

## CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study aimed at determining the theories of and instructional approaches to English as a foreign Language (EFL) reading reflected in the Omani EFL grade twelve reading curriculum, and to investigate how this curriculum prepares students for the appropriate level of academic reading skills required at the university level. This chapter illustrates the research methodology and design, the research instrument, methods of data collection, and data analysis used to answer the research questions.

### 3.1 Research Approach and Design

According to Voss et al. (2002:197), a case study is “a history of a past or current phenomenon, drawn from multiple sources of evidence. It can include data from direct observation and systematic interviewing as well as from public and private archives. In fact, any fact relevant to the stream of events describing the phenomenon is a potential datum in a case study, since context is important”.

Using case studies has become very common in social research, particularly with small-scale research projects. Case study method is used in many of social science studies especially when in-depth explanations of a social behaviour are sought after. Case studies explore and investigate contemporary real-life phenomenon through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions, and their relationships. Moreover, case study method enables a researcher to examine the data closely within a specific context. In most cases, a case study method selects a small geographical area or a very limited number of individuals as the subjects of study. Not

like quantitative analysis, which observes patterns in data at the macro level because of the frequency of occurrence of the phenomena being observed, case studies observe the data at the micro level (Zainal, 2007, p.2).

Case study research is “simply conducting research on a single individual or situation. This approach has the potential to deal with simple data through complex situations” (Baxter and Jack, 2008: 556). Moreover, a case study provides the opportunity for valuable insight into a case for a novice researcher, as it allows the researcher to collect data from diverse sources and congregate them to clarify the case (Baxter and Jack, 2008). Typically, “when the case has special entities to discover, the single case design is suitable to be utilised, where it forms a starting point for highlighting contextual matters that could be important” (Yu & Ramanathan, 2012: 223). The focus on a single case permits richer and deeper perspective than a case-based study, which concentrates on comparisons between cases, instead of the exhaustive understanding of an appropriate framework (Baxter, 2008). The aimed of a case study is to understand complex social phenomena, and real-life cases, such as managerial and organisational processes. As stated by Denscombe (2010), the main feature of the case study approach is that it focuses on just one instance of the phenomena that is to be investigated. This is exactly the intention of the current study, given the time and resources of the researcher. Choosing the case study strategy allowed for the use of a variety of methods, each of which provided valuable data. The benefit of a case study is the allowance for deeper penetration into the core of the matter. One potential drawback is it is often difficult to generalise based on one single case and to provide general suggestions based on conclusions (Jong & van der Voordt, 2002).

Denscombe (2010: 32) indicated that “the decision to use a case study approach is a strategic decision that relates to the scale and scope of an investigation and it does not, at least in principle, dictate which method or methods must be used. Indeed, strength of the case study approach is that it allows for the utilisation of a variety of methods depending on the circumstances and the specific needs of the situation”.

Furthermore, the aim of the case study is to explore a case, an event, a process, activity, or one or more individuals in depth. Time and activity limits the case or cases, and researchers gather detailed information utilising a variety of data collection processes throughout a sustained period (Creswell 2003). Thus, the current research utilised a case study method. This study followed the case study method to allow the researcher to examine a complex phenomenon that is related to determining the alignment of the Omani English Language Curriculum with the communicative approach as indicated in the instructional approaches reflected in the Omani EFL grade twelve reading curriculum for EFL reading. How this curriculum prepares students for academic reading skills required for reading at the university level was also examined. It also ensures that the issue or case is not researched through one lens, but rather through a variety of lenses, allowing for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be exposed and understood. Baxter and Jack (2008, p.544) stated that the “qualitative case study is an approach to research that simplifies the exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources”.

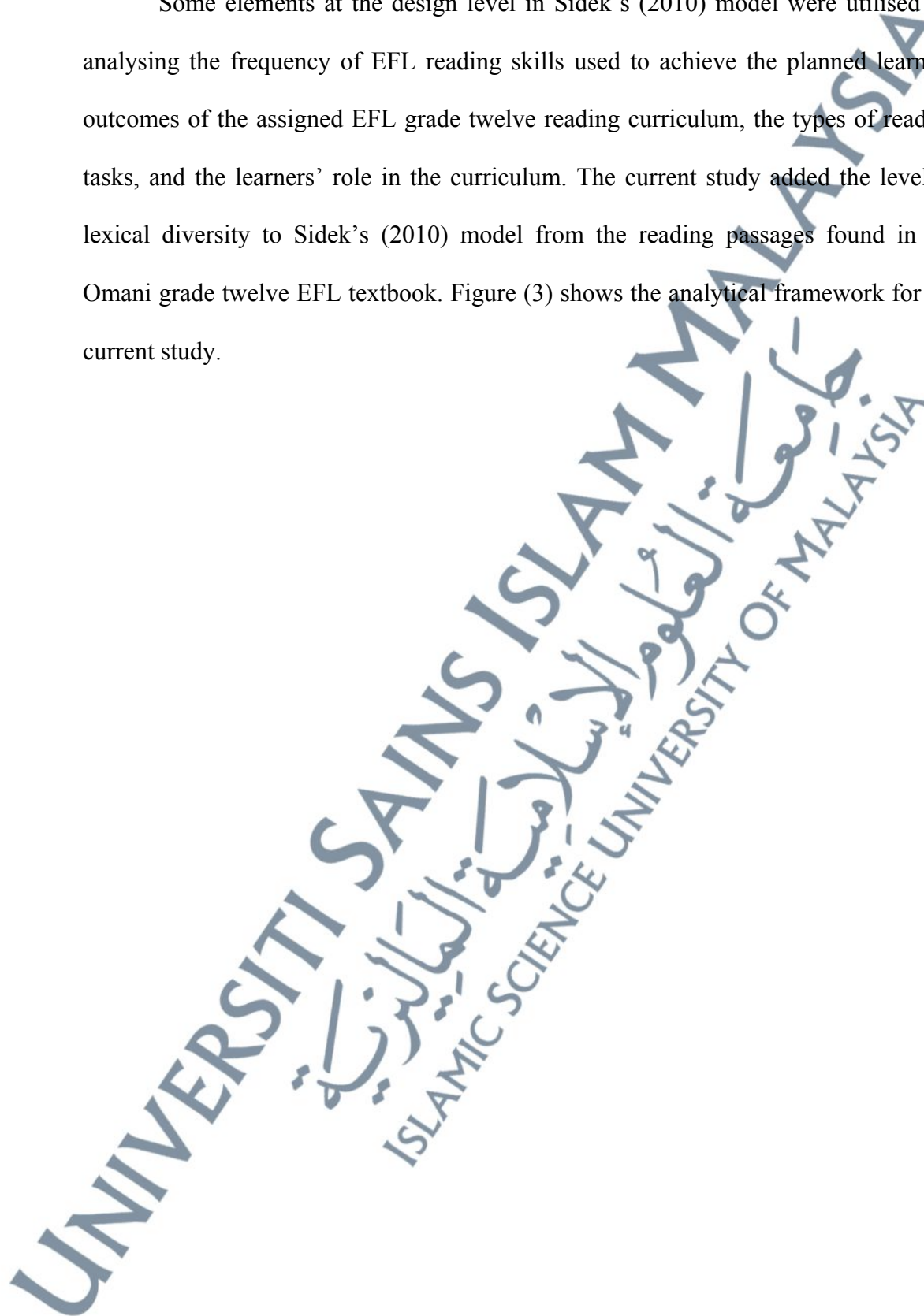
According to Baxter (2008), the different types of case study research include descriptive, exploratory, and explanatory case studies. However, the most utilised

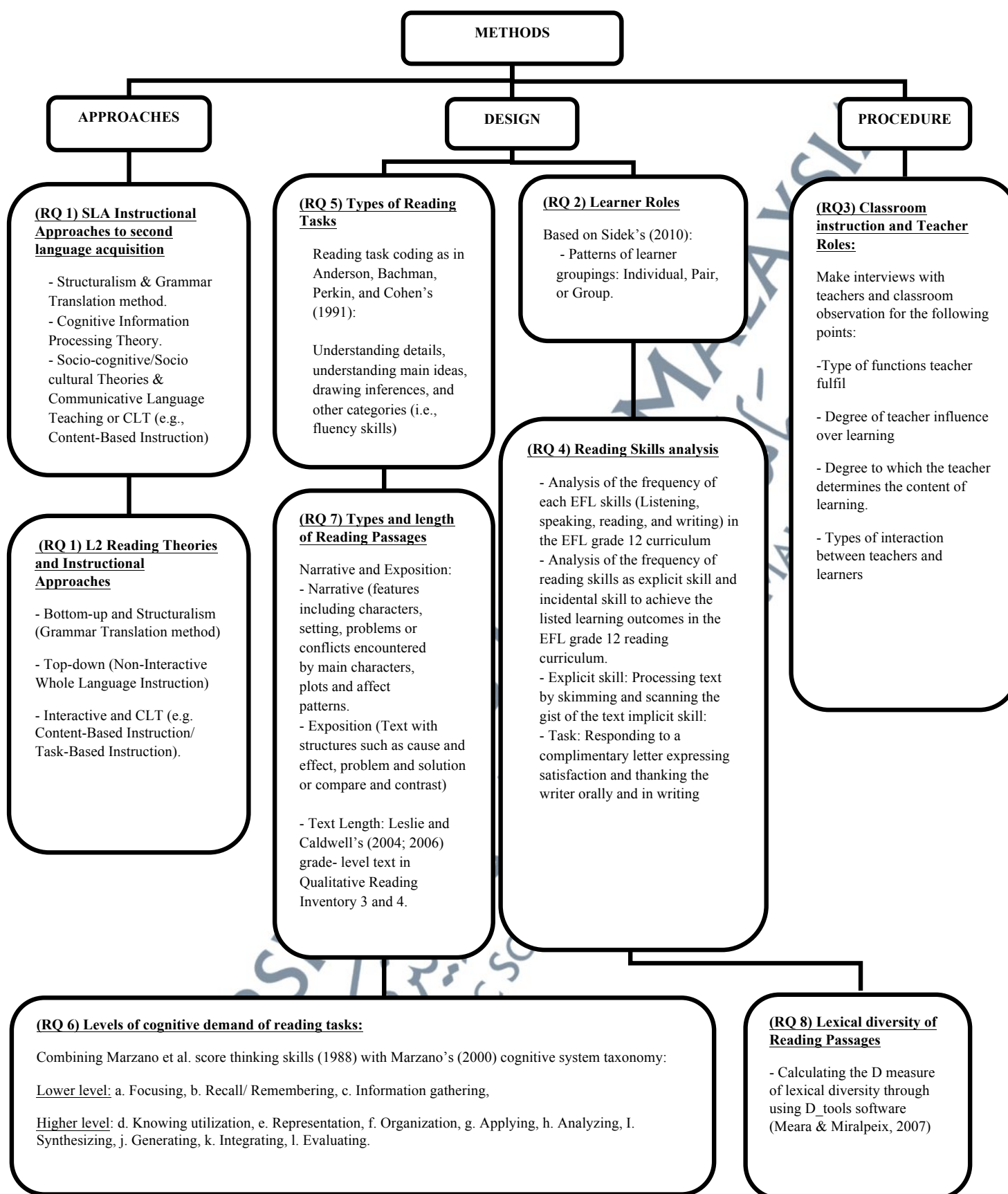
types of case study research are the descriptive and exploratory case study, because exploratory case studies define research questions and hypotheses. Explanatory case studies seek to link an event to its effects and are used to investigating causality, while descriptive case studies clarify the phenomena and their specific contexts (Creswell, 2003). Furthermore, each of these types can either study single or multiple cases. Also, cases can be investigated either in a longitudinal setting to discover and explain changes within cases over time, or in a similar setting to discover and explain differences between cases.

For the analysis of the Omani EFL grade twelve reading curriculum, this study adopted the revised model of Sidek's (2010), which was influenced by Richards and Rodgers' (2001) model. This model introduces a conceptual framework for language instruction assuming that posits that at the fundamental level, language instruction can be analysed regarding approach, design, and procedure. Since language teaching can be examined at the basic level regarding approach (foundational theory), design (e.g. learners' roles, selected language skills, learning tasks), and procedure (e.g. classroom observations, teachers interviews). This model represents a theoretical framework for language teaching.

Since the goal of the current study was to examine the overarching approaches to the foreign language (L2) reading instruction reflected in the Omani EFL grade twelve reading curriculum, some modified components in Sidek's (2010) EFL reading conceptual frameworks apply to the current study. For instance, the component at the approach level in Sidek's (2010) model provided a tool for analysing the Omani grade twelve EFL reading instructional approach regarding its implicit foundational theories of SLA and theories of L2 reading.

Some elements at the design level in Sidek's (2010) model were utilised for analysing the frequency of EFL reading skills used to achieve the planned learning outcomes of the assigned EFL grade twelve reading curriculum, the types of reading tasks, and the learners' role in the curriculum. The current study added the level of lexical diversity to Sidek's (2010) model from the reading passages found in the Omani grade twelve EFL textbook. Figure (3) shows the analytical framework for the current study.





*Figure 3: Revised Analytical Framework of Sidek (2010)*

## 3.2 Research Settings

This research studied the Omani public grade twelve EFL curriculum and its implications on student performance at the tertiary level because it is the final year of post-basic school education before tertiary education. For this reason, students' English proficiency in grade twelve reflects their English language competency, which has developed during the school years as preparation to cope with the academic English requirements at the tertiary level.

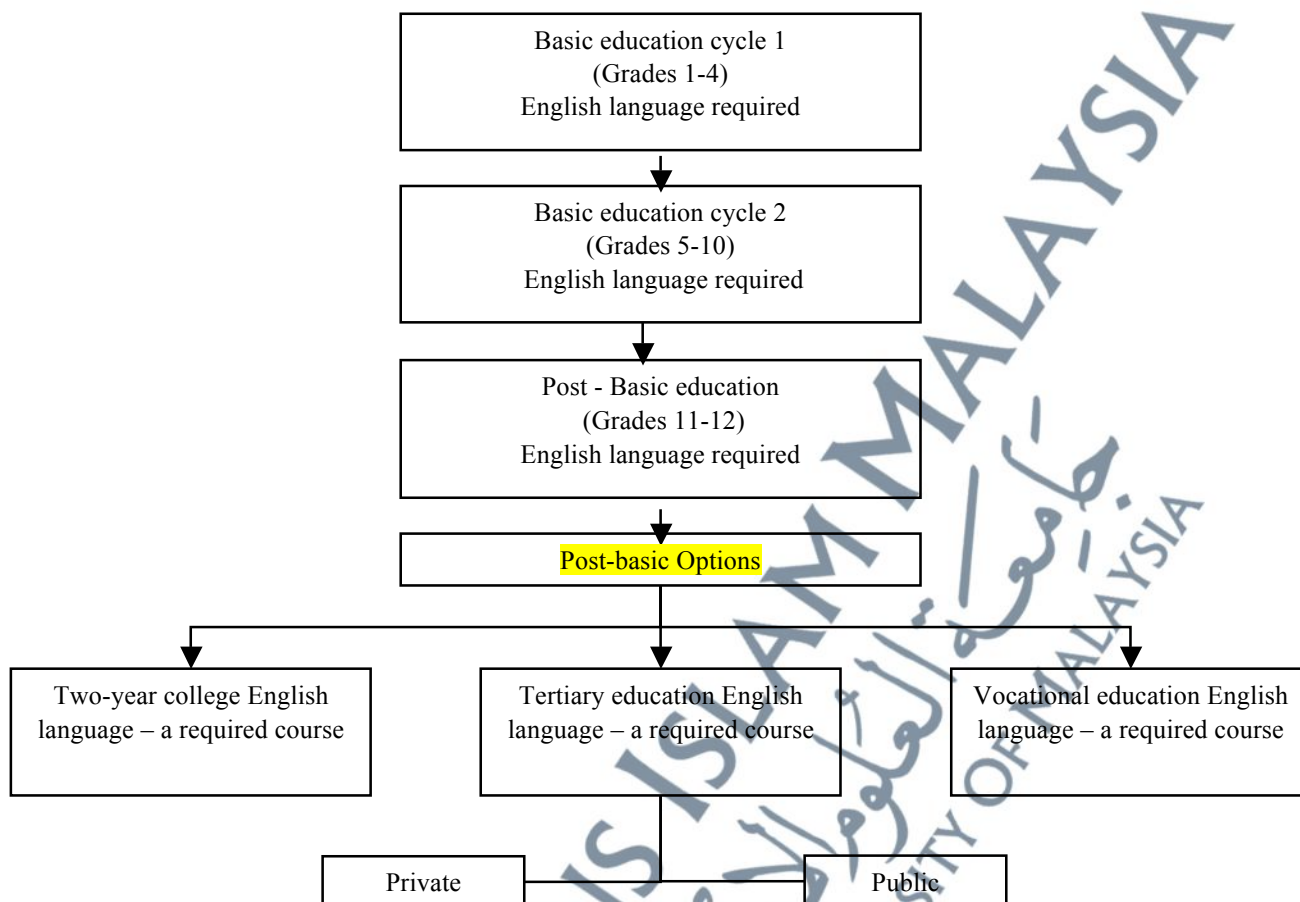
### 3.2.1 Omani EFL Educational Context

English is taught as a foreign language in schools in Oman. Students begin studying it from grade one alongside Arabic (their mother tongue). Students have 5-7 periods per week, with each period consisting of 40 minutes; thus, the total hours of English exposure per week is approximately three to four hours (Al-Jardani, 2012). However, English is studied as a foreign language and is not a language of instruction in most Omani schools. At the tertiary level, where the language of instruction is English, the students' comprehension of the subject matter is often less than satisfactory, despite the fact that a foundation programme course is provided to prepare students for the tertiary level. It is argued that students are still not comfortable in classes instructed in English. This is reflected in their class participation, overall performance and study experience, understanding of the modules, and exam preparation (Sivaraman et al., 2014).

The English language curriculum reflects students' maturation and conceptual development levels in English at each level of teaching. As Al-Jadidi (2009) contends, these levels are represented as follows:

- The first level of this curriculum is grades 1-4, which plays an essential role in developing a linguistic and attitudinal basis for teaching in later grades. It also develops positive ways of thinking about English language learning through utilising communicative and experiential approaches to language learning and teaching.
- The second level of the English curriculum is from grades 5-7, which further strengthens the basis established in the first four years of school. It also strengthens English as a means of communication and its functional usage. This helps increase students' confidence in English, as well as the practical skills to use English beyond basic education. Further, the curriculum for this level offers a careful introduction of the elements of the English language, such as grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary along with reflecting the fact that students can apply both analytical modes of learning and experiential.
- The final level is grades 8-12, where the curriculum contains more advanced linguistic skills and a broad knowledge of linguistic schemes in English. At this level, the approach of English becomes as a mean for communication and functional usage with a more balanced analytical mode of learning.

The figure below illustrates the EFL requirements in the Omani educational system.



*Figure 4: EFL requirements in the Omani educational system*

### 3.2.2 The Omani post-basic School EFL Educational Framework

The English Language Teaching Department Unit at the Ministry of Education is authorised to supply school textbooks throughout the country. The Omani Ministry of Education developed a document describing the English language curriculum framework for government schools in the Sultanate of Oman since 1998.

Moreover, the government of Oman has embarked on an ambitious new programme of educational reform and development, starting in 1998, with English language teaching identified as pivotal to the achievement of the reform. The rationale

for the reformed English language curriculum has been developed within the framework of the general objectives of the basic education system. Also, the development of the curriculum framework takes place within the broader context of general educational objectives (Ministry of Education, 2010).

In the educational framework, the curriculum, syllabus, and the curriculum specifications for all subjects instructed in school, including English are planned and prepared by the Omani Ministry of Education. There are two levels of the education system in Oman: the first level is called 'Basic Education' and contains Cycle 1 (grades 1-4) and Cycle 2 (grades 5-10), and the other level, called 'Post-Basic Education,' contains grades 11 and 12 (Al-Jardani, 2012). There are specific English language syllabi for each level (Ministry of Education, 2010).

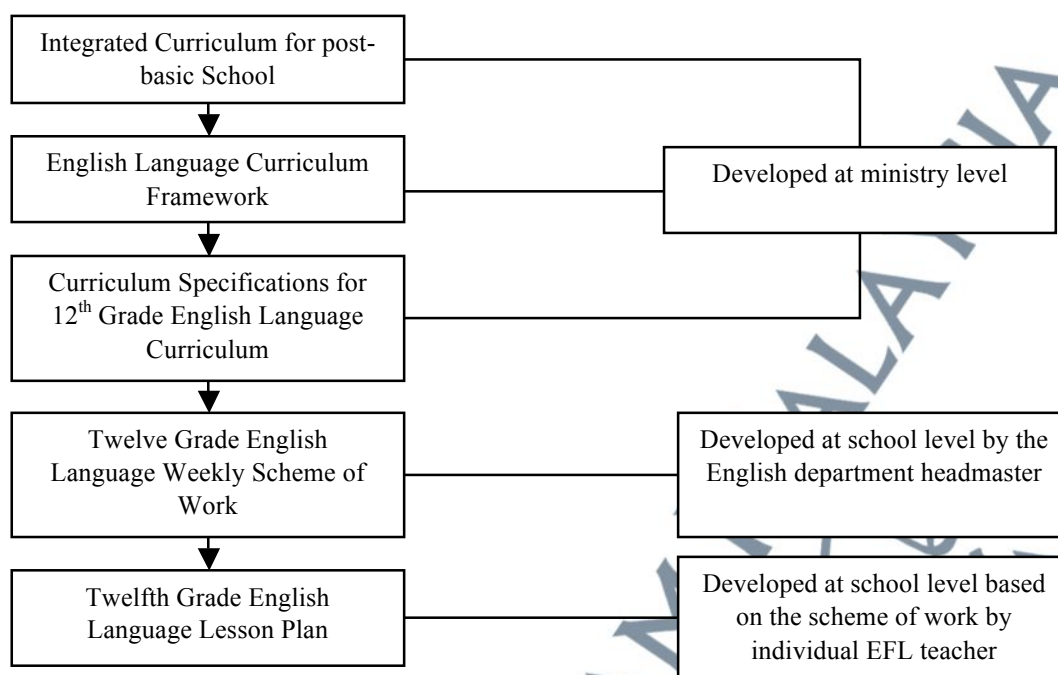
The number of hours in the school year mandates that English instruction start in grade one, as opposed to grade four under the prior system. However, instruction in basic education (grades one through to ten) and post-basic education (grades eleven and twelve) in government schools is completely in Arabic, apart from the one English class students take every day. Changes in how English is taught in Omani schools were brought by the arrival of the Basic Education system (Sergon, 2011). The prospects for students' English levels were substantially raised: the target for the end of grade ten was set at 4,500 words. It is important that the students have an active mastery of 2,500 words and a recognition vocabulary of an additional 2,000 words. It was shown that students must know 6,000 to 7,000 words to be adequately prepared for university studies (Omani Ministry of Education, 1999) by the end of grade twelve. Thus, students ideally obtained 4,500 words in a span of 10 years but can then

obtain anywhere from one-third to double the number of words that they already know in a matter of two years.

By grade seven, they are expected to know 750 words and by grade twelve, 6,000. At the end of grade seven, with their limited vocabulary of 750 words, students must also have acquired the micro skills of skimming and scanning, be capable of writing correctly in cursive, and be able to compare and contrast (Omani Ministry of Education, 2000).

### **3.2.3 The Omani post-basic Grade Twelve EFL Educational Framework**

The current Omani grade twelve English language educational framework includes four categorised levels, as shown in Figure 5; the Integrated Curriculum for Grade Twelve “Engage with English” (the whole curriculum), the English Language Curriculum Framework (Overall English Language Curriculum for grades 1-12), the Curriculum Specifications for Grade Twelve English Language Curriculum (detailed syllabus), and the Grade Twelve English Language Scheme of Work (weekly instructional plan based on the Grade Twelve Syllabus Curriculum).



*Figure 5: Omani Grade Twelve English Language Educational Framework*

### 3.2.4 The Grade Twelve English Language Curriculum Specifications

The English language curriculum reflects designed and ongoing changes throughout the social and educational range, which has had a positive effect on the future of language teaching in Oman, including the below changes (Ministry of Education, 2010):

- Educational philosophy.
- The role of English in society (tourism, business, etc.).
- Students and parents' expectations.
- An increased level of student awareness about knowledge of the outside world.
- Student awareness in regards to Tran's literacy.
- Educational technology.

The curriculum, with its approach and aims for the instructing of English as well as approaches to instructor training and learner assessment, reflect (Ministry of Education, 2010):

- Expectations for higher levels of accomplishment from the school programme.
- Recognition of learner-focused methodology.
- Less dependence on transmission-oriented modes of teaching.
- Less focus on a linguistic 'product' as the result of every lesson.
- Greater focus on the role of English in continuing economic and technological development and encouraging world knowledge.

Based on the philosophy of the educational reform, specifications of the grade twelve English language curriculum are designed not only to promote students' linguistic knowledge and skills but also to improve their capability for efficient and independent learning. This effort is part of the initiative to develop student strategies for classroom learning, as well as to prepare them for the many opportunities available for learning English outside of the classroom (Ministry of Education, 2010).

In line with the Omani educational goals, one of the principal goals of the grade twelve English language curriculum is to develop students who are competent in EFL skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing as part of their academic preparation for university level. To accomplish these goals requires a concentration on strategies in the curriculum. Furthermore, students are required to be conscious of the nature of learning strategies, be capable of realising effective as well as ineffective strategies, and improve awareness of their ways of learning and how these can be monitored and strengthened in a positive way (Rassekh, 2004).

### 3.3 Research Purpose

This study aimed to determine the comprehensive approaches reflected in the Omani EFL grade twelve reading curriculum to a foreign language (L2) reading instruction, in addition to investigating how this curriculum prepares students for the appropriate level of academic reading skills required by a university. The sample comprised the Omani EFL grade twelve English language reading curriculum (*Engage with English*), as well as the grade twelve students from six schools in Ibri, Sultanate of Oman, enrolled during the academic year 2015-2016. The students are chosen as participants because they are the most senior students enrolled in the curriculum, which is the target of this investigation, and they are candidates for the EFL Academic Reading Programme for higher education for the next academic year. Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

#### Part I (The Curriculum Alignment with the Communicative Approach)

- 1- What theories of and instructional approaches to SLA and second language reading are reflected in the Omani EFL grade twelve reading curriculum?
- 2- What types of learner roles are reflected in the Omani EFL grade twelve reading curriculum?
- 3- What types of teacher roles are reflected in the Omani EFL grade twelve reading curriculum?

#### Part II (Preparing Students for Reading in English at the Higher Education Level)

- 1- How frequently are reading skills mentioned explicitly as a vital means for the achievement of the Omani EFL grade twelve-curriculum outcomes?

- 2- What types of reading tasks are used in the Omani EFL grade twelve reading curriculum?
- 3- What levels of cognitive demand for reading tasks are reflected in the Omani EFL grade twelve reading curriculum?
- 4- What types and lengths of reading passages are included in the Omani *Engage with the English* course book?
- 5- What is the level of lexical diversity in the reading passages in the EFL grade twelve textbook?

### 3.4 Rationale of Research Questions

The following are the rationale for the research questions for the study.

#### Part I (The Curriculum Alignment with the Communicative Approach)

**RQ1: What theories of and instructional approaches to second language acquisition (SLA) and second language reading are reflected in the Omani EFL grade twelve reading curriculum?**

The term *curriculum* in the Omani context might best match Robertson's (1971: 564) definition that "...the curriculum includes the goals, objectives, content, processes, resources, and means of evaluation of all the learning experiences planned for pupils both in and out of the school and community through classroom instruction and related programs". The term *EFL grade twelve curriculum* refers to the Omani *Engage with English* language curriculum, whereas the term *EFL Grade twelve reading curriculum* refers to statements in the Omani EFL Curriculum Specifications document and in the *Engage with English* EFL textbook that is linked to EFL reading skills. Hereafter, the Omani *Engage with English* EFL textbook will be referred to as

the EFL textbook. The Omani EFL grade twelve reading curriculum was prepared according to formal theories and approaches to second language learning and reading. Hence, it is necessary to understand the SLA theories, instructional approaches, and the second language reading theories that exist in the Omani EFL grade twelve reading curriculum (Menezes, 2013; Mohammed & Sidek, 2015; Kessler & Bikowski, 2013).

**RQ2: What types of learner roles are reflected in the Omani EFL grade twelve reading curriculum?**

Richards and Rodgers (2001: 27) stated that putting the roles of learners under analysis is crucial, as “the *instructional* system will be influenced by how learners are regarded”.

**RQ3: What types of teacher roles are reflected in the Omani EFL grade twelve reading curriculum?**

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), teachers might utilise their own teaching procedures, affected by a certain view of language and a certain learning theory. Applying the curriculum highlights the role of teachers in their participation for the curriculum plans, while developing and enhancing the curriculum depends mainly on “continuing reconstruction of the forms in which teachers represent knowledge in classrooms in collaboration with students as they reflect on their teaching” (Aidroos, 2011, p.22).

**Part II (Preparing Students for Reading in English at the Higher Education Level)**

**RQ4: How frequently are reading skills mentioned explicitly as a vital means for the achievement of the Omani EFL grade twelve-curriculum outcomes?**

Answers to this question will offer insights into the degree to which EFL reading skills are the primary focus of the grade twelve EFL reading curriculum.

**RQ5: What types of reading tasks are used in the EFL grade twelve reading curriculum?**

The types of reading tasks in the selected documents, examined previously in studies on L1 and L2 reading instruction, are related to reading abilities (e.g., Beck & McKeown, 2001; Scanlon & Vellutino, 1997; Swaffar, 1985; In et al., 2006; Maarof & Yaacob, 2011; Lee, 2011; Brazzale, 2014).

In addition, reading tasks may point to students' cognitive abilities in foreign language reading understanding (e.g., Alderson & Lukmani, 1989; Bernhardt, 1983; Davey, 1988; Cohen & Upton, 2006; Al-Issa, 2011; Wang, 2015). This question answered through examining the types of reading task in the Omani EFL Curriculum Specifications document and the *Engage with English* textbook. The selected reading tasks' coding is as in Anderson et al. (1991), which classifies reading tasks into drawing inferences, identifying details, and identifying main ideas. Moreover, this coding was selected based on the researcher's preliminary examination of the selected documents, where most of the reading tasks in the Omani EFL Curriculum Specifications and the *Engage with English* textbook appeared within these classes. New classes were created to accommodate reading tasks that did not fall within Anderson et al.'s (1991) coding classes based on the type of the reading tasks.

**RQ6: What levels of cognitive demand of the reading tasks are reflected in the Omani EFL grade twelve reading curriculum?**

The importance of analysing the cognitive level of language skills in the field of foreign language instruction has been indicated in previous studies where it is presented as a necessary aspect for language proficiency and where cognition is an awareness of how to use strategies of various types to achieve important general goals in reading (Koda, 2005; Sawaki et al., 2009; Lee & Sawaki, 2009; Yoshida, 2012). University students should have a sufficient level of reading skills for information literacy leading to academic success (Moore et al., 1999).

Past studies (e.g., Alderson, 1990; Whalley et al., 2006; Larsson, 2013; Maftoon & Tasnimi, 2014) tested the cognitive requirement of reading understanding tasks in evaluating students' "internal mental processes" (Chamot, 1983: 463). One of the principal goals of the EFL grade twelve curriculum is to prepare students for higher education. Therefore, the aimed of the EFL grade twelve reading coursebook should be to train students to be able to deal with higher education requirements. That means students are required to be outfitted with not only the lower cognitive skills, including knowledge recovery and understanding but also higher cognitive skills, including the ability to examine and use information studied. The cognitive demands of the reading tasks at the grade twelve level may help to provide insight to the degree of difficulty of EFL reading and information processing skills that grade twelve students are taught.

**RQ7: What types and lengths of reading passages are included in the grade twelve EFL coursebook?**

The current study aimed to discover the comprehensive second language reading instruction reflected in the Omani EFL grade twelve English language curriculum to analyse how it prepares students for tertiary reading. Previous research in the field of language teaching have suggested that there is an opportunity for students to benefit from reading instruction that corresponds to the reading demand at the tertiary level (e.g., Mullis, Martin, Foy & Drucker, 2012; Rotter & Bendl, 1978).

**RQ8: What is the level of lexical diversity in the reading passages in the EFL grade twelve textbook?**

Lexical diversity measures will offer insights about the lexical richness of the reading texts at the grade twelve EFL curriculum. In addition, it is important for this study to indicate the readability of the texts, where high lexical diversity implies low readability and the existence of new words. Moreover, knowing passage difficulty at the text level will determine the problems surrounding identifying new strategies (Aziz et al., 2010). Numerous foreign language instruction studies have shown how important the difficulty of EFL grade level reading texts is for language mastery (e.g., Aziz Hussin, 2010; Azari, 2012).

### **3.5 Data Collection**

To analyse the Omani grade twelve reading curriculum, the researcher adopted the revised Richards and Rodgers (2001) and Sidek (2010) method for language teaching, which is a revision of Anthony's (1963) model. This method provided an analytical framework for language teaching assuming that the fundamental level of language instruction can be analysed regarding approach, design and procedure. In addition, some components in the revised Richards and Rodgers' (2001) method for

language instruction analytical frameworks used for the current study such as approach, design and procedure.

Previous studies analysing second language curriculum utilised content analysis (e.g. Lee, 2009). Content analysis is a reputable research technique (Krippendorff, 1980; 2004) commonly used by researchers dealing with historical and communication issues (Basturkmen, 1999; Lal Das & Bhaskaran, 2008; Franzosi, 2008; Mayring, 2014). It is a method of research that entails analysing texts scientifically and without bias to make inferences that are both replicable and applicable according to the texts (Krippendorff, 1980; Cohen Manion & Morrison, 2007; Bhattacharjee, 2012; Jonathan, 2012).

Another part of the design component is the type, length, and lexical diversity level of reading passages, which includes narrative and exposition. Narrative features include characters, setting, problems, or contradictions faced by major plots, characters, and influence patterns, while exposition is a text with structures, like problem and solution, cause and effect, or compare and contrast. Furthermore, text length according to Leslie and Caldwell (2004; 2006), is a grade level text in the Qualitative Reading Inventory. In addition, the lexical diversity level of EFL grade twelve reading texts measured by using the *D\_tools* software (Meara & Miralpeix, 2007). Under the procedure component, the researcher analysed the learner's role, which includes a pattern of groupings, such as individual, pair or group. This is achieved through classroom observation.

### **Part I (The Curriculum Alignment with the Communicative Approach)**

**RQ1: What theories of and instructional approaches to second language acquisition (SLA) and second language reading are reflected in the Omani EFL grade twelve reading curriculum?**

Under the approach component, the researcher analyzed the SLA instructional approaches to foreign language acquisition, which includes the structuralism and grammar translation method, cognitive information processing theory, socio-cognitive/sociocultural theories and communicative language teaching or CLT. Also, SLA, the foreign language instructional approaches, including bottom-up and structuralism (grammar translation method), top-down (non-interactive whole language instruction), interactive and (e.g. content-based instruction/task-based instruction) used.

The theories and practices underlying the English language curriculum can be analysed through assessments, instructing practices, and studying textbooks (Yoshida, 2012). Thus, to answer all research questions, the Omani EFL textbooks and coursebooks were examined.

**RQ2: What types of learner roles are reflected in the Omani EFL grade twelve reading curriculum?**

In an attempt to answer this question, learner roles coded utilising Richards and Rodgers' (2001) coding. In the current study, the coding of learner roles involves types of learning tasks set for learners about learner groupings, whether single or within groups.

**RQ3: What types of teacher roles are reflected in the Omani EFL grade twelve reading curriculum?**

Since learner roles are closely connected to the teacher's status and function, the current study investigated the teacher roles reflected in the Omani EFL grade twelve reading curriculum. In an attempt to answer this question, teacher roles coded utilising Richards and Rodgers' 2001 model. In the current study, the coding of teacher roles involves the types of functions teachers are expected to fulfil.

## **Part II (Preparing for Reading in English at the Higher Education Level)**

**RQ4: How frequently is the reading skill mentioned explicitly as a vital means for the achievement of the learning outcomes in the Omani EFL grade twelve curriculum?**

To analyze the extent to which EFL reading is utilised as the means to attain the learning results in the EFL grade twelve curriculum, the revised component of language skill analysis in the Sidek (2010) model will be utilised. Two analyses are conducted to shed more light on EFL reading in the EFL grade twelve curriculum. The first is the analysis of how frequent each EFL language skill (reading, listening, writing, and speaking) appears in the Omani EFL Curriculum Specifications document and the *Engage with English* textbook.

The other analysis was concerned with the ranking of statements in the Omani EFL Curriculum Specifications document and the *Engage with English* textbook. The researcher considers EFL reading tasks as either denotative or inexplicit tasks. This analysis offers insight into the degree to which EFL reading skills are a focus in the reading curriculum. In addition, the *Engage with English* textbook will also be analysed.

**RQ5: What types of reading tasks are used in the EFL grade twelve reading curriculum?**

This question is answered by examining the types of reading task in the Omani EFL Curriculum Specifications document and the grade twelve EFL textbooks. Under the design component, the researcher analyzed the types of reading tasks (including reading task coding as in Anderson et al. 1991), understanding details, understanding main ideas, drawing inferences, and other categories. For this, reading task coding selected based on the researcher's preliminary examination of the selected documents, as most of the reading tasks in the Omani EFL Curriculum Specifications and the *Engage with English* textbook appeared within these classes. Nevertheless, to accommodate for reading tasks that did not fall within Anderson et al.'s (1991) coding classes, new classes were created based on the type of reading task.

**RQ6: What levels of cognitive demand of the reading tasks are reflected in the Omani EFL grade twelve reading curriculum?**

The researcher analyzed the levels of difficulty of the Grade twelve EFL reading tasks for which grade twelve students are prepared. In deciding the cognitive levels of the reading tasks, Marzano et al.'s 'Core Thinking Skills' classification (1988) and Marzano's 'Cognitive System' classification (2000) were integrated as follows:

Lower Level:

- 1- Focusing: taking particular information and ignoring others
- 2- Recall/Remembering: recalling information from long-term memory
- 3- Information gathering: getting information by one or more senses or searching information by inquiry.

Higher Level:

- 4- Representation: coordinating information, such as understanding of visual aids (e.g., maps, charts)
- 5- Organising: Comparing, sorting, ordering, representing
- 6- Applying: utilising applicable prior knowledge within a new position
- 7- Analysing: describing details, relationships and forms, first thoughts as well as mistakes
- 8- Synthesising: identification of the most crucial components and deletion of irrelevant information
- 9- Generating: deducing, anticipating, and working out information
- 10- Integrating: resuming and reconstituting
- 11- Evaluating: establishing criteria and verifying

These classifications were utilised because they identify cognitive and thinking skills, which students must possess in order to interpret information successfully at different levels of cognitive demand. If the cognitive requirements of the reading tasks in the post-basic EFL reading curriculum are mainly at the knowledge recovery and understanding level of the selected classification (like remembering and focus), grade twelve students may not find any difficulty in English reading tasks at the university level.

**RQ7: What types and length of reading passages are included in the grade twelve EFL coursebook?**

To distinguish the types of *Engage with English* reading texts students are taught at the grade twelve level, it is necessary to analyse the types of reading

passages included in *Engage with English* regarding genre and whether the texts are suitable for students' grade level. Text genre examined in narrative, and expository classes in previous studies reveal, in general, that expository and narrative passages are the two most important text types (e.g., Yoshida, 2012; Zhou & Siriyothin, 2011; Farvardin & Biria, 2011). Besides these, grade level texts in this study are analysed according to text length, utilising Qualitative Reading Inventory 3 and 4 (Leslie & Caldwell, 2004; 2006).

**RQ8: What is the level of lexical diversity in the reading passages in the EFL grade twelve textbooks?**

To answer this question, the researcher used a computer software program, 'D\_tools' as a data collection, which gives the value of D measure that indicates the lexical diversity level for the analysed texts in the grade twelve EFL curriculum. It has been established that the value of D is more accurate than measuring the Type-Token Ratio (TTR) because the TTR is affected by the length of the text. There is an agreement among previous studies that the D measure is the most reliable measure of lexical diversity (McCarthy and Jarvis, 2007; Johansson, 2009; Wang, 2014).

### **3.6 Classroom Observation**

Classroom observation was chosen as one of the method for data collection for this study, as it reflects the roles of learners and teachers. Before conducting the study, the researcher received a letter from USIM requesting permission from the participating school and department directors to observe grade twelve classes. After obtaining their consent, the concerned teachers were provided with the observation schedule. Six schools from different cities participated in this study and two teachers

were randomly selected from each school. The researcher provided the respective teacher's lesson plan for the day. The teachers were also informed that the observation was not meant to evaluate their performance or that of their students.

They were encouraged to teach as usual, as observation is designed to identify the procedure inherent in the reading lessons and materials, as defined in the revised Richards and Rogers' Method for Language Teaching. *Engage with English* was subjected to analysis using Richards and Rogers' method as adapted by Sidek (2010). The analysis provides data on how these books adhere to the components outlined in the method above for language teaching. The data is then collected based on the devised observation sheet.

### 3.7 Research Tools

The present study intends to examine the Omani grade twelve English language curriculum through determining the comprehensive approaches to second language reading instructions that are reflected in it, with the goal of examining how well the assigned curriculum prepares students for university academic reading. Thus, the three tools in this study are: (1) the revised Sidek's Model for EFL reading, (2) D\_tools Software to measure the lexical diversity  $D$  and (3) class observation.

The researcher determined what is reflected in the grade twelve reading curriculum according to the revised Sidek's (2010) Method for EFL reading. Classroom observation is prescribed in the Richards and Rogers' Model for Language Teaching. This is essential in assessing the design of the teachers' and students' roles in the curriculum.

### 3.8 Data Analysis

This research adopted the explorative case study, as it only examined the EFL reading curriculum in a chosen country and is not seeking to prove hypotheses or to apply an intervention. It aspired to examine the relationships between curriculum and instruction to suggest the necessary improvements for the Omani education system to prepare grade twelve students for tertiary level reading in English language (Jong & van der Voordt, 2002).

#### Part I (Curriculum Alignment with the Communicative Approach)

Research Question 1 was answered in two parts; *instructional* approaches for theories of SLA and *instructional* approaches for theories of foreign language reading. Based on the reviews of the theories utilised in SLA, the first research question was analysed as follows:

**RQ1: What theories and instructional approaches to: 1) second language acquisition (SLA)? and 2) second language reading are adopted by the Omani EFL grade twelve reading curriculum?**

To analyse the SLA theories and instructional approaches adopted in reading related statements in the *Engage with English* textbook using three most important SLA theories and their associated instructional approaches; socio-cognitive/sociocultural, cognitive information processing, and structural/behaviourism.

The structuralism theory might be adopted in the SLA instructional approaches, such as the deductive grammar approach, which involves using reading expressed teaching of rules to employ language, explain grammar rules, and learn

vocabulary (Wang, 2009). The structuralism theory was extracted from statements from the selected documents such as the following:

**Listening:** Can follow an interpretation (unwritten story) and identify characters, situations and outcomes, as well as recognise the difference between vowels, diphthongs, consonant clusters, homophones, consonants, homographs, and words borrowed from other languages in a dictated text.

**Speaking:** Can use English with correct pronunciation, intonation patterns, correct phrasing, pauses, stress, emphases, fluency, and rhythm.

**Reading:** can read a paragraph, identify topic sentence, and underline all verbs in simple present tense.

**Writing:** Can write a summary of a text, utilising the dictionary to find the meanings of words, and change all verbs into simple past tense.

The cognitive information processing theory of SLA reading encompasses textual information processing, the compilation of text information, linguistic information processing, and prior knowledge processing (Sidek, 2010), which occurs naturally in the learner's cognition, without the comprehension of communicative activities in the reading context. Therefore, statements that were deduced in the cognitive information processing theory of SLA class include: Processing information in texts by scanning particular information and ideas, drawing out basic ideas and details, discerning sequence of ideas, finding the explicit and implicit meaning, constantly creating tables to compare the information; reading a sort of texts silently, whether from print or the internet. The analysis of sociocultural and socio-cognitive theories of SLA combined to represent the communicative instructional approach theory, as these two theories overlap with each other in the way of language learning

cognitively and socially. In addition, the socio-cognitive theory of SLA views language learning not just as mechanical features of language learning/teaching and acquisition from a psycholinguistic viewpoint (Matsuoka & Evans, 2004).

The sociocultural and socio-cognitive theories are intertwined in SLA, and reflected in communicative instructional approaches to second language reading because language and language acquisition are considered cognitive and social needs (Matsuoka & Evans, 2004). In the data analysis, statements that reflected social-cognitive theories of language learning are represented by the following:

Assign students to read; present a speech based on a text; read and get information for different uses through reading materials in print, such as articles, reports, and using the internet; undertake enquiries after reading advertisements in the newspaper and determining a number of similar services and products orally and in filling in a form or writing a short note submitting exactly what is needed; thanking the writer orally and in writing, depend on information in a reading text, writing reports also on particular topics based on a text read; finally, listen to, read and reply to literature by realising and saying in one's own words the story and poem heard and read, and contributing one's opinion of the text.

The sociocultural theory of SLA considers language as a key tool for the development of intellectual processes or the essential means of mediation for one's cognition. Hence, language learning is comprehended as a socially mediated process, and this theory is reflected in communicative instructional approaches. In addition, sociocultural theories of SLA may be reflected in the foreign language reading

instructional approaches, such as TBI, whole language reading instruction, and content-based on ESL instruction.

Sidek (2010) proposed that the main theories of second language reading processing are: 1) bottom-up; 2) top-down; and 3) interactive. Reading related statements in the Omani EFL Curriculum Specifications and the *Engage with English* textbook will be inscribed for these three theories.

“The bottom-up theory is text-driven in nature and focuses on the lower-level text processing skills such as phonological processing, word recognition, and word identification” (Sidek, 2010: 71). The bottom-up theory to second language reading might be categorised as an instructional approach, such as the grammar translation method to L2 reading.

The top-down process involves reading when the meaning is built from part to whole (Bergeron, 1990). Based on the idea that readers’ capability to use syntactic and semantic sign makes up for their lack of graphic signs, the top-down theory underlines higher level text processing skills, such as contextual and background knowledge sources (Nassaji, 2002; Yoshida, 2012). The top-down theory might be described as interactive whole language instruction as communicative instructional approaches in second language reading. However, it only reflects part of the whole language instruction because, as a communicative approach to second language reading, significant interaction with the reading context is the principal concentration of the reading task’s design. Without the communicative aspects, the whole language instructional approach is believed to non-interactive and hence encoded as the Non-Interactive Whole Language instructional approach under the top-down theory class.

**RQ2: What types of learner's roles are reflected in the Omani EFL grade twelve reading curriculum?**

Richards and Rodgers (2001, p.27) contended that it is essential to analyze the roles of learners because "the instructional system will be influenced by how learners are regarded". Based on Richards and Rodgers' model, learner roles were tested about forms of learner groupings. Thus, the current study depending on Richards and Rodgers' model to examines learner roles toward learning influencing factors and learners as problem solvers.

Based on the analysis of classroom observation and the Omani EFL grade twelve reading curriculum, the researcher detected that there were three types of learner groupings observed in the curricular materials: pair, group, or individual. Reading tasks that are designed to be accomplished in pairs or groups reflect communicative instructional approaches to second language reading, as information processing of text happens through meaningful cooperative effort toward making meaning.

The individual reading tasks reflect the audio-lingual approach because such tasks determine information processing among individual learner's cognition, without the integration of reading the context. Hence, forms of learner grouping in this study categorise the reading tasks into these three categories.

**RQ3: What types of teacher roles are reflected in the Omani EFL grade twelve reading curriculum?**

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), teachers might utilise their own teaching procedures, influenced by a certain view of language and a certain learning theory. In an attempt to answer this question, teacher roles were coded utilising

Richards and Rodgers' (2001) model. In the current study, the coding of teacher roles involves the types of functions teachers are expected to fulfil. The teacher's role reflected in the curriculum includes both the objectives of the curriculum and the learning theory upon which the curriculum is predicated. The success of the curriculum depends on how the teacher presented the content or created conditions for successful language learning. In answering this question the present study analysed the types of teacher roles for the reading tasks reflected in the EFL grade twelve curriculum through coding of teacher roles involves the types of functions teachers are expected to fulfill.

## **Part II (Preparing for Reading in English at the Higher Education Level)**

**RQ4: How frequently are reading skills mentioned explicitly as a vital means for the achievement of the Omani EFL grade twelve-curriculum outcomes?**

The frequency of which reading skills are mentioned explicitly as a vital means to achieve the listed learning outcomes could offer proof about the emphasis on reading in the Omani EFL grade twelve reading curriculum. We use the language skill analysis process model utilised in Sidek (2010) to analyse the extent to which Omani EFL reading was utilised as the means to achieve the listed learning outcomes in the Omani EFL grade twelve curriculum.

With the goal of determining the degree of emphasis on Omani EFL reading in the EFL grade twelve curriculum, two analyses were carried out. The first is the analysis of how frequently each EFL language skill (speaking, writing, listening, and reading) appears in the Omani EFL Curriculum Specifications document and the *Engage with English* textbook.

The second analysis encompasses the evaluation of statements in the Omani EFL Curriculum Specifications document and the *Engage with English* textbook and tags EFL reading tasks as either implicit or explicit tasks utilised to achieve the listed learning outcomes in the Omani EFL grade twelve English language curriculum.

**RQ5: What types of reading tasks are used in the EFL Grade Twelve reading curriculum?**

The types of reading tasks found in the Omani EFL Curriculum Specifications document and the *Engage with English* textbook are analysed because past studies in L1 and L2 reading have proved that the types of reading tasks assigned to students affect their reading capabilities (Beck & McKeown, 2001).

The reading task coding utilised in this study is drawn from Sidek's study. Sidek classified reading tasks into four classes (read a passage and discuss the point of view in the passage, read topics of current interest and exchange ideas as the nature of the reading tasks, read a passage and discuss in a group a given statement related to the passage, and read a newsletter and discuss the comments in the letter) that determining details (textually explicit) describing inferences and determining main ideas.

This system of coding reading tasks was applied because it depends on the researcher's preliminary examination of the selected documents; the majority of the reading tasks in the Omani EFL Reading Curriculum Specifications document and the *Engage with English* textbook seem to fit into these classes. The determining details (textually explicit), describing inferences, and determining of the main ideas can be

conceived of as tasks that reflect top-down reading theories, as the tasks concentrate on meaning making.

These types of reading tasks are planned to construct a collaborative meaning between the members of reading the context, thus, reading tasks types can be considered a reflection of communicative-related interactive theories. Otherwise, the nature of the reading tasks class, such as fluency, can be in general thought to reflect bottom-up L2 reading theories. This is because these reading tasks, which are not associated with meaning making, encompass lower-level text processing skills. However, reading tasks based on bottom-up reading theories can be thought of as communicative and interactive, if such tasks are planned with communicative intentions for meaning making (Matsuoka & Evans, 2004).

**RQ6: What levels of cognitive demand of the reading tasks are reflected in the Omani EFL grade twelve reading curriculum?**

The current study analyses the cognitive demand levels of reading tasks in the grade twelve EFL textbooks and the EFL Curriculum Specification document to find the types of reading tasks for which grade twelve students are prepared. To answer this question, a combination of Marzano et al.'s Core Thinking Skills classification (1988) and Marzano's Cognitive System classification (2000) as used in Sidek (2010) was utilised, in which the low-level cognitive demands include focusing, recalling/remembering, and information gathering, while the high level cognitive demand includes organising, applying, analysing, synthesising, generating, integrating, and evaluating. The table below shows the explanation for each cognitive skills and its level of cognitive demand according to (Marzano et al., 1988; Marzano, 2000).

**Table 1: Core Thinking Skills Taxonomy**  
 (Source: Marzano et al., 1988; Marzano, 2000; cited in Sidek, 2010)

<b>Cognitive Skill</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Level of Cognitive Demand</b>
Focusing	Attending to accurate information and disregarding others	Low
Recalling/ Remembering	Retrieving information from long-term memory	Low
Information Gathering	Obtaining information through one or more senses or seeking information through inquiry	Low
Organising	i. Comparing: Comparing information regarding similarities and differences ii. Classifying: Grouping and labelling entities on the basis of their attributes iii. Ordering: Sequencing information according to specified criteria iv. Representing: Changing the form but not the substance of the information	High
Applying	Using relevant prior knowledge within a new situation	High
Analysing	i. Identifying details: Determining characteristics or parts of something ii. Identifying relationships and patterns: Recognising ways in which elements are related iii. Identifying main idea: Identifying the central element, such as hierarchy of the main ideas or line of reasoning iv. Identifying errors: Recognising logical fallacies and correcting them where possible	High
Synthesising	Identification of the most critical components and deletion of irrelevant information	High
Generating	i. Inferring: Going beyond text information to claim what can be reasonably true ii. Predicting: Anticipating next events, or the outcome of a situation iii. Elaborating: Explaining by adding relevant details	High
Integrating	i. Summarising: Combining information efficiently into cohesive statements ii. Restructuring: Changing existing knowledge structures to incorporate new information	High
Evaluating	i. Establishing criteria: Setting standards for making judgements ii. Verifying: Confirming the accuracy of claims	High

According to Sidek (2010), to consider grade twelve EFL students prepared for the tertiary level in terms of the cognitive skills, they should be equipped with the higher-level cognitive skills in addition to the lower-level ones. Analysing the cognitive demands of the reading tasks could give insight into whether the grade the

current study considered the students to be prepared for the tertiary level if the majority of reading tasks in the EFL grade twelve. An EFL reading curriculum needs to provide tasks that are of a higher level of cognitive demand; otherwise, the students are not prepared for EFL reading tasks at the university level. Additionally, grade twelve students should have acquired the cognitive skills they are expected to possess for university level.

**RQ7: What types and lengths of reading passages are included in the grade twelve EFL coursebook?**

Grade twelve students in Oman should be prepared to deal with reading tasks that they are expected to face at university. Students may benefit from reading instruction that corresponds to the reading demand at the tertiary level (Sidek, 2010). Also, exposing students to grade level texts in reading instruction may assist them to read and comprehend grade-level texts in specific content areas (Sidek, 2010). Thus, to see how the EFL reading instruction at grade twelve is utilised in university academic contexts, the text types, regarding grade level and genre were analysed to offer another view of the EFL preparing process.

The two main types of text are exposition and narrative (Avalos et al., 2007; Koda, 2005). The common characteristics of narrative text encompass settings, plots, effect patterns, problems or conflicts faced by main characters, and characters. Expository texts frequently utilise text structures, including problem and solution, compare and contrast, and cause and effect (Meyer & Ray, 2011). Horiba (2000) found that in L2 reading, text types strongly influenced the reading process and recall. Despite the narrative genre, expository texts “are often written for the purpose of

knowledge sharing and thus the content is often informational” (Sidek, 2010, p.79). If a text in the EFL grade twelve textbook contains any of these structures, the text is marked as an expository text. As Oh (2001) stated, simplified or shortened sections in texts may help improve second language reading and understanding. However, it is still unclear whether shorter or longer texts are best utilised in second language reading and understanding instruction. Nevertheless, the question is: how does the type and length of reading passages included in the *Engage with English* coursebook impress on students’ capability to read grade twelve texts in the content fields, where texts are usually long and complex in nature?

Grade twelve texts in this study are examined according to text length using Leslie and Caldwell’s (2004; 2006) Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI 3 and 4). These inventories were used as proxies because there is no published inventory for grade twelve texts about length for second language reading. Based on these inventories, the grade twelve length of texts should be between 470-550 words.

Moreover, length of reading and understanding passages is calculated and serve as the basis to generalise whether grade twelve passages are utilised in the *Engage with English* coursebook for both text types. If the text length of both types of passages is less than 470 words, the coursebook is not considered suitable for grade twelve and vice versa.

**RQ8: What is the level of lexical diversity in the reading passages in the EFL grade twelve textbook?**

Quantifying the degree of lexical diversity involves identifying how often-different words are used in a text, so this requires a comparison between types and

tokens in the text. Tokens describe the total number of words in a text, while types represent the number of different items (Nation, 2001). As a measure of the range of vocabulary used by a writer, lexical diversity has traditionally been calculated using TTR (Malvern & Richards, 2002), which describes the ratio between the number of different words (types) and the total number of words (tokens). For instance, there are 14 tokens but 12 types in the following sentence: “I have been learning English for nine years, so I can speak English fluently.” The two occurrences of “I” in English each belongs to the same type. The TTR is calculated and reported as a percentage using the following formula:

$$\text{Type-Token Ratio} = \frac{\text{Number of different words (types)} \times 100}{\text{Total number of words in text (tokens)}}$$

However, a significant weakness of the TTR method when it is used to compare texts is the sensitivity of the measure to variability in text length (Nation & Webb, 2011). As a text gets longer, there are fewer chances for new types to appear, because a high proportion of the frequent types have already appeared. Thus, longer texts tend to have lower TTRs as an artefact of text length.

Durán, Malvern, Richards and Chipere (2004) addressed this weakness of the TTR by proposing an alternative measure of lexical diversity,  $D$ , which involves drawing multiple word samples from a text and plotting their respective TTRs on a curve. This process allows the relative lexical diversity of even quite short texts to be determined. Durán et al. (2004) suggested that if a text has a higher  $D$ , its lexical diversity tends to be greater.  $D\_tools$  determined as a computer program that is freely available on the lognostics website (<http://www.lognostics.co.uk>). It provides a standardised procedure for measuring  $D$  in input text files (.txt).  $D\_tools$  generates

100 samples of 35 randomly selected words from a text and calculates a TTR for each of these. These 100 values are then averaged to produce a composite mean ratio for all 100 samples. The programme goes on to do the same calculation for samples of 36 randomly selected words, then for 37, then for 38, and so on, all the way up to samples of 50 words (Meara & Miralpeix, 2007).

The table below (2) summarises the methods and instruments, which used to answer the research questions. It also highlights on analysis and interpretation data.

**Table 2: Summary of Research Questions, Methods, Instruments, Analysis and Interpretation Methods**

	Research Questions	Methods	Instruments	Analysis and Interpretation
1-	Theories and Approaches	Content Analysis	Revised Sidek Model	Research question: whether the curriculum is in full alignment, partial alignment, or not in alignment with the communicative approach
2-	Learners' Role	Classroom observation	Observation Sheet	
3-	Teachers' Role	Classroom observation	Observation Sheet	Research question: whether the students are partially prepared, fully prepared or not prepared for university reading in EFL.
4-	Reading skill	Content Analysis	Revised Sidek Model	
5-	Reading tasks	Classroom observation	Observation Sheet	
6-	Cognitive demand	Content Analysis	Marzano et al.'s 'Core Thinking Skills' classification and Marzano's 'Cognitive System' classification	
7-	Reading passages	Classroom observation	Observation Sheet	
8-	Lexical diversity	Content Analysis	D measure	

### 3.8.1 Content Analysis

Lal Das and Bhaskaran (2008) defined content analysis as the scientific study of the content of communication. It is the study of the content concerning the meanings, contexts and intentions contained in messages. Several authors have

addressed content analysis (for example Krippendorff, 1980; Graneheim, & Lundman, 2004; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Lal Das & Bhaskaran, 2008).

Content analysis was first developed in the social sciences as a way of studying cultures at a distance. It can be used to determine the beliefs, values, ideologies, role perceptions, behavioural norms and other elements of a culture through systematic analysis of its words and pictures.

The basic technique of content analysis entails counting the number of times pre-selected words, themes, symbols or pictures appear in a given medium. More refined applications categorise and quantify relationships among the selected units. Earlier uses of content analysis were usually limited to words, while more recent applications include a computer-assisted colour breakdown of pictures and other advanced graphic analysis. Content analysis can be performed on printed material (newspapers, magazines, books) or virtually any medium with verbal and/or visual content (radio and television programmes, recorded meetings, movies, and songs) (Wheeler, 1988).

Although the content analysis was used in an objective and systematic manner starting in the 1920s and 1930s, it was performed largely by hand until the 1960s, when computers began to play an important role. Wheeler (1988) explained that the introduction of optical scanners solved a fundamental problem in content analysis by greatly reducing the cost of reading large volumes of material. Computers further improved the process of content analysis by counting and cross-tabulating data quickly, economically, and often, according to more sophisticated schemes than had previously been feasible. One of the most significant advantages of computer-aided

content analysis, over-hand coded, or interpretive content analysis is that the rules for coding text are made explicit.

The public nature of the coding rules yields tools for inquiry that, when applied to a variety of texts, generate formally comparable results. The use of computers forces the researcher to state specific categories and rules for identification of the characteristics under study. It disciplines researchers by making them focus on objective content as a function of inference and measurement, with relatively little bias (Wheeler, 1988).

In addition, content analysis is a widely applied qualitative research technique. Instead of consisting of a single method, current applications of content analysis demonstrate three different approaches: directed, summative, or conventional. These approaches are utilised to interpret meaning from the content of text data and show commitment to the naturalistic paradigm. However, there are some differences among these approaches in coding schemes, origins of codes, and threats to trustworthiness. In the conventional content analysis, coding categories are deduced directly from the content of text data. In a focused approach, the analysis starts with relevant research or theory and results as guidance for initial codes. A summative content analysis includes comparisons and counting, commonly of content or keywords, followed by the interpretation of the context (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

### **3.9 Validity and Reliability**

As this study involved document analysis, it was necessary that validity procedures be carried out. According to Weber (1990: 12), “to make valid inferences

from the text, it is important that the classification procedure be reliable in the sense of being consistent: Different people should code the same text in the same way”.

In this study, reading tasks refer to any statements in the Omani English Language Curriculum Specifications document and the *Engage with English* textbook associated with EFL reading skills. Additionally, validity procedures for coding the tasks associated with reading skills were carried out by asking whether EFL curriculum experts from the Ministry of Education (MOE) in the Sultanate of Oman agree or disagree with the elicited statements chosen by the researcher. The arbitrators were provided with copies of the thesis project plan to show them the variables of the study and its theoretical framework.

The same validity procedure was carried on the elicited reading tasks to determine whether those tasks are observed implicitly or explicitly as a means to achieve the listed learning outcomes in the Omani EFL grade twelve English language curriculum. Discussion decided any disagreement about items tested for reliability.

Creswell (2003) gave a general definition of reliability regarding the consistency and stability of responses. It can also be defined as a measure of the reliability and coherence of the research, as demonstrated by documentation of all procedures used in the study in a way that demonstrates the study aims for optimal reliability. Reliability is also a term for a measurement instrument's dependability, i.e. the degree to which repeated investigations yield comparable results. Reliability is further concerned with the consistency of the research instruments.

According to Golafshani (2003), reliability is a measure of how accurately and consistently an instrument can quantify a phenomenon through time and among

different populations. The data and its source can be trusted to the extent. Data is reliable when it is dependable, unfailing, trustworthy, authentic, sure, reputable and genuine, and can be measured regarding consistency and the reputability of the source. To check the reliability of the research instrument, the researcher used the Holsti equation below. In general, all numbers are reliable and reflect a solid range of consistency.

Holsti formula is represented by the equation:

$$R = \frac{2M}{N1 + N2}$$

- Where M is the total items agreed upon.
- Where N1 is total items coder 1 selected.
- Where N2 is total items coder 2 selected.

**Table 3: The Validity of Second Language Acquisition Theory, Second Reading Theories and Instructional Approaches as Reflected in Selected Documents**

SAL Theories, Second Reading Theories and Instructional Approaches Documents	Structural Theory (GTM, ALM). Bottom-Up Theory (GTRI)	Cognitive Information Processing Top-Down Theory (NIWLI)	Socio-Cognitive/ Sociocultural Theory (CBI and TBI)  Interactive Theory (CBI and TBI)
EFL Coursebook 12A	94%	92%	91%
EFL Coursebook 12B	98%	94%	95%
EFL Workbook 12A	98%	97%	94%
EFL Workbook 12B	97%	97%	97%
EFL Classroom Observation	98%	95%	97%
Overall Statement (3052)	98%	96%	96%

**Table 4: The Validity of Learner Role as Reflected in Selected Documents**

<b>Learner Role Documents</b>	<b>Individual</b>	<b>Pair/Group</b>
EFL Coursebook 12A	98%	96%
EFL Coursebook 12B	97%	97%
EFL Workbook 12A	98%	96%
EFL Workbook 12B	98%	97%
EFL Teacher's Book 12B	98%	97%
EFL Teacher's Book 12A	97%	97%
EFL Classroom Observation	95%	98%
Overall Statement	98%	97%

**Table 5: The Validity of Teacher Role as Reflected in Selected Documents**

<b>Teacher Role Documents</b>	<b>Director</b>	<b>Catalyst</b>
EFL Coursebook 12A	98%	97%
EFL Coursebook 12B	97%	96%
EFL Teacher's Book 12B	98%	97%
EFL Teacher's Book 12A	97%	97%
EFL Classroom Observation	94%	98%
Overall Statement	98%	97%

**Table 6: The Validity of the Frequency of each EFL Language Skill in the Omani EFL Curriculum**

<b>Skills/ Documents</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Listening</b>	<b>Speaking</b>
EFL Coursebook 12A	97%	92%	95%	91%
EFL Coursebook 12B	97%	98%	86%	95%
EFL Workbook 12A	97%	97%	96%	89%
EFL Workbook 12B	98%	95%	94%	97%
Overall Statement	98%	95%	94%	94%

**Table 7: The Validity of the Emphasis on Reading Skill as Explicit/Implicit Skill in the EFL Reading Curriculum**

Documents	Explicit Statements	Implicit Statements
EFL Coursebook 12A	97%	98%
EFL Coursebook 12B	96%	98%
EFL Workbook 12A	96%	98%
EFL Workbook 12B	95%	98%
Overall Statement	96%	98%

**Table 8: The Validity of Types of Reading Tasks as Reflected in Selected Documents**

Documents	Identifying Main Ideas	Identifying Details	Making Inferences	Other Categories
EFL Coursebook 12A	96%	96%	96%	96%
EFL Coursebook 12B	90%	93%	95%	96%
EFL Workbook 12A	90%	96%	97%	97%
EFL Workbook 12B	97%	93%	98%	95%
Classroom Observation	97%	92%	97%	97%
Overall Statement	96%	94%	97%	96%

**Table 9: The Validity of the Cognitive Demands of EFL Reading Tasks as Reflected in the EFL Reading Curriculum**

Documents	Low Level	High Level
Reading tasks in EFL coursebook 12A	95%	98%
Reading tasks in EFL coursebook 12B	97%	98%
Reading tasks in EFL workbook 12A	96%	98%
Reading tasks in EFL workbook 12B	95%	98%
Reading tasks from classroom observation	96%	98%
Overall individual categories in EFL curriculum	96%	96%