UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH:

THE INFLUENCE OF VOCABULARY SIZE AND THE USE OF READING TECHNIQUES IN THE LEVEL OF READING COMPREHENSION OF STUDENTS WHO ARE TAKING READING AND CONVERSATION I COURSE AT THE FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT OF THE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR DURING THE SECOND SEMESTER OF 2013

IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE DEGREE OF:

LICENCIATURA EN IDIOMA INGLÉS OPCIÓN ENSEÑANZA

PRESENTED BY:

ALMA NOHELI MADRID HERNÁNDEZ   MH07004

JESSICA JAMILETH VIDES RODRÍGUEZ   VR08011

JOSÉ DAVID CONTRERAS CHACÓN   CC04210

ADVISOR:

LICENCIADO RENÉ ARTURO HERNÁNDEZ RIVAS

MAIN CAMPUS SAN SALVADOR, AUGUST 14TH, 2014

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GENERAL CORDINADOR OF THE GRADUATION PROCESS

LIC. RENÉ HERNÁNDEZ

ADVISOR

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To God:

For providing us life, health, wisdom and academic knowledge along the development of the major and this undergraduate project.

To our families:

For providing us unconditional support, motivation and sacrifice during the major and the whole research process.

To our advisor:

For guiding us, for the effort and time spent on throughout this often tiring process.

Professors:

For motivating us during the major and for sharing their knowledge and being a role model for us.

Teachers and students of reading and conversation I

For giving us the chance to administer the instruments and in this way to gather the data.

To ourselves:

For supporting one another during this long process.

Alma Noheli Madrid Hernández

Jessica Jamileth Vides Rodríguez

José David Contreras Chacón

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ABSTRACT

English is a worldwide language; so many investigations have been done about this language. Many scholars have written books about English as a second language and books for teaching English but these investigations have been carried out in diverse countries with contexts totally different from the ones that Salvadorian students live in. This research has been conducted with the objective of providing sources to future English learners with Salvadorian contexts especially for the reality of the Foreign Languages Department of the Arts and Sciences School of the University of El Salvador; so that students of the foreign Language Department can have access to researches done in their own context.

This study was aimed at determining how influential vocabulary size and the use of reading techniques are in reading comprehension. The research question was "How do vocabulary size and the use of reading techniques influence reading comprehension of students who are taking Reading and Conversation I course at the Foreign Languages Department of the Arts and Sciences School of the University of El Salvador?". In this research, three main aspects of students' skill profile were taken into account: Vocabulary level, the use of reading techniques and the level of reading comprehension.

In order to collect the data, the instruments selected for this research were three different tests. The first one, a vocabulary test from Cambridge University Press. The second, a test for identifying the use of reading techniques that was designed by the researchers taking into account different sources. And the last one, a reading comprehension test designed by Cambridge University Press. These tests were administered to 62 out of 78 students that

were taking the Reading and Conversation I course of the Foreign Language Department of the Arts and Sciences School of the University of El Salvador during the second semester of 2013.

After administering the tests, the students' results of each test were divided into subcategories in order to organize the information gathered. Those categories were established by the grade that students obtained in each test. This organization helped researches to analyze the data for answering the research question. Microsoft Excel was used for the statistical procedure. Line graphs were done for representing the data so that researches could interpret the results for achieving the conclusions of the research.

The conclusions of this research are going to be helpful not only for students but also for teachers since it gives an overview of the impact that vocabulary level and the use of reading techniques have on students' reading comprehension. Since this research has been carried out at the Foreign Language Department of Arts and Science School of the University of El Salvador.

OBJECTIVES

GENERAL OBJECTIVE*:*

- To determine how vocabulary size and the use of reading techniques influence the level of proficiency in reading comprehension in students of Reading and Conversation I course at the Foreign Languages Department of Arts and Sciences School at the University of El Salvador during the second semester of 2013.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE*:*

- To determine how the level of vocabulary reached by students of Reading and Conversation I course at the Foreign Languages Department of Arts and Sciences School of the University of El Salvador during the second semester of 2013 influences their level of proficiency in reading comprehension.

- To determine how reading techniques that are applied by students of Reading and Conversation I course at the Foreign Languages Department of Arts and Sciences School of the University of El Salvador during the second semester of 2013 influence their level of proficiency in reading comprehension.

- To find out which variable is more influential in the level of proficiency in reading comprehension in students of Reading and Conversation I course at the Foreign Languages Department of Arts and Sciences School of the University of El Salvador during the second semester of 2013.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the problem

Reading is one of the four macro skills that a student who is learning English as a Foreign Language needs to master in order to become a proficient bilingual person. However, the full understanding of it can be difficult to achieve. It is noticed that students at Foreign Language Department of Arts and Sciences School of the University of El Salvador are not an exception. During the reading and conversation classes students go through many problems because reading is not worked on systematically in the mother tongue, so students cannot apply techniques like guessing word meaning, scanning, skimming, etc. Moreover, students that frequently read in their mother tongue have a better understanding of a passage in the target language; therefore, it is essential to study the factors that influence reading comprehension. It is crucial for students to become aware of the things that are influencing their reading comprehension and how they can improve this important skill. Our research project will determine how vocabulary size and the use of reading techniques affect the reading comprehension level of proficiency of the students who are taking Reading and Conversation I at the Foreign Languages Department of Arts and Sciences School of the University of El Salvador during the second semester of 2013. With the information that is going to be gathered, the researchers will be able to determine the variable that influences students´ reading comprehension the most.

1.2 Significance of the Problem (and historical background)

The history of the English language started with the arrival of three Germanic tribes who invaded Britain during the 5th century AD. These tribes, the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes, crossed the North Sea from what today is Denmark and Northern Germany. At that time, the inhabitants of Britain spoke a Celtic language. But most of the Celtic speakers were pushed West and North by the invaders mainly into what is now Wales, Scotland and Ireland. The Angles came from "Englaland" and their language was called "Englisc" from which the words "England" and "English" are derived. ("History of the English Language", May 28th, 2013)

Today, American English is particularly influential, due to the United States of America´s dominance of cinema, television, popular music, trade and technology. But there are many other varieties of English around the world, including for example Australian, New Zealand, Canadian, South African, Indian and Caribbean English.

Nowadays, it is noticed that to know English provides students with more opportunities to succeed in the society since it is the most important language, the official language in 70 countries. To master English skills can give people many opportunities to get a job in different areas such as bilingual schools, call centers, tourism, etc. Reading is one of the skills that people need to focus on, since it allows them to access any written information. ESL students at the Foreign Language Department need to read a variety of English texts in different subjects and comprehend their content. However, there are many factors that affect the comprehension of a reading: environmental influences, interest, motivation, vocabulary size, reading habits, reading techniques (Georgia Dennis, eHow

Contributor, May 30th, 2013). This research will aim at describing how vocabulary level and the use of reading techniques affect the level of reading comprehension in students of the Reading and Conversation I course at the Foreign Language Department of Arts and Sciences School at the University of El Salvador.

The "wisegeek" website defines vocabulary as the body of words that make up a language, and the importance of vocabulary in reading comprehension cannot be overstated. Without a good working knowledge of words and their meanings, both written and verbal communication will be muddied or poorly understood. This definition states that vocabulary has a big impact in the level of reading comprehension that students have.

Taking into consideration both the size of vocabulary and the use of reading techniques, our study's main goal is to answer how vocabulary size and the use of reading techniques affect the reading comprehension in students of Reading and Conversation I course of the Foreign Language Department of Arts and Sciences School of the University of El Salvador.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research is to determine how vocabulary size and the use of reading techniques affect reading comprehension. The focus will be on students of Reading and Conversation I course at the Foreign Language Department of Arts and Sciences School at the University of El Salvador since these students have already taken all the Intensive English courses and they are supposed to have reached a high level of English proficiency. Students from these courses might use the results of this research to strength their reading comprehension. Moreover, through this research it will be determined what vocabulary level these students have and whether they use reading techniques or not. Besides that, the research aims at finding out which of these two variables, vocabulary level or the use of reading techniques, is the one that influences the most in the level of reading comprehension reached by students.

1.4 Research questions.

Research question:

How do vocabulary size and the use of reading techniques influence reading comprehension of students who are taking Reading and Conversation I course at the Foreign Languages Department of Arts and Sciences School of the University of El Salvador during the second semester of 2013?

Subsidiary questions:

- How much does vocabulary size help students to understand a reading?
- How does the use of reading techniques help students in reading comprehension?
- Which of these two variables, vocabulary size or reading techniques, influence reading comprehension the most?

1.5 Limitations

Although the research team was able to carry out most of the plan for the present research, there were also some hard times in pulling off this investigation. Here are some of the limitations the research team faced during the process of this work:

- ✓ The members in charge of conducting the research project had different time schedules available, so the research process took more time to be done as planned due to the personal occupations of each one.

- ✓ Another is, the limited access to appropriate bibliography written by well-known researchers and updated information that could support this research work.

- ✓ It was not possible to administer the instruments to all subjects under study since not all teachers give the researchers the opportunity to do it; therefore, the sample population was of 62 students out of 78 that had been calculated.

- ✓ In each Reading and Conversation I group, a great amount of students did not attend regularly or they arrived late; consequently, it was so hard to administer the instruments to everyone at the same time.

- ✓ The instruments were long, so some students did not finish them because the time these took to be solved was about 2 hours.

1.6. Definition of Key Terms

It is important to define the main terms that are going to be used in thesis research so the readers can have a better understating of this project.

Reading Comprehension: This term is defined as understanding a text that is read, or the process of "constructing meaning" from a text. Comprehension is a "construction process" because it involves all of the elements for the reading process working together as a text is read to create a representation of a given text in the reader's mind. (Partnership for Reading, 2005).

Vocabulary Size: It refers to the number of words of which a learner has at least some superficial knowledge of meaning. Other author defines it as the number of words that a person knows http://engres.ied.edu.hk/vocabulary/vocabulary2-3.html.

Reading techniques: They are defined as specific abilities which enable a reader to read the written form as meaningful language, to read anything written with independence, comprehension and fluency, and to mentally interact with the message (SIL International, 1999).

Word family: It is a group of words that share a common base, to which different prefixes and suffixes are added.

Non-experimental research: It is the research design that does not involve a manipulation of the situation, circumstances or experience of the participants. Also it is characterized by procedure of collection of data which often forfeit some degree of control in return for obtaining data. Short questionnaires can be used to get data for a non-experimental research.

CEFF: The **Common European Framework of Reference for Languages** (CEF or CEFR) it was put together by the Council of Europe as a way of standardizing the levels of language exams in different regions. It is very widely used internationally and all important exams are mapped to the CEFR. There are six levels: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2.

C1: Effective Operational Proficiency. It is the ability to communicate with the emphasis on how well it is done, in terms of appropriacy, sensitivity and the capacity to deal with unfamiliar topics.

Scanning: It is a reading technique where the reader looks for specific information rather than trying to absorb all the information. If you're reading a timetable, say, you want specific information usually and so look for something that is convenient for your journey plans- when you do this, you are *scanning.*
http://www.usingenglish.com/glossary/scanning.html#q7Xhiitrg2YHAYfK.99.

Skimming: *Skimming* is reading a text to get the gist, the basic overall idea, rather than concentrating on absorbing all the details. For instance, many people skim read a newspaper article just to get a quick overview, or a text could be skimmed to see whether it's worth reading in detail.
http://www.usingenglish.com/glossary/skimming.html#WzE0riMtBk6VRUJr.99.

Previewing: Previewing a text means to get an idea of what we are going to find in a particular text or in other words it is a skill of learning about a text before reading it. It saves time, gets a sense of what the text is about and gives us a kind of overview. This simple skill includes seeing what we can learn from the head notes or other introductory

material, skimming to get an idea of the content and taking a look at how the text is organized. It saves a lot of time for us as after previewing a text, we can set a purpose or evaluate whether the text meets our purpose or not. http://faculty.ksu.edu.sa/sajidchaudhry/Learning%20Resources/132-2.pdf

Predicting: Making predictions is a strategy in which readers use information from a text (including titles, headings, pictures, and diagrams) and their own personal experiences to anticipate what they are about to read (or what comes next). A reader involved in making predictions is focused on the text at hand, constantly thinking ahead and also refining, revising, and verifying his or her predictions. This strategy also helps students make connections between their prior knowledge and the text. http://beyondweather.ehe.osu.edu/issue/the-sun-and-earths-climate/making-predictions-a-strategy-for-reading-and-science-learning.

Inferring: When we infer we take what we know and combine it with clues from the text to draw a conclusion or predict a result. Making inferences is vital to developing understanding of a text. It enables students to discover the deeper meaning of the text and what is not directly stated by the writer or the creator of the image. When they infer, students form opinions and make assumptions and judgments about events, situations and issues in the text, and how the characters are thinking and feeling. http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/712assessments/naplan/teachstrategies/yr2012/index.php?id=literacy/reading/lr_cold/lr_cold_s23a2_12

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Review of related literature and analysis of previous researches

Reading comprehension

Reading is one of the four macro skills that foreign language learners should master in their language learning process if they want to become well-rounded users of the target language. Grellet (1981) defines reading comprehension as the capacity to understand a written text extracting the required information from it as efficiently as possible. In other words, comprehending a reading is to grasp the most important elements of a text. The ability to read is seen as the most stable and durable of the foreign language skills since learners acquire most of their vocabulary through reading. Also, it provides learners with the opportunity to be exposed to well-organized and well-written pieces of writing which help them to improve their language abilities. Like readers who are native speakers, when foreign language learners read a text their main goal is to comprehend its message. Hence, it shows that foreign language students need to master reading since it is useful in a target language.

Many authors claim that there are factors which have an influence on reading comprehension. In May 30th,2013 Georgia Dennis, a contributor of eHow website, mentioned vocabulary size, the use of reading techniques, reading habits, educational background, motivation, previous knowledge etc. as factors that influence at the moment of comprehending a reading. According to the investigation vocabulary size and the use of reading techniques that learners apply in order to comprehend a reading are determinants on reading comprehension. Therefore, this study will focus firstly on the influence of vocabulary size and secondly on the use of reading techniques.

Vocabulary size

The first influential factor in reading comprehension that is going to be described is vocabulary level since authors like Anderson, Freebody and Calixto state that it is significant on the comprehension of a text. "It has long been accepted that vocabulary knowledge is an instrument for reading comprehension" (Anderson & Freebody, 2000). If foreign language learners do not have enough vocabulary they will not be able to comprehend a reading text because language learners need to have a high level of vocabulary which allows them to have a good understanding since it is considered as an essential tool at the moment of interpreting a text. Also, Calixto (2006) says that the amount of unknown vocabulary is crucial in order to know if it enables the foreign language learner to read with reasonable comprehension. In essence, the amount of vocabulary known is determinant at the moment of comprehending a text.

In order to fully understand a text, language learners have to manage a high amount of words. Schmitt & McCarthy (1997) presented some data that establish that there are over 54,000 word families in English, although educated adult native speakers know around 20,000 of these word families. They argued that a much smaller number of words, between 3,000 to 5,000 word families, are needed to provide an English learner a basis for meaningful reading comprehension in the basic level. Then, if English learners do not know that amount of words they will face problems at the time of comprehending a reading.

Identifying word meanings is crucial in understanding a text; it is for that reason that MC. Quirter states some facts about word meanings. Students know one meaning of a word, but it is known that one word has different meanings in different contexts. Thus

MC.Quirter (2006) states that students need to have a deep understanding of word meaning rather than simply knowing the literal meaning of a new concept. It is important that students explore the multiple meanings of a word; otherwise they will get a wrong message from the reading.

The use of reading techniques

Vocabulary has already been described as a factor that influences on reading comprehension; on the other hand, Grellet claims that the use of reading techniques affects the comprehension of a text as well. These are tools that help readers to understand a reading faster and fulfill the reading purpose. He states on his book: Developing Reading Skills (1981) that comprehending a text depends greatly on the purpose that the reader has. A skilled reader will reject the unnecessary information through the use of these techniques and quickly find what is looking for. It reveals how the use of reading techniques has a great impact on reading comprehension.

In order to achieve successfully the reader's purposes, Brown presents a number of reading techniques that are helpful to get a high comprehension level of texts. Skimming, scanning, inferring, semantic mapping, previewing and predicting are reading techniques stated by Brown (1994: 292-296). All these techniques help the readers to improve their understanding by getting the main points from the text, increasing the reader's ability to think, linking ideas, and setting the context of the text. Hence, through the use of reading techniques, students get a better understanding of a text.

According to authors like Kerr, the use of reading techniques are helpful not only for general reading, but also for tests. In his article *"Skimming, scanning and inferring"* (2009) he mentions that it is common that English language tests, either international (e.g. the Cambridge First Certificate) or local exams (e.g. the Polish school-leaving test, the 'Matura') include a reading component that usually includes tasks that are better accomplished if the students apply different techniques such as skimming, scanning and inferring. It demonstrates that the use of those reading techniques help students to get high score on reading comprehension tests.

There are some studies about the relation of the use of reading techniques and reading comprehension; an example of it is the research carried out in Mindanao State University. Tabudlong, Abucayon, Larayos & Malawani (2012) did an investigation in Mindanao State University in Philippines that found out that there is a significant relationship between the use of reading techniques and the level of reading comprehension. The results of the reading techniques and reading comprehension tests showed that the respondents who have high scores in the reading techniques test have high scores in the reading comprehension tests. These results show the consistency in the performance of the students in both exams since the results demonstrate a parallel relationship.

The investigations that have been carried out demonstrate that both, vocabulary size and the use of reading techniques, have an influence on reading comprehension. All these findings evidence that the use of reading techniques and vocabulary size are not only positively related with the level of reading comprehension, but also they provide a significant help in the successful understanding of a given text. In the literature review was not found an author that compares which of those variables is the most influential on the

level of reading comprehension, the research seeks to find out which of these two variables already described is the one that influences the most on the level of reading comprehension reached by students of Reading and Conversation I course at the Foreign Language Department of Arts and Sciences School at the University of El Salvador.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Description of Research Design and Procedures Used.

Type of research: Correlational research

This research project was a correlational study since its main purpose was to find out the connection between the independent variables, vocabulary size and the use of reading techniques, with the dependent variable, reading comprehension. Moreover, this research had the perspective of mixed method because of the combination of qualitative and quantitative method. The data was gathered and interpreted in numbers and those results helped the researchers to describe how the dependent and independent variables were associated one another. This process was carried out in order to find if reading comprehension is influenced by the vocabulary size and the use of reading techniques in students of Reading and conversation I of the Foreign Language Department of Arts and Sciences School of the University of El Salvador.

Research design: Non-experimental design

Non- experimental research is a category of research design, in which the researcher observes the phenomena as it occurs naturally, and no external variables are introduced. It was a non-experimental research design since the independent variables were not manipulated at all. Researchers collected data without making changes in the context or introducing treatments. The instruments were administered without any review about the use of reading techniques or any previous preparation for the taken exams.

Procedure used

Researchers needed two class hours of Reading and Conversation I course in order to administer the three instruments for the investigation. So researchers asked for permission to teachers, some of the teachers authorized researchers to use time class for the exams. The tests were administered to all the students that attended class the authorized day. In order to identify the students´ tests, they wrote the ID number in each exam. In the first session students took the reading techniques because a specific time was given to do this test. After finishing the reading techniques test, students answered the vocabulary test; this was how the first session finished. In the second session, students answered the reading comprehension test in about an hour. This tests were administered to students at the end of the term since students have already studied the use of reading techniques during the semester, also they have already passed the five Intensive English courses that are necessary in order to take the Reading and Conversation I course.

3.2 Sources of Data

In order to gather the data, researchers did a tiring search with the goal of getting the most reliable and valid data. The first test, Reading Comprehension test was selected from "Certificate in advance English C1", an official examination paper from University of Cambridge ESOL examinations. The second one, Vocabulary Level Test, was also taken from Cambridge University, but in this time from an online source. It was found at the website http://cdextras.cambridge.org/Readers/RPT_last.swf. Finally, the use of reading technique test was a compilation of different resources, books and websites. It was selected from the book 'Reading power' which was written by Beatrice S. Mikulecky and Linda Jeffries authors. Moreover, the websites http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise.com and

http://www.education.com/study-help/article/making-inferences_answer/?page=2   were

used for making some of the items of the use of reading techniques test. The sources of data

that were described are reliable in order to obtain an useful data.

3.3. Sampling Procedures

Universe

The universe in our investigation included all the students of the Foreign Language Department of Arts and Sciences School of the University of El Salvador who were taking Reading and Conversation I course during the second semester of 2013. The total of students in the courses was 238, who were distributed in 8 different groups at different schedules.

Sample

The sample was 20% of the universe which was equivalent to 78 students ideally. The sample type planned to use was randomly sample type so 10 students from each of the 8 different groups of Reading and Conversation I course were going to be selected as sample in order to achieve reliability and validity. But due to the fact, that the researchers faced the inconvenient that not all the teachers in charge of the subject allowed them to administer the instruments to students, the sample type had to be changed and convenience sampling had to be used. Hence, the data gathered was obtained from only 62 students from four complete groups of Reading and Conversation I course of the Foreign Language Department of University of El Salvador.

3.4. Methods and Instruments of Data Gathering

Instruments

This correlational study used three instruments due to the fact that there were two independent variables and one dependent variable, and it was necessary to measure all of them. First, a Vocabulary Level Test designed by Cambridge University Press was used for measuring the students' vocabulary level. Secondly, a reading test for identifying the use of reading techniques was administered to students; this test was designed by researchers with exercises taken from different sources. The last instrument used was a Reading Comprehension test from the book "Certificate in Advanced English C1" from Cambridge University Press. So, with these three different instruments the data had been collected.

Vocabulary Level Test: A Vocabulary Level Test based on the common European framework was administered to Reading and Conversation I course in order to measure if they had advanced vocabulary level. The test given to each student consisted in solving 30 difficulties in which students had to choose three out of six words and match them with their respective definition. This exam took around fifteen minutes to be answered. For reaching the advanced vocabulary level, students needed to obtain a score of 22 to 30 right answers in the test.

The use of reading techniques test: This test was designed by the researches taking into account the different reading techniques like scanning, skimming, guessing meaning from context, making inferences, previewing and predicting. This exam consisted of fifty three items in which students needed to have a grade of seven or higher in order to make an optimum use of reading techniques. Even though it was a general reading

technique test, in order to have reliable results, researcher decided to evaluate technique by technique because each technique has particular characteristics that were important to take into consideration.

Reading comprehension test: The English reading comprehension test was selected from "Certificate in advance English C1" from Cambridge University. This exam measured the level of reading comprehension that students of Reading and Conversation I course had. It had 34 difficulties and took students about an hour to answer the exam. Students needed to have a grade of seven or higher in order to make a proficiency level of reading comprehension according to the Common European Framework.

Having already described the characteristics of each instrument that were used in the research, it is necessary to mention that those instruments were essential for gathering the information and carry out this research project.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1 Analysis of data

In order to analyze the data the researchers were going to take into account categories for a better understanding of the data. Each exam score was going to be divided into two categories; the categories for the reading comprehension test were going to be the students that reached the C1 level and the students that did not reach it. Also, the vocabulary level was going to be divided into the students that had the advanced level of vocabulary and the ones that did not have it. Moreover, the results of the exams on the use of reading techniques were going to be subcategorized in optimums use of reading techniques and poor use of them. After gathering the data, it could not be processed as it was planned because only two students passed the reading comprehension test, so there was no way to make a relation between the scores obtained. Therefore, the researchers decided to analyze the data in a different way.

Researchers had to arrange the data based on scores obtained in the tests by students of Reading and Conversation I course. First, the data was organized with the purpose of checking each of the tests and giving each student a grade from 1 to 10. Second, the grades of the three exams were associated to the corresponding students ID in order to identify the grades gotten by students in each exam. Third, the data was arranged based on the reading and comprehension test grades in an ascendant way, from 1 to 10. Moreover, a statistical frequency chart was made in five intervals of two points each one. By using that chart, the results were presented in a line graph that showed the scores that students obtained in the three different exams. Its purpose was to identify the amount of students that passed and did not pass the different tests as well as to represent the relation between the grades obtained in each test.

4.2 Analysis of the data by graphs

Individual scores obtained by students in each test
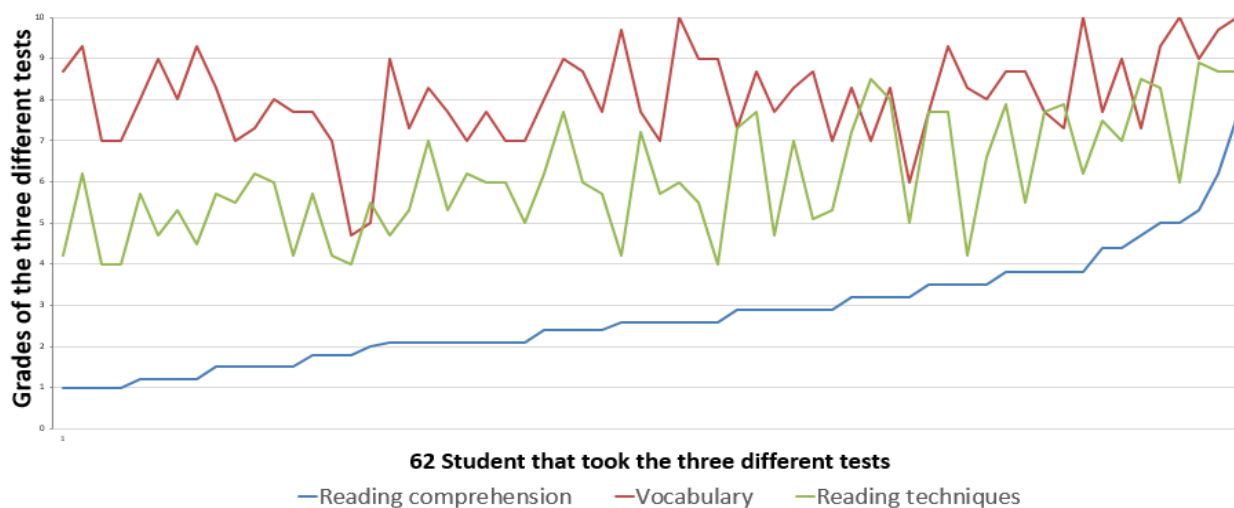
This line graph represents the grades obtained by each student in the three tests administered. The data was arranged based on the reading comprehension test, from the lowest to the highest grades with its respective vocabulary and the use of reading techniques test grades. The graph shows that there is a positive correlation between the vocabulary level and the use of reading techniques grades with reading comprehension because the students that have a high score in reading comprehension also have a high score in vocabulary and in the use of reading techniques. A positive correlation between vocabulary level and the use of reading techniques is perceived in the students that had scores from 6-8 in reading comprehension and the students who got scores from 8-10 in vocabulary level and the use of reading techniques as well. As a conclusion, the scores of vocabulary level and the use of reading techniques should be higher than 8 in order to have a positive influence in reading comprehension.

Statistical frequency of scores obtained in the three different exams that were administered to students

	1-2.0	2.1-4	4.1-6	6.1-8	8.1-10
Reading comprehension	17	37	6	2	0
	27%	60%	10%	5%	0%
Vocabulary	0	0	3	30	29
	0%	0%	5%	48%	47%
Reading techniques	0	4	30	19	9
	0%	6%	48%	31%	15%
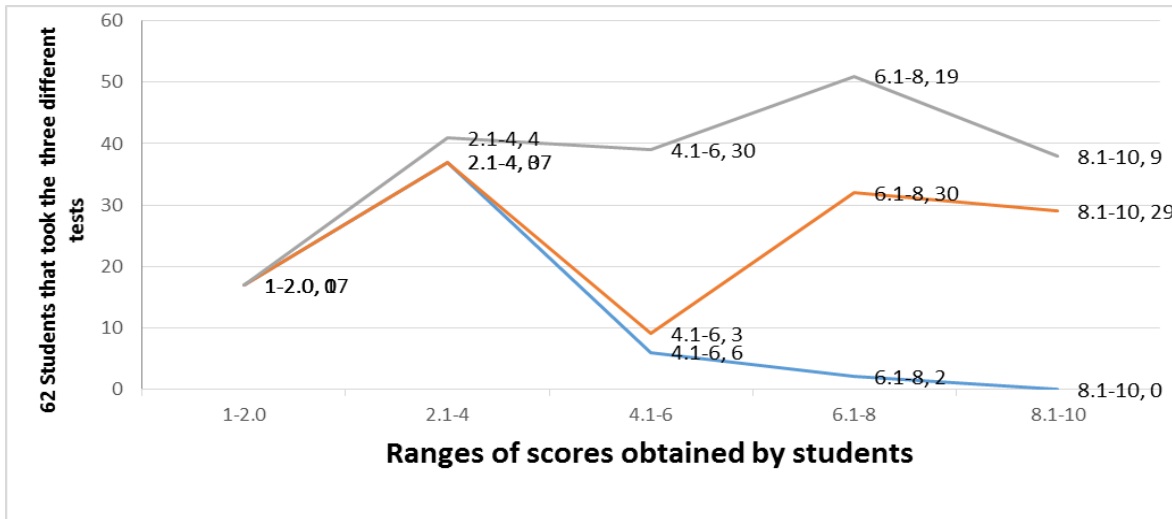
The line graph shows the statistical frequency of scores in each range for the three tests administered. According to this, 60% of the students got grades between 2.1 and 4 in the reading comprehension test, which means the majority of students did not get the C1 level because according to Cambridge University Press a score of seven is required in order to achieve C1 level (advanced reading comprehension). It also shows that 95% of the students reached from 6.1 to 10 in the vocabulary level test. This tells us that a high amount of students who are taking Reading and Comprehension I course have high vocabulary level. Besides, through the results it can be seen that 48% of students got an average score of 4.1 to 6 in the use of reading techniques test. As a result, students have the knowledge about the use of reading techniques; however, they have not internalized them and are not able to use them in an accurate way.

The correlational relation between vocabulary level and the use of reading techniques.

62 Student that took the three different tests
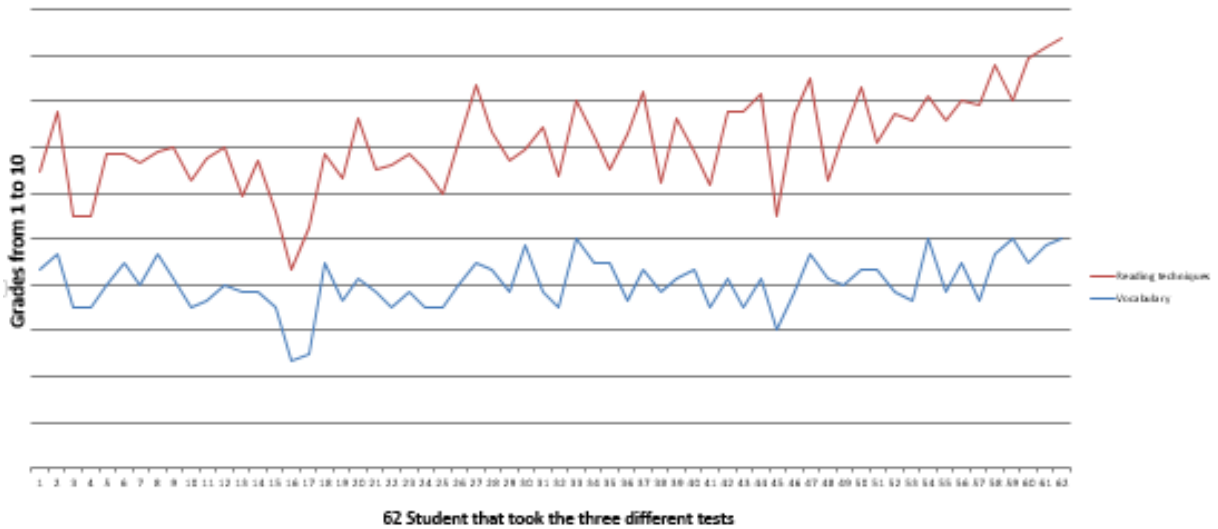
According to this line graph, there is a positive association between the independent variables, vocabulary size and the use of reading techniques. It is evident that there is the positive correlation between these variables because when vocabulary scores are high, the scores in the use of reading technique test increase and the other way around. As a result, the use of reading techniques and vocabulary level are related to each other, therefore, they should not be isolated.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Major findings

1. There is a positive correlation between independent variables, vocabulary and the use of reading techniques.

2. There is a positive correlation between the independent variables, vocabulary and the use of reading techniques, and the dependent variable reading comprehension.

3. The level of reading comprehension that English language students have at this level of the major is not the one that they supposed to have.

4. Students know the reading techniques but they cannot apply them unless they are told to do that.

5. Students of Reading and Conversation I course have a high level of vocabulary.

5.2 Answers to research questions
Research question:

How do vocabulary size and the use of reading techniques influence reading comprehension of students who are taking Reading and Conversation I course at the Foreign Languages Department of Arts and Sciences School of the University of El Salvador during the second semester of 2013? After analyzing the data, we can say that the vocabulary level and the use of reading techniques have a big influence in the reading comprehension of students who are taking Reading and Conversation I course since students that have higher level of reading comprehension also have a high vocabulary level and a high use of the reading techniques while reading a text. But in order to have this influence, it is necessary to have a high level of both, vocabulary and the use of reading techniques. Even though students obtained a high level of vocabulary but not a high score in the use of reading techniques, its reading comprehension was not affected in a positive way because its scores remained low.

Subsidiary questions:

- **How much does vocabulary size help students to understand a reading?** It is seen in the data that vocabulary level influences in a positive way in the reading comprehension. Most of the students passed the vocabulary level test with high grades obtaining the advanced vocabulary level established by Cambridge University Press. Also the students that obtained a C1 level in reading comprehension had a high level of vocabulary. Therefore, vocabulary level influences in reading comprehension since the

students that have C1 level also have a high vocabulary level but for influencing in a positive way they also need to have a high use of reading techniques.

- **How does the use of reading techniques help students in reading comprehension?** Researchers concluded that the use of reading techniques influenced in the reading comprehension because students that got low scores of the use of reading also obtained a low score in the reading comprehension test. Therefore, the use of reading techniques affects the students´ reading comprehensions.

- **Which of these two variables, vocabulary size or reading techniques, influence reading comprehension the most?** None of these two variables, vocabulary level and the use of reading techniques, influence the most because both are essential in order to have a proficient reading comprehension. Moreover, vocabulary level and the use of reading techniques influence in reading comprehension when both scores are high but not when the grades obtained on those test are different; which means that there is not possible to have an positive influence in reading comprehension when one of the grades is higher than 8 and the other one is lower than 8 as well.

5.3 Conclusions

At the end of this study, the researchers reached the following conclusions:

The independent variables, vocabulary level and the use of reading techniques, have a positive correlation between them. It is seen that when the use of reading techniques grades increase also the vocabulary grades increase. Similarly, if the use of reading techniques decreases the grades of the vocabulary level does it too. This correlation is observed in all grades gotten by students in the test. It does not matter the amount that the grades increase or decrease because the positive correlation stills remains.

The independent variables, vocabulary level and the use of reading techniques, have an influence in the dependent variable, reading comprehension. Because students who got higher grades than 8 in vocabulary and the use of reading techniques obtained a higher grade+ than 6 in reading comprehension. That is the reason why researchers conclude that in order to have a high grade in reading comprehension it is necessary to have high grades in both vocabulary and the use of reading techniques.

In order to take Reading and Conversation I course, Foreign Language students have to take the five Intensive English subjects that the curriculum requires. That means, students should have the C1 level of reading comprehension at this level of the major. Cambridge University Press establishes that for having the C1 level of reading comprehension, which corresponds to the advanced level in Common European Framework, students have to obtain a grade higher than 7.0 in such exam. However, the results of the study clearly reflected that the majority of students, 87%, did not have the

reading comprehension level that they should reach the advanced level because most of them got scores from 1 to 4.0, and only 3% reached the level. To conclude, Foreign Language students do not have the reading comprehension level that is required at this point of the major.

Students identify the reading techniques but they cannot use them when reading a text. Most of the students passed the test of the use of reading techniques with a grade higher than 6.0 but they did not apply the reading techniques in the reading comprehension test. If students had applied the reading techniques in the reading comprehension test, they could have gotten a higher grade in this test. Researches can reach this conclusion because of the grades of two students that have a C1 level; they obtained a high grade not only in the vocabulary test but also in the use of reading techniques. Apparently, students of Reading and Conversation I course have not internalized those techniques because they are able to use them when they were told to apply a specific technique but not in a text without requesting to use certain reading technique.

The Vocabulary Level Test from Cambridge University Press that was administered to students of Reading and Conversation I course showed the vocabulary level that they have. This test categorized students who got scores of 7 to 10 in advanced vocabulary level. The findings of the study supported that almost all the students have the advanced vocabulary level since most of them passed the vocabulary test with a high grade; therefore, students of Reading and Conversation I course have an advanced level of vocabulary.

5.4. Recommendations

✓ Not only is recommendable to make use of Reading Techniques but also to have a high Vocabulary Level in order to have a high level of Reading Comprehension. Because the use of Reading Techniques is as important as Vocabulary Size when comprehending a reading.

✓ Reading and Conversation I teachers should encourage students to learn which reading technique they have to use when reading a text because students are not able to identify the reading techniques that they have to apply unless they are explicited told .

CHAPTER 6

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CHAPTER 7

ANNEXES

7.1 Design of the study

A. Description of Research Design and Procedures.

Type of research: Correlational research

A Correlational study attempts to discover a relationship between dependent and independent variable. This academic study is considered an example of this type of research since it is going to relate variables. It´s main purpose is to find the connection between independent variables, vocabulary size and the use of reading techniques, with the dependent variable, reading comprehension. Moreover, this research will be carry out under the perspective of mixed method because of the combination of qualitative and quantitative method. The data that is going to be gathered will be interpreted in numbers and those results are going to help the researches to describe how the independent and dependent variable is associated one to another. This process will be carried out in order to find if reading comprehension is influenced by the vocabulary size and the use of reading techniques between students of Reading and conversation I of the Foreign Language Department of Arts and Sciences school of the University of El Salvador.

Research design: Non-experimental design

Non- experimental research is a category of research design, in which the researcher observes the phenomena as it occurs naturally, and no external variables are introduced. It is a research design in which variables are not manipulated. Researchers will collect data without making changes or introducing treatments. The instruments will be administered without any review about the use of reading techniques or any previous preparation for the test that sample population is going to take.

Procedure

In order to gather the data researchers will need to administer three tests to students of Reading and conversation I course. With the purpose to gather the data, researchers are going to ask teachers to allow 10 students to leave the class and take the tests. The instruments are going to be taken by the students in two sessions of one hour class each one, so students will have one hour class with the teacher in charged for the class and one hour for taking the tests. The first session students are going to take the Reading Comprehension test which is going to be the longest instrument. The second session students are going to take the vocabulary level test and the one that applies the use of reading techniques. In order to identify the students´ tests, they will write their student´s ID in each instruments provided by the researchers.

B. Sources of Data

In order to gather the data, researchers are going to do a tiring search with the goal of getting the most reliable and valid data. First, the Reading Comprehension test is going to be selected from "Certificate in advance English C1", an official examination paper from University of Cambridge ESOL examinations. The second one, Vocabulary Level Test, is also going to be taken from Cambridge University, but in this time from an online source. Its website is http://cdextras.cambridge.org/Readers/RPT_last.swf.   Finally, the use of reading technique test was a compilation of different resources, books and websites. It was selected from the book 'Reading power' which was written by Beatrice S. Mikulecky and Linda Jeffries authors. Moreover, websites like http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise.com and http://www.education.com/study-help/article/making-inferences_answer/?page=2 are going

to be used in order to obtain some exercises about the use of reading techniques. The instruments are going to be selected from trustworthy sources with the aim of gathering reliable data.

C. Sampling Procedures

Universe

The universe in our investigation includes all the students of the Foreign Language Department of the School of Arts and Sciences at the University of El Salvador who are taking the of Reading and Conversation I course during the semester II-2013. The total of students taking the subject is 238, distributed in 8 different groups at different schedules.

Sample

20% of the universe is going to be selected randomly as the sample in order to do a reliable and valid research. If the universe is 238 the 20% of that universe is equal to 78 students. Since there are 8 different groups it is necessary to select the same amount of students of each group. Therefore, 10 students of each reading and conversation I course of the Foreign Language department of University of El Salvador are going to be selected randomly from each attendance list.

D. Methods and Instruments of Data Gathering

Instruments

The instruments that this correlational study is going to use are three due to the fact that there are two independent variables and one dependent variable and it is necessary to measure all of them. First, a Vocabulary Level Test designed by Cambridge University Press is going to be used for measuring the students' vocabulary size. Secondly, a reading test for identifying the use of reading techniques will be administered to students, this test is designed by researchers with exercises taken from different sources. The last instrument that will be used is a Reading Comprehension test from the book "Certificate in Advanced English C1" from Cambridge University Press.

Vocabulary Level Test: It is an online test from Cambridge University. It can be found at http://cdextras.cambridge.org/Readers/RPT_last.swf. This test will measure if students have the vocabulary required for being in an advanced vocabulary level. This instrument has 30 difficulties that they are going to solve in a hand out given by the researchers on which they have to choose three out of six words and match them with their respective definition. This exam is also based on the common European framework. For reaching the advanced vocabulary level, students need to obtain 22 right answers in the test. This exam is going to take around 10 minutes to be answered.

The use of reading techniques: this exam is designed by the researches taking into account the different reading techniques like scanning, skimming, guessing meaning from context, making inferences, previewing and predicting. The scanning section, guessing meaning from context, the previewing and predicting items are obtained from the book

"Reading Power" who´s author are Beatrice S. Mikulecky and Linda Jeffries moreover, skimming and making inferences are gotten from http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise.com and http://www.education.com/study-help/article/making-inferences_answer/?page=2 websites respectively. This exam consist of fifty two items in which students need to have a score of seven or higher in order to make an optimum use of reading techniques. Besides that, the exam will take about 20 minutes to students to answer it.

Reading comprehension test: The English reading test was selected from "Certificate in advance English C1". This exam is going to measure the level of reading comprehension that students have based on the common European framework. It is going to take students about an hour and fifteen minutes to take the exam. And the researches will use these results for a bivariate analysis that is going to tell them how vocabulary size and the use of reading techniques influence on reading comprehension.

After describing the characteristics of each of the different tests that are going to be used in the research, it is necessary to mention that those instruments are very important for gathering the information that is going to be analyzed and interpreted in order to answer the research question.

E. ANALYSIS OF DATA

In order to analyze the collected data the researchers will take into account the following categories. By the score obtained on the different instruments, students will be divided in two categories: first of all, the students that get an advanced level of vocabulary

(22 to 30 points) and the ones that do not reach it (less than 22 points). Second, according to the score obtained in "the use of reading techniques test", they are going to be classified into two groups: the ones that make an optimum use (grades higher than 7) of reading techniques and the students that make a poor use of reading techniques (grades lower than 7). And finally, the students will be classified as students that achieve the C1 level in the exam of Cambridge University Press and the ones that do not have it, C1- level

The next chart presents the classification of the data that will be gathered based on the results that students will have on the exams.

INSTRUMENTS	CLASSIFICATION	GRADES
Vocabulary test	Advance level	22 to 30 points
	Not advance level	Less than 22
Reading techniques	Optimus use of reading techniques	Higher than 7
	Poor use of reading techniques	Lower than 7
Reading comprehension	C1	Higher than 7
	C1-	Lower than 7

In order to answer the research question "How do vocabulary size and the use of reading techniques influence in reading comprehension of students who are taking Reading and Conversation I course at the Foreign Languages Department of Arts and Sciences school of the University of El Salvador during the second semester of 2013?" the

researchers are going to do a bivariate analysis with the data gathered through the instruments.

First of all, the dependent variable "reading comprehension" is going to be correlated with the independent variable "vocabulary size". In this way the researchers are going to identify if students have parallel grades on both exams concluding that the results on reading comprehension whether or not are influenced by vocabulary size.

Secondly, the dependent variable "reading comprehension" is going to be correlated with the independent variable "use of reading techniques", so that the researchers would identify if students´ grades on both exams are related one to another.

Finally, the three variables are going to be compared in order to identify which independent variable (vocabulary size and use of reading techniques) influences the most the dependent variable (reading comprehension).

After gathering the information a statistical procedure has to be done for the analysis of the data. The collected data is going to be processed by using the program Microsoft Excel. In order to represent the data bar graphs are going to be used. So the correlational research can be done throughout this tool.

7.2. Instruments

UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCIENCES AND ARTS SCHOOL
FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT
VOCABULARY LEVELTEST

OBJECTIVE: DETERMINE IF FOREIGN LANGUAGES STUDENTS WHO ARE TAKING THE READING AND CONVERSATION I COURSE HAVE THE VOCABULARY REQUIRED FOR BEING IN ADVANCE LEVEL.

Instructions: Choose from the words of the left the ones that fit on the definition of the right side. Write the letter in the space provided.

QUESTIONS 1 TO 3

A. VAGUE

B. CRITICAL

C. EXTENSIVE

D. IMPRESSIVE

E. ESPLENDIND

F. BARE

_____ Not covered

_____ Not clear or uncertain

_____ Saying that someone or something is bad or wrong

QUESTIONS 4 TO 6

A. DECK

B. CHARACTERISTIC

C. FUNERAL

D. ORIGIN

E. RAY

F. JUSTICE

_____ Behavior or treatment that is fair.

_____ A flat area for walking on, especially on a boat or bus.

_____ A typical or obvious quality that makes one person or thing different from others

QUESTIONS 7 TO 9

A. BUNCH

B. ECONOMICS

C. COMPONENT

D. HEADQUATERS

E. MEDIA

F. PICKPOCKET

_____ One of the parts of a system, process, or machine.

_____ A thief who steals things out of pockets or bags in a crowd.

_____ The scientific study of the system by which a country's wealth is made and used.

QUESTIONS 10 TO 12

A. ARISE

B. CONGRATULATE

C. ENABLE

D. INHERIT

E. PEDAL

F. STAMMER

_____ Make something possible

_____ Pause a lot and repeat sounds because of a speech problem

_____ Praise someone and say you are pleased about their achievement

QUESTIONS 13 TO 15

A. ANGLE

B. CARAVAN

C. FLESH

D. DEBT

E. JURY

F. TUNE

_____ The amount of money that you owe someone.

_____ A serious of musical notes that are pleasant to listen to

_____ The soft part of the body of a person or animal between the skin and the bones.

QUESTIONS 16 TO 18

A. PROSPECT

B. CABIN

C. DEPENDENT

D. BARRIER

E. OINTMENT

F. STUDIO

_____ A type of fence that prevents people from going into an area.

_____ A smooth, thick liquid that is used on painful or damaged skin.

_____ The possibility that something good might happen in the future.

QUESTIONS 19 TO 21

A. BLUNT

B. DELICATE

C. RURAL

D. STALE

E. ETHNIC

F. VULNERABLE

_____ Not new or fresh anymore.

_____ Relating to people of a particular culture.

_____ Relating to the countryside and not to towns.

QUESTIONS 22 TO 24

A. AVENUE

B. CEMENT

C. DATA

D. FATE

E. INSTANCE

F. OBLIGATION

_____ Information or facts about something.

_____ A gray powder used in building which is mixed with sand and water to make a hard material.

_____ What happens to a particular person or thing, especially something final or negative, such.

QUESTIONS 25 TO 27

A. BOND

B. COINCIDENCE

C. ELASTIC

D. OFFICIAL

E. HORIZON

F. MIRACLE

_____ Someone who has an important position in an organization.

_____ The line in the distance where the sky seems to tough the land or the sea.

_____ A type of rubber that returns to its original size and shape after you stretch it.

QUESTIONS 28 TO 30

A. CONTRADICT

B. BROADCAST

C. FUNCTION

D. ANTONISH

E. PROFIT

F. SPILL

_____ Work or operate

_____ Make someone very surprised

_____ Say the opposite of what someone else has said

OBJECTIVE: TO DETERMINE WHETHER READING AND CONVERSATION I STUDENTS AT THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR MAKE USE OF READING TECHNIQUES TO COMPREHEND A TEXT.

ID:_____

SCANNING:

Direction: Read each question. Then scan the advertisement to locate the correct answer. 3 minutes

1- How many different beverages are advertised? ………………...._____ ___
2- What is the price of a 9" pie? ………………………………………._____ _____
3- How many ounces (oz) of vegetables can you buy for .79? ………._____ ____
4- How many Eggo Waffles are in a package (pkg.) ………………._____ __
5- What is the name of the company which sells frozen carrots? …..._____ _____
6- Which juice is 100% natural? ……………………………………._____
7- How many pieces of pizza can you buy for $2.39? ……………..._____ ____
8- Which pizza is cheaper? .... _____
9- What is the weight of the frozen bread dough? …………………._____ _____
10- Is pink lemonade on sale? ………………………………………._____ _____

TIMESAVING FROZEN FOODS

Minute Maid OJ Calcium Fortified, Country Style or Regular. 12 Oz Can. Or Reduced Acid 10 Oz Can. Frozen — **.99**

Seneca Juice 100% Natural Grape, Granny Smith Apple or Apple. 12 Oz. Can. Frozen — **1.29**

Lemonade Shop & Go. Regular or Pink. 12 Oz Can. Frozen — **2 for $1**

Large Crispy Bagels Shop & Go. Assorted Varieties 15.6 Oz Pkg. of 5. Frozen. — **.69**

Eggo Waffles Homestyle or Buttermilk 11 Oz Pkg. of 8 Frozen. — **1.29**

Cool Whip Lite, Extra Creamy or Regular 8 Oz Container. Frozen — **.99**

9" Homestyle Pie Sara Lee. Assorted Varieties 37 Oz Pkg. Frozen. — **1.99**

White Bread Dough Shop & Go. 5 lb Pkg of 5. Frozen. — **1.89**

Birds Eye Deluxe Microwaveable Vegetables. Baby Whole Carrots, Broccoli Florets, Sugar Snap Peas, Tendersweet Corn, Baby Broccoli Spears, Whole Green Beans or Tiny Tender Peas. 8 Oz Pkg. Frozen. — **.79**

Shop & Go Carrots Whole Baby 16 Oz or Crinkle Cut 20 Oz Bag. Frozen — **.89**

Ellio's Pizza 6 Slice Double Cheese 19 Oz Pkg. Frozen — **2.39**

Cheese Ravioli Shop & Go. 16 Oz Pkg. of 36 Frozen — **1.39**

Weaver Chicken Fried Crispy Dutch Frye 28 Oz Pkg. or Batter Dipped or Dutch Frye Breasts. 22 Oz Pkg. Frozen — **3.49**

Totino's Pizza Party. Assorted Varieties 9.8 Oz Pkg. Frozen — **1.39**

Fish Sticks Van de Kamp's Value Pack 26.4 Oz Pkg. of 44. Frozen — **3.49**

Directions: Look at this text and then answer the next five questions in five minutes.

PHOBIAS

What is a phobia? A phobia is an intense fear or feeling of anxiety that occurs only in a particular situation that frightens you. This might be something as seemingly logical as a fear of heights, or as illogical as a fear of the colour green. At other times you don't feel anxious. For example, if you have a phobia of spiders (as millions of people do), you only feel anxious when there's a spider around, otherwise you feel fine. About one in ten people has a significant phobia, although few people seek treatment. People develop phobias to all sorts of things. Each phobia has its own name. Some (of a very long list) includes:

- ✓ Musophobia – fear of mice
- ✓ Peladophobia – fear of bald people
- ✓ Amathophobia – fear of dust
- ✓ Pnigophobia – fear of choking or smothering
- ✓ Maieusiophobia – fear of childbirth
- ✓ Homichlophobia – fear of fog
- ✓ Arachibutyrophobia – fear of peanut butter sticking to the roof of the mouth

Phobias make people avoid situations they know will make them anxious, but this can make the phobia worse. A person's life can become increasingly dominated by the precautions they take to avoid a situation they fear. You may know there's no real danger and you may feel embarrassed by your fear, but you're still unable to control it. It's better to confront your fears, even if it's in a very careful way or with the help of a trained therapist. A phobia is more likely to go away if it began after a distressing or traumatic event. What's the treatment? Cognitive behavioural therapy – a 'talking treatment' where you learn all about the thing or situation you are scared of and how to change your behaviour – has a high success rate in phobias. Your GP can refer you.

1. The purpose of the text is to...
A) Give information about phobias
B) Give instructions for people with phobias
C) Persuade people with phobias to seek help

2. A phobia ...
A) Happens to everyone when they are frightened
B) Happens only in certain situations
C) Only happens to people who are anxious

3. The writer advises people with phobias to ...
A) Consult a psychotherapist
B) Avoid situations that make them anxious
C) Confront the fear rather than avoid it

4. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is ...

A) A recommended treatment for phobias

B) Not a recommended treatment for phobias

C) Is a recommended treatment for some phobias

5. What is the main message of this article?

A) Some people have phobias and live in fear of certain things.

B) If you have a phobia you should see a therapist.

C) What a phobia is and how to treat it.

GUESSING MEANING FROM CONTEXT

Directions: in each of the following items, there is a word you may not know. Guess the word meaning from the context of the sentences. Then, choose the correct word.

1. What does **ravenous** mean?

    _____

    Could I have a piece of bread? I missed breakfast and I am simply **ravenous**.
    a. starving   b. upset   c. angry   d. happy

2. What does **wink** mean?

    _____

    George **winked** to me from across the room. It was a signal not to say anything about what we have seen.
    a. blink   b. jump   c. point   d. pull up

3. What does **sallow** mean?

    _____

    The poor girl had a **sallow** skin and very thin, bony arms and legs.

    a. pallid   b. colorful   c. dark   d. lucid

4. What does dike mean?

    _____

    After so much rain, the river flowed over the **dike** and into the fields.
    People in this area began building **dikes** many centuries ago. It was the only way to keep the sea out of their villages.
    a. duct   b. fence   c. mountains   d. city

5. What does **gaudy** mean?

    _____

    She was wearing such **gaudy** clothes that was easy to find her in the crowd.
    a. light   b. vivid   c. gloomy   .d pallid

MAKING INFERENCES

Directions: Read the selection, and then answer the questions that follow.

ANCIENT ANIMALS

Dinosaurs are everywhere. You see them in movies, books, museums, and TV documentaries. They show up as stuffed toys or on T-shirts. These prehistoric beasts may be extinct—no longer living—but they're definitely not forgotten! It's been a long time since dinosaurs roamed and ruled Earth. Scientists say the last ones died about 65 million years ago. We know the dinosaurs are gone, but no one knows exactly why. After all, no one was here to witness what happened! Most scientists believe dinosaurs died out after a gigantic meteorite hit Earth's surface and drastically changed the planet's climate.

Birds and mammals that were protected by feathers and fur were better able to adapt to the weather changes than cold-blooded dinosaurs. Other scientists say dinosaurs aren't extinct, they just look different! These experts believe the prehistoric beasts changed and developed into birds! Still other scientists say that Earth's warmer weather caused more male than female dinosaurs to develop. So, they say, dinosaurs died out because there were no more females to increase the population! How do scientists know what dinosaurs looked like? There were no cameras millions of years ago, so dinosaurs are the only ones who know . . . and they're not talking! Scientists get clues from dinosaur fossils, and infer the rest. Bones, footprints, and other remains are evidence of how big dinosaurs were and how they moved. To figure out how they looked with their skin on, scientists look at animals that live today.

Because dinosaurs were lizard-like, scientists can infer that dinosaurs looked a lot like modern-day lizards. And since modern lizards are brown, gray, or green, then dinosaurs probably were, too! That's why dinosaur pictures and museum models have the same colors as today's lizard populations. Scientists are always discovering new things about dinosaurs. In recent years, fossils were found in Antarctica, proving that dinosaurs lived on every continent. Experts also figured out that Stegosaurus had only one spread-out row of plates down its back, not two individual rows. And fossils of the smallest and the largest dinosaurs have been found. What will scientists discover next?

1. From the first paragraph, you can infer that…
a.   you can see dinosaurs only in museums.
b.   all dinosaurs were very tall.
c.   the author doesn't like dinosaurs.
d.   people of all ages are interested in dinosaurs.

2. Scientists found a rare blue lizard in Colombia, so you can infer that
a.   the scientists were looking for missing people.
b.   some dinosaurs might have been blue.
c.   no dinosaurs had ever lived in Colombia.
d.   the lizards built nests near the top of a volcano.

3. Since scientists are always discovering new things about dinosaurs, you can infer that
a.   they still might not have found the smallest or biggest dinosaurs.
b.   science is no longer interested in looking for fossils.
c.   prehistoric people left written records with descriptions of dinosaurs.
d.   when scientists make inferences, they are always right.

4. What can you infer from the fact that Stegosaurus has just one row of plates?
a.   Stegosaurus wasn't as old as scientists thought.
b.   Old pictures and museum models of Stegosaurus had to be changed.
c.   Someone stole the other row of plates from a museum.
d.   Stegosaurus means "roof lizard."

5. What can you infer about lizard eggs?
a.   Cooler temperatures should produce more female lizards.
b.   Hot weather should produce female lizards.
c.   Cold temperatures will produce more male lizards.
d.   Hot weather will produce more orange lizards.

6. What can you infer about scientists?
a.   They never watch TV.
b.   All scientists study about dinosaurs.
c.   They don't always agree.
d.   They never make mistakes.

PREVIEWING AND PREDICTING:

An amazing article has this title:
> BOSTON: A GOOD PLACE TO LIVE

Which of the following ideas could you find in the article? Check YES OR NO.

		YES	NO
1.	Boston has many wonderful museums.	_____	_____
2.	The sports teams in Boston are exciting to watch.	_____	_____
3.	There are many poor people in Boston.	_____	_____
4.	The Boston symphony Orchestra is one of the best.	_____	_____
5.	People are not very friendly in Boston	_____	_____
6.	There are many famous old buildings in Boston.	_____	_____
7.	Apartments are expensive and hard to find	_____	_____
8.	Jobs are hard to find in the Boston area	_____	_____
9.	People like to walk and jog in the city parks	_____	_____
10.	Winters in Boston are cold and snowy.	_____	_____

Another magazine article has this title:

> MODERN DENTIST
> ━━━━━━━━━━
> How They Can Help You

Which of the following ideas could you find in the article? Check YES or NO

		YES	NO
1.	Dentist hurt your teeth.	_____	_____
2.	Dentist use may up-to-date machines.	_____	_____
3.	Some dentists play the radio for their patients.	_____	_____
4.	Some dentists will pull out all your teeth.	_____	_____
5.	You can get your teeth cleaned at the dentist´s office.	_____	_____
6.	The dentist may x-ray your teeth.	_____	_____
7.	A visit to the dentist is very expensive.	_____	_____
8.	The dentist tells you how to take care of your teeth.	_____	_____
9.	Some dentists become very rich.	_____	_____
10.	Modern dentists must study for many years.	_____	_____

OBJECTIVE: TO DETERMINE IF FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDENTS WHO ARE TAKING THE READING AND CONVERSATION I COURSE HAVE THE READING COMPREHENSION LEVEL REQUIRED FOR BEING IN C1.

Part 1

You are going to read three extracts which are all concerned in some way with providing a service. For questions 1–6, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

Fish who work for a living

Cleaner wrasses are small marine fish that feed on the parasites living on the bodies of larger fish. Each cleaner owns a 'station' on a reef where clientele come to get their mouths and teeth cleaned. Client fish come in two varieties: residents and roamers. Residents belong to species with small territories; they have no choice but to go to their local cleaner. Roamers, on the other hand, either hold large territories or travel widely, which means that they have several cleaning stations to choose from. The cleaner wrasses sometimes 'cheat'. This occurs when the fish takes a bite out of its client, feeding on healthy mucus. This makes the client jolt and swim away.

Roamers are more likely to change stations if a cleaner has ignored them for too long or cheated them. Cleaners seem to know this: if a roamer and a resident arrive at the same time, the cleaner almost always services the roamer first. Residents can be kept waiting. The only category of fish that cleaners never cheat are predators, who possess a radical counterstrategy, which is to swallow the cleaner. With predators, cleaner fish wisely adopt an unconditionally cooperative strategy.

1   Which of the following statements about the cleaner wrasses is true?

   A   They regard 'roamer' fish as important clients.
   B   They take great care not to hurt any of their clients.
   C   They are too frightened to feed from the mouths of certain clients.
   D   They are in a strong position as they can move to find clients elsewhere.

2   The writer uses business terms in the text to

   A   illustrate how fish negotiate rewards.
   B   show how bigger fish can dominate smaller ones.
   C   exemplify cooperation in the animal world.
   D   describe the way fish take over a rival's territory.

Extract from a novel

The Giordano painting

'I was up in town yesterday,' I tell Tony easily, turning back from my long study of the sky outside the window as if I'd simply been wondering whether the matter was worth mentioning, 'and someone I was talking to thinks he knows someone who might possibly be interested.'

Tony frowns. 'Not a dealer?' he queries suspiciously.

'No, no — a collector. Said to be keen on seventeenth-century art. Especially the paintings of Giordano. *Very* keen.'

'Money all right?' Tony asks.

'Money, as I understand it, is far from being a problem.'

So, it's all happening. The words are coming. And it's not at all a bad start, it seems to me. I'm impressed with myself. I've given him a good spoonful

line 12   of jam to sweeten the tiny pill that's arriving next.

'Something of a mystery man, though, I gather,' I say solemnly. 'Keeps a low profile. Won't show his face in public.'

Tony looks at me thoughtfully. And sees right through me. All my boldness vanishes at once. I've been caught cheating my neighbours! I feel the panic rise.

'You mean he wouldn't want to come down here to look at it?'

'I don't know,' I flounder hopelessly. 'Perhaps . . . possibly . . .'

'Take it up to town,' he says decisively. 'Get your chum to show it to him.'

I'm too occupied in breathing again to be able to reply. He misconstrues my silence.

'Bit of a bore for you,' he says.

3   When he brings up the subject of the Giordano painting, the narrator wants to give Tony the impression of being

    A   cautious.
    B   resigned.
    C   mysterious.
    D   casual.

4   What is the narrator referring to when he uses the expression 'tiny pill' in line 12?

    A   his shortage of precise details about the collector
    B   his lack of certainty about the value of the painting
    C   his concerns about the collector's interest in the painting
    D   his doubts about the collector's ability to pay for the painting

The invention of banking

The invention of banking preceded that of coinage. Banking originated something like 4,000 years ago in Ancient Mesopotamia, in present-day Iraq, where the royal palaces and temples provided secure places for the safe-keeping of grain and other commodities. Receipts came to be used for transfers not only to the original depositors but also to third parties. Eventually private houses in Mesopotamia also got involved in these banking operations, and laws regulating them were included in the code of Hammurabi, the legal code developed not long afterwards.

In Ancient Egypt too, the centralisation of harvests in state warehouses led to the development of a system of banking. Written orders for the withdrawal of separate lots of grain by owners whose crops had been deposited there for safety and convenience, or which had been compulsorily deposited to the credit of the king, soon became used as a more general method of payment of debts to other people, including tax gatherers, priests and traders. Even after the introduction of coinage, these Egyptian grain banks served to reduce the need for precious metals, which tended to be reserved for foreign purchases, particularly in connection with military activities.

5   In both Mesopotamia and Egypt the banking systems

    A   were initially limited to transactions involving depositors.
    B   were created to provide income for the king.
    C   required a large staff to administer them.
    D   grew out of the provision of storage facilities for food.

6   What does the writer suggest about banking?

    A   It can take place without the existence of coins.
    B   It is likely to begin when people are in debt.
    C   It normally requires precious metals.
    D   It was started to provide the state with an income.

You are going to read a magazine article about hippos. Six paragraphs have been removed from the article. Choose from the paragraphs **A–G** the one which fits each gap (**7–12**). There is one extra paragraph which you do not need to use.

When the hippos roar, start paddling!

Richard Jackson and his wife spent their honeymoon going down the Zambezi river in a canoe.

'They say this is a good test of a relationship,' said Tim as he handed me the paddle. I wasn't sure that such a tough challenge was what was needed on a honeymoon, but it was too late to go back. My wife, Leigh, and I were standing with our guide, Tim Came, on the banks of the Zambezi near the Zambia/Botswana border. This was to be the highlight of our honeymoon: a safari downriver, ending at the point where David Livingstone first saw the Victoria Falls.

7

Neither of us had any canoeing experience. Tentatively we set off downstream, paddling with more enthusiasm than expertise. Soon we heard the first distant rumblings of what seemed like thunder. 'Is that Victoria Falls?' we inquired naïvely. 'No,' said Tim dismissively. 'That's our first rapid.' Easy, we thought. Wrong!

8

The canoe plotted a crazed path as we careered from side to side, our best efforts seeming only to add to our plight. This was the first of many rapids, all relatively minor, all enjoyably challenging for tourists like us.

9

The overnight stops would mean mooring at a deserted island in the middle of the river, where Tim's willing support team would be waiting, having erected a camp and got the water warm for our bucket showers. As the ice slowly melted in the drinks, restaurant-quality food would appear from a cooker using hot coals. Then people would begin to relax, and the day's stories would take on epic proportions.

10

One morning, Tim decided to count the number of hippos we saw, in an attempt to gauge the population in this part of the river. Most of the wildlife keeps a cautious distance, and we were assured that, safe in our canoe, any potential threats would be more scared of us than we were of them – but we had been warned to give these river giants a wide berth. They'd normally stay in mid-stream, watching us with some suspicion, and greeting our departure with a cacophony of grunts.

11

Tim yelled 'Paddle!' and over the next 100 metres an Olympic runner would have struggled to keep up with us. The hippo gave up the chase, and although Tim said he was just a youngster showing off, our opinion was that he had honeymooners on the menu. That would certainly be the way we told the story by the time we got home.

12

At some times of the year, you can even enjoy a natural *jacuzzi* in one of the rock pools beside the falls. The travel brochures say it's the world's most exclusive picnic spot. It's certainly the ideal place to wind down after a near miss with a hippo.

A Luckily we could make our mistakes in privacy as, apart from Tim and another couple, for two days we were alone. Our only other company was the array of bird and animal life. The paddling was fairly gentle, and when we got tired, Tim would lead us to the shore and open a cool-box containing a picnic lunch.

B If that was the scariest moment, the most romantic was undoubtedly our final night's campsite. Livingstone Island is perched literally on top of Victoria Falls. The safari company we were with have exclusive access to it: it's just you, a sheer drop of a few hundred metres and the continual roar as millions of litres of water pour over the edge.

C There was plenty of passing traffic to observe on land as well – giraffes, hippos, elephants and warthogs, while eagles soared overhead. We even spotted two rare white rhinos. We paddled closer to get a better look.

D We had a four-metre aluminium canoe to ourselves. It was a small craft for such a mighty river, but quite big enough to house the odd domestic dispute. Couples had, it seemed, ended similar trips arguing rather than paddling. But it wasn't just newly-weds at risk. Tim assured us that a group of comedians from North America had failed to see the funny side too.

E But number 150 had other ideas. As we hugged the bank he dropped under the water. We expected him to re-surface in the same spot, as the others had done. Instead, there was a sudden roar and he emerged lunging towards the canoe.

F Over the next hour or so the noise grew to terrifying dimensions. By the time we edged around the bend to confront it, we were convinced we would be faced with mountains of white water. Instead, despite all the sound and fury, the Zambezi seemed only slightly ruffled by a line of small rocks.

G When we'd all heard enough, we slept under canvas, right next to the river bank. Fortunately, we picked a time of year largely free of mosquitoes, so our nets and various lotions remained unused. The sounds of unseen animals were our nightly lullaby.

You are going to read a newspaper article about a novelist. For questions 13–19, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

The opera-lover turned crime novelist

Through her series of crime novels, Donna Leon has been solving murders in Venice with great panache — mostly to the soundtrack of grand opera.

Donna Leon first launched herself as a crime writer in 1991 with *Death at La Fenice*, which saw a conductor poisoned in mid-performance at the Venice opera house. 'It was an idea that kind of grew,' she says. 'I had a friend at the opera house. One day we were backstage, complaining about the tyrannical conductor – and we thought it would be a laugh to make him the victim in a crime novel, which I duly went off and wrote. But that's all it was meant to be. I was lucky to be born without ambition, and I had none for this book. Then I sent it off to a competition, and six months later they wrote back to say I'd won. I got a contract, and suddenly I had a purpose in life, a mission.'

To hear her talk, you'd think that until *Death at La Fenice* she'd been living in obscurity. Not so. She was a well-known academic teaching English literature at universities in the USA and Europe. But she found that she wasn't really cut out for university life, and finally decided to walk out on it. 'I'm a former academic,' she says now through slightly gritted teeth. And it's interesting that her literary reputation has been made through a medium so remote from the one she used to teach.

'You'd be surprised how many academics do read murder mystery though,' she adds. 'It makes no intellectual demands, and it's what you want after a day of literary debate.' That said, Ms Leon is big business. She sells in bulk, her books are translated into nineteen languages and she's a household name in German-speaking countries. 'All of which is gratifying for me personally, and I don't mean to rubbish my own work, but murder mystery is a craft, not an art. Some people go to crime conventions and deliver learned papers on the way Agatha Christie presents her characters, but they're out of their minds. I stay away from such events.'

Leon also stays away from most of the other expected haunts of crime writers, like courtrooms and police stations – 'I've only known two policemen, neither of them well,' – which accounts for the absence of technical legal detail in the books. What's more, the few points of police procedure that appear are usually invented – as, she admits, they're bound to be when you set a murder series in a place where murders never happen. 'Venice is small, compact, protected by its geography – there's really not much crime.' Clearly

the key thing about her murder stories isn't credibility. Predictability comes closer to the mark: setting a series in a fixed location that the reader finds attractive, with a constant cast of characters.

And that's what Donna Leon does. Her unique selling point is Venice which, as the reviewers always say, comes through with such vitality and forcefulness in Leon's writing that you can smell it. There's a set cast of characters, led by a middle-aged detective, Commissario Brunetti, and his wife (a disillusioned academic). Then there are her standard jokes – often to do with food. Indeed, Leon lingers so ecstatically over the details of lunch, the pursuit of justice frequently gets diverted. The eating is a literary device – part of the pattern of each novel, into which she slots the plot. 'That's how you hook your readers, who like a kind of certainty. And the most attractive certainty of crime fiction is that it gives them what real life doesn't. The bad guy gets it in the end.'

Indeed, when the conversation switches to Donna Leon's other life, *Il Complesso Barocco*, the opera company she helps run, she talks about baroque opera as though it were murder-mystery: fuelled by 'power, jealousy and rage, despair, menace' which are her own words for the sleeve notes of a new CD of Handel arias by the company, packaged under the title *The Abandoned Sorceress*. Designed to tour rare works in concert format, *Il Complesso* was set up in 2001 in collaboration with another US exile in Italy, the musicologist Alan Curtis. 'It started as a one-off. There was a rare Handel opera, *Arminio*, that Alan thought should be performed, and it became an obsession for him until eventually I said, 'Do you want to talk about this or do you want to do it?' So we did it. I rang a friend who runs a Swiss opera festival. We offered him a production. Then had eight months to get it together.'

Somehow it came together, and *Il Complesso* is now an ongoing venture. Curtis does the hands-on artistic and administrative work. Leon lends her name which 'opens doors in all those German-speaking places' and, crucially, underwrites the costs. In addition, her publishing commitments take her all over Europe – where she keeps a lookout for potential singers, and sometimes even features in the productions herself: not singing ('I don't') but reading the odd snatch from her books.

13 What is suggested about the novel *Death at La Fenice* in the first paragraph?

    A   Donna based the plot on a real-life event she had witnessed.
    B   Donna didn't envisage the work ever being taken very seriously.
    C   Donna had to be persuaded that it was good enough to win a prize.
    D   Donna embarked upon it as a way of bringing about a change in her life.

14 The second paragraph paints a picture of Donna as someone who

    A   has little respect for her fellow academics.
    B   regrets having given up her job in a university.
    C   was unsuited to being a university teacher.
    D   failed to make a success of her academic career.

15 From Donna's comments in the third paragraph, we understand that

    A   she feels crime fiction should be considered alongside other types of literature.
    B   she is pleased with the level of recognition that her own novels have received.
    C   she regards her own novels as inferior to those of Agatha Christie.
    D   she finds the popularity of crime novels amongst academics very satisfying.

16 Donna is described as an untypical crime writer because

    A   she is able to imagine crimes being committed by unlikely characters.
    B   she is unconcerned whether or not her stories appear realistic.
    C   she has little interest in the ways criminals think and operate.
    D   she manages to come up with imaginative new ideas for her plots.

17 Donna's greatest strength as a crime writer is seen as

    A   her avoidance of a fixed approach.
    B   her injection of humour into her stories.
    C   the clear moral message she puts across.
    D   the strong evocation of place she achieves.

18 When Donna helped set up *Il Complesso Barocco*,

    A   she didn't expect it to be a long-term project.
    B   she saw it as more interesting than her writing work.
    C   she had a fundamental disagreement with her main collaborator.
    D   she was attracted by the challenge of the first deadline.

19 In what way is Donna important to *Il Complesso Barocco*?

    A   She provides essential financial support.
    B   She oversees its day-to-day organisation.
    C   She helps as a translator.
    D   She organises the recruitment of performers.

Part 4

You are going to read an article about the human mind. For questions **20–34**, choose from the sections **(A–E)**. The sections may be chosen more than once.

Which section mentions the following?

things that you will not need if you adopt a certain mental technique | 20 [ ]

using an image of a familiar place to help you remember things | 21 [ ]

being able to think about both particular points and general points | 22 [ ]

things that you may not have a clear mental picture of | 23 [ ]

something which appears to be disorganised | 24 [ ]

annoyance at your inability to remember things | 25 [ ]

bearing in mind what you want to achieve in the future | 26 [ ]

an example of an industry in which people use pictures effectively | 27 [ ]

an everyday example of failure to keep information in the mind | 28 [ ]

the impact a certain mental technique can have on people listening to what you say | 29 [ ]

an assertion that certain things can be kept in your mind more easily than others | 30 [ ]

information that it is essential to recall in certain situations | 31 [ ]

being able to consider things from various points of view | 32 [ ]

things that come into your mind in an illogical sequence | 33 [ ]

remembering written work by imagining it in context | 34 [ ]

Picture this... with your mind's eye

Trying to understand and cope with life, we impose our frameworks on it and represent information in different symbolic forms in our mind, writes Jonathan Hancock

A

Think of the mental maps you use to find your way around the places you live and work. Which way up do you picture towns and cities you know well? Which details are highlighted, which ones blurred? Just as the map of London used by passengers on the Underground is different from the one used by drivers above ground, so your mental framework differs from that of other people. We also use frameworks to organise more abstract information. Many people say that they can visualise the position of key passages in books or documents. Mention a point made by the author, and they can recall and respond to it by picturing it in relation to other key points within the larger framework they see in their mind's eye. On a chaotic-looking desk, it is often possible to see a mental picture of where the key pieces of paper are and find a particular document in seconds.

B

We all have our own natural strategies for structuring information, for altering and re-arranging it in our mind's eye. You can take control of your thinking by increasing your control of the mental frameworks you create. Since Ancient Roman times, a specific framing technique has been used to improve memory and boost clarity of thought. The concept is simple: you design an empty framework, based on the shape of a building you know well, and get used to moving around its rooms and hallways in your mind. Whenever you have information to remember, you place it in this 'virtual storehouse'. Whatever it is you are learning – words, numbers, names, jobs, ideas – you invent pictorial clues to represent each one. The mind prefers images to abstract ideas, and can retain vast numbers of visual clues. Just as advertisers bring concepts to life with key images, you highlight the important points in a batch of information and assign each of them an illustration.

C

Memory and place are closely linked. Have you ever walked upstairs, forgotten what you went for, but remembered when you returned to where you were standing when you first had the thought? When you are trying to learn new information, it makes sense to use the mind's natural tendencies. In your mind, you return to the imaginary rooms in your 'virtual storehouse', and rediscover the images you left there. Cicero, perhaps the greatest orator in history, is reputed to have used this technique to recall complex legal arguments, addressing the Roman Senate from memory for days on end. You can use it to remember all the employees in your new workplace, the jobs you have to do in a day, month or year, subject headings for a complex piece of work, or the facts you need to have at your fingertips under pressurised circumstances.

D

The system of combining images and ideas works so well because it involves 'global thinking', bringing together the two 'sides' of your brain. The left side governs logic, words, numbers, patterns and structured thought – the frameworks you build – and the right side works on random thoughts, pictures, daydreams – the memorable imagery you fill them with. The fearless, imaginative creativity of the child combines with the patterning, prioritising, structured thinking of the adult. The memory is activated with colours and feelings, as you create weird, funny, exciting, surreal scenes; and the information is kept under control by the organised frameworks you design. Imagination is the key. You enter a new dimension, dealing with information in a form that suits the way the mind works. In this accessible form, huge amounts of data can be carried around with you. You never again have to search around for an address book, diary or telephone number on a scrap of paper. Your memory becomes a key part of your success, rather than the thing you curse as the cause of your failure.

E

Bringing information into the field of your imagination helps you to explore it in greater depth and from different angles. Storing it in the frameworks of your mind allows you to pick out key details but also to see the big picture. You can use your trained memory to organise your life: to see the day-to-day facts and figures, names, times and dates, but also to keep in touch with your long-term goals. By understanding the way your mind works, you can make yourself memorable to others. Give your thoughts a shape and structure that can be grasped and others will remember what you have to say. You can take your imaginative grasp of the world to a new level and, by making the most of mental frames, you can put the information you need at your disposal more readily.