ANALYSIS OF FACTORS THAT PROMOTE CRITICAL READING BY EFL STUDENTS IN A TURKISH EDUCATIONAL SETTING

A THESIS
PRESENTED BY
BİROL AXYÜZ

TO
THE INSTITUTE OF ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF ARTS IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

BİLMİNT UNIVERSITY
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ABSTRACT

Title: Analysis of Factors that Promote Critical Reading by EFL Students in a Turkish Educational Setting

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The Turkish education system has frequently been characterized as based on a read and repeat model, imposing knowledge in chunks based on memorization, instead of enabling the individual to think creatively, solve problems and interpret information. The latter set of skills have been collectively labeled as critical thinking (CT). In its basic form, critical thinking in reading (CR), is held to promote the student’s ability to think autonomously, by being able to make judgments and predictions, draw conclusions, make inferences, and detect biases during reading. CR is particularly important as these skills are needed to be developed for success in academic studies and post university professions.

This study sought to identify the factors that can promote CR. The research questions asked in the study were as follows:

1. What are the factors that teachers judge “critical” in CR?
2. To what extent do students use CR skills in carrying out reading tasks?
3. Which instructional procedures do teachers employ to promote CR?
4. What instructional procedures do students think can provide them with effective use of CR skills?

These research questions were investigated by administration of questionnaires to students and their teachers at Erciyes University and through interviews with the teachers of the subject students. The student questionnaire included a reading passage with assigned tasks requiring application of CR skills. These tasks were given to determine the actual performance of the students in terms of CR. The subjects (students and teachers) were asked to rate CR skills according to their perceived importance. In addition, instructors were asked to rate the frequency and kind of CT activities used in their reading classes.

The findings of the study indicate controversial findings since the responses given by students and teachers were not consistent with one another. Teachers supported the idea that students need more practice, and hence, further enhancement of CT skills in reading. In contrast, the majority of students indicated little need for the enhancement of CT skills in reading and very few stated that they lacked these skills. The results of the reading text assessment indicated that student performance was not consistent with their questionnaire responses and that, generally, they lacked the ability to perform CR tasks. The mismatch in the answers of students and teachers indicates further need for instructional focus on CR skills.
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MA THESIS EXAMINATION RESULT FORM

August 31, 1997

The examining committee appointed by the Institute of Economics and Social Sciences for the thesis examination of the MA TEFL student

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has read the thesis of the student.
The committee has decided that the thesis of the student is satisfactory.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Although the concept of critical thinking (CT) has been the subject of growing interest throughout the past three decades, it is not a new concept. The conceptualization of “thinking” was first considered by Aristotle, Plato and Socrates (see Chapter 2 for a discussion of Socratic Dialog). Socrates taught his students how to think clearly and critically about contradictions of evidence presented in arguments and how to use various techniques in reasoning (Pogrow, 1990).

Over the past decades, there has been much interest in CT; however, it remains a complicated and controversial concept. Different approaches to CT have defined its relation to different domains of inquiry and integrated it into different theoretical approaches. There are various definitions, but there is no agreed upon use of terminology (see Chapter 2 for a discussion of the definition of CT). One definition of CT is that it is autonomous thinking that analyzes and evaluates arguments into particular meanings and interpretations and strives to find a way to truth by developing logical reasoning patterns and understanding biases underlying particular positions (Siegel, 1988). In other instances, CT has been associated with problem solving, decision making, and creative thinking. In a more general sense, CT is used as an umbrella term for all higher-order thinking skills (Presseisen, 1986).

Students need to develop CT skills for success in their academic studies and post university professions as well as for personal benefit (Dubin et al., 1986). University students entering an important stage of adulthood need to develop a concept of independence and the ability to make their own decisions. In addition, students need to develop an awareness of the factors which will promote successful university studies.
One crucial factor is developing good thinking skills based on the medium of reading. The study of written texts, as Dubin et al. (1986) assert, is the most important means of promoting CT in an academic setting.

The application of CT in foreign language learning, and in reading in particular, requires certain skills and abilities. Students need these skills and abilities to do in depth studies of professional material in various academic areas, since most of the knowledge that students are expected to learn is found in textbooks. Therefore, CT in reading is a valuable aid to students to promote their learning.

Critical reading (CR) is viewed as the application of the various CT processes to a written text. In other words, CR is the use of CT skills in reading known as critical reading (CR). Robinson (in Smith, 1991) defines CR as the ability to apply relevant criteria in evaluating a text; including judgment of truth, validity and worth of what is being read, based on criteria or standards developed through previous experience (see Chapter 2 for a discussion of CR). In sum, academic success is closely related to the acquisition of CR skills, since students are required to do extensive reading for academic purposes.

To enable the acquisition of CR skills, the role of the teacher, student and materials need to be analyzed. It is through such analysis that we can help Turkish students develop and employ CR skills. This thesis takes the position that CR is a cornerstone for intellectual growth in foreign language learning not only at Erciyes University but in other educational institutions in Turkey as well. The question that comprises the focus of this study is the identification of the factors that can promote CR.
Background of the Study

The Turkish education system has frequently been characterized as a “read and repeat” model. Celep (1993) asserts that instead of imposing knowledge in chunks based on memorization, the individual should be able to think creatively, solve problems, and be able to interpret information. The assumption is that today’s and tomorrow’s citizens need to be critical thinkers and problem solvers rather than repositories of someone else’s information. In addition, Bursalioglu (1973), drawing on the findings of his study calls attention to the inadequacies of the Turkish education system in enabling learners to become critical thinkers for the contemporary and future world, in the sense that it fails to teach certain skills. It can be said that CT is a relatively new educational concept in Turkey.

In the case of the Preparatory School at Erciyes University, CR is likewise a new concept in the university setting. In none of the faculties or in the preparatory school of Erciyes University are students exposed to CR as a part of the course requirements and there is not presently a CR component in the proficiency requirement for the preparatory school or the faculties within Erciyes University. Given the current lack of emphasis on the instruction of CR in Turkish education, in general, we can expect students who are admitted to Erciyes University to bring along with them learning habits based on memorization and rote learning (Celep, 1993). As Celep argues, students starting university may have difficulty in knowing what it means to think critically. They may not be able to form necessary linkages between previously pieces of acquired knowledge that are essential for retention and problem-solving. This may be due to the fact that teachers and text developers have been thought of as being the center of knowledge and dispensers of the right answers. Consequently, students may try to memorize teachers’
and authors' statements in text books and give similar answers to avoid failing, that is radically different from CR in which readers are actively in questioning and developing their own conceptual world.

Due to the fact that engineering, medical, civil aviation, and business administration and economics students comprise the majority of the preparatory school, they need to read extensively in their professional fields. Therefore, reading cannot merely be a skill on which students are tested for comprehension, but should be developed as a skill in thinking critically which they must acquire in order to evaluate and interpret new information and become independent learners after graduating from the preparatory school to enable them to cope with their English for Special Purposes (ESP) courses in their freshman classes.

In fact, the primary aim of the preparatory school is charged with developing the required proficiency level for ESP classes. In the case of the students at Erciyes University, they come from a heterogeneous background and from different faculties, consequently, they possess different character traits and tendencies towards the acquisition and performance of CR.

Statement of the Problem

As noted earlier, given the lack of CR skills in the curriculum at the preparatory school, we do not as of yet have models for teaching CR skills. In other words, we do not know how to teach these skills. The question then, is how to encourage models of thinking, learning and reading based on the problem solving and decision making skills called CR. In sum, there remain gaps in our understanding of how capacities for CR skills can be developed. Given that this is the case, the first and foremost step in
resolving this issue seems to be the identification of the promoting factors that can enable the acquisition of CR skills.

Purpose of the Study

It is said that students can improve their thinking ability by employing the factors that promote CR. Once students incorporate these skills, they can become efficient critical thinkers in every field of endeavor. CR skills are essential for academic students who must read a variety of writing styles for informational purposes.

Given the current gap in our understanding of how to develop CR skills, this study sets out to identify the factors that can promote CR skills of students at the preparatory school at Erciyes University. The identification of these can be a step towards enhancing CR by focusing attention on present limitations and future possibilities in CR based instruction.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study should benefit students, instructors, and curriculum and text developers not only at Erciyes University but also at other institutions which share a concern for CR. With such knowledge, CR can become a more central focus for the preparation for university studies by raising the awareness of its significance, not only in the preparatory school but at the secondary level as well. Since the use of CR is a national rather than a local issue, it is hoped that the findings of this study will be of guidance to other educational institutions both at the university and secondary level of education.
Research Questions

In this study the following research questions will be investigated:

1. What are the factors that teachers judge “critical” in CR?
2. To what extent do students use CR skills in carrying out reading tasks?
3. Which instructional procedures do teachers employ to promote CR?
4. What instructional procedures do students think can assist them with effective use of CR skills?

This chapter has introduced the concepts of critical thinking and reading. It has drawn attention to the fact that CR is a national issue and that an identification of the promoting factors is an essential step to enable instruction of CR. The next chapter reviews the professional literature related to the issues of critical reading.

Definition Of Terms

Critical Thinking: Reasoning skills that require recognizing the author’s point of view, making inferences, separating fact from opinion, making judgments, detecting biases, solving problems, deciding on the truth and applying background knowledge.

Critical Reading: The application of the critical thinking skills to a reading text.
CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter discusses the factors that promote the process of critical thinking (CT) and its application in reading, that is critical reading (CR). First, as background for this study, the origins of CT are reviewed. Second, various definitions by philosophers and educators of CT and CR are offered. Third, the effects of background knowledge, cultural background and top-down reading on CR are discussed. The final section deals with instructional issues in terms of teacher and learner roles.

Origins of Critical Thinking

The conceptualization of “critical thinking” dates back to Aristotle, Socrates and Plato. These philosophers taught their students to think clearly and critically about contradictions of evidence presented in arguments and to use induction and deduction to reach conclusions (Skull, 1987). Although CT may have been first mentioned during the Classical Period, it was not until the last three decades that CT was emphasized as a new field to be studied in education.

Western governments have taken prominent steps over the past years to enhance CT at public secondary schools and universities, mostly because CT is considered essential for democratic citizenship (McPeck, 1990). In other words, there has been growing awareness in the field of education concerning the need to prepare learners to think on their own. Living in a society at the threshold of the twenty-first century, the ability to solve problems with new solutions is required for success, not only in the field of education but also in professional and social life.
Towards a Definition of Critical Thinking

Despite recent widespread interest in CT in education, there is no clear agreement on what the concept of CT is. One major controversy has been whether CT is subject-free, as both Ennis and Paul assert (in Siegel, 1988), or subject-specific, as proposed by McPeck (1990).

Ennis (in Siegel, 1988) says that a person is a critical thinker if and only if the person has the skills, abilities, or proficiencies necessary for correctly assessing an issue. He further asserts that mere possession of such proficiency is not enough to define the concept of CT. Instead, he claims that there must be a tendency to exercise the proficiency. Ennis concludes that in this 'skills plus tendencies' conception, a critical thinker has both the skills or proficiencies necessary for the proper assessing of statements and also the tendency to exercise those proficiencies in ordinary activities.

Likewise, Paul (in Siegel, 1988) emphasizes the importance of including the tendency to utilize proficiencies for CT as well and further adds that skills and abilities in CT can be taught. These technical skills can be mastered without any significant attention being given to the differences in subject matter, cultural context or background knowledge. To be able to learn to exercise CT is to commit oneself to the view that CT amounts basically to the mastery of a set of skills and techniques (in Siegel, 1988).

Ennis in his paper “The Concept of Critical Thinking” defines CT as a set of reasoning skills, based on judgment, and lists the ‘twelve aspects of CT’. He does not limit his definitions of CT to a specific subject, instead he assumes these apply to a multitude of areas. These reasoning skills are as follows:
1. Detecting the main idea of a statement.
2. Judging whether there is ambiguity in a statement.
3. Judging whether certain statements contradict each other.
4. Judging whether a conclusion follows necessarily.
5. Judging whether a statement is specific enough.
6. Judging whether a statement is actually the application of a certain principle.
7. Judging whether an observation is reliable.
8. Judging whether an inductive conclusion is warranted.
9. Judging whether the problem has been identified.
10. Judging whether something is an assumption.
11. Judging whether a definition is adequate.
12. Judging whether a statement made by an authority is acceptable.

It seems that CT is based on judging what the underlying issue is (or is not), and is focused on deciding what to believe or to do.

McPeck (1990) challenges Ennis’ (in Siegel, 1988) view of CT, claiming that it does not represent the true nature of CT. He argues that Ennis’ approach seems to ignore the fact that people vary their logic from one situation to another, emphasizing that different fields of knowledge require different types of thinking. McPeck says that this does not mean that CT cannot be exercised when a person has limited knowledge about a specific subject, but that limited knowledge restrains the acquisition of CT skills. This does not necessarily lead to the assumption that CT cannot be taught. Instead, practicing CT skills requires that the individual possess background knowledge to transfer to CT. McPeck proposes seven features of CT:
1. CT is always subject dependent.
2. CT varies from field to field.
3. CT does not necessarily require disagreement or rejection of accepted norms.
4. CT consists of the skill to reflect and seek truth in a given domain of knowledge.
5. CT is more than assessment of statement, it is a complex thought process involving problem solving and active engagement in certain activities.
6. Since CT is knowledge dependent, it is also knowledge limited.
7. CT may also include the use or rejection of methods, strategies and techniques.

Given the range of views represented by Ennis and McPeck, it might be difficult to find a center ground. However, there are some common themes shared by McPeck and Ennis. For example, CT for both would include reflection, seeking truth, problem solving and active engagement. This study follows the views of Ennis in assuming that CT skills can be taught independently of specific disciplines or specific subjects.

Defining Critical Reading

Critical reading (CR hereafter) is the application of the criteria of CT skills to a reading text. Definitions of CR vary in terms of the abilities required in carrying out CR. Wallace (1992) refers to CR as reading between the lines, which means deducing and drawing inferences and predicting the author's intended meaning. Robinson (in Smith, 1991) defines CR as the ability to apply relevant criteria in evaluating a text, such as judgment of the truth and validity of what is being read, based on criteria or standards developed through previously acquired knowledge. Russell (in Smith, 1991) further
suggests four conditions to be able to perform CR:

1. a knowledge of the field in which the reading is being done
2. an attitude of questioning judgment
3. some application of the methods of scientific inquiry
4. taking action in light of the analysis or reasoning

Similarly, according to McCuen & Winkler (1989), CR means reading with a conscious effort to see both sides of an issue, draw valid conclusions, and detect bias. It means looking beyond the immediate reaction we have to a text and trying to comprehend its underlying meaning. McCuen and Winkler refer to ten guidelines which are essential for enhancing CR:

1. Understand what you read and consult various sources if necessary.
2. Imagine an opposing point of view for all opinions.
3. Search for biases and hidden assumptions.
4. Separate emotion from fact.
5. If the issue you are reading about is unfamiliar, be willing to look up the facts.
6. Use insights from one subject to apply what you already know to whatever you read.
7. Evaluate the evidence by cross checking with other sources.
8. Contemplate the values that give an argument its driving force.
9. Look for logical fallacies.
10. Do not be deceived by false claims, because arguments are often based on imaginary claims.
Examining these opinions about CR reveals some commonalities. It seems that CR activities include detecting biases and fallacies, separating facts from opinion, finding the intention of the author, making judgments and evoking background knowledge. Examining the factors that promote CR is the first step in enhancing its use. Three factors which make a significant contribution to CR are general background knowledge, cultural background knowledge, and the ability to use top-down reading. These factors are discussed below.

Factors that Promote Critical Reading

General Background Knowledge

Immanuel Kant, as early as 1781 pointed out the significance of background knowledge in thinking, drawing attention to the fact that new information, new concepts, and new ideas can have meaning only when they are related to something that the individual already knows. This can also be applied to CR both in the native language and the foreign language (Carrell, 1990).

Similarly, much emphasis has been put on the significance of background knowledge and its effect in reading over the past fifteen years. “What was once thought to be a one way flow of information to the brain is now known to be an interactive flow, that is a two way, communication between the reader and the reading text” (Devine et al, 1987, p.177). Devine et al believe that the text in and of itself is meaningless, that is, it is the reader who assigns meaning. A text can have as many meanings as there are readers who interpret the information according to their perceptions in line with their background knowledge.

Recent empirical research in the field which has come to be known as schema
theory has demonstrated the truth of Kant's original observation and the importance of background knowledge in CR. Three functions of schema have been identified by Anderson et al (in Alderson et al, 1984). First of all, possessing the schema can permit a coherent interpretation of the text. In other words, the ability to interpret the text can be distorted if the reader lacks the necessary background knowledge. Secondly, schema can enable a reader's interpretation of an ambiguous message. If readers possess background information which differs from that of the author, they will interpret the passage to conform with their own schema rather than with the author's schema. Thirdly, schema imply establishing a correspondence between things known and new information in text. Readers monitor their comprehension and know whether or not they have understood the text. Given these functions of schema in CR, it can be concluded that CR involves creating connections between background knowledge and new information.

Devine et al (1987) says that it does not help to study the components of reading such as grammar and vocabulary on their own. Nor does it help the teacher to adapt the text in order to fit some readability scale. With little background knowledge, the reader is forced to rely heavily on visual cues in the text (see Top-Down Reading). On the other hand, a reader who can recall a wealth of previous information about the topic will be required to make less use of the actual printed material to comprehend the text. When there is a mismatch of background knowledge between the author and the reader, confusion and misunderstanding may result; so what we understand depends on what we already know. In other words, the more background knowledge one has that relates to the textual information, the easier one's comprehension will be. For example, given the following numbers and asked what order they were in
without re-looking at the sequence of the numbers, the result will most probably vary:

0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20 5 9 0 11 7 18 3 20 1 15 19

As the first sequence matches with a knowledge structure (schema) already acquired (counting by twos), we can easily assimilate the first series of data. The second sequence is difficult to assimilate, since it does not match with any typical pattern of acquired knowledge. Similarly, relating and connecting new information to stored facts, will make CR easier and more interesting.

Putting it differently, as new material enters one’s cognitive field, it interacts with the existing conceptual system. It is at that stage that meaningful learning -defined as relating new material to relevant established knowledge in the cognitive structure (Brown, 1994)- can take place. Since meaningful learning is an outcome of the matching of the cognitive structure with the text, concern should be given to background knowledge. Therefore, it would be logical to say that the more meaningful the reading material in relation to the reader’s current knowledge the greater the promotion of CR and learning.

**Cultural Background Knowledge**

In addition to general background knowledge, cultural background knowledge is considered to have an impact on the acquisition of CR. The common experience, concepts, interests, views and life-styles of readers with common social and cultural background and congruence of cultural background with the text are significant factors in CR (McKay, 1979). In contrast, cultural blinders can lead to certain prejudices that
will affect the thinking process of the reader, and lead to an interpretation of a text different than the author's intended meaning.

A number of studies have investigated the effect of cultural background knowledge upon the ability to interpret, evaluate and infer from the text. It has been shown that when a reader and writer share cultural assumptions about social systems, there is a much higher level of interaction between the reader and the text than would occur when such assumptions are not shared (Devine et al, 1987).

If readers are asked to read texts that are based on a culture which is different from theirs, distortion is likely to happen in the ability to produce appropriate interpretations. Such distortion can have effects in comprehending the text since it has been incorrectly assumed that if someone can understand and speak a language, any non-technical message in that language will also be understood (Devine et al, 1987). Students with the appropriate cultural background are more likely to be able to handle a linguistically difficult passage than those without such knowledge.

In the critical reading of an unfamiliar text, the reader attempts to determine the cultural context in which the text is set. This is somewhat like 'finding the intention of the author' by reading between the lines. The critical reader realizes that cultural contexts differ and that he/she may be bringing culturally inappropriate assumptions to the text. Such realizations on the part of the reader are essential first steps in CR. Hedge (1987) discusses how to overcome the inhibition of cultural background. She says that as students read more widely and gain understanding of the life, customs and attitudes portrayed in a text, they will become more able to appreciate the full meanings of texts and more able to interpret the writer's attitude. Therefore, it is important that students get as realistic an impression of the culture as possible.
**Top-down Reading**

Given the role of general background knowledge and cultural background knowledge in CR, students cannot be expected to perform CR unless they have the appropriate information. In other words, readers who cannot evoke their background knowledge will ultimately turn to bottom-up, word-based, intensive kind of reading. The idea is that the meaning is in the print on the page and that this print must be traced from the letter to word to phrase to sentence to text to text meaning. Contemporary views of reading suggest that reading comprehension derives as much from reader knowledge as it does from print. That is, the successful reader approaches reading from a top-down perspective, evoking background knowledge, bringing expectations to the text and predicting a way to get to meaning.

In addition, top-down reading has been said to be dependent on the reader’s proficiency level in the target language. In fact, there is a general assumption in much EFL pedagogy that CR is highly dependent on high proficiency, whereas, bottom-up reading has been associated with low proficiency. Devine et al (1987) believe that until a minimal level of language proficiency is achieved, students will not be able to benefit from CR. The assumption is that until basic vocabulary items and grammatical structures from the target language are mastered, efforts to produce CR from the written texts in that language would be futile. In other words, readers should gradually progress from bottom-up reading towards top-down reading. Therefore, proficient readers try to keep the meaning of the text in mind, read in broad phrases, skip inessential words and guess the meaning of unknown words from the context. Efficient reading does not result from exact perception and identification of all elements, but from the use of the most productive cues to produce guesses which are right the first time.
Thus, reading difficulties should be minimized in order to maximize CR by providing the necessary proficiency level and background information. If it is true that the proficiency level and background knowledge have an impact on the reader's ability to perform CR, it can be suggested that CR is beyond simply identifying printed letters, words, phrases and sentences in the text. Instead, CR is an active process which requires the reader to reflect on his/her background knowledge.

Methodological Concerns in Critical Reading

Role of the Teacher

In identifying the factors that promote CR, one of the most important variables is the teacher. The teacher has a judicious role in carrying out tasks that make CR successful. The extent to which students perform CR depends on the measure of the teachers' role. The role of the teacher can be summarized as follows: teacher's attitude, teacher guided activities, types of questioning, and Socratic dialog.

Teacher's Attitude

The teacher attitude has great impact on CR. Given that CR is autonomous thinking, that is, doing one's own thinking; it can be argued that teachers have a very important role in helping students become less dependent on their teachers by encouraging them to be less dominated by the dictates of the authority (Hedge, 1985). Gage (in Bartholomae et al., 1986) asserts that students often take no responsibility for finding their own answers by means of critical and rational thought, since they are confident that the teacher will somehow provide the necessary clue which will make such judgment, by the students unnecessary. According to Gage, what has been missed
in education is the difficult but significant habit of “critical judgment”. It is therefore important that teachers should engage students in arguments and take their arguments seriously, even if their arguments seem implausible at first. Hedge adds that the attitude of the teacher should infuse confidence in pupils and that early, but inaccurate attempts at reasoning should not be penalized.

Another important issue concerns the length of response time. When asking questions, teachers should give students time to think about the answers, otherwise, the process of CR will be impeded. Moments of silence and thought should suspend the discussion. Silence, is seen by many teachers as a sign of failure, however it can actually be a sign of a particularly healthy discussion and can indicate that the students are thinking. Silence is not an indication of ignorance or refusal; instead it is time to reflect and think (Kelly et al, 1983).

**Teacher Guided Activities**

As Nuttall (in McKay et al., 1979) maintains, reading teachers have a significant role and are responsible for two kinds of tasks. First of all, they have to provide relevant texts, seeing whether or not texts are interesting to the students and whether or not the texts are at the appropriate level of difficulty. To the extent that CR depends on background knowledge, it is essential that teachers try to determine whether or not students have the needed cultural and world background knowledge to correctly interpret the text. Teachers also need to determine what cultural background information is assumed by the text and to what extent the cultural assumptions in the text differ from those of the students.
Debate is one type of activity that can be used to exploit suitable texts in ways that go far beyond superficial reading, since finding answers to debate questions involves close reading and full understanding. Debate is a way of involving students with a topic and exposing them to different points of view. In that way the student is focused on the topic and will read more effectively (Nuttall, 1989).

Furthermore, by reading silently at their own pace, students can develop the ability to infer the meanings of words using cues in the context. This kind of individual and self-directed reading process makes students independent in learning, which is an important factor in CR success. Traditional teaching, with the teacher firmly in control of all activity and with the teacher’s voice as the focus of attention, tends to remove students’ responsibility for their own progress (Hedge, 1985).

Types of Questioning

This section is concerned with the types of questions that can encourage CR and the teacher’s role as the asker of questions. It seems reasonable to assume that questions which focus student attention on superficial aspects of meaning in the reading text will lead to a different kind of understanding than will questions directing attention to more complex aspects of the same text.

It has been proposed that the nature of the questions asked has a primary role in guiding students to think critically in reading. Kelly et al (1983) point out that questioning helps students discover their own ideas; it gives students an opportunity to explore and argue and to sharpen thinking skills.
Open-ended questions.

Closed-ended questions ask for short and specific answers which are more for the purpose of restatement of information than to see whether concepts are grasped. Closed-ended questions are generally considered as lower-level questions; therefore, teachers should not ask only close-ended questions. Closed-ended questions are considered as the first step of a series of questions, but are not at the level students need for a rich experience in CR. Open-ended questions, known as higher-order questions, ask for new information, the solution to complex problems, and the expression of ideas. Open-ended questions are thus more beneficial for CR, in that they encourage discovery and difference of opinion. Extensive use of higher-level questioning results in higher thinking achievement; students who answer higher-order questions extensively will more frequently exercise higher-order thinking skills as major components of CR (Kelly et al., 1983).

Research by Royer et al. (in Alderson et al., 1984) on the use of higher-order questions has shown that readers receiving higher-order questions learn information more efficiently than readers not receiving such questions. Readers receiving higher-order questions have been shown to be able to make use of CR, to respond to higher-order application and evaluation questions, in addition to responding to lower-level factual recall and comprehension questions. In contrast, individuals receiving only lower-level questions respond poorly on higher-order questions when these are encountered.
Inferential questions.

In addition to open-ended questions, questions of inference can have an impact on building CR. Inference questions oblige the student to read 'between the lines', to consider what is implied but not explicitly stated. This is the major component in CR according to Wallace (1988). Wallace defined CR as being the process of 'reading between the lines' and 'drawing inferences' from the text. Questions of this kind are more difficult than open-ended questions, because they require the student to understand the text well enough to work out its implications. Like open-ended questions, they often require the reader to put together pieces of information that are scattered in the text so that their joint implications can be recognized.

Student generated questions.

Kelly & Christenbury (1983) claim allowing students to generate questions is an alternative to teacher initiated questions. Such questions may be directed to the teacher, to other students, or self-directed during the process of trying to make sense of a text, and the emphasis is placed on student questions rather than student answers. Too much dependence upon a stimulus/response model, with teachers providing questions and students reacting with answers, can create passivity and intellectual dependence. To question, to think critically and independently, students need the opportunity to construct their own inquiries, not merely to respond to the inquiries of the others.

Therefore, to attain a balance of teacher initiated and student initiated questions, the questions asked need to be varied and appropriate to the subject matter and to students' interests. A mixture of these questions can foster a classroom environment
where learning becomes stimulating and where questions provide a means for exploration, not merely measures of retention (Kelly et al., 1983). Neither the teacher nor the student should be afraid to be wrong; the teacher should help students to see questions not as attempts to expose their ignorance, but as aids to the successful exploration of the text (Nuttall, 1989).

Thus, questions should not only be asked to assist understanding but also to encourage students to respond and reflect so that they can interpret and evaluate behaviors and events in texts. Moreover, a variety of questions promoting CR can be asked depending on the learners’ learning style and the context of the text.

**Socratic Dialog**

One particular type of questioning is Socratic dialog. Socratic dialog is an instructional technique that can be used to enhance CR. It entails asking appropriate questions to help learners find answers themselves through their own thought process.

Socrates’s primary aim was to encourage critical judgment; Socratic dialogue derived from the practices of his questioning. Socrates had practiced the oral art of discussion which he called “dialectic” and which consisted of question and answer exchanges between people who sought to discover ultimate truths. The aim was to proceed towards new experiences and discoveries. Today, when students experience and discover important thinking concepts on their own in socially meaningful situations, they are likely to learn more than they would from the most stirring adult lecture on the same concepts (Vygotsky in Pogrow, 1990).

According to Pogrow (1990), the objective of Socratic dialogue is to develop students’ critical judgment by stimulating and probing student responses in ways that
promote rethinking and restatement. To accomplish this, the teacher must shift from the role of giver of information and judger of answers to that of a coach. Students must be guided to construct and express their own ideas and understandings, rather than being told what to do by the teacher.

In relation to Socratic dialogue, Doyle (in Pogrow, 1990) extensively studied the reaction of teachers to the pressure of teaching ambiguous material. He notes that teachers often either pass over such units or break the material down into small sequential steps that make the work familiar and easy to understand. As mentioned above, ambiguity has a significant role for helping students construct meaning on their own.

Therefore, dialogue between the teacher and students and among students, is at the heart of CR. To produce a substantial amount of thinking, teachers must react to students’ questions and answers in ways that maintain the ambiguities, probes, and clues that guide students to construct meaning on their own. Instead, if teachers respond didactically, the thinking process will quickly deteriorate and the opportunity to help student understanding will be lost. Additionally, without such Socratic components, the most sophisticated curriculum inevitably will be converted to rote learning activities. The curriculum then should consist of key types of questions, such as open-ended, inferential questions and student generated questions, which in combination with Socratic techniques, channel the dialogue in ways that develop CR skills (Pogrow, 1990).
Role of the Learner

As is the case with the teacher, the learner also has a significant role in the process of CR. Grabe (in Dubin et al, 1986) takes the position that reading is a critical skill needed by EFL/ESL students for academic success, hence, assigning the student appropriate tasks may lead to the enhancement of CR.

Interpretive Reading Skills

Interpretive reading skills or CR skills, as Jensen (in Dubin, Eskey & Grabe, 1986) puts it, are essential for academic students who must read a variety of writing styles for informational purposes. Jensen proposed the following characteristics of an efficient reader to be able to read critically. The successful critical reader needs to be able to recognize the author’s point of view/purpose; separate fact from opinion; guess the meaning of unknown words; and make judgments/inferences. Therefore, students should be able to read critically and analytically; they should challenge themselves, each other and the text; they should learn to question, evaluate, and criticize as part of the CR process.

Recognizing the author’s point of view/purpose.

Jensen (in Dubin, Eskey and Grabe, 1986) asserts that in assessing the author’s point of view, the reader needs to understand that the message can be implicit or explicit. If the point of view is implicit, then the reader must infer meanings and draw conclusions. Jensen adds that in recognizing the author’s purpose, the reader should consider who the author is and what his/her background is. Moreover, Shurter et al. (1966) say that as educated members of society, university students should prepare
themselves to think and read critically and to refute those ideas that can be detected as fallacies. The task of the reader, then, is to scan opposing authorities to see whether the author is unprejudiced, competent and in a position to know facts.

**Separating fact from opinion.**

Another component of CR involves separating facts from opinion. “Fact” is something that is true and something that can be proven beyond a reasonable doubt; whereas “opinion” is the author’s underlying meaning of a text (Rasool et al., 1993). Therefore in CR students need to reconstruct the text in order to separate a writer’s facts from his/her opinion.

Further dimensions of separating fact from opinion require readers to identify types of opinions in texts such as a generally held opinion or a personal opinion, and separate their own opinion from the text or the author’s point of view (Jensen in Dubin et al., 1986). In addition, Jensen points out that students need to find arguments in texts which show either approval or disapproval. After detecting such pieces of information as either facts or opinions, the next step would be to use these to arrive at conclusions. These steps can ultimately encourage readers to perform CR as they recognize the facts and opinions in a text.

**Contextual guessing.**

Guessing word meanings from the context is another important skill for efficient reading (Clarke and Silberstein in Dubin et al., 1986). Guessing word meanings is also considered as one of the components of CR. This skill involves using contextual clues to guess at the general meanings of words instead of using dictionaries. Over reliance on
dictionaries makes reading tedious and hence, prevents CR. Guessing meanings from context teaches students that they can often obtain a general understanding of an unfamiliar word if they continue reading. Students should realize the advantages of inferring word meanings and that they can often draw sufficient meaning to understand a passage. Students should be made aware how much they can predict the meaning of unknown words without looking up every word in the dictionary, in order to build their confidence (Dubin et al, 1986).

**Making judgments/inferences.**

Making judgments is one of several CR skills required of the student. The ability to make logical and intelligent judgments is a complicated one which can involve various processes of reasoning. In order to make intelligent judgments it is helpful to understand these reasoning processes. Traditional education imposes judgments and conclusions on students without allowing them to either understand the process behind the judgment or come to conclusions for themselves.

One important process of reasoning from which judgments are drawn is making inferences. Making inferences is an attempt on the part of the reader to interpret what the author has left unsaid or what he/she attempts to say without words. It involves deductive/inductive leaps from what is literally stated to what is actually intended: "This is what the author has said, but what does he/she actually mean?" The reader has to put several clues together in order to predict possible occurrences or behaviors (Shurter, 1966).

Critical readers need to be able to use both inductive and deductive reasoning. For example, the process of drawing an inference concerning a text may involve
collecting bits of evidence which are provided by the author and coming to a general conclusion (inductive reasoning). However, inferencing may also involve deductive reasoning if the author has provided general statements or premises followed by other information to which the general statement must be applied.

Summary and Conclusion

This chapter identified the characteristics of CR, and discussed the factors that promote CT and its application in reading. The studies and the views discussed in this review of literature provide guidelines to the ultimate goal, that is CR. In addition, the review of literature shows the significance of CR in an EFL/ESL context.
CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

Introduction

As mentioned in the review of literature, critical reading (CR) is generally defined as the ability to recognize the author’s point of view, make inferences, draw conclusions, separate facts from opinion, make judgments and detect biases. Putting it differently, CR is autonomous thinking that analyzes and evaluates text arguments into particular meanings and interpretations. It is activated when the reader brings to bear on the text analytical and evaluative processes based on their background knowledge and relates this to the specific content and context of reading.

The concern of this study was to identify the major components that promote CR. In order to identify whether the CR skills are currently being used, this descriptive study gathered factual data through questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire items were based on a questionnaire used in a study by Gül (1991) done on reading comprehension. Additional questions were derived from the issues emerging from the literature review. Data were collected from students and teachers for purposes of triangulation (Cohen & Manion, 1990). In this study, the research questions were as follows:

1. What are the factors that teachers judge “critical” in CR?

2. To what extent do students use CR skills in carrying out reading tasks?

3. Which instructional procedures do teachers employ to promote CR?

4. What instructional procedures do students think can assist them with effective use of CR skills?
Subjects

The Preparatory School at Erciyes University provides English instruction at three different proficiency levels, A, B and C, with A the highest and C the lowest. Following group A, B is considered as the group with the highest proficiency level at upper-intermediate. In level B, the majority of the students’ ages range between 17 and 20, with 58 male and 25 female students. As for their educational background, these students were graduates from secondary schools where the medium of instruction was either English or Turkish. The subjects for this study were chosen from the B group (ninety-eight students) to provide a sufficient number of students with a reasonable proficiency level due to the fact that group A had only forty students. Since CR skills normally increase along with language proficiency, the researcher wanted to use subjects with at least an intermediate proficiency level. Therefore, the student group with the intermediate proficiency level was chosen acting on the belief that they would possess CR skills.

The teachers who participated in this study are experienced in the field of TEFL, with a minimum teaching experience of two years either in the preparatory school or at other institutions and with either a BA or an MA degree in the field of TEFL. The number of teachers who participated in this study was twenty-two. Seven of them were female and fifteen male. Their ages ranged between 25 and 35.

Materials

Student Questionnaires

The questionnaire items related to the students’ perceived performance and importance were administered to the students in Turkish to increase reliability.
Whereas, the CR tasks based on the reading part were administered in English. The instructors were given the questionnaire in English. The questionnaire for both the teachers and the students consisted of only close-ended questions. Some similar items appeared on both questionnaires to check whether the students were giving answers consistent with those of their teachers.

The students' questionnaire consisted of three parts. Part A, was a reading passage with 15 CR questions (see Appendix A) which students were asked to answer. Out of the 15 questions, three questions were related to the abilities of drawing conclusions, detecting the main idea, and anticipating what information can come next in the text. These were multiple choice questions with four options to choose from and scored as 12.5 points each.

Three questions were related to guessing the meaning of unknown words. They were also multiple choice ones and scored as 12.5 points each.

In addition, there were four questions related to detecting the difference between fact and opinion. These were scored as one question, since students were simply asked to respond to these questions by marking them as either 'fact' or 'opinion'. Therefore, all four questions were scored out of 12.5 points.

Similarly, there were five questions related to comparing differences and similarities. Likewise, they were scored as one question, since students were asked to respond by marking them as 'similar' or 'different'. Thus, all five questions were scored out of 12.5 points.

Therefore, the questions for the reading text were related to six different CR abilities. The criteria for passing the reading text with CR tasks was set at 60%, since the minimum score for passing such a test in the preparatory school is 60%. Therefore,
those who score below 60% were not considered to be successful users of CR skills.
The reading text (see Appendix A), taken from Mosback & Mosback (1994) is about
two pages long and based on the topic 'money', its history and its current use, world
wide.

Part B of the questionnaire was comprised of six items, each related to a type of
CR question in part A. The items asked the students to assess their performance in
terms of whether they thought they were able to carry out successfully the CR tasks in
part A. Students were required to circle “yes” or “no” according to their perception of
their performance, that is “yes” for being able to answer the question correctly and
“no” for not being able to answer the question correctly. The six items in part B,
related to the tasks in part A, were as follows:

1. detecting the difference between fact and opinion
2. drawing conclusions from the author’s ideas
3. comparing similarities and differences
4. guessing the meaning of unknown words from the context
5. detecting the main idea
6. predicting what information can come next without reading the text

The purpose was to see if there was a match between student performances
and their self-assessment of CR skill use.

In part C of the students’ questionnaire, students were asked to rate given
statements regarding to methodological concerns, techniques and activities,
instructional procedures, and student preferences and attitudes in respect to reading
instruction. The scale used was a Lickert-Scale with five levels, one corresponding to
never, two to rarely, three to sometimes, four to usually, and five to always. Finally, as
a sub-category in part C, students were asked to rate the frequency of the question types that they were typically required to answer. There were five question types that comprised this part of the study. The question types were as follows: questions requiring short/clear answers, questions requiring no opinion, questions requiring judgment and opinion, discussion questions, and self-questioning. These questions have either a negative or a positive impact on CR as pointed out in the literature review.

**Teacher Questionnaires**

The teacher questionnaire had two parts, A and B (see Appendix B). The items in part A were the same as those of the first twenty-four items in the student questionnaire, part C. Teachers were asked to respond to the items in part A according to their perceptions of their students in reading classes, in respect to methodological concerns, techniques and activities, and instructional procedures.

Items in part B were related to the activities and techniques teachers employ in reading classes that might enhance students’ CR abilities, as well as activities held to have a negative impact on the process of CR. The aim was to see the frequency of use of activities employed in class that are held to have a positive or negative impact on CR. In both parts A and B, teachers were asked to rate statements using a five level Lickert-Scale.

**Interviews**

In the interview, there were six open-ended questions which intended to determine the instructional procedures they employed in order to enhance CR, and
what instructional procedures might provide students with more effective use of CR skills. In addition, teachers were asked for their opinions about their role in enhancing CR and how they perceived their students in being able to perform CR (Appendix D).

Procedure

Piloting of the Student Questionnaires

In order to test the reliability of the questionnaire items, the student questionnaire was piloted with 16 level A students in the same institution. As mentioned previously, these students have the highest proficiency level within the preparatory school and are considered to be more proficient than those in group B. All students were informed that the answers of the questionnaires would be kept confidential. The purpose was to get students to answer with full concentration, so that the answers given would not mislead the results of the research. Items with confusing wording were reconsidered and reworded to clarify any misunderstandings.

The reading text and questions, that is part A of the students questionnaire, was not piloted on any of the students within the preparatory school. However, the text and the questions were shown to four instructors of the subject students in order to see if the passage and questions were appropriate for the students in terms of vocabulary and structural difficulty. The reading text and questions were approved by the four instructors in terms of vocabulary and structural difficulty. This was done so as to improve the clarity of the questions.

Likewise, the teacher questionnaire was piloted to check the understandability of the items. Four teachers within the department were consulted to see whether the items were clear or not. The teachers approved the clarity of the items as stated.
**Questionnaire Administration**

First of all, dates with the subject teachers were arranged in advance and they were asked to spare an hour of their class time for the administration of the questionnaires. The questionnaires were administered to three classes with a total of 83 students, in three different class hours, on three consecutive days. The researcher was present during the administration of the questionnaires to clarify any items misunderstood by the students. The students were told that the purpose of the questionnaire was for the benefit of developing the reading program in the coming years and thus they were asked to answer the questionnaire carefully. They were also told that the answers would be kept confidential and that the data obtained from this study would be used for academic purposes by the researcher. The aim was to get the students to become aware of the significance of the study so that they would give answers that would reflect their actual competence in CR abilities.

The administration of the reading text comprised the first phase of the research, that is part A. Students were informed that part B was directly related to the reading text in part A. Students read the text and then gave answers to questions requiring CR based on the text. After completing the CR tasks, students were asked to check the given components of CR, in part B. Following part B, students were asked to do part C which constituted the third part of the students’ questionnaire. This part of the questionnaire was intended to discover their opinions regarding the importance of CR activities and techniques in reading classes. Moreover, part C had a sub-category for investigating the question types students were required to answer in the reading class.
The second phase of the research was the administration of questionnaires to the teachers. The theme of the items in the first part of the teacher questionnaire, part A, was the same as part C of the student questionnaire. In the second part of the teacher questionnaire, teachers were asked to rate the frequency of use of CR activities and techniques in their reading classes. They were not given a time limit so that they could reflect on their teaching experience and focus on the questionnaire items. In addition, they were told that the results of the questionnaires would be kept confidential and used only for the purpose of academic research.

Interviews

Out of the 22 teachers who completed the questionnaires, four of them teach the B level students who responded to the student questionnaire. These four teachers were interviewed immediately after the questionnaires were administered. Dates were scheduled in advance, determined according to the day of the administration of the questionnaires. That is to say, the questionnaires were conducted in the morning followed by the interviews in the afternoon. The interviews lasted 10-15 minutes for each teacher and were held in either Turkish or English depending on which language the teacher felt more comfortable with. The answers to the open-ended questions, which had been given to the teachers in advance, were recorded through anecdotal notes taken by the researcher. The researcher did not interfere with what the teachers were saying in order to avoid imposing any ideas on them. The researcher simply asked the questions and the teachers commented on them.
Data Analysis

This descriptive study was designed to identify the factors that promote CR. Data were collected through questionnaires and interviews which were analyzed employing statistics of mean scores, standard deviation, and percentages.

The student questionnaires were analyzed in three steps. First of all, student responses were converted into scores assessed out of 100 to see their ability in CR, as well as the percentages of the correct answers they had given for each question. Secondly, the student answers in part B, their perceptions on their performance in the reading passage were converted into percentages for the two options, “yes” and “no”. Part B was analyzed in relation to part A to see if there was any relation between the students’ anticipated score and their actual score. Finally, student responses for part C were converted into percentages out of 100 for each item and analyzed according to what extent learners were aware of CR, to what extent they thought they were able to make use of CR skills and their attitudes towards the use of CR techniques.

The results of the questionnaires answered by the teachers were likewise converted into percentages in order to analyze them in relation to the research question. The two parts were analyzed independently. However, the teacher responses to part A were compared with the results of the student responses to part C. The purpose was to see whether the two respondent groups shared the same perception on common issues in CR. In the following chapter, data analysis is presented in detail.
CHAPTER 4 RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Data Analysis Procedures

After identifying the factors that promote critical reading (CR) skills, this study sought to analyze the extent to which students possess CR, how competent they are in practicing these skills in reading texts, and to what extent their instructors focus on the use of CR activities in the reading sessions. To investigate these issues, questionnaires were administered to students and instructors, and interviews with the instructors of the subject students at the Preparatory School at Erciyes University were held. Data were collected from students and teachers for the purpose of triangulation (Cohen & Manion). The questionnaires administered to the students included a reading passage with questions based on CR tasks. This chapter presents the results of the data collected and analyzed to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the factors that teachers judge “critical” in CR?
2. To what extent do students use CR skills in carrying out reading tasks?
3. Which instructional procedures do teachers employ to promote CR?
4. What instructional procedures do students think can assist them with effective use of CR?

Questionnaires and Interviews

The student questionnaire was administered to 83 students from three intermediate classes. In the first section of the questionnaire, the students were given a reading passage followed by 15 CR questions. These questions required students to use CR skills (see Appendix A). The second section asked for the students’
perception of whether they were able to carry out the CR tasks based on the reading passage. The purpose was to see if there was consistency between what the students were able to do and what they thought they could do. The next part, that is part C of the student questionnaire (see Appendix A) was to determine the subjects’ general attitude towards CR skills and to what extent they claimed to be able to carry out CR in their reading classes.

The teacher’s questionnaire had parts A and B. In the first part of the questionnaire, (see Appendix B), the teachers were asked for their perceptions of how much they thought their students were able to carry out CR in class. The aim was to see if there was a correlation between what the students claimed to possess and what the teachers thought their students possessed, in terms of CR. The focus of the questions in the first part of this questionnaire were the same as in the student questionnaire, part C.

The second part of the teacher questionnaire asked to what extent the teachers employ activities that promote CR skills and abilities in their students. The purpose was to assess teachers’ actual use of activities that promote CR.

The final phase of the research was an interview with the four instructors of the subject students. The four instructors who only teach level B students, the subjects of the research, were asked to comment on six open-ended questions distributed after the completion of the questionnaires. The instructors were expected to comment on the basis of their own teaching situations in respect to CR.
Questionnaire Analysis

Analysis of Student Questionnaire, Part A

The reading passage in the questionnaire administered to the students had fifteen questions (see Appendix A) based on CR tasks. Six questions were multiple choice ones with four options and the other eight questions required students to select one of the two options. The fifteen questions were based on six CR skills which were: drawing conclusions, detecting the main idea, anticipating the next information, contextual guessing, detecting the difference between fact and opinion, and comparing similarities and differences. In scoring the CR questions, the 15 questions were scored out of 100. Table 1 shows the mean, range and the standard deviation of the student scores.

Table 1

Results of Student Responses in the Reading Passage, Part A and B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>83 students</td>
<td>55.12</td>
<td>83.00</td>
<td>15.17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean for all subjects was 55.12. The highest score was 93.5; the lowest score was 10.5; therefore the range was 83. The standard deviation was calculated to be 15.17. Respondents would have achieved a score of 31.25 by chance alone. Thus subjects in fact, achieved a score past 23.87 points, higher than they would have scored by chance alone, that is if they had not used the passage or in fact knew no English.

The criteria for passing the reading text was set at 60%, since the minimum score for passing such a test in the preparatory school is 60%. To this extent 41%,
that is 34 of the students passed the test (at 60%); in other words 59%, that is 49 of the students could not pass (at 60%). Table 2 shows the distribution of the scores obtained from the reading passage question answers.

Table 2

Distribution of the Student Scores in the Reading Passage, Part A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>10-19</th>
<th>20-29</th>
<th>30-39</th>
<th>40-49</th>
<th>50-59</th>
<th>60-69</th>
<th>70-79</th>
<th>80-89</th>
<th>90-100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Analysis of Student Questionnaire, Part B**

The second part of the reading section asked students to respond according to what they thought they were able to do in the first part. The statements were detecting the difference between fact and opinion, drawing conclusions, comparing similarities and differences, contextual guessing, detecting the main idea, and anticipating the next piece of information. These statements correspond to the type of questions they were required to answer in the first part. Students were asked to respond to each of these statements by circling either ‘yes’ or ‘no’. “Yes” meant “I was able to achieve the task” and “no” meant “I was not able to achieve the task”.

Next, the responses to “yes” were converted into percentages out of 100 for each CR skill. The percentages for each of the six statements were compared with the percentages of the correct answers for the CR questions given in part A to see if there was a consistency between their expected score and their actual score. As mentioned in Chapter 3, there were 15 questions in part A, that is one question each for drawing conclusions, detecting the main idea and anticipating the next piece of information,
three questions for contextual guessing, four questions for comparing similarities and differences, and five questions for detecting the difference between fact and opinion. The percentage of the correct answers given to each CR skill in part A were compared with the percentage of the students’ perceived performance who said “yes” in part B. The following table shows the percentages for the two sections.

Table 3

Comparison of the Percentages for Sections A and B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CR Tasks</th>
<th>Part A</th>
<th>Part B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CR Test Correct Answer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detecting the main idea</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipating the next idea</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawing conclusions</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextual guessing</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detecting difference between fact/opinion</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparing similarities/differences</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows that students over predicted their performance for ‘detecting the main idea’. 16% of the students answered it correctly (part A), whereas 60% expected to get it right (part B). It shows that students were not able to accurately predict their actual performance for ‘detecting the main idea’. In contrast, students under predicted their performance for ‘anticipating the next piece of information’. 25% of the students thought they were able to anticipate the next piece of information. However, 85% answered it correctly. As for ‘drawing conclusions from the text’, students again over predicted their ability. 69% of the students expected to
answer correctly, whereas 45% actually answered correctly. Students were most accurate in predicting their actual performance for ‘contextual guessing’. The mean for their performance in the three contextual guessing questions was 59% and their perceived performance was 58%. In ‘detecting the difference between fact/opinion’, the mean of the correct answers given for the five questions in this category was 70%. In fact, 60% of the students thought they were able to detect the difference between fact/opinion. This shows that they were more successful than they thought they were. Finally, in the category of ‘comparing similarities and differences’, students over predicted their actual score. The mean of the correct answers given to the four questions in this category was 53%, whereas 80% of the student thought they were able compare similarities and differences.

Respondents would have achieved a score of 25 by chance alone for questions based on detecting the main idea, anticipating the next idea, drawing conclusions and contextual guessing. The subjects in fact achieved an average score of 16 points for detecting the main idea lower than they would have scored by chance alone, that is if they had not used the passage or had not known any English. As for anticipating the next idea subjects achieved an average score of 85 points. In this case, the subjects scored 60 points higher than they would have scored by chance alone. The subjects scored an average score of 45 points for drawing conclusions. They in fact scored 20 points higher than they would have scored by chance alone. The average score for contextual guessing was 59 points. Students in fact scored 29 points higher than they would have scored by chance alone. The questions based on detecting the difference between fact and opinion and comparing similarities and differences had two answers,
so the chance of guessing the right answer was 50%. The subjects achieved an average score of 70 points in the question based on detecting the difference between fact and opinion. They in fact achieved a score of 20 points higher than they would have scored by chance alone. As for comparing similarities and differences the subjects achieved an average score of 53 points. The subjects achieved a score of only 3 points higher than they would have scored by chance alone, that is if they had not used the passage or in fact knew no English.

Analysis of Student Questionnaire, Part C

Part C of the student questionnaire was analyzed under six categories. The first category was the use of CR promoting activities and techniques in the classroom setting. The second category was about the use of classroom activities that have a negative impact on CR. The third category dealt with responses to CR abilities. The fourth category was about instructional materials used in the reading class. The fifth category was related to students' attitudes and preferences in CR. The last category was about the use of question types in the classroom. The responses were converted into percentages for each questionnaire item. The scale was one for never, two for rarely, three for sometimes, four for usually, and five for always. Table 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 show the percentages of student responses to each item.

The first category of items are the CR techniques and activities used by students in reading. These included contextual guessing, the perceived importance of class discussion on CR, the frequency of the use of class discussion, teacher guided activities that have students express their own ideas, and top-down reading. These
are considered to have a positive impact in promoting CR (see Chapter 2 for a discussion of factors that promote CR and methodological concerns). Table 4 shows the percentages for the use of activities and techniques which promote CR (numbers on the left hand indicate the number of the item in the questionnaire).

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CR Skills</th>
<th>Response Rate by Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Contextual guessing for unknown words</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Perceived importance of class discussion</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Frequency of class discussions in class</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Teacher guides students to express ideas</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Unknown words don't matter (top-down reading)</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=usually, 5=always

The response with indicating greatest CR skill use is guessing the meaning of unknown words. Students say that they almost “usually” or “always” (88.7%) try to guess the meaning of unknown words from the context. In terms of class discussion, the results reveal that students strongly believe that they can “usually” or “always” (80.8%) evaluate and interpret a text better after having a class discussion. However, item 18, reveals a striking result, in that students say that they “never” or “rarely” (61.3%) have a class discussion before reading a text. In item 21, students say that their teachers “usually” guide them to express their own ideas, the percentage being 34.6% followed by “sometimes” (28.4%). Finally, top-down reading skill is equally distributed under categories “usually” and “always” (29.6% respectively). Since the two categories add up to a total of 59.2%, students acknowledge that it usually does
not matter if they do not know every word in a text. The following table shows the activities that have a negative impact on CR.

Table 5

Percentage of Student Responses in Relation to Activities that Discourage CR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities that Discourage CR</th>
<th>Response Rate by Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Students read word by word (bottom-up reading)</td>
<td>11.0 23.2 18.3 25.6 22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Dictionary use by students for unknown words</td>
<td>14.5 32.5 28.9 19.3 4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Teacher answers questions explicitly raised in a text</td>
<td>16.0 34.6 23.5 16.0 9.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = usually, 5 = always

As a negative factor in CR, students responded to bottom-up reading, that is being heavily dependent on the visual cues in the text, almost equally under categories 2, 3, 4 and 5, with “usually” being the highest percentage (25.6%). As for the next negative factor, students stated that they “never” or “rarely” (47%) stop to look up words in the dictionary, when there are words with meanings that they do not know. This shows that students claim to ignore or make an attempt to guess the meaning of words from the context. Last of all, item 16 shows how students perceive their teachers in answering questions they raise in a reading text. Students state that their teachers “never” or “rarely” (50.6%) answer all the questions raised in a reading text, which is believed to have a positive effect in enhancing CR.

The third analysis examines students’ abilities from their own perspective. The following table shows the percentage of student responses regarding their perception of their ability to use CR in class.
Table 6

Percentage of Student Responses in Relation to CR Abilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students’ CR Abilities</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. Trying to predict author’s intention</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Detecting cause/effect relation</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Distinguishing between fact/ opinion</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Recognizing relation between ideas/ actions</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Recognizing author’s point of view</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Drawing conclusions</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Comparing similarities and differences</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Detecting contradictory statements</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=usually, 5=always

As can be seen from Table 6, the highest percentage for the students effort in trying to predict the author’s intention reveals “usually” or “always” (62.6%) as the highest percentage. Students state that they can “usually” or “always” (50%) detect cause and effect relationships. In item 6, the results reveal that students can “usually” or “always” (53%) distinguish between fact and opinion. As for recognizing relationships between ideas and actions results reveal “usually” or “always” (59.8%) as the highest percentage. In addition, the majority of the students state “usually” or “always” (75.3%) as the highest percentage for drawing conclusions from the text. In contrast, recognizing the author’s point of view (41%), comparing similarities and differences (44.4%) and detecting contradictory statements (38.8%) yield responses with “sometimes” as the highest percentage. However, 42.1% for recognizing the author’s point of view, 45.7% for comparing similarities and differences and 45.1%
for detecting contradictory statements state that they can “usually” or “always” carry out such abilities.

The fourth analysis is related to the instructional materials used in the reading class. Table 7 shows the percentages of the items related to the instructional materials.

Table 7

| Percentage of Student Responses in Relation to the Instructional Material | Response Rate by Percentages |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Instructional Materials | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. Reading material is interesting | 11.0 | 28.0 | 51.2 | 7.3 | 2.4 |
| 10. Difficulty level in reading is appropriate | 2.4 | 3.6 | 28.9 | 51.8 | 13.3 |
| 17. Difficulty level in grammar is appropriate | 1.2 | 7.4 | 17.3 | 46.9 | 27.2 |
| 23. Reading interest leads to interpretation | - | - | 9.9 | 35.8 | 54.3 |

Note: 1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=usually, 5=always

Table 7 indicates that the majority find reading materials “sometimes” interesting, being 51.2%, but 39% find materials “never” or “rarely” interesting. As for the difficulty of the reading texts, the majority of the students “usually” or “always” (65.1%) find it at the appropriate level. In addition, most of the subjects say that the difficulty of the grammar is “usually” or “always” (74.1%) at the appropriate level. Likewise students claim that “the more interesting the text is, the more willing students are to interpret it”. The dispersion of the responses reveals “usually” or “always” (90.1%) with the highest percentage. The subjects say that they can and will interpret interesting reading materials but that often the materials are not interesting.
The final analysis in this section is related to the students' attitudes and preferences towards CR. Table 8 shows the percentages for attitudes and preferences.

Table 8

**Percentage of Student Responses in Relation to their Attitudes and Preferences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preferences and Attitudes</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preference for close-ended questions</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>56.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Preference for open-ended questions</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Background knowledge affects comprehension</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Cultural background affects comprehension</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=usually, 5=always

Table 8 shows that students appear to have a strong preference for close-ended questions. 88% of the respondents indicated that they “usually” (31.3%) or “always” (56.6%) prefer such questions. On the other hand, student responses were broadly spread in respect to preferences for open-ended questions with a percentage of over 10% found in each of the five rating categories and 43% found in the middle category “sometimes”. It can be said that students accept a mix of close-ended and open-ended questions but with a strong preference for the former. As for their attitude towards background knowledge and its affect on comprehension, student responses were broadly spread with over 12.5% of student responses found in every category and 32% found in the “sometimes” category. In contrast, the majority of the students say that if they share a cultural background with the text, they are “usually” or “always” (75%) more able to interpret the text. This suggests that
students found cultural background more than twice as important in reading for understanding than background knowledge.

In the final part of the student questionnaire, students were expected to circle the most frequent type of questions they were required to answer in the reading class. Similarly, the student responses were converted into percentages, and these percentages were analyzed to see the frequency of types of questions they were required to answer. These are shown in Table 9.

Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Types</th>
<th>Response Rate by Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Questions requiring short/clear answers</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Questions not requiring opinion</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Questions requiring judgment and inference</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Discussion questions that discuss different opinions</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Self-questioning to think independently</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=usually, 5=always

As can be seen in the table there is a wide distribution of questions types used in class. For close-ended questions, the majority of the students state that they “usually” or “always” (58%). Similarly, questions that require no opinion of the reader, yield similar results with the majority saying either “usually” or “always” (67.9). Percentages regarding questions that require students to make inferences are equally distributed under categories 2, 3, and 4 (28.4%). Discussion questions have similar results to that of inference/judgment questions, however the percentage for
‘sometimes’ (32.5%) is slightly higher. As for self questioning, this is the least frequent question type that students are required to answer, with ‘sometimes’ (32.1%) having the highest percentage followed by “never” and “rarely” (46.9%). Therefore, it can be said that a variety of questions are being made use of except for self-questioning types.

**Analysis of Teacher Questionnaire, Part A**

In order to analyze the questionnaire administered to the teachers, the means of the responses were calculated. The teachers’ means on part A were compared to the means of the student responses in part C. The means give us the teachers’ perception of how capable their students are in CR. The focus of the items in this part of the questionnaire was the same as that of the students’ questionnaire, part C. There were five categories that were compared which were: CR activities and techniques, factors that discourage CR, students’ CR abilities, instructional material, and attitudes and preferences. The purpose was to see whether teachers had the same perception as the students, in terms of CR. The numbers on the lefy indicate the number within the questionnaire. Table 10 shows the analysis of the mean scores for the teachers’ perception versus the students’ claim in respect to CR activities and techniques used in the reading class.
Table 10

Mean Scores for Teacher and Student Responses Related to CR Activities and Techniques

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CR Activities and Techniques</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Students read word by word (bottom-up reading)</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>3.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Contextual guessing for unknown words</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>4.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Dictionary use for unknown words</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Perceived importance of class discussions</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Teacher answers all questions explicitly raised in a text</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>2.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Frequency of class discussion in class</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>2.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Teacher guides students to express ideas</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>3.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Unknown words don’t matter (top-down reading)</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>3.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=usually, 5=always

As Table 10 indicates, bottom-up (3.86 and 3.24) and top-down reading (3.49 and 3.73 respectively) show little difference in responses of teachers and students. In discussions periods conducted in the class, both the teachers and students believe in the importance of discussion periods to promote the reader’s ability to evaluate and interpret the text; the results fall under “usually” (4.00 and 4.13). As for top-down reading there seems to be very little difference between the two opinions (3.49 and 3.73 respectively).

The biggest disagreement is in respect to frequency of class discussion periods (3.73 and 2.29). Students feel they do not have enough discussion periods to better evaluate the text, while teachers think they employ discussions periods in class more frequently than the students. The findings also indicate that teachers think their students are heavily dependent on dictionaries (3.86) and do not guess the meanings...
of unknown words from the text (2.82). In contrast, students say that they usually try
to guess the meaning of unknown words (4.22) and refer to the dictionary only
“sometimes” or “rarely” (2.67). Another difference of opinion occurs for question 21,
regarding teacher guidance for expressing ideas. Teachers say they almost “always”
(4.50) guide their students to express their ideas, whereas students say that it is done
only “sometimes” (3.37). Finally, teachers say that they “usually” (4.00) answer all
the questions raised in a reading text, whereas students say teachers “sometimes”
(2.69) answer all the questions. However, answering all the questions explicitly raised
in class is considered to have a negative impact on promoting CR, because a sense of
ambiguity is needed to evoke students’ thought.

The next analysis concerns the teachers’ and students’ perspectives on the
students’ ability to read critically. Table 11 shows the difference in means between
the two sets of respondents.
Table 11

Mean Scores for Student/Teacher Responses Related to Students’ CR Ability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CR Abilities</th>
<th>Teachers M</th>
<th>Students M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. Trying to predict author’s intention</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>3.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Detecting cause/effect relationship</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>3.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Distinguishing between fact/opinion</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>3.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Recognizing relation between ideas/ actions</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>3.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Recognizing author’s point of view</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>3.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Drawing conclusions</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>3.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Comparing similarities and differences</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Detecting contradictory statements</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>3.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=usually, 5=always

It can be seen that all of the items mentioned in Table 11 have similar results to one another. In all of the eight CR skills, teachers have a lower perception than do the students in respect to students’ ability to use CR skills. However, the two sets of means between the teachers and the students do not yield a very large difference. The teachers’ answers show that their means are dispersed around “sometimes”, whereas the students’ answers are dispersed between “sometimes” and “usually”. The biggest difference in the mean is for question 4. Students see themselves “usually” able to predict author’s intention, while their teachers see them as only “sometimes” able to predict author’s intention (3.72 vs 2.64).

The third analysis compares the views of the teachers and the students on the instructional material used in the reading class. Table 12 gives the means for the instructional materials according to the two sets of respondents.
Table 12

Mean Scores for Teachers and Students Related to the Instructional Materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Materials</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. Reading material is interesting</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Difficulty in level reading material is appropriate</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>3.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Difficulty level in grammar is appropriate</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>3.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Reading interest leads to interpretation</td>
<td>4.59</td>
<td>4.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=usually, 5=always

Table 12 shows that teachers think the instructional material is more interesting compared to the students, the difference in the mean being 0.81. As for the reading material being appropriate, teachers and students have similar views. However, students think that the grammar in reading texts is more difficult than do teachers, the difference in the means being 0.84. Last of all, teachers and students agree with each other that interpreting the text strongly depends on the text being interesting.

The final analysis concerns the mean scores for preferences and attitudes of the students, that have an impact on CR, from the perspective of both teachers and students. The following table represents the mean scores for students’ preferences and attitudes in terms of CR.
Table 13

Mean Scores for Teachers and Students Related to Preferences and Attitudes in CR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students' Attitudes and Preferences</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preference for close-ended questions</td>
<td>4.59</td>
<td>4.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Preference for open-ended questions</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Background knowledge affects comprehension</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Cultural background affects comprehension</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=usually, 5=always

As can be seen in the table, there seems to be agreement between the teachers' perception of student preferences and student preferences themselves for close-ended questions that have short and clear answers and with considerably less preference for open-ended questions that ask students to express their own ideas. For close-ended questions both response means (4.59 and 4.40 respectively) fall between "usually" and "always" and near "sometimes" for open-ended questions (3.00 and 3.14). Similarly, the two sets of means show that the teachers and students believe in the importance of the effects of cultural background in relation to interpretation of a reading text (4.50 and 4.00 respectively). However, the biggest difference is in question 20. Students' mean for the impact of background knowledge in being able to understand a text (2.88) is lower corresponding to "sometimes", whereas the teachers say "usually" (4.05). It appears that teachers have not made students aware of the significance of background knowledge in being able to comprehend a text, hence interpreting it.
Analysis of Teacher Questionnaire, Part B

The second part of the questionnaire was directly related to the performance of teachers in the practice of CR skills. These items were converted into percentages to see the frequency of different kinds of activities used in the reading class, especially those we have labeled CR activities and techniques. Table 14 shows the percentage of responses regarding activities and techniques teachers employ. Numbers on the left show the number within the questionnaire item.

Table 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CR Activities and Techniques</th>
<th>Response Rate by Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Activities focusing on meaning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Building on background knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Selecting interesting texts</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Selecting texts that help acquire cultural background</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Use of debates to expose to different points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Enhancing autonomous thinking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Activities that construct/express ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Allow time to think and express ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Group works to consult each other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Pre-reading activities that focus on content/meaning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Taking students' arguments seriously</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=usually, 5=always

Table 14 shows the dispersion of the CR activities and techniques used by the teachers. It is apparent that the majority of the teachers claim to "usually" or "always" (68.1%) use activities that focus the students' attention on the content and
meaning of the text. In addition, the majority say that they “usually” or “always” (68.2%) try to build on the students’ background knowledge in relation to the text by a class discussion. As for the selection of texts that are interesting to students, teachers’ responses were broadly spread with over 13.6% of teacher responses found in each of the rating categories. However, teachers “never” or “rarely” (59.1%) try to select texts that possess cultural background related to the students local culture. The categories of exposing students to different points of view by engaging them in arguments and debates reveals “sometimes” (45.5%) and “usually” (45.5%) as the highest percentage. The table also reveals “usually” or “always” (90.9%) as the highest percentage for trying to engage students to think on their own, that is autonomous thinking. As for getting students to construct and express their own ideas by activities focusing on the text reveals “usually” or “always” (63.7%) as the highest percentage. The category for allowing students time to think before they express their ideas in discussion questions reveals “usually” (45.5%) and “always” (45.5%), adding up to a total of 91%. Similarly, teachers claim that they “usually” or “always” (68.2%) have the students work in groups or pairs. On the other hand, teachers say that they “sometimes” (45.5%) try to develop activities that focus students’ attention on the content and meaning of a text at a pre-reading stage. Finally, the category with the highest percentage for taking students arguments into consideration seriously is under “usually” or “always” (86.4%).

The second analysis concerns activities and techniques that have a negative impact on CR. As mentioned in the review of literature, these factors tend to inhibit the process of CR, whereas avoiding such activities may enhance the process of CR.
The following table shows the percentage of teacher responses to activities said to inhibit CR.

Table 15

Percentage of Teacher Responses Related to Activities that Discourage CR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities that Discourage CR</th>
<th>Response Rate by Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Responding to ambiguities in text explicitly</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Breaking down texts into steps to make it easier</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Interpreting and evaluating texts for students</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Choosing simple texts that are easy to understand</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Giving the meaning of unknown words</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=usually, 5=always

Table 15 shows that the majority of the teachers “usually” or “always” (72.7%) respond to students’ questions on the ambiguities of the text explicitly, and “usually” or “always” (63.6%) like to break down texts into small sequential steps that make it easier for students to understand. As for item 13, teachers “sometimes” (50%) evaluate and interpret the text for the students rather than having them do this themselves. On the contrary, teachers “never” or “rarely” (50%) choose texts that are considered simple. Last of all, they “usually” or “always” (66.7%) give the meanings of the vocabulary that students do not know. These results suggest that teachers, perhaps unknowingly, often undertake teaching practices which are considered to inhibit the development of CR skills.
Analysis of Interviews with Teachers

Interviews, which were conducted with four teachers of the subject students, were the third source of data in this study. The researcher asked six open-ended questions which the teachers were required to comment on. The major concern of the questions were based on instructional procedures and their use by the teachers and students. The interview questions were open-ended and the instructors were asked to comment on these questions. In order to analyze the data, the researcher generated six categories according to the questions asked in the interview. In each category the main theme was specified according to its relevance to the topic of the research. The number of responses mentioned in the interview were presented in tables 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21. The categories that the researcher generated were as follows:

1. What do you think could be done to make reading material more interesting?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the instructional material?
3. What is the role of the teacher to promote CR?
4. What characteristics of students as good or bad readers can be observed in CR?
5. What do you think your strongest skill in developing CR is?
6. What is the single most important characteristic of effective reading students seem to lack?

Category 1 - In this category, instructors were asked to comment on the first open-ended question. They were asked to answer the question by referring to their own teaching experience.
Table 16

Points Mentioned Related to the Reading Material Being More Interesting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points Mentioned in the Interview</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The significance of the text being interesting</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texts being authentic</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activation of background knowledge</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-reading activities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-ended questions</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipating the next information</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negative effects of culture specific texts</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16 shows that two of the teachers agree that reading materials should arouse the interest of students by rendering the reading materials as interesting as possible to motivate and stimulate students. Whereas it was reported by one teacher that those texts which are too culture specific tend to lower the interest of the students. Moreover, most of the teachers report that reading materials should be authentic to enhance interest so that students can interpret and draw conclusions from the text. Another factor noted by one teacher is that teachers should activate students’ background knowledge through the manipulation of pre-reading activities so that students can focus on the theme of the text and thus more readily comprehend the meaning of the text. In order to achieve this, this teacher stated that pre-reading activities are considered to be crucial as they evoke students’ pre-existing prior knowledge. The other two teachers also emphasized the importance of pre-reading activities to raise the students awareness in order to carry out tasks requiring CR. Furthermore, one of the teachers stated that students’ background knowledge could
be activated by directing questions so as to ask students to predict what information will come next in the text. It was also reported that open-ended questions, such as 'how' and 'why', could be asked to raise a critical attitude of the student towards the text ranging from simple to difficult questions. In addition, various techniques and activities could be manipulated in such a way as to provide more student involvement in class.

Category 2 - The second category refers to the strengths and weaknesses of the instructional material. The following table shows the points which the instructors mentioned. The negative figures under 'number of responses' indicate the number of responses related to the weakness of the instructional material, whereas the positive figures indicate the number of responses related to the strength of instructional material.

Table 17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points Mentioned in the Interview</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acquisition of vocabulary</td>
<td>+2, -1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural elements</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authenticity of texts</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over population of students</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As for the weaknesses of the reading material, one teacher said that the reading books concentrate too much on the acquisition of vocabulary, rather than enhancing reading skills. Furthermore, materials are felt to concentrate on cultural
aspects more than necessary which is considered to be an inhibition to understanding, unless something is done to strengthen relevant cultural background. Another weakness, reported by one teacher, had more to do with the physical aspects of the class, that is the over population of students. These cause distraction of students’ attention from the text materials. Text books are prepared for small classes, in terms of population, whereas the population of classes in the preparatory is over thirty. This is believed to result in a lack of concentration and ability to participate on behalf of the students.

On the other hand, one of the instructors thought the instructional materials were authentic in terms of reality, focused on a wide variety of vocabulary use, and continually reinforced previous material throughout following chapters. Two respondents said repetition of expressions and vocabulary was thought of as a positive way to reinforce what students learned in earlier units.

Category 3 - The third open-ended question was about the role of the teacher in promoting CR. Table 18 shows the topics that were mentioned in the interview.

Table 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points Mentioned Related to the Role of the Teacher</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building on students’ background knowledge</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on open-ended questions</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guiding students into discussions</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The teachers seem to agree that building on the background of the students has a positive impact in performing CR. The teachers thought they should guide students into discussions through the medium of open-ended questions in order to evoke their background knowledge. It was considered that questions, such as “why” and “how”, are important, in the sense that they guide students into thinking critically. Therefore, teachers are thought to have a judicious role in guiding their students with relevant material and appropriate activities.

Category 4 - The fourth question was about the characteristics of students as good or bad readers in CR. The following table shows the points the teachers referred to.

Table 19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points Mentioned in the Interview</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Detecting similarities and differences</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading between the lines</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-ended/close-ended questions</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextual guessing</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No interaction with the text</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No tolerance of ambiguity</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One of the teachers said that good readers can detect similarities and differences and relate them to their pre-existing background knowledge. Another teacher said that students tend to read between the lines and try to form ideas as they read. Third, good readers like to answer open-ended questions, instead of close-
ended questions which they find redundant and they like to be asked for their own opinions. Last of all, those who try to guess the meaning of words from the text are considered to be good readers.

On the other hand, bad readers usually expect the teacher to do the thinking for them. Therefore, students do not interact with the text in order to interpret its meaning. They do not want to tolerate ambiguity in a text, and they want the text to be as explicit as possible, so that the text is ready-made for students to follow the CR tasks.

**Category 5** - The fifth category refers to the perception of the teachers as to what their strongest skill in developing CR is. Table 20 shows the personal CR skills that teachers talked about.

**Table 20**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points Mentioned in the Interview</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warm-up activities</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-ended questions</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guided activities</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking students answers into consideration</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this category, there was not much response. However, one teacher stated that warm-up activities supported with open-ended questions such as 'why' and 'how' were considered to be strong skills. Another teacher also referred to the significance of open-ended questions in terms of their strongest skill in developing CR.
Furthermore, activities that guide students into drawing conclusions and help them to interpret the text were considered as the teachers strongest skills in promoting CR.

Finally, one teacher said that he listens to students’ responses carefully and takes their responses into consideration.

Category 6 - The final category asked which characteristic of effective reading students seem to most lack. Table 21 shows the characteristics that students seem to lack in being able to perform CR.

Table 21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points Mentioned in the Interview</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of background knowledge</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No tolerance of ambiguity</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No interaction with the text</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of open-ended questions</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of reading in L1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As for this category, not possessing the required background knowledge by one teacher was thought of as the single most important characteristic of effective reading which students seem to lack. Also, one teacher said that students perceive reading lessons as the medium to acquire vocabulary, rather than developing their reading skills. One of the teachers reported that students do not want to tolerate any kind of ambiguity and try to understand every stage of the text and the vocabulary. As a result, they do not interact with the text.
However, a teacher believes that he sometimes does not ask open-ended questions to evoke students' thoughts. In addition another teacher stated that neither the teachers nor the students read adequately in their first language which is believed to have an impact on the transfer of reading skills to their second language.

This chapter presented the analysis of data collected through questionnaires and interviews. The following chapter will provide interpretations and a discussion of the findings of the study and offer interpretations.
CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS

Overview of the Study

Having identified the factors that promote critical reading (CR) skills, this study sought to analyze how competent students are in carrying out CR skills and to what extent the instructors employ CR activities in class. The CR skills were assessed through the medium of a reading test and a questionnaire. The teachers were given a questionnaire and interviews were held with the teachers of the subject students. This chapter presents interpretations and discussions of the data collected and analyzed to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the factors that teachers judge “critical” in CR?
2. To what extent do students use CR skills in carrying out reading tasks?
3. Which instructional procedures do teachers employ to promote CR?
4. What instructional procedures do students think can assist them with effective use of CR?

The questionnaire administered to the students, contained three parts. The first part, part A, was a reading passage which the students were assigned along with CR questions. In part B, students were asked for their perception on part A, that is how well they thought they had answered the CR questions. As for part C, students were required to rate the significance of the CR skills, the extent they thought they possessed CR abilities and the relevance of the instructional materials they used in their reading class.

The teachers’ questionnaire, was comprised of two parts, A and B. Part A had the same items as in part C of the students’ questionnaire. This part involved the teachers’ perception of their students’ CR skills. The second part asked the teachers
to rate the frequency of the techniques and activities they employed to promote
students' ability to read critically.

In the interviews with the teachers of the subjects, the teachers were given
open-ended questions to comment on by reflecting on their teaching situation in the
preparatory school. The theme of the items in the questionnaire and the interviews
were identified according to the framework of the literature review (see Chapter 2).
The subject matter of the research items can be categorized under methodological
concerns, CR techniques and activities, students' background effects, and
instructional procedures.

Summary of Findings

Analysis of Student Questionnaire

In the first part of the students' questionnaire, the reading text assessment,
students answered a total of 15 CR questions related to six CR abilities which were as
follows: drawing conclusions, detecting the main idea, anticipating the next
information, contextual guessing, detecting the difference between fact and opinion,
comparing similarities and differences. As the student scores reveal in part A,
students were not very successful. Given the passing grade set at 60%, the results
yield that only 41% of the students were able to pass the reading text based on CR
tasks. In other words 59% scored below 60. The mean for the 83 subjects was 55.12
which was below 60%.

The second part required students to circle either "yes" or "no", according to
their perceived performance on the six types of CR tasks in part A. This part was for
the purpose of trying to anticipate their performance on part A and to compare their
anticipated score with their actual score. Students were asked whether they were able to detect the difference between fact and opinion, draw conclusions, compare similarities and differences, guess the meaning of unknown words from the context, detect the main idea, and anticipate the next information in a text. The results reveal that students over predicted their performance for detecting the main idea, drawing conclusions, and comparing similarities and differences. However, students under predicted their performance for anticipating the next piece of information and detecting the difference between fact and opinion. The closest students got in predicting their performance was for guessing the meaning of unknown words (58% vs 59% respectively).

Part C of the student questionnaire, which had 24 items, was categorized under five titles: CR activities and techniques employed in class, activities that discourage CR, students perceived performance on CR abilities, instructional material, and students' attitude and preference towards the requirements of CR. All of the items in the five categories were converted into percentages to find the dispersion of the answers. The results reveal that the majority of the students claim to be able to carry out CR skills.

In the sub-category of part C, students were also asked to rate the frequency of the five question types they were required to answer in the reading class. The question types were as follows: questions requiring short/clear answers, questions not requiring opinions, questions requiring judgment and inference, discussion questions that discuss different opinions, and self-questioning to think autonomously. The results reveal that there was a wide distribution of question types used in the reading class. However, self-questioning is the least frequent question type that students are
Analysis of Teacher Questionnaire

In the first part of the teacher questionnaire, there were 24 items which were the same as the first 24 items that corresponded to the questions on the student questionnaire, part C. Part A of the teachers’ questionnaire were analyzed in relation to the students’ questionnaire, by calculating the mean for each item. The subject matter of the 24 items were CR activities and techniques, teachers’ perceived performance of the students in CR, instructional materials, and the teachers perception of their students’ preference and attitude towards the requirements of CR. These were the same issues investigated in the student questionnaire.

The biggest difference between the teacher responses, part A, and the student responses, part C, appeared in students’ ability to perform CR skills of ‘contextual guessing’, ‘the use of dictionary for unknown words’ and ‘predicting the author’s intention’. Students claimed that they were able to make guesses at unknown words and predict the author’s intention, in contrast to what the teachers thought their students did. Moreover, the teachers’ perceptions revealed that their students refer to the dictionary more than the students’ claim. Another major difference was in terms of CR activities of ‘the teacher answering all questions explicitly raised by the students’, ‘the frequency of the use of class discussions’ and ‘the teacher guiding their students to express their ideas’. Teachers claim that they employ class discussions and guide their students to express their ideas more often, whereas students claim that such activities are employed less frequently. As for answering all questions explicitly, teachers say that it is done usually, whereas students claim that it is done sometimes.
However, answering all questions explicitly is considered to have a negative impact on CR. The above mentioned factors show the major differences between the teachers and the students.

In the second part of the teacher questionnaire, teachers were asked to rate the questionnaire items. The teacher responses were converted into percentages to see the frequency of the techniques and activities they use in class. The results indicate that teachers strongly claim that they ‘usually’ or ‘always’ focus on the meaning of the text, build on students’ background knowledge, employ the use of debates, evoke autonomous thinking, guide students into expressing their ideas, allow them time to think, make use of group works, and take students’ arguments into consideration.

Despite the fact that teachers claim to make use of critical activities to promote CR, the findings reveal that they also make use of activities which discourage the acquisition of CR skills. For example, they say that they usually respond to the ambiguities of the text explicitly, break down texts into small sequential steps to make understanding easy, and give the meaning of unknown vocabulary. In addition to these, they also say that they sometimes evaluate and interpret the text for students rather than having them do this themselves.

Discussion of the Research Questions

In this section, the findings of the study are discussed in the light of the research questions. The research questions are as follows:

1. What are the factors that teachers judge “critical” in CR?
2. To what extent do students use CR skills in carrying out reading tasks?
3. Which instructional procedures do teachers employ to promote CR?
4. What instructional procedures do students think can assist them with effective use of CR skills?

1. Instructional approaches that teachers judge “critical” in CR.

First of all, in the interviews with the instructors of the subject students, it was found that warm-up activities supported with open-ended questions have a positive effect on guiding students into producing CR. The teacher responses in the questionnaire support the view that students can evaluate and interpret a text better after having class discussions that guide the students in carrying out CR tasks. As Kelly & Christenbury (1983) point out, open-ended questions which help students discover their own ideas, give an opportunity to explore and argue, and sharpen thinking skills are more beneficial for CR.

A second instructional approach was found to be the activation of background knowledge. According to the teacher responses in the questionnaires, it was found that students background knowledge can be activated through the manipulation of warm-up and pre-reading activities. The significance of background knowledge in carrying out CR tasks was also emphasized by the majority of the teachers. Teachers strongly believe that what the readers understands depend on what they already know. This is supported by the literature review in that the reading text in itself is meaningless, unless new information and new concepts are related to something the reader already knows (Ausebel in Brown, 1994). Hence, activating the students’ background knowledge by employing relevant instructional material and activities can be considered as factors to promote CR.
In addition, teachers say that to evoke the students' attention, reading materials should be as interesting as possible in order to motivate and stimulate students. This view was also emphasized in the questionnaire given to the teachers, that is the more interesting the text is, the more willing students are to interpret it. It was also reported that instructional materials should be authentic enough to enhance the interest of students.

In contrast, it was believed that instructional material should not concentrate on cultural aspects, since cultural specific texts tend to lower the interest of the students. The questionnaire results also reveal strong claims by the majority of the teachers in terms of cultural background. Teachers claim that if students share a cultural background with the reading text, they will be more able to interpret it. Devine et al. (1987) point to the importance of cultural background in a text, that is when a reader and a text share cultural assumptions about social systems, there is likely to be a higher level of interaction between the reader and the text. Therefore, it can be suggested that cultural assumptions should appeal to the readers background to promote CR.

2. The use of CT skills in carrying out reading tasks by students.

The answer to the second research question was obtained through the questionnaires given to the students and teachers. Student responses indicate that they think that they are able to use CR skills to a considerable extent, whereas the teacher responses indicate a significantly lower estimation of student CR skills. Thus, there seems to be a mismatch between the two sets of responses concerning using and producing CR skills. This shows that the perceptions teachers possess of their
students CR is lower than what the students claim to have.

Students state that they are able to carry out various CR tasks at a considerable extent, such as, detecting cause/effect relationships, distinguishing between fact and opinion, guessing meaning from the context, recognizing relationships between ideas/actions, drawing conclusions, and predicting the author’s point of view. On the other hand, teachers felt that students were not fully capable of carrying out these CR tasks.

In the case of the mismatch between the teachers and the students, it is necessary to turn to the performance of the students on the reading passage, part A, assigned with CR tasks. The results of the reading passage can be used to determine the extent of the students’ performance. As mentioned earlier, thirty-four students out of the eighty-three subjects were able to score over 60% which was stated as the passing grade. Students were quite successful in answering the three questions correctly related to contextual guessing (59%), and it was in this CR question that the students got closest to predicting their actual score (58%). This view was also supported by the student questionnaire, part C. In contextual guessing and the use of dictionaries, the percentages show that students always try to guess the meaning of unknown words from the context and they rarely refer to the dictionary for unknown words. They try to practice contextual guessing and they try not refer to the dictionary very much, which are positive assets. This claim seems to be consistent with the results they scored in part A, where they were expected to make guesses at unknown words from the context.

Students were also successful in detecting the difference between fact and opinion in part A. The majority of the students were able to answer the questions
related to detecting the difference between fact/opinion correctly (70%). This claim was supported by the students in part C, where students claimed that they can usually carry out such a task. Therefore, there seems to be a consistency between their claim and their actual performance.

As for anticipating the next piece of information in a text, 85% of the students were able to predict the relevant information that is likely to follow. Although students did not expect to achieve a high score, they were still successful in achieving such a task.

In these three CR questions, students were able to carry out the CR tasks, however, their performance for drawing conclusions, comparing similarities and differences, and detecting the main idea were over predicted (see Chapter 4, Table 3). In other words, the students were not as successful as they claimed to be, although they were able to carry out some CR tasks. This shows that students are able to carry out CR for some skills, whereas they seem to need more practice for other skills. Thus, it can be concluded that neither the teachers’ perception of their students nor the students’ perceived performance of themselves reflect the students’ actual competence in CR.

In short, the findings of the study indicate that students’ and teachers’ perception differ slightly from one another in terms of students using CR skills. Students think they are more able to read critically; whereas teachers think that students are not as able to read critically as they themselves expect. The teachers’ responses, however, do not mean that students are not able to read critically; they say only that teachers have a lower perception than students. A possible reason for this
may be that students are not aware of what CR skills require. Students may not know what abilities are needed to carry out certain CR tasks. Another reason may be that students are not able to read as critically as they claim, confirming the teachers' perception.

3. Instructional procedures teachers employ to promote CR.

Part B of the teacher questionnaire was analyzed to see what instructional procedures teachers employ to promote CR. Teachers claim that they develop activities that focus the students' attention on the content and meaning of the text. They try to build on students' background knowledge by using pre-reading activities, and engage students in debates and arguments. They encourage students to think on their own, without dominating their thoughts, and allow students time to think on their own. They try to guide their students into constructing and expressing their own ideas and understandings by providing them with activities at various reading stages. They have students work in groups, and take their arguments into consideration seriously. If it is true that these mentioned factors have a prominent role in the enhancement of CR as pointed out in the literature review, it can be concluded that teachers indicate that they employ some of the most important skills in CR.

On the other hand, there are activities that teachers use which have a negative impact in promoting CR. Some examples of such activities are, teachers not showing concern for choosing materials which are interesting for the students or that help students acquire the cultural background. Teachers seem to respond to questions relating to the ambiguity of the text explicitly and break down reading texts into small sequential steps that make it easier to interpret for the students. Last of all, teachers
say that they supply the meaning of vocabulary that students do not know. These are negative factors that discourage the acquisition in promoting CR. Hence, it can be concluded that although teachers claim they employ activities that promote CR, they perhaps unknowingly make use of some activities that inhibit the process of CR.

4. Instructional procedures students think can provide them with effective use of CT skills in reading.

The answers to the fourth research question was obtained through the student questionnaire. Students reported that instructional procedures such as class discussions help them to better evaluate and interpret a text. It can thus be argued that the teacher should shift from the role of giving information and judging answers, to the role of guiding students in discussions by using appropriate questions.

The questionnaires show that students strongly believe in the significance of sharing the same cultural background knowledge as that of the text. Students stated that cultural background “usually” or “always” (75%) has a positive impact in interpreting and evaluating the reading text. This claim indicates that teachers should choose materials which relate to the students’ local culture or that teachers should facilitate any mismatch of cultural specifics between the text and the reader by supplying additional activities. However, teachers stated that they “never” or “rarely” (59%) select additional texts that may help students acquire the cultural background. The results reveal that although students show concern for the effects of cultural background on CR, teachers do not show the necessary concern for selecting the appropriate text.
Another factor that students think can provide them with effective use of CR is concerned with the instructional material being interesting. The majority of the students in the student questionnaire think that the more interesting the text is, the more willing they are to interpret it. It can be suggested that instructional material should appeal to the students' interest, hence, it should be rendered interesting.

In addition, students believe that guessing the meaning of unknown words from the context is a reading skill which is highly valued. If it is true that contextual guessing provides a general understanding of unknown words, then it can be suggested that making inferences and drawing conclusions are also instructional procedures that can provide effective use of CR skills. Furthermore, students say that they are more willing to evaluate the text when it appeals to their interest. Therefore, teachers need to determine whether or not the text is interesting to the students.

In addition, the data resulting from student and teacher questionnaires concerning top-down reading and bottom-up reading are almost equally distributed between 'sometimes' and 'usually'. It can thus be inferred that students show effort to use the two skills complimentarily, that is students show effort to do the two processes together as proposed in the interactive model of reading. Dubin et al. (in Celce-Murcia, 1991) identify the interactive model as the ideal model of reading, because as the reader follows the contextual clues he/she tries to make predictions about the context of the text, hence interpreting it.

However, students have a neutral attitude towards the significance of the effects of background knowledge to help them evaluate and interpret the text. This shows that students are not fully aware of the importance of some of the CR skills. Devine et al. (1987) argue that what we understand depends heavily on what we
already know, therefore, the more background knowledge the reader has in common with the text, the easier one’s ability to read critically will be.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to the study skill of reading and the educational setting of the Preparatory School at Erciyes University. Therefore it would be difficult to generalize the results and conclusions of the research to other language skills and other educational institutions in Turkey. However, the procedures to enhance CR may well be relevant to the teaching of other foreign languages, language teaching institutions, and to EFL teachers and students and language teaching in general.

Another limitation has to do with the nature of CR. CR is an indefinite and abstract concept, therefore, it was difficult to measure the extent the subjects possessed CR. As CR involves a cognitive process, it was difficult to measure the extent of the CR abilities, whether through the opinion or the performance of the students.

Furthermore, it was hard to ensure that the students were able to express the extent of their CR skills through a single reading passage and through the medium of 15 CR questions. In that sense, this study was limited to only one reading passage with 15 CR questions. Use of additional reading texts would obviously yield more reliable results and a more broad focus on the use of the CR skills.

Additionally, the theme of the reading passage was about the medium of money, its history and its current use. Although concern was shown in choosing an appropriate topic, it was not known to what extent the passage really appealed to students’ interest and their background knowledge. It was assumed that choosing the
reading text based on money would appeal to all of the subjects’ interest and would not require much background knowledge in order to be able to evaluate and interpret it.

Implications for Further Research

In this study, the researcher investigated how much students are able to think critically and what CR skills they use. Further research might be of an experimental nature. An experimental study can be conducted using students in two groups, a control group and an experimental group. The experimental group could be acquainted with activities and techniques that promote CR in text processing, whereas the control group could be trained using non CR activities in comprehending texts. The results of the two groups could be compared to see how well students are able to read critically after being acquainted with CR skills. This could show if CR training activities and techniques actually promote CR. In future research, a wider range of CR skills could be examined such as finding contradictory statements, detecting author’s intention, recognizing ideas and actions, and making judgments.

Another research possibility regards needs assessment. The researcher has identified the CR skills without considering individual needs. Therefore, expectations may differ according to individual students and departments. A detailed CR skills need analysis could respond to these individual concerns.

Pedagogical Implications

It is widely accepted that reading is one of the most important skills that students are expected to acquire so that they can become successful in their
educational and professional lives, especially in an EFL setting in Turkey. Promoting CR skills of students will better enable them to be able to draw conclusions and make inferences; be able to think on their own, even in cases of ambiguity; and guide them into detecting relevant criteria to be able to evaluate and interpret a text. Since CR is needed for students, it is necessary that reading teachers facilitate the process of CR by choosing the appropriate instructional material and activities, and by guiding students to raise their critical awareness.

As mentioned in the review of literature, possessing relevant background knowledge has a positive impact on the ability to read and think critically. It is important for the teachers to keep match of students' background knowledge and the reading text with relevant techniques and activities. Furthermore, as a dimension of methodological concerns, teachers, students and instructional materials have a significant role in promoting CR. Making use of appropriate techniques and activities also have a major role in promoting CR, such as various questioning types and the use of Socratic dialogue.

Furthermore, an interesting finding in this study was that some of the items in this research yield almost similar results to the study conducted by Gül (1990) at the School of Foreign Languages Department of Basic English in Middle East Technical University (METU). The questionnaire items of the study conducted by Gül (1990) and of the current study regarding the ability to detect cause and effect relationship, distinguish between fact and opinion and guess the meaning of unknown words all yield similar results. In addition, bottom-up and top-down reading reveal similar responses. Therefore, it may be possible to generalize some of the results and implications to other language teaching institutions.
To sum up, a reading curriculum based on these considerations will make EFL programs more beneficial, effective and purposeful. Hence, students can be made aware of how important reading is as a factor influencing their ability to think critically.
REFERENCES


Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, summed up the four major qualities of money 2,000 years ago. It must be strong and easy to recognise, to divide, and to carry around. In other words it must be, 'durable, distinct, divisible and portable'. When we think of money today, we think of it either as round, flat pieces of metal which we call coins, or as printed paper notes. But there are still parts of the world today where coins and notes are of no use. They will buy nothing, and a traveller might starve to death if he had none of the particular local 'money' to exchange for food.

Among isolated peoples, who are not often reached by traders from outside, commerce usually means a direct exchange of goods. Perhaps it is fish for vegetables, meat for grain, or different kinds of food in exchange for pots, baskets, or other manufactured goods. For this kind of simple trading, money is not needed, but there is often something that everyone wants and everybody can use, such as salt to flavour food, shells for ornaments, or iron and copper to make into tools and ships. These things - salt, shells or metals - are still used as money in far away parts of the world today.

Salt may seem rather a strange substance to use as money, but in countries where the food of the people is mainly vegetable, it is often an absolute necessity. Rocks of salt, stamped to show their value, were used as money in Tibet until recent times, and rocks of salt will still buy goods in Borneo and parts of Africa.

Cowrie sea shells have been used as money at some time or another over the greater part of the Old World. These were collected mainly from the beaches of the
Maldive Islands in the Indian Ocean, and were traded to India and China. In Africa, cowrie sea shells were traded all over the continent from East to West. Four or five thousand went for one Maria Theresa dollar, an Austrian silver coin which was once accepted as currency in many parts of Africa.

Metal, valued by weight, came before coins in many parts of the world. Iron in lumps, bars or rings is still used in many countries instead of money. It can either be exchanged for goods, or made into tools, weapons or decorations. The early money of China, before shells, was bronze, often in flat, round pieces with a hole in the middle, called ‘cash’. The earliest of these are between three thousand and four thousand years old - older than the earliest coins of the eastern Mediterranean.

Nowadays, coins and notes have supplanted nearly all the more pictured forms of money, and although in one or two of the far away countries people still stock it for future use on ceremonial occasions such as weddings and funerals, examples of primitive money will still be found only in museums.
Students’ Questionnaire

(English Version)

Dear Students,

This questionnaire has been prepared for the purpose of gathering factual data on the practicing of “Critical Thinking” in “Reading Comprehension” lessons at the Department of Foreign Languages. For this reason, giving careful and accurate answers to the questions will enhance the reliability of the results. I assure you that any information will be kept confidential.

Thank you for your participation.

Birol Akyüz

A- After reading the text, choose the answer (for question 1, 2 and 3) which is most correct according to the information in the text.

1. In some parts of the world a traveler might starve,
   a) even if his money was of the local kind.
   b) even if he had no coins or notes.
   c) if he did not know the local rate of exchange.
   d) even if he had plenty of coins and notes.

2. If the passage had one more paragraph to continue, what information do you think it would contain.
   a) Museums also contain examples of unusual kinds of clothing.
   b) One of the largest museums in the world is in London.
   c) Museums contain collections relating to primitive people.
   d) Several museums around the world have collections showing kinds of primitive money.

3. The exchange of goods usually take the place of money where
   a) there is only salt.
   b) the people’s needs are quite simple.
   c) metal tools are used.
   d) money is unknown.
Find the following words in the passage (for question 4, 5 and 6) and select the meaning according to the passage.

4. Substance (line 13)
   a) material
   b) weightiness
   c) piece
   d) food

5. Supplanted (line 27)
   a) died
   b) replaced
   c) not used any more
   d) lost interest

6. Distinct (line 3)
   a) recognizable
   b) different
   c) portable
   d) separate

7. Identify the following statements as either fact (F) or opinion (O).

61. Examples of primitive money will be found in museums.
62. Money is thought of as being round, flat pieces of metal.
63. Salt, shells or metals were used as money in the far away parts of the world.
64. Money in some parts of the world will buy nothing and a traveler can starve to death.
65. Sea shells were collected mainly from beaches in the Indian Ocean.

8. Say whether the statement is similar (S) or different (D) in meaning to the sentence from the passage, by the line numbers in brackets.

61. Four or five thousand cowrie sea shells used to be as valuable as one Maria Theresa Dollar (20-21).
62. Lumps of iron or iron bars are exchanged for tools, weapons and ornaments (22-24).
63. Aristotle said money should be made of high-quality materials (1-2).
64. Salt is used in countries where food is mainly vegetable (13-14).
B- According to the reading text that you have just read, try to predict your performance for the following factors listed below. Circle the option that best applies to you.

In the text I was able to...

1. ...detect the difference between fact and the author's opinion. yes / no
2. ...draw conclusions from the author's ideas. yes / no
3. ...compare similarities and differences. yes / no
4. ...guess the meaning of unknown words from the text. yes / no
5. ...detect the main idea. yes / no
6. ...anticipate the next piece of information. yes / no

C- While-pre-post reading

In each of the following statements, circle the number that you think best applies to you in reading a text in class.

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</table>
7. I can recognize relationships between ideas/actions.
   1 2 3 4 5

8. When I do not know the meaning of a word, I try to guess it from the context.
   1 2 3 4 5

9. The English readings in our class textbooks are interesting.
   1 2 3 4 5

10. The English readings in our class are at the appropriate level of difficulty.
    1 2 3 4 5

11. I can recognize the author's point of view.
    1 2 3 4 5

12. When there are words with meanings that I do not know, I stop to look up these words in a dictionary.
    1 2 3 4 5

13. I can evaluate and interpret the text better after having a class discussion.
    1 2 3 4 5

14. After I read the text I can draw conclusions from it.
    1 2 3 4 5

15. I can compare similarities and differences.
    1 2 3 4 5

16. The teacher answers all the questions I raise in a reading text.
    1 2 3 4 5

17. The grammar of class texts are at the appropriate level of difficulty.
    1 2 3 4 5

18. We have a class discussion before starting to read.
    1 2 3 4 5

19. I can detect contradictory statements.
    1 2 3 4 5
20. How much I understand depends on how much I already know about the topic.

1 2 3 4 5

21. The teacher guides us to express our own ideas.

1 2 3 4 5

22. If I share a cultural background with the reading text, I am more able to interpret it.

1 2 3 4 5

23. The more interesting the text is, the more willing I am to interpret it.

1 2 3 4 5

24. When I read a text, it does not matter if I do not know every word.

1 2 3 4 5

C -i Question Types

In each of the following question types, circle the number that you are frequently required to answer in reading a text in class.

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Questions that...

1. ...have one correct answer and are obvious from the text, e.g. yes/no who/when questions.

1 2 3 4 5

2. ...ask for information in the text without stating my own opinion.

1 2 3 4 5

3. ...ask me to make inferences or judgments about what I have read.

1 2 3 4 5

4. ...help me understand and discuss different opinions about the topic.

1 2 3 4 5

5. ...I ask myself to think independently when I am reading.

1 2 3 4 5
Appendix B

Dear Colleagues,

This questionnaire has been designed to collect factual data about what teachers think of the application of "Critical Thinking" in "Reading Comprehension" lessons at the Department of Foreign Languages at Erciyes University. The data will be used in research on "Critical Thinking in Reading". Bearing these factors in mind, I hope that you will answer the questions carefully. The results will be kept confidential.

Thank you for your cooperation and participation.

Birol AKYÜZ

A- While-pre-post reading

In each of the following sentences, circle the number that you think best applies to your students in reading a text in class.

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1. Students like to answer questions that have short and clear answers.
   1 2 3 4 5

2. Students like to answer questions that ask them to express their own ideas about the text (e.g. disagree/agree).
   1 2 3 4 5

3. Students read word by word in an English text to get the meaning.
   1 2 3 4 5

4. Students try to predict the author's intention.
   1 2 3 4 5

5. Students can detect cause/effect relationships.
   1 2 3 4 5

6. Students can distinguish between fact and opinion.
   1 2 3 4 5

7. Students can recognize relationships between ideas/actions.
   1 2 3 4 5

8. When students do not know the meaning of a word they try to guess it from the context.
   1 2 3 4 5

9. The English readings in our class textbooks are interesting.
   1 2 3 4 5

10. The English readings in our class textbooks are at the appropriate level of difficulty.
    1 2 3 4 5
11. Students can recognize the author’s point of view.
   1  2  3  4  5

12. When there are words with meanings that students do not know, they stop to look up these words in the dictionary.
   1  2  3  4  5

13. Students can evaluate and interpret the text better after having a class discussion.
   1  2  3  4  5

14. After students read the text they can draw conclusions from it.
   1  2  3  4  5

15. Students can compare similarities and differences.
   1  2  3  4  5

16. I answer all the questions the students raise in a reading text.
   1  2  3  4  5

17. The grammar of class texts is at the appropriate level of difficulty.
   1  2  3  4  5

18. We have a discussion period with students before starting to read a text.
   1  2  3  4  5

19. Students can detect contradictory statements.
   1  2  3  4  5

20. How much students understand depends on how much they already know about the topic.
   1  2  3  4  5

21. I guide students to express their own ideas.
   1  2  3  4  5

22. If students share a cultural background with the reading text, they are more able to interpret it.
   1  2  3  4  5

23. The more interesting the text is, the more willing students are to interpret it.
   1  2  3  4  5

24. When students read a text, it does not matter if they do not know every word.
   1  2  3  4  5

B- In each of the following statements, circle the number that best applies to you in your reading classes.

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1. I develop activities that focus the students’ attention on the content and meaning of the text.
   1  2  3  4  5
2. I try to build up on the students' background knowledge in relation to the text by a class discussion.

3. I try to select additional texts that are interesting to students.

4. I try to select additional texts that may help students to acquire the cultural background by choosing materials which relate to their local culture.

5. I engage students in expressing their reasons in arguments/debates by exposing him/her to different points.

6. I try to enhance students to think on their own (autonomously) without dominating their thoughts.

7. I respond to students' questions on the ambiguities of the text explicitly.

8. I try to get students to construct and express their own ideas and understandings by providing them with activities that help them focus on the text.

9. I like to break down reading texts into small sequential steps that make it easier for students to understand.

10. I encourage and allow students time to think before they express their ideas in discussion questions.

11. I have the students work in pairs or groups so that they can consult one another at pre/post reading stages.

12. I try to develop activities that focus students' attention on the content and meaning of the text at a pre-reading stage.

13. I interpret and evaluate the text for students rather than having them do this themselves.

14. I choose additional texts that students can easily understand.

15. I give the meanings of the vocabulary that students do not know of.

16. I take students arguments into consideration seriously.
Sevgili Öğrenciler,

Elinizdeki bu okuma metni bilimsel veri elde edebilmek amacıyla hazırlanmıştır. Bu veriler, okuma derslerine yönelik bir araştırmada kullanılabilecektir. Yukarıda belirtilen sebeplerden dolayı soruları ciddiyet ve samimiyetle cevaplayacağınızı umuyorum. Sonuçlar kesinlikle gizli tutulacaktır ve notlarınızla hiçbir şekilde etki etmeyecektir.

Katkılarınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederim.

Erciyes Üniversitesi
İngilizce Okutmanı

Birol Akyüz

B- Okumış olduğunuz metne göre, size aşağıdaki faktörleri ne şekilde cevaplayabilirsiniz.

Size uygun olan seçeneği yuvarlak içine alınız.

Bu okuma metninde,

1. .... gerçek ve yazarın kişisel görüşü arasındaki farkı ayırt edebildim.       evet / hayır
2. .... yazarın fikirlerinden sonuç çıkarabilirdim.                       evet / hayır
3. .... benzerlikleri ve farklılıkları karşılaştırabilirdim.                evet / hayır
4. .... anlamını bilmediğim kelimeleri, metnin bütününden çıkarabilirdim.    evet / hayır
5. .... veya paragraflardaki ana fikirleri tespit edebildim.                evet / hayır
6. .... sırasıyla gelişen fikirleri okumadan önce tahmin edebildim.        evet / hayır
Değerli Öğrenciler,

Bu anket, Yabancı Diller Bölümü’ndeki “Okuduğunu Anlama” (Reading Comprehension) derslerinde “Eleştirel Düşünme’nin” uygulaması konusundaki fikirlerle ilgili bilimsel veri elde etmek amacıyla hazırlanmıştır. Yukarda belirtilen nedenlerden ötürü, soruları içtenlikle cevaplamanız araştırmadan sağlıklı veriler alınabilmesine olanak sağlayacak ve veriler sadece bilimsel amaçlı kullanılacaktır.

Katkılarınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederim.

C- Okuma öncesi veya okuma sonrası:
Aşağıdaki cümleleri okuyup size uygun olan cevabı yuvarlak içine alınız.

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<tr>
<th>Hiçbir zaman</th>
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1. Metinde açıkça belli olan ve kısa cevap verebileceğim soruları severim.
   1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

2. Metin ile ilgili düşüncelerimi açıklamaya yönelik soruları cevaplamayı severim.
   1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

3. Metindeki anlama çikarmak için kelime kelime okurum.
   1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

4. Yazarın amacını tahmin etmeye çalışırım.
   1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

5. Sebep/sonuç ilişkisini tespit edebilirim.
   1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

   1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

7. Metinde fikirler ve olaylar arasındaki ilişkileri tespit edebilirim.
   1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

8. Kelimenin anlamanı bilmediğim zaman, metnin bütününden anlamını tahmin etmeye çalışırım.
   1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

   1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

10. Sınıfta okutulan metinler anlayabileceği düzeydedir.
    1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

11. Yazarın görüş açısını anlayabilirim.
    1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

12. Okurken, anlamanı bilmediğim kelimeler olduğunda, her kelimeyi sözlükte ararım.
    1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |


1  2  3  4  5

15. Metin içerisindeki benzerlikleri ve farklılıkları karşılaştırabilirim.

1  2  3  4  5

16. Okuma metniyle ilgili bütün sorularını öğretmen cevaplandırır.

1  2  3  4  5

17. Sınıfta okutulan metnin grameri anlayabileceğimiz düzeydedir.

1  2  3  4  5

18. Okumaya başlamadan önce, sınıfta gruplar halinde karşılaştık fikir alış verişinde bulunuruz.

1  2  3  4  5

19. Metindeki karşıtlık fikirleri tespit edebilirim.

1  2  3  4  5

20. Okuduğum konuyu anlayabilmem, bu konu hakkında daha önceden ne kadar bilgi olduğuna bağlıdır.

1  2  3  4  5

21. Öğretmen kendi fikirlerimi ifade etmek için beni yönlendirir ve yol gösterir.

1  2  3  4  5

22. Okuma metnindeki kültürel öğelerle ne kadar sahip isem, o kadar kolay yorumlayabilirim.

1  2  3  4  5

23. Okuma metni ne kadar ilgimi çekeceğe, o kadar kolay yorumlayabilirim.

1  2  3  4  5

24. Metni okurken, her kelimenin anlamını bilmemem önemli değildir.

1  2  3  4  5

C-i- Sınıfta bir parçayı okuduktan sonra, karşılaştığınız soru tipini size uygun olan cevabı yuvarlak içine alarak işaretleyiniz .

Hiçbir zaman  Nadiren  Bazen  Sık sık  Her zaman

1  2  3  4  5

1. Metne bakıp hemen bulabilim狄k tek doğru yada kısa cevabı olan sorular. Örneğin: ‘‘Yes-No / who, when’’ gibi sorular.

1  2  3  4  5

2. Kişisel yorumunu katnaksız metinde verilen bilgisi aktarmann yeterli olduğu sorular. Örneğin: T-F / what, where.

1  2  3  4  5


1  2  3  4  5


1  2  3  4  5

5. Okurken, bağımız bir şekilde düşünebilmek için, kendi kendime sorular yöneltim:

1  2  3  4  5
Appendix D

Interview Questions

1. What do you think could be done to make reading material more interesting?

2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the instructional material?

3. What is the role of the teacher to promote CR?

4. What characteristics of students as good or bad readers can be observed in CR?

5. What do you think your strongest skill in developing CR is?

6. What is the single most important characteristic of effective reading students seem to lack?