

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The present study aims at examining the overarching approaches to Second Language (L2) reading instruction as reflected in the Yemeni EST 3rd grade secondary school reading curriculum. In addition, the study determined how well the EST 3rd grade secondary school reading curriculum prepares students for the reading comprehension skills that they are required to acquire in order to be able to read texts in English at the tertiary level. This Chapter presents the discussion of the findings of this study.

The findings of the current study in this Chapter are discussed in two parts as follows: **Part One** discusses the alignment of the Communicative Language Teaching

(CLT) approaches in the Yemeni EST reading curriculum as reflected in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories, Second Language (L2) reading theories and their corresponding instructional approaches, teacher role and learner role. Part Two discusses the contribution of English for Science and Technology (EST) reading curriculum of 3rd grade secondary school in preparing the Yemeni 3rd grade EST secondary students for effective reading comprehension in English in content-based areas at the tertiary level.

5.1 PART ONE: THE ALIGNMENT OF THE YEMENI EST 3RD GRADE SECONDARY READING CURRICULUM WITH THE COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING APPROACH

The Yemeni EST 3rd grade secondary school curriculum is a communicative-based curriculum (UNESCO, 2011; Hassen, 2009; Al-Tamimi, 2006; O'Neil et al., 1999). Therefore, the Yemeni EST 3rd grade secondary school reading curriculum should also be in alignment with the characteristics of the communicative language teaching approach. The Yemeni EST 3rd grade secondary school curriculum adopted the communicative language teaching instructional approaches due to its importance in curriculum planning, implementation, and evaluation of different methods and techniques (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Nunan, 1991). In addition, the communicative approach was also selected for the EST Yemeni curriculum due to its vital role to construct the learners' competence in processing the information from different types of texts (Chang & Goswami, 2011; Ozsevik, 2010; Marland & Son, 2004).

This section discusses the findings of research questions 1, 2 and 3, which examine whether the main features of the CLT features are reflected in the Yemeni

EST secondary school reading curriculum. The CLT features were examined based on three SLA theories: structuralism theory, cognitive theory and socio-cultural and socio-cognitive theories. As the Yemeni EST 3rd grade secondary school curriculum was developed based on the CLT, the findings should also be a reflection of the socio-cognitive/socio-cultural theory of SLA and the interactive L2 reading theories of information processing and the related instructional approaches such as CBI approach and TBI approach. In the same vein, the learner role and the teacher role should also be reflected in the learner-centred classrooms.

5.1.1 Second Language Acquisition (SLA) Theories, Second Language (L2) Reading Theories and Related Instructional Approaches, Learner Role and Teacher Role

In terms of SLA theories and L2 reading theories, the findings of the study demonstrated that only 15% of the reading-related statements in the Yemeni EST 3rd grade secondary school course book, work book and reading classroom practices reflected the socio-cognitive / socio-cultural theory. While in a combination, 85% reflected the cognitive information processing theory (57%) and the behaviourism/structuralism theory (28%). Such findings do not match the nature of the EST 3rd grade reading curriculum as a communicative based curriculum. The results of the current study showed that the EST 3rd grade reading curriculum was primarily developed based on the cognitive information processing theory, in which reading comprehension instruction reflects the learner role as an individual information processor.

The non-communicative instructional approaches were reflected in the EST work book (23%) and classroom practices (36%) more than the communicative

instructional approach (19% and 15% respectively). As such, one may reasonably conclude that the non-communicative approach of teaching English language in the Yemeni secondary schools is still prevalent. Thus, the claim of shifting the instructional mode of the English language in the Yemeni setting from non-communicative to communicative instructional approach was not evidenced in the findings of the current study.

The findings from classroom observation suggested that the Yemeni EST 3rd grade reading teachers' instructional implementation primarily reflect the cognitive theory of SLA (57%) rather than the socio-cultural / socio-cognitive theory of SLA (28%). Reading tasks in the classrooms frequently reflected the bottom-up reading theory (36%) and top-down reading theory (54%) with little reflection of the interactive reading theory (10%). These findings are in line with previous studies (e.g., Na'ama, 2011; Al-Ahdal, 2010). Those studies reported that in the Yemeni secondary school English classroom the dominant focus of implementations is on teaching grammatical rules in a non-communicative manner. The data from classroom observations provided evidence that the Yemeni teachers still strictly adhere to the non-communicative method of explaining the text explicitly to students instead of discussing the text as it is advocated by CLT approach.

The Yemeni EFL teachers significantly performed the role of directors (98%) in reading comprehension classrooms, which is an evidence of the reflection of the structuralism behaviourism theory of SLA and the bottom-up L2 reading theory. Such finding is an indication of misalignment in the theoretical grounding of the curriculum in regards to its label as a communicative curriculum. If the curriculum was grounded

in the CLT approach, the socio-cognitive / socio-cultural theory, L2 reading interactive theory would be significantly evidenced at the reading comprehension instructional implementation level. Such finding of non-communicative instructional practices in the Yemeni EST reading classrooms could highly be explained to accommodate the pressure to drill students to perform well in examinations due to the examination-oriented educational system in the Yemeni setting. However, the non-communicative instructional approach could be less effective in assisting the students to use language in real life situations; and in case of reading, it might be resulted in students with poor reading comprehension skills (Gudepu, 2013).

The findings of this study show that the Yemeni EST reading teachers of 3rd grade secondary school highly emphasize processing the text information through using top-down L2 reading theory, which is the theoretical foundation of the non-interactive whole language approach of L2 reading instruction. Without the inclusion of the communicative interaction and taking into account the reading context, the reading tasks in the curriculum seems to greatly suffer from the lack of communicative features that are necessary for reading comprehension (Sidek, 2010). The findings of this study were found to be matching the findings of past studies in the Yemeni setting (e.g., Na'ama, 2011; Al-Andal, 2010; Hassen, 2009). The results of the mentioned-studies are in favour of the view that the Yemeni English Language curriculum is theoretically lacking for its practical side of the communicative approach.

In addition, Rababah (2005) found that although the English language curricula in most Arabic countries are claimed to be grounded in the CLT approach; classrooms

practices are more inclined to non-communicative methods where in reading contexts the learners only play a passive role information processors. For example, in the EST reading instructional implementation in the current study, the teachers highly emphasized on teaching the meaning of the new words in isolation from the text. Moreover, while the learners were reading aloud, the teachers only focused on correcting their pronunciation of the words. This finding is in line with Azzan's (2001) findings of his study in Yemen. Samples of such non-communicative instructional practices are illustrated in Extracts 7, 8 and 9 from the classroom observation data.

FIGURE 5.1: Extract (7) from Classroom Observation Data

Extract 7

Teacher is reading "Yes, as soon as she gets up, she goes to the window and open the curtain and the window and look to outside..."

Teacher: In paragraph number 1 what is she describing?

Student: Describing the weather.

Teacher: How did you know that she is describing the weather?

Student: Wall of white mist.

Teacher: What is it, what is "the wall of white mist?"

Student: "Dhabab" Explains the meaning in Arabic.

Teacher: "Away, mumtaz" Commented in Arabic.

Teacher: Continue reading "Jane knew that would disappear". Is disappear here past or present?

Student 1: Past.

Teacher: Past!!

Student 2: No, no... present

Teacher: "Aga baad aysh?" in Arabic (It came after what?)

Student: "Baad would" in Arabic (after would)

Teacher: Yes, after would. After would we use infinitive. It should be or must be infinitive not past and not present or continuous. What is the past and past participle of disappear?

FIGURE 5.2: Extract (8) from Classroom Observation Data**Extract 8**

Teacher: Today we have reading lesson about describing natural disasters. Who will tell me, what is our lesson for today about? I told you to prepare the test. Haa, what is it about???

Students are silent...

Teacher: OK, our lesson today is about describing “a Hurricane hits central America”. What does Hurricane mean?

Students are silent...

Teacher: It is ... (*Translated in Arabic*).

The teacher is writing on the board (damage, destroyed, homeless).

Teacher: Here are the new vocabulary mentioned in the first paragraph. What do they mean? The first word, terrible?

Student: Err...

Teacher: Yes, is it good or bad, it is bad adjective. Next, damage? Yes Nora

Student: (Nora): Thamar (*in Arabic*)

Teacher: OK, yes as Nora said, did you hear her, yes you, what did Nora say?

Student: Thamar.

FIGURE 5.3: Extract (9) from Classroom Observation Data**Extract 9**

Teacher: Now paragraph number 4. What part is Jane describing, paragraph 4?

Student: Chickens.

Teacher: Describe the chickens.

Student: Describing the chickens below the window.

Teacher: Yes, she describes the chicken. What are the chickens do?

Student: Cackling noisily, scratching in the dust with their claws and pecking with their beaks

Teacher: Noisily, what part of speech?

Student 1: Adverb.

Student 2: A Verb.

Teacher: Shooo. Be polite, she will take (*pointing to the observer*) a bad impression about you. Noise, noisy, noisily. What are they?? Ha kholoud.

kholoud: Noise noun, noisy adjective and noisily adverb.

Teacher: Don't make noise. What is noise here?

Student: Noun.

Teacher: She is a noisy girl!

Student: Adjective.

Teacher: Ok. Don't speak noisily!

Student: Adverb.

Teacher: So the adjective changes to adverb by adding -ly.

All Students: Ly

Teacher: Yes, l and y. Now any questions? Any questions?

Student: No, no.

Extracts 7, 8 and 9 of classroom observation provided evidence of the grammar translation method and non-interactive cognitive method. The teachers instructed the students to directly express the meaning of new vocabulary in a non-interactive context. The teacher in GTM plays the role of a director and directs the learners to extract specific information from reading texts, the teachers only teaches the learners the meanings of the new vocabulary explicitly isolated from the context (Gough, 1972). Researchers highlighted the failure of GTM in developing the learners' communicative competence as the communicative language teaching approach does

(Puebla, 2012; Pugazhenthil & Phil, 2012; Freeman, 2000; Celce-Murcia, 1991; Canale & Swain, 1980).

Thus, a clear reflection of the structuralism theory and cognitive information processing theory of SLA and their corresponding L2 reading theories were significantly observed in almost all L2 reading comprehension classes. Some examples of the observed data that were found to be in line with structuralism behaviourism and cognitive information processing theories can be mentioned in terms of utilizing L1 as the only means of clarifying the meaning of vocabulary and sentences in the reading texts. Most of the reading classroom instructional time was allocated for teaching students de-contextualized vocabulary via translating them into mother tongue. This technique was not found to be in line with socio cognitive / socio cultural theories of SLA and interactive L2 reading theory that focus on using text-based discussion to clarify the meanings of the new words.

Conscious teaching of vocabulary and grammar as it seems in the extracts from the data provides evidence of non-communicative instructional approach and consequently, does not promote communicative abilities in terms of efficient and effective contextualized text information processing. However, teaching vocabulary in reading classroom instruction has been found to be helpful and effective in improving the students' reading comprehension, Lee (2003) found that the effectiveness of teaching vocabulary in reading instruction takes place via a cooperative communicative method, but not in practicing behaviourism structural methods such as the grammar translation method.

Hence, the findings of this study indicated that there is a misalignment between the EST 3rd grade curriculum label as a communicative curriculum and what the curriculum stipulates and promotes in the teaching of EST reading comprehension. According to previous studies in the Yemeni setting (e.g., Al-Fatimi, 2009; Al-Mansoori, 2008; Al-Refa'ai, 2001) it was also indicated that the Yemeni English language classrooms were primarily teacher-centred based classrooms, which this feature is not in harmony with the features of CLT approach. Alsofi (2009) stated that English language teachers in Yemen are not sufficiently skilled to teach a communicative syllabus, the reason which leads to English teaching and learning problems in Yemen.

In short, the results of the SLA theories and L2 reading theories analyses showed that the Yemeni EST 3rd grade reading curriculum was not developed based on the socio-cognitive / socio-cultural theory, which is the basic grounding principles of the communicative approach. Moreover, the findings of the present study are consistent with the findings of Murshed (2002), who reported that the Yemeni English language curriculum does not adopt the Socio-cognitive/ socio-cultural theories of SLA and interactive L2 reading theories. As a result, EST teachers in the Yemeni classrooms continue to teach reading in a non-communicative manner, which is in alignment with the non-communicative approach presented in the curriculum. Consequently, in classroom setting, the active learners are not encouraged. On the contrary, they reflect the passive reader role.

In terms of the teacher and the learners' role, the findings also demonstrated that the EST 3rd grade secondary school reading curriculum was not designed based on the

CLT approach as it was labelled. Within the framework of the CLT, reading tasks are designed as pair/group work, which by practicing the pair/group work the learners process the text information via communicative interaction and language functions as a facilitating tool (Vygotsky, 1975). Based on the findings of classroom observation of the study, the reading classroom in the secondary school level in Yemen is mainly a teacher-centred setting. Reading practices in the Yemeni secondary schools commonly is performed by the students reading loudly or silently. Then, after the students' reading for the text is over, the students answer the teacher's questions about the text. The teachers highly emphasize on the accuracy of pronunciations and often provide explicit explanation of grammar rules and vocabulary meanings in English and Arabic as well as evaluating the students' answers as correct or incorrect. Such instructional practice conforms to the IRE pattern, a type of instructional approach within the structural/behaviourism theory. The findings of this study on the teacher role and the learner role support the findings of previous studies in the Yemeni context (e.g., Azzan, 2001; Ba-Matraf, 1997).

The Yemeni EST 3rd grade secondary school reading curriculum is claimed to be a communicative curriculum as a whole; however, it advocates using both the non-communicative and communicative instructional approaches (EST Teacher's Book, p.4), the findings from classroom observation indicated that at the instructional implementation level, the teachers use the non-communicative instructional approach more frequently than the communicative approach. This finding is in line with the finding of a study by Ba-Matraf (1997). Being labelled as a communicative curriculum, reading instruction should be communicative in nature. However, only 36% of the reading tasks in the EST teacher's book are designed to be conducted in

pairs or groups while (64%) of the reading tasks are designed to be individual tasks. The EST reading comprehension instruction reflected only 2% of the classroom activities in the form of pair or group work.

FIGURE 5.4: Extract (2) from EST Teacher's Book on the Teacher Role

- Give pupils several minutes to read the article. Encourage them to skip over words that they do not know for the time being - they will have an *opportunity* for detailed reading when doing the Workbook activities. When they have finished, ask the questions to the class as a whole and encourage discussion if there are any disagreements.
- Have pupils read the article again and write short answers to the questions in WB1.4A. Point out that they will have to think carefully about questions 7-10. When they have finished, have them compare their answers with a partner's and discuss any differences. Then elicit answers from the class.
- Have pupils read the text again and answer the questions in WB1.8B. The emphasis is on reading and understanding, so they should write short answers. Have them compare their answers with a partner's and discuss any disagreements.

Source: EST Teacher's Book

As shown in Figure 5.4, the teacher's book assigns the teacher role as both director and catalyst for the same individual task; nevertheless, the findings from reading classroom instruction indicated that the teachers frequently act as director (98%). Hassen (2009) found that the Yemeni EST teachers' reading instruction reflects the structuralism theory of SLA, which mainly symbolises in the grammar translation instructional method. He claimed that while the teacher's book, to some extent, emphasizes the communicative approach, the Yemeni teachers emphasize using the non-communicative instructional method.

The most logical explanation for the reason behind using the Yemeni teachers of the non-communicative instructional approach in EST reading classrooms is the exam-oriented educational system in Yemen. At the end of the senior year, which is the 3rd Grade in secondary school, the students have to sit for a high-stake national examination which determines their eligibility for the admission to university. In regards to EST students, teachers' main goal is to prepare them to perform well in this norm-referenced test in which students have to process the reading texts individually. Consequently, EST reading teachers to a great extent ignore the role of communicative instructional approach which helps in enhancing the students' higher psychological function, as Vygotsky (1975) purported. Hence, the teachers fall back to the non-communicative instructional approach, which is grounded in the structuralism theory and the cognitive information processing theory. As a result of such pressure in making students good test takers, EST reading comprehension instruction seems to be primarily aims at preparing students to perform on the national examination. Extract 10 from classroom observation transcripts shows an evidence of such English reading comprehension lesson in Yemen.

Besides, Extract 10 suggests that the teacher was concerned about time constraint and thus resorted to individual silent reading and vocabulary identification. She asked the students to read and prepare for the reading lesson few days prior to the class. As the students did not manage to read the reading passage on their own at home, the teacher asked them to perform a silent reading in class. However, due to the time constraint for the class, she interrupted the students' reading and instructed them to answer some wh-questions about the text as they were reading the text. Extract 10

illustrates how time constraint influenced teachers' choice to use non-communicative reading comprehension instructional approach.

FIGURE 5.5: Extract (10) from Classroom Observation Data

Extract 10

Teacher: The lesson, did you read it? What I said before? You must prepare it at home. Ok, now read it read it. You have 5 minutes to read it. Try to read it and give me some information. Try to read it and then I will ask you some questions, and then you try to give me what, give me some information. Read it read it. I said read it at home. I said prepare it at home. I said it before

Student started reading the passage

Teacher: ok, now, listen to **me because we don't have enough time**, the camel we can find it here in Yemen, it is covered with hair. Not heavy. Ok what about lama. Where we can find Lama? As you read it?

Another possible explanation of why the EST reading teachers chose to use the non-communicative instructional approach, which is reflected in the teacher role as a director, is the students' low level of English language proficiency. The students' low English language proficiency level is clearly evidenced in the Extracts 7, 8 and 9 from classroom observation data. These extracts exhibit how the students at the senior high school level do not even know the meaning of simple vocabulary such as 'terrible' and 'damage'. The students did not recognize whether the word 'noisily' is a verb or an adverb. This explanation was supported by Al-Ahdal (2010), who declared that the students have a low proficiency level and the teachers lack the ability to adapt the materials at the real level.

Extract 11 from classroom observation illustrates that the Yemeni learners' low proficiency level of English language stimulated the teacher to utilize the structural method. The Yemeni reading teachers found it difficult to applying any communication as the learners' are poor in the reading comprehension skills as well as in English language in general. Consequently, reading classroom was shifted to be based on one-way direction through traditional instructional approaches. As it is shown in Extract 11, the learners' language competence level determined the role of the teacher. In an informal discussion after classrooms observation, the majority of the teacher indicated that teaching grammar is an important element for the learners in order to understand the text and to improve their language competence. Such a believe might also be a reason for adopting the reading teachers the role of a director rather than a catalyst. However, the low level proficiency of students challenges the teachers in applying CLT reading instruction. This justification comes in line with Ozsevik (2010), who declared that EFL teachers face challenges in employing CLT in their classroom implementations.

FIGURE 5.6: Extract (11) from Classroom Observation Data

Extract 11

Teacher: OK, what is the lesson about, I have just explained. OK then, tell me anything you understood from the text?

Students are making noise.

Student: Teacher we don't know anything and we do not understand anything please translate, ((*in Arabic*))

Teacher: OK then, you just keep quiet and I will explain everything.

The Teacher started reading the text paragraph after the another and explaining and translating every single sentence and word while the student were very silent.

In addition, the number of students in reading classroom may also challenges the reading teacher from applying the CLT instructional approach. According to Hassen (2009), the Yemeni secondary school English curriculum lack for “An ideal class and an ideal period of time” (p.185) referring to the large number of students in classroom, which range about 40-100 and above, and a short class period. Later on, in a study by Abdullah and Patil (2012), English language teachers claimed that overcrowded classes, lack of time and intensive teaching load in the Yemeni secondary schools affect the their instructional approaches.

With regard to the findings on the learner roles, the Yemeni 3rd grade EST reading curriculum did not present the learner role that conforms to the CLT pattern. This finding contrast to the educational philosophy of Republic of Yemen, which was principally formed by taking into account the needs of learners and society aiming at preparing teacher-trainers and relating the theory with practice (Hassen, 2009). Nevertheless, the results of the learner role in the IRE pattern (87%) suggested that in the Yemeni 3rd grade EST reading curriculum, the learner role was not designed to conform to the CLT features. In CLT, the learners are given an appropriate consideration for their societal role in the classroom learning community. This finding is in line with the findings of past studies in the Yemeni context (e.g., Hassen, 2009; Alshamiry, 2005; Murshed, 2002). For example, Hassen (2009) asserted the vital role of the learner as the basic factor in developing the teaching and learning process.

Actually, the results from the learner and the teacher role showed that the learner role was not stated of great importance as it was suggested in CLT approaches of language teaching. While the EST 3rd grade curriculum entitled itself as a

communicative-based curriculum aiming at preparing the learners for academic learning, only a little emphasis was placed on the communicative skills in reading tasks. In other words, while the communicative contents in the curriculum intended to promote the communicative competence, the communicative instructional practices were not explicitly and vigorously reflected in classroom implementations and in the reading tasks, which were elicited from the course book and work book. Nevertheless, the classroom practices and EST curriculum reflected the teacher-centred reading classroom as it is in the IRE pattern. These findings contradict with the emphasis on building the learners' communication competence through the pair/group activities as stated in the EST curriculum (See Figure 5.7).

FIGURE 5.7: Extract (3) from EST Teacher's Book on the Learner Role

Pair and group work Pair and group activities have these advantages:

- They promote communication in the classroom.
- They allow for oral practice by all rather than a few pupils.
- They place responsibility for learning on the pupil.

It is important that pupils understand these benefits. They are more likely to use the opportunities well if they do. Having permanent pairs is most efficient, but it may be necessary to change these from time to time.

The teaching notes suggest pair or group practice when appropriate. In general, all the language exchanges, whether new or revised, need to be practised in simultaneous pairs after class presentation and demonstration. The pupils should also be trained to discuss their answers with their partners. Both of these situations allow real communication and should be exploited fully.

Group activities must be well-organized to be effective and they need very careful advance planning. The pupils must be willing to participate fully and they must understand exactly what is required of them. The activity itself must be suitable in that it demands several participants. Unless this is so, some pupils will remain silent. Demonstration with one group is needed before the whole class carry out group activities. Pupils need not sit as a group. For example, three rows of three pupils, sitting one behind the other, would be adequate for most group activities. The two main requirements are that the pupils should know who makes up each group, and that they should be close enough to communicate with each other.

Source: EST Teacher's Book (p.11)

Developing and designing the EST curriculum based on the CLT instructional approach and its underlying instructional methods such as content-based instructional method, task-based instructional method and interactive whole language instructional approach means that the reading related tasks should be highly represented in the communicative interactive pattern. However, the elicited reading tasks from the EST 3rd grade secondary school reading curriculum were individual tasks in nature based on the teacher-centred classroom, in which the teacher plays a role as a director. Such findings indicated that the EST reading tasks were mainly designed toward training the EST learners for national reading examination, in which the learners have to process the information in the reading texts individually.

In summary, the findings on SLA, L2 reading theories, the learner roles and teacher roles showed that the current Yemeni EST 3rd grade reading curriculum was not in alignment with the elements of CLT approach. Moreover, the findings showed that the reading classroom practices reflect the non-communicative instructional mode, the structuralism theory and the cognitive theory.

The inappropriateness issues that were traced within the curriculum in terms of the SLA theories and instructional approaches might be one of the fundamental causes to the continuing EST reading comprehension problems at the secondary school level and the university level thereafter, as was found in past studies (e.g., Bel-Fagih, 1999; Bamataf, 1997; Yar Mohamed, 1992; Alwalss, 2000; Al-Mekhlafi, 1995; Azzan , 2001 as cited in Al-Tamimi, 2006; Al-Tamimi, 1999; Balfakeh, 2009; Albadri, 2001; Almahedi, 2008). In line with the findings of the current study, those problems were attributed to many factors such as the teaching materials (Al-Fatimi, 2009; Al-

Mansoori, 2008; Al-Refa'ai, 2001) and the lack of effective teaching instructional approaches on reading comprehension skills and more focusing on teaching grammar (Azzan, 2001).

Consequently, based on the findings of the present study, some recommendations are provided in section (6.2.1) in terms of revising the current EST 3rd grade reading curriculum. The recommended revisions on the current EST reading curriculum aim at reflecting the socio-cognitive / socio-cultural theory and a communicative interactive theory of text information processing, which are principally the grounded of CLT Approach. Revising the current curriculum to be strictly based on the communicative interactive instructional approaches will lead to a curriculum truly based on the CLT instructional approaches (e.g., Ozsevik, 2010; Koda, 2005 as cited in Sidek, 2010; Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Canale & Swain, 1980; Hymes, 1972). With the proposed curriculum, the listed learning outcomes will be greatly achieved as the curriculum is one of the strategies of achieving the desired educational goals (Mutebi, 1996).

5.2 PART TWO: THE PREPARATION OF THE YEMENI EST 3RD GRADE SCONDARY LEARNERS FOR READING IN ENGLISH AT THE TERTIARY LEVEL

This section discusses the findings of research questions 4, 5, 6 and 7, which examined the emphasis of reading skill in EST 3rd grade secondary school curriculum, the types of reading tasks and reading texts, the readability level and length of reading texts, as well as the cognitive demands of reading tasks in terms of the extent to which EST learners are prepared to read effectively in English at the tertiary level.

5.2.1 The Emphasis of EST Reading Skill

In order to prepare the EST learners for reading at the tertiary level, reading skill should be effectively emphasized as an explicit skill throughout the EST 3rd grade curriculum as a means to achieve the listed learning outcomes in the curriculum. The findings of the emphasis on English language reading as the means to achieve the listed learning outcomes in the EST course book and workbook demonstrated that reading skill was more significantly emphasized (53%) than all other English language skills; writing, listening and speaking.

This finding implied recognizing the most essential role for reading skill in the Yemeni EST secondary curriculum that because reading skill is the central gate to every personal development (Almahedi, 2008; Holde, 2004) and the essential and the pioneer skill for academic successes (Lesnick et al., 2010; Kavaliauskienė & Anusienė, 2010; Carrell, 1988a). In addition, reading skill is the most important skill in providing the basis for a considerable amount of learning in secondary school (Guthrie et al., 2004; Alvermann & Earle, 2003). Although the reading skill was reflected as an explicit skill more than the other major English language skills in the EST 3rd grade curriculum to achieve the listed learning outcomes in the curriculum, it did not necessarily mean that the curriculum fully prepares the Yemeni EST learners to read successfully in their academic areas at the university level. Other variables in the EST 3rd grade reading curriculum, which were examined in this study, such as the types of reading tasks, text types, readability level and length of reading texts as well as the level of cognitive demands are among the determinants of whether the Yemeni EST 3rd grade reading secondary school curriculum fulfils its aims and objectives in

preparing EST secondary school students to read effectively in English at the university level.

5.2.2 Types of Reading Tasks

The three major reading task types, identifying main ideas, identifying details and making inferences, were reflected in the EST 3rd grade reading curriculum. These three major reading task types are essential for successful reading comprehension at the tertiary level. Thus, to prepare the Yemeni EST 3rd grade students to process the academic reading texts, they must be well equipped with these three major types of reading tasks.

The findings of the types of reading tasks in the EST 3rd grade reading curriculum suggested that the EST 3rd grade reading curriculum emphasized the three vital reading tasks (72%); identifying main ideas (16%), identifying details (37%), and drawing inferences (19%), which are very important for effective reading comprehension. In addition to the three major reading tasks, EST secondary reading curriculum included other types of reading tasks such as grammar and vocabulary (28%). The inclusion of the three major types of reading tasks as well as the other types of reading tasks added to the strength of the EST reading curriculum and its preparation for EST students to process the texts information at the university level because academic reading comprehension requires such integration.

Table 4.6 and Figures 4.9 and 4.10 show two findings on the types of reading task. Firstly, the EST curriculum greatly emphasized on the three major types of reading tasks (72%); identifying details, identifying main ideas and making inferences,

which are more important in reading comprehension. Secondly, a misalignment was found in the distribution of the major types of reading tasks between the EST course book, EST work book and classroom observation, particularly in terms of the distribution of identifying details and drawing inferences.

The high distribution of the three major tasks that was found in the EST course book (78%), EST work book (71%) and EST reading classroom observation (68%) suggested that the EST 3rd grade reading curriculum emphasized on training the EST 3rd grade secondary learners on the three major types of reading tasks, which are critical for effective reading comprehension at secondary and tertiary level. These findings might conclude that the Yemeni EST Reading curriculum prepares EST learners for effective reading and hence, prepares them for their success at the academic level.

On the other hand, in terms of the mismatch that was found in the distribution of identifying details and drawing inferences reading tasks among the EST reading curriculum documents, as shown in Figure 4.10, might deteriorate the students' reading comprehension. In the EST course book, identifying details was less emphasized (17%) compared to its emphasis in the EST work book (41%) and classroom practices (39%), while drawing inferences was highly emphasized (41%) in the EST course book than it is in the work book (17%) and classroom observation (18%). This irregular distribution of the major types of reading tasks in the Yemeni EST reading curriculum suggested that the EST reading curriculum was not fully equipped the EST learners with the ability to deal with all types of reading tasks. When the Yemeni EST students enter their tertiary level they will need to strategize

the reading texts through dealing with the three types of reading tasks (Cohen & Upton, 2006). Kerr (2009) claimed that Well-designed skimming, scanning and inferring tasks can help the students in processing the information of the reading texts.

However, reading tasks on identifying main ideas was given equivalent distribution in the EST reading curriculum documents and classroom practices. Figure 4.10 shows that the lowest emphasis was given to this type of reading tasks all over the EST course book, work book and classroom practices. Such low emphasis on identifying main ideas reading tasks in the EST textbooks and classroom practices seems to be with great disadvantage and one of the shortcomings of the Yemeni EST reading curriculum. The significant low emphasis on identifying main ideas than identifying details and making inferences reading tasks in the Yemeni EST reading curriculum documents and classroom implementations leads to the reading comprehension problems, which the EST learners encounter in their academic reading at university level. In the same vein, past studies found that students usually find it difficult to extract the main ideas of the text being read particularly when they read the informative texts in content based areas at the university level (e.g., Afflerbach, Pearson, and Paris, 2008; Nambiar, 2007).

In order to understand texts, students need to be able to identify main ideas, make inferences and identify details. Therefore, for EST 3rd grade secondary school learners to be able to process information in their content area at the tertiary level, they need to be well prepared with these three major reading tasks. However, EST 3rd grade reading curriculum does not emphasize these three major reading tasks equivalently, in addition to lower emphasis on identifying main ideas tasks. Lack of

enough training of EST learners on identifying main ideas reading tasks may affect their academic performance in the content areas in terms of reading comprehension. Such effect might be reflected in reading comprehension difficulties and low level of students' academic performance thereafter.

The irregular distribution of reading tasks in EST reading curriculum and EST reading classroom implementations suggest that the reading tasks in the selected EST secondary reading curriculum do not properly train EST learners for effective reading comprehension in academic content areas at tertiary education. However, being the most valuable and essential reading comprehension skills for academic reading are based on the three major types of reading tasks examined in the current study, identifying main ideas “*skimming*”, identifying details “*scanning*”, and making inferences “*careful reading*” (Badariah, 2011; Weir, 2005; Urquhart and Weir, 1998; Weir, 1983), the shortcomings in a proper focusing of the EST secondary reading curriculum on the three major types of tasks can be stated as one of the reasons behind reading comprehension problems at tertiary level in Yemen. As a result, EST 3rd grade students continue to struggle in comprehending reading texts at secondary school level and university level thereafter (Balfakih, 2009; Almahedi, 2008; Albadri, 2001; Azzan, 2001; Alwais, 2000; Al-Tamimi, 1999; Bel-Fagih, 1999; Bamataf, 1997; Al-Mekhlafi, 1995; Yar Mohamed, 1992).

Kerr (2009) found that designing the reading curriculum with the three major task types, reading for details, reading for main ideas, and making inferences, is very helpful in training the students to perform well in both international and local exams. Therefore, for EST 3rd grade secondary school students to pass the national

examination successfully and go further to the university level, they should be equipped with the three major types of reading tasks.

Academic reading is a complex, multi-level tasks which differ from other kinds of reading (Sengupta, 2002). Therefore, when EST learners engage in their academic studies, the deficiency in training them on processing information from different types of reading tasks will make them suffer in reading comprehension. EST learners will see reading comprehension as a very difficult and complicated task and will be challenged in processing reading texts in the content areas at the tertiary level which will affect their academic studies negatively. Thus, the instructional design and the balance of reading tasks in the EST reading curriculum documents and classroom instruction should be designed more accurately and equivalently in terms of the the distribution of the three major types of reading tasks.

As the EST curriculum is a combined functional /structural syllabus (See Figure 5.8), thus it is logical for the reading curriculum to include other types of reading tasks as grammar and vocabulary. However, much emphasis on these types in reading curriculum may denote that the reading curriculum falls in the structural approach more than the functional one.

FIGURE 5.8: Extract (4) from EST Teacher's Book

The Course has a combined functional/structural syllabus and the recommended methodology is drawn from a variety of old and new sources. The workbooks provide carefully graded and systematic practice and consolidation exercises as well as communicative language learning talks. Although the new course includes group activities, there is a greater use of pairwork. A system of signposting in the new edition makes the books easily accessible to pupils and teachers.

Source: EST Teachers Book (p. 4)

Table 4.6, shows that in EST 3rd grade reading curriculum and classroom instruction a highly emphasis was given to teaching vocabulary and grammar more than the three major types of reading tasks, with some variation from one document to another. These findings come along with the findings from SLA theories in which classroom implementations showed that the Yemeni EST 3rd grade reading teachers greatly focus on structuralism and cognitive theory and training the students to process the text information via top-down and bottom-up rather than the communicative interactive theory. Such classroom instructional methods produce students able to identify grammar structures and vocabulary as well as identifying details that are mentioned explicitly in texts while fail in making inferences beyond the text or skim the text for main ideas. The findings of this study were supported in past studies (e.g., Azzan, 2001; Tamimi, 2006). Azzan (2001) found that the secondary school learners in Yemen lack for any practical and training sessions to read effectively, while Al-Tamimi (2006) declared that the Yemeni English reading teachers focus on teaching vocabulary and grammatical rules. However, the researcher of current study found that even for learning the new vocabulary through making inference from the text was totally disregarded in the EST secondary reading classrooms; vocabulary

were taught separately from the text. Extract 12 from special classroom instruction shows that the teacher shifted the lesson from reading comprehension class to teaching vocabulary class, the teacher spent more than half of the class time on teaching vocabulary

FIGURE 5.9: Extract (12) from Classroom Observation Data

Extract 12

Teacher: Today we will take a lesson from science reader “Acid and alkalis”

Students: We did not prepare teacher (*in Arabic*)

Teacher: OK I want you to be not prepared. I will explain everything. Open your book on page 96. OK now before reading we need to know the meaning of these words. We can work together. If you know it is OK if you don't know we're going to explain ((*Acid, Alklis, Dissolve, Neutralize, and Metal*)). Ok now we will talk about the 1st word, Acid what is it? It's like what, how is its taste?

Student: Sour.

Teacher: Go to the second word. What is it?

Students are Silent

Teacher: Don't know. Ok. Write what does it mean? Neutralize, what does it mean?

Student: Ta'adul (*in Arabic*)

Teacher: OK open your books and read the first paragraph silently.

Students are reading silently while the teacher is writing some points, multiple choices and fill in the blanks questions on the board to elicit the answers from the students.

Teacher: OK, has a sharp or sour taste.....

Student: Acid

Teacher: The word comes from..... It means sour.

Students: Latin

And so on, the teacher reads the exercise and the students answer from the opened books on their desks.

Extract 12 presented that the teacher did not train the learners on processing the information from the text through the three major types of reading tasks that they will need for academic reading in content areas at the university level. The teacher never used these major reading tasks, all the class was run focusing on teaching vocabulary in the texts and then the teacher asked the students to read the text silently while she was writing some *fill in the blank* and *multiple choice questions* on the board instead of observing the students while reading. Eventually, the teacher read the questions and the students answered them from the books in their hands, most of the time, the teacher was asking, explaining and answering herself without the students' participation. Thus, in this special sample of classroom practices, a highly significant lack of training the students in the three major types of reading tasks was reflected.

From the classrooms observation, it is important here to note that the majority of the textbooks, which were in the hands of EST students, were already answered by the school students of the previous years, as in the public schools in Yemen the books are handed over from one batch of students to the other batch in the next year. Such this school policy indicates that while the EST reading curriculum to some extent emphasizes the major types of reading tasks; practically, the learners do not train on using these tasks types as they just read the written answers in the books, which almost all the times are correct. Thus, the Yemeni school policy in handing over the textbooks from one year to another does not contribute in achieving the curriculum goals.

5.2.3 Readability Level, Type and Grade Level of Reading Texts

At the tertiary level, students are expected to read effectively various sorts of texts from textbooks, journal articles, web pages, magazines and newspapers. This is confirmed by Badariah et al. (2011) who indicated that “Diploma students and undergraduates need to read a lot of academic texts, journals, websites and magazines regularly which require them to use high level of reading comprehension skills and therefore making reading an effortful activity” (p.34). Thus, paying a great attention to the construction of texts’ elements in EST curriculum is of great important in order to guarantee the preparation of EST learners for reading at tertiary level. Three elements of the reading texts were examined in this study, readability level, types and length of reading texts.

5.2.3.1 Readability Level

In terms of the readability level of reading texts in EST 3rd grade secondary school reading curriculum, the findings showed that all the reading texts in the EST course book were below the grade level in terms of the reading ease (100%) while in terms of the grade level no single reading text reflected the grade level of the Yemeni EST 3rd grade secondary student (grade level 12). The readability level of texts is one of the textbooks’ features that affect the students’ reading comprehension (Miller, 2011; Rottensteiner, 2010), however, it was not given the appropriate attention in developing EST secondary school reading curriculum. The readability level of EST reading passages in the EST course book was not appropriately addressed. Using Flesch Reading Ease (FRE) formula and Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level (FKGL) Score, it was found that only 2 out of 22 passages were at the border line of grade-level while the other passages were below the grade-level of senior secondary school (grade level

12). However, the 2 passages entitled “*Radio Activity*” and “*Experimental Procedure*” did not match the exact level of senior secondary school learners, they fell into the “difficult category” at different levels: level 10 and 11 respectively. The “difficult category” includes 3 levels: the 10th, the 11th and the 12th.

Nonetheless, the findings showed that the majority of EST reading texts conformed to non-grade-level; grade 6 (36.3%), grade 7 (18.1%), grade 8 (18.1%), grade 10 (4.5%) and grade 11 (4.5%). For EST secondary school learners, to succeed in their academic areas in which the content reading at university level involves reading in English, they need to be prepared to process texts of equivalent complexity level to texts’ at tertiary level. The findings in this study showed a significant gap between the readability level of texts that the Yemeni EST learners read in secondary school and the required level of difficulty of text, which they will have to read in their academic areas at the tertiary level. These findings are in line with the finding of past studies that found a clear gap in the complexity level of texts in high school and those at the university level (e.g., Sheehan et al., 2010; Williamson, 2006).

When there is a gap between the readability level of the texts at the high school and those at the university level, the EST secondary learners will face challenges in processing reading texts at the university level because they have not frequently trained in processing texts at the grade-level complexity. As such, this shortage in EST textbooks seems to participate in reading comprehension difficulties that the Yemeni secondary school graduates face at the university level. The findings on text complexity are congruent with the findings of a past study in the Turkish context by Zorbaz (2007). Zorbaz examined words and sentences’ length and readability of tales

in the 1st – 8th grades Turkish textbooks and concluded that the length of the words and sentences of tales in the textbooks do not match the grade levels of students (Cited in GEÇİT, 2010). Another study by Tekbiyık (2006) also found that the Turkish 9th grade physics textbook readability level is lower than the students' grade level (Cited in GEÇİT, 2010). The findings of this study with regards to complexity level suggested that the Yemeni curriculum designers should have not been aware of the needs to train the Yemeni students with grade-level texts.

Moreover, a possible explanation for this finding is that the Yemeni educators, teachers, and curriculum designers were not aware of the learners' needs, the university level requirements and the importance of providing the EST course book with reading texts appropriate for the students' grade level in terms of their readability level.

5.2.3.2 Types of Reading Texts

Since the textbooks of interest in the current study were designed for EST students, it was expected that the majority of reading texts in the course book to be expository texts in order to assure the preparation of EST students' to read the expository texts in the content area at tertiary level. This expectation was based on the consensus of many researchers that reading passages in EST textbooks are expository texts (Fetters et al., 2011; Veveiros, 2010; Ephraim, 2009; Fludernik, 2000). Nevertheless, the findings of current study showed that the EST course book comprises both types of reading passages; narrative and expository. The expository texts were presented in the EST course book in only 2 passages more than the narrative, 10 reading passages were narrative while 12 were expository.

Each text structure either the narrative or the expository is processed differently (e.g., Gillam, Fargo & Robertson, 2009). This was affirmed in a study by Sharp (2004) who stated that the comprehension of reading materials take place when the learners are either familiar with the text or have been instructed in comprehending the specific structure of the texts. Hence, if EST 3rd grade students are trained to process narrative genre texts more than expository genre texts, the students will be more familiar in processing the narrative texts than the expository ones. With regards to reading in English at the tertiary level, such practice will cause difficulty for the Yemeni students to process content area texts since they are not frequently trained to process the expository genre texts. The finding on text type in this study is in line with the findings of a study by Sidek (2010), in which she found that the Malaysian upper secondary school English language reading curriculum emphasizes the training of narrative reading texts more than expository texts.

Although the EST 3rd grade curriculum contains one section at the back of the course book for science reader, which contains 10 expository texts, the inclusion of texts from general English in the EST curriculum caused the narrative texts to be only 2 texts fewer than the total of expository texts in the EST course book. In the Yemeni setting, reading teachers are not given the flexibility to use texts apart from the passages, which were provided in the course book (Figure 5.10). As such, from the classroom observations, the EST reading teachers used only the materials in the textbook in their reading comprehension classes, which includes many narrative texts.

FIGURE 5.10: Extract (5) from Teacher's Book

Crescent 6 contains six core Units, an Arts Reader and a Science Reader. The core material is intended to be used by all pupils for developing language skills; the Arts Reader is intended for use in arts classes and the Science Reader for use in Science classes. Since both Readers are printed in one volume, however, pupils and teachers can use the extra material as they wish.

Source: Teacher's Book (p.4)

The above extract shows that the art and science readers are printed in the same volume and the EST reading teachers are allowed to use the narrative texts from the art reader as they wish. Such allowance may defeat the purpose of training EST students to process expository texts without specific emphasis on expository texts in reading comprehension instruction. Thus, it is clear that EST teachers are restricted to use the reading texts that were provided only by the Yemeni Ministry of Education in the EST 3rd grade course book, both of the science and art texts. Allowing the EST teachers and learners to use texts from art readers translates to the misfocus of training EST students to process expository texts. This situation shows that EFL curriculum developers seemed to be unaware of the primary objective of EST program; that is to train students to process the expository texts. Since the EST curriculum was developed by hired foreign experts, the ministry should have evaluated the curriculum carefully with regards to the program objectives prior to its implementation.

In line with the findings of Part One in the current study, the allowance of EST 3rd grade reading teachers to only use the reading passages that are presented in the EST course book is against the label of EST reading curriculum as a communicative-based curriculum because the communicative reading curriculum cannot achieve its goals through the textbooks only (Obanya, 2002). Such over-reliance on reading texts

in the EST course book should be discouraged in order to prepare the EST learners for their academic reading at tertiary level in terms of types of texts.

From the findings of the types of reading texts, it seems that EST 3rd grade reading curriculum does not match the Yemeni educational philosophy, which states that the curriculum was mainly organized based on the learner's needs. In terms of the EST program, addressing the learner's needs requires equipping the EST students with the skills to process expository texts in order to develop their ability in processing expository texts in their content areas at the tertiary level. If the EST learners are exposed and trained frequently to process the narrative texts structure, consequently, when they encounter expository texts at university level they are likely to face difficulties to process information in academic materials necessary for their academic success because they have not sufficiently trained to process the expository texts structure, as was confirmed by (Sharp, 2004).

5.2.3.3 Length of Reading Texts

Academic reading was defined as a complex purposeful and critical reading of a range of lengthy texts for completing the study of specific major subject areas (Sengupta, 2002). Thus, the length of texts in the EST textbook is of great important if the curriculum aims at preparing the secondary students for academic reading in content areas at the university level.

Using Leslie and Caldwell's Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI 3 & 4) (Leslie & Caldwell, 2004, 2006) as a proxy of text length in second and foreign language, the EST senior secondary school level reading texts were classified as grade-level if the

text length was approximately ranged between 470-550 words. However, the findings on text length in this study showed that the majority of reading texts in the EST course book (95.5%) did not follow the 3rd grade secondary school level, while only 4.5% conformed to grade-level. These findings suggest that the selection of reading passages in the EST 3rd grade secondary school course book at the development level of CECY was done without specific planning in line with the EST program objectives to train the students to process expository texts at grade-level. Such condition was evidenced only in unit five, where only one narrative text entitled “*The Mystery of the Mary Celeste*” was found to conform the grade-level of senior-secondary school with 517 words. Thus, none of the expository texts met the grade level of senior secondary school, which suggest that the Yemeni EST secondary school students are not sufficiently trained to read at grade level texts. Subsequently, it is logical for Yemeni students to be challenged in processing long reading passages at tertiary level. Past studies suggested that many students register high level of failure in academic reading due to their text misinterpretation (Cakir, 2008), which could lead to students’ inability to process grade-level academic texts. Sidek (2010) found a similar finding in the Malaysian context, in which the majority of reading texts for the form five at the Malaysian secondary school were found to be below the grade-level of upper secondary school.

Generally speaking, as in the secondary school level, students have to be trained more on reading grade-level expository texts. By training the students at secondary school level to read grade-level texts, students are prepared to read academic text at the tertiary level. The appropriate training in processing expository texts would assist

students to build their competence in reading comprehension and to succeed in their academic areas at the university level (Jalilehvand, 2012).

The gap that was traced in this study between the length of reading texts in EST secondary school reading curriculum and the supposed grade-level length of reading texts in senior secondary school level and university level may explain the reason behind the English language reading comprehension difficulties, which were found in the Yemeni context at the tertiary level. When students are not trained to read at the grade-level text, they might not be able to handle academic texts at the university level which are commonly lengthy in nature. The length of passages contributes to the difficulty level of the passages as the longer the passages, the more difficult they are (Mehrpour & Riazi, 2004). Therefore, since the Yemeni students lack of the training reading passages at grade level, such condition might cause them to face difficulty to process the long academic expository texts.

The findings of the current study are in line with the findings of many past studies. For example studies by Park (2010), Hellekjer (2005) and Lehmann (1999) found a serious weakness in reading academic tests in English among university students because of the gap found between classroom instruction at the secondary school level and the learners' needs for reading at tertiary level. In the same vein, a low level in reading comprehension was found among the Yemeni students in Faculty of Science Technology (Ali, 2007) and among medical students at Aden University (Albadri, 2001) due to the gap between the EST reading instruction and tertiary level requirements.

5.2.4 Cognitive Demands

The students' ability to manage reading tasks that require high cognitive demands is another essential element for effective reading comprehension. As the academic reading tasks complexity range from easy to difficult, for the learners, in order to achieve higher level of success in their academic reading they need to be able to accomplish reading tasks with different levels of cognitive demands starting from coding written information (low level) to analysing one's personal experience (high level) (Dutro & Moran, 2003; Moore et al., 1999; Crano & Johnson, 1991).

Language learning in the socio-cognitive and socio-cultural theory relies on both the communicative tool and the psychological tool to develop the learners' cognitive processes (Anton, 1999; Lantofl, 1994). The communicative interactive theories of information processing stress processing information through interaction between low level and high level cognitive processes (e.g., Stanovich, 1980; Rumelhart, 1977). Such combination of various levels of cognitive demands in processing reading texts help students in building their reading competence as well as their ability to process reading texts with different levels of cognitive demands. Thus, both of the high and the low levels of cognitive skills are important for L2 readers to overcome the language difficulties, especially when reading difficult academic texts (Alderson, 2000). Hence, training the students only on lower cognitive demands tasks do not help them in processing the higher level of cognitive demands tasks (Stanovich, 1980). Training the students on the two levels of cognitive demands reading tasks is greatly significant as reading at academic level is more complex and requires interaction among the readers' knowledge, the cognitive skills, the strategy use and purpose of reading (Sidek, 2010; Butcher and Kintsch, 2003).

The findings on analysing the level of cognitive demands of the reading tasks in EST secondary reading curriculum showed that the reading tasks were primarily designed to require low level of cognitive demands. A significant emphasis seems to be placed on reading tasks that require students to apply low level (61%) of cognitive skills such as recall text information (32%), focus on specific information in text (20%) and information gathering (9%). Based on Marzano et al.'s (1988) core cognitive skills, by emphasizing the recall and the focus on specific information skills, the EST reading curriculum does not train the learners in acquiring the high level of cognitive skills. The high level of cognitive skills such as identifying details, identifying main ideas and drawing inferences are symbolised in cognitive process such as synthesizing, analysing and evaluating. The recall and focus on specific information skills fall into processing texts through grammar, vocabulary and text structure.

The EST reading curriculum reflected (39%) reading tasks that require students to apply high reading cognitive skill such as analysing (20%) while the other high cognitive reading tasks were incorporated in the EST 3rd grade reading curriculum in a significantly low amount. The incorporation of high cognitive reading tasks in the curriculum was in a considerably low amount compared to the low level tasks. Allocating 20% for analysing skill, as was found in the current study, suggest that the EST 3rd grade secondary reading curriculum in small portion emphasized on the learners' cognitive needs at the tertiary level. The low distribution of reading tasks with high level of cognitive demands while the high emphasis on EST reading tasks with low level of cognitive demands in the EST 3rd grade secondary reading curriculum contribute to the reading comprehension challenges that encounter the

Yemeni EST learners at the tertiary level. Thus, EST 3rd grade secondary learners should be trained to process reading tasks that require high cognitive level in order to improve their cognitive abilities in processing reading tasks at university level. The deficiency in preparing secondary school learners in Yemen via training them to process tasks with high level of cognitive demands is in line with the findings of past studies (e.g., Sidek, 2010; Astika, 2004).

Further analysis for Table 4.9, which presents the findings of the cognitive demands of EST reading tasks, indicates that the cognitive demands of the reading tasks in the EST 3rd grade course book, work book and reading classroom instruction were distributed unequally (See Figure 4.18). The EST work book and reading classroom observation were highly incorporating reading tasks that require low level of cognitive demands as (70%) compared to 58% in the EST workbook. On the contrary, the EST course book was appeared to significantly incorporate reading tasks requiring high level of cognitive demands (59%) with a great incorporation of the analysing skill (22%). However, among the high cognitive reading tasks, which was incorporated in the EST course book, work book and classroom implementations; the inclusion of the analysis skill was with significant emphasis while the other skills were in a great low emphasis.

Such findings suggest that the EST 3rd grade secondary school reading curriculum was generally designed to emphasize on the recall and focus as low cognitive demand skill and on the analysing skill as a high cognitive demand skill. These findings on the inequality distribution pattern of cognitive demands of reading tasks as well as the highly incorporating of the low cognitive demands evidence that

the EST 3rd grade reading curriculum partially prepares secondary students for reading comprehension at tertiary level, which mainly incorporate reading tasks that need properly high level of cognitive demands.

Moreover, these findings suggest that EST reading curriculum designers might be unaware of the learners' needs to be trained and prepared for their reading at tertiary level (Hassen, 2009) in terms of processing reading tasks that require high level of cognitive demand. The different distribution pattern for the levels of cognitive demands of the reading tasks, which were found in the three sources of data, presented that the curriculum designers did not follow the actual procedures in designing the curricula as well as in developing, implementing and evaluating them (Taba, 1962). At academic level, learners need to be able to synthesize, evaluate and interpret to learn new information about their subject matter (Noor, 2006). If the Yemeni EST curriculum is designed to train students to meet high cognitive demand reading tasks, the curriculum will be able to prepare students for a successful reading in English in the academic areas at the tertiary level. It is important to equip and polish the learners' essential cognitive skills at the secondary school level in order to ensure their academic success at the tertiary level (Crano & Johnson, 1991).

The findings from classroom implementations showed that the course book proposed 41% of the reading tasks with low level of cognitive demands. In contrast, the Yemeni EST reading teachers allocated 70% reading tasks that require low level of cognitive demands. The most possible explanation for the findings from classroom implementations is that Yemeni EST teachers are not aware of the need to prepare EST 3rd grade learners to deal with high cognitive demand reading tasks at the tertiary

level. Another possible explanation for such results might be that the teachers are not aware of the learners' need to process reading tasks with high cognitive demands at higher institution studies.

Academic reading materials are relatively difficult and commonly require high level of cognitive demands reading tasks (Alderson, 2000; Urquhart & Weir, 1998). Efficient reading requires the readers to manage high cognitive demands reading tasks such as making predictions and hypothesis about the text content and examine their predictions (Ozek, 2006). Dutro and Moran (2003) stated that equipping the learners with reading tasks requiring high level of cognitive demands will prepare them to process academic language tasks efficiently. In the same vein, Talebinejad and Matou (2012) contended that it is essential to train learners to critically analyse reading texts for academic success.