented in the Egyptian Cultural & Educational Bureau in London for sponsoring me while I was writing this book. I owe so much to my beloved country, Egypt, and I do hope that this work could insight many practitioners and language teachers into improving the status of English language teaching and learning in Egypt.

CHAPTER ONE: SETTING THE SCENE

1.1 Exploring Relevant Acronyms and Abbreviations

It sounds appropriate at the beginning to shed some light on some acronyms, terms, and/or abbreviations commonly used in the field of English language teaching (ELT) and learning. Despite the slight differences that might exist between these acronyms or abbreviations (e.g., ESL vs. EFL), I see it as important to show the reader the exact meaning of each. The goal here is more towards understanding each acronym/abbreviation, and less towards creating clear-cut boundaries between some acronyms/abbreviations (e.g., TESOL/TEFL) that have been used interchangeably for so long. The list below (see Table 1) presents a brief description:

Table 1: List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

CALL	Computer-Assisted Language Learning
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELL	English Language Learning/Learner
ELT	English Language Teaching
EMT	English as a Mother Tongue
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
L1	First Language (mother tongue or native language)
L2	Second Language
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
Ss	Students

TBL	Task-Based Learning
TEFL	Teaching of English as a Foreign Language
TESL	Teaching of English as a Second Language
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language

TESOL is an acronym which stands for *Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages*. In this sense, it can be regarded as an ***umbrella*** acronym or a 'blanket' term that covers situations in which English is taught both as a second language (**L2**) and as a foreign language (**FL**) (Carter & Nunan, 2009: p1). In American English, the term is usually used to refer to both **TESL** and **TEFL**. The term also refers to *Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc.* (*http://www.tesol.org*), a professional association with a mission to ensure excellence in English language teaching.

TEFL is a similar acronym that stands for *Teaching English as a Foreign Language*. For me, TEFL is quite similar to TESOL, albeit the latter is more general as it can subsume/include both **TESL** (Teaching of English as a Second Language) and **TEFL** (Teaching of English as a Foreign Language). In this regard, **TESL** refers to situations in which the English language is taught as a second language to people/students/learners whose native language is NOT English.

This applies to two distinct types of situations: (1) the situations in which immigrants travel to an English-speaking country/community (e.g., UK, US, Australia, and New Zealand) and learn English language courses to be able to communicate/interact in English with others in the new communities. Those people also use their native languages (**L1**) at home; (2) the situations in which English becomes used locally in a certain country/community for authentic

communication after being officially transformed in status from a foreign language (**EFL**) into a second language (**ESL**). As a result, the formal educational system in this country requires students/learners to learn English as a second language (**ESL**) along with their original native language (**L1**).

ESL (English as a second language), **ESOL** (English for speakers of other languages), and **EFL** (English as a foreign language) all refer to the use or study of English by speakers with a different native language.

ELT, which stands for *English Language Teaching*, sounds less problematic than the above acronyms since it is, according to Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_as_a_foreign_or_second_language), a widely-used teacher-centred term. It is used more in British English and is concerned more with the English-language teaching processes and activities in general than on any of the learning types/modes discussed above. Similarly, the acronym **ELL** (English Language Learning), which is learner-centred, is a general term that refers to learning English in any situation and under any circumstances. It can also refer to the English Language Learner himself/herself.

CALL (Computer-Assisted Language Learning) refers to a trend or approach in English language teaching/learning that employs computers, and any subsequent applications like the Web, in the field. It was defined by Levy (1997: p1) as "the search for and study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning". CALL has gone through many stages of development that go side by side with the rapid developments occurring in the technological reality. Not long ago, Warschauer and Kern (2000) suggested a new term: Network-Based Language Teaching (**NBLT**), as a new approach that marks an extension of CALL to capture the new developments in Information and

Communication Technologies (ICT) and how they have been influencing language learning.

1.2 The New Reality of English Language Teaching/Learning

We have to admit that language learning in general has been changing so drastically in recent years. Language educators have become quite convinced that the way learners are learning the language at present is totally different from the way that they themselves were learning it in the past. The history of language learning has witnessed significant shifts and transitions from the ***behaviouristic*** models that perceive language learning from a computerised input-output perspective, to the ***social/collaborative*** models that foster socio-cultural learning and collaborative knowledge construction (see also Shetzer & Warschauer, 2000).

Nowadays, we are witnessing an unprecedented revolution in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) which has been changing the nature of the English language itself (see, for example, Crystal, 2001) by imposing new practices that have been influencing how we use the language for communication (Warschauer et al, 2000). The Internet or the Web, and the affordances, facilities, applications, and tools it has been enabling for public use, have recently created new possibilities and avenues for language learning and practice (Abdallah, 2011). More specifically, the development of Web 2.0 (a new generation of the Web that has been enabling new functions and possibilities for learning such as social networking, easy publishing online, and collaborative construction of knowledge) (Alexander, 2006; Parker & Chao, 2007), imposes a new reality for language learning and practice.

This is clearly evident and significant in the case of learning English as a foreign language within the Egyptian social context where learners find no opportunities to practise the language in real or native-like situations outside their classrooms. Thus, Egyptian language learners may resort to the Web or the English media to listen to and watch models of how the native speakers use the language. The Web, in particular, allows for active participation by learners through the social tools it provides (e.g., Facebook, Chat, E-mail, and Messenger).

Therefore, I think that this generation of learners is much luckier than ours. I remember that having an English pen-friend in our days (just few years before the Web emerged for public use) was a dream that I aspired to achieve, but I could not. Towards the end of 1999 when I have learned how to use the Web to locate relevant data, send e-mails, and chat with others using www.excite.com, I used to spend more than 15 hours a day to explore and enjoy these great privileges of communication with native speakers that had not been there few years earlier.

Generally, from a theoretical standpoint, English language learning has been greatly influenced by the new theories of literacy which recognise the new dimensions that the dominant technological innovations have brought to the fore (Abdallah, 2010b). Nowadays, people are talking about new varieties of the traditional and already existing language skills; they talk about 'online reading', 'online writing', 'networked communication', 'collaborative writing', and 'connective writing'. These new varieties have been recently enabled and fostered by a group of Web-based technologies (e.g., Blogs, Wikis, and social bookmarking websites).

As far as language learning is concerned, these new varieties are of special significance since they definitely expand the traditional language skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and communication, and which we have been familiar with for a long time. In other words, these new varieties do not replace the established language skills, but build upon them instead (Abdallah, 2008). After all, language has never been a stable phenomenon that is isolated from the surrounding innovations and practices going on both nationally and globally (Crystal, 2001). For more on this, please watch this interesting talk by David Crystal on: 'How is the Internet changing language today?' at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P2XVdDSJHqY

1.3 Literacy Theories and Approaches

The meaning of literacy has become drastically different from what it used to be (see also my class Wiki at: http://assiuttefl.wikispaces.com/New+Literacies). It is no longer restricted to the traditional abilities to read books, write with a pen, communicate orally face-to-face with other people, and/or calculate numbers. The concept has been growing in scope to continuously include new skills, knowledge, and competencies which were not familiar before. In other words, the meaning of literacy has become dependent on many things and various factors such as:

a) The new technologies emerging everyday;
b) The new social practices that these new technologies (e.g., the Internet) impose;
c) The growing needs of people in a certain society;
d) The new ways of communication coming to the fore; and

c) The new challenges that globalisation has recently imposed.

This has recently influenced the English language and how it is taught in this era. Therefore, it would be convenient here to review briefly the new ***theories*** and/or ***approaches*** of literacy which have been influencing language learning:

Traditionally, literacy was conceptualised from a static, *cognitive/psycho-linguistic approach* that admits the existence of a specific ***set of skills*** and competencies that should be mastered by learners regardless of the local context. This vision resulted in unified structures of knowledge that constitute literacy in everywhere in the world (Street, 2008). After all, it is always easy for educators to teach the same set of skills to many generations of learners. This approach, which is still dominant nowadays, has been constructed upon the stable nature of books or print-based materials as tools for learning.

As a result of the unprecedented rapid developments in ICT on one hand (see also Coiro et al, 2008), and the growing recognition of the vital role played by the context and the social environment in the teaching/learning process on the other, a ***socio-cultural approach*** to literacy and language learning has come to the fore. From this socio-cultural perspective, literacy is viewed in terms of the dominant ***social practices*** and the new technologies used by people in everyday life, and thus schools or classrooms are perceived as interactive units in society. Based on this new approach, some scholars have started to create dichotomies between 'in-school' literacies, and 'out-of-school' literacies, arguing that academic literacies within schools should encompass the new forms of literacy that have become dominant in daily interactions among people (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Gee, 1996; Street, 2009).

Based on this modern approach that recognises the role that new technologies have been playing nowadays, the concept of 'literacy' has been pluralised (i.e. literacies) to encompass the many forms and variations that emerged with these new technologies (Abdallah, 2008). Thus, a plethora of terms associated with literacy have emerged, such as: new literacies, multiple literacies, visual literacies, electronic literacies, computer literacy, and media literacies.

Moreover, some new approaches have emerged as a reaction to the rapid developments. As a result of the dominance of ICT in the educational and language learning contexts, some new literacy approaches have come to the fore all of which take into consideration the new literacy practices attached to emerging new technologies and the resulting new social practices. I will delineate some of these new theories and/or approaches to literacy in the following section.

1.3.1 New Literacy Studies

This is a generation of scholars (e.g., Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Street, 1984) with an orientation towards studying literacy from a new ***dynamic*** perspective that takes into consideration many socio-political, ethnographic, and technological dimensions. According to this approach, literacy practices are so ***socially embedded*** that they cannot be understood in isolation. Literacy is not static, and hence, language learners, in particular, should expand their literacy practices. Further, this approach assumes that the object of literacy studies is 'literacies' in their various social situations, not an unrealised abstraction called literacy. If literacy is a ***set of practices*** within a social network or a community, then it must be learned within a community. Recognising the diversity of literacy practices entails letting go of fixed notions of good reading strategies and bad

strategies (see also: http://www.literacyjournal.ca/literacies/1-2003/analysis/2/1.htm).

1.3.2 Multiliteracies (Multiple Literacies)

This term was devised by The New London Group (1996). In the light of this approach, reading, writing, and communication on the Internet may be viewed as including a set of 'multiliteracies' which emerge as individuals from different cultural contexts encounter one another within different communication technologies (Leu & Kinzer, 2003). Pioneers in this group assert that curricula should be updated to incorporate the new digital input and address these changing multiliteracies. Consequently, learning in schools need to be organised around a much wider concept of communicative practice and representation than this currently presented to learners around the world (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000).

With its main focus on ***multi-modal*** communication and ***multi-sensory*** means necessary for mastering a foreign language, this approach involves direct implications for language learning. In this sense, for English language learning purposes, students need to integrate multimodal ways of communication and meaning representation (e.g., linguistic/textual, audio, and visual) drawing on their own experiences and semiotic literacy practices to get their message across (The New London Group, 1996). Since communication is the main goal of learning a foreign language, this is closely relevant as learners should employ multiple channels and modes to convey their message in the target language to a wide audience.

1.3.3 Multi-modal Literacy

This approach is quite similar to the above one as it encompasses all the different ways in which meaning can be created and communicated in the world today (Jewitt & Kress, 2003). In language learning, literacy is no longer conceived as a mono-modal phenomenon. Instead, it is approached as a ***multi-modal reality*** in which case there are many modes that interact together while we are learning and using the language for a variety of communicative and pragmatic purposes. Thus, the main focus should be no longer solely on the printed word or the spoken word as the basic component of language. Along with this stable component, there are other ***modes*** of communication that reinforce the message that we want to get across. These modes have become so evident and dominant with the increasing use of technological tools to mediate the use of the English language.

1.3.4 Electronic Literacy Approach

An 'electronic literacy approach' to network-based language teaching (Shetzer & Warschauer, 2000) is a quite recent approach that emerged with the dominance of the Internet or the Web in many everyday-life domains and activities, especially education and language learning. It conceives language learning from a ***socio-cultural perspective*** based on the Web as a new technology of literacy. It implies an interdependent/transactional relationship between the Web and language. In particular, it assumes that becoming literate nowadays is more than learning how to decode and write letters and words. This state of affairs is never adequate in this information age in which the technology of literacy itself has changed. Hence, there is an interactive relationship between the English language and the Web, as a main technology of literacy. This relationship has become so strong that it is hard to identify both as two isolated identities.

In this regard, this approach argues that in the same way as new skills and competencies are needed to employ the Web for language learning purposes, similar skills and competencies are also needed for employing language to master and integrate the Web and other ICTs. This way, language learners use the computers and the Web (as new technologies) in an ***integrative*** fashion to accomplish many language learning goals without being absolutely confident whether the Web is influencing their language learning, or whether their language is improving the way they are using the Web.

1.3.5 The 'New Literacies' Perspective

Based on the brief discussion above, we can identify how literacy has changed recently; it has been changing in different ways that current EFL curricula and English teaching courses should consider. Thus, literacy has been changing:

- From ***paper-based*** to ***electronic/digital-based***;
- From ***one-dimensional*** to ***multi-dimensional***;
- From ***offline*** practices to ***online*** practices;
- From ***isolated/individual*** practices to ***collaborative/connective*** practices; and
- From ***independent, unified*** practices to ***situated, contextual*** ones.

The New Literacies Research Team at the University of Connecticut, US (http://www.newliteracies.uconn.edu) is the founder of the 'new literacies' approach. Its main focus is on the new literacies of reading comprehension that are based on the Web. The team defines 'new literacies based on the Internet' as "the skills, strategies, and dispositions necessary to successfully exploit the rapidly changing ICT continuously emerging in our world" (Leu et al., 2004).

Based on this 'new literacies' perspective and with specific reference to the Egyptian context and Assiut University College of Education pre-service EFL teacher education programme, I define **'Web-based new literacies'** in the context of TESOL and EFL teacher education as:

> *The up-to-date, Web-associated knowledge, insights, skills, strategies, and competencies that EFL student teachers need for an effective employment of the Web in language learning, which might lead to improving/expanding their literacy practices within learning contexts, and making them succeed as both lifelong learners and prospective teachers of English (Abdallah, 2010b).*

Based on empirical data obtained from a preliminary investigation (Abdallah, 2010b) as part of my PhD project, I came out with a comprehensive list of those ***Web-based new literacies*** that Egyptian EFL student teachers need in their pre-service education programmes (see Table 2 below):

Table 2: List of Web-based New Literacies

Categories	Specific Literacies
1-Online Communication and Collaboration	**1.1 Membership of online communities and the knowledge society:** 1.1.1 Students should be able to employ appropriate Web-based communication tools. 1.1.2 Students should be able to utilise the diverse modes of Web-based communication (e.g. synchronous/asynchronous and online/offline modes) appropriately. 1.1.3 Students should be able to communicate cross-culturally (i.e. communicate with others from diverse cultures and geographical locations). 1.1.4 Students should show respect and consideration to others during online interactions (i.e. netiquette). 1.1.5 Students should be able to practice roles and responsibilities effectively in an online collaborative learning community (e.g. being critical online readers, creative online writers, constructors of knowledge, effective online communicators, active participants and negotiators). 1.1.6 Students should participate effectively in online boards and forums (e.g. bulletin boards, discussion forums, and/or listserv discussions). 1.1.7 Students should join online e-mail discussion groups (e.g. Yahoo Groups and Google Groups).
	1.2 Composing and writing online: 1.2.1 Students should be able to understand and identify ways of composing, revising, and editing online, using a word processor (e.g. Microsoft Word). 1.2.2 Students should be aware of the interactive relationship

Categories	Specific Literacies
	between many components while composing an online message: the audience, their purpose of writing, the medium, and their message. 1.2.3 Students should show some consideration for their online audience while they are writing (e.g. considering their interests, age, cultural background, educational level, and availability). 1.2.4 Students should be able to reflect on the quality of their own writing and the language they use while using online writing tools (e.g. they should use a formal style when they approach academic staff through email). 1.2.5 Students should be able to employ a range of online writing tools, whether synchronous (e.g. real-time chat) or asynchronous (e.g. email), for creative writing. 1.2.6 Students should be selective of sources during online writing (e.g. choosing the online documents and resources which sound appropriate to the writing purpose, and adapting them properly to the task at hand). 1.2.7 Students should be able to express in their own words new knowledge derived from online resources to convey to others their personal understanding. 1.2.8 Students should be able to share ideas with specialists and attain feedback from them (e.g. through email communication). 1.2.9 Students should be able to practise cooperative, functional writing online (i.e. having purpose and objectives while writing to others) to promote the exchange of ideas, viewpoints, and perspectives. 1.2.10 Students should be able to employ online tools of written communication (e.g. email and blogs) to practise online writing

Categories	Specific Literacies
	activities (e.g. answering others' questions, making new postings, and/or responding to others' postings). 1.2.11 Students should be able to compose and send effective online messages to influence, convince, and/or orient others. 1.2.12 Students should be able to embed some visual, hyper-textual, and/or multimodal elements (e.g. smileys and links) in their messages.
	1.3 Meaning negotiation and idea sharing: 1.3.1 Students should be able to employ the Web as a publishing vehicle to express ideas and to share viewpoints as well as reflections with others. 1.3.2 Students should be able to transfer meaning across the different multi-dimensional systems made possible by the Web (e.g. hypertext, sound, and video). 1.3.3 Students should be able to investigate Web-based conversations and attract collaborators to construct ideas and valuable knowledge (e.g. by reviewing others' online contributions in blogs and wikis and commenting on them). 1.3.4 Students should engage themselves in discussions with experts in the field of English language teaching/learning. 1.3.5 Students should be able to exchange ideas and negotiate meaning through online collaboration with others by providing and receiving feedback. 1.3.6 Students should be able to engage themselves in an online open dialogue by using free online question/answer services (e.g. Yahoo Answers) to share their experiences with others and make use of others' experiences.
	1.4 Online language practice:

Categories	Specific Literacies
	1.4.1 Students should be able to use English for realistic, purposeful communication with people all over the world through Web-based communication tools and facilities. 1.4.2 Students should employ Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) to increase their language use and practice, and to supplement face-to-face language learning. 1.4.3 Students should critique and respond to the language input provided by others. 1.4.4 Students should be able to use reflective Web-based tools that foster learning English as a foreign language (e.g. blogs and wikis).
2-Online Information Management and Knowledge Construction	**2.1 Surfing the Web and locating information:** 2.1.1 Students should understand the structure and organisation of the Web and how information is displayed on it. 2.1.2 Students should understand the advanced features, facilities and services enabled by search engines (e.g. Google translation, Google books, videos, and images). 2.1.3 Students should be able to identify an information need or a learning need and decide which online resources to use to address that need. 2.1.4 Students should be able to use a variety of search tools and strategies to find information that is appropriate to the task at hand. 2.1.5 Students should be able to effectively surf the web to locate relevant and useful information using prominent search engines (e.g. Yahoo, Google, and Altavista). 2.1.6 Students should be able to use effective techniques for

Categories	Specific Literacies
	organising keywords (e.g. using Boolean operators like AND, OR, and "+" to indicate relationships, and using quotation marks for locating exact phrases). 2.1.7 Students should be able to deal effectively with searches (e.g. by rapidly selecting the most relevant results and navigating to the most reliable information resources). 2.1.8 Students should be able to make rapid navigational decisions as to whether to read the current page of information, pursue links internal or external to the page, or perform another search. 2.1.9 Students should be able to employ strategies for finding the most important or useful information within a website (e.g. using the "find on this page" option to locate specific keywords, and reviewing coloured words and hyperlinks). 2.1.10 Students should be able to explore new search approaches and alternative strategies when a previous strategy has not worked (e.g. switching topics, visiting new websites, and trying new keywords).
	2.2 Online reading comprehension: 2.2.1 Students should understand the features of online texts represented in the range of symbols, cueing systems, and multiple-media formats (e.g. icons and animated symbols). 2.2.2 Students should understand the nature of hypertext that entails new screen-based interactions between word, image and sound. 2.2.3 Students should look for and work out the overall meaning of an online message that has been formulated in a complicated

Categories	Specific Literacies
	digital context.

2.2.4 Students should focus on a particular question/problem/inquiry to guide the online reading process.

2.2.5 Students should try to activate their prior knowledge and make use of their background information while dealing with new online texts.

2.2.6 Students should be able to read across an evolving range of online texts through skimming and scanning websites.

2.2.7 Students should be able to navigate through links and connected pages to construct meanings that meet goals and/or answer questions.

2.2.8 Students should be able to employ new reasoning and comprehension strategies to deal with nonlinear, interactive online texts.

2.2.9 Students should be able to read purposefully, selectively and pragmatically within an online environment to accomplish their objectives (e.g. by selecting relevant information).

2.2.10 Students should be able to make use of cues (e.g. captions, icons, hyperlinks, and interactive graphics) to identify relevant and important ideas.

2.3 Critical Literacy Skills:

2.3.1 Students should understand some important facts about websites that relate to reliability (e.g. the fact that each website has its own agenda, perspective, and bias).

2.3.2 Students should be able to identify a website's form (e.g. blog, forum, or advertisement) and general purpose (e.g. entertainment, educational, or commercial) in order to evaluate the reliability of online sources.

Categories	Specific Literacies
	2.3.3 Students should be able to identify the type of webpage content (e.g. a book, an article, a brochure, and an archive). 2.3.4 Students should be critical and reflective by going beyond the simple decoding and comprehension of the online text. 2.3.5 Students should be able to employ critical thinking skills and strategies while investigating web-based information to discover its accuracy, validity, reliability, and appropriateness to the task at hand. 2.3.6 Students should make use of their background knowledge to evaluate what they read online and to question the relevant social, political, and ideological elements. 2.3.7 Students should make critical, informed judgments about online information, which include: recognising bias, identifying the authors and their purposes, and distinguishing the commercial content from the academic one. 2.3.8 Students should be able to use clues on a webpage that help with evaluating it as an information source (e.g. clues in a URL or web address that help with determining a website location and type). 2.3.9 Students should be able to ask and answer evaluative questions such as: Is the information accurate? Is the author an authority on the subject? Is the information current and timely? 2.3.10 Students should be able to compare and contrast the reliability of the information they find by investigating multiple sources on the same topic.
	2.4 Synthesising information and constructing knowledge: 2.4.1 Students should be able to engage in a self-directed text construction process (i.e. building texts based on personal

Categories	Specific Literacies
	motivation and direction) to construct meaning from unrelated and disparate online texts. 2.4.2 Students should be able to transform disconnected pieces of information into an original text. 2.4.3 Students should be able to use a variety of tools and techniques to analyse, synthesise, translate, and manipulate digital content from the web in order to add value to the information. 2.4.4 Students should be able to participate in and contribute to ongoing content-building conversations over the web. 2.4.5 Students should be able to generate new perspectives and viewpoints by integrating information and synthesising ideas while they employ multiple online resources. 2.4.6 Students should be able to make use of various Web-based electronic formats (e.g. WebPages, email, blogs, audio sources, interactive diagrams, and discussion boards) and unlimited resources to synthesise information and construct knowledge.
3-Acessing Web-based English Resources and Materials	**3.1 Making use of the Internet as an online library for English learning:** 3.1.1 Students should be aware of the potential of the Internet for EFL learners to access resources to support and reinforce their learning (e.g. traditional, face-to-face learning as well as independent learning). 3.1.2 Students should be able to access Web-based English language teaching/learning resources (e.g. EFL/TEFL/TESOL websites and forums and the Internet TESL Journal). 3.1.3 Students should be able to evaluate useful types and forms of online English resources.

Categories	Specific Literacies
	3.2 Accessing authentic English material: 3.2.1 Students should be able to access online authentic language materials and employ them to the task at hand. 3.2.2 Students should be able to locate and utilise useful language teaching/learning websites devoted to TEFL (e.g. www.bbcarabic.com). 3.2.3 Students should be able to access professional material, contacts, and resources to employ them in their learning and professional development. 3.2.4 Students should be able to download different types of resources related to the English language and TEFL (e.g. articles, audio and video materials).

1.4 Summary

In brief:

➢ There are some acronyms and abbreviations associated with the field of English language learning/teaching that EFL student teachers should be familiar with (e.g., TESOL, TEFL, ESL, EFL, and CALL).

➢ Our traditional theories and methods of English language teaching/learning should be revisited in the light of the current changes going on nowadays, especially as far as new technologies are concerned.

➢ The new innovations that have been emerging in our life have imposed a new reality of English language teaching and learning.

➢ The new technologies of today have recently changed and expanded the concept of literacy.

➢ There are new theories of literacy based on the new ICTs (e.g., new literacies, multi-literacies, and multi-modal literacies) which should be considered in language learning.

➢ There is a list of those Web-based new literacies that Egyptian EFL student teachers need within their pre-service education programmes. These literacies are subsumed under main categories such as: (1) online communication and collaboration; (2) online information management and knowledge construction; and (3) accessing Web-based English language resources and materials.

1.5 Reflections and Ideas for Workshops

➢ Work in groups to draw a conceptual diagram that delineates and explains the relationship between the main abbreviations and acronyms which are commonly used in the field of English language teaching/learning (e.g., TESOL, TEFL, TESL, ESL, EFL, and EL).

➢ Read my article: Abdallah, M. M. S. (2008) "New literacies or new challenges?": The development of the concept of literacy in the context of information and communication technologies and language teaching. *ERIC*. ED502132, and which is available at: http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED502132.pdf to discuss the following:

   a) How has the concept of literacy been changing in history?

    b) How does this new concept of literacy influence English language teaching/learning in your opinion?

    c) In your opinion, in what way will these new literacies influence your future teaching practices as a prospective teacher of English?

➢ Go through the ***Web-based new literacies*** listed above to identify the most important literacies to you and which you think you need the most as an EFL student teacher (and a future teacher of English).

CHAPTER TWO: A REVIEW OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODS

2.1 Introduction: Explaining the Problematic Concepts

Before reviewing the wide range of English teaching methods existing in literature, it sounds appropriate to explain the problematic concepts that EFL student teachers might struggle with. These concepts are: epistemology, approach, methodology, method, and technique. Crotty (2003) provides a comprehensive theoretical argument in this respect (see Figure 1 below)
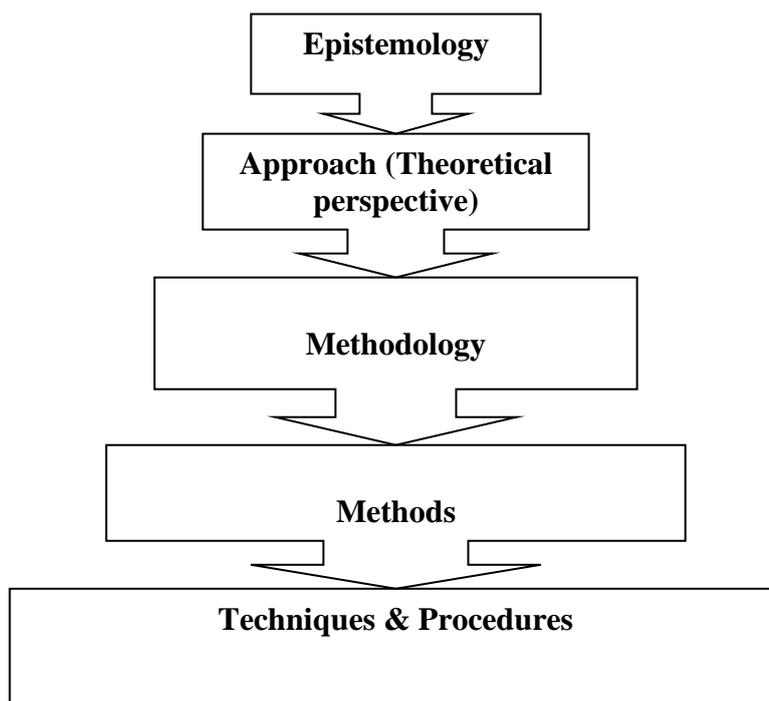
Figure 1: Crotty's Diagram (adapted)

Although Crotty targeted the social research process from this argument, I think that the argument is still useful and significant for English language teaching methodology as well. Hence, I will try here to adjust this argument to our field.

Generally, '**epistemology**' refers to the theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and thereby in the methodology. It is a very general term that relates to the broad question of how one gets knowledge in this world. Therefore, epistemology is related more to the human knowledge in general, than to language learning in particular. In other words, it tries to specify the way through which one acquires the knowledge existing out there. Hence, it explores the nature of knowledge itself, and whether it is obtained objectively or subjectively in this world. In other words, it poses questions such as: is knowledge obtained through direct, concrete interaction with the physical world in a unified fashion, and consequently becomes an ***objective***, standardised reality equally available to all the people around? Or is it ***subjectively*** formed throughout our interactions with others, and hence our personal interpretations and judgements become significant in this knowledge formation process? Or is it neither purely objective nor purely subjective, but takes a ***critical*** or pragmatic stance instead?

Thus, **epistemology** deals with 'the nature of knowledge, its possibility, scope and general basis' (Hamlyn, 1995: p242). ***Objectivist*** epistemology, for example, holds that meaning, and therefore, meaningful reality, exists apart from the operation of any consciousness. Thus, a tree in the forest is *a tree,* regardless of whether anyone is aware of its existence or not. In other words, when human beings recognise it as a tree, they are simply discovering a meaning that has been lying there in wait for them all along (Crotty, 2003: p8). On the other hand, a ***constructionism*** or ***subjective*** epistemology rejects this objective view of human knowledge contending that there is no objective truth waiting for us to discover; instead, truth, or meaning, comes into existence in and out of our

engagement with the realities in our world. Thus, meaning is NOT discovered, but ***constructed***, and hence, different people might construct meaning in different ways, even when the same phenomenon is in question (Crotty, 2003: p9).

Further, ***pragmatism*** as a third epistemology is a pluralistic real-world, practice-oriented, and problem-centred position that does not see the world as an absolute unity. Some epistemologies prioritise the mind over matter (i.e. the physical world), while others focus mainly on the physical world as an objective reality that has nothing to do with our thinking minds, and hence a ***duality*** was established among thinkers and philosophers. As an alternative to the mind-matter dualism, the ***pragmatic*** approach to education, which dates back to Dewey (1929), posits a ***transactional realism***, one in which reality only reveals itself as a result of the activities of the organism, and thus the focus should be on the "interactions between the living human organism and its environment" (Biesta & Burbules, 2003: p10).

Instead of separating mind from matter (real world), ***Dewey's*** pragmatism incorporates both of them into one entity conceptualising nature itself as "a moving whole of interacting parts" (Dewey, 1929: p232). Dewey did not want to identify his pragmatism with any of the two extremes (i.e. idealism vs. realism). Instead, he wanted his philosophy to stand between objectivism and subjectivism, and between idealism and realism, highlighting the importance of real interaction with (and experience of) the lived world, and thus, favouring an ***experiential/experimental*** learning theory (Biesta & Burbules, 2003). Thus, Dewey views knowledge as a construction, not of the human mind, but that is located in the organism-transaction itself (Biesta & Burbules, 2003: p11).

Approach (theoretical perspective) is a way of looking at the world and making sense of it. It might draw on a certain epistemology (i.e. a theory of knowledge), but its main function is to ***guide*** and underlie specific ***methodologies***. In other words, it is the ***philosophical stance*** that lies behind our chosen methodology. Thus, in a language learning context, an approach is a ***set of beliefs*** or ***assumptions*** about language and how it is taught and learned. These beliefs or assumptions provide the logic and criteria needed for the methodology we will use. In this context, Harmer (2001: p78) contends that an approach 'describes how people acquire their knowledge about the language and make statements about the conditions which will promote successful language learning'. Thus, *behaviourism* and *naturalism* can be two distinctive approaches to language learning.

An approach can be interpreted and applied in a variety of different ways in the classroom. Thus, if we approach English language learning/teaching from a ***behaviouristic*** perspective that highlights the stimulus-response or input-output system in language learning, then all our teaching/learning activities will be centred on the ***observable behaviour*** of learners as a main indication of their learning. On the other hand, if we hold a ***communicative*** approach according to which 'language is for communication' or 'language should be taught communicatively so that learning becomes effective and meaningful', then our ***methodology*** should be a communicative one that applies the assumptions or beliefs constituting the communicative approach we are adopting.

Similarly, one might hold a ***socio-cultural approach*** to language learning according to which language learning becomes a ***social process*** in the first place rather than a purely individual and cognitive one (Wertsch, 1991). This process

is ***mediated*** by cultural tools, both physical and mental, that will gradually become integrated into the learner's mind. In this case, the methodology s/he will use should focus on socio-cultural learning activities/techniques such as: cooperative/collaborative language learning, peer teaching, group discussions, Web-mediated learning, and reciprocal teaching (see also Cumming-Potvin et al, 2003).

In the same vein, if one holds a ***constructivist*** approach to language learning that stresses students' pre-existing knowledge, beliefs, and experiences (see, for example, Hu, 2005), then the chosen methodology will focus on ***learner-centred***, ***enquiry-based***, and ***reflective*** activities (Mintrop, 2001) in which case the students' previous knowledge is activated and built upon. In other words, the learners' ***voices*** will be heard more in the classroom in the light of this constructivist pedagogy.

According to Crotty (2003: p7), from a social research perspective, a **methodology** provides the rationale for the choice of certain methods to accomplish the overall goal. A **methodology**, as I understand it, describes a strategy or an organised ***plan of action*** to ***carry out*** the abstract philosophy entailed in an approach. Thus, a methodology should be compatible with the main approach and go in line with its main premises and/or assumptions. In other words, it translates the abstract approach into ***feasible***, meaningful practices and procedures that can be carried out inside the classroom. This way, a methodology functions as a ***means*** that links theory to practice in English language teaching/learning.

At a lower level, **methods** describe the various ways of carrying out a certain methodology. According to Harmer (2001: p78), a **method** is 'the ***practical***

realisation of an approach'. For Richards and Rodgers (2001), a method refers to a specific **instructional design** based on particular theories of language and language learning. Thus, in each method, the following aspects are clearly specified: (1) the linguistic content and the sequencing of the syllabus; (2) roles of both the teacher and learners; (3) the classroom techniques to be followed; and (4) assessment/evaluation procedures and/or techniques (see also Barnard, 2004). There are many language teaching methods in literature such as: The Grammar-Translation Method, the Audio-Lingual Method, the Direct Method, and the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Method.

However, there is a recent argument that should be considered in this regard which implies that the best method is that there should be no specific method. In this regard, Brown (2002) argues that in this **post-method** era, **there is no 'one-size-fits-all' method** that will suit every individual learner and teacher. There are many personal factors (e.g., individual differences, motivations, and personal preferences) that inevitably interfere with the teaching-learning process. None of the adopted methods has yet proven to be, as I can phrase it, the **'panacea'** for all the language learning illnesses and problems. Consequently, teachers have to be **eclectic** or **selective** by developing a **fitness-for-purpose** attitude according to which the goals/objectives at hand should guide how they teach, not the other way around.

Realistically speaking, each method has its own advantages and disadvantages; up till now, no method has been empirically proven the best for all language educators to blindly adopt without discussion. For example, the current great enthusiasm to (and wide adoption of) the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method in Egypt can be attributed to the failure of the previously adopted

method (i.e. the Grammar-Translation Method) to meet the national language learning goals. It failed to develop a language learner who can communicate properly in English. This does not mean that the CLT will stay forever, especially in this ICT-dominated age that has been changing the nature of language and how it should be taught (see Chapter 1).

Procedures refer to the ***direct steps*** that teachers should follow inside the classroom to accomplish the stated objectives based on the adopted method. In language learning terms, a **procedure** concerns the techniques and practices employed in the classroom as consequences of a particular approach or design (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In other words, it refers to the detailed, organised, and ***concrete means*** that teachers can easily state in advance in their teaching notes. This way, they are more relevant to the teaching/learning practices at the classroom level.

A teacher by himself/herself might not be able to translate the teaching method and/or approach s/he is adopting into detailed, meaningful steps that help with accomplishing the objectives of the lesson. For this reason, a teacher's guide provides the detailed procedures that the teacher should follow for each lesson. However, these stipulated procedures are not intended to be final or closed in the narrow sense; rather, they should be flexible enough to be adapted, and also be open to discussion and amendments/revisions to be made on them if/when necessary. Sometimes a teacher is obliged (owing to time constraints or whatever) to skip, modify, and/or merge together some procedures. This is natural in teaching/learning in general as a human activity that can never be fully controlled in the same way laboratory experiments are controlled.

However still, the followed procedures should conform to the main language learning/teaching approach and methods employed.

Techniques, on the other hand, are used to realise a certain objective by *carrying out* a specific *activity* in a certain way; or by *doing* something *directly* during learning in a way that sounds appropriate and relevant. Examples of techniques include: individual work, pair work, and group work (which are commonly referred to as *organisational* techniques). They also include the *options* available for teachers to do the same thing. For example, there is a wide range of available techniques that s/he can use to present new vocabulary and grammar/structure (e.g., dramatisation, definition, Arabic translation, miming, using pictures/drawings, using real situations, and using gestures). Similarly, there are many techniques that a teacher can use for *drilling* and *practice*, such as asking students to: re-arrange sentences, match words with pictures, substitute words with certain ones given, fill in the missing parts, re-write a paragraph, and find the odd-one-out item/word. These are common practices that English language teachers always do in the classroom, even without realising that they are called 'techniques'.

2.2 Prominent English Language Teaching Methods

Language teachers, as Nunan (1991) puts it, have always been searching for the *right* method that can be valid for all learners in all teaching/learning situations and contexts. This impetus for finding a method that survives all weaknesses and criticisms has led to the development of many language teaching methods throughout the history of language teaching. Thus, some popular methods for language teaching were devised based on the *weaknesses* observed in the

previously used ones. Each method has its own premises, principles, procedures, advantages, and disadvantages.

Nunan (1991) argues that many disciplines such as linguistics, psychology, and sociology contributed considerably to the development of language teaching/learning methods. For example, general ***psychological theories*** of learning (e.g., behaviourism), which were not devised mainly for language learning purposes, had their influence on language teaching methods. In particular, the view that the human behaviour is similar to animal behaviour (behaviourism) turned human learning into a ***stimulus-response process*** that disregards any role of mental activity. Thus, the operant conditioning and the role of ***reinforcement*** in forming certain behaviours or habits were applied to the study of human behaviour in general, and language learning in particular. As a result of this view, language learning, as I understand it, was fragmented into small ***concrete behavioural performances***. Besides, language learning was viewed as no more than ***habit formation***. Along with this behaviourist tradition, a ***structural linguistic*** tradition emerged, and both resulted in the development of classroom activities which were mainly based on ***patterns*** and substitution drills to teach language.

In what follows, I will try to review some of these popular language teaching methods so that language teachers can understand the main differences between these methods and the rationale underlying the choice of a certain method over another.

2.2.1 The Grammar-Translation Method

Historically, the Grammar-Translation Method is one of the oldest and most traditional methods of language teaching. It was originally developed to teach

Greek and Latin. The main ***premise*** underlying this method is that foreign language study is a ***mental*** discipline, the goal of which may be to ***read literature*** in its original form or simply to be a form of ***intellectual*** development. In other words, a foreign language is best learned when literature of the target language in its original form is translated into the mother tongue. Moreover, language is approached as merely a ***deductive*** process, not as an inductive one, and hence, from data or a ***set of rules*** presented, learners are required to create sentences in FL through ***transfer*** techniques.

Thus, words in a foreign language are approached as ***isolated*** units. ***Translation*** here becomes the main practice that teachers should focus on to enable their students to understand and internalise the target language. The basic approach is to analyse and study the ***grammatical rules*** of the language, usually in an order roughly matching the traditional order of the grammar of Latin, and then to practise manipulating grammatical structures through the means of translation both into and from the mother tongue. For this reason, it is called 'Grammar-Translation' method (Rivers, 1981).

The ***main principles*** of this method are (Rivers, 1981; Richards & Rodgers, 2001):

1. Translation interprets the words and phrases of the foreign languages in the best possible manner.
2. The phraseology and the idiom of the target language can best be assimilated in the process of interpretation.
3. The structures of the foreign languages are best learned when compared and contrasted with those of the mother tongue.

4. The main focus of learning a foreign language should be on ***knowing about*** the target language rather than on ***using*** it for communication.

According to Wikipedia (*http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grammar_translation*), the method requires students to translate whole texts word for word and memorise numerous grammatical rules and exceptions as well as enormous vocabulary lists. The goal of this method is to be able to read and translate literary masterpieces and classics. That is why the method originated within the context of classical languages that focused more on reading and understanding classics and literary works, and less on functional communication or interaction.

Thus, the ***main characteristics or features*** of this method can be summarised as follows (Prator & Celce-Murcia, 1979; Richards & Rodgers, 2001):

- Teaching is mostly done in the ***mother tongue*** (i.e. native language) with little active use of the target language. In other words, the students' mother tongue is the main ***medium*** of instruction which is used to explain new items and enable comparisons to be made between the foreign language and the native language;
- ***Reading*** is the main language skill in focus; and reading and writing are utilised more than listening and speaking;
- ***Translating*** vocabulary, grammatical rules, and literary texts from the target language into the mother language, and vice versa, is an essential teaching practice;
- Language learning consists of little more than ***memorising*** rules and facts in order to understand and manipulate the morphology and syntax of the foreign language;

- The *sentence* is the basic unit of teaching and language practice. This focus on the sentence, as a distinctive feature of the method, was an attempt to make language learning easier;

- *Accuracy* is emphasised and prioritised over *fluency*.

- *Writing* and *memorising lists* of words translated into the mother tongue (i.e. bilingual vocabulary lists) is indispensible;

- Little attention is paid to the context of texts, which are treated as exercises in grammatical analysis;

- *Grammatical rules* can be taught and drilled while being *isolated* from the context;

- *Little* attention is paid to *pronunciation* or *communicative competence*;

- Often the only drills are exercises in *translating disconnected sentences* from the target language into the mother tongue.

Based on this argument, can you think of the main *advantages* and *disadvantages* of the Grammar-Translation Method? I will give you few hints: According to this method, are grammatical rules taught in context? Which is better: to teach grammar as isolated structures, or to teach them in context? Similarly, which is better: teaching *about* the language, or teaching *through* the language? Is it good at all to focus mainly on the literature of the target language? Is it good to disregard the *communicative* competence in favour of the *grammatical* competence? Is it a good idea to have lists of words in the target language to memorise and learn by heart? Is it always good to teach all the time in the mother tongue? If you think well about these questions, you will generate a list of the main advantages and disadvantages of this method.

2.2.2 The Direct Method

I intentionally chose to address the Direct Method after the Grammar-Translation Method because the former sounds quite contradictory to the latter since it emerged in response to it. The Direct Method, also called the ***Natural Method***, was established in Germany and France around 1900. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), it is a natural method that stresses the importance of learning a foreign or a second language in the same way as the ***native*** language is ***acquired***. Thus, ***direct*** or natural ***exposition*** to the target language is the cornerstone of this method. Rather than learning ***about*** the target language (e.g., mastering its grammatical rules, syntax, and vocabulary with the help of the mother tongue), learners are encouraged to learn the target language (e.g., English) ***through*** the target language itself, with no interference from the native language (e.g., Arabic).

Therefore, the ***main principles and features*** of the method are:

1. Classroom ***instructions*** are conducted exclusively in the ***target*** language.
2. Only ***everyday*** vocabulary and sentences are taught.
3. ***Oral communication skills*** are built up in a carefully ***graded*** progression organised around ***question-and-answer exchanges*** between teachers and students in small, intensive classes.
4. ***Grammar*** is taught ***inductively***, not ***deductively***.
5. New teaching ***points*** are introduced ***orally***.
6. ***Concrete*** vocabulary is taught through ***demonstration, objects, and pictures***; ***abstract*** vocabulary is taught by ***association*** of ideas.
7. Both ***speech*** *and* ***listening*** comprehensions are taught. In other words, main focus is on ***listening*** and ***speaking***, rather than on ***reading*** and ***writing***.

8. Correct pronunciation and grammar are emphasised.

9. ***Teacher*** should ***speak*** much ***less*** than students; students should be speaking at least 80% of the time during the lesson.

10. Students are taught from inception to ask questions as well as answer them (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: p12).

Thus, the Direct Method has some ***advantages and disadvantages***. The main advantage is represented in its focus on immersing learners in direct and natural use of the target language. Another advantage is allowing for students' voices to be heard since the teacher is required to speak less. Also, the inductive teaching of grammar is sometimes more useful than the deductive type.

However, like any other method, the Direct Method has many disadvantages which can be represented in: (1) the assumption that a foreign or a second language can be taught/learnt exactly like the mother tongue, and consequently its full disregard of the role that the native language can play in this respect; sometimes a simple, brief explanation in the students' native language might be a more efficient route to comprehension (see also Richards & Rogers 2001: p13); (2) the need for excellent and well-trained teachers to implement the method properly since all communications and activities are done in the target language. In other words, its large dependence on the teacher skill, rather than on a textbook, is a noticeable drawback/weakness since not all teachers are proficient enough in the foreign language to adhere to the principles of the method. In the Arab world, for example, it is hard to find Arab teachers who can speak English in a native-like manner, or use it exactly in the same way as native speakers would do; (3) the focus on listening and speaking at the expense of reading and writing; all language skills should be considered in language instruction; (4) the great demands on teachers to create a native-like language

learning environment which make the method idealistic/unrealistic in practical terms.

_____

2.2.3 The Reading Method

As the name implies, the reading method draws mainly on the ***reading ability*** of foreign language learners. The main goal is to acquaint those learners with the target language within a short period of time by developing their reading ability in this language (Rivers, 1981). This method dates back to 1929 when the American students were required to study a foreign language for only two years. Since the acquisition of any serious level of competence in all four language skills requires more than two years, the only reasonable objective for such a short period of study, as Coleman (1929) recommended, should be the development of reading ability. Thus, the objective of the reading method is to make learners fluent readers and the main focus was on comprehension, not reproduction.

In the light of this method, students were taught to read the target language without a conscious effort to translate what they were reading. Emphasis was placed on developing autonomous ***silent*** reading and increasing individual reading ***rate***. Frequency words counts were developed and used as the basis for graded ***readers***[1] written to conform to certain levels of word frequency, and where introduction of new vocabulary was carefully controlled. Thus, students studied basic word lists based on these frequency levels. To facilitate things to students, the words were often grouped around themes or centres of interest (Rivers, 1981: p36).

_____

[1] A *reader* refers to one of a series of texts for students learning to read.

Since it was a ***pragmatic*** method, the teaching of other functional language aspects (e.g., grammar) and skills (e.g., speaking and writing) was done in a limited subservient way. In other words, the study of grammar, for example, was geared to the needs of the reader; thus, only the minimum essentials of grammar were to be incorporated into the course at this stage. Similarly, writing was limited to exercises which would help the student to remember vocabulary and structures essential to the comprehension of the target text (Rivers, 1981: p36).

2.2.4 The Total Physical Response (TPR) Method

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), Total Physical Response (TPR) is a language teaching method that was developed in the USA by James Asher, a professor of psychology. It was built around the coordination of ***speech*** and ***action*** with an attempt to teach the target language through ***physical*** (***motor***) activity.

TPR is based on the premise that the human brain has a ***biological programme*** for acquiring any natural language in the world. The process becomes visible when we observe how ***infants*** internalise their first language; they tend to listen to their parents' speech, imitate, and respond ***physically*** before they are able to produce any ***verbal*** language. They stay silent for few months during which internalisation and code breaking occur. We can imagine a conversation between parents and infant through which the TPR method can be quite clear: At first, the parent says, "Look at daddy. Look at daddy." The infant's face turns in the direction of the voice and daddy exclaims, "She's looking at me! She's looking at me!" Asher calls this 'a language-body conversation' because the parent speaks and the infant answers with a ***physical response*** such as looking, smiling, laughing, turning, walking, grasping, holding, sitting, running, etc.

Hence, Asher perceives successful adult second/foreign language learning as a ***parallel process*** to child first language acquisition, and hence adults should recapitulate the processes by which children acquire their native language. More specifically, he claims that speech directed to young children consists primarily of ***commands***, which children respond to ***physically*** before they produce ***verbal responses*** (Asher, 1969).

Asher views the ***verb*** (especially in the ***imperative***) as the central linguistic pattern around which language learning and use are organised. In this sense, a ***stimulus-response*** view provides the learning theory underlying language teaching pedagogy.

Contrary to most language teaching methods, Asher's TPR draws on the role that the right-brain plays in language learning; he proposes that the child acquires language through ***motor*** movement – a right hemisphere activity. In this sense, right-hemisphere activities must occur before the left hemisphere can process language for production (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

In addition, Asher highlights how the ***reduction of stress*** as an important emotional factor, can facilitate language learning. The absence of stress is an important condition for successful language learning. Thus, it becomes important in adult language learning to create a ***relaxing***, stress-free environment similar to the one which the child is exposed to while acquiring his/her first language.

Unlike methods that operate from a grammar-based or structural view of the core elements of language, TPR requires initial attention to *meaning* rather than to the forms of items. Grammar is thus taught *inductively*.

Imperative drills are the major classroom activity in TPR, and which are typically used to elicit physical actions and activity on the part of the learners. Learners thus have the primary roles of *listener* and *performer*. They listen attentively and respond physically to commands given by the teacher.

2.2.5 The Audio-Lingual Method

The audio-lingual method originated in the American army as a result of a great urge during the World War II to learn other nations' languages so that the USA does not become isolated from the world around. Linguists were searching for an effective *alternative* to the dominant Reading Method that should draw on the behaviourist theory of learning. At that time, *behaviourism* was greatly dominant and influential as a scientific means of understanding reality and behaviourists claimed that they could discover the hidden secrets of human learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Rivers, 1981).

Thus, the method draws on a behaviourist theory suggesting that much learning is the result of *habit-formation*, where performing the correct response to a stimulus means that a reward is given; constant repetition of this reward makes the response automatic, a procedure referred to, in behaviouristic terms, as *conditioning* (Harmer, 2007: p49). Thus, language learners' correct responses, performances, and/or language products are immediately followed by positive *feedback* from the teacher, while incorrect ones are followed by negative feedback. Like the direct method, the audio-lingual method encourages using

the ***target language*** as a means of instruction without resorting to the mother tongue or the native language (Nunan, 1991; Rivers, 1981). This way, the target language is taught/learned naturally in context where speech precedes written production. This is the reason why language labs are usually the best places where the audio-lingual method can be implemented.

The main ***principles*** of the audio-lingual method are:
1. Language is a ***verbal behaviour*** or a set of habits, and consequently, foreign language learning is basically a process of ***mechanical habit formation***; hence good habits are formed by giving correct responses rather than by making mistakes;
2. Language is ***speech***, not writing, and therefore, language skills are learned more effectively if the items to be learned are presented in spoken form before they are seen in written form;
3. ***Analogy*** (which involves the processes of generalisation and discrimination) provides a better foundation for language learning than ***analysis***; explanation of rules are therefore not given until students have practised a pattern in a variety of contexts;
4. Teachers should teach the language, not about the language, and hence the ***meanings*** that the words of a language have for the native speaker can be learned only in a linguistic and cultural context, and not in isolation;
5. A language is what its ***native speakers*** say, not what someone thinks they ought to say;
6. Languages are ***different***; therefore, structural linguists rejected the notion of a universal grammatical system which can serve as a framework for the organisation of the facts of all languages. The main

implication here is that a target language is totally different from the native language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Rivers, 1981).

In the classroom, the language teacher, according to this method, is required to ***model*** a sentence that students have to repeat. Then, s/he is required to present some new words for students to sample in the same structure. For example, the teacher might say, "*She has been reading a book for three hours!*" with students repeating this sentence. Then, s/he might give alternative words for students to use in the same structure such as: *write, month, I, wait, five, travel, learn, watch, TV, drive, we, etc*. No matter which words learners use, the same form or structure (present perfect continuous tense here) should be produced, with slight modifications made to the main sentence. Thus, the focus becomes mainly on ***form*** with no explicit teaching of grammar.

The main idea here is that learners should practise a particular construct, structure, and/or form until they are able to use it spontaneously and unconsciously. To realise this, activities are totally controlled by the teacher so that only particular responses and/or outputs are produced. This means that learners have to stick to teacher's directions and instructions, and hence free expression is discouraged.

Learners play ***reactive*** roles by responding to stimuli, and thus have little control over the content, pace, or style of learning. Since they are likely to make mistakes, they are not encouraged to initiate or lead interaction. Learners should learn new forms by ***listening*** to the teacher, imitating accurately, and performing controlled tasks. On the other hand, the teacher's role is ***central*** and ***active*** within this teacher-dominated method; s/he models the target language,

controls the direction and pace of learning, and monitors and corrects the learner's performance. In other words, s/he should keep learners active and attentive all the time since active verbal interaction between the teacher and learners is the key here. Therefore, teacher should:

- Provide sufficient practice and model the various types of language behaviour;
- Introduce the language skills in this order: listening, speaking, reading, and writing;
- Teach the spoken language in dialogue form;
- Direct choral response by all or parts of the class and get the individual student to talk;
- Teach the use of structure through pattern practice;
- Guide students in choosing and learning vocabulary;
- Reward trials by students in such a way that learning is reinforced (Brooks, 1964: p143; Richards & Rodgers, 2001)

Oral drills and ***pattern*** practice are typical of this method since an ***accurate*** production of a certain form or structure is the target. These drills include: repetition (i.e. an utterance is repeated as soon as it is heard); inflection (i.e. a word in the sentence takes another form when repeated, like when the singular 'man' becomes the plural 'men'); replacement (i.e. one word is replaced with another); and re-statement (i.e. the utterance is re-phrased by learners) (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Thus, dialogues and drills are the basis for any classroom practices that draw on the audio-lingual method. Dialogues provide the means of contextualising key structures through introducing real-life situations in which structures might be

used as well as some cultural aspects of the target language. Meanwhile, correct pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation are emphasised. After a dialogue has been presented and memorised, a specific grammatical patterns in the dialogue are selected and become the main focus of various kinds of drill and pattern-practice exercises (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). You can watch a real example of an English language teacher using this method in this nice video at: *http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cvz-GLyZ7bM*

_____

2.2.6 Suggestopaedia

Suggestopaedia is a teaching method developed by Bulgarian psychotherapist and psychiatrist-educator, Georgi Lozanov. In foreign language learning, it is described as a set of recommendations derived from Suggestology with the aim of optimising and improving the language learning process (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The most prominent characteristics of Suggestopaedia are the decoration, furniture, and arrangement of the classroom, the use of music, and the authoritative behaviour of the teacher. Lozanov (1978: p27) claims that "memorization in learning by the suggestopedic method seems to be accelerated 25 times over that in learning by conventional method".

From Soviet psychology, Lozanov has taken the notion that all students can be taught a given subject matter at the same level of skill promising success through Suggestopaedia to the academically gifted and the ungifted alike.

The central characteristic of Suggestopaedia is the centrality of music and the musical rhythm to learning drawing on its functional uses in therapy (e.g., using the unique potential of rhythm to energise and bring order). In this sense,

language learners are required to relax in order to produce language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

2.2.7 The Silent Way

The Silent Way is a language teaching method that was devised by Caleb Gattegno. It belongs to a tradition that views language as problem-solving, creative, and discovering activity, in which the ***learner*** is a principal ***actor*** rather than a passive listener. As the name implies, the teacher is supposed to be ***silent*** (but not passive) most of the time. In other words, the method requires the teacher to say as little as possible so that students' ***speaking*** is the principal activity. Thus, it is based on the premise that the teacher should be ***silent*** as much as possible in the classroom, but the learner should be encouraged to ***produce*** as much language as possible.

The method draws heavily on some problem-solving premises that were represented in Benjamin Franklin's words:

> *Tell me and I forget,*
>
> *teach me and I remember,*
>
> *involve me and I learn.*

Thus, ***involving*** students in the learning process (as active participants) is the key element in this method. Therefore, the learning ***hypotheses or premises*** underlying the Silent Way are:

1. Learning is facilitated if the learner ***discovers*** or ***creates*** rather than remembers and repeats what is to be learned.
2. Learning is facilitated by accompanying (mediating) physical ***objects***.
3. Learning is facilitated by problem solving involving the material to be learned (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

_____

Rods and colour-coded pronunciation charts are used to provide physical foci for learners and to create memorable images that facilitate recall.

As far as the presentation of language is concerned, the Silent Way adopts a highly ***structural approach***, with language taught through sentences in a sequence based on grammatical complexity, described by some as a "building-block" approach. Thus, students are presented with the structural patterns of the target language and learn its grammar rules through ***inductive*** processes. In addition, ***vocabulary*** is a central ***dimension*** of language learning, and thus the choice of vocabulary becomes crucial. ***Functional*** words are the most important vocabulary for learners as they provide a key to comprehending the spirit of the language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: p82).

Gattegno emphasises the ***primacy of learning over teaching***, and hence places a focus on the ***self*** of the learner, and subsequently on his/her priorities and commitments. ***Silence*** is considered the best vehicle for learning, because in silence students concentrate on the task to be accomplished and how it can be accomplished. Silence is thus an aid to alertness, concentration, and mental organisation.

Being silent does not mean being 'passive' as the teacher under this method has many roles to play; s/he is a facilitator, organiser, script writer, manager, monitor, evaluator, and assistant.

Advantages of the method include:

1. Language learners are not passive as the method encourages creativity and problem-solving abilities;

2. The teacher feels less stressed and more relaxed as learners are active most of the time;

3. Physical objects used by the teacher in this method can facilitate learning by helping learners to internalise the target language and easily recall the linguistic input.

Some ***disadvantages*** of the method include:

1. Lack of communication between the teacher and learners;

2. The method is limited to relatively small groups of learners and thus it becomes inappropriate for large-size classes like the ones in Egypt;

3. The method might not be appropriate for teaching some linguistic aspects and language skills that require much modelling by the teacher and repetition by learners.

2.2.8 Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

According to Wikipedia, Computer-assisted language learning (CALL) is succinctly defined in a seminal work by Levy (1997: p1) as "the search for and study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning" (see also Chapter 1). CALL embraces a wide range of ICT applications and approaches to teaching and learning foreign languages, from the "traditional" drill-and-practice programs that characterised CALL in the 1960s and 1970s to more recent manifestations of CALL, such as the virtual learning environment and Web-based distance learning. It also extends to the use of corpora, interactive whiteboards, and computer-mediated communication (CMC).

Since computers were publicised, many attempts have been made by educators and educational researchers to integrate them into the educational process in general and into language learning in particular. Thus, researchers and educators have been exploring the possibilities that computers can afford for improving language learning and teaching and enabling learners to achieve the maximum learning benefits, no matter whether the computer is used as a *tool*, a *learning environment*, or a *tutor* (Hanson-Smith, 2009).

CALL has gone through many stages that go side by side with the rapid developments occurring in new technologies which coalesced in the emergence of the Internet or the Web. These stages were identified by Warschauer and Healey (1998) as: (1) behaviouristic CALL, (2) communicative CALL, and (3) integrative CALL. Each stage corresponds to a certain level of technology as well as a certain pedagogical approach.

Structural CALL or ***Behaviouristic*** CALL marked the first generation in which the main focus was on employing some computer software and/or applications to help language learners with drilling and practising new language content (Warschauer & Healey, 1998). In this sense, computer programmes and/or software were devised mainly for drilling purposes; language learners were exposed to computers as an aid that should help them to internalise the traditional linguistic content at an individual pace.

The next stage, ***communicative CALL***, emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s, at the same time that behaviouristic approaches to language teaching were being rejected at both the theoretical and pedagogical level, and when new personal computers were creating greater possibilities for individual work.

Proponents of communicative CALL stressed that computer-based activities should: focus more on ***using*** forms (content) than on the forms themselves; teach grammar implicitly rather than explicitly; allow and encourage students to generate original utterances rather than just manipulate pre-fabricated language; and use the target language predominantly or even exclusively. Communicative CALL corresponded to cognitive theories which stressed that learning was a process of ***discovery***, expression, and development. Popular CALL software developed in this period included text reconstruction programs (which allowed students working alone or in groups to rearrange words and texts to discover patterns of language and meaning) and simulations (which stimulated discussion and discovery among students working in pairs or groups). For many proponents of communicative CALL, the focus was not so much on what students did with the machine, but rather on what they did with each other while working at the computer (Warschauer & Healey, 1998).

Though communicative CALL was seen as an advance over behaviouristic CALL, it too began to come under criticism. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, critics pointed out that the computer was still being used in an ad hoc and disconnected fashion. This corresponded to a broader re-assessment of communicative language teaching theory and practice. Many teachers were moving away from a ***cognitive*** view of communicative teaching to a more ***social*** or ***socio-cognitive*** view, which placed greater emphasis on language use in authentic social contexts. Task-based, project-based, and content-based approaches all sought to integrate learners in authentic environments, and also to integrate the various skills of language learning and use. This led to a new perspective on technology and language learning termed ***integrative CALL***, a perspective which seeks both to integrate various skills (e.g., listening, speaking,

reading, and writing) and also to integrate technology more fully into the language learning process. In integrative approaches, students learn to use a variety of technological tools as an ongoing process of language learning and use, rather than visiting the computer lab on a once a week basis for isolated exercises.

2.2.9 Network-based language teaching (NBLT)

This approach can be regarded as an extension or a variety of CALL. But due to the unprecedented influence of the Internet or the Web on our life in general, and on language learning in particular, it sounds reasonable to me to distinguish NBLT as a separate approach. Shetzer and Warschauer (2000) coined the term 'NBLT' to describe their electronic literacy approach to language teaching and learning (see also Chapter 1). NBLT refers specifically to the pedagogical use of computers connected in either local or global networks, allowing one-to-one, one-to-many, and many-to-many communication. This approach highlights the learning opportunities that language learners are provided with when computers are connected with each other, both locally and globally. The Web enables great opportunities for communication which are vital within second and foreign language learning situations.

According to this approach, language learning is conceived from a **socio-cultural perspective** where the learning process is mediated by the Web. It assumes the existence of an interdependent/transactional relationship between the Web and language. This relationship has become so strong that it is hard to identify both as two isolated identities. Thus, it is hard nowadays to isolate language learning

from the Web as a technological reality that needs some skills and strategies that are quite relevant to the English language.

2.2.10 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Communicative language teaching can be understood as a set of principles about the goals of language teaching, how learners learn a language, the kinds of classroom activities that best facilitate learning, and the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom. Learners in environments using CLT techniques learn and practice the target language by interactions with one another and the instructor, the study of "authentic texts" (those written in the target language for purposes other than language learning), and the use of the language both in class and outside of class.

This approach started in the 70s and became prominent as it proposed an alternative to the then ubiquitous systems-oriented approaches, such as the Audiolingual method. That means that, instead of focusing on the acquisition of grammar and vocabulary (grammatical/linguistic competence), the Communicative Approach aimed at developing the learner's competence to communicate in the target language (communicative competence), with an enhanced focus on real-life situations.

Learners converse about personal experiences with partners, and instructors teach topics outside of the realm of traditional grammar to promote language skills in all types of situations. That method also claims to encourage learners to incorporate their personal experiences into their language learning environment and to focus on the learning experience, in addition to the learning of the target language.

According to CLT, the goal of language education is the ability to communicate in the target language. This is in contrast to previous views in which grammatical competence was commonly given top priority. CLT also focuses on the teacher being a facilitator, rather than an instructor. Furthermore, the approach is a non-methodical system that does not use a textbook series to teach the target language but works on developing sound oral and verbal skills prior to reading and writing.

Communicative language teaching (CLT) makes use of real-life situations that necessitate communication. The teacher sets up a situation that students are likely to encounter in real life. Unlike the audiolingual method of language teaching, which relies on repetition and drills, the Communicative Approach can leave students in suspense as to the outcome of a class exercise, which will vary according to their reactions and responses. The real-life simulations change from day to day. Students' motivation to learn comes from their desire to communicate in meaningful ways about meaningful topics.

In the Communicative Approach, real communication and interaction is not only the objective in learning, but also the means through which it takes place. Margie S. Berns, an expert in CLT, argues that "language is interaction; it is an interpersonal activity and has a clear relationship with society. In this sense, language study has to look at the use (function) of language in context, both its linguistic context (i.e. what is uttered before and after a given piece of discourse) and its social, or situational, context (i.e. who is speaking, what their social roles are, why they have come together to speak)" (Berns, 1984, p. 5).

There are some main principles of CLT:

- Language is for ***communication***, and it should be taught and learnt ***communicatively***.

- CLT is based on four major principles: ***communication***, ***individualization***, ***socialization***, and ***enjoyment***.

- Under CLT, the teacher needs to develop a ***positive*** attitude towards ***socialization*** and to create a social context leading to the use of language under conditions of ***natural*** and appropriate communication.

- CLT has caused a shift of emphasis from ***knowledge*** of grammatical rules to rules of ***use*** that govern the process of communication; it is a shift of emphasis from developing learners' ***linguistic*** competence to developing their ***communicative*** competence.

- Under CLT, the four language skills are taught communicatively in an integrative way. However, ***listening and speaking*** precede reading and writing skills.

2.2.11 Socio-cultural Language Learning

The socio-cultural learning theory (socio-culturalism) was originally developed by Vygotsky (1978). From a socio-cultural standpoint, human learning is defined as a dynamic social activity that is situated in physical and social contexts, and distributed across persons, tools, and activities (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991). The core of the theory is that the ***external social processes***, rather than the internal cognitive ones, ***mediate*** and shape human learning. In other words, according to Vygotsky (1978), any psychological function appears on two planes: first on the ***social plane*** (i.e. during social interaction), and then on the ***psychological plane*** of the individual. Thus, learning starts in a social context as

a social event which the individual ***appropriates*** through ***cultural tools*** into his/her psychological structure, not the other way around.

Highlighting the social, collaborative nature of learning, the theory posits that the individual is ***inseparable*** from his/her social context, and consequently, cognitive development is viewed as a socio-cultural activity where cognition is seen as a social product achieved through ***interaction***. Thus, the individual constructivist development of the learner is still in focus, but such development would not be possible without the social interactions promoting learning in a meaningful context. This ***socio-cultural*** focus recognises the importance of learning as a ***social experience***, even when the individual learner is physically alone on his/her computer chatting with others online. Thus, the social processes are vital for learning to occur.

In language learning terms, these social processes facilitate the production of discourses, artefacts, and resources useful in language learning (Singh & Richards, 2006). The concept of ***Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)***, or, in instructional terms, ***scaffolding*** as a prominent practice in language teaching (Erben et al, 2009), is a key concept here. Vygotsky (1978: p86) defines ZPD as "the distance between the ***actual*** developmental level as determined by individual problem solving and the level of ***potential*** development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers". In educational terms, ZPD is the ***interactional space*** within which a learner is enabled to perform a task beyond his/her current level of competence through assisted performance or scaffolding, and hence the internalisation of the social interactive processes happens (Ohta, 2000; Wertsch, 1991).

Unfortunately, the cognitive/psycholinguistic perspectives dominating language learning and reading/writing instruction disregarded the socio-cultural and contextual factors that influence language learning and literacy practices. In particular, the **autonomous model** of literacy suggests that literacy is a set of unified, universal, neutral, and value-free skills and cognitive practices the acquisition of which is virtually devoid of any contextual features or social connections (Au, 2006: p38; Knobel, 1999; Street, 1995). This has restricted language educators' views on the language learning process driving them to assume that any language can be taught anywhere in the same way under any circumstances. As a reaction, sociological approaches to language and literacy were developed by New Literacy Studies (NLS). NLS starts out from what people do in their lives to understand and examine their social practices through the study of particular events (Barton, 2009). This represents a new tradition in considering the nature of literacy perceiving it as a social practice (Street, 2009) (see also Chapter 1).

2.3 Reflections and Ideas for Workshops

■ Discuss with your instructor the main **differences** between those terms: epistemology, approach, methodology, method, and technique.

■ With your instructor review the English language teaching methods discussed above (e.g., the Grammar-Translation, Direct, TPR, Audio-Lingual, CLT, Socio-cultural, MI, and CALL methods) to conclude the **core principles** of each method and the main **differences** between them.

■   At home, review all the methods discussed above to choose *one* that you *prefer* and consider effective. Write a *critical appreciation/analysis* on it (e.g., main idea, core principles, dominant teaching activities used, advantages, and disadvantages), stating *why* you prefer this method and for *what teaching purposes* you can use it in your classroom.

CHAPTER THREE: LESSON PLANNING

3.1 Introduction

Experience shows that the teacher is at his/her best when s/he considers carefully what s/he is going to teach before s/he is actually in front of his/her students. Lesson planning enables the teacher to realise how much the pupils have learned and how much is still ahead to be learned. More specifically, planning lessons is an ***important*** and ***useful*** teaching practice because:

- It makes the teacher feel confident and organised. In other words, s/he will not lose face in front of his/her learners;
- It keeps the teacher on track;
- It makes the teacher ready to cope with whatever happens;
- It gives teaching a structure or framework and an overall shape;
- It helps the teacher to identify the main objectives of the lesson;
- It acts as a reminder for the teacher once s/he is stuck or distracted;
- It enables the teacher to identify the new language items and aspects s/he is going to teach;
- It helps the teacher to organise his/her teaching and deal with the different exercises that the lesson involves effectively;
- It allows the teacher to pace himself/herself properly during the real lesson so that s/he can end the lesson properly in due course;
- It helps the teacher to reflect upon the lesson at hand and devise his/her own techniques/procedures for dealing with the different sections of the lesson;
- It helps the teacher to identify any difficulties that s/he might encounter during the lesson and prepare for them well in advance;

- In the long run, it helps the teacher to improve his teaching by identifying both the weak and strong points, and suggesting ways of improvement.

According to our Egyptian system, all teachers are required to jot down in advance the main components of the lesson they are going to teach, regardless of the actual teaching that will be carried out inside the classroom. Though it is important and necessary for any teacher to write down something in his/her teacher's notes, the written preparation or plan should not be everything. Many Egyptian teachers have the habit of copying the same lesson plans from previous notes if the course is the same every year. Though this might be a time-saving technique, yet it creates stereotyped lessons that do not allow for the creativity and flexibility needed for language teaching/learning situations.

A teacher needs to understand what s/he has written and why s/he has written it. As a preliminary step, s/he should go through the lesson at hand many times in the Student's Book. This is important to get familiarised with the lesson s/he is going to teach. A second important step is to try to guess, based on this preliminary reading, the learning objectives of the lesson without going through the Teacher's Guide. Also, s/he can guess the new language items (i.e. new vocabulary and new grammatical points) s/he is going to teach. This way, s/he can come to grips with the whole lesson before going through the Teacher's Guide.

I remember that when I was a teacher of English for the first time in my life in 1998, I encountered a problem that made me aware of the importance of reviewing the Student's Book: the Preparatory-Two English course was new at that time and the Ministry of Education issued the Student's Book, but delayed

issuing the Teacher's Guide for unknown reasons. Consequently, as a teacher, I had to adjust myself to this strange situation and prepare my lessons based on the Student's Book only in the absence of the official Teacher's Guide. During that time, I found myself obliged to do many things that I had never done before. In particular, I had to

- Phrase learning objectives for the lesson based on the content in the Student's Book;

- Devise my own steps and procedures for dealing with the different exercises of the lesson;

- Create boundaries between lessons since the Student's Book was divided into units and exercises, not lessons; it was not clear where Lesson One, for example, ended and where Lesson Two started. Thus, if a teacher wanted to know which exercises constituted which lessons, s/he had to resort to the Teacher's Guide (otherwise, how else could s/he know?);

- Work out all the answers to all the questions and exercises, especially those dealt with in the Student's Work Book, since all model answers were included only in the Teacher's Guide;

- Read more in the Teacher's Guide of the Preparatory-One course (which was available at that time) to identify how the author (who was the same for both courses) dealt with different types of exercises (e.g., grammar exercises, silent reading, and listening activities) to identify patterns and generate some ideas that might help me with dealing with similar exercises in the Preparatory-Two course;

- Read in the field of TESOL/TEFL Methodology in general to activate my knowledge and come out with some practical guidelines;

- Ask and consult other senior teachers in the school who were experiencing the same situation with the same course; those teachers provided me with insightful ideas and solutions;

- Write my own scripts for all the listening exercises I was dealing with, and this was the most difficult part of the job! It was so difficult because the Teacher's Guide was the only place where one could find these scripts. Therefore, I had to either ignore these exercises; postpone them till I get hold of the Teacher's Guide; or devise totally new scripts based on the Student's Book only, and which should have been consistent with the original scripts stipulated by the author (and which were not available). This part, in particular, involved much creativity as I chose the most difficult solution: to devise my own scripts based on the cues provided in the Student's Book.

Though this experience was hard a little bit, it was extremely useful; as a novice language teacher, I learned a lot since the situation obliged me to use my own techniques and strategies to sort out the problem. Besides, I realised the importance of reviewing the Student's Book before going through the Teacher's Guide (which was not available then).

A new teacher should realise the fact that there are ***various types*** of lessons that need various types of planning. Thus, planning a reading lesson is different from planning a writing lesson, a grammar lesson, a story (novel) lesson, a practice lesson, or a revision lesson. Though the current trend (especially as far as the communicative approach is concerned) is to integrate the different language skills in the same lesson without creating clear-cut boundaries between them, I still believe that there are many types of lesson plans that a new teacher needs

to understand and practise. At least, each exercise within the same lesson might need different preparation.

3.2 Main Components of a Lesson Plan

Generally, there are *four* main questions which a teacher should ask himself/herself before entering the classroom:

- What should I teach?   (Content)
- Why should I teach it?   (Objectives)
- How should I teach it?   (Methods/steps/procedures)
- When should I teach it?   (Timing)

In Egypt, things are easier for English teachers than in other places since everything is detailed in the Teacher's Guide (see, for example, Dallas & Gomm, 1998); teachers thus are not required to creatively write their plans from scratch. However, it is the teacher's responsibility to skilfully adapt and adjust the contents in the Teacher's Guide to suite his/her particular context, objectives, needs as well as his/her students' language proficiency levels. In other words, the Teacher's Guide issued by the Ministry of Education should not be regarded as a Holly book that must be followed to the letter. When I was an English teacher myself I used to adjust the warm-up activities in the Teacher's Guide, for instance, to my students' needs. For example, I used to cancel warm-up games that were not suitable for my students, and practise with them instead some spelling exercises, especially because a lot of them were experiencing problems with writing many English words.

This leads to another issue associated with lesson planning: the issue of *flexibility*. The teacher should be flexible in his/her plans. Sometimes unavoidable factors, such as time constraints and students' poor performance, interfere with the teaching/learning process. In these circumstances, the teacher should adopt a flexible attitude towards the lesson plan, and hence make some appropriate adjustments. Based on my experience as a teacher of English, I had sometimes to do some adjustments or modifications in the real teaching situation, especially when I was short of time. Thereupon, I suggest some adjustments as follows:

- Skipping some sections/parts/exercises that students can go through and/or answer on their own at home (e.g., as a home assignment);
- Briefly giving models for the new activity without going through all the examples in the textbook or the workbook;
- Shifting to the more difficult and/or the most important parts of the lesson if/when s/he feels that certain parts are too easy for students to tackle in details;
- Allotting less time to the easy tasks which consumes much time;
- Re-arranging the lesson plan/schedule, if necessary;
- Guiding students into useful resources (e.g., websites, videos, and books) that might help them to independently study certain parts.

What should the teacher include in his/her teaching notes?

The table below shows the normal *format* of lesson plans as it appears in the teacher's notes. Usually, there are 4 columns: (1) the date (i.e. the date in which the target lesson is to be taught to students/class); (2) the period (i.e. the time when the lesson is taught according to the school daily schedule/timetable); (3) the class (i.e. a division of students enrolled in the same year, such as

'preparatory one', and who are located in a separate classroom); (4) the subject matter (i.e. includes all the teacher preparation notes associated with the lesson).

Please keep in mind that the same lesson can be taught in many periods to different classes on the same day. So, the good news is that the teacher does not need to repeat or rewrite the same plan for every time s/he enters the classroom.

The first thing that a teacher should write in the subject matter section is the *title*; this might include: the name of the course (e.g., Hello! Three, Hand in Hand Four, etc.); the number and title of the unit (e.g., Unit One: Going to the Beach!) and the page numbers; and the exercise(s) to be dealt with (whether in the Student's Book or the Workbook or both) (see also Dallas & Gomm, 1998)

Table 3: A sample format of a lesson plan

Date	Class	Period	Subject Matter
11-11-2011	1/2 1/1 1/4	1st 2nd 4th	**Hello! One** (i.e. the name of the course) **Unit One**: Boys and girls at their new schools **Lesson One** (SB: Ex. 1 and 2, P.1 & WB: Ex. 1, P.1) ***Objectives*** By the end of the lesson, Ss should (will/are expected to) be able to: 1-ask and answer questions about themselves using 'wh' questions; 2-use the past simple to talk about past events while conversing with other classmates; 3-introduce themselves to others using the first-person (i.e. the pronoun "I"). ***Teaching Aids*** TB (Teacher's Book), SB (Student's Book), WB (Work Book), BB (the Blackboard), pictures, wall charts, and an online video. ***New Language Items*** 1-*New Vocabulary (Key Vocabulary):* learn, maths, preparatory school, remember, and pass. 2-*New Grammar (Key Structure)*: Past simple tense e.g. – He <u>went</u> to school <u>this morning</u>. - We <u>learned</u> many useful things <u>last year</u>. - Soha <u>brought</u> new books from her new school.

Date	Class	Period	Subject Matter
			Procedures *Warm-up* (duration: 10 minutes) • I'll revise with students some words they studied last year such as: school, primary, friend. • I'll ask some students to use these words in meaningful sentences based on their real-life experiences. • If possible, I'll let them watch a short video on YouTube in which some native speakers introduce themselves to others. **SB: Ex. 1, P. 1** • I'll ask students some Qs about the main picture in the book (e.g., 'What can you see in this picture?' 'How many people are there?' 'What are they wearing?' 'Where do you think they are going?'). • Based on students' answers, I'll help them to form many other 'wh' questions about the picture. • I'll write on the board the questions that students produce, focussing on the 'wh' words. **SB: Ex. 2: P. 1** • I'll help students to talk about past events by asking them personal questions about the things they did yesterday. • I'll go through the exercise introducing the new vocabulary in context. • I'll help students to elicit the form of the 'past simple tense' from the given examples. • I'll help them to understand the meaning of it throughout the examples in the book. **WB: Ex. 1: P. 1** • I'll ask students to work in pairs to use the correct past form of the verb to fill in the missing parts in each sentence.

Date	Class	Period	Subject Matter
			• I'll go around to check and provide any assistance or support that students might need. • Then, I'll ask individual students to speak up and read their answers. • I might ask some students to come out and write these answers on the board. **-Home Assignment** Answer the following questions: • What did you do yesterday? • What did you study last year?

In what follows, I will explain each component in detail:

3.2.1 Objectives

"If a man does not know to what port he is sailing, no wind is favourable." –Seneca the Younger

Before dealing with **objectives**, it sounds appropriate to delineate two other relevant terms which many teachers use interchangeably: **goals** and **aims**. Common sense tells us that a goal is broader than an aim, and that an aim is, by turn, broader than an objective. Literature indicates that the relationship between goals, aims and objectives is a hierarchical one. Educationally, the three should be congruent and consistent with each other. The language teacher is more concerned with writing down specific objectives for the lessons s/he is going to teach. But, s/he should also be aware of the main educational goals and aims as far as the course s/he is teaching is concerned.

According to Oxford (2009: p166), **goals** are the engine that fires language learning action and provides the direction for the action. They are the long-term purposes which policy makers at the top of the educational hierarchy envisage for the educational process and which need to be translated into shorter-term aims and objectives so that they can be of direct relevance to the classroom (see also Yelon, 1991). For example, the main goal of teaching English as a foreign language in the Egyptian context to all stages of mainstream education (e.g., public schools) might be to enable students/learners to: speak the language fluently; use the language accurately for different purposes; and/or communicate in English with native speakers. Such a goal sounds like a wish that the system aspires to make true by means of the stipulated language courses. Besides, goals are centred on general ideas and philosophies, and therefore, they are phrased in a broad way that needs to be fragmented.

Aims are less general and more concrete than goals. They can be stated at the course level. Thus, the following aim can be obtained: By the end of the course, preparatory-one students should be able to consolidate the main vocabulary and structures necessary for meaningful communication. Or, by the end of the course, secondary-one students should be able to develop an oral argument using some advanced scientific terms. These are the types of aims that, as I imagine, an Egyptian English language teaching course works towards. Therefore, it is important for teachers of English, especially novice ones or even experienced ones when the course is new, to review and comprehend well the introductory part of the course included in the teacher's guide before actual teaching. Have you reviewed it yet?

Objectives, instructional objectives, or **learning objectives**, however, are the most direct and concrete of all. They focus more on the very specific learning outcomes that should be achieved by the end of a lesson or a whole unit (Gagne, et al, 1988; Yelon, 1991). Therefore, they should be as much explicit as possible. While phrasing their objectives, teachers should care for writing down accurate and precise descriptions that indicate clearly the exact outcomes they would like to reach. Sometimes, instructional objectives, especially behavioural ones, are described as **SMART** (i.e. Specific, Measureable, Attainable/Achievable, Realistic, and Time-based) (Gagne, et al, 1988).

Here I propose some general characteristics of instructional objectives that include being:

- Learner-centred vs. teacher-centred;
- Concrete vs. abstract/general;
- Written vs. oral;

- Short-termed vs. long-termed;
- Learning-oriented vs. teacher-oriented;
- Clear vs. ambiguous;
- Contextual vs. conceptual;
- Contextualised vs. de-contextualised;
- Realistic vs. idealised.

Going through the teacher's guide to identify the lesson objectives is of course an indispensable thing to do. However, I highly emphasise the importance of **revising/restating/rephrasing the objectives in the Teacher's Guide**, when/if necessary. There are some reasons, in my reckoning, why a teacher should do that sometimes:

- Making the stated objectives clearer and less obscure;
- Writing them in the format that his/her advisor/supervisor/inspector/guide/head teacher prefers;
- Turning them into behavioural, measurable objectives (e.g., by changing an abstract verb into an action one), if necessary;
- Elaborating more on them by adding some necessary details that make them more comprehensive (e.g., adding reference, performance, product, standard or criteria, etc.) (Nazir, 1998; Yelon, 1991);
- Adjusting them to the context, classroom situation, and students' levels;
- Splitting a long objective (that might include two action verbs) into two short ones.

___

3.2.2 Teaching Aids

A teacher should write down the main teaching aids s/he is going to use.

There are three main teaching aids which are frequently used in every lesson: TB – WB – BB (WB), and sometimes cassette tapes.

There are many other teaching aids such as: wall charts, real objects, drawings, over-head projector, computers/Internet, handouts, tapes, and pictures. The choice of which aids to use depends on many factors such as:

- Whether the aids are available or not;
- Whether they need much preparation or not;
- Whether they are expensive or cheap;
- Whether they are available in the classroom (e.g., real objects like pens, wall charts, and drawings) or outside;
- Whether they can be easily made by the teacher during the lesson or not;
- Whether they can be easily brought to the classroom or not; and above all
- Whether they are necessary or not.

Generally, the teacher is encouraged to use any aids that would clarify the teaching points and facilitate language learning for students. They always say that the teacher himself/herself is the best visual aid; s/he can use his/her face, body movements, gestures, miming, and voice to clarify things and help his/her students to understand. Some teachers are really clever at employing these natural gifts to reinforce their verbal performance.

It should be noted that an essential function of any visual aid is to support the teacher's words and help with conveying the main message. In this regard, a picture, for example, can help so much with clarifying a difficult point. There is a Chinese proverb that says: "A picture can paint a thousand words!"

Besides, a teacher can use simple drawings that do not take much time and effort, and which will eventually do the job. You might know very simple ways of drawing a man, a woman, a bike, a car, a bird, and a donkey, for example, without being a talented artist. These simple drawings can delineate the main features of the object without involving any complicated artistic features.

3.2.3 Warm-up

a) What is it?

Warm-up means preparing students for the new lesson. It usually takes around 5 minutes at the beginning of each lesson. The teacher should include in his teaching notes the short activity s/he is going to use as warm-up. I think that the teacher is free to decide whether to stick to the warm-up activity stated in the teacher guide, or to use another activity that might be more appropriate to his/her specific context and students' levels.

b) Why is it important?

Warm-up is important in the sense that it marks a transitional stage between the previous lesson and the new one. In this sense, it should prepare students, both psychologically and academically, for the new lesson. Some teachers might skip this important stage and go directly to the new lesson. Of course this practice is wrong and has nothing to do with flexibility; being flexible never means skipping an essential component of the lesson like this.

c) What should it include?

The content here depends greatly on the stage or the school in which a teacher teaches in Egypt (i.e., primary, preparatory, and secondary). Normally, secondary-stage students need more advanced warm-up activities than those

needed by the preparatory-stage students, for example. But generally, warm-up can include anything light and useful for learners such as:

- Playing a short game;
- Launching a communicative activity;
- Posing an interesting question that connects a previous lesson with the present one;
- Revising briefly the main ideas in the previous lesson;
- Revising a grammatical point (e.g., present continuous tense) that has something to do with a new grammatical point tackled in the present lesson (e.g., present perfect continuous);
- Revising some previously learned words which are closely relevant to the lesson at hand;
- Writing a group of letters on the board and asking students to form some English words out of them;
- Writing a group of words on the Board and asking students to form meaningful English sentences from these words;
- Giving some students a scenario to act in English in front of the whole class;
- Using the computer or the Web (if/when possible) to watch a YouTube video that has something to do with the lesson at hand (e.g., a video that summarises a reading passage in the new lesson; a short video that introduces a new topic addressed by the new unit/lesson such as: Sharks, Volcanoes, Earthquake, Animals in the Sea, Lost in London, Travelling in Time, the Internet, etc.).
- Using the Web to locate an official English teaching/learning website such as: *http://www.bbc.co.uk/arabic/learningenglish* to introduce a new language-learning tip or a new idiomatic expression.

d) When does it come?

Definitely, it should come at the beginning of the lesson immediately after usual regularities such as saying 'Hello' to students and checking attendance. The teacher should try his/her best not to waste anytime at the beginning, and thus cancel the warm-up stage to sort things out for himself/herself. Again, there is no point in going directly through the lesson at hand without the warm-up stage.

3.2.4 Procedures for teaching each exercise

The official teacher's guide accompanying any English syllabus in Egypt usually provides details of the procedures that teachers should follow for teaching each lesson. If the lesson is divided into exercises, then each exercise has certain procedures to follow depending on many factors such as:

- ❖ The language skill or linguistic aspect in focus;
- ❖ The order the exercise takes in the lesson;
- ❖ The amount of the new language items introduced;
- ❖ The goals/objectives behind the exercise;
- ❖ The category which the exercise belongs to (e.g., a silent reading exercise, a speaking exercise, a grammar exercise, a practice exercise, and so on).

Usually, most exercises take the following format of procedures:

1-***Presentation*** (in which the teacher presents key language items and explains all instructions and difficulties);

2-***Drilling*** (in which the teacher does his/her best to enable students to internalise a new language item, using different types of drills such as: repetition drills, substitution drills, transformational drills, and chain drills);

3-***Practice*** (in which the teacher helps learners to practise any new language items or aspects through various activities and procedures). There are three main types of practice:

    a) Controlled practice

    b) Guided practice

    c) Freer practice

An important point here is ***transition*** which can occur many times during the lesson (e.g., transition from warm-up to an exercise and transition from an exercise to the next). Smooth transition is one of the pillars that ensure success of the lesson plan during implementation in the classroom.

You are strongly advised to refer back to your teacher's guide (which you use in your teaching practice sessions) for more examples and illustrations. Please try to read the ***introduction*** very well as it gives a detailed explanation of these issues supported by many examples and clarifications.

3.2.5 Evaluation techniques (oral – written)

1-Why is evaluation used?

Evaluation is the way through which the teacher can identify his/her students' learning, and the extent to which the lesson objectives have been realised. Sometimes evaluation is used interchangeably with assessment despite the differences between them. However, I will not elaborate on these differences here as my main focus is on the techniques that a teacher can use to evaluate or assess his students.

Evaluation or assessment is used for many reasons:

- To check whether the lesson objectives have been realised;
- To identify learners' academic levels;
- To check whether learners have really acquired a certain linguistic input;
- To enable the teacher to evaluate his/her performance;
- To identify learners' weaknesses and adjust future teaching accordingly;
- To take notes of common language-learning difficulties so as to address them in sub-sequent lesson plans;
- To provide a space for more language practice;
- To re-teach some aspects (e.g., vocabulary, grammatical points, and language functions);
- To create a background/database based on which the teacher can design future language tests;
- To give constructive feedback that might improve learners' performance.

2-When should it be used?

Evaluation can be used at any stage during the lesson. However, it is normally used at the end of each exercise or the whole lesson. It is worth mentioning that the teacher nowadays has no problem with evaluation since most exercises in the students' workbooks assess the items introduced in their textbooks. However, the teacher is sometimes required to evaluate his/her students orally. Such an oral evaluation usually takes little time and helps so much with handling the lesson.

In brief, evaluation can be used when:

- The teacher wants to confirm that his/her students have mastered certain aspects or areas before moving to the following stage;

- The teacher feels that his/her students have learned a great deal, and therefore, s/he has to pause a little bit to ensure that they have understood all previous contents;
- Students are about to learn something new, which is closely relevant to a previously-learned point;
- The teacher wants to design a test in the near future.

3- Which techniques should a teacher use?

The teacher can choose from a wide range of evaluation techniques, both oral and written. Here are some of these techniques:

- Asking 'wh-' questions;
- Asking 'yes/no' questions;
- Giving commands and/or directions;
- Asking students to supply the missing parts in a sentence;
- Asking students to read aloud a section;
- Asking students to dramatise a situation and/or play certain roles;
- Giving students some stimuli (e.g., drawings, objects, and signs) and requiring them to perform according to the given stimuli;
- Asking students to write notes or give oral reports;
- Asking students to write in his/her personal diary;

3.2.6 Ending the lesson

There are many things that can be said about ending the lesson. In this regard, the teacher should:

- end the lesson on time and with a positive tone;
- summarise, when necessary, the main learning points dealt with in the lesson;

- revise quickly the main language items and linguistic aspects covered in the lesson;
- give a hint about the next lesson and if students need to prepare in advance something for it;
- ask students if they have any questions; and
- give assignment or homework.

3.2.7 Home Assignment (Homework)

Giving students homework (or home assignment) to do is a standard teaching practice. But because life is getting so complicated and students' obligations are increasing, I think that it is not a good idea to exhaust your learners with much homework to do, especially during the weekends. However, it will be a good idea if you help students to answer few model questions of an exercise in the classroom, and then ask them to do the rest independently as homework. I used to do this myself to save much effort and time, especially during the late periods of the school day which sometimes went below 35 minutes!

I think that under any circumstances, the homework given to students should be:
   a) Simple, short, and not exhausting;
   b) Closely related to the main points tackled;
   c) Interesting;
   d) Enjoyable;
   e) Relevant to language practice;
   f) Creative, but not very challenging; and
   g) Beneficial to students

3.3 Reflections and Ideas for Workshops

■ Discuss with your instructor based on the above discussion the most appropriate ***format*** that you should use for planning your lessons.

■ Drawing on this format along with the official Teacher's Guide you currently use in your teaching practice, select from the textbook a lesson and plan for it. Then, demonstrate in the workshops how you have planned your lesson and the main components of your plan giving as many examples and illustrations as you can. You can demonstrate this as if you are telling a story. Please remember that in these workshops you are ***not*** required to demonstrate ***how*** you should ***teach*** your lesson; instead, you are required to demonstrate ***how*** you ***have planned*** your teaching, and thus communicating your experience to your colleagues (with no micro-teaching). You can talk like this:

> *"Well, before deciding on a certain plan to follow, I reviewed the lesson in the textbook many times without looking at the Teacher's Guide. From the textbook, I could come out with the main objectives of the lesson. To double-check, I looked at the suggested plan in the Teacher's Guide and then I adjusted my objectives accordingly. I thought it would be better, for example, to re-phrase my objectives in my own way to make them clearer. Besides, I did not like the way one of the objective was written in the guide. I preferred to have two objectives instead of one rather than having one objective that includes TWO action verbs...etc."*

CHAPTER FOUR: TEACHING NEW VOCABULARY

4.1 Introduction

Throughout the history of language teaching/learning, teaching vocabulary was sometimes neglected by both methodologists and language teachers. It was assumed that vocabulary was less important compared with an area such as grammar, and therefore, it should be dealt with quickly and implicitly without giving it a special focus (Nunan, 1991; Rivers, 1981). Thus, priority was given to grammar, especially within the audio-lingual method. However, with the development of the communicative approach to language teaching, the status of vocabulary enhanced considerably. Many methodologists argued that in the early stages of learning and using a second/foreign language, one is better served by vocabulary than grammar, and that one can 'bypass' grammar in going for meaning if one has a reasonable vocabulary base (Nunan, 1991: p117).

Moreover, Rivers (1983: p125) argue that the acquisition of an adequate vocabulary is essential for successful second/foreign language use, and that vocabulary expansion becomes easier as one matures; the more one's vocabulary develops, the easier it is to add new words. Usually, the first few words in a new language are quite hard to acquire, but as the learner accumulates more words and get familiar with the target language, vocabulary acquisition becomes much easier than before.

There are many arguments as to the best way to *grade* or order vocabulary in a language syllabus. Some scholars suggest that vocabulary should be graded in terms of *frequency* (i.e. the most frequent words should precede the less frequent ones). Proponents of general purpose English, for example, argue that

learners should be taught a 'common core' of high frequency items rather than items specific to a particular domain (Nunan, 1991). Others suggest that vocabulary should be graded in terms of ***difficulty*** (i.e. easy words should precede difficult ones). Some others divide vocabulary into ***active*** words and ***passive*** words suggesting that active words should be introduced first. Active words refer to those words that language learners need to ***understand***, learn, and master very well so as to ***use*** the target language properly, while passive words refer to those that learners need to only understand, with no obligation to use them. It should be noted that the same passive vocabulary can become active at a later stage of learning (see also: *http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/knowledge-wiki/passive-vocabulary*).

The nature of the English language as a language that has been subject to many influences from other languages makes the issue of teaching new vocabulary of a special concern. Although linguists have tried to facilitate the learning of English vocabulary by creating some rules and generalisations, the irregularities in spelling have made learning English words a problematic issue. Compared with Arabic, for example, English sounds much more irregular and complicated in terms of spelling, and therefore, Arab learners who study English as a foreign language usually struggle with learning new vocabulary.

4.2 Why is Teaching New Vocabulary so Important within the Egyptian Context?

Teaching new vocabulary is an important issue as far as teaching English as a foreign language is concerned, especially within the Egyptian context. This importance, in my opinion, can be attributed to the nature of the English

language itself and how the words are spelled. Unlike Arabic and many other Western languages, writing/spelling in English is a problematic issue. Tracing the history of the English language, it can be noted that English was the subject of many foreign influences (e.g., the Norman invasion, and subsequently the French language and the Latin language). These influences created discrepancies in English spelling and writing, which led sometimes to mismatch between the pronunciation of a word on the one hand, and the orthographical representation (i.e. the written shape of it as it appears on paper) on the other.

These irregularities in spelling made it difficult to devise comprehensive rough rules that can help foreign learners to predict how any new word should be written, without seeing it before. For example, suppose that a learner is required to write a word like 'right' without seeing it before…Just based on dictation. How on earth will s/he be able to write it? Will s/he (as an Arab learner) write it as: 'right', 'rite', 'write', 'rait', or 'rayet'? Similarly, if s/he has not seen the word 'photograph' before, will s/he write it as: 'photograph', 'fotograf', or 'photograf'? The same applies to a word like: 'feast' which, when only heard, holds many possible written forms (many of which are not English at all!) such as: 'feest', 'fiest', 'feist', 'fist', 'pheast'; also 'see', which can be otherwise written as: 'sea', 'cea', 'cee', 'si', 'sie'; 'tyre', which can also be written as 'tire' and 'tyer'. A famous example of a complicated word is 'psychology' which, if not seen before, can be written as: 'sychology', 'saikologi', 'psaicology', 'sikologie', 'saickology', etc. Another similar standard example of this irregularity is the word 'psalm' (pronounced: /sa:m/), and which can be written as: 'sam', 'salm', or 'psam'…and so on and so forth!

The point I am making is that it is extremely hard for Arab learners in general and Egyptian ones in particular, to learn new English words without practising them. This calls for adequate ways that teachers should use to present new English words. Moreover, there is a need to explain to learners the spelling difficulties in these words by, for example, comparing these new words with previously learned ones. This way, learners can internally create linguistic patterns and/or conceptual frameworks that might help them to envisage certain rules. Gradually, they might be able to easily grasp some regularities and irregularities. Though there are some spelling rules in English, a great number of exceptions exist as well. For example, I learned in the past that when the letter 'g' is followed by any of the letters 'e', 'i', and 'y', it is pronounced /j/; otherwise, it is pronounced /g/. But what about words like 'give', 'gear', 'begin', 'anger', 'monger', and 'eager'? Why the 'g' in them is pronounced /g/, and not /j/?

4.3 Golden Rules for Teaching New Vocabulary

To all EFL student teachers: as teachers, you should keep in mind the following important points which you should keep in mind as golden rules for the successful teaching of vocabulary:

- *Never teach lists of de-contextualised vocabulary items.* The focus in class should be on encouraging learners to develop strategies of inferring the meaning of new words from the context in which they occur (Nunan, 1991: p121). After all, learners will forget these isolated lists.

- *Before the English class, check the new words yourself.* You must be a good model for your students by mastering these new words yourself. Thus, you should, for example, consult your dictionary for pronunciation if you are in

doubt. In Egypt, many of us are still experiencing problems with pronouncing some English words like 'exhausted', 'vehicle', 'cupboard', and 'dawn', simply because our teachers in the early days did not pronounce them correctly. As a result, we have developed wrong pronunciation of these words for a considerably long time.

■ *Before teaching a new word, check whether your students know it.* If they already know it, much time and effort will be saved for you! Usually ask them a question like: "Does any of you know what this word means?"

■ *New words should be taught in context.* Creating lists of words to teach in advance of the activity/exercise at hand is not the practice I prefer. If you do this, you might need to revisit these words again when you read them in context!

■ *Never ever tell your students that the word at hand has this meaning only.* This way, you will confine their thinking, and consequently bad language learning habits might develop. Hence, language learners' minds should be, right from the beginning, open to a wide range of possibilities. Take, for example, words like 'spring', 'set', 'can', 'post', 'pound', 'stamp', and 'fire'. How many meanings do these words have in your reckoning? Consult your dictionary or check them online at: *http://dictionary.cambridge.org*

■ *Don't use ARABIC TRANSLATION when you have many other appropriate techniques for conveying meaning.* This does not mean that using Arabic is a crime! Sometimes using Arabic strengthens the meaning and helps with retention. I remember that some teachers in the past used to teach their

students how to use ***mnemonics*** in Arabic to help them to easily recall the meaning of certain English words (e.g., using the Arabic equivalent of the word 'elephant' which is pronounced 'feel' in a meaningful context to introduce the English verb, 'feel', and thus saying in Arabic: "If an elephant/FEEL presses my leg, I will FEEL with much pain!"). In his thesis that was conducted within the Egyptian context, Hassanein (2004) elaborated on the effectiveness of these mnemonic strategies on developing English vocabulary retention and retrieval. However, try other techniques that might help your students understand and learn the new word in English. This might be better if you want to create an English context in the classroom that allows for more language practice.

■ *Don't write any Arabic synonyms on the Board*. Try to use Arabic orally rather than in writing, unless you are dealing with translation exercises.

■ *You can use more than one technique at the same time for teaching a new word*. Teachers should be flexible and open in this regard. Sometimes you find yourself using *dramatisation* along with another technique like *drawing* to communicate the meaning of an action word like 'wait'.

■ *New words should be taught communicatively and contextually*. This brings back again the listing technique mentioned above. According to the communicative approach to language teaching, new words should be taught communicatively in context while the teacher is using them in simulated life situations, and then allowing students to practise these words. In this regard, you should create situations for your students in which they can use the new words purposefully and pragmatically. For

example, they should use the target language for accomplishing realistic communicative/functional goals like: expressing opinion, talking about likes/dislikes, suggesting something or responding to a suggestion made, presenting a new idea, etc. (see also Abdallah, 2010a).

■ *Help your students to develop effective ways for retaining new vocabulary such as creating semantic networks*. **A semantic network** consists of words which share certain semantic features or components (e.g., being mass media components, being members of the family, being tools used in the classroom, being Internet-related stuff, etc.). A famous activity related to semantic networks is 'Find/Spot the odd one out!' in which a group of similar words belonging to the same category are given and which includes ONE word that is different in a sense. Learners are asked to identify this word and indicate the reason why it is different.

4.4 Steps Used for Teaching New Vocabulary

There are different points of view regarding the order of those steps to be used by the teacher for teaching new vocabulary, but, whatever this order is, the process should involve the following essential steps:

1-**Modelling the word**: This involves providing a native-like model for your students in terms of: (1) pronunciation (i.e. saying the word); (2) spelling (i.e. writing the word on the Board explaining any spelling rules or difficulties associated with it); and (3) contextualisation (i.e. giving several examples to show how the word is used in real context).

2-***Using technique(s) for showing the meaning***: Usually this step is an essential one that every teacher uses when s/he presents a new word. Unfortunately, a lot of Egyptian teachers, owing to time constraints and the great number of the new language items that they have to present in the same lesson sometimes, skip the other steps. However, it is important, especially for EFL student teachers in their teaching practice sessions, to follow all these steps. There are many techniques that can be used to present the meaning of a new English word. 'Arabic translation' is mostly used by Egyptian English teachers despite the wide range of the other various techniques available to them (e.g., drawings, miming, facial expressions, gestures, dramatisation, giving synonyms/antonyms in English, and using several examples in context) (see also Nazir, 1998). However, many teachers resort to Arabic translation as if it was the only technique just to save time and effort, disregarding the other useful techniques which might help their students to develop schema or schemata in English. One of the important things that teachers should consider while teaching is to try their best to help their students to THINK in English.

3-***Checking students' understanding***: This is very important; otherwise, how else can a teacher know that students have already understood and internalised the target vocabulary? There are many techniques that a teacher can use to check his/her students' understanding such as: (1) asking them to say the meaning in Arabic; (2) asking them to use the target word in a meaningful sentence; and (3) asking them to perform some actions that denote understanding (see also Nazir, 1998).

4-***Practice***: Practising is important for learners to consolidate the new word. There are many techniques that teachers can use to enable their students to

practise the new words. These include: (a) using the same word in different sentences; (b) writing the word on the Board or in a notebook; (c) including the word in the personal Word Journal[2]; (d) checking the word online using free online dictionaries such as: *http://dictionary.cambridge.org*; (e) Googling the word using 'Google Images' to see the resulting images for the target word; and (f) using the new word to produce some meaningful utterances or to accomplish some communicative purposes through interacting with other class mates.

4.5 Techniques Used for Showing the Meaning of a New Word

■ There are so many techniques to be used (see below) all of which can be effective. However, a certain technique(s) might be appropriate with a certain word rather than another. For example, which is better to use for presenting the word 'smile': definition or facial expressions? Presumably, using 'facial expressions' is more suitable here as it is more direct, more time saving, and easier to use and understand than a 'definition'.

■ Arabic translation is not the only technique, and teachers should not resort to it once there are some other possible techniques to try. The principle that should guide the teacher in this regard is "fitness for purpose". In other words, the teacher's objective(s) and teaching situation should guide him/her while choosing the appropriate technique. If the main teaching method used is a communicative

---

[2] A Word Journal is a collection of learned words which learners can organise/classify under some main categories, such as: school, street, home, relatives, fruits, vegetables, games, people, etc. The idea was suggested in the 'Hello!' series for teaching English as a foreign language in Egypt ('Hello! 3' for preparatory-one students in 1996). This is closely relevant to the semantic network.

one, not a Grammar-Translation one for example, then more use of the target language (i.e. English), and less use of the native language (i.e. Arabic as the mother tongue) is encouraged. Thus, Arabic translation should be used in a very limited way so that an English context is created.

■ With certain words, a teacher can use other techniques which may be more effective than Arabic translation. Arabic translation is frequently used with abstract words.

■ These techniques are used in ONE step (i.e. showing the meaning of the new word). Hence, there is a big difference between the ***steps/procedures*** used for teaching new words on one hand, and the ***techniques/strategies*** used for presenting the meaning. The first includes the second, and thus, the second is done as one of the steps/procedures of the whole process of teaching new vocabulary.

Using different techniques to present new vocabulary

■ The teacher can present the meaning of the new words using a range of possible techniques. In this regard, there are many techniques to use.

■ The choice of one technique over another depends on some factors such as: (1) the nature of the word (i.e. being concrete vs. abstract or being noun vs. verb); (2) the teacher's abilities and presentation skills; and (3) students' academic levels.

What are these techniques? (See also Nazir, 1998)

■ ***Real objects (realia)***: This is the direct technique that any teacher, if appropriate and applicable, should think of as the first option. According to Edger Dale's Cone of Experience (see Dale, 1969), direct experience or doing/viewing the real thing is the most effective aid for remembering, learning, and comprehension.

■ ***Outside environment (surroundings)***: This is another level of real objects that involves pointing to visible surroundings existing outside the classroom or school (e.g., playground, headmaster's office, tree, street, flag, factory, farm, people, car, bus, bus stop, etc.)

■ ***Definitions***: These are the dictionary-like accounts that a teacher can give to explain what a word means. I think that all or most of the words used in a definition should be familiar to learners. Otherwise, the technique will not be fruitful. A teacher can copy a definition from an English-English dictionary or an encyclopaedia; or s/he can simply check it online using Google definitions, a technique that personally has been so useful for me enabling one to access all the definitions available online. All what s/he should do is to go to *www.google.com*, and then write in the search bar 'define', followed immediately by a colon, and then the target word/term (e.g., define:cloning). I have just done it and got many definitions, the first of which is: Cloning: a general term for the research activity that creates a copy of some biological entity (a gene or organism or cell).

■ ***Examples***: Examples, especially when concrete and realistic, help with clarifying the meaning of a new word. The more these examples are simple, short, direct, and relevant to learners' lives, the more influential they will be.

■ ***Context***: This technique is quite close to 'examples', since examples are intended to contextualise the target word to make it meaningful. Teaching new words in isolation is not effective as learners are likely to forget them. Putting the word in a proper, relevant context gives it more significance.

■ ***Synonyms/Antonyms***: A 'synonym' stands for the word/phrase which is equivalent in meaning, while an 'antonym' stands for the word/phrase which is opposite in meaning. What is particular about this technique is that it builds on the learner's knowledge base or his previously known vocabulary. Therefore, a web of connected words can be gradually formed and enhanced within the learner's mind. However, it is an essential requirement that a teacher should be 100% sure that his/her learners have already studied the words s/he is building on and/or referring to. Otherwise, the technique will do harm rather than good. Examples include: convenient = suitable; sibling = a person's brother or sister; white ≠ black; sad ≠ happy. But, a teacher should always ensure accuracy by presenting the appropriate synonym/antonym to the target word. As I noticed, the English language, unlike the Arabic language, does not entail clear-cut boundaries or what I can definitely call a 'sharp contrast' between words. For example, here in England, when I ask an English

person: 'How are you?', s/he always replies: 'Not so bad, Mahmoud!' This answer is not roughly equal to: 'I'm fine', 'I'm happy', or 'I'm doing very well!'. Similarly, 'not so hard' is NOT the same as 'easy'; 'cheerful' or 'pleased' is not EXACTLY the same as 'happy'; 'bring' is not the same thing as 'fetch'; and 'sad' is NOT roughly the same as 'unhappy' or 'disappointed'.

■ *Gestures and Miming*: They say that the teacher himself/herself is the best teaching aid! Therefore, s/he has to use gestures and miming to explain the meaning of a new word. This is a very good technique as it costs nothing, but a teacher should check understanding to make sure that his/her students understand his/her gestures and miming.

■ *Dramatization*: Many teachers are good actors by nature. Therefore, they have to exploit this natural gift in their teaching in general, and in showing the meaning in particular. A teacher can make use of other students while dramatising if this will be beneficial in someway or another.

■ *Actions*: Actions might be used to show the meaning of many words like action verbs (e.g., draw, run, jump, walk, move, etc.). If a teacher is too shy to do this, especially within the Egyptian socio-cultural context, for any reason (e.g., because of gender, disability, and classroom management), s/he can whisper to a student in Arabic to act this.

■ *Drawings***:** Drawing on the Board is a good technique that is commonly used. Simple drawings that show the main features of something are enough, and hence, the teacher does not have to be a gifted artist or painter to do this. Figure 2 below presents examples of some simple drawings that any teacher can do.
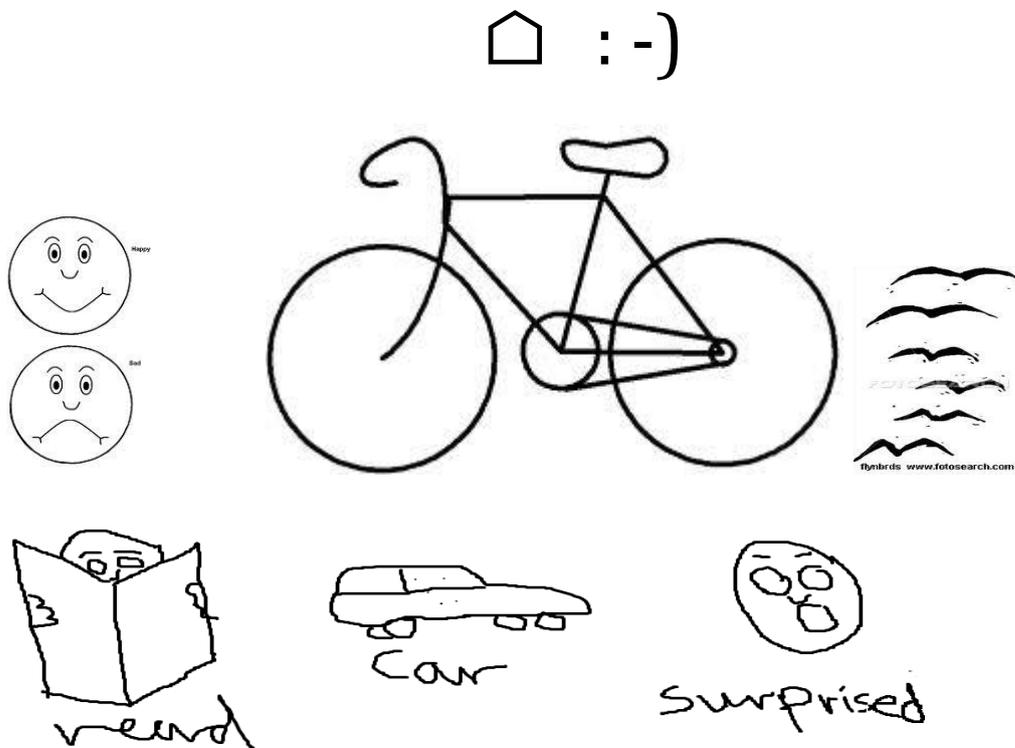
Figure 2: Examples of simple drawings

■ *Pictures:* Pictures would save time and effort for the teacher as they are already there. Nowadays, it is easy to locate any pictures online using the Google Image service

(*http://www.google.co.uk/imghp?hl=en&tab=wi*). If a computer and/or Internet connection are not available in the classroom, the teacher can use instead traditional paper-based pictures already there, for example, in books, magazines, wall charts, and newspaper. Sometimes pictures are more effective than drawing, especially when the teacher is not so good at drawing. Besides, they might show clearly some needed complicated and necessary details.

- *Arabic translation:* This is a technique that is mostly resorted to when previous techniques fail or become inappropriate. Usually, Arabic translation is used to explain the meaning of abstract and complicated English words such as: policy, honesty, pragmatism, stressful, and meaningful. Sometimes, the meaning of a word becomes clearer and more precise when conveyed in the native language, especially for beginners. At advanced levels and when learners have mastered a great number of words and developed a sense of the English language, using English to present the meaning of such words might be much more appropriate and useful.

4.6 Reflections and Ideas for Workshops

- Discuss with your instructor the above **steps** and **techniques** of teaching new vocabulary and **how** you can employ them in your teaching.

- Drawing on the steps used for teaching new vocabulary and the techniques of showing the meaning, please select some words from the textbook you are dealing with in your teaching practice sessions and

demonstrate in the workshops (as a micro-teaching activity) how you will teach them. Please prepare your teaching notes for this exercise in advance based on the steps and techniques discussed above making use of the official teacher's guide that you normally use in your teaching practice.

CHAPTER FIVE: TEACHING NEW GRAMMAR/STRUCTURE

5.1 Introduction

As far as teaching English as a foreign language in the Egyptian context is concerned, I have noticed that grammar is of great importance. Generally, grammatical rules are perceived by both teachers and learners there as the means through which one can identify the appropriate ways of using the target language. In reality, while native speakers do not need to learn and/or memorise any grammatical rules since they use the language naturally and unconsciously, foreign learners, on the other hand, need to master these rules. They need to understand how the target language is formed by learning specific rules or patterns that should guide them into the right ways of using it. Once they have mastered these patterns, as Chomsky suggests, they become able to produce accurate sentences in the target language (see also Rivers, 1981).

Noam Chomsky (1959, 1965, cited by Larsen-Freeman, 2009) was mainly concerned with **grammatical competence**: the knowledge of a *finite* system of *rules* that enables an ideal language user to generate and understand an infinite variety of sentences. In this sense, learning a pattern saves much time and effort as it helps language learners to generalise. Thus, drawing on a reasonable number of words that they have already learned, they become able to produce an infinite number of sentences based on this pattern.

Suppose for example that learners have mastered the following pattern or rule: *Subject + have/has + been + V-ing + for* (a period of time). They, as a result, become able to produce sentences such as:

I have been learning English for seven years.

They have been sorting letters for two hours.

He has been cycling for 30 minutes.

We have been waiting for two hours.

You have been reading the manual guide for an hour…etc.

Linguists, as Larsen-Freeman (2009) argue, make a distinction between two types of descriptive grammar: (1) **Formal grammars,** which take as their starting point the *form* or structure of language, with no or little attention given to meaning (semantics) or context and language use (pragmatics); (2) **functional grammars**, which conceive of language as largely *social interaction*, seeking to explain why one linguistic form is more appropriate than another in satisfying a particular communicative purpose in a particular context.

In this regard, Nunan (1991) states that contrary to the traditional teaching that focuses on ***form***, the communicative teaching of grammar focuses (in addition to form) on ***meaning*** and ***use*** by placing grammatical rules in context. In this sense, grammatical rules are taught in ways that relate to students' personal lives; thus, students are asked not only to ***repeat*** structures, but also to ***use*** these structures in ***meaningful*** sentences. The teacher's role thus should be to pave the way for communicative situations in which many students become involved. These situations should encourage students to use the target structure functionally and purposefully. This way, the target structure is taken away further from the abstract level to the functional, realistic one.

5.2 How to Teach New Grammar

Reviewing literature in the TESOL/TEFL field (e.g., Nunan, 1991; Richards, et al, 1985; Rovers, 1981), I could come out with some important facts about teaching grammar, which I can summarise in the following points:

- Teaching English grammar depends considerably on one's own approach to the English language itself. Thus, a *structural* approach to language informs the use of certain methods, procedures, and/or techniques, which are totally different from those that a *functional* approach informs. However, if a *flexible* approach with a balanced focus that combines between both form and function is adopted, then mixed methods, procedures, and/or techniques are likely to be used in teaching grammar.

- Teaching grammar should be a *contextualised* process, not an isolated one detached from context. Structural patterns or grammar rules cannot be taught as separate units that have nothing to do with how the target language is realistically used in its original context. After all, creating and establishing the appropriate context facilitates comprehension.

- Traditional approaches of teaching grammar insist that there should be a *logical order or sequence* that teaching the English grammar should take. Thus, structures or rules should be gradually ordered in terms of difficulty. This sequence should consider the natural stages that learners go through, regardless of whether they are learning in a second or foreign language context. For example, as Nunan (1991) notes, all learners appear to go through the following four stages in the acquisition of negation:
    - Stage 1: 'no + verb' →   No work/No understand.

- Stage 2: 'don't + verb' →   I don't like/He don't can swim.
- Stage 3: 'auxiliary + negative' →   She can't go/He don't stay.
- Stage 4: analysed don't →   He didn't stay.

- In addition, according to this structural approach, learners while learning English go through many stages, each of which builds on the one preceding it. Thus, learners first learn **isolated** words and phrases, and then proceed into the **standard** word order of subject + verb + object (e.g., 'I go home'). Then, they add an element to the *core* structure (e.g., '**Yesterday**, I go home'). After this comes a sequence of stages in which the learner develops the ability to *rearrange* internally words from the core structure (e.g., 'Can you swim?'). At the next stage, learners become able to carry out *more complex rearrangements*, producing structures such as 'where are you going tonight?'.

- Usually teaching new grammar or structure is conducted through two methods: the **deductive** method, which is also referred to as the **explicit** method, and the **inductive** method, which is also known as the **implicit** method. Sometimes authors create a clear-cut dichotomy between **direct** and **indirect** teaching of grammar, which, as I think, refer to the same thing. While the **deductive** method is associated with classical language teaching approaches that focus on form and memorisation of grammatical rules as a standard practice, the **inductive** method is associated with modern approaches such as communicative language teaching and socio-constructivist language learning, which highlight the meaning, use, and context. In other words, and according to Richards, et al (1985: p93), **deductive** learning is "an approach to language teaching in which learners

are taught rules and given specific information about a language. They then apply these rules when they use the language. Language teaching methods which emphasise the study of the grammatical rules of a language (for example, the Grammar-Translation Method) make use of the principles of deductive learning". On the other hand, ***inductive*** learning (or learning by induction as is sometimes called) does not involve a direct teaching of grammatical rules; instead, learners are left to discover or ***induce*** rules from their experience of using the target language. Thus, according to the inductive approach, grammatical rules are not directly imparted to the learner through teaching (i.e. deductive teaching of grammar). Instead, learners are provided with examples and illustrations of using the target structure, and then the grammatical rule is elicited communicatively. Moreover, classroom activities should be inductive by providing data through which learners may form and test hypotheses, and by helping learners to link the new with what they already know.

- McKay (1987) argues that which approach one uses (i.e. deductive vs. inductive) depends on such things as the ***age*** of the learner and the ***complexity*** of the grammatical point. With ***children***, an ***inductive*** approach will often be the most productive. However, with ***adults***, particularly academically oriented ones, the students may expect an ***explanation*** of the grammatical rule.

- Teaching grammar should be based on an ***organic, dialogic*** rather than ***linear*** view of language learning. Consequently, greater attention should be paid to ***form-function relationships***, rather than to teaching ***discrete*** elements at an abstract level. Hence, attempts should be always made to

situate the grammatical structures within a broader discourse or context to make them meaningful and relevant. That is the reason why the communicative teaching of grammar always starts from the context by stating realistic examples, and then proceeds into meaning and form, with an attempt to **contrast** the new structure with old ones. This way, students' knowledge base is activated and exploited all the time based on the belief that language is a complicated entity that can never be oversimplified by being analysed into small discrete (isolated) elements.

- Ur (1988) presents a four-stage approach to the teaching of grammar items:
  - **Presentation**. Making the structure salient and prominent through an input text in which the target item appears.
  - **Isolation and explanation**. This involves ensuring that students understand the various aspects of the target structure.
  - **Practice**. Getting students to absorb and master the language.
  - **Test**. Getting learners to demonstrate mastery.

- As far as communicative language teaching is concerned, I prefer a flexible inductive approach that addresses the **organic, circular** nature of the English language by combining between both deductive and inductive techniques of teaching grammar. Sometimes, it is hard to conform strictly to the inductive approach without using some deductive techniques within it; the language teaching/learning process itself is too complex to allow for such clear divisions to be established while teaching. In this sense, while **examples and illustrations** are provided at the beginning to **contextualise** the target structure (or grammatical rule), students are

encouraged to *elicit* the *form* from the given examples; the form should not be totally left for students to discover independently at home, for example. If this is done, students might lose focus after the lesson is over. Besides, according to this model, a balance should be made between *form* and *meaning* since both are important for helping students to understand and apply the target structure. In brief, my model is *inductive* in total, but also involves some explicit or deductive teaching techniques to help students to constructively develop knowledge about (and understanding of) the English grammar, and to drill and practise the target structure inside the classroom. This model is represented by the following steps of teaching grammar communicatively:

1. Providing *examples* that include the target structure. This way, introducing the target structure should start from a realistic context, not from an abstract rule;

2. Creating *focus* to draw learners' attention to the specific features of the target structure based on the given examples. This focus could be made by highlighting, colouring, and/or capitalising the essential components of the target structure (e.g., The new tenants HAVE JUST ARRIVED in the lobby);

3. Explaining the *meaning* of the target structure using any of the same techniques (or a combination of two or more of these techniques) used to present new vocabulary such as: dramatisation, miming, pictures, body-language, drawings, etc. (see also Chapter 5). Please note that a teacher sometimes finds himself/herself obliged to use more than one technique to

present the meaning depending on the complexity of the structure itself and the elements and dimensions it might involve. In this regard, I do not mind using Arabic for presenting the meaning if other techniques fail to convey an accurate and acceptable meaning of the new structure. Thus, a teacher is required to always **check understanding** during this stage to decide on whether any further explanation is needed. There is no problem if you ask a student to explain the meaning in Arabic to his/her classmates, but try to avoid doing this yourself;

4. Helping students to elicit the **form** or the grammatical rule. Therefore, teachers at this stage should not explicitly state the rule without getting students to think and guess. However, you (as a teacher) should interfere sometimes by leading the discussion and providing any necessary cues and/or hints that might help your students to come to grips with meaning;

5. **Drilling** the structure by using many types of drills (e.g., chain drills, substitution drills, and transformation drills). This part sounds a little bit **deductive**, but is necessary to help students with **internalising** form. It is based on the premise that continuous use of the same form should form, in behaviouristic terms, a habit. This habit formation process is the key to a further stage in which students become able to use the form independently in other situations;

6. Helping students to ***create a link*** between the new structure and other similar structures they have already learned. This connection might clarify the new structure and help students to build upon past knowledge. For example, if I am teaching the present perfect continuous (e.g., I HAVE BEEN DRIVING for two hours), I normally draw on previously-learned tenses such as the present continuous and the present perfect to activate students' previous knowledge, and build upon it;

7. Helping students to ***practise and use*** the structure within controlled and guided practice exercises;

8. Helping students to freely ***produce*** meaningful English sentences that include the target structure.

5.3 Learning/Teaching Grammar Facilitated by New Technologies

New technologies in general and the Web in particular have recently facilitated learning English grammar. On the Web, for example, language learners have become able to independently learn, practise, and check many linguistic forms and idiomatic expressions. In particular, Google and other search engines provide a corpus for language learning. According to Wikipedia, in linguistics, a ***corpus*** (plural corpora) or text corpus is a large and structured set of texts (now usually electronically stored and processed). They are used to do statistical analysis and hypothesis testing, checking occurrences or validating linguistic rules on a specific universe. For example, it has become possible to identify which of the following is English: statistical accurate results *or* accurate

statistical results? Similarly, it has become quite easy to identify, for example, the difference between: important *for* me and important *to* me.

I have just inserted each between two inverted commas in the Google search bar: "statistical accurate results", and "accurate statistical results", respectively. Reviewing the returned results for each, I could conclude that the second is the correct English form that should be used. Of course Google did not tell me directly which one is correct, but instead it searched a large number of texts in its database to identify exact matches for the target structure I gave to it. This database includes millions of English texts in many fields, and therefore, it provides phrases, expressions, and sentences as used by real people in real contexts.

Based on this online linguistic corpus, sometimes when confused between two forms both of which sound right, I use another technique to identify which form is grammatically accurate. I simply write both forms separated by *or* in the Google search bar as follows: happier *or* more happy; arrive at *or* arrive in, and so on. Reviewing the obtained results, one should be able to decide on that.

In addition to this online linguistic corpus, the Web has facilitated teaching English grammar in many ways. For example, it provides both teachers and learners with useful videos demonstrating and explaining certain grammatical items. See, for example, this interesting clip on 'present perfect continuous': *http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_FU8JJ1N-8*

In the same vein, language learners can employ some Web-based facilities such as Blogs and Wikis for discussing some grammatical rules and idiomatic expressions. Having the same focus, attitudes, and orientation online, they can

share with others many ideas, resources, and experiences related to certain structures.

5.4 Reflections and Ideas for Workshops

■ Discuss with your instructor the above ***guidelines*** and ***model*** of teaching grammar and ***how*** you can employ them in teaching grammar exercises.

■ Drawing on the ***communicative/inductive model*** of teaching grammar discussed above, please select a grammar exercise from the textbook you are dealing with in your teaching practice sessions and demonstrate in the workshops (as a micro-teaching activity) how you will teach it. Please prepare your teaching notes for this exercise in advance based on both my model and the official teacher's guide that you normally use in your teaching practice.

CHAPTER SIX: TEACHING LANGUAGE SKILLS: TEACHING LISTENING COMPREHENSION

6.1 Introducing the Main Language skills

Like any other language, the English language includes ***four*** main language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Each of these skills has its own set of sub-skills. However, things are not so evident and straightforward as they might seem. I have noticed that linguists have attempted many classifications of these skills from different perspectives. In this regard, the four skills were divided into two main categories ***active*** skills (which include speaking and writing) and ***passive*** skills (which include listening and reading). This division is based on how active the person's performance and mental processes are while using a certain skill; thus, a person is assumed to be totally passive while s/he is listening or reading doing nothing more than deciphering or decoding the language content s/he receives; on the other hand, s/he is assumed to be active during speaking and writing, making use of all his/her mental abilities to produce a linguistic content, either orally or in writing.

Unfortunately, this classification is quite inaccurate and incomprehensive since in reality the person is not totally passive while s/he is listening or reading; his/her mental abilities are always in action since s/he is supposed to ***comprehend*** the target content s/he is listening to or reading, and sometimes gives feedback, comments, and/or interferes to correct something or take notes.

Therefore, a new alternative classification from a different perspective came to the fore: dividing the four language skills into ***receptive*** skills (i.e. listening and reading) and ***productive*** skills (i.e. speaking and writing). I think this classification sounds more accurate as it draws on the person's dominant performance while using a certain skill. In this sense, a ***receptive*** skill is not an equivalent to a ***passive*** skill; a receptive skill can be active in a way or another.

Sometimes the language skills are classified in terms of ***communication channels*** into ***oral*** skills (i.e. listening and speaking, both of which rely on the oral channel), and ***written*** skills (i.e. reading and writing, which rely on the written channel).

Current trends in language teaching are trying to minimise these artificial and superficial boundaries and divisions. In theory, such divisions might be acceptable at a conceptual level. In practice, however, it is hard to isolate in the teaching/learning situation the language skills into discrete units or entities and assume that they can stand separate from each other. For example, in ***speaking*** exercises, it is impossible not to utilise (and sometimes develop) the ***listening*** skill. Oral interactions between teacher and students or among students themselves depend greatly on their ability to listen carefully and pay attention to what is being said before/while speaking.

Thus, an ***integrative*** approach that treats the four language skills as ***connected*** to (and independent on) each other, is currently dominant. According to this approach, the language teacher should utilise and develop the four language skills ***in concert*** so that learners use them coherently and flexibly without feeling with any boundaries or dichotomies. This approach is also known as the ***holistic*** approach: an approach to language teaching which seeks to focus on

language in its entirety rather than breaking it down into separate components, such as reading, listening, and writing (Richards & Schmidt, 2002).

6.2 Listening as a Skill

As a language skill, listening is so significant. The human baby spends considerable time hearing the surrounding voices (i.e. the silent period) till it is able to speak or do anything else. What is particular about listening, as Rost (2009) argues, is that it is not only a ***skill area*** in language performance, but is also a ***critical means*** of ***acquiring*** a second or foreign language. Moreover, it is the ***channel*** in which we process language in real time – employing pacing, units of encoding and pausing that are unique to spoken language.

Listening as a skill is ***not*** always ***passive*** or ***receptive***; it is, on the contrary, an ***active*** and ***creative*** skill (Rivers, 1981: p160). The reason is that in order to comprehend the sounds falling on our ears, we take the raw material of words, arrangements of words, and the rise and fall of the voice, and from this material we ***create*** a ***significance***. Of course there is a ***meaning*** in the linguistic arrangement that the speaker has already produced (i.e. the speaker's meaning), but ***significance*** is in the mind of the listener (i.e. how the listener processes and comprehends the spoken content). This implies, as I think, that there is a ***subjective*** part of the listening skill that depends on the listener himself/herself, which is more important than the seemingly ***objective*** utterance which might seem the same if, for example, it is tape-recorded.

Therefore, listening is a ***complicated*** skill that includes many overlapping components: a linguistic component, a communicative component, a mental component, a social component, and a cultural component. It is described as a

goal-oriented activity that involves ***'bottom-up'*** processing, in which listeners attend to data in the incoming speech signals, and ***'top-down'*** processing, in which listeners utilise prior knowledge and expectations to create meaning (Rost, 2009: p7). Thus, in psycholinguistic terms (see also Rivers, 1981), there are many mental processes that go on inside a learner's mind during listening. These processes are represented in:

- Recognising ***speech patterns and phonological features*** (e.g., intonation, stress, falling and rising tone), and employing these in understanding an utterance;

- Conducting ***information processing*** by, for example, ***transferring*** selected parts of the auditory input stored in the short-term memory to the long-term memory before they are lost, to facilitate ***retention***;

- ***Recognising vocabulary***, which involves understanding the ***key words*** that should help with getting the main message;

- ***Matching*** the new linguistic input with the already existing ***knowledge base***, and activating any relevant prior knowledge with the aim of ***encoding*** and comprehending this new input;

- ***Working out*** the ***main message*** and the ***overall meaning*** from the utterance by ***summarising*** it and focussing on the most important bits only since it is hard for a listener to remember every word that was said;

- In extracting significance, a listener has to make many bridging ***inferences*** which help him/her to understand the ***logic of the sequence***. This involves being able to recognise logical connectives and relational words (e.g., *because of*, *since*, and *therefore*)

Thus, it is quite evident that all main skills such as listening are divided into some ***sub-skills***. According to the official BBC teaching English website (*http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/knowledge-wiki/sub-skills*), those sub-skills are

behaviours that language users do in order to be effective in the main skill. Reviewing some websites (e.g., *http://miguelbengoa.com/elt/?p=86*), I found a reasonable number of listening sub-skills which sound consistent with the *mental processes* discussed above:

1. ***Deducing meaning*** and ***use*** of unfamiliar lexical items through understanding ***word formation and contextual clues*** in utterances and spoken text;

2. ***Recognising and understanding phonological features*** of speech [especially those forms associated with supra-segmental features];

3. ***Understanding relationships within the sentence***: the syntactic and morphological forms characteristic of spoken language;

4. ***Understanding relationships between parts of text and utterances*** through cohesive devices [especially grammatical cohesive devices such as reference];

5. ***Understanding relationships between parts of text by recognising discourse markers*** [especially for transition and conclusion of ideas, for anticipation of objections or contrary views and for turn-taking];

6. ***Understanding the communicative function*** and value of utterances with and without explicit markers [e.g., definition and exemplification];

7. ***Understanding conceptual meaning*** in spoken text and utterances [e.g., comparison, degree, cause & effect, result, and audience & purpose];

8. ***Understanding attitudinal meaning*** in spoken text and utterances [especially ability to ***recognise*** the ***speaker's attitude*** towards the listener and the topic by intonation];

9. ***Identifying the main points*** or important information in discourse [especially through vocal underlining and verbal cues];

10. ***Distinguishing main ideas from supporting detail*** [the whole & its parts, fact & opinion, statement & example, and proposition & argument];

11. ***Understanding explicitly stated ideas*** and information;

12. ***Understanding ideas and information in spoken text*** and utterances which are not explicitly stated [e.g., through making inferences];

13. ***Interpreting spoken text*** by going outside information in the text to information not contained in the text;

14. ***Transferring and transforming information in speech to diagrammatic display*** [e.g., through completing a diagram, table, or chart];

15. ***Skimming***: listening to obtain the ***gist*** of spoken text;

16. ***Scanning***: listening for ***specific details*** in spoken text;

17. ***Note-taking*** from spoken text:

- Extracting salient points to summarise specific idea or topic in text
- Selectively extracting relevant key points from text
- Reducing text through rejection of redundant or irrelevant items or information [e.g., determiners, repetition, compression of examples, use of abbreviations, and use of symbols denoting relationships between states or processes].

6.3 Stages of Comprehension

Rivers (1981: p157) identifies several stages which any student learning a new language should go through. On first contact, utterances strike students' ears as a stream of undifferentiated noises. The more they listen, the more the students gradually perceive some order in the noise. As they learn some of the arbitrary occasions of the target language (e.g., vocabulary, verb groups, and simple expressions), they begin to distinguish the phonic and syntactic patterning (which is not yet comprehension).

Later on, language learners pass through a stage when they recognise familiar elements in the mass of speech without being able to recognise the interrelationships within the whole stream of sound (not yet full comprehension). At this stage they feel as if they are walking in a fog where they sometimes see clearly and, at other times, things around become obscure.

As they hear much speech in the new language, they acquire facility in recognising the ***crucial elements*** which determine the message. They are aided in this by their growing knowledge of syntax, which enables them to ***chunk*** the language, that is to ***group*** elements into coherent segments, thus reducing the processing loads. At this more advanced stage, they may recognise the essentials of the message, but not be able to remember what they have recognised simply because of their inability to concentrate their attention on the crucial elements of the message long enough.

6.4 Teaching Listening

6.4.1 Introduction

As far as teaching listening is concerned, listening as a language skill was not given much focus due to the dominance of the ***written mode*** as the standard format of presenting a foreign language. However, later on, linguists started to realise the important role that listening plays in language acquisition. Gradually, the ***spoken*** language was gaining ground as a means of foreign language learning. In particular, Bloomfield (1942) declared that 'one learns to understand and speak a language primarily by hearing and imitating native speakers'. This great focus on the listening skill was clearly evident in the development of the ***audio-lingual method*** in the US that draws heavily on the behaviouristic approach to learning that was dominant at the time.

In contrast to this ***behaviouristic approach*** in the US that highlighted ***imitation*** and forming ***habits***, there was a growing interest in the United Kingdom in ***situational approaches***. Firth and his contemporaries believed that the ***'context of situation'*** – rather than linguistic units themselves – determined the meaning of utterances. This implied that ***meaning*** is a ***function*** of the situation and cultural context in which it occurs, and that language understanding involved an integration of linguistic comprehension and non-linguistic understanding (Rost, 2009).

Other key influences emerged later in Chomsky's and Hymes' works and arguments. Thus, Chomsky's innatist views (i.e. ***innatism*** goes counter to behaviourism, proposing that the human child possesses innate knowledge of language structure facilitated by an unobservable Language Acquisition Device

[LAD] that contains language universals) led to the notion of the ***meaning-making*** mind and the concept of a '***natural approach***' to language learning. In response to Chomsky's notion of ***language competence***, Hymes proposed the notion of '***communicative competence***', stating that what is crucial is not so much a better understanding of how language is ***structured*** internally, but a better understanding of how language is ***used***.

The communicative language teaching (CLT) movement viewed listening as an integral part of communicative competence. Listening for ***meaning*** became the primary focus, and finding relevant input for the learner assumed greater importance (Rost, 2009: p8).

6.4.2 Why to teach/learn listening

In fact, there are many reasons for teaching listening. For example, Rivers (1981) argues that teaching the comprehension of spoken language is of primary importance if the ***communication aim*** is to be achieved. Language learners must be exposed to authentic material including a linguistic input as said by native speakers. The teacher's voice is OK, but is not sufficient alone to provide the natural sense of the English language. Usually, the Egyptian teacher pronounces English differently and adjusts the linguistic input to suit his/her teaching and his/her students' learning levels. Unfortunately, this is not the ***authentic*** language material that students need to hear. Authentic material usually refers to all those resources that present language as is really and naturally used in its real context ***without*** any adjustments made by the teacher to make it simpler and easier (Harmer, 2007).

In this context, Harmer (2007: p133) presents some of the reasons why students should listen to the English language and why teachers should teach listening. These include:

- Most students need to ***understand*** the English they hear and language teachers should do anything to make this possible;

- Listening is good for students' ***pronunciation*** in that the more they hear and understand English being spoken, the more they absorb appropriate pitch and intonation, and also identify how words are pronounced in connected speech; thus, listening texts stand as good pronunciation models;

- Throughout listening to samples of the English language as used in reality, students can come to grips with the ***varieties*** that English takes in Britain as the country of origin.

Moreover, in teaching listening, the teacher can organise the authentic material into ***meaningful*** tasks; thus, students will listen to English with a purpose or objective in mind to achieve. Such meaningful, ***goal-oriented*** tasks will help students to ***make sense*** of the language they hear and exert some efforts to understand the ***content*** rather than just focussing on pronunciation and other linguistic features. Such linguistic features are important in their own right, but focussing on them alone without employing them for understanding the main message would not be very useful. Besides, students will be much ***more focussed*** while listening to a clip, for example, when there is a task to be done, such as answering a question or writing some conclusions, than when they listen to the same clip just for pleasure.

In brief, the **reasons** for teaching and learning listening can be summarised in the following points:

- Language learners should be exposed to authentic language material that includes examples of how language is used in real contexts;

- Learners should feel with the natural sense of the target language and develop the communication skills necessary for acquiring and learning it;

- Learners need to listen to models of the target language as it is really uttered by native speakers, which might in turn help them with improving their pronunciation;

- Learners need to be trained on how to understand the overall message of specific auditory segments, and hence on how to develop comprehension as an essential component of the listening activity;

- Learners need to hear complete and continuous segments of the target language without any interruptions and/or adjustments made by the teacher.

6.4.3 New technologies and the teaching of listening

When the audio-lingual method came to the fore with much focus on listening, the language laboratories became the ideal settings for modelling the English language by providing students with the standard oral language as pronounced by native speakers. Currently, with the vast developments in computer software (CD's and DVD's) and the increasing use of the Web as a main language learning resource, many audio and video clips made by native speakers are available online at the learner's finger tips. This state of affairs has recently facilitated practising the listening skill. As Rost (2009) concludes, these resources have vastly increased the potential input material for language learning, and thus,

_____

selection of the most important input, chunking the input into manageable and useful segments, and developing support material, have become much more possible than before (see also Benson & Voller, 1997). This way, language learners have become able to listen in a self-paced fashion to native speakers and also interact with computers.

6.4.4 How to teach listening

6.4.4.1 Main principles

Reviewing literature in the field (e.g., Harmer, 2007; Nunan, 1991; Rivers, 1981; Rost, 2009), I came out with some ***principles*** that should act as guidelines for English language teachers while teaching listening:

- If listening materials are not included in the formal textbooks, the teacher should be able to carefully ***select*** the appropriate ***input*** sources (which must be authentic) that suit his/her teaching purposes and his/her learners' levels, and ***present*** them effectively;

- Listening tasks should be ***designed creatively***; they should be well-structured, enabling opportunities for learners to activate their own knowledge and monitor what they are doing;

- Listening should be ***integrated*** with other learning purposes, and ***linked*** appropriately with speaking, reading, and writing;

- Listening instruction should resemble ***real-life listening*** in which the listener builds a sense of purpose, and where a listener's response is necessary;

- Listening activities should go through ***three main phases***: pre-, while-, and post-listening phases;

- The teacher should ***encourage*** students to listen as often and as much as possible and direct them to the useful resources (e.g., online clips and CDs); the more students listen, the better they get at listening;

- The teacher should help students to ***prepare*** to listen by asking them, for example, to look at pictures, discuss the topic, and/or predict what will happen; this way, students become ***engaged*** with the topic and the task at hand;

- The teacher should encourage students to respond to the ***content*** of listening, not just to the language;

- The teacher should set ***different tasks*** for ***different*** listening ***stages*** since there are different things we might want to do with a listening text. For example, for a first listening, the task(s) should be fairly straightforward and general so that students' general understanding and response can be successful. After all, it will be the teacher's job to make the full use of the text at hand;

- The teacher should ***play*** the audio track or ***say*** the script more than once so that students hear it again to pick up the things they missed the first time, and study some of the language features that the audio segment or clip might include. The first listening to a text is usually used just to give students an idea of what the speakers sound like, and what the general topic is so that sub-sequent listenings become easier for them. For sub-sequent listenings, the audio track might be stopped at various points, or only extracts from it are played (see Harmer, 2007: p135).

6.4.4.2 A communicative model for teaching listening

Now that communicative language teaching (CLT) is currently the dominant approach for teaching English as a foreign language, I will present here a ***model*** based on CLT and which is usually used in main stream education in Egypt. This model is composed of three main stages: the ***pre-listening*** stage, the ***while-listening*** (or ***actual-listening***) stage, and the ***post-listening*** stage. During the three stages, the teacher should consider the main principles/guidelines stated above and try his/her best to help his/her students to achieve the full benefit of the listening activity or task at hand.

a) The pre-listening stage

This is the stage that precedes playing the audio clip or saying the text, the main goal of which is to introduce students to the task and prepare them well before they are exposed to the listening material. Thus, the teacher should:

- ***Warm-up*** students ***and familiarise*** them with ***the topic*** of the clip by talking generally about it and/or developing a short informal discussion among students (even in Arabic). If there are pictures in the textbook related to the task, the teacher can ask some questions to get students to understand what it is all about (e.g., What do you see in the pictures? Why do you think…? How many…are there in …?, etc.);

- ***Introduce*** any necessary or difficult language items that might help students to understand the clip;

- ***Explain the task*** by stating clearly (in simple and straightforward language) what exactly students are going to do while listening. The teacher should make sure that students understand what they are supposed to do. In this regard, s/he can check understanding, even in

Arabic, to ensure that all students know what to do; otherwise, the task will be meaningless and insignificant. For example, the teacher can talk like this:

> *Now you're going to listen to a conversation between two English friends who are preparing for a visit to Egypt. I'd like you to look at the map while listening to circle the city or place which both of them agree to visit. Please listen carefully to tell me the names of those places after I stop the recorder.*

- **State any specific instructions** related to the task, such as whether you want your students to work individually, in pairs, or in small groups, and whether they will listen to the segment just once or more.

b) The while-listening (actual-listening) stage

This is the stage when the students are directly exposed to the audio clip without any interference or interruption from the teacher. But this does not mean that the teacher should go out of the classroom till the clip ends. Instead, the teacher has to do many things such as:

- **Playing the clip or recorder** (or saying the script if no recorder is used), making sure that students are listening to the right clip, and stopping it when it is over;

- **Checking, monitoring, and going around** to make sure that students are doing the task properly;

- **Keeping an eye-contact** with students and monitoring their reactions.

c) The post-listening stage

During this stage the teacher gets the main outcomes out of the task. This involves getting students to speak up and say their answers. In particular, the teacher should:

- Get students to ***answer the pre-listening questions***, for example, or read any specific conclusions that they have made during listening;

- ***Play the audio clip again***, if necessary, to reinforce some details or ideas, or to teach specific items;

- Ask students to ***summarise*** the clip and tell their ***personal impressions*** about it;

- ***Discuss*** with students how the task might have ***added to their knowledge*** or helped them with improving their English;

- ***Guide students into similar audio clips*** available online (e.g., at *www.youtube.com*) and which they might employ for further extensive listening exercises that they can do independently and informally at home at their own convenience.

6.5 Reflections and Ideas for Workshops

■ Discuss with your instructor the above ***principles*** of teaching listening and ***how*** you can employ them in teaching listening exercises.

■ Drawing on the ***communicative model*** of teaching listening discussed above, please select a listening exercise from the textbook you are dealing with in your teaching practice sessions and demonstrate in the workshops (as a micro-teaching activity) how you will teach it. Please prepare your teaching notes for this exercise in advance based on both my communicative model and the official Teacher's Guide you are using in your teaching practice.

CHAPTER SEVEN: TEACHING SPEAKING AND ORAL COMMUNICATION

7.1 Introducing Speaking and Oral Communication

To most people, mastering the art of speaking is the single most important aspect of learning a second or foreign language, and success is usually measured in terms of the ability to carry out a conversation in the target language (Nunan, 1991: p39). Unfortunately, speaking is a neglected skill in the Egyptian English classes. The main reason for that lies in the fact that English language tests are always ***written*** tests that do not include oral components; there are no oral tests in English in the mainstream education for assessing students' speaking and oral communication skills. The main problem here is that the classroom is usually the only place where Egyptian students speak English, and only if their English teachers encourage them to do so. Being a non-English speaking country, the Egyptian social context does not provide any opportunities for students to practise or speak English outside the classroom. This is very discouraging to students since they find no reason at all for learning English as a foreign language (Abdallah, 2010a).

In this regard, Shumin (1997: p11) argues that since most EFL learners learn the target language in their own culture, practice is available only in the classroom. So, a key factor in L2 or foreign language development is the ***opportunities*** given to learners to speak in the target language. Teachers must arouse in the learners a willingness, need, and/or reason to speak. Therefore, Rivers (1981: p188) regards speaking as a skill which is more ***demanding*** on the teacher than any other language skill. Therefore, she advises teachers to give their students many opportunities to practise speaking.

Communication is a vital process which plays a very important role in our life. This process is not peculiar to human beings only; animals and all other living beings are able to communicate, but in their own ways to achieve their own purposes and satisfy their particular needs. This implies that life will be impossible without communication. Unlike all other living beings, humans have developed through speaking a linguistic system to make communication possible. Oral communication, along with other paralinguistic features that help with conveying the message, was used very early in the human history of development to exchange certain messages (Redmond, 2000).

Thus, as I argued elsewhere (Abdallah, 2010a), as human beings, we have our own ways of communication: we are able to speak and express ourselves orally. We have many languages which we can use to communicate orally, in addition to a non-verbal language system which is very common among us no matter how different we are from each other. In this regard, human communication is known as

> *a special form of communication that occurs between and among people. The connection made among humans through communication involves the use of spoken symbolic language – the words we speak – as well as nonverbal cues such as gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice (Redmond, 2000, p6).*

Communication in a foreign language, either orally or in writing, is the ultimate goal of teaching it. It is a skill that students are supposed to master to achieve certain goals. In this regard, it is both an end in itself and a means towards an end. Students are required to ***express*** themselves in the target language so as to reflect their understanding of the ***comprehensible input*** they are exposed to by the teacher. This process could be a problem with the students who are studying

English as a foreign language. Those students need to master some speaking skills that enable them to both pronounce accurately and communicate functionally.

In our everyday life, we communicate for many reasons. In a general sense, we normally communicate in order to satisfy needs, gain information, manage relationships, derive pleasure and entertainment, get self-validation, coordinate and manage tasks, and persuade and gain something from others (Redmond, 2000, pp8-10). This brings to me an important distinction that we should always make between speaking or oral communication as a ***phonological*** skill, and speaking as a ***functional*** skill. In this sense, if a teacher wants his/her students to master the phonological speaking skills, then s/he needs to focus on the linguistic level of pronouncing words and saying them correctly. This is usually done at an early stage of language learning. On the other hand, if the functional speaking skills are his/her main focus, then s/he should focus on the communicative level of speaking that goes beyond the linguistic level and which includes the oral survival functions of the language, such as: asking and answering questions, giving opinions, giving oral presentations, making suggestions and responding to suggestions made, etc. (Abdallah, 2010a).

In the communication process, we speak in order to convey the message that we have, and in this way, we ***encode*** a message. Simultaneously, we expect the listener to interpret or ***decode*** this message. This way, we ***frame*** our message and select the linguistic elements to express it so as to arouse in the receiver the meaning we are trying to convey (Rivers, 1981: p221).

Recently, the way through which speaking is looked upon has changed a lot. Scholars have begun to focus on the functional aspects of speaking. This has led

to ***expanding*** the definition of speaking to involve the functional and communicative aspects. Thus, there has been a trend that focuses on ***communication activities*** that reflect a variety of ***settings***: one-to-many, small group, one-to-one, and mass media. Another approach has been to focus on using communication to achieve ***specific purposes***: to inform, to persuade, and to solve problems. A third trend has been to focus on ***basic competencies*** needed for ***everyday life***, such as giving directions, asking for information, or providing basic information in an emergency situation (Mead & Rubin, 1985).

Elsewhere (Abdallah, 2010a), I delineated the relationship between communication and the speaking skill as follows:

- Speaking is a ***means*** through which communication takes place;
- In the communication process there is a ***message*** to be ***conveyed*** by someone to another. This message can be conveyed by ***speaking***;
- By speaking, we ***form*** the message to be communicated in a ***linguistically valid way*** that can be understood by others;
- Communication is always involved in and related to the main four language skills: listening, ***speaking***, reading, and writing.
- In teaching English as a foreign language, we develop the students' ***speaking ability*** to the point at which they can concentrate on the ***message*** rather than on the ***code*** so as to make them communicate ***meaningfully*** in English.
- The ***speaking skill*** involves more than the ***superficial*** learning of grammar and patterns of the language. To be able to speak involves the ability to use the language system for the purpose of communication (Reid, 1977: p33).

- ▪ ***Speaking*** is sometimes used ***functionally*** to achieve ***realistic communicative purposes*** and needs.

The Internet or the Web has been recently influencing language communication by enabling two modes of communication: synchronous communication, enabled by tools such as chat rooms, and asynchronous communication, enabled by tools, such as e-mail. Synchronous communication takes place while people are simultaneously online, as it requires the presence of all participants at the same time during the communication process. Asynchronous communication, on the other hand, occurs when online interaction does not happen simultaneously between two parties (Pritchard, 2004: p10; Warschauer et al, 2000). Each mode has its own advantages and disadvantages. For example, though the synchronous mode allows for a live language and direct interaction with native speakers, it does not allow for the reflection that the asynchronous mode enables.

7.2 Speaking as a Skill

I can confidently conclude from the above discussion that speaking, like listening, is a ***complicated*** skill because it involves many processes and components which work together when a person talks. Speaking involves many overlapping aspects: ***pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, cohesion, accuracy, and fluency***. In addition to the linguistic components, it includes other components or elements that give it specific shape as a language skill; it involves other social, psychological, paralinguistic, and cultural components. The ***social aspect*** of speaking is apparent when we deal with another one who may have a different social or cultural background. Therefore, when we define speaking, we should not restrict ourselves to the linguistic component which

constitutes only small part of the speaking process. Moreover, we should think of which **type** of speaking we mean: for example, do we mean by it the **mere pronunciation** and accurate oral production of words, phrases, and/or sentences, or the **social interaction** with others that involves functional communication with realistic purposes in mind?

In this regard, Rivers(1981: p186) stresses the fact that an act of speech involves **more than knowledge of the code**. It involves the selection of integrated patterns of elements of the code for the expression of an intention, and the assembling of the necessary features without hesitation.

Keeping all these elements in mind, Florez (1999) defines speaking as

> *an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information. Its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their collective experiences, the physical environment, and the purposes for speaking.*

There are many **sub-skills** that can be included under the main speaking skill. These sub-skills (see also *http://miguelbengoa.com/elt/?p=62*) can be represented in the following:

1. **Producing segmental features** of English at **word level** (e.g., vowel and consonant sounds, and stressed and unstressed syllables);
2. **Using supra-segmental features** of English (e.g., intonation, stress in sentences, word-linking, and weak forms) accurately in spoken utterances;
3. **Expressing grammatical relationships** in spoken utterances at the level of the sentence;

4. ***Expressing relationships between parts of a spoken utterance*** through cohesive devices (especially grammatical cohesion such as noun-pronoun reference);

5. ***Using markers*** in spoken discourse (e.g., introducing an idea, developing an idea, transition to another idea, concluding an idea, emphasising a point to indicate important information, explaining or clarifying a point already made, and anticipating an objection or a contrary view);

6. ***Sustaining communicative dialogue*** with and without explicit markers;

7. ***Expressing conceptual meaning*** in spoken utterances;

8. ***Expressing attitudinal meaning*** in spoken text and utterances (especially by intonation);

9. ***Marking the main points*** or important information in spoken text and utterances (especially through emphasis or vocal underlining and through verbal cues);

10. ***Expressing information or knowledge*** in informal and semi-formal utterances;

11. ***Planning and organising information*** in formal expository discourse (e.g., oral narrative and oral description of phenomena or ideas).

From a ***functional*** perspective, speaking (as an oral communication process) involves some sub-skills that are necessary for ***survival*** and getting along with others. These include (see also Abdallah, 2010a):

- Expressing one's opinion and communicating it to others;
- Responding to others' suggestions and opinions;
- Convincing others of something;
- Expressing sympathy and concern;
- Making requests;

- Responding to requests made;
- Making an oral presentation to present a new idea or topic;
- Explaining a difficult point to others;
- Relating personal experiences;
- Expressing and rationalising personal attitudes;
- Correcting someone's mistakes;
- Rephrasing and revising an utterance to make it easier and simpler;
- Sharing useful ideas and discoveries with others;
- Discussing a topic with others;
- Summarising something such as a lecture, a talk, or a story to communicate the main idea (gist) to others.

7.3 Speaking Fostered by New Technologies

New technologies have recently enabled new channels for oral communication and self expression. The Web, for example, has enabled anyone to upload any material online. Some people would be interested in sharing their viewpoints and experiences through social networking websites such as YouTube and Facebook. They can easily record videos for themselves and upload them easily online so that the whole world can watch them. This makes them focussed on what they are saying and doing to get their message across, and consequently, they can improve their speaking ability. Moreover, the chat software enables language learners to communicate synchronously with native speakers. Throughout this communication, they can imitate those native speakers and do their best to speak clearly.

Thus, the Web and other new technologies foster speaking by:

- Providing **channels** for self-expression;

- Exposing language learners to **authentic** audio and video material that they can imitate;
- Enabling them to **contact native speakers**;
- Enabling them to **share** useful **ideas** with others;
- Helping them to **understand** their **mistakes** and **form good speaking habits**.

7.4 How to Teach Speaking

7.4.1 Why to teach speaking

According to Harmer (2007) and Thornbury (2005), there are many reasons for teaching speaking which can be summarised in the following points:

- Speaking activities provide **rehearsal opportunities** (i.e. chances to practise real-life speaking in the classroom);
- Speaking tasks in which students **employ** any or all of the **language** they know **provide feedback** for both teacher and students;
- The more students have opportunities to **activate** the various elements of language they have stored in their brains, the **more automatic** their use of these elements become;
- Students are more likely to **internalise** and **improve** the target language if they are provided with **purposeful speaking** tasks/activities that go further than controlled language practice and the linguistic, phonological aspects;
- Students tend to **feel confident** about themselves while they are **speaking** the target language and **expressing** themselves in real situations;

- The ***classroom*** (as in Egypt) might be the ***only place*** where students might ***speak*** the target language, and therefore, the language teacher should ***provide opportunities*** for students to ***speak up*** and ***use*** the language to accomplish realistic goals;

- Because the four language skills are practically connected together, ***speaking activities usually improve other language skills***, such as listening and writing, and help students to ***activate*** their language ***input*** and ***think*** in English;

- Usually the language learner's ***mental abilities and thinking skills become highly active*** while speaking since s/he becomes more focussed and keen to exploit the maximum mental power to ***produce*** an acceptable utterance;

- Finally, speaking ***enables*** language learners to ***put all things together*** and ***practise*** the target language by ***exploiting*** vocabulary, grammar, and any ***language aspects*** they have already learned.

7.4.2 Speaking activities

There are many ***activities*** that can be used in the classroom to develop speaking. In this context, Nunan (1991: pp51-52) suggests some ***concrete*** speaking activities that can be used in the classroom with ***lower*** proficiency learners. For me, they can be described as controlled activities in which language learners are given models or cues to guide them into producing certain outcomes. These activities include:

- Reading question cues and making up questions;
- Studying a substitution table and making up sentences accordingly;

- Reading a model dialogue and having a similar conversation using cues provided;
- Looking at a picture and studying model sentences to make up similar sentences about a similar picture;
- Listening to an interview, and then asking and answering.

Other more advanced activities (see Harmer, 2007) include:

■ **Role play**: In this activity, the teacher assigns roles for students to play. This might involve writing a script for students to perform. This script usually includes some language functions or expressions that students should use while they are acting real-life situations. During the activity, the teacher should write notes without interfering with the flow of conversation. In this regard, it is not a good idea to interrupt and correct students' errors/mistakes. In most cases, the main focus here is on fluency more than on accuracy. Therefore, the teacher should tolerate students' mistakes till the end of the activity. Later on, s/he can discuss with them any grammatical and/or lexical issues and re-teach certain aspects when necessary.

■ **Discussion**: Generally speaking, discussion, whether spontaneous or planned, has the great advantage of provoking fluent language use (Harmer, 2007: p128). It is important to give students *pre-discussion* rehearsal time by, for example, dividing them into small groups to explore the discussion topic before organising a discussion with the whole class. There should be an objective (or some objectives) guiding a discussion (e.g., By the end of the discussion, students should state the reasons why the world has become an awful place, or give their predictions for the future of mankind with the vast

developments in Information and Communication Technologies). It is sometimes important to set a purpose for the discussion to turn it into a goal-oriented activity that keeps students focussed all the time. However, free/informal discussions are sometimes useful as they provide a more relaxing environment where students are able to use the language freely without feeling with pressure.

■ **Information-gap activities**: When two persons have different information that they need to exchange so as to complete the whole picture, this is called 'information gap'. This 'gap' that exists between them should motivate them to talk with each other. For example, in pairs students each look at a picture which is very similar (though they do not know this) to the one their partner has. They have to find, say, ten differences between their pictures without showing their pictures to each other. This means that they will have to do a lot of describing (and questioning and answering) to find the differences (Harmer, 2007: p129).

■ **Telling stories**: Telling stories in the target language is a very important activity. Normally, all people like to tell stories or listen to others' stories, but in their native language. The teacher can draw on this by asking students to tell stories of things that happened to them in the past, or to tell a story in English based on famous Arabic or Egyptian folklore. Further, the teacher can encourage students to invent stories based on given cues or drawings. Also, the teacher can ask them to *re-tell* famous stories in their own ways.

■ **Balloon debate**: A group of students are in the basket of a balloon which is losing air. Only one person can stay in the balloon and survive (the others

have to jump out). Individual students representing famous characters (Napoleon, Ghandi, Cleopatra, etc.) or professions (teacher, doctor, lawyer, etc.) have to argue why they should be allowed to survive (Harmer, 2007: p131).

■ **Favourite objects:** This activity is another way of getting students to tell stories. However, the stories here are very personal and are connected with one's personal life and the objects s/he prefers. Students are encouraged to think about how they would describe their favourite objects in terms of when they got them, why they got them, what they normally do with them, why they are so important to them, and whether there are any stories associated with them. In groups, they then tell each other about their objects, and the groups tell the class about which was the most unusual/interesting, etc. in their group (Harmer, 2007: p130).

■ **Oral presentations**: This activity can be described as an advanced one since it might need advanced skills in the target language. Here individual students give a talk on a given topic. Students should be given sufficient time to prepare themselves, and gather/structure all necessary data. Students are guided into identifying the core components of an oral presentation (i.e. introduction, body, and conclusion) and that a presentation can be supported with some aids and illustrations. The rest of students listening to the student presenting something should be given some kind of listening tasks, such as giving feedback (see also Harmer, 2007: p130).

7.4.3 The teacher's role during the speaking activities

The teacher's role is very important during the speaking activities. He should:

- Be a *guide on the side* and not a *sage on the stage*;
- *Facilitate* interactions without dominating them;
- *Organise* interactions and write scripts;
- *Monitor* students' performance and write notes;
- *Give feedback* to help students to improve their future performance;
- *Re-teach* certain aspects if necessary based on weaknesses observed in his/her notes;
- *Intervene sometimes* when the activity does not go smoothly;
- *Provide corrections* but only after the activity is over;
- *Provide* any *tools* (e.g., cards, charts, and objects) necessary for carrying out the activity.

7.4.4 Main principles and guidelines for teaching speaking

- Language teachers should consider the fact that *oral language*, because of its circumstances of production, tends to differ from *written language* in its typical grammatical, lexical, and discourse patters (Bygate, 2009: p14). The implication here is that oral skills and oral language should be *practised* and *assessed* under *different conditions* from written skills, and therefore teaching should be adjusted accordingly.
- Learning to speak in a second or foreign language will be *facilitated* when learners are *actively engaged* in attempting to communicate.
- Both *bottom-up* processes (in which the learner starts from the small fragments and proceeds to the whole) and *top-down* processes (in which the learner starts from the whole thing, and then gradually divide it into smaller segments) are important for speaking, and therefore the teacher

should draw on both to help his/her students to speak up and use the language functionally.

- All speaking activities should focus in a ***balanced*** manner on both ***accuracy*** and ***fluency***. A main focus on accuracy could restrict learners' free production of the target language making them unable to speak naturally, and thus it encourages a less exploratory or fluent use of the language. On the other hand, a main focus on fluency might encourage greater use of formulaic chunks of language, discouraging attention to accuracy (and thus an inaccurate linguistic output will result) and reducing speakers' capacity for processing complex language (see also Bygate, 2009: p17).

7.5 Reflections and Ideas for Workshops

■   ***Discuss*** with your instructor the above section on 'how to teach speaking' to come out with ***practical ideas*** that you can use for teaching speaking activities in your classroom.

■   ***Select*** a speaking exercise/activity from the textbook you are dealing with in your teaching practice sessions and ***demonstrate*** in the workshops (as a micro-teaching activity) how you will teach it. Please ***prepare*** your teaching notes for this exercise in advance based on both the ***guidelines*** that you concluded from the previous discussion with your instructor and the teaching notes included in the official teacher's guide you are using in your teaching practice.

■ ***Select*** any of the speaking activities discussed above (e.g., role play, oral presentation, and information-gap activities), prepare for it, and then try to carry it out in the micro-teaching sessions.

CHAPTER EIGHT: TEACHING READING

8.1 Introduction

Reading is an essential component of what people do every day. It is an important skill that learners need to develop; it is the means through which they can independently learn more about the target language and improve their mastery of that language. Reviewing literature, it can be concluded that for a quite long time in the history of language teaching, reading was given priority over other phonological skills (i.e. listening and speaking).

All the time, people need to read different things in different situations for many different ***purposes***. For example, people usually read in order to:

- ❖ Understand what is going on around;
- ❖ Entertain themselves and pass the time;
- ❖ Acquire new information, knowledge, and skills;
- ❖ Know more about a topic of interest;
- ❖ Learn new words and language items, and develop other language skills;
- ❖ Communicate with others;
- ❖ Travel to other places in the world without leaving the armchair;
- ❖ Form a background that helps with answering certain questions;
- ❖ Increase knowledge and understanding of the culture of speakers of the target language, their ways of thinking, and their contemporary activities;
- ❖ Prepare for tests and exams.

Reading thus is a very important activity in any language class, not only as a source of information and pleasure, but also as a means of consolidating and extending one's knowledge of the language (Rivers, 1981: p259). The reading

skill, once developed, is the one which can be most easily maintained at a high level by the students themselves without further help from the teacher.

Further, reading should be treated not as a passive skill, but rather as a complex skill; during reading, the reader does many things simultaneously and thus cannot be considered as idle or a passive recipient of a message stated by an author. In this regard, Mikulecky (1990) states some of the processes that go on inside the reader's mind other than the main ***decoding*** process. These processes include:

- Noticing the distinctive features in letters, words, and meanings;
- Guessing and taking risks to predict meaning;
- Reading to identify meaning rather than to identify individual letters or words;
- Taking an active role by applying one's knowledge of the world and the topic at hand in attempting to understand;
- Making use of redundancies (i.e. orthographic, syntactic, and semantic) to reduce uncertainty about meaning;
- Maintaining enough speed to overcome the limitations of visual processing and memory systems;
- Constantly switching back and forth between the text and previous knowledge in an effort to understand the target content/text.

The main challenge in learning to read in a foreign language is that learners are faced with a different language ***code*** and script. In this new context, they are required to understand the sounds that the new symbols or ***graphemes*** represent, and also ***extract*** from the printed patterns ***three levels of meaning***: ***lexical*** meaning (i.e. the semantic content of the words and expressions);

structural or grammatical meaning derived from interrelationships among words or from the order of words; and ***socio-cultural*** meaning (i.e. the evaluation that people of our culture attach to the words we are reading) (Rivers, 1981: p261).

Johnston (1983: p17) defines reading comprehension as

> *A complex behaviour which involves conscious and unconscious use of various strategies, including problem-solving strategies, to build a model of the meaning which the writer is assumed to have intended.*

Surfing the Web, I found many ways in which reading is ***defined***. In this regard, reading can refer to:

- The skill of ***deciphering*** and ***understanding*** the printed text;
- The ***action*** or ***skill*** of reading written or printed matter silently or aloud;
- A complex ***cognitive*** process of ***decoding*** symbols for the intention of ***deriving*** meaning (reading comprehension) and/or ***constructing*** meaning;
- The ***means*** through which one can ***decode*** or understand a certain message ***encoded*** by someone.

Thus, no matter whether reading is defined as a skill, an action, or a process, it definitely involves ***decoding*** certain content in order to ***understand*** a message ***encoded*** by a writer.

8.2 Types/Kinds of Reading

8.2.1 Intensive reading vs. extensive reading

As far as the reading types are concerned, there are two main types or kinds of reading: **intensive** reading and **extensive** reading. **Intensive** reading is that type which is commonly used ***inside*** the classroom to train learners on using reading for specific goals and purposes. In this case, there are tangible tasks to be performed and which should never exceed the time limitations imposed by the school timetable. In these situations, students are normally required to read a short text (i.e. a paragraph or a small text composed of several paragraphs). A focus is placed on some language issues that the text involves, and therefore, an explanation of the new language items (i.e. new vocabulary and grammar) by the language teacher is a main practice. Moreover, the text itself includes new vocabulary and grammar beyond students' current reading ability so that learning can take place. Texts to read are usually there in the textbook as part of the course itself or are sometimes chosen and pre-determined in advance by the teacher to address specific language learning objectives (see also Nunan, 1991, and Rivers, 1981).

Extensive reading, on the other hand, is this free type which is done independently by students at home. It is usually advised as an extra or ***optional*** activity that students might do to develop a deeper understanding of the target language as well as some general language skills. Sometimes, students are referred to the library by their teacher to read a story or a book that details/supports certain topics or learning aspects. This is a common demonstration of an extensive reading activity. In extensive reading situations, students read long pieces of texts (e.g., stories); they sometimes read some parts

for ***details***, and at other times, they ***skim*** other parts in order to get the general idea or identify other parts of interest to read in detail. There is no standard way or method for carrying out this type since students are free to do it in the way they like and at the times that suit them. Thus, it is a stress-free type that is carried out in leisure and for pleasure with no obligation. Eventually, it might influence, in a way or another, students' language learning and academic achievement (see also Harmer, 2007).

With the development of the Web as an important language learning resource, language learners are exposed more than ever to a vast number of resources that might help them with doing extensive reading. Therefore, the term 'extensive reading' is sometimes used interchangeably nowadays with 'online reading' in which learners can ***flexibly*** shift between a varied range of language resources that might be closely relevant with what they are studying at school. Therefore, thanks to the Web, extensive reading has recently become much easier than before.

8.2.2 Online reading vs. offline reading

Although they ***share*** some ***common*** features and strategies, such as activating prior knowledge and synthesising information (Eagleton & Dobler, 2007: p36), print-based reading (or offline reading as it is sometimes called) and Web-based reading are not the same. From a new literacy perspective, the skills and strategies associated with traditional, print-based reading are still necessary to read and learn online, but are not sufficient alone since the nature of online reading comprehension is different (Coiro & Dobler, 2007).

Online reading is a ***complicated*** process that requires knowledge about new things such as how search engines work and how information is organised within websites (Coiro, 2005: p30). Thus, those who master the skills and competencies necessary to read books are not necessarily competent online readers. Empirically, Coiro (2005: p30) noticed that some students already skilled at reading books were struggling with finding information online wasting much time without reaching their target. For example, they were lost on the Web moving from one webpage to another without locating the information they needed to complete their assignments, a conclusion also reached by a study that I have already conducted (Abdallah, 2011).

By the same token, Leu et al (2007) conclude that video recordings for some adolescent readers while reading online suggest that readers who struggle with offline materials may not struggle with online materials to the same degree as long as they have the skills and/or strategies essential for online reading comprehension. They conclude that ***isomorphism*** does not exist between offline and online reading comprehension because if they were the same, high-achieving offline readers would always be high-achieving online readers and vice versa.

Consequently, it is essential to understand the ***differences*** between online reading and offline or print-based reading which usually revolve around: (1) environment or medium; (2) nature; (3) types of the cognitive processes involved; (4) the complex nature of the texts readers interact with; (5) the additional new skills and/or strategies that online readers need in the Web-based environment.

The **environment**, **medium**, and ways of navigation of print and hypertext are completely different. While both environments typically provide supportive navigational features (e.g., a table of contents), the actual content of hypertext is hidden beneath multiple **layers** of information not viewable with traditional previewing procedures such as rapidly going through the pages of a printed book (Coiro & Dobler, 2007). Besides, the Web itself provides many **features**, such as hyperlinks and hypertext, which facilitate the navigation process to the readers.

The **construction of meaning** as a cognitive process is another source of difference. Online readers have choices as they navigate through many websites and media, and therefore, they personally construct their own meaning and understanding out of this navigation process. Offline readers, on the other hand, read the texts already constructed for them. Thus, the construction of meaning during online reading comprehension is much more complex than it is the case with offline reading comprehension (Leu, et al, 2009).

Reading on the Web therefore adds **layers of complexity** to an already complex process (Kern, 2000: p223). This complexity is caused by the fact that comprehension on the Web requires the orchestrating of a number of additional **cueing systems** (e.g. operational, organisational, and multimedia cues) plus knowledge of informational text structures placing a heavier cognitive load on learners (Eagleton & Dobler, 2007: p31). This is shown by studies of how textual differences influence comprehension, which indicate that both children and adults have more difficulty reading informational texts than reading narrative texts (e.g., Biancarosa & Snow, 2004). The difficulty posed by informational texts

becomes more challenging when readers are to define a specific task, search for information, and select the resources themselves.

The **nature of the text** itself is different as online texts are more complicated than linear, printed texts. Online texts appear in types new to the readers, which Coiro (2005) identifies as nonlinear, multiple-media, and interactive texts, to clarify the message transferred. Readers online are provided with options like clicking a hyperlink to access further details on a particular word or item. Now that online texts involve new forms and ways of arranging and structuring textual material introducing new challenges for readers, especially second and foreign language readers, higher levels of inferential reasoning and comprehension monitoring strategies are demanded.

There are many new skills and strategies needed within an online reading context. Leu et al (2008: pp322-37) detail some of these skills and strategies as follows: (1) Online reading is usually initiated by a pre-reading question or query that guides the reading process, something not necessarily needed within a print-based reading context; (2) locating information online is another aspect of online reading comprehension that requires new skills (e.g., using a search engine, reviewing returned results, and quickly reading a webpage to locate links to required data). Locating information may create a bottleneck for the sub-sequent skills of online reading comprehension in the sense that those who possess those online skills necessary to locate information can continue to read and solve their problem, while those who do not possess them cannot; (3) During critical evaluation, a unique set of skills are required. Whereas critical evaluation is important when reading offline, it is perhaps more important while reading on the Web where anyone can publish anything. Therefore, it is vital to

identify to what extent the online information is reliable. The unique nature of the Web, as a source of information that differs from traditional resources, has been thoroughly explored, mostly by librarians, who have highlighted the need for greater critical evaluation of Web-based resources.

Reading online is a complicated process that is not simply defined around the encoding of online texts, or just the purpose, task, and context. Instead, as Leu, et al (2008: pp332-36) argue, online reading comprehension is also defined by a process of *self-directed text construction* that occurs as readers navigate on their own through an infinite informational space to construct their own versions of texts encountered online.

With the dominance of the Web as a teaching/learning medium and the subsequent result that information gathering has become, perhaps, the most widely used application of the Web, it is surprising that there is still a lack of a research-based understanding of the strategies needed to successfully understand and read information online (Coiro, 2009; Coiro & Dobler, 2007). Some few studies were conducted to examine online reading (e.g., Coiro & Dobler, 2007). New literacies required for dealing with information and material available online still need further investigation.

Many new reading sub-skills and strategies have emerged to express the new online processes. In this context, Leu (2002) suggests that developing more *critical reading skills* within networked ICT will be an important aspect of the new literacies to face the challenge ahead. Clarifying the nature of the challenge we have today, Eagleton and Dobler (2007) suggest that in order to be Web

literate, we should meet the demands of the Web, which are associated with reading by acquiring new skills and strategies.

8.2.3 Silent reading vs. reading aloud

Reading aloud (oral reading) and reading silently (silent reading) are really two separate processes, each of which has its own advantages and disadvantages. Reading aloud may be useful for ***reporting*** information or improving ***pronunciation***, but a reading lesson should focus on silent reading. Moreover, reading aloud might be useful for beginners, while silent reading might be more appropriate with advanced language learners. When students read silently, they can vary their pace and concentrate on understanding more difficult portions of the text. They will generally think more ***deeply*** about the content and have greater comprehension when reading silently (see also: *http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/teaching/esl/reading.cfm*).

In brief, I think that ***reading aloud*** (or oral reading) can be ***useful*** because:

❖ Learners will be able to pronounce the words and get immediate feedback from the teacher that might help them to improve their reading skills;

❖ Learners will be able to speak up and participate;

❖ The teacher will be able to identify common reading problems and errors and suggest remedies accordingly;

❖ Students can provide each other with feedback (i.e. peer correction);

❖ Reading aloud is very useful and effective for acting and dramatising the reading script, and making the text alive.

However, there are many ***disadvantages*** associated with this type which I summarise in the following points:

❖ Reading aloud might be a stressful experience to some learners;

❖ Sometimes deep understanding is not realised while reading aloud;

❖ Reading aloud might be a slow process compared with silent reading as readers normally take longer time;

❖ It usually takes much of the class time especially when many students are required to read sequentially;

❖ Sometimes teaching/learning focus shifts from the content of the text to the speaking and pronunciation issues.

On the other hand, ***silent*** reading can be ***useful*** because:

❖ It allows for reflection and more thinking;

❖ It saves much time and effort for both teachers and learners;

❖ It enables students to review many pages within a quite short period of time;

❖ It helps with developing comprehension and allows for more utilisation of many reading strategies (e.g., meta-cognitive strategies);

❖ It facilitates independent learning and personal management of text;

However, it includes some ***disadvantages*** such as:

❖ Not allowing for discussion during reading through pair work or group work;

❖ Sometimes bad reading habits are formed and might go unnoticed;

❖ Sometimes learners' attention is not totally focussed on the text at hand (e.g., they might feel distracted or absent-minded);

❖ Teachers are not able to know exactly how learners are reading or managing the target text.

8.3 Reading Strategies and Sub-skills

From the above discussion, I can conclude that reading is a broad skill that involves a wide range of other strategies and sub-skills. Two of the most famous strategies (or sub-skills as they are called sometimes) are ***skimming*** and ***scanning***. Whether readers skim or scan depends on what kind of text they are reading and what they want or need to get out of it. ***Skimming*** text means that one casts their eyes over its surface to ***get a general idea*** of what it is about. Thus, the main purpose here is not to read everything in details, but to read quickly in order to come out with the main idea (gist) from the text at hand. This process is clearly evident when we run our eyes over a film review to see what the film is about, or when we look quickly at a report to get a feel for the topic and what its conclusions are. In others words, concentrating too hard on specifics or details is not needed here as it would take much time and effort (Harmer, 2007: p101). People often skim when they have lots of material to read in a limited amount of time.

There are many ***cues*** or ***clues*** that should help the reader to come out with the general idea such as:

- The main title and sub-titles of the text;
- The headings and sub-headings that the text includes;
- The topic sentence (mostly the first sentence) in each paragraph;
- Any illustrations (e.g., tables, graphs, and drawings) that the text includes;
- Any highlighted items (e.g., words that are **bold faced** or in *italics*).

Scanning a text, on the other hand, refers to the process of locating particular bits or pieces of information (e.g., a telephone number, a name, or a date of birth). Scanning thus never requires reading every word in the text; otherwise it

would not be considered scanning at all. The way we scan the text depends on the type of information we are after. Therefore, if one wants a telephone number, for example, his/her eyes will automatically review all numbers in the text. Similarly, if one desires a name, his/her eyes will catch all the capital letters (especially in the middle of sentences) throughout the whole text.

Typical questions that might be used to guide a scanning activity include:

- When was X born?
- What is X's full name?
- What is X's telephone number?
- What are the main places that X visited while he was in Egypt?
- How many weeks did X stay in Luxor?
- How long has X been travelling?

Moreover, language learners need to master a wide range of reading strategies. In particular, struggling readers need the following:

- ❖ knowledge of different types of texts and the best strategies for reading them;
- ❖ multiple and meaningful opportunities to practise reading in subject-specific contexts;
- ❖ opportunities to practise reading with appropriate resources;
- ❖ opportunities to talk about their reading and thinking;
- ❖ background knowledge in subject areas;
- ❖ expanded sight vocabularies and word-solving strategies for reading subject-specific texts;
- ❖ strategies for previewing texts, monitoring their understanding, determining the most important ideas and the relationships among

them, remembering what they read, and making connections and inferences; and

❖ strategies for becoming independent readers in any context. (Available online at: *http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/studentsuccess/thinkliteracy/files/Reading.pdf*)

Thus, according to above resource, some reading strategies are utilised in three main phases of reading: before reading, during reading, and after reading. Effective readers use strategies to understand what they read before, during, and after reading.

1-**Before** reading, they:

- o use *prior knowledge* to think about the topic;
- o make *predictions* about the probable meaning of the text;
- o *preview* the text by skimming and scanning to get a sense of the overall meaning.

2-**During** reading, they:

- o *monitor understanding* by questioning, thinking about, and reflecting on the ideas and information in the text.

3-**After** reading, they:

- o *reflect upon* the ideas and information in the text;
- o *relate* what they have read to their own experiences and knowledge;
- o *clarify* their *understanding* of the text;
- o *extend* their *understanding* in critical and creative ways.

Generally, the main readings **strategies** (or **sub-skills**) that students need to master as parts of the main reading skill include:

- ❖ Previewing a text;
- ❖ Analysing the features of a text;
- ❖ Finding organisational patterns;
- ❖ Finding signal words;
- ❖ Using context to find meaning;
- ❖ Connecting the text with other texts to formulate comprehensive ideas;
- ❖ Reading between the lines (inferences);
- ❖ Combining pieces together to develop a deeper understanding;
- ❖ Making use of keywords, titles, sub-titles, headings, and sub-headings, and other features in the text to understand the main message that the writer wants to convey;
- ❖ Sorting ideas using a concept map;
- ❖ Visualising;
- ❖ Making notes;
- ❖ Making conclusions;
- ❖ Making judgements.

In the same vein, Mikulecky (1990) identifies some reading sub-skills that foster the thinking processes which students need to develop in order to read standard English effectively. These include:

- ❖ **Automatic decoding**: being able to recognise a word at a glance;
- ❖ **Previewing and predicting**: giving the text a quick review to be able to guess what is to come;
- ❖ **Specifying purpose**: knowing why a text is being read;

- ❖ ***Identifying genre***: knowing the nature of the text in order to predict what the form and content will be;

- ❖ ***Questioning***: asking questions in an inner dialogue with the author;

- ❖ ***Scanning***: looking through a text very rapidly for specific information;

- ❖ ***Recognising topics***: finding out what the text is about;

- ❖ ***Classification of ideas into main topics and details***: categorising words and ideas on the basis of their relationships and distinguishing general and specific;

- ❖ ***Locating topic sentences***: identifying where possible the main sentences in a passage that include the main ideas;

- ❖ ***Stating the main idea of a piece of writing***: knowing what the author is expressing about the topic;

- ❖ ***Recognising patterns of relationships***: identifying the relationships between ideas as well as the overall structure of the text;

- ❖ ***Identifying the words which signal the patterns of relationships***: being able to see connections between ideas through words such as *because, therefore, as* (which indicate cause-effect relationships) and *first*, *then*, *later* (which indicate order and sequence);

- ❖ ***Inferring the main ideas*** using patterns and clues;

- ❖ ***Guessing the meaning of unknown words from the context***: using clues such as knowledge of word parts, syntax, and relationship patterns;

- ❖ ***Skimming***: quickly getting the gist of a passage or a book;

- ❖ ***Paraphrasing***: Re-stating texts in the reader's own words in order to monitor one's own comprehension;

- ❖ ***Summarising***: shortening material by retaining and re-stating the main ideas and skipping details;

❖ ***Drawing conclusions***: putting together information from several parts of the text and inducing new or additional ideas;

❖ ***Drawing inferences and using evidence***: reading between the lines and using evidence in the text and including new or additional ideas;

❖ ***Reading critically***: judging the accuracy of a passage with respect to what the reader already knows and distinguishing fact from opinion.

8.4 How to Teach Reading

8.4.1 Approaches to reading

Generally, the way a language teacher approaches the reading process determines how s/he will teach reading. According to Nunan (1991), there are two main approaches or views to teaching reading: the ***bottom-up*** view and the ***top-down*** view. The bottom-up view suggests that successful reading is a matter of ***decoding*** the individual written words to derive meaning, while the top-down view suggests that we use ***real-world knowledge*** or background to construct and interpret the written messages.

The central notion behind the ***bottom-up*** approach (phonics approach) is that reading is basically a matter of ***decoding*** a series of written symbols into their aural equivalents. Thus, the reader processes each letter as it is encountered. These letters, or ***graphemes***, are matched with the phonemes of the language that the reader already knows. These phonemes are blended together to form words. The derivation of meaning is thus the end process in which the language is translated from one form of ***symbolic representation*** to another. The main reason for the dominance and survival of this approach in the face of criticism is

that it seems a reasonable and logical explanation of what happens when we read.

On the other hand, the ***top-down*** (psycholinguistic) approach to reading places the ***reader*** rather than the text at the heart of the reading process. It emphasises the ***construction of meaning*** rather than the decoding of form. The interaction of the reader with the text is central to the process, and readers bring to this interaction their knowledge of the subject at hand, knowledge of and expectations about how language works, motivation, interest, and attitudes towards the content of the text. Rather than decoding each symbol, or even every word, the reader forms hypotheses about text elements and then samples the text to determine whether or not the hypotheses are correct (Nunan, 1991: p66).

Each of those two approaches or models has its own advantages and disadvantages. For example, while the bottom-up model might be suitable for beginning readers, the top-down model does not distinguish between beginning readers and fluent readers. Further, while the bottom-up model is focussed on ***spelling-to-sound correspondences*** which are both complex and unpredictable since many of the English words have irregular spellings, the top-down model is focussed on employing both our knowledge of linguistic forms and our knowledge of the world in understanding the text.

Drawing on the perceived deficiencies of both models, Stanovich (1980) proposes an ***interactive-compensatory model***. It suggests that readers process texts by utilising information provided simultaneously from several different sources; they can compensate for deficiencies at one level by drawing on

knowledge at other levels. These sources include: phonological, lexical, syntactic, semantic, and discoursal knowledge.

A modern theory for understanding the reading process is the ***schema theory*** which was associated with artificial intelligence and computer processing. In this regard, Minsky's 'frame' theory suggests that human memory consists of sets of ***stereotypical*** situations (frames) which guide comprehension by providing a ***framework*** for making sense of new experiences (Nunan, 1991: p67). Like frame theory, ***schema theory*** suggests that the knowledge we carry around in our heads is organised into ***interrelated patterns*** that are constructed from our previous experience of the experiential world and guide us as we ***make sense of*** new experiences. They also enable us to ***make predictions*** about what we might expect to experience in a given context. Given the fact that discourse comprehension is a process of ***utilising*** linguistic ***cues*** and ***background knowledge*** to ***reconstruct*** meaning, the schemata are extremely important, particularly to second and foreign language learners.

The schema theory has many implications for reading within English language teaching and learning contexts. For example, the pre-reading tasks are designed to build or ***activate*** the learner's schemata, and therefore, teachers should draw on this fact to familiarise learners with the target text. Thus, rather than attempting to neutralise texts, it would seem more suitable to prepare students by helping them to build background knowledge on the topic prior to reading, through appropriate pre-reading activities (Carrell, 1988).

Carrell (1988: p245) lists numerous ways in which relevant schemata may be constructed. These include: lectures, visual aids, demonstrations, real-life experiences, discussion, role-play, text previewing, introduction and discussion

of key vocabulary, and key-word/key-concept association activities. Examples of such contextualisation include, for example, showing pictures of a city before asking the students to read a text about that city, or playing a video clip from a film adaptation of the novel the class is about to study (see also Stott, 2001).

Moreover, it is possible to see reading as a ***practice***, ***product***, or ***process***. A number of scholars, as Wallace (2009) argues, tend to view reading as a ***practice*** by locating discussion of reading within the wider framework of literacy practices. Thus, reading is seen as part of the language behaviour beyond the learning of specific skills or strategies. In addition, it is viewed in the light of the everyday social practices particular to the cultural setting.

Those who view reading as a ***product*** reduce it into parts and components of the text. Thus, priority is given to the text and parts of texts with varying attention paid to form alone or the relationship between form and meaning. Simultaneously, particular reader skills may be identified as linked to the focus of specific textual features (Wallace, 2009). It is usually associated with the static information produced by testing techniques.

On the other hand, those who view reading as a ***process*** believe that the reader brings to the act of communication with an author his/her past experiences with the reading process, with language, and with life situations which serve to pre-dispose him/her toward certain responses (Hollander, 1975). In this context, reading is seen as an ***interactive*** process (not merely active) and readers are seen as negotiating meaning; meaning is partial within the text and writers' intentions may not be privileged over readers' interpretations. Thus, the reader rather than the text is taken as the point of departure. In addition, the psycho-linguistic, cognitive, and meta-cognitive processes going on inside the reader's

mind while s/he is interacting with the text are more important than the text itself. Thus, readers move beyond the text to make critical and cognitive links with their own life experiences (Wallace, 2009).

8.4.2 Principles of teaching reading

Harmer (2007) lists some principles for teaching reading. These are:

- *Encourage students to read as often and as much as possible*. The more students read, the better. Everything teachers do should encourage them to read ***extensively*** as well as ***intensively***.

- *Students need to be engaged with what they are reading*. During lessons, for example, teachers should do their best to ensure that their students are ***engaged*** with the topic of a reading text and the activities they are asked to do while dealing with it.

- *Encourage students to respond to the content of a text and explore their feelings about it, not just concentrate on its construction*. In other words, the ***meaning*** and the ***message*** of the text are just as important as the way the text is organised (e.g., the way the language is used and the number of paragraphs the text contains). As a result, teachers must give students a chance to ***respond*** to that message in some way (e.g., they should be allowed to show their feelings about the topic at hand).

- *Prediction is a major factor in reading*. The moment the reader gets some ***clues*** (e.g., the book cover, the headline, and some pictures/drawings), the brain starts ***predicting*** what s/he is going to read. Thus, ***expectations*** are set up and the active process of reading is ready to begin. In class, teachers should give students ***hints*** so that they also have a chance to predict what is coming.

- *Match the task to the topic when using intensive reading texts*. Once a decision has been taken about what reading text the students are going to read (and this rarely happens in Egyptian language classes since the reading texts are already there as part of the course), teachers need to choose good reading ***tasks***. These tasks can be represented in: the right kind of questions, appropriate activities before during and after reading, and useful study exploitation. The ***choice*** of a reading text should be determined by students' level, the topic of the text, and its linguistic and activation potential. Using appropriate tasks is extremely important; the most useful and interesting text, for example, can be undermined by boring and inappropriate tasks.

- *Good teachers exploit reading texts to the full*. This can be done through ***integrating*** the reading text into interesting lesson ***sequences***, using the topic for discussion and further tasks, using the language for study, and using a range of activities to bring the text to life.

In the same vein, the NCLRC (available at: *http://www.nclrc.org/essentials/reading/developread.htm*) states some useful principles that language teachers should draw on while dealing with reading activities:

- o *Construct the reading activity around a purpose that has significance for students.* Teachers should make sure that students understand what the purpose of reading is (e.g., to get the main idea, obtain specific information, understand most or all of the message, and enjoy a story). Recognising the purpose of reading will help students to select appropriate reading strategies.

- o *Define the activity's instructional goal and the appropriate type of response.* In addition to the main purpose for reading, an activity can

have one or more instructional purposes, such as practising or reviewing specific grammatical constructions, introducing new vocabulary, or familiarising students with the typical structure of a certain type of text.

o   *Check the level of difficulty of the text.* There are many factors that help the teacher to judge the relative ease or difficulty of a reading text for a particular purpose and a particular group of students. These include: how the information is organised; how familiar students are with the topic; whether the text contains redundancy; and whether the text offers visual support to aid in reading comprehension.

o   *Use pre-reading activities to prepare students for reading.* During pre-reading teachers might prepare students for reading by: assessing students' background of the topic; giving students the background knowledge necessary for the comprehension of the text; and making students aware of the type of text they will be reading and the purposes for reading.

8.4.3 Reading activities

There is a wide range of activities that can be used to develop the reading skill. These activities vary according to many factors such as the teaching/learning objectives, students' level, the type of reading in focus, the time allowed, the reading stage (i.e. pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading stages) and the way the classroom is organised. Sometimes reading activities are mainly meant to increase the **linguistic competence** of language learners, while others are meant to increase their **communicative competence**.

In this regard, the NCLRC identifies some activities which are appropriate for the pre-reading stage:

❖ Using the title, subtitles, and divisions within the text to predict content and organisation or sequence of information;

❖ Looking at pictures, maps, diagrams, or graphs and their captions;

❖ Talking about the author's background, writing style, and usual topics;

❖ Skimming to find the theme or main idea and eliciting related prior knowledge;

❖ Reviewing vocabulary or grammatical structures;

❖ Reading over the comprehension questions to focus attention on finding that information while reading;

❖ Constructing semantic webs (a graphic arrangement of concepts or words showing how they are related);

❖ Doing guided practice with guessing meaning from context or checking comprehension while reading.

Such pre-reading activities are important at lower levels of language proficiency and at earlier stages of reading instruction. As students become more proficient at using reading strategies, teachers will be able to reduce the amount of guided pre-reading and allow students to do these activities themselves.

Moreover, there are many reading activities that involve students in developing many other language aspects and skills. These include:

1-Jigsaw reading

Jigsaw reading is a classroom activity (a group activity) in which each member is dependent on the others for part of the information. The activity is fairly ***authentic*** and provides a real opportunity for ***genuine communication;*** it involves students in speaking and summarising skills. It is very useful when

working with short authentic texts such as newspaper articles. There are many ways of doing this activity. One way of doing it, for example, is to have two news stories that share a theme (e.g., two separate stories on crime). The teacher should prepare comprehension questions for each story, and then give one half of the class (Group A) one story, and the other half (Group B) the other. The students read their article, answer the questions, and check understanding. Students then pair up with someone from the other group and tell them about their story, and listen to the other's one. To help students remember their story the teacher may get them to take notes. Alternatively, the students can keep the article with them to refer to (see *http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/try/activities/jigsaw-reading*).

Harmer (2007: p107) provides another way of doing it. Students read a short text which sets up a problem and then, in three groups (expert groups), they read three different texts, all of which are about the same thing (i.e. different aspects of behaviour such as anger, or different reports on a problem, or different parts of a story or a strange event). When they have read their texts, they come together in groups (home groups) where each student has read a different text, and they try to work out the whole story, or describe the whole situation. The good thing about this activity is that it gives students a reason for reading, and then sharing what they have found out. To see a real example, please watch this video on a Jigsaw reading lesson: *http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eitqo_US4jA*

2-Look and Say

This activity or technique is appropriate for beginners. It helps learners to recognise whole words or short sentences rather than individual sounds.

Students will look at a word which a teacher sounds, and in turn will repeat the sound (the word). Flashcards with individual words written on them are used often accompanied with a related picture. Once having gone over many cards, learners will eventually start understanding written language.

3-Coming up with a title for the story

Students are required here to read the whole story silently so as to come up with an appropriate title. This activity encourages students to understand the main topic or theme of the story. The generated title might reflect to what extent a student could understand the main details.

4-Continue the story (predict an end)

In this activity the teacher stops at a certain point while reading a story, and asks students to predict what will happen next. This should give students opportunity to put pieces together and creatively think about an unseen future event. Along with the reading skill, students can develop many thinking and linguistic skills while doing this activity.

5-Different responses

According to Harmer (2007: p109), there are many things students can do with a reading text apart from answering comprehension questions or saying whether something is true or false, for instance. For example, when a text is full of facts and figures, teachers can get students to put the information into graphs, tables, or diagrams. Also, students might be asked to describe the people in the text (where no physical description is given). This will help them to visualise what they are reading. At higher levels, we can get students to infer the writer's attitude from the text.

8.5 Reflections and Ideas for Workshops

■ ***Discuss*** with your instructor the above section on 'how to teach reading' to come out with ***practical ideas*** that you can use for teaching reading activities in your classroom.

■ ***Select*** a reading exercise/activity (e.g., silent reading) from the textbook you are dealing with in your teaching practice sessions and ***demonstrate*** in the workshops (as a micro-teaching activity) how you will teach it. Please ***prepare*** your teaching notes for this exercise in advance based on both the ***guidelines*** that you concluded from the previous discussion with your instructor and the teaching notes included in the official teacher's guide you are using in your teaching practice. Also, please always consider the three stages of teaching reading: pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading stages, and adjust your teaching accordingly.

■ ***Select*** any of the reading activities discussed above (e.g., jigsaw reading, look and say, and continue the story), prepare for it, and then try to carry it out in the micro-teaching sessions.

CHAPTER NINE: TEACHING WRITING

9.1 Introduction

Generally, writing is a language skill, an everyday practice, a form of literacy, a communicative activity, and sometimes a means through which learners can be assessed, especially within the Egyptian context. As a method of communication, for example, writing can be used to establish and maintain contact with others, transmit information, express thoughts, feelings, and reactions, entertain, and persuade. As a personal or private activity, it can be a powerful tool for learning and remembering. It can be used to explore and refine ideas, organise thoughts, and record information. At school, learners are usually asked to use writing to display what they know, and thus, writing becomes the medium through which pupil learning is measured (Browne, 1999: p2).

Therefore, people write for different reasons and in a wide range of contexts. They normally write in order to:

- ❖ Get their message across;
- ❖ Convey important information and facts to others;
- ❖ Communicate their own intentions and purposes;
- ❖ Help and support others;
- ❖ Prove that they have mastered something;
- ❖ Put ideas on paper so that they are not lost;
- ❖ Plan for doing something by creating a schedule or timetable;
- ❖ Guide and direct others;
- ❖ Succeed in life and pass tests;
- ❖ Modify and re-draft something;
- ❖ Make money and earn living;

❖ Express themselves;

❖ Socialise and participate in different events;

❖ Organise ideas and say what one cannot communicate orally;

❖ Share ideas and experiences with others;

❖ State reflections and jot down personal diaries;

❖ Teach/Train others and provide them with feedback;

❖ Learn and internalise some linguistic aspects (e.g., vocabulary and grammar); and

❖ Simplify something.

According to Harmer (2007), composing or writing in a foreign language is always a ***demanding*** process where language learners need to employ many skills and strategies. As a productive skill, writing draws on other language skills such as listening and reading. That is why language teachers usually delay it until their students have done a great deal of listening and reading in the target language.

In its ***simplest*** form, writing may take the form of ***notation***: copying in conventional graphic form something already written, or reproducing in written form something that has been read or heard. This act hardly involves anything more than the ability to use the writing system of the language. Writing in the language becomes more ***complicated*** when it involves writing ***meaningful*** segments of language which might be used in specific circumstances by native speakers. This is the type of writing involved in things like grammatical exercises, the construction of simple dialogues, and dictation. In its most ***highly developed*** form, writing refers to the ***conveying*** of information or the ***expression*** of original ideas in the target language. These distinctions among the types of writing activities reflect the major areas of learning involved in the

writing process. Students must learn the ***graphic*** system and be able to spell according to the conventions of language. They must learn to control the structure according the canons of good writing. They must learn to ***select*** from among possible combinations of words and phrases those which will convey the meaning they have in mind (Rivers, 1981).

Furthermore, it is important to be aware of the differences between ***spoken*** and ***written*** language. When people speak, they normally seem more relaxed and less formal. They are likely to express themselves in a simple language which is full of hesitations, pauses, repetitions, etc. In this regard, Holliday (1985) and Nunan (1991) state some of the features that distinguish spoken from written texts:

- ❖ Spoken language sounds ***simpler*** than written language; Transcriptions of spoken language look ***less structured*** because they represent '***unedited'*** language. The ***lexical density*** of written texts (i.e. the number of lexical or content words per clause) makes writing seem more complex;

- ❖ Spoken forms are in a sense more basic than the written forms; in writing, we have normally altered the normal state of events;

- ❖ Compared with speech, writing is often ***de-contextualised***; in communicating a message, writers are usually distant in time and place from the person(s) with whom they wish to communicate. Because of this lack of direct contact with the reader, they are unable to make use of feedback from others to adjust their message;

- ❖ People usually exert more ***effort*** during writing as they do their best to clarify their message. This absence of the physical and paralinguistic features that the speaker uses to support his/her utterance adds burdens to the writer.

9.2 The Writing Sub-skills

Writing is a ***broad*** skill that has many manifestations that might be referred to as 'writing sub-skills'. These are the concrete skills that language learners need to develop so as to be efficient writers in the target language. They include (see: *http://miguelbengoa.com/elt/?p=87*):

1. Manipulating the script of the language: handwriting, spelling, and punctuation;

2. Expressing grammatical (syntactic and morphological) relationships at the sentence level;

3. Expressing relationships between parts of a written text through cohesive devices (especially through grammatical devices such as noun-pronoun reference);

4. Using markers in written discourse, in particular:

- introducing an idea
- developing an idea
- making a transition to another idea
- concluding an idea
- emphasising a point (and indicating main or important information)
- explaining or clarifying a point already made
- anticipating an objection or contrary view

5. Expressing the communicative function of written sentences:

- using explicit markers
- without using explicit markers

6. Expressing information or knowledge in writing: both explicitly and implicitly;

7. Expressing conceptual meaning;

8. Planning and organising written information in expository language, which includes:

- narrative
- straight description of phenomena or ideas
- descriptions of process or change of state
- argument

9.3 Writing Fostered by New Technologies

The writing skill nowadays has been fostered by new technologies. In particular, some Web-based facilities have recently enabled new genres of writing and made it possible to share and develop ideas in an infinite fashion. For example, Wikis have enabled '***collaborative writing***' in which case learners collaborate together online to produce something. Through Wikis, language learners can add, edit, and delete the content in a developmental fashion that was not possible before. Similarly, through Blogs, learners have become able to practise '***connective writing***' in which case they can post content and comment on posts made. Thus, the same post may raise a great deal of arguments connected together. This might result in ***threaded discussions*** in which the ideas are developed continuously with no end. Unlike the case in traditional, paper-based writing, students while writing online (whether connectively or collaboratively) write purposefully, sometimes in response to others' accounts, keeping in mind the potential audience. Besides, there is no end for the writing, as the dialogue will continue when others comment on what has been written and post new pieces that stimulate discussion.

This state of affairs has provided online spaces to practise writing and develop the different writing skills that learners need in the 21st century. Writing has become a ***collaborative*** activity rather than a ***static*** product that a student

initiates and finishes individually with no interference from others. Besides, the way that learners write ***online*** is totally different from the way they write ***on paper***. Writing online enables writers to:

❖ Easily correct themselves (self-correction) while they are writing;

❖ Use many options such as checking spelling and grammar to produce accurate pieces;

❖ Exploit multiple resources while writing and copy and paste parts easily and flexibly;

❖ Reflect on what they are writing by employing different techniques such as the 'find' feature that enables them to locate any word/phrase in the text;

❖ Re-order the content they have written and fill in the gaps when necessary;

❖ View models of good writing that might help them with organising their ideas and developing their writing skills;

❖ Contrast different accounts and summarise what they have written;

❖ Establish an e-mail dialogue with other students who are reading the same content;

❖ Write to a real audience for realistic and communicative purposes;

❖ View written accounts belonging to different genres and practise multi-genre writing online;

❖ Make use of the authentic content available online while writing.

9.4 Teaching Writing

9.4.1 Writing as a process vs. writing as a product

Perceiving writing either as a process or as a product drastically determines how we teach writing. The '***product'*** approach to writing is a ***teacher-centred*** approach that focuses solely on ***accuracy***. It focuses on the ***end result*** of the learning process – what it is that the learner is expected to be able to do as a fluent and competent user of the language (Nunan, 1991: p86). In other words, teachers are concerned with the ***outcome*** or product that learners eventually produce. Thus, writing in the target language is seen more as a purely ***linguistic*** activity than as a ***communicative*** activity. It is viewed as a standard practice that can be easily measured and scored objectively based on some pre-determined criteria. Thus, the ***product-oriented*** approach favours classroom activities in which the learner is engaged in imitating, copying, and transforming models of correct language.

On the other hand, the '***process***' approach focuses on ***fluency*** more than on accuracy, and on ***quantity*** more than on quality. It focuses mainly on the various classroom activities which are believed to promote the development of skilled language use. Teachers adopting this approach, instead of looking at completed texts, are much more interested in the ***process*** writers go through in composing texts. They believe that competent writers do not produce final texts at their first attempt, and that writing is a long and often painful process, in which the final text emerges through ***successive*** drafts. Thus, beginning writers are encouraged to get their ideas on paper in ***any shape*** or form without worrying too much about formal correctness or grammar. Further, this approach encourages collaborative group work between learners as a way of enhancing motivation and developing positive attitudes towards writing (Nunan, 1991: p87).

Accordingly, writing is a creative, expressive, and ***learner-centred*** activity in which the learners' personal characteristics, attitudes, and feelings play vital roles. Thus, the student writer's ***voice*** comes to the fore as an essential component of the wiring process which is an individual process in the first place (Reid, 2009). In this sense, and as Harmer (2009: p113) states, writing is not a linear process that follows a pre-determined order; instead, it is a complicated, ***iterative*** process that might go in a ***chaotic*** order. Thus, writers may plan, draft, *re*-plan, draft, edit, *re*-edit, *re*-plan, etc before they produce their final version. This way, students are writing-for-writing beside writing-for-learning.

_____

9.4.2 Factors influencing the teaching of writing

There are many factors that language teachers should consider for teaching writing. For example, the kind of writing they ask students to do and the way they ask them to do it will depend on learners' age, level, learning styles, and interests. Thus, they should not ask beginners to try to put together a complex narrative composition in English. As Harmer (2009) puts it, in order to help students to write successfully and enthusiastically in different styles, we need to consider three separate issues: genre, the writing process, and building the writing habit.

Generally, ***genre*** (the French equivalent of 'sort', 'kind', or 'type), according to Wikipedia, is the term for any category of literature or other forms of art or culture (e.g., music) and in general, any type of discourse, whether written or spoken, audio or visual, based on some set of stylistic criteria. Genres are formed by conventions that change over time as new genres are invented and the use of old ones is discontinued. Often, works fit into multiple genres by way of borrowing and recombining these conventions. As far as writing is concerned, a

genre is a type of writing which members of a discourse community would instantly recognise for what it was. Thus, we recognise a small ad in a newspaper the moment we see it because, being members of a particular group, we have seen many of such texts before and are familiar with the way they are constructed. Therefore, one of the important decisions language teachers need to make is ***which genres*** are important and/or engaging for their students. Then, they can show them examples of texts within a genre to help them to see how typical texts within a genre are constructed. This knowledge will help them to ***construct*** appropriate texts of their own. At lower levels, learners might be given clear models to follow and imitate. However, as their language levels improve, their writing should express their own creativity within a genre, rather than imitating it (Harmer, 2009: p113).

Teachers should also consider the issue of ***writing as a process***. They should encourage students to plan, draft, and edit in a dialogic, iterative fashion. In order to develop writing as a process, teachers need to be both ***patient*** and ***tolerant*** allowing learners sometimes to err and violate grammatical rules for the sake of producing a creative content that reflects self-expression and personal thinking. Thus, learners should be allowed to do many attempts before producing a final version.

Moreover, teachers should help their students to ***build*** the ***writing habits***. Often, students feel too bored to write or find it difficult to start. This is quite normal, and therefore, the teacher's role lies in encouraging them from the very beginning to make writing an essential component of their daily activities.

In addition, teachers should do their best to make writing ***interesting, realistic,*** and ***relevant*** to their students. For example, the more the writing topic is

interesting to students and relevant to their daily lives, the more they are likely to develop their writing skills and produce reasonable accounts. In other words, writing should be ***contextualised*** within the learners' culture. Thus, it might be better to ask Egyptian learners to write in English on agriculture in Egypt or the over-population problem there, than to ask them to write on the English weather or life in London.

9.4.3 Principle of teaching writing

The following principles should act as guidelines for language teachers while teaching writing:

- Teachers should do their best to develop writing as a habit for their students;
- Teachers should find ways to ***involve*** those learners who are ***reluctant*** to write (e.g., exposing them gradually to writing; asking them to write about something they like; and giving them rewards after producing a reasonable written account)
- Teachers should consider the goals behind the writing activities/exercises at hand and adjust their teaching accordingly;
- During free writing exercises, teachers should avoid over-correction and try their best to be encouraging, tolerant, and flexible all the time;
- Beside striving to obtain an accurate product from students after writing, teachers should also focus on writing as a ***process*** by understanding the overlapping socio-cultural, psycholinguistic, and personal aspects associated with writing;
- Teachers should do their best to make the writing activity ***interesting*** and ***relevant*** to their students;
- Teachers should involve their students in various ***genres*** of writing;

- Teacher should relate and integrate writing with other language *skills/aspects* such as reading and listening.

9.4.4 Writing activities

Deciding on writing activities by teachers depends on many factors such as: students' level, their average age, the future intentions for the writing (e.g., school tests), the specific writing skills in focus, the language aspects that a teacher wants to address, and the writing genre in focus. Thus, an important question to ask oneself is: What should the students be able to produce at the end of this exercise? (e.g., a well written letter, a report, an essay, an advertisement, a story, etc.). Another important question is: What is the focus of the exercise? (e.g., structure, tense usage, and creative writing). Once these factors are clear in the teacher's mind, the teacher can begin to focus on how to involve the students in the activity thus promoting a positive, long-term learning experience (see: *http://esl.about.com/cs/teachingtechnique/a/a_twrite.htm*).

Harmer (2007) mentions a reasonable range of writing activities. These include:

1-Instant writing activities: Using instant writing activities as often as possible, especially with reluctant writers, can help with building the writing habit. In these activities, students are asked to write immediately in response to a teacher's request. For example, students might be dictated half sentences to complete (e.g., 'My favourite hobby is …', and 'I will never forget the time I …'). Teachers can also give students three words and tell them to put them into a sentence as quickly as possible. Instant writing is designed both to make students comfortable when writing, and also to give them thinking time before they say the sentences they have written aloud.

2-Newspapers and magazines: Newspapers and magazines offer different kinds of text that allow for genre analysis, and then writing within that genre. For example, students might be asked to look at a range of different articles to analyse how headlines are constructed, and how articles are normally arranged. They then can write an article about a real or imaginary news story that interests them.

3-Collaborative writing activities: Students gain a lot from constructing texts together, especially through using online tools such as Wikis and Google Documents. For example, teachers can have them build up a letter on the board, where each line is written by a different student. Also, teachers can tell a story which students then have to try to reproduce in groups. When students have created their own versions of the same story they have already heard, they might compare their version with the original as a way of increasing their language awareness. Teachers can also set up a ***story circle*** in which each student in the group has a piece of paper on which they write the first line of a story (as dictated to them by the teacher). They then have to write the next sentence, and then pass their papers to the person next to them, and so on. Finally, when the papers get back to their original owners, those students write the conclusion. Another variety of the same activity might be to engage students in collaborative writing around a computer screen. They can use a Word processing application for writing, or an online tool such as Wiki to produce a written outcome.

4-Writing to each other: Students can be asked to write e-mails or any other kind of messages to each other. They can be also involved, under the teacher's supervision, in live chat sessions on the Internet.

9.5 Reflections and Ideas for Workshops

■   *Discuss* with your instructor the above section on 'how to teach writing' to come out with *practical ideas* that you can use for teaching writing activities in your classroom.

■   *Select* a writing exercise/activity from the textbook you are dealing with in your teaching practice sessions and *demonstrate* in the workshops (as a micro-teaching activity) how you will teach it. Please *prepare* your teaching notes for this exercise in advance based on both the *guidelines* that you concluded from the previous discussion with your instructor and the teaching notes included in the official Teacher's Guide you are using in your teaching practice. Also, please always consider the three stages of teaching writing: pre-writing, while-writing, and post-writing stages, and adjust your teaching accordingly.

■   *Select* any of the writing activities discussed above, prepare for it, and then try to carry it out in the micro-teaching sessions.

REFERENCES

Abdallah, M. M. S. (2008). "New literacies or new challenges?": The development of the concept of literacy in the context of information and communication technologies and language teaching. *ERIC*. ED502132.

Abdallah, M. M. S. (2010b). Web-based new literacies: Revisiting literacy in TESOL and EFL teacher education. *Paper presented at the Australian Council of TESOL Associations (ACTA) International TESOL Conference titled: Redefining "TESOL" for the 21st Century - Language learning and teaching for the future.* Surfer's Paradise Holiday Inn, Gold Coast, Australia (7-10 July, 2010). [Online] Available from: http://eric.exeter.ac.uk/exeter/handle/10036/111761 (Accessed 1st October 2010).

Abdallah, M. M. S. (2011). *Teaching English as a Foreign Language from a New Literacy Perspective: A Guide for Egyptian EFL Student Teachers*. VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, Saarbrücken, Germany

Abdallah, M. M. S. (2011). The Internet in EFL teacher education: Investigating the possibilities and challenges in a pre-service education programme. *Sino-US English Teaching*, 8(1).

Alexander, B. (2006). Web 2.0: A new wave of innovation for teaching and learning? *Educause Review*, 41(2), (March/April), 32–44.

Asher, J. (1969). The Total Physical Response approach to second language learning. *The Modern Language Journal,* 53(1), pp. 3-17.

Au, K. (2006*). Multicultural issues and literacy achievement*. Routledge, London.

Barnard, R. (2004). The diverse aims of second language teaching: Implications for New Zealand primary schools. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies,* 39(2), 207-21.

Barton, D. & Hamilton, M. (1998). *Local Literacies: Reading and writing in one community*. Routledge, London.

Barton, D. (2009). Understanding textual practices in a changing world. In: M. Baynham & M. Prinsloo (eds.) *The Future of Literacy Studies*. Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Benson, P. & Voller, P. (Eds.) (1997). *Autonomy and Independence in Language Learning.* Longman, London.

Biancarosa, G. & Snow, C. E. (2004). *Reading next—A vision for action and research in middle and high school literacy: A report from Carnegie Corporation of New York*. Alliance for Excellent Education, Washington, DC.

Biesta, G. J. & Burbules, N. C. (2003). *Pragmatism and educational research*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Lanham.

Bloomfield, L. (1942). *Outline Guide for the Practical Study of Foreign Languages*. Linguistic Society of America, Baltimore, MD.

Brooks, N. (1964). *Language and language learning: Theory and practice*. 2nd ed. Harcourt Brace, New York.

Brown, H. D. (2002). English language teaching in the "post-methods" era: Towards better diagnosis, treatment and assessment. In: J. C. Richards & W. A. Renandya, (Eds.), *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice* (pp. 9-18). Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Browne, A. (1999). *Teaching writing: Key stage 1 and before*. Trans-Atlantic Publications.

Bygate, M. (2009). Speaking. In: R. Carter & D. Nunan (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other languages* (11th Ed.). Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Carrell, P. L. (1988). Interactive text processing: Implications for ESL/second language reading classrooms. In P. L. Carrell, J. Devine, & D. E. Eskey (Eds.), *Interactive approaches to second language reading*. CUP, Cambridge.

Carter, R. & Nunan, D. (Eds.), (2009). *The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other languages* (11th Ed.). Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Coiro, J. & Dobler, B. (2007). Exploring the online reading comprehension strategies used by sixth-grade skilled readers to search for and locate information on the Internet. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 42, 214-57.

Coiro, J. (2005). Making sense of online text. *Educational Leadership*, 63(2), 30-35.

Coleman, A. (1929). *The teaching of modern foreign languages in the United States*. Publications of the American and Canadian committees on modern languages, vol. 12. Macmillian, New York.

Crotty, M. (2003). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Sage, London.

Cope, B. and Kalantzis, M. (Eds.), (2000). *Multiliteracies: Literacy learning and the design of social futures*. Routledge, London.

Crystal, D. (2001). *Language and the Internet*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Cumming-Potvin, W., Renshaw, P., & Van Kraayenoord, C. E. (2003). A sociocultural analysis of language learning: New forms of literacy practices in a language and culture awareness programme. *Language and Education: An International Journal*, 17 (6), 391-407.

Dale, E. (1969). *Audiovisual methods in teaching*. Dryden Press, NY.

Dallas, D. & Gomm, H. (1998). *Hello! 3: Teacher's guide for preparatory English, Year 1*. Egyptian International Publishing Company, Longman.

Dewey, J. (1929). "The sources of a science of education". In: *The Later Works (1925-1953)*, edited by Jo Ann Boydston. Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, 5: 1-40.

Eagleton, M. B. & Dobler, E. (2007). *Reading the Web: Strategies for Internet inquiry*. The Guilford Press, New York.

Erben, T., Ban, R., & Castaneda, M (2009). *Teaching English language learners through technology*. Routledge, New York.

Florez, M. (1999). Improving adult English language learners' speaking skills. National Center for ESL Literacy Education. *ERIC Digest*. [Online] Available from: http://www.cal.org/ncle/digests/speak.htm (Accessed: 10 June, 2001)

Gagne, R., Briggs, L., Wager, W. (1988). *Principles of instructional design* (3rd ed.). Holt, Reinhart and Winston, New York.

Gee, J. P. (1996). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses* (2nd Ed.). Taylor & Francis, London.

Hamlyn, D. W. (1995). 'Epistemology, history of'. In: T. Honderich (Ed*.), The Oxford Companion to Philosophy.* Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 242-5.

Hanson-Smith, E. (2009). Computer-assisted language learning. In: R. Carter & D. Nunan (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other languages* (11th Ed.). Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (pp. 107-13).

Harmer, J. (2001). *The practice of English language teaching*. Person Education Limited, England.

Harmer, J. (2007). *How to teach English*. Pearson Education Limited, England.

Hassanein, O. S. (2004). The Effect of Using a Suggested Training Program Based on Mnemonic Strategies on Developing Vocabulary Retention and Retrieval of EFL Majors at the Faculty of Education in the New Valley. *PhD Thesis*. Cairo University, Egypt.

Henry, L. A. (2006). SEARCHing for an answer: The critical role of new literacies while reading on the Internet. *Reading Teacher*, 59(7), 614-27.

Hollander, S. K. (1975). Reading: Process and product. *The Reading Teacher, 28(6).*

Holliday, M. A. K. (1985). *Spoken and written language*. Deakin University Press, Victoria.

Hu, G. (2005). Professional development of secondary EFL teachers: Lessons from China. *Teachers College Record*, 107(4), 654-705.

Jewitt, C. & Kress, G. (Eds.) (2003). *Multimodal Literacy*. Peter Lang, New York.

Johnston, P. H. (1983). *Reading comprehension assessment: A cognitive basis*. International Reading Association.

Kern, R. (2000). *Literacy and language teaching*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Knobel, M. (1999). *Everyday literacies: Students, discourse, and social practice*. Peter Lang, New York.

Larsen-Freeman, D. (2009). Grammar. In: R. Carter & D. Nunan (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other languages* (11th Ed.). Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (pp. 34-41).

Leu, D. J., Coiro, J., Castek, J., Hartman, D., Henry, L., & Reinking, D. (2008). Research on instruction and assessment in the new literacies of online reading comprehension. In: C. C. Block, S. Parris, & P. Afflerbach (eds.), *Comprehension instruction: Research-based best practices*. Guilford Press, New York.

Leu, D. J. & Kinzer, C. K. (2000). The convergence of literacy instruction and networked technologies for information and communication. *Reading Research Quarterly,* 35, 108-27.

Leu, D. J., Kinzer, C. K., Coiro, J. L. & Cammack, D. W. (2004). Toward a theory of new literacies emerging from the Internet and other information and communication technologies. *International Reading Association* [Online]. Available from: http://www.readingonline.org/newliteracies/leu/ (Accessed 10th March 2008).

Leu, D. J., McVerry, J. G., O'Bryne, W. I., Zawilinski, L., Castek, J., & Hartman, D. K. (2009). The new literacies of online reading comprehension and the irony of no child left behind: Students who require our assistance the most, actually receive it the least. In: L. M.

Morrow, R. Rueda, & D. Lapp (eds.), *Handbook of research on literacy and diversity*. Guilford, New York.

Leu, D. J., Zawilinski, L., Castek, J., Banerjee, M., Housand, B., & Liu, Y. (2007). What is new about the new literacies of online reading comprehension? In: L. Rush, J. Eakle, & A. Berger (eds.), *Secondary school literacy: What research reveals for classroom practices*. National Council of Teachers of English, Urbana, IL. pp. 37-68.

Leu, D. J. (2002). The new literacies: Research on reading instruction with the Internet and other digital technologies. In: J. Samuels, & A. E. Farstrup (eds.), *What research has to say about reading instruction*. International Reading Association, Newark, DE. pp. 310-36.

Levy, M. (1997). *Computer-Assisted Language Learning: Context and conceptualization*. Oxford University Press, New York.

Lozanov, G. (1978). *Suggestology and outlines of suggestopedy.* Gordon and Breach, New York.

McKay, S. (1987). *Teaching grammar: Form, function, and technique*. Prentice Hall, Hemel Hempstead.

Mikulecky, B. S. (1990). *A short course in teaching reading skills*. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, USA.

Mead, N. & Rubin, D. (1985). Assessing listening and speaking skills. *ERIC Digest*. ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills Urbana IL. ED263626

Mekheimer, M. (2005). *Effects of Internet-based instruction, using Webquesting and e-mail on developing some essay writing skills in prospective teachers at the Faculty of Education at Beni Suef*. PhD dissertation. Beni Suef Faculty of Education, Egypt.

Mintrop, H. (2001). Educating students to teach in a constructivist way – Can it all be done? *Teachers College Record*, 103, 207–39.

Moore, W. (2003). Effective Internet search strategies: Internet search engines, meta-indexes and web directories. *Alexander Campbell King Law Library Presentations at University of Georgia School of Law*. [Online] Available from: http://digitalcommons.law.uga.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1025&context=speeches (Accessed 16th November 2008).

Nazir, M. F. (1998). *Teaching English as a foreign language*. Assiut University College of Education, Egypt.

Nunan, D. (1991). *Language teaching methodology: A textbook for teachers*. Prentice Hall International, London.

Ohta, A. S. (2000). Rethinking interaction in SLA: Developmentally appropriate assistance in the zone of proximal development and the acquisition of L2 grammar. In: J. P. Lantolf (ed.) *Sociocultural theory and second language learning*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Oxford, R. (2009). Language learning strategies. In: R. Carter & D. Nunan (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other languages* (11th Ed.). Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (pp. 166-72).

Prator, C. & Celce-Murcia, M. (1979). "An outline of language teaching approaches." In: M. Celce-Murcia & L. McIntosh (Ed.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language*. Newbury House, New York.

Pritchard, A. (2007). *Effective teaching with Internet technologies*. Paul Chapman Publishing, California.

Redmond, M. (2000). *Communication: Theories and applications*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, New York.

Reid, J. (2009). Writing. In: R. Carter & D. Nunan (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other languages* (11th Ed.). Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (pp. 28-33).

Reid, L. (1977). *Speaking well* (3rd Ed.). Hill Book Company, Mc Grow, New York.

Richards, J., Platt, J., & Weber, H. (1985). *Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics*. Longman, London.

Richards, J. & Rodgers, T. (2001). *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. (2nd Ed.) Cambridge University Press, New York.

Richards, J. & Schmidt, R. (2002). *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching & Applied Linguistics* (3rd ed.). Pearson Education Limited, London.

Richardson, W. (2009). *Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts, and other powerful Web tools for classrooms*. Corwin Press.

Rivers, W. M. (1981). *Teaching foreign language skills* (2nd Edition). University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Rosencrance, L. (2003). Sidebar: Artificial intelligence and the smarter search engine. Computerworld. [Online] Available from:

http://www.computerworld.com/softwaretopics/software/appdev/story/0,10801,86
     988,00.html (Accessed: 16th November 2008).

Rost, M. (2009). Listening. In: R. Carter & D. Nunan (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other languages* (11th Ed.). Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (pp. 7-13).

Sharma, P. & Barrett, B. (2007). *Blended learning: Using technology in and beyond the language classroom*. Macmillan, Oxford.

Shetzer, H. & Warschauer, M. (2000). An electronic literacy approach to network-based language teaching. In: M. Warschauer & R. Kern (Eds.), *Network-based language teaching: Concepts and practice.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Shumin, K. (1997). Factors to consider: Developing adult EFL students' speaking abilities. *Forum*, 36(3).

Singh, G., & Richards, J. C. (2006). Teaching and learning in the language teacher education course room: A critical sociocultural perspective. *RELC Journal*, 37 (2), 149-75.

Smith, D. G., & Barber, E. (2005). *Teaching English with information technology: How to teach English using the Internet, software, and email - For the Professional English Language Teacher*. Modern English Publishing, London.

Son, J.-B. (2008). Using Web-based language learning activities in the ESL classroom. *International Journal of Pedagogies and Learning*, [Online] 4(4), 34-43 Available from: http://www.apacall.org/ijpl/v4n4/IJPLv4n4_article3.pdf (Accessed: 1st January 2009).

Stanovich, K. (1980). Toward an interactive-compensatory model of individual differences in the development of reading fluency. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 16, 32-71.

Stott, N. (2001). Helping ESL students become better readers: Schema theory applications and limitations. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 7(11).

Street, B. (1984). *Literacy in theory and practice*. CUP, Cambridge.

Street, B. (1995). *Social literacies: Critical approaches to literacy in development, ethnography, and education*. Longman, Harlow.

Street, B. (2008). New literacies, new times: Developments in literacy studies. In: B. Street and N. Hornberger (2008) (Eds.) *Encyclopedia of Language and Education 2: Literacy*. Springer, pp3-14.

Street, B. (2009). Multiple literacies and multi-literacies. In: R. Beard, D.A. Myhill & J.Riley (Eds.), *Handbook of writing Development*. Sage, London.

Teeler, D, & Gray, P. (2000). *How to use the Internet in ELT*. Longman, Harlow.

The New London Group (1996) A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard Educational Review,* 66(1), 60-92.

Thornbury, S. (2005). *How to teach speaking*. Longman, Harlow, England.

Toyoda, E., & Harrison, R. (2002). Categorization of text chat communication between learners and native speakers of Japanese. *Language Learning & Technology*, [Online] 6 (1), 82–99 Available from: http://llt.msu.edu/vol6num1/pdf/toyoda.pdf (Accessed 4th January 2009).

Trokeloshvili, D. A., & Jost, N. H. (1997). The Internet and foreign language instruction: Practice and discussion. *The Internet TESL Journal*, [Online] 3(8) Available from: http://iteslj.org/Articles/Trokeloshvili-Internet.html (Accessed 6th January 2009).

Ur, P. (1988). *Grammar practice activities*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Wallace, C. (2009). Reading. In: R. Carter & D. Nunan (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other languages* (11th Ed.). Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (pp. 21-27).

Warschauer, M. (2000). Online learning in second language classrooms: An ethnographic study. In: M. Warschauer & R. Kern (eds.), *Network-based language teaching: Concepts and practice*. Cambridge University Press, New York.

Warschauer, M., & Healey, D., (1998). Computers and language learning: an overview. *Language Teaching*, 31, 57–71 [Online].

Warschauer, M., Shetzer, H., & Meloni, C. (2000). *Internet for English teaching*. Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Alexandria, VA.

Wertsch, J. V. (1991). *Voices of the mind: A sociocultural approach to mediated action*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Yelon, S. L. (1991). Writing and using instructional objectives. In: L. J. Briggs, K. L. Gustafson, & M. H. Tillman (Eds.), *Instructional design: Principles and applications* (2nd edition) (pp. 75-121). Educational Technology, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.