

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

The purpose of this study is to examine the overarching approaches to L2 reading instruction as reflected in the Yemeni EST 3rd grade secondary school reading curriculum. This study also investigates the extent to which this curriculum prepares the Yemeni students for reading in English at the university level. As Chapter Four thoroughly presented the major findings of the data that were gathered from classroom observation and from reviewing the documents of interest in this study, Chapter Five exhaustively discussed these major findings. In Chapter Four the findings were supported by tables, figures and some extracts from classroom observations data and, while the discussions in Chapter Five were supported by extracts from classroom observations data and the teacher's book. This Chapter, Chapter Six, presents the conclusion of the present study, suggests some recommendations for revising the

current EST 3rd grade reading curriculum and offers some suggestions for further studies.

## 6.1 CONCLUSION

The current study aims at investigating the overarching approaches to second language (L2) reading instruction reflected in the Yemeni EST 3rd grade secondary school reading curriculum as well as to find out how well this curriculum prepares the Yemeni students for reading in English in their academic areas at the university level. The Yemeni EFL curriculum, which EST 3rd grade secondary school reading curriculum is part of it, was designed in 1977 based on the CLT approach. Although the Yemeni EFL curriculum has been amended from time to time since 1977, it is still claimed to be firmly based on the communicative approach to language learning and teaching (O'Neil et al., 1999). Hence, it is crucial for the Yemeni EST 3rd grade secondary school curriculum to be in alignment with the features of CLT approach.

The data of the present study were collected through document reviews and classroom observations. The findings showed that the EST 3rd grade reading curriculum as a whole does not match the essential features of CLT approach at a curriculum design level. The stating of the aims, objectives and the instructional approaches of the EST reading curriculum at the beginning of the 3rd grade EFL teacher's book are rather unclear, and thus caused misinterpretation of the goals of the curriculum. This misinterpretation was evidenced in the misalignment reflected in the non-communicative instructional approaches in the EST 3rd grade reading curriculum documents and classroom instruction.

Besides, the findings of the present study showed that the EST 3rd grade reading curriculum does not fully prepare the Yemeni learners for reading in English in the academic areas at the tertiary level in terms of types of reading tasks, types, readability level and length of reading texts and the level of cognitive demands. These findings provided evidence of the Yemeni EST 3rd grade reading curriculum to be one of the possible causes of reading problems, which are faced by the Yemeni learners at the tertiary level. Such findings are congruent with the findings of past studies (e.g., Almahedi, 2008; Albadri, 2001; Alwalss, 2000; Bin Taya'a, 1996; Al-Mekhlafi, 1995; Yar Mohamed, 1992).

Based on the findings of the present study, the Yemeni EST 3rd grade secondary reading curriculum needs to be revised in terms of its label as a communicative-based curriculum as well as in terms of its aim to prepare the EST learners for academic reading at the tertiary level.

## 6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

Based on the findings of analysing the reading curriculum of EST 3rd grade secondary school in Yemen, several recommendations were proposed to achieve the following objectives: *Firstly*: To develop the EST 3rd grade reading curriculum to be extremely communicative-based curriculum in alignment with the communicative language teaching approach. And *Secondly*: To ensure that the curriculum fully prepares the EST 3rd grade secondary school students for reading in English in their content-based areas at the tertiary level.

### 6.2.1 Recommendations for Developing EST 3rd Grade Reading Curriculum and Classroom Instruction to be in Alignment with CLT Approach

The curriculum designers, who were appointed by the Yemeni MOE to be responsible for developing the EST 3rd grade secondary reading curriculum, should have a clear understanding of the communicative-grounding and the principles of CLT in terms of its underpinning second language acquisition theories, second language reading theories and the related communicative instructional approaches, learner roles as well as teacher roles. A misconception of these aspects of the CLT may affect the development of the intended curriculum and might create a misalignment in the design of the instructional approach, which subsequently affects the instructional implementation.

The CLT principles revolve around the socio-cultural and socio-cognitive theories. The socio-cultural theories emphasize the purposeful and meaningful interaction in promoting cognitive development (McNamara, 2007; Tomlitch, 2000). For instance, in TBI, learners not only have to manage and understand data in the reading passages, which is cognitive in nature, but also complete the assigned tasks based on the information from the reading texts through meaningful interaction between the readers, the context and the teacher (Shaari, 2008; Richards, 2006; Ellis, 2003; Vilches, 2003). The socio-cognitive theories emphasize the importance of the interaction between the learners' cognition processes and the environment for the language learning (Khatib & Shakouri, 2013; Atkinson, 2002).

Curriculum designers should integrate the CLT features in the curriculum in a holistic manner. In doing so, the EST 3rd grade secondary school reading curriculum

has to be designed based on the socio-cognitive and socio-cultural theories, which are the grounding principles of the CLT approach. The reading related tasks should reflect a student-centred classroom where learners are active readers. Ellis (1997) states that whether the learners are good or poor, when they are given a chance to use the full time in reading classes to communicate the overall language of their reading text material they understand and comprehend the reading text effectively. As such, the Yemeni EST 3rd grade secondary school reading curriculum should give the EST students such a chance in order to build their language comprehension skills.

Past studies indicated that the English language teachers in Yemen lack of training to adapt the teaching materials (Al-Ahdal, 2010). Zuheer (2013) declared that the Yemeni MoE does not conduct any training for the teachers and the majority of inspectors of English do not update English language teachers with the latest teaching approaches. The lack of training the English language teachers on teaching reading leads the teachers to construct their own wrong understanding about the reading process, which is the cause of many reading difficulties that their students face Mourtaga (2012).

Accordingly and based on the findings from classroom observation, it is recommended that the Yemeni MoE to conduct circular workshops and conferences for the Yemeni educators and schools' teachers to update them with new teaching approaches and to clarify any ambiguity about English classroom practices, which might take place in the field of the English language teaching. So, the teachers will understand better about the CLT and its characteristics as well as they will know that

grammar and vocabulary should not be taught explicitly in communicative classrooms. Teachers also would know about SLA theories and L2 reading theories

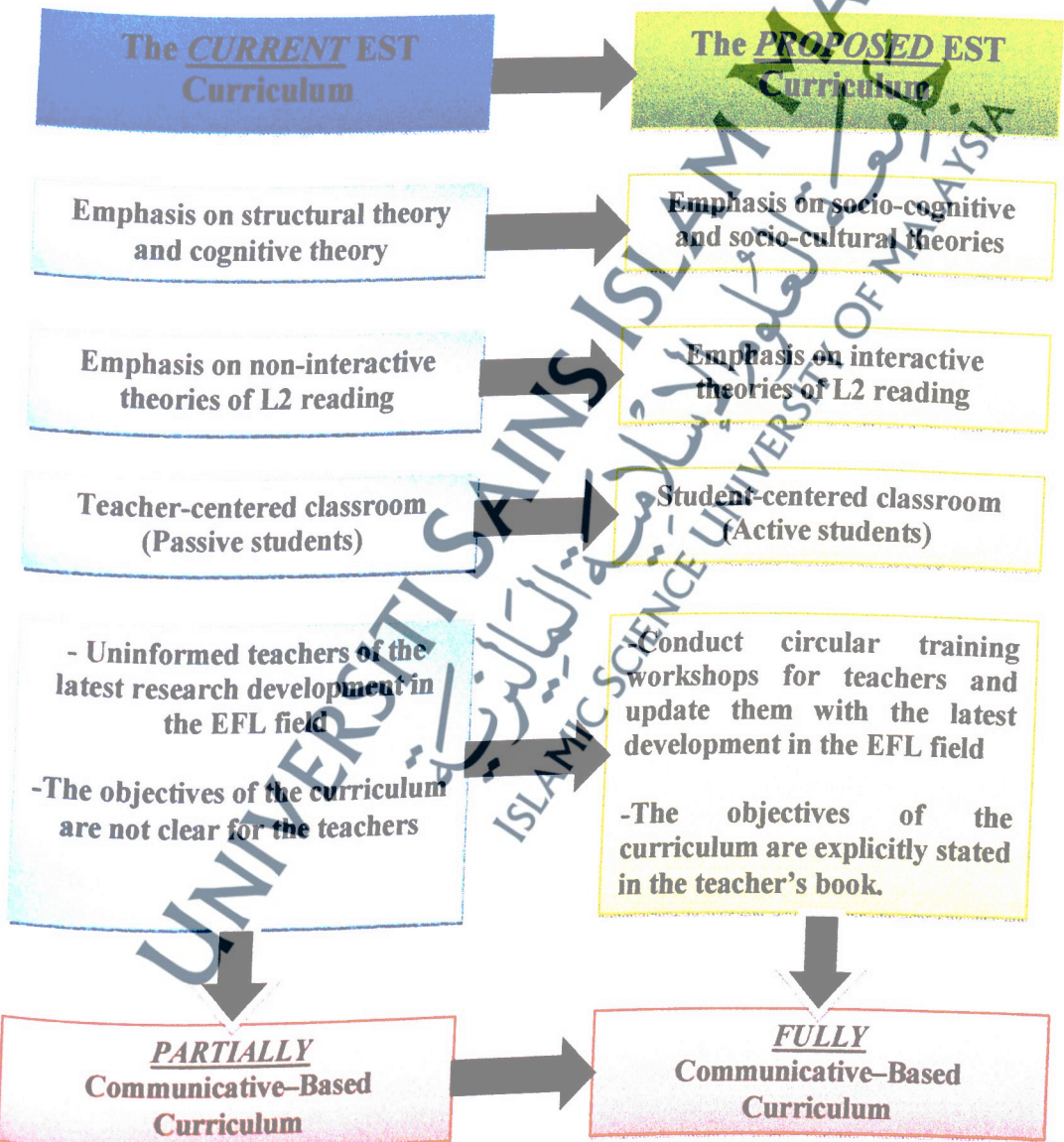
The objective of the National Secondary Educational Philosophy in preparing the Yemeni secondary school graduates was designed on the basis of the learners' needs to carry on their higher education, as was stated in the Ministry of Education documents (2008). Therefore, the current study recommends that the objectives aims and teaching methods of EST 3rd grade curriculum to be stated clearly at the beginning of the teacher's book; so that, any misinterpretations can be avoided and the teachers of English become aware of the learning outcomes to be achieved via classroom instruction. A full understanding of the CLT approach will create teachers conscious of creating learner-centred lessons. Figure 6.1 below illustrates the above recommendations for EST 3rd grade secondary reading curriculum to be fully in alignment with CLT instructional approach.

The Yemeni EFL curriculum documents consist of the course book, the work book and the teacher's guidebook; however, the teacher's guide book is not used by all teachers. The thing that is really needed to be highlighted in this context is the absence of EFL curriculum specification document. The curriculum specification document for the Yemeni EFL curriculum is incorporated in teacher's book, as for the 3rd grade of secondary school it is represented in the first 23 pages in the teacher's guide book (page 1 - page 23). As a result, the current study would suggest that the Curriculum Development Centre, Ministry of Education in Yemen to design a curriculum specification document for English language for each level of the secondary school

education. In the curriculum specification documents the objectives and learning outcomes and specifications should be stated in detail.

**FIGURE 6.1:** The Recommended Revisions in EST Secondary Reading Curriculum and Classroom Instruction to be aligned to its CLT label

### EST SECONDARY READING CURRICULUM AND CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION



With the above revisions, the instructional approaches and design for EST 3rd grade secondary reading will fully reflect the proposed communicative instructional approaches for the ESP reading curriculum. Moreover, by revising the Yemeni EFL/EST curriculum, the EST course book and work book as well as the classroom implementations could be aligned with the appropriate communicative reading comprehension activities. Besides, by such revisions, it is expected that the curriculum designers will ensure the alignment with the CLT approach in the EST curriculum documents, which are the course book, the work book and the teacher's book. In addition, textbook developers will enrich the teacher's book with a full guide on how to conduct the classroom instruction based on the CLT grounding. When the EST documents are in agreement with the grounding principles of the CLT reading comprehension instructional approaches and when the EST teachers are conscious of the principles of CLT classroom grounding, the instructional implementations by the EST teachers would yield best practices which in turn able to produce self-regulated EST readers at all educational levels especially at the tertiary level.

#### **6.2.2 To Ensure the Preparation of the EST 3rd Grade Secondary School Students for Academic Reading in Content-Based Areas at the Tertiary Level**

Ensuring the accomplishment of the curriculum objectives is vital. According to Obanya (2002), a perfect match must be found between the designed curriculum, the implemented curriculum and the achieved curriculum. The findings from the review and analyses of the 3rd grade EST secondary school reading curriculum documents and classroom instruction showed that the EST reading curriculum does not fully prepare learners for reading in English in the content areas at the university level.

Educators argued that reading materials and textbooks should be designed at the students' grade level (Ornstein & Lasley, 2000 as cited in GEÇİT) in order to train the students to read grade-level texts. However, several issues of the curriculum were found in this study as discussed in sections 5.1 and 5.2. The recommendations that are provided below describe the revisions, which should take place in the EST 3rd grade secondary reading curriculum:

- a. Based on the findings from types of reading tasks in the EST course book, work book and classroom instruction, a proposed curriculum is recommended where there should be an equal distribution of the types of reading tasks, in particular the “*drawing inferences*” category in the work book and classroom implementation, the “*identifying details*” category in the course book, and the “*identifying main ideas*” category in the work book. Teachers at secondary school level should provide a balanced training to EST secondary school students to process different types of reading tasks in order to prepare students for academic reading in English at the tertiary level.
- b. Based on the findings of the types, readability level and length of texts, it is recommended that in the revised version of EST 3rd grade reading curriculum, the reading texts in the ESP course book should be selected with a great attention. The reading texts in the proposed curriculum should be appropriate in terms of the type and the grade-level of students as well as their readability level and length. Thus, in order to prepare EST students for reading at the tertiary level, in the proposed curriculum the selected reading passages should be expository grade-level passages. In content areas at the university level, the students frequently encounter complex and lengthy texts (Sengupta, 2002),

which are commonly expository texts (Fetters et al., 2011; Veveiros, 2010; Ephraim, 2009; Fludernik, 2000). To prepare the learners to be able to process information in expository texts at the university level, they should be trained at the secondary school level on the organization and structure of informational texts first (Goldman and Rakestraw, 2000).

- c. A proposed curriculum for the 3rd grade EST secondary school reading curriculum should include a balanced distribution of the reading tasks with various cognitive demands especially the higher-level cognitive demand tasks in the EST 3rd grade course book, work book and classroom instruction. Providing reading tasks that require high level of cognitive demands should be of great emphasis in the EST classrooms. The EST secondary reading curriculum should be balanced in incorporating a significantly high amount of reading tasks of various categories of high cognitive skills in order to arm EST students with the ability to overcome reading challenges via the efficient processing of reading tasks of various cognitive demands in English at the university level (Sidek, 2010; Astika, 2004).

With the proposed revisions in the EST 3rd grade secondary school curriculum, the goal of the curriculum to prepare the students for EST reading at the university level could be materialized. When the instructional design in the curriculum is not carefully analysed and manifested in textbooks development, such situation may leads to a gap between the curriculum goals and its outcomes as it was showed in the findings of the current study. To assure the preparation of EST students to read effectively and achieve the required success in their academic studies, such gap is of

critical importance to be eliminated. Achieving the aims of the curriculum is attained through textbooks because textbooks constitute an important element of the educational process. Therefore, textbooks need to be prepared in certain standards (GEÇIT, 2010). The revisions that are recommended in this study for the EST 3rd grade reading secondary school curriculum is to ensure that the EST students may become successful readers even when they encounter complex informative texts at the tertiary level. The recommended revisions in the EST 3rd grade secondary reading curriculum are illustrated in Figure 6.2.

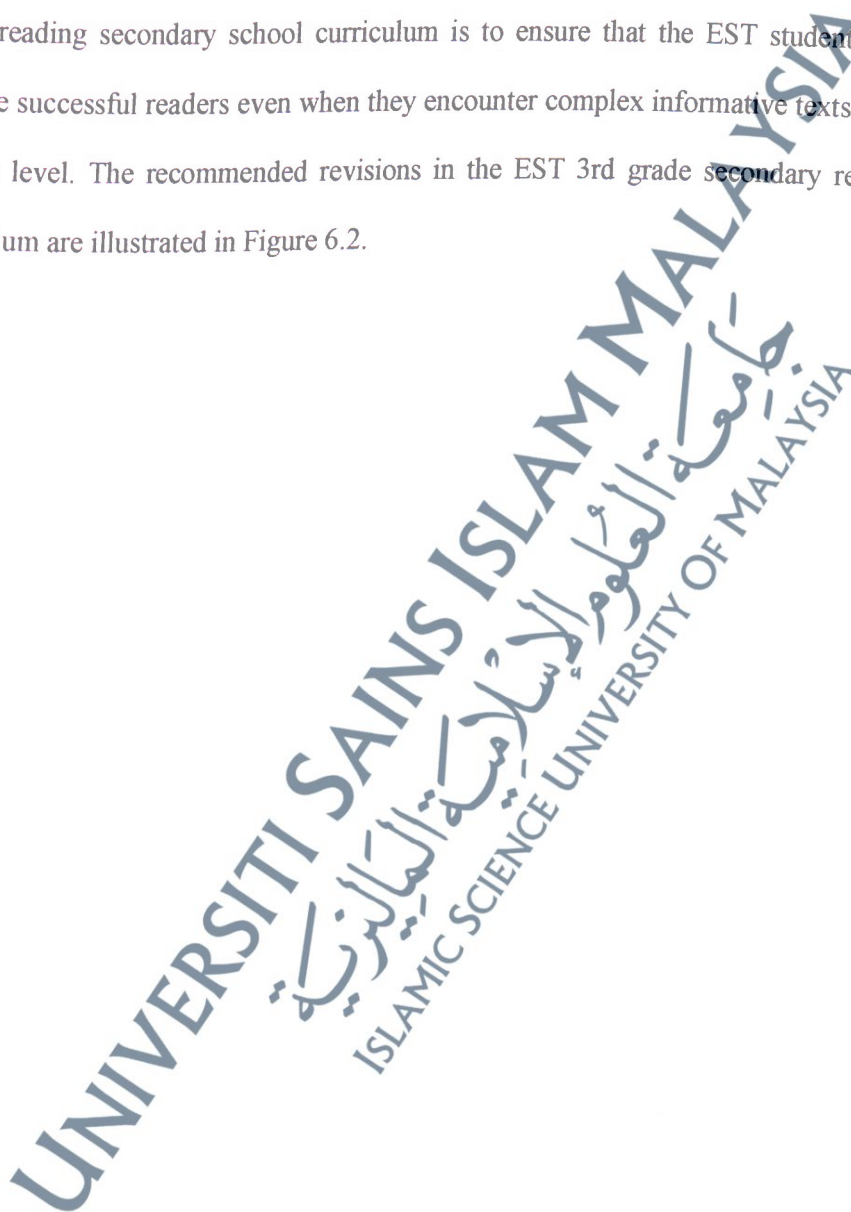
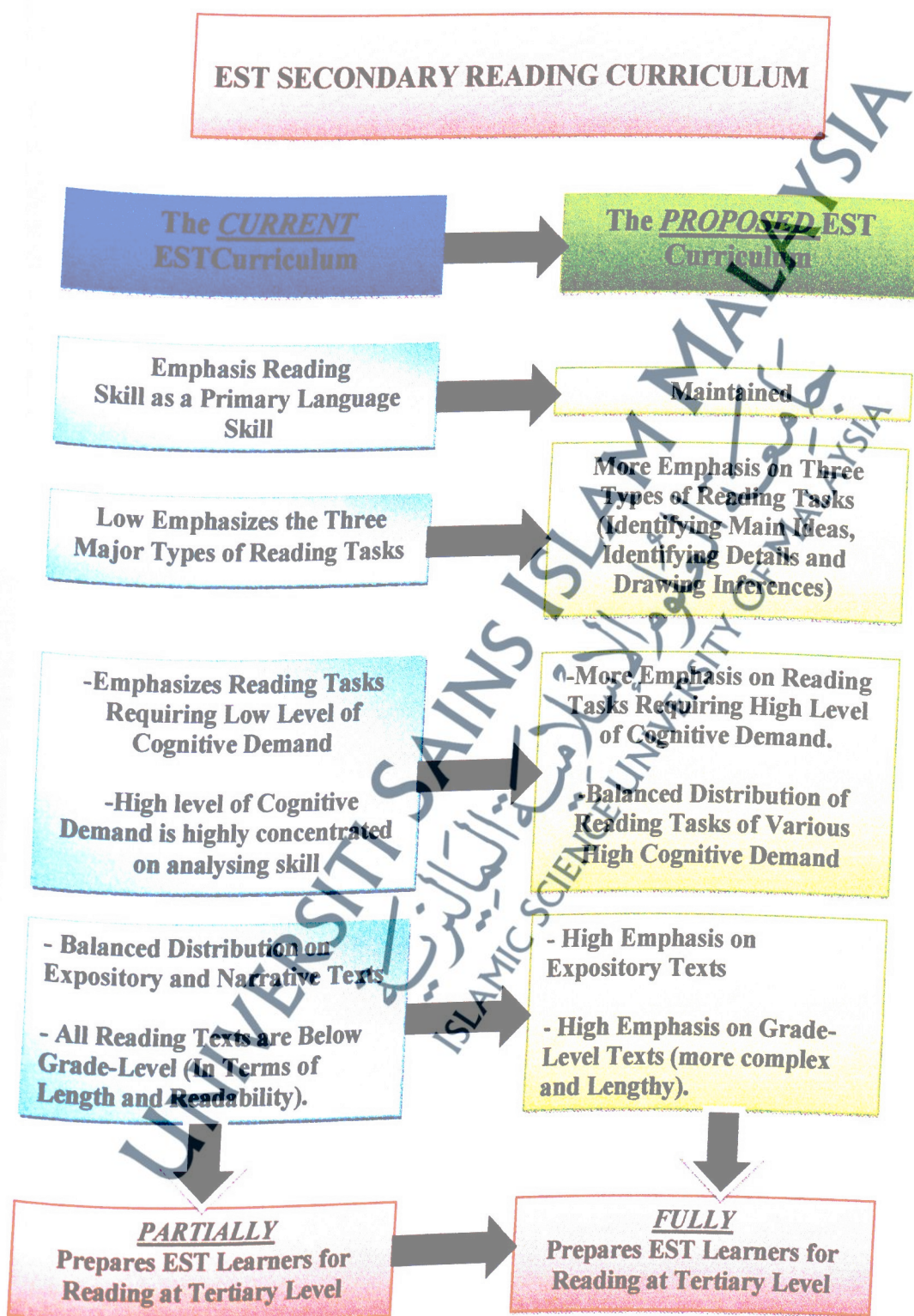
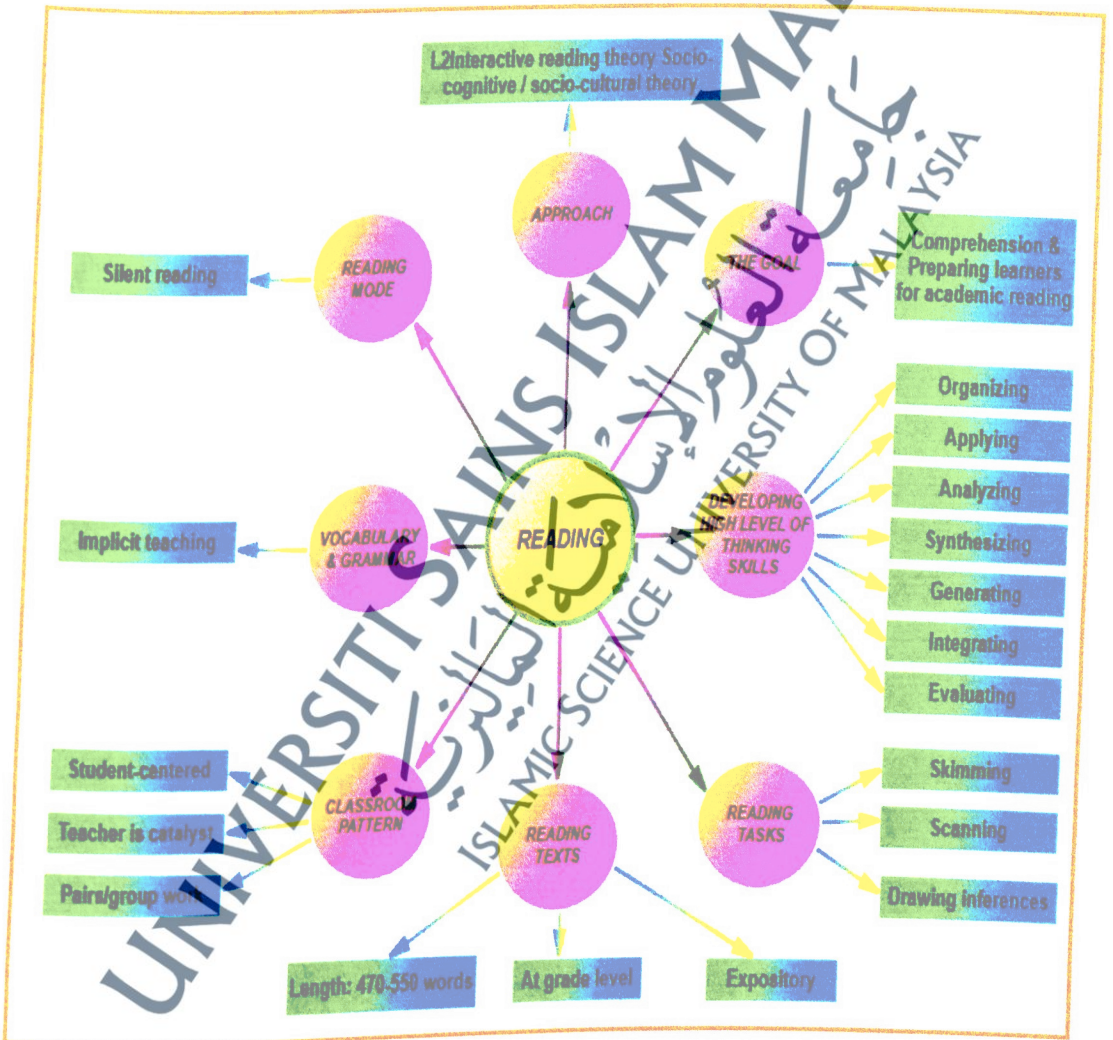


FIGURE 6.2: The Recommended Revisions in EST Secondary Reading Curriculum and Classroom Instruction to prepare the learners for academic reading



Based on the recommended revisions presented in Figures 6.1 and 6.2, Figure 6.3 below presents a model for designing any EST senior secondary school reading curriculum. This model is considered the contribution of the current study to the body of literature. The established model summarizes the main elements that any EST reading curriculum for upper secondary school level should be based on.

FIGURE 6.3: Model For Senior Secondary School EST Reading Curriculum



### 6.3 SUGGESSTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

This study is the first of its kind in the Yemeni context on EST reading curriculum analysis that has contributed to developing the revised curriculum, which is needed for preparing EST Yemeni learners for reading in academic areas at the university level. The findings of the EST 3rd grade secondary reading curriculum analysis can be extended in future research.

1. This study only examined the alignment of EST 3rd grade secondary school curriculum with the CLT approach. Since there are various CLT approaches such as the content-based, task-based and genre-based instructional approaches, experimental studies could be carried out to determine which of the communicative instructional approaches is best utilized in the EST classroom to significantly improve the reading comprehension among the Yemeni EST 3rd grad secondary school learners.
2. This study only examined the EST reading curriculum of the senior secondary school level in Yemen. Since teaching English as a foreign language in Yemen starts in the first year of preparatory level (grade 7). It might be beneficial to carry out the similar study on the EFL 1st grade secondary school reading curriculum, on the EST 2nd grade secondary school reading curriculum and on the EFL preparatory secondary school reading curriculum. By examining and revising the series of EFL reading curriculum in Yemen starting from the preparatory level to the secondary level, the Yemeni setting may best prepare its students for academic reading in English at the university level.
3. Further studies are needed to investigate the reading curriculum in both levels in Yemen, secondary school level and university level. Further studies might compare the secondary and tertiary textbooks in terms of readability level, types

and length of texts, types of reading tasks and their cognitive demands. The findings of such studies will be useful in recommending proper revisions in the EST secondary reading curriculum and to further include some required features from content-based area reading in the EST secondary reading curriculum.

4. The present study examined the EST 3rd grade curriculum documents, course book, work book, teacher's book and classroom implementation and recommended a revised curriculum based on the findings of study. Future studies may examine the configuration of all variables examined in this study in the curriculum documents. Therefore, the suggested revisions will figure out the revisions that should be done in each individual document of the curriculum.
5. In addition to classroom observation, future studies need to conduct interviews with EST secondary school teachers in order to examine the teachers' professional development and their knowledge about the latest development in the EFL field in terms of the most effective instructional approaches for the teaching of EFL reading.
6. This study only included 16 classroom observations, more classroom observations should be conducted in future studies to provide more comprehensive picture about the teaching of EST reading in secondary level in Yemen.