

## **The Impact of Instruction in Critical Reading Strategies on Advanced Iraqi EFL learners' comprehension**

**Dr. Basim Y. Jasim**  
*University of Mosul - College of Arts*

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### **Abstract:**

Research on critical reading strategies mainly focused upon first language reading and suggested very general instructional guidelines. Very few studies (e.g. Patching et al, 1983; and Song, 1998) provided empirical investigation of the benefits of critical reading instruction with conclusive results. The present study is a further contribution to the discussion on the effect of critical reading strategies instruction upon advanced Iraqi EFL learners' comprehension. It adopts a control-experimental pretest- posttest design. The critical reading strategies taught are distinguishing between facts and opinions, detecting bias and prejudice, making inferences and recognizing propaganda. The following research questions are addressed: "Does explicit training in the use of critical reading strategies improve advanced EFL learners' comprehension of English texts? If so, is the effect of this training similar for all critical reading strategies taught?" The results indicate that training in critical reading strategies has a favorable effect upon the subjects' comprehension; and that the effect is relatively equal upon the four strategies taught. On the basis of the results obtained it is suggested that critical reading strategies should be an integral part of advanced reading instruction courses.

## أثر تدريس استراتيجيات القراءة الناقدة في استيعاب الطلبة العراقيين المتقدمين الدارسين للغة الإنكليزية كلغة أجنبية

ا.م.د. باسم يحيى جاسم  
جامعة الموصل / كلية الآداب

### ملخص البحث:

تركزت معظم البحوث المتعلقة باستراتيجيات القراءة الناقدة على القراءة في اللغة الأم و قدمت العديد من المقترحات العامة لتدريسها. أما النزر اليسر من الدراسات التجريبية (مثل دراسة باجينغ و زملائه 1983 و دراسة سونغ 1998) في هذا المجال فكانت نتائجها متضاربة من حيث أثرها في استيعاب القراءة لدى الطلبة الدارسين للإنكليزية كلغة أجنبية . تعد الدراسة الحالية إسهاماً في الجدل المتعلق بأهمية تدريس القراءة الناقدة و أثره في استيعاب القراءة لدى الطلبة العراقيين الذين يدرسون اللغة الإنكليزية كلغة أجنبية. تبنت الدراسة المنهج التجريبي و نظام الاختبار القبلي و الاختبار البعدي لتدريس أربع مهارات من استراتيجيات القراءة الناقدة وهي: التفريق بين الحقائق و الآراء, و تشخيص التحيز و القراءة بين السطور و تمييز الدعاية. و حاولت الدراسة الإجابة عن التساؤلين الآتيين هل أن التدريس المباشر لاستراتيجيات القراءة الناقدة سيسهم في تحسين استيعاب الطلبة للنصوص الإنكليزية؟ و إن كان الأمر كذلك فهل لهذا التدريس الأثر نفسه في جميع استراتيجيات القراءة الناقدة التي تم تدريسها؟ بينت النتائج أن التدريب على استراتيجيات القراءة الناقدة كان له أثر إيجابي على استيعاب الطلبة للنصوص الإنكليزية و أن هذا الأثر شمل جميع الاستراتيجيات التي تم استخدامها. و في ضوء النتائج المستحصلة تم اقتراح جعل تدريس استراتيجيات القراءة الناقدة جزءاً حيوياً من تدريس القراءة في المراحل المتقدمة من تعلم اللغة.

## 1. Theoretical Background

### 1.1 Introduction:

In the literature on teaching languages reading is the most important activity not only because it is an indispensable source of information and a pleasurable activity but also a means of reinforcing and broadening one's knowledge of language (Rivers 1981:259). However, modern interest in teaching within the context of second or foreign language has relegated it to a secondary status. The audio-lingual method which was in vogue from the early 1950s to the late 1960s used reading

to practice pronunciation and to reinforce grammatical patterns and vocabulary items that had been introduced orally (Silberstein, 1987 in Grabe, 1991: 376 ;Dubin and Bycina, 1991:195) . It was also viewed as a passive skill which simply involves developing letter- sound correspondence so that the speech sounds that are studied orally in isolation are to be related to certain letters in reading.

Since the late 1970s there have been a number of advances made in research on reading in second and foreign language contexts (e.g. Smith 1982 ; Goodman 1985: in Grabe, 1991:376 ; Grabe, 2002:276) . The researchers and practitioners called for a greater role of reading in foreign language syllabus. Rather than a process of picking up information from the page in letter- by -letter or word - by -word manner, reading has come to be seen as an active process which constantly involves guessing, predicting, inference, drawing conclusion etc. (Grellet ,1981:8).

## **1.2 The reading process**

Most of the current views on second / foreign language (S/FL) reading are affected by research on first language (L1) reading. L1 reading research isolates a number of features that characterize fluent reading. Anderson, et al, (1985), and Hall, et al, (1986, in Grabe 1991:378-79) noticed that fluent reading is rapid : the reader needs to maintain the flow of information at a sufficient rate. S/he needs to be purposeful, having a purpose for reading, whether it be for information or entertainment; interactive, i.e. making use of his background knowledge as well as information from the text; comprehending, i.e. typically expecting to understand what s/he is reading ; flexible, i.e. employing a range of strategies to read efficiently such as skimming, scanning, predicting, discovering bias etc; and developing gradual improvement.

Undoubtedly, reading in a second language (L2) is different in many respects from L1 reading. Carrel and Grabe (2002:235) categorize the major difference between L1 and L2 reading into three types: linguistic and processing differences; individual and experiential differences; and socio-cultural and institutional differences. Grabe (1991:386) points out that an L2 reader begins the L2 reading process with very different knowledge from an L1 reader. An L1 learner has more than 6000 words at his disposal before beginning reading instruction in school. Furthermore, an L1 reader also has an intuitive sense of the grammar of his language which the L2 learner typically lacks. Yet, the L2 learner has certain advantages. He has a more well-developed conceptual sense of and a more factual knowledge about the world. He "can make elaborate logical inferences from the text". As a consequence, vocabulary becomes largely a matter of remembering "a second label for a well-understood concept." (Ibid: 387). Given these differences, one cannot always apply findings from research on L1 learners directly and unreservedly to S/FL contexts. Yet these findings provide significant insights into S/FL reading instruction.

The literature on the reading process (despite the differences outlined above between L1 and L2 reading,) tends to discuss the reading process in terms of bottom-up and top-down reading models (cf. Lynch and Hudson 1991: 218- 19; Dubin and Bycina 1991: 196- 97 ). The bottom-up model describes the reading process as building comprehension from letter to word, to phrase, to sentence. For Lado (1964: 134- 136) reading basically involves identifying the graphemes by contrast, association of graphemes, looking for regularization for fit, the problems in patterns and the exceptions. Then the learner moves to words and their meanings and finally to the way the message is imparted in the phrase or a sentence.

In the top- down model, the basic idea is that efficient reading is not word by word identification. The reader "uses minimal language cues to make hypotheses about the meaning of text. These hypotheses are then confirmed, rejected or modified " (Lynch and Hudson, 1991:218). According to this model, the readers predict meaning. As they read they "take in large chunks of the text at a time ... match what they already know with the meaning they derive from the text " (Dubin and Bycina, 1991:197). Accordingly, reading strategies such as reading for main ideas of whole sections and paragraphs, and looking for details which offer supporting evidence or bias are stressed.

During the 1980s an interactive model which puts the bottom-up and top- down together was proposed. According to this model, the reading process works like this: clues to meaning are taken up from the page by the eye and transmitted to the brain. The brain matches existing knowledge to the incoming data to facilitate the processing of new information. On the basis of this previous experience, predictions are made about the content of the text which are either confirmed or revised. Thus the two processes, bottom-up and bottom-down, are complementary (Ibid). The reading skills often focused upon are: finding specific information, finding the main idea, drawing inferences, discovering bias and understanding vocabulary in context (lynch and Hudson, 1991: 223). Grabe (1991: 383) points out that the interactive model may refer to two different things. It may refer to the general information between the reader and the text or to the interaction of many component skills in simultaneous operation.

Since the mid 1980s close attention has been paid to the role of strategies in L2 learning (Oxford 2002, Chamot 2005). Learning strategies are defined by Oxford (2002: 124) as "specific actions, behaviours, steps or techniques that students (often intentionally) use to

improve their progress in L2 skills ". For Anderson (2003: 3), they are "conscious actions that learners take to improve their language learning ", while for Chamot they are "procedures that facilitate a learning task" (2005: 112) .

Duffy (1993 in Janzen, 2002: 287) views reading strategies as "plans for solving problems encountered in constructing meaning". They may be observable such as taking notes or outlining while reading, or non-observable such as connecting what is being read to the reader's background knowledge. They range from looking up a word in a dictionary to reading critically, detecting errors in reasoning, or recognizing bias.

Various types of reading strategies have been mentioned in the literature on reading. Yet, it seems that no classification has been provided yet. The present research suggests that the best way to classify reading strategies is by relating them to the type of thinking or comprehension required.

In the context of reading, Smith (1969, in Friedman and Rowles, 1980 : 144 ) identifies four types of comprehension : literal, interpretive, critical and creative. Friedman and Rowles(1980: 145- 157) suggest a relatively similar classification. For them a distinction should be made between literal comprehension, inferential comprehension, evaluative comprehension and application.

In literal comprehension the learner tries to get the meaning directly from the text. This is manifested in following strategies like rereading certain phrases or sentences, looking up new words in the dictionary, trying to guess their meaning from the context depending on context clues; looking for linguistic context- clues to find the topics, and the main idea by skimming and scanning or by paraphrasing the author's message to comprehend it better.

Inferential comprehension requires the reader to go beyond the author's literal statements in order to interpret the author's meaning. This is realized by strategies like integrating old and new information ; drawing inferences; deriving meaning from figurative language; recognizing the author's purpose, attitude, tone or mood; seeing relationship among events, people and ideas; distinguishing between real and unreal, fact and opinion, relevant and irrelevant; getting the main idea; and analyzing the author's conclusions. (Ibid: 150)

In evaluation, one usually reads critically trying to evaluate or pass judgment of the text he is reading. He most often compares an existing state ( the text in focus) to a desired state according to given criteria. The strategies used to realize this type of comprehension are: evaluating the opinion and tone, recognizing propaganda, paying attention to bandwagon, card stacking, red herring or testimonial, if any.

Application refers to the reader's ability to utilize the information taken from a text in a different context. The strategies used to realize this aspect of comprehension are the ability to apply a skill being learned or to apply correctly a general conclusion to a skill situation or event. For example, when reading about the elements of coherence in writing, the reader is supposed to make use of these elements in writing a coherent paragraph or essay.

### **1.3 Critical Reading:**

Critical reading means different things to different people. Generally, it refers to that type of reading in which the reader is preoccupied not only with what a text says but how it portrays the subject matter. It looks into how an opinion is expressed and infers what it means in a given context.

Ennis (1962, in Olson and Ames, 1972: 61) says that critical reading means judging or evaluating the correctness of what is being read. Huns (1965: in Olson and Ames,; Ibid ) argues that critical reading requires evaluation of printed material with some known standard or norm that relates to content or message of a printed text to determine its accuracy, consistency, truthfulness, value, tone, mood, bias etc. Following Wright's (1977), Patching et al (1983: 408) view critical reading as " a set of processes that occur when readers correctly identify valid (versus invalid) instances of argument, reasoning or presentation of evidence in written material". Kurland (2000: 2) points out that critical reading requires the learner to explore an author's purpose, to understand tone and persuasive elements and to recognize bias.

The definitions above suggest that critical reading calls for identifying elements not clearly found in a text; in fact, each requires inferences from evidences within a text. Recognizing a purpose involves inferring a basis for choices, of content and language; identifying tone and persuasive elements involves classifying the nature of language choices whereas detecting bias involves classifying the nature of patterns of choice of content and language.

In the present research the working definition of critical reading is: *that type of reading in which the reader is preoccupied with distinguishing facts from opinions, detecting bias and prejudices, drawing conclusions and making inferences, and recognizing propaganda.*

## **1.4 The Need For critical Reading**

Critical reading has been highly recommended in the literature on the teaching of reading for a number of reasons. Kay (1946: 380) maintains that critical reading enables the reader "to be able to judge

whether this or that bit of information is true, is complete fabrication or is slightly coloured to suit someone's editorial policies". Devine (62: 361) relates critical reading to critical thinking which is the ultimate aim of teaching. Critical thinking can only be developed through various strategies of critical reading. Thus, critical reading is needed in order to develop critical thinking.

Olson and Ames (1972) provide a detailed account of the reasons for teaching critical reading. They argue that critical reading is definitely needed for a student to learn to cope with editorial reporting in television or radio, or in print. He needs to be aware that what is reported or written is coloured by the writer's or editor's interpretation which, in turn, is based on his experience, mood, outlook, or prejudices.

Thus, in the world of today where emphasis is being placed on mass communication and propaganda, where facts are interpreted differently, where almost everything is coloured by interest, politics, or prejudice, and where cards tacking and band wagon as well as red herring sometimes prevail, critical reading to distinguish these divergences is mostly needed.

In spite of its importance, the teaching of critical reading faces a number of obstacles which are rightly summarized by Olson and Ames (Ibid : 66- 68) as follows: the use of a single text book, the 'halo effect' attached to the printed word, the desire of the teachers to avoid controversial subjects, the emphasis on conformity, and involvement in emotions and prejudices.

These detriments are supposed to be overcome at university level, and emphasis on controversial issues, determining the reliability of the information read and detecting bias and prejudice that colour the facts and opinions should be made instead .

## 1.5 Critical Reading Strategies

The skills or strategies that characterize critical reading are of various types. The literature on critical reading (e.g. Kay, 1946; Devine 1962; Henning 2002; Flemming, 2002) identifies different types of strategies the most important of which are the following:

### a. Distinguishing between facts and opinions

Statements of facts describe people, places, states or events. They can be proved true or untrue and can be verified for accuracy through observation or reference to other written records. They are not affected by a writer's personality, emotions, background, experience or training. By contrast, opinions are matters of personal state. They reflect an individual's personal response to the world. They cannot be verified or proved true or false. However, they can be labelled as valid/ invalid, sound/ unsound, informed/ uninformed. Again, they are very much influenced by an individual's personality, background, experience, emotions and prejudice. (cf. Olson and Ames, 1972: 68f; Flemming, 2002: 519- 530).

Facts frequently use numbers, statistics, dates and measurement. Let us consider the following examples:

1. Six inches of rain fell in Mosul last night.
2. Measles has an incubation period of seven to fourteen days.

Opinions are frequently found in history books, literature, sociology and the like. They are often expressed through comparisons or words such as 'more', 'better', 'least'; and often introduced by verbs like : 'appear', 'seem', or adverbs suggesting doubt and possibility such as 'probably', 'potentially', 'apparently'.

For example:

1. She has a great imagination.

2. He might possibly agree to do the job alone.

Opinions can be justified by appealing to reason, examples, statistics, or relevant facts. Thus, to evaluate an author's opinion the reader must investigate the justifications provided by the author to support his opinion and see if these justifications are relevant or irrelevant to the opinion expressed. (cf. Flemming, 2002: 530)

### **b. Detecting bias and prejudice**

The language we speak or write is very much affected by the society in which we live, background knowledge, training and experience to the extent that a writer cannot be completely free from bias. However, a writer may sometimes be so biased that s/he passes on false information or omits crucial facts so that s/he distorts the truth and honesty which most authors want to keep in their writings (cf. Olson and Ames, 1972:69; Flemming, 2002: 540)

Bias and prejudice are reflected through tone and slanted language which are usually highly charged with positive or negative connotations concerning the people referred to or the topic in focus. The patterns used, the words selected, the aspects chosen, the behaviour or acts highlighted, or the evidence given, each implies the attitude of the writer towards the topic or people concerned.

To read critically partly involves the ability to discover the slanted language and its connotation through investigating the words and expressions, the mode, the style or patterns used. This process is facilitated through comparing two texts written by different writers on the same topic pointing out how a particular topic can be viewed from different perspectives using different words, expressions, patterns, moods or tones.

### **c. Making inferences and Drawing Conclusions**

Flemming (2002: 205) defines inferences as "the conclusion a reader draws about what is unsaid based on what is actually said". A critical reader is one who not only can read for literal meaning but also can infer meaning which is not overtly stated in the text and draw relevant conclusions. The inference the reader draws, Flemming (Ibid: 216) recommends, "should sum up the message or the paragraph in the same way a topic sentence would have". Hennings (2002: 143) points out that a critical reader who makes an inference asks him/ herself what the author is suggesting or hinting at through the facts s/ he is giving and what connections s/ he can make on the basis of what he knows and what the text tells.

Related to making inference is drawing conclusion. A conclusion is a generalization about a topic. It is a big idea that you put together based on the inferences you have made on the main idea of the text and all the facts that support the main idea. A critical reader builds his/ her conclusion on evidence s/ he finds on what he reads not on his own opinions. The question s/ he usually asks: what big idea or ideas can I put together based on the facts given in the text ? (cf. Wiener and Bazerman, (1995:226- 227); Hennings, 2002:146).

### **d. Recognizing Propaganda**

Propaganda is defined by Webster's New World Dictionary of American language as "any systematic, widespread dissemination or promotion of particular ideas, doctrines, etc, to further one's own cause or to damage an opposing one. Thus, any piece of writing which uses unfair argument or logic in order to press a special point of view with special interests might be termed as propaganda (Wiener and Bazerman, 1995: 295). Authors who use propaganda techniques rely heavily on emotional appeals meant to hide their lack of a reasonable argument.

Although propaganda is associated with wartime, some politicians and advertisers use propaganda methods to manipulate public thinking; they want people to vote for their candidates, believe in their programmes, or/ and their cause or buy the cars, the goods they want to sell etc. Flemming (2002: 547- 50) identifies four types of propaganda methods: band wagon, testimonial, card stacking and red herring.

Band wagon is commonly used in advertising. It takes advantage of people's desire to be part of a larger group. It simply says "Every body's doing it: You should too". The testimonial technique is used when a respected or well- known figure: a scientist, a statesman, or a film star, recommends a product, a position, or a cause to the general public. The message in this technique is "Buy this product or believe in this political cause because you like and respect me". Card stacking takes place when the writer is very selective about the facts being mentioned so that it is similar to stacking the cards. If the writer wants you to favour a project, a person or a cause, s/ he tells you only positive facts about it or about him/ her. Therefore, you never get all the facts but only those that support the speaker or writer's position. Red herring is originally a method for testing hunting dogs, where a smelly fish is used to see if the smell of the fish could distract the dog from the hunt. This technique is used when a writer or a speaker starts discussing a subject but s/ he intentionally veers it to another to distract the reader's or the audience attention from the fact which s/he cannot support.

Critical readers should, therefore, be able to recognize all the methods of propaganda, distinguishing the aims behind using each and developing techniques to overcome them.

## 2. Review of literature

Until the early 1980s the bulk of literature on reading comprehension in general and critical reading in particular consists of theoretical discussions accompanied by very general guidelines or strategies for instruction (Patching et al, 1983: 407). Since then a good deal of research in L1 and L2 has been conducted on reading- strategy training and on critical reading strategies. The assumption has been that training students to use effective reading strategies will lead to effective comprehension and performance.

To begin with, Patching et al (1983) investigated the effect of three critical strategies, viz. faulty generalization, false casualty and invalid testimonial, on high- school students' comprehension. Results showed a significant difference in performance in favour of the experimental group on which direct instructions on those critical reading skills were applied.

Brown and Palincsar (1984, in Song, 1998) taught four reading strategies, viz. summarizing, questioning, clarifying and predicting. They found that strategy training was effective in enhancing the reading ability of the students and in improving their comprehension and recall. Graves (1986, in Gersten et al, 2001 ) contrasted a control treatment to two experimental conditions: direct instruction on identifying the main idea, and direct instruction combined with self questioning and self monitoring. The results indicated that the student's direct instruction treatments outscored those in the control group. Darch and Kameenui (1987) made several modifications in the procedures used by Patching et al (1983). Their subjects were language disabled students who received 40- minute lessons in the same critical reading strategies developed by Patching et al (1983) for twelve consecutive days. The results showed that the subjects in the direct-instruction group significantly outperformed their counterparts in the control group in comprehension and performance.

However, Barnett (1988, in Kern, 1989) reported that his subjects who had received direct instruction in reading strategies did not score significantly higher on a French reading comprehension test than did subjects not receiving strategy instruction. Kern (1989) again questioned whether explicit training in the use of comprehension strategies in L2 reading improves student's comprehension of L2 texts and whether the effect on comprehension is similar for all students. The results indicated that reading strategy training had a strong positive effect on L2 reader's comprehension.

Motivated by the reading- strategy- training approach of Brown and Palincsar (1984), Song (1998) taught his subjects the same reading strategies used by Brown and Palincsar (1984) in an EFL reading classroom context. The results showed that strategy training was effective in enhancing EFL reading and the effectiveness varied with L2 reading proficiency. Ikeda and Takeuchi (2003, in Chamot, 2005) also traced the effects of reading- strategy instruction on students' achievement in reading comprehension. The experimental group received explicit reading strategy instruction in making inferences, using selective attention, using imagery, and summarizing. The results revealed that strategy instruction affects the frequency of students' use of strategies only for the high-proficiency- level group.

The review of literature above indicates that the favourable effect of reading strategies, especially critical reading strategies, was mainly found in L2 context. In FL context research findings concerning the effectiveness of training in reading strategies have not been clear - cut. In fact, studies have shown mixed results. Furthermore, most of the studies reviewed were conducted upon pre- university students and in L2 context. Also very few critical reading strategies were investigated.

The present study therefore tries to bridge this particular gap in this area by providing a research- based investigation of the effectiveness of training advanced EFL students in using four most important critical reading strategies at university level and in pure FL context.

### **3. The research questions**

The present study addresses the following research questions.

- a- Does explicit training in the use of critical reading strategies improve advanced Iraqi EFL students' comprehension of English texts?
- b- Is the effect of this training similar for all critical reading strategies taught?

### **4. Hypotheses**

Based on studies reported in the literature review it is predicted that:

- a- The students who receive explicit training of the critical reading strategies outscore those who do not receive such training in the reading comprehension test.
- b- The effect of training in critical reading strategies is the same for all the strategies trained upon.

### **5. Purpose of the study**

The present study has a three- fold purpose. First it provides the reader with a short account of the reading process and how this process can be viewed from different perspectives. Secondly, it introduces the critical reading strategies, their definition, importance and types as well as the review of literature concerning the teaching of these strategies to L1 and L2 students. Thirdly, it provides an experimentally - based answer to the research questions already posed by means of testing the hypotheses that have already been posited so that it can be a contribution to the discussion pertaining to the effectiveness of strategy training in FL context.

## **6. Methodology**

### **6.1 Subjects:**

The subjects of the present study consisted of 70 second- year students of English language and literature at the Department of English, College of Arts, University of Mosul. They were 49 females and 21 males. Their average age was 20. The subjects had already studied English at the pre university stage for eight years and had already been introduced to English language and literature in the Department of English. In their first year, they studied English grammar, phonetics, reading comprehension, composition, introduction to literature and conversation. In the second year they have been studying English grammar, phonology, reading comprehension, writing, conversation, poetry, drama, and history of literature. In reading comprehension, the syllabus in the first year was Alexander's (1967) Developing Skills and the syllabus in the second year was Alexander's (1967) Fluency in English.

The subjects were originally divided into two equal groups (A) and (B). Groups (A) was regarded as the control group and group (B) the experimental group.

The reason behind choosing second- year students was that at this stage advanced reading comprehension was introduced and no further courses in comprehension were given.

The number of subjects was then reduced to sixty because the participants in the pilot study (see experimental procedure below) were excluded.

### **6.2 Experimental procedure**

Twenty days before applying the experimental lesson series, a pilot study was carried out. The point of carrying out the pilot study is to

uncover any problems and to address them before the main study was carried out. It is an important means of "assessing the feasibility and usefulness of the data collection methods and making any necessary revisions before they are used" (Mackey and Gass, 2005: 43).

According to Klein (1974: 129), this procedure is used to check the time allocated to the final application, to identify the weak points in order to be avoided in advance, to find out the difficulty level of the items or method applied, and to shed light on the reliability of the test.

To this end ten second-year students voluntarily agreed to participate in a one-weak experiment. The participants were trained on using one critical reading strategy namely, identifying bias. The students were then interviewed and asked about the way the material was presented and explained, the difficulties they found throughout the sessions, and their attitudes towards the material and the method of presentation. The pilot study and the interview provided the present researcher with valuable feedback concerning the time allotted for presenting each strategy, the way to introduce it, the length of the passages to be used, and the attitude of the students towards the strategies applied.

### **6.3 Testing procedure**

The present study followed the pretest- posttest control experimental procedure. Two days before the beginning of the training lessons all subjects in both the control and experimental groups were given a pre- test in reading in comprehension. Five weeks later, after finishing the training in critical reading strategies all subjects were given the same test as a post- test. The rationale behind applying the same test was to provide an exactly comparable criterion, so that the problem of equating different forms and content of the pre- test and the post- test can

be avoided. The five- week- interval between the administration of the pretest and that of the post- test, and not giving the students the right answer after the pre- test might be sufficient enough to overcome any short- term memory effect.

The test consisted of four parts of multiple choice questions, each tested the subjects' ability to comprehend and use a given critical reading strategy. Part one tested the subjects' ability to distinguish facts and opinions and the evidence to back up the main opinion expressed as well as the strategy used by the author in presenting the statements of facts and opinions etc. Part Two tested the subjects' ability to use the inference skills and drawing conclusion where most of the questions concerned things not clearly stated in the passage given. Part Three concerned the subjects' ability to detect bias and slanted language and how the language the author used was affected by his beliefs and prejudices. Part Four attempted to identify the subjects' ability to recognize various types of propaganda and how language was slanted to achieve various controversial functions.

The items of the test were 40 in number and each correct choice was given two points so that the test was scored out of eighty (See Appendix 1).

The validity and reliability of the test were tested. Validity measures "the extent to which the data- collection procedure measures what it intends to measure" (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989: 188). Evidence on two types of validity : content and face validity was ensured so as to make the test a good representation of the material and method to be used. Content validity decides" whether the text is a representative sample of the content of whatever the test was designed to measure" (Brown, 1996: 233). Based on the guidelines provided by Anastasi (1982: 132), the content validity was established by systematically analyzing the

major aspects of critical reading strategies so that each aspect was reflected in the test item that examined the subjects' ability to master that aspect. The draft of the test was also distributed to the panel of experts in language teaching and psychological measurement and evaluation to check for appropriacy and adequacy of the test to measure what it was supposed to measure.

Face validity, which measures what it appears superficially to measure, pertains to "whether the test looks valid to the examinee who takes it." (Ibid :136). This type of validity was established by giving part of the test to the participants in the pilot study in order to check its appropriacy, difficulty for the testees and the time allotted to the test so that it can function effectively in practical situations.

The feedback obtained from the experts' notes and the responses of the subjects of the pilot study as well as the interviews made with both helped in better formulating, modifying or changing some items of the test. It is worth mentioning, however, that the strategies of critical reading complete each other and are too interrelated to be tested separately. Therefore some test items may test more than one strategy and the same strategy may appear in different parts of the test.

Another critical feature against which the test was judged to was reliability. For Anastasi (Ibid: 102) "reliability" refers to consistency of the scores obtained by the same person when reexamined with the same test on different occasions or under other variable examination conditions. For Weiner (1990: 31) it is concerned with "how far can we depend on the result that a test produces?". The reliability of the present test was established statistically using Kuder- Richardson formula (K- R 20). Applying the formula to the test the result was (0.87). The final version of the test was drafted on May 15, 2007. The researcher himself

taught the experimental group while the control group was taught by the teacher who was originally assigned to teach both groups.

## 6.4 Material and Training procedure

The material used in teaching reading comprehension to the control group was entirely based on the passages and exercises in Alexander's book "Fluency in English". According to the guidelines for teaching this book, the students were supposed to read the passage which ought to have been prepared in advance then to do the exercises that follow which were comprehension questions and issues related to vocabulary, special difficulties in sentence structure and paragraph, choosing a topic, or identifying the main idea of the passage.

The experimental group was also taught the same passages with their exercises so as not to interfere seriously with the normal proceedings of the regular course. But the time allotted to the passage and exercises was about a third of the original time allotted to each passage in the control group. The other two thirds were devoted to teaching materials not given to the control group. Thus from the three lectures a week devoted to discussing each passage and its exercises in the control group only one lecture was devoted to the same passage in the experimental group while the other two were devoted to introducing the material related to the various aspects of critical reading strategies.

The passages used to exemplify critical reading were based on those provided by Wiener and Bazerman (1995) Henning (2002) and Flemming (2002) but the questions that followed them were a modified version of the questions posed by Wiener and Bazerman (1988) and Duncan (2007) for detailed lesson plans for the control and experiment groups (see Appendices 3 and 4).

## 6.5 The strategy training procedure

The strategy training procedure used in the experimental lesson series was as follows

The teacher (the investigator) began with a brief statement of what he was going to do through the lectures to come in reading comprehension. Each critical reading strategy was defined and the benefits of using these strategies in reading comprehension and in other subjects including literature and how using these strategies can enhance efficiency in reading and help to manage the text actively in the way that expert readers do were pointed out.

The teacher then explained the procedure to be followed in presenting the critical reading strategies drawing the subjects' attention to the point that he would choose only four strategies, among many, namely, distinguishing between facts and opinions and evaluating opinions, making inferences, thinking about bias, and recognizing propaganda. He also told them that each strategy was going to be dealt with separately before combining them together. He finally pointed out that he would start with showing how these strategies could be represented in a sentence, a paragraph or a passage. (For a sample lesson plan, see Appendix 3).

## 7. Results

In order to see the effects of critical strategy training on the comprehension of experimental group subjects, Mean, Standard Deviation as well as the progress for both the control and the experimental group subjects were computed. Table 1 summarizes the overall results.

**Table 1: Overall Achievement scores (Means, Standard Deviation, Standard Error Mean and progress) for control and experimental groups**

Groups	Questions	Pretest			Posttest			Progress
		Mean	SEM	SD	Mean	SEM	SD	Mean
Control group	Q1	7.00	0.62	3.39	7.53	0.55	3.04	0.53
	Q2	6.73	0.47	2.59	6.33	0.48	2.63	-0.40
	Q3	7.73	0.54	2.95	7.00	0.41	2.27	-0.73
	Q4	6.00	0.41	2.28	5.86	0.49	2.72	-1.14
	Total	28.33	1.57	8.61	26.43	1.27	2.72	-1.90
Experimental group	Q1	8.26	0.60	3.29	11.60	0.64	3.51	3.34
	Q2	7.86	0.55	3.06	11.80	0.67	3.69	3.94
	Q3	9.46	0.60	3.31	11.53	0.63	3.47	2.07
	Q4	7.13	0.55	3.04	10.86	0.66	3.66	3.73
	Total	32.73	2.04	11.17	46.20	1.98	10.85	13.47

A number of comparisons were then made upon the results above in order to see whether the differences found were significant or not. To begin with a two- sample t-test comparing the total Mean scores obtained by control- group subjects with those obtained by experimental group subjects in the pretest was made. The aim was to see whether they had the same background knowledge concerning the critical reading strategies in focus before starting the treatment. Table 2 summarizes the results.

**Table 2: A comparison between the mean scores of the control and experimental groups in the pretest.**

Group	N-	Mean	SD	SE Mean	T-value	Df.	Sig.
control	30	28.33	8.61	1.6	1.71	58	0.01
Experimental	30	11.20	11.20	2.0			

Table 2 indicates that the calculated t-value under 58 degrees of freedom at 0.01 level of significance was 1.71 while the tabulated t- value under the same degree of freedom and the same level of significance was 2.66. This suggests that no statistically significant difference was found between the two groups in their linguistic background in the point under question at the point of departure

The second comparison was made between the total mean score obtained by the control group subjects in the pretest and post- test to see whether any advancement took place as a result of the knowledge and experience acquired during the time lapsed between the pretest and the posttest (nearly a month). To this end a paired t- test was used to examine this difference as in Table 3 below:

**Table 3 :The paired t- test of the difference between pretest and posttest mean scores of the control group.**

tests	N-	Mean	SD	SE mean	T-value	Df.	Sig.
Pretest	30	28.33	8.60	1.57	0.88	58	0.01
Posttest	30	26.43	6.94	1.26			
Difference	30	1.90	11.83	2.16			

Table 3 above clearly shows that the calculated t- test under 58 degrees of freedom at 0.01 level of significance was 0.88 which is lower than the computed t- value which is 2.66. These results suggest that no statistically significant difference was found in the mean scores of the pretest and posttest of the control group, i.e. no significant change in the point under investigation was found.

A third comparison was made in the total mean scores of the pretest and posttest of the experimental group. The aim was to investigate whether the change in the mean scores that resulted from teaching reading strategies was significant or not. Table (4) below sums up the statistical findings.

**Table 4: The paired t- test difference between pretest and posttest mean scores of the experimental group.**

tests	N-	Mean	SD	SE Mean	T-value	Df.	Sig.
Pretest	30	32.73	11.16	2.03	-5.09	58	0.01
Posttest	30	46.20	10.84	1.98			
Difference	30	-13.46	14.48	2.64			

The calculated t- value (5.09) in Table 4 above is clearly greater than the tabulated t- value 2.66 under the same degrees of freedom and at 0.01 level of significance. This implies that a significant change has taken place as a result of training the subjects of the experimental group in critical reading strategies.

A fourth comparison was made in the posttest scores of the control and Experimental groups. The aim was to find out the difference if any between the two groups in the overall achievement as shown in Table 5 below.

**Table 5: The two- sample t- test of posttest mean scores for the control and experimental groups.**

Group	N-	Mean	SD	SE Mean	T- value	Df.	Sig.
Control	30	26.43	6.94	1.30	8.41	58	0.01
Experimental	30	46.20	10.8	2.00			

The results above show that the t- value (8.41) is greater than the tabulated t- value (2.66) under the same degree of freedom and level of significance. This means that there is a statistically significant change in favour of the experimental group. That is, training in critical reading strategies had brought about a significant change in the subjects' performance if comparison was made within the control group subjects.

A final comparison was made within the experimental group between each question in the pretest and its counter part in the posttest. The aim was to find out which of the critical strategies was affected more than others by the training procedure. Tables 6 and 7 sum up the results of this comparison

**Table 6: The experimental group subjects' mean scores of each question in the pretest and its counterpart in the posttest**

variable	Mean	SE Mean	SD
<b>Q1</b>	3.33	0.74	4.06
<b>Q2</b>	3.93	0.85	4.65
<b>Q3</b>	2.06	0.88	4.82
<b>Q4</b>	3.73	0.82	4.51

Where : Q1= in the pretest and its counterpart in the posttest.

Q2= in the pretest and its counterpart in the posttest.

Q3= in the pretest and its counterpart in the posttest.

Q4= in the pretest and its counterpart in the posttest.

The results obtained were then applied to the one way ANOVA for difference as in Table 7 below

**Table 7: One-Way ANOVA for the experimental group**

variable	Sum of squares	Df.	Mean square	F	Sig.
<b>Between groups</b>	63.200	3	21.06	1.03	0.382
<b>Within groups</b>	2372.267	116	20.451		
<b>Total</b>	2435.467	119			

Table 7 shows that  $f = 1.03$  at 0.38 level of significance which means that no statistically significant difference was found between the experimental group subjects' mean scores in the pretest and their counterparts in the posttest. This suggests that the training procedure in the critical reading strategies seems to affect the four strategies equally.

## 8. Discussion

The results obtained above indicate the following:

1. No statistically significant difference was found in the mean scores between the control and experimental groups in the pretest (see Table 2 above). This implies that both groups had a relatively similar linguistic background concerning the point under discussion, viz. critical reading strategies, so that one may safely assume that any subsequent change in the mean scores may be due to the material and training applied.
2. No statistically significant difference was found between the pretest and posttest scores of the control group despite the lapse of a month of teaching reading comprehension in the point under investigation, viz. critical reading strategies (see Table 3 above). This result suggests that the instruction has no effect as far as critical reading strategies are concerned.
3. A statistically significant difference was found between the pretest and posttest scores of the experimental group in favour of the posttest (see Table 4 above). This result was also reinforced by the significant difference found between the posttest scores of the control group and those of the experimental group in favour of the experimental group (see Table 5 above). These results clearly indicate that systematic instruction using modelling and explicit training in overt critical reading strategies was effective. Thus the answer to the first research question which is already addressed is yes: explicit training in the use of critical reading strategies improved the advanced EFL Iraqi students' comprehension. Consequently, the first hypothesis which reads " the students who receive explicit training in the use of critical reading strategies outperform those who do not receive such training in the reading comprehension test" is confirmed.

4. No statistically significant difference was found in the experimental group between the pretest and posttest scores of each question and among questions (see Table 6 above). This implies that strategy instruction had a positive effect on almost all the critical strategies taught in roughly the same proportion. Thus, the answer to the second research question "Is the effect of this training similar for all critical reading strategies taught?" is also yes. Accordingly, the hypothesis which reads "The effects of training in critical reading strategies are the same for all strategies trained upon" is also confirmed.

The findings outlined above provide empirical evidence that explicit instruction in critical reading strategies can improve comprehension and be effective not only for L1 students (Brown and Palincsar, 1984) and intermediate level students (Kern, 1989) but also for EFL college students as Long (1998) suggests. In line with the relevant literature, training in critical strategies is strongly recommended at advanced levels of reading comprehension in FL context at advanced levels of language learning.

## 9. Conclusions

The present study aimed to provide empirical evidence for the differential effect of critical strategies training on advanced Iraqi EFL learners at college level and the effect of such training on each of the critical reading strategies tested. The major conclusions drawn from the results obtained and the discussion made above are:

1. Systematic training in critical reading strategies has a positive effect on students' ability to discriminate facts from opinions, making inferences, recognizing bias and prejudice and identifying various types of propaganda, and the training procedure used had a relatively

equal effect on all the strategies taught. This may be ascribed to the newness of strategies taught as opposed to the boredom of traditional comprehension questions and exercises students are used to . At this advanced stage the learners seem to welcome the strategies that help them read critically and find themselves involved in the teaching/ learning process and training them in critical reading strategies seems to provide them with such a chance.

2. The fairly good mean scores obtained by the experimental group subjects may be ascribed to the newness of the material and method and to the short time allocated to teaching and practising the critical reading strategies.

## 10. Recommendations

Given that one of the most important goals of teaching reading at college level is to instil in the learner the ability to read critically, several recommendations can be made on the basis of the results obtained and conclusions drawn:

1. Training students in critical reading should be an essential part of an advanced reading comprehension course at college level.
2. Critical reading strategies should be introduced through direct instruction, explicit explanation and adequate diverse and controversial texts.
3. The teaching of reading comprehension strategies should be integrated with other material in the syllabus, especially literature. The student should be encouraged to read longer passages in poetry, drama, novel, criticism, etc critically so that s/he can discriminate opinions and make inferences, and recognize slanted language, faulty reasoning bias, prejudice, etc, in everything s/he reads.

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## Appendix 1

### The Test

#### A) Read the following passage then answer the questions below:

There is a considerable body of information suggesting chimpanzee intelligence. The first serious study of the behaviour of monkeys was made in Indonesia by Alfred Wallace, the co discoverer of evolution by natural selection. Wallace found that a body of he chimpanzee he studied behaved exactly like a human child in similar circumstances. Teuber recounted many stories told by his parents, pioneer German ethnologists who founded and operate d the first research station devoted to chimpanzee behaviour on Tenerife in the canary island early in the second decade of the past century. It was here that Kohler performed his famous studies of the sultan, a chimpanzee 'genius' who was able to connect two rods in order to reach an otherwise inaccessible banana. On Tenerife, also, two chimpanzees were observed badly treating a chicken : one would extend some food to the chicken encouraging it to come nearer where upon the other would thrust at it a piece of wire it had concealed behind its back. The chicken would retreat but soon allow it self to approach once again and be beaten once again. Here is a fine combination of behaviour sometimes thought to be uniquely human: cooperation, planning an action, deception, and cruelty

#### A:

**1-State whether the following sentences are statements of facts or opinion or both, underlining the word that led you to such conclusion.**

a-Sultan was able to connect two rods to reach an otherwise inaccessible banana

b-On Tenerife, two chimpanzees were observed badly treating a chicken.

c-Here is a fine combination of behaviour thought to be uniquely human.

d-Wallace found a baby of chimpanzee behaving exactly like a child in similar situation.

**2- The main opinion in the passage above is that:**

a-Chimpanzees' behavior is cooperative ,deceptive and cruel.

b-The study of chimpanzees' behaviour in the canary island.

c- Chimpanzee is as intelligent as human being..

d- Sultan was a genius kind of apes.

**3- the chief piece of evidence used to back up the opinion were**

a-The studies made by Wallace.

b-the stories told by Tuber's parents about apes.

c-Kohler's studies of sultan.

d-The observations made on Tenerife.

**4-The order of evidence to back up the main opinion were**

- a-Chronological
- b-From general to specific.
- c-from reason to difference
- d-from reason to conclusion

**5-The kind of reasoning employed in the passage above was**

- a-historical
- b-philosophic
- c-political
- d-scientific

**6-The sources mostly relied upon were**

- a-observation
- b-historical facts
- c-stories
- d-documents

**7-The sources can be relied upon because**

- a-The stories told about ape's behaviours were true.
- b-The documents concerning ape's intelligence were confidential.
- c-The observations made clearly reflected apes' intelligence.
- d-The studies were made by well know scientists.

**8-The strategy used by the author in presenting facts and opinions was that of**

- a-description
- b-narration
- c-argumentation
- d-expository

**9-The main conclusion drawn was based on**

- a-Wallace's study of monkeys' behaviours in Indonesia
- b-Teuber's studies in the canary islands
- c-Tenerife observations of monkeys' behaviours
- d-All the above alternatives.

**B:**

**Read the following passage then answer the questions underneath trying to use inference skills.**

I began to see how everything was so wrong. When farm owners can have a complex watering system to irrigate their crops but they cannot have running water inside the houses of workers. They paid great attention to the needs of their domestic animals but they cannot provide least medical care for the workers. They can have land subsidies for the farm owners but they cannot have adequate unemployment compensation for the workers. They treat them like farm implements. In fact they treat their implements better and their domestic animals better . They have heat

and insulated barns for the animals but the workers live in beat-up shacks with no heat at all.

**1. The implied main idea of the selection above is**

- a- farm owner have watering system but the workers have watering system but haven' t .
- b- The workers were badly treated by the farm owner.
- c- Animals have heat and insulated barns.
- d- Landowners can't have adequate compensations for workers.

**2. We may infer that the author believes that**

- a- Workers should stop complaining .
- b- Farm owners should prosecuting the workers.
- c- Workers should be treated like farm tools.
- d- Farm owner cannot afford medical care to the workers.

**3. The attitude of farm owners towards the workers was one of**

- a- Neglect
- b- Fairness
- c- Hostility
- d- Favourism

**4. From the passage above we infer that workers are viewed by land owners as:**

- a- Mere tools that can easily be replaced by others
- b- People who always complain
- c- No more than domestic animals
- d- People who should be highly respected and appreciated

**5. The author's tone ----- towards the workers was**

- a- hostile
- b- indifferent
- c- biased
- d- neutral

**6. The strategy used by author to express his point of view was that of**

- a-showing contrast
- b- moving from general to specific
- c- pointing to the causes and effects
- d- making an argument

**7. The passage is an example of**

- a- moral lesson
- b- a social satire
- c- amusement
- d-providing information

**8. The fact given by farm worker may suggest that**

- a- workers should be treated more carefully

- b- farm owners should be thought of highly
- c- animals shouldn't have heat and insulated barns
- d- The workers' needs should be satisfied

**9. The major conclusion that can be drawn from the passage above is that**

- a- The worker's condition needs urgent improvement
- b- medical care should be provided to the workers
- c- farm owners need to be less cruel
- d- farms and domestic animals need special attention

**10. From the tone of the passage the writer might be**

- a- a landlord
- b- a Salesman
- c- a bourgeois
- d- a journalist interested in every day's social conditions.

**C:**

**Read the following paragraphs**

- 1) There is no point working. The money just goes to the no- good government and the cheating landlords. You break your back to make the boss rich. Taxes are high and rent is impossible. But if you do not work, you give up your pride and the few comforts you have. You just have to live on what is left over.
- 2) Every one should be proud to work and support the system your taxes go to making this country great. And helping the landowners and the factory owners make money you are strengthening the backbone of the nation. Hard work makes good citizens.

**1. In both (1) and (2) the truth is**

- a- twisted in favour of one specific position or another
- b- objectively expressed
- c- neutrally conveyed
- d- indifferently presented

**2. Both the statements above are a good example of**

- a- testimonial
- b- bandwagon
- c- card stacking
- d- red herring

**3. The first paragraph differs from the second in**

- a- how social conditions are viewed
- b- how work and taxation are viewed
- c- the importance it gives to the work
- d- the role of landowners and factory owners in the society.

**4. It seems that the author of first paragraph adhere**

- a- the landowners
- b- factory owners
- c- workers
- d- Tax collectors

**5. The author of the second statement seems to adhere**

- a- the workers
- b- landlords
- c- tax collectors
- d- factory owners

**6. The author first paragraph seems to be more ----- than author of the second**

- a- emotionally neutral
- b- supportive
- c- critical
- d- comical

**7. The author of the second paragraph seems to be**

- a- a Marxist
- b- a bourgeois
- c- a boss
- d- a worker

**8. In each paragraph ----- has been expressed.**

- a- all the truth
- b- no truth
- c- half the truth
- d- none of the above alternative

**9. In the first paragraph the author wanted to say that**

- a- the government and landlord are cheating us.
- b- They have to live in order to work.
- c- There will be no point in working however hard we try
- d- They have to work to earn over living.

**10. In the second paragraph the author was of the view that:**

- a- A good citizen must have work to do
- b- factory owners and landlords are the back bone of the nation
- c- They must proud of being workers.
- d- Taxes make the government and country great.

**B) Read the following passage then answer the question underneath**

A local mayor is running for reelection. He has a very good record and his opponent finds it hard to come up with reasons why she should be elected instead. During the campaign she gives the following speech: "Ladies and gentlemen, the current mayor has not been effective in his job. The harm of pornography, Journals or posters that show naked bodies and sexual acts- has caused harm to the city. A recent exhibit at a

local gallery was filled with sexual images: pornography harms everyone not just children, I call on you all to speak not against pornography. If I am elected mayor I will wage a war against it. So it is time for change."

**1. The speech made above was an example of-----**

- a- bandwagon
- b- car stacking
- c- testimonial
- d- red herring

**2. The speaker essentially wanted her audience to**

- a- elect her the mayor
- b- elect the local mayor again
- c- get ride of pornography
- d- back up local galleries

**3. The speaker followed ----- in showing ineffectiveness of reelected her opponent mayor**

- a- logical reasoning
- b- circular reasoning
- c- erroneous reasoning
- d- false alternative

**4. The technique of persuasion used by the speaker appeals to**

- a- emotion
- b- authority
- c- passion
- d- sensation

**5. The implicit assumption of the speech is that the speaker will be**

- a- as effective as the present mayor
- b- better than the present mayor
- c- no better than the present mayor
- d- worse than the present mayor

**C:**

**Read the following passage then answer the questions underneath :**

An actor famous for his Puccini's' opera portrayal of caring doctor is featured in a commercial advertisement for a new brand of antacid. The advertisement shows the actor standing in front of a hospital and saying : " Every time I get an upset stomach, I take Antacid Extra. I would not trust any other brand " .

**1. The paragraph above in an example of**

- a- band wagon
- b- testimonial
- c- card stacking
- d- red herring

**2. The aim of the advertisement is to**

- a- urge people to admire the actor
- b- help people get ride of upset stomach
- c- urge people to buy Antacid Extra in particular.
- d- encourage people to go to hospital when having upset stomach

**3. The aim behind showing an actor with the drug is that**

- a- people would make an association between the famous actor and famous brand
- b- people would trust Antacid Extra because they have trusted the actor.
- c- Antacid extra is most suitable for artists.
- d- The drug is as famous as the artist

**4. such cases are found in**

- a- books
- b- advertisements
- c- films
- d- medical clinics.

**5. The advertisement was based on the assumption that people tend to imitate those who**

- a- are experts
- b- are knowledgeable
- c- admire very much
- d- work hard

## Appendix 2

### The subjects' Raw scores in the pretest and posttest

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
1	8	6	8	4	26	6	8	10	6	30	8	4	6	2	20	8	8	10	12	38
2	2	4	6	6	18	12	10	10	8	40	9	4	6	6	25	10	8	6	10	34
3	9	8	10	8	35	10	6	8	4	28	12	6	6	12	36	12	10	12	16	50
4	11	8	6	4	29	10	6	10	10	36	6	8	8	2	24	8	12	10	14	44
5	12	10	10	8	40	8	6	8	6	30	6	10	10	8	24	16	12	10	18	56
6	3	4	4	6	17	4	4	6	4	18	6	10	8	6	30	14	14	16	12	56
7	6	4	10	6	26	14	10	10	8	42	10	4	4	4	22	18	14	12	8	52
8	6	4	6	4	20	6	6	8	6	26	11	4	6	4	25	9	10	12	10	41
9	6	6	4	2	18	6	10	10	8	34	13	6	6	4	29	6	10	10	8	36
10	4	2	8	6	20	6	8	8	8	30	5	6	8	6	25	10	18	14	16	58
11	8	10	10	6	34	8	8	12	8	34	6	6	6	2	20	14	20	18	10	62
12	8	4	6	4	22	10	12	16	12	50	6	8	12	10	36	10	10	10	14	44
13	6	4	8	6	24	2	4	4	4	14	8	10	8	8	34	10	12	16	8	46
14	6	8	12	8	34	4	6	8	4	22	9	10	10	4	33	12	8	14	10	44
15	8	10	14	6	38	12	10	8	8	38	9	8	6	6	29	13	16	12	8	49
16	4	4	6	2	16	16	10	14	10	50	6	4	6	4	20	18	20	18	14	70
17	12	10	16	12	50	7	10	10	4	31	6	2	4	4	16	17	16	10	8	51
18	4	10	8	8	30	13	14	16	14	57	4	2	6	8	20	13	10	16	8	47
19	10	4	6	6	26	10	6	6	6	28	2	4	8	6	20	10	6	8	4	28
20	10	4	8	6	28	4	4	8	2	18	5	6	8	4	23	9	6	8	6	29
21	12	8	8	8	36	6	2	2	2	12	9	6	8	6	29	8	10	10	10	38
22	10	10	8	10	38	6	2	6	2	16	13	6	8	2	29	12	14	12	10	48
23	16	10	6	8	40	6	10	14	8	38	15	12	8	8	43	18	12	8	10	48
24	10	8	6	6	30	10	12	12	12	46	4	8	6	6	24	6	8	4	8	26
25	13	8	6	8	35	12	12	14	8	46	4	4	2	4	14	10	10	12	12	44
26	4	6	4	2	16	8	10	10	10	38	6	6	10	12	34	10	12	8	6	36
27	4	6	4	4	18	7	6	6	6	25	6	8	10	8	32	13	10	16	14	53
28	6	8	10	6	30	9	10	12	8	39	6	4	6	8	24	8	12	12	16	58
29	6	10	10	6	32	10	6	10	10	36	7	4	2	4	17	16	16	14	18	64
30	10	4	4	4	24	6	8	8	8	30	9	10	8	8	36	10	10	8	8	36

Where :

A = refers to the scores of Q No.1 obtained by control group subjects in the pretest

B= refers to the scores of Q No.2 obtained by control group subjects in the pretest

C = refers to the scores of Q No.3 obtained by control group subjects in the pretest

D=refers to the scores of Q No.4 obtained by control group subjects in the pretest

E= refers to the total scores obtained by control group subjects in the pretest

- F= refers to the scores of Q No.1 obtained by experimental group subjects in the pretest
- G = refers to the scores of Q No.2 obtained by experimental group subjects in the pretest
- H= refers to the scores of Q No.3 obtained by experimental group subjects in the pretest
- I = refers to the scores of Q No.4 obtained by experimental group subjects in the pretest
- J= refers to the total scores obtained by experimental group subjects in the pretest
- K= refers to the scores of Q No.1 obtained by control group subjects in the posttest
- L= refers to the scores of Q No.2 obtained by control group subjects in the posttest
- M= refers to the scores of Q No.3 obtained by control group subjects in the posttest
- N= refers to the scores of Q No.4 obtained by control group subjects in the posttest
- O= refers to the total scores obtained by control group subjects in the posttest
- P= refers to the scores of Q No.1 obtained by experimental group subjects in the posttest
- Q = refers to the scores of Q No.2 obtained by experimental group subjects in the posttest
- R= refers to the scores of Q No.3 obtained by experimental group subjects in the posttest
- S= refers to the scores of Q No.4 obtained by experimental group subjects in the posttest
- T= refers to the total scores obtained by experimental group subjects in the posttest

### **Appendix 3**

#### **A sample lesson plan- the experimental group.**

Subject: Advanced Reading Comprehension

Topic: Detecting bias and prejudice.

Class: second year. Department of English.

Instruction Objectives: The students are supposed to be able to:

- a. recognize the main idea in the passage.
- b. Evaluate the evidence given to support the idea.
- c. Carefully separate objective facts from opinions.
- d. Detect bias and prejudice in the text.
- e. Identify the various aspects of slanted language.

Material : layouts including short adapted passages taken from  
Wiener and Bazerman (1995), Flemming (2002)  
and Duncan (2007) .

Time required to teach this strategy = three fifty- minute. lectures.  
Number of students = 30 students .

The teaching process:

The teacher first, defines the critical reading strategy in focus drawing his students' attention to its importance of reading texts critically and its relevance to other critical reading strategies. He told his students to read the text carefully and closely to detect any bias or prejudice in it through careful studying of the words and structures used by the author or the way he presented them.

Then, he asks individual students to read the already prepared passage. Students are then enhanced to learn new or key vocabulary items by looking for contextual clues or division of the words into part clues. Special attention is to be paid to connotation and shades of meaning some words, phrases or structures in the passage may have.

Next, individual students are asked to do the exercises that follow the reading passages. These excerpts include explaining the contextual (and connotational meaning) of some words as used in the passage; giving short answers to questions concerning the main idea, the facts that support the main idea, the way the author express his purpose, the mood and tone of the author and whether he twists the truth to serve his purpose; and the evidence on this slanted language.

Finally, the teacher asks his students to read another passage and do the exercises that follow as a homework assignment before discussing it in the subsequent lecture .

## **Appendix 4**

### **A sample lesson plan- the control group**

Subject: Advanced Reading Comprehension.

Class: second year.

Topic: A reading passage.

Instruction Objectives: The student are supposed to understand the passage assigned by the teacher and do the exercises thereafter.

Time required = three fifty- minute lecture for each passage.

Material: passages selected from Alexander's Fluency in English.

Number of students = 30 students.

The teaching process:

Typically, the teacher reads the passage already assigned loudly or asks individual students to read it while others are listening and following him in their books. He then asks volunteers to answer the comprehension questions that follow the passage, helps his students with difficult vocabulary items, and explains the key structures used in the passage and special difficulties that have already been identified.

The teacher's role dominates the lecture: he (sometimes) reads the passage, explain difficult words and special structural points. The students' roles are varied. Typically, individual students answer the comprehension questions and do the exercises after the notes or explanation made by the teacher of the points related to difficult words or structures.