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**THE EFFECT OF TEST METHOD ON READING STRATEGIES:
AN ANALYSIS OF MULTIPLE-CHOICE
AND CLOZE TESTS**

Dissertação para obtenção do Grau de Mestre, Área de Concentração: Língua Inglesa, do Pós-Graduação em Letras. Setor de Ciências Humanas, Letras e Artes da Universidade Federal do Paraná.

CURITIBA
1996

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*“Friend of the wise! and teacher of the good!
Into my heart have I received that lay
More than historic, that prophetic lay
Wherein (high theme by thee first sung aright)
Of the foundations and the building up
Of a Human Spirit thou hast dared to tell
What may be told, to the understanding mind
Revealable; and what within the mind
By vital breathings secret as the soul
Of vernal growth, oft quickens in the heart
Thoughts all too deep for words.*

(Samuel Taylor Coleridge 1817)

This poem was written by Coleridge to his friend William Wordsworth who had previously recited a beautiful poem to him. The word 'lay' means poem, but if I had written it I would have given it a figurative meaning: knowledge and dedication. And these I received from Prof. Dr. Guido Irineu Engel and Prof. Michael Alan Watkins. I will be eternally indebted to them for their patience and willingness to help whenever needed.

I am also grateful to all my friends who kindly took part in my research despite the hard work it involved.

Thank you.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research was to make an inventory of strategies used by ESL test-takers in order to correctly answer multiple-choice and cloze tests of reading. All informants had the University of Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English and therefore were considered to be proficient readers. This research involved a study in which the informants were asked to take Cambridge Proficiency multiple-choice as well as cloze tests and also answer a questionnaire in which they wrote *how* they got to the correct answers, i.e. what the mental process they went through in order to answer each test item. After classifying the data, two flow-charts of strategies used in both tests were constructed. We then compared these strategies to check if there were similarities and differences in each type of test, and came to the conclusion that test-takers use different strategies to answer multiple-choice and cloze tests. We have included in this research not only a review of the literature on testing, but also a review of current theories of reading widely accepted by theoreticians. We did so in order to verify similarities and differences between the reading process and test-taking process and came to the conclusion that even though test-takers adopt reading strategies, they also make use of strategies developed specifically to answer the multiple-choice and cloze tests successfully. We also perceived that multiple-choice and cloze tests, when used to measure reading comprehension, have low *construct validity*, because the examinees' performance is also affected by factors other than the ability of reading comprehension.

RESUMO

O objetivo desta pesquisa foi fazer um levantamento de estratégias usadas por examinandos de uma segunda língua para chegar a respostas corretas nos testes de leitura de múltipla-escolha e cloze.

Todos os informantes possuíam o 'Certificate of Proficiency in English' da Universidade de Cambridge o que comprova que eram leitores proficientes.

Para a coleta de dados os informantes foram submetidos a um teste 'cloze' e a três testes de múltipla-escolha. Todos os testes usados foram extraídos dos exames do 'Cambridge Proficiency'. Os informantes também responderam a um questionário para especificar como chegaram às respostas corretas, isto é, qual foi o processo mental utilizado para solucionar as questões dos testes. Depois de classificar os dados, dois fluxogramas de estratégias usadas em ambos os testes foram elaborados. Em seguida, tais estratégias foram comparadas para verificar similaridades e diferenças entre os dois testes em pauta. Chegamos à conclusão de que os examinandos utilizam diferentes estratégias para responderem as questões dos testes de múltipla-escolha e 'cloze'. Também incluímos, nesta pesquisa, além de uma revisão de literatura a respeito de testes, também uma outra revisão sobre teorias de processos de leitura amplamente aceitas pelos teóricos da atualidade. Na comparação das teorias de processos de leitura com as estratégias usadas pelos informantes nos testes de múltipla-escolha e cloze chegamos à conclusão de que os mesmos, ao fazerem um teste de múltipla-escolha ou cloze não somente utilizam estratégias de leitura descritos na literatura especializada, mas também estratégias exigidas especificamente por cada teste. Pudemos também perceber que tanto o teste de múltipla-escolha como o 'cloze', usados como instrumentos para a mensuração de compreensão de leitura, possuem baixa validade de conceito (construct validity), visto que o desempenho do examinado é afetado também por outros fatores, além da habilidade de compreensão de leitura.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. CONTEXT OF THE PROBLEM

Testing is a form of measurement. Henning (1987:1) compares measurements of general goods with testing:

Just as we weigh potatoes, examine the length of a piece of cloth, count eggs in a carton, or check the volume of a container of milk, so we test reading comprehension or spelling to determine to what degree these abilities are present in the learner.

However, there may be errors of measurement. Various factors might contribute to this problem: a defect in the scale (when weighing goods), or inaccurate tests in the case of language learning. Test designers must be alert for errors of measurement, because we know that test performance may be affected by factors other than the abilities we want to measure. These factors range from fatigue, health problems and lack of motivation to test-wiseness and poorly-written tests, and may have an influence on test scores, although they are not associated with the language ability being tested. Bachman (1991:60) asks a crucial question related to this problem: "How much of an individual's test performance is due to measurement error, or to factors other than the language ability we want to measure?" He (1991:161) states:

The concerns of reliability and validity can thus be seen as leading to two complementary objectives in designing and developing tests:

- (1) to minimize the effects of measurement error;
- (2) to maximize the effects of the language abilities we want to measure.

These two objectives must be considered by any test designer if he wants to obtain a true measure of language ability.

The problem of test measurement error is particularly relevant in relation to the reading skill, because there is no obvious measurable product. The reading skill differs

from the writing and speaking skills in that we cannot perceive a reader's performance whereas the performance of writers and speakers is fully observable. This makes measurement of the reading skill a difficult issue.

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this dissertation is to analyze and compare two test methods used to measure reading comprehension: multiple-choice and cloze. We decided to focus on these particular test methods because they are both used in well-known proficiency examinations - multiple-choice tests in the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency¹ and the University of Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE) and cloze tests in 'the Associated Examining Board - Test in English for Educational Purposes' (TEEP)². They are also mentioned as techniques for measuring reading comprehension in most books on testing (eg. Heaton, 1994: 81-86; Hughes, 1994: 120-1; Oller, 1979: 231-259; Weir, 1990: 43-45). However, both methods have recently been subjected to a good deal of criticism as measures of reading comprehension. Alderson (1979b:219-26) claims that cloze tests have low construct validity, while multiple-choice has been severely criticized by Oller (1986:240-45) on the grounds that it puts a strain on the flow of normal communicative interactions, as well as causing a number of other problems which will be discussed later in this dissertation (p.83-5).

¹ Hughes, 1994 p.18

² The A.E.B. is one of the largest of the G.C.E. (General Certificate of Education) boards operating in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. They decided in 1978 to undertake research into the field of examining English as a foreign language and subsequently developing an examination which would assess performance of students in English for Academic Purposes. It later became called the Test in English for Educational Purposes (T.E.E.P.), for students who have to study through the medium of English. For more information see Weir (1994:104-146). A mock of a cloze test is found in the same book on page 138.

1.3. OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of this dissertation are:

- a. to identify the strategies test-takers use in multiple-choice and cloze tests;
- b. to compare the strategies used in multiple-choice and cloze tests with strategies used when reading for normal communicative purposes as described by the most widely accepted current theoreticians.

1.4. OUTLINE OF THE REMAINDER OF THE DISSERTATION:

In order to accomplish the objectives mentioned above, this dissertation will review the literature on the reading process in chapter 1. Since the objects of our study are two reading comprehension test methods - multiple-choice and cloze - it was necessary to understand in depth how the reading process takes place and how this skill has been viewed by theoreticians, so that we could study the relationship between the reading process and the test-taking process. The second chapter of this dissertation consists of a review of the literature on testing, because in order to study multiple-choice and cloze tests, it was necessary to have a general view of the history of testing followed by a more specific explanation of the tests in focus. The third chapter consists of a description of the research carried out for this dissertation. The results and discussions of the investigation are presented in chapter four. Finally, chapter five summarizes the content of the dissertation and gives suggestions for further investigation of phenomena which showed up during the research process.

2. THE READING PRODUCT & THE READING PROCESS

2.1. Overview

The objective of this chapter is to present some theoretical views on the reading product and the reading process. The first part, which focuses on the reading product, will describe the different purposes of reading. The second part will concentrate on a psycholinguistic perspective of the reading process, focusing mainly on Frank Smith's and Kenneth S. Goodman's ideas of how reading takes place in the mother tongue. Both theorists will be considered in the study of the reading process in a second language because Alderson (1984:213) posits the idea that the reading process is basically the same in all languages. Finally, more current theories on the reading process will be examined, such as an interactive approach, the interactive-compensatory model and the schema-theoretic view of reading.

2.2. The reading product

The ultimate goal a reader commonly wishes to achieve when reading is full comprehension of the text. Therefore, if we intend to talk about the product of the reading process, i.e. reading comprehension, we must define what it is. Comprehending a text is when a reader reconstructs a message as closely as possible to what the writer had intended, by using knowledge of the world, knowledge of the subject matter and knowledge of the language. However, what is comprehended and how will depend upon other factors, such as what we are reading and why we are reading it.

In our day-to-day life we come across a large number of text-types such as novels, plays, poems, letters, telegrams, newspapers and magazines, textbooks, recipes,

advertisements, instructions, menus, traffic signs, and many others. In other words, the texts we read vary considerably in their nature. With regard to why we read, Grellet (1992:4) gives two main reasons: for pleasure and in order to get information.

How much we comprehend will depend on what we are reading and why we are reading it. For instance, if we are reading instructions on how to put together hundreds of pieces of plastic in order to set up a racing-car we need to understand every single detail of what is written so we can accomplish our task. However, if we are reading a novel for pleasure, only the main plot will be important to most readers. Now, if we are reading the classified advertisements in the newspaper looking for a job, maybe only the section of 'Teachers Wanted' will catch our attention.

Therefore, how we read, that is, what strategies we use in order to comprehend a text, is a consequence of what and why we are reading. Of course we cannot deny that some strategies serve as the basis of any kind of reading, such as applying knowledge of the world and knowledge of the language.

2.3. The reading process

2.3.1. Reading in second language acquisition

The study of second language acquisition has been the object of a considerable amount of research owing its importance in the contemporary world. Richards and Rodgers (1986:01) state:

It has been estimated that some sixty percent of today's world population is multilingual. Both from a contemporary and a historical perspective, bilingualism or multilingualism are the norm rather than the exception. It is fair, then, to say that throughout history foreign language learning has always been an important practical concern.

The process of reading and learning to read, which is one particular area of second language acquisition, has consequently also been the object of intense research, especially over the last 30 years. Teachers, linguists, psycholinguists, psychologists and other professionals have studied the reading process and reading comprehension, making important contributions to contemporary theories.

Reading has been given different focuses and roles depending on the period when it was studied, and consequently on the general philosophy of second language acquisition current in that period.

2.3.2. Reading before the 60's

Reading was not regarded as an independent object of scientific study until the mid-late 60's. It was first viewed as a technique for studying the vocabulary, grammar, structure and translation of a target language. Later on, with the emergence of the Audio-Lingual Approach, reading was left aside. It only served as a means of mechanizing the structures and rules of the target language. It was not until the late 60's that reading was given its deserved value and studied as an independent skill.

2.3.3. Reading in the 60's and 70's

In the late 60's and early 70's the reading process and reading comprehension became the focus of a large amount of research. The notion of a passive reader who sees reading as a simple matter of 'extracting sounds from print' or 'translating the written symbols on the page into real or imagined sounds of speech' gives way to that of an active reader who tries to reconstruct the message of a text by taking into account not only his linguistic knowledge, but also his experience of the world.

This new approach to reading was based on a psycholinguistic perspective which in turn derived from insights in linguistics and cognitive psychology. Two renowned psycholinguists in particular advocated this new approach: Frank Smith (1978a, 1978b) and Kenneth Goodman (1967, 1973).

2.3.3.1. Frank Smith's view of the reading process

Frank Smith (1978b) in his book "Understanding Reading" outlines his new approach by proposing pairs of concepts which show differences between an efficient and an inefficient reader: visual and non-visual information, 'saccade'-fixation and regression, short-term and long-term memory, surface and deep structure. He also considers prediction as an important aspect of the reading process.

i) Visual and nonvisual information

In order to be able to read there are some physical factors which must be present. For instance, "you need illumination, some print in front of you, your eyes open, and maybe your glasses on"(Smith 1978b:4). Reading depends on some information which goes from the eyes to the brain. For Smith (1978a) visual information is an important part of reading, but it is not enough. You might have in front of you print, your eyes might be open and the room illuminated; however, this does not mean that you will be able to read the text. In order to be able to read a text efficiently you need other kinds of information which are stored 'behind the eyeball' in the brain, such as knowledge of the language, knowledge of the subject matter of the text, knowledge of the world.

Knowledge of the language is part of the information that is essential for reading. To accomplish successful understanding of a text, the reader must know, at least to some extent, the language in which the text is written. That is to say, the system and rules of that particular language must be stored in the brain, which is why knowledge of the language is considered one part of nonvisual information.

Knowledge of the subject matter is also important. The more you know about the topic of the text being read the more you tend to comprehend it. For instance, if a group of elementary school teachers are given a text about "Z-80 Assembly Language Programming" they will probably not be able to read it, not because the text might be badly written - an electronic engineer or a computer scientist would read and understand it perfectly - but because the subject is totally unfamiliar and therefore there is no nonvisual information stored in the brain about the topic. However, if they were given a text about "Children's behavior in school" they would tend to comprehend the text, if not in totality at least most of it, because the topic is related to their everyday lives.

Knowledge of the world is every single piece of information you have about the environments you live in and other environments you know about, the culture you live in, other cultures you know about, your perceptions, your memories, etc. When reading, it is essential for the reader to relate and make analogies between what he is reading and the knowledge of other things he knows about. This nonvisual information will help him compose the message of a text. This is shown in the figure below:

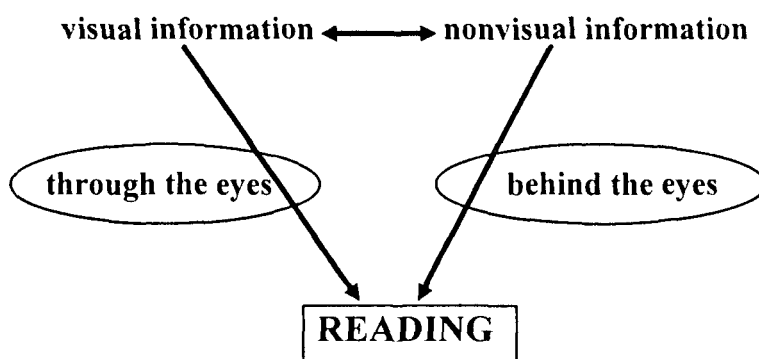


Figure 1: Two sources of information in reading. Frank Smith (1978b:5)

According to Smith (1978b:p.5) "the more nonvisual information a reader has, the less visual information the reader needs. The less nonvisual information that is available from behind the eyes, the more visual information is required", i.e. the less nonvisual information the reader can employ, the harder it is to read.



Figure 2: The role of visual and non-visual information in reading. The more nonvisual information a reader uses the more efficient his reading is. Adapted from Smith 1978b.

There is a trade-off between visual and nonvisual information; however there is a limit to how much visual information the brain can deal with in making sense of print. This limitation is called the *bottleneck effect* as shown in figure 3.

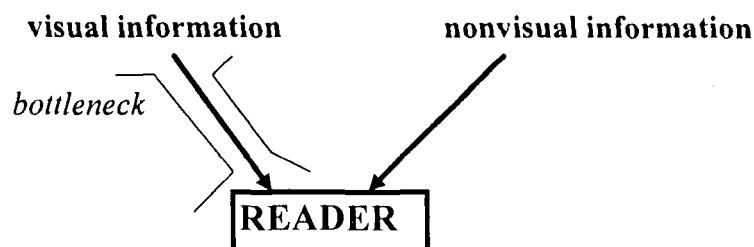


Figure 3 : The bottleneck in reading. Smith (1978b:6)

Smith (1978b:6) justifies children's reading limitations by saying:

Now we can see one reason why reading can be so very much harder for children quite independently of their actual reading ability. They may have little relevant nonvisual information.

Owing to the inescapable reason that there is a limit to how much visual information the brain can handle at any one time, insufficiency of nonvisual information can even make reading impossible.

Smith reminds us that as a consequence of the bottleneck effect a reader can easily become, temporarily, functionally blind. It is possible to look but not be able to see, no matter how good the physical conditions are. "It is the brain that sees, the eyes merely look, usually under the direction of the brain....Visual perception involves decisions on the part of the brain".(Smith 1978a: 16)

In order to exemplify the importance of nonvisual information Smith shows the address below:

2IO LION STREET

The figures "1" and "0" are numbers and two letters at the same time: the numbers IO in 2IO and the letters IO in LION. The visual information was the same for the numbers and letters. However, the nonvisual information will enable the reader to interpret these figures by attributing a distinct meaning to them.

Therefore, if you rely excessively on visual information you will end up having the bottleneck effect and thus limit your comprehension of the print. When a reader only makes use of visual information another phenomenon occurs : tunnel vision.

In order to describe tunnel vision let us start by giving examples and then explaining them.

1. "cddmeodossllwoopa;a;wopedkfir"
2. "cat swallow" (two unrelated words)
3. "All cats are grey at night."

If someone intends to memorize the examples above how long will it take him to read each one? Certainly this person will have to spend much more time looking at example one if he intends to remember it. Example 3 will take only a few seconds for one to make sense of it and memorize it. Therefore, if this person has to spend more time looking at a section of print in order to make sense of it or memorize it, it will seem as if he were looking at the print through a narrow paper tube, because he will fix his eyes on it for a longer time: that is tunnel vision. Suppose someone is reading the following text:

"My uncle Harold is a very busy man. He spends most of his time working at his office or at home. When you invite him to see a movie or a soccer game he always says, 'I wish I had time to waste on such foolish things'. Today after having been a workaholic all his life he's got pneumoconiosis."

If this text were given to young teenagers, most probably they would have tunnel vision on the word "pneumoconiosis" because this word is not part of their knowledge of the world. They would rely heavily on the visual information. "Tunnel vision is not a permanent state; it occurs when the brain is overloaded with visual information". Smith (1978:33) mentions three main problems which cause tunnel vision :

- a) when the reader tries to read something that is nonsense to him;
- b) when there is lack of relevant knowledge;
- c) when the reader is reluctant to use nonvisual information.

ii) Saccade - Fixation and Regression

A 'saccade' is "an eye movement that is rapid, irregular, spasmodic, but it is also a surprisingly accurate jump from one position to another".(Smith 1978b: 36). It is the way we normally sample our visual information in order to decode it with the help of the nonvisual information. When we are efficient readers we "jump" forward - from left to right and downwards -very rapidly, in order to sift the visual information we need and decode it in the brain with the help of nonvisual information. Our brain controls the movements of our eyes. Depending on what kind of information the brain is looking for it will send commands to the eyes so they can fix an image in order to apprehend it. Consequently, the eyes move systematically to where there is the most information that we are likely to need. A 'saccade' is thus when the eyes go from one position to another searching for relevant information. These positions are called fixations or fixation pauses. Fixations are the brief periods when the eyeball is resting and during which the visual input required for reading takes place. Efficient readers make good use of 'saccades' and fixations. A good reader fixes his eyeballs at a position where he can apprehend enough visual information to send to the brain, and there decode it into a message. Right after the fixation pause, the eyes "leap" to a forward position so that they can achieve continuity through the apprehension of more visual information. An efficient reader does not go from one word to the next in order to decode the message: he makes use of 'saccades' and fixation pauses at high speed. The larger 'saccades' are faster than the small ones. The number of fixations varies both with the skill of the reader and the difficulty of the passage being read. There is a slight tendency for skilled readers to change fixations faster than unskilled readers.

When reading, another phenomenon may occur if the reader loses the stream of the message he is apprehending: regression. Regression is a backward movement of the eye along a line of print when reading, i.e. it is a 'saccade' that goes in the opposite direction from the line of type, from right to left along a line, or from one line to an earlier one. Regression is thought to be a strategy largely used by poor readers because the more difficult the text is the more the reader has to go back to a word or sentence he could not understand in order to, from there on, try to continue the stream of thought which he was engaged in. However, Smith (1978b:36) rejects the idea that poor readers use more regressions than good readers. For him, "all readers produce regressions - and for skilled readers a regression may be just as productive an eye movement as a 'saccade' in a forward or progressing direction". He continues by saying that "the duration of fixations and the number of regressions are not reliable guides for distinguishing between good and poor readers. What does distinguish the fluent from the less skilled reader is the number of letters or words - or rather, the amount of meaning that can be identified in a single fixation."³

The concept of 'saccade', fixation and regression can look like the following figures

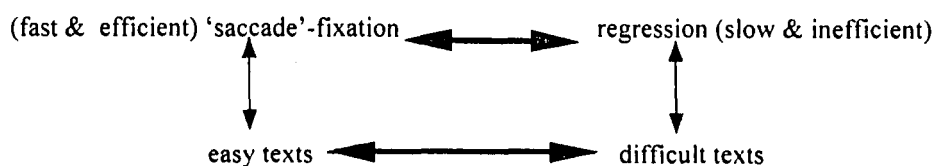


Figure 4: 'Saccade', fixation, regression . Adapted from Smith 1978b:36.

³ Smith 1978b p.38

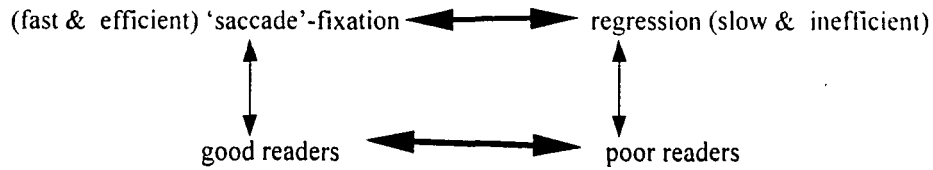


Figure 5: 'Saccade', fixation and regression, when regression is considered a sign of poor reading skills. Adapted from Smith 1978b:36.

The more regressions that occur, the more difficult the text is and/or the less skilled the reader is. A third figure appears to be needed:

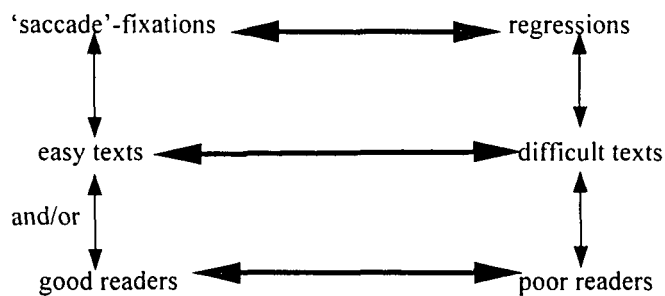


Figure 6: 'saccade'-fixations, regressions. Regressions occur either because the text is difficult or because the reader is not skilled enough, or both. Adapted from Smith 1978b:36

iii) Short-term and long-term memories

According to Smith (1978b: 44), the memory system has 4 specific functions or 'operating characteristics':

input - how information goes in;

capacity - how much can be held;

persistence - how long it can be held;

retrieval - getting it out again.

In order to study the functions described above, we need to consider the different kinds of memory we have. Smith states that there are two main kinds of memory according to the function they serve: short-term memory and long-term memory.⁴

Short-term memory refers to a part of the memory where information is received and stored for short periods of time while it is being analyzed and interpreted to form meaningful units. Smith (1978b: 46) says that

short-term memory is the 'working memory', a 'buffer memory', where you retain in the forefront of your mind whatever it is you are attending to at a particular moment. As far as language is concerned, the contents of short-term memory are usually the last few words you have read or listened to, or thoughts you had in your mind instead. Therefore, short-term memory is whatever is holding your attention.

Reading would not be possible if it were not for short-term memory, as that is where you keep the traces of what you have just read while your brain makes sense of it and while you go on to the next fixation pause, i.e. the next few words.

Although short-term memory is essential for reading, there are some limitations which must be considered. First, it cannot contain very much information at any one time: a sequence of seven unrelated items is about as much as anyone can hold in the brain. Therefore, short-term memory can be very easily overloaded, or overwhelmed, and a sure way to do this in reading is to try to fill short-term memory with excessive detailed information from a page. This is where the danger lies, as Smith (1978a:38) points out:

⁴ According to Garman (1994:308-10) the classical views of memory may be wrong. The classical view separates the sensory stage (perception - visual and auditory) from short-term and long-term memory; therefore the three stages of memory can be studied apart. Theories of 'distributed memory' interrelate and include the sensory phase together with short-term and long-term memory: the three stages of memory are interwoven. However, for the sake of this dissertation we will continue to use the classical view of memory because short-term and long-term memory can be analyzed separately, which will make our analysis of the reading process and test-taking process possible.

We will be essentially blind, even with our eyes open, if we pay so much attention to detail that we have no room for new information in short-term memory. The contents of short-term memory, in other words, represent our complete experiential world at any one particular time. And if we want to make sense of what we are attending to at that particular time, we must be able to make sense of the contents of short-term memory.

If short-term memory is occupied with details the reader will inevitably sink into tunnel vision (see p.10), and if the reader has tunnel vision the whole process of 'saccade'-fixation - short-term memory - meaning will be broken. The reader will lose track of the meaning of the message contained in the text, and it might take him many regressions to recapture the sequence of meanings and continue good reading.

A second limitation involved is persistence. Short-term memory cannot hold information for a very long time. If there is an intention to keep the information in short-term memory longer than a few seconds, then the rehearsal technique will have to be applied: the reader must keep repeating to himself whatever he wants to remember, without getting distracted and focusing his attention on anything else.

In conclusion, there is a limit to how much information can be held in short-term memory, and to how long it can be retained. However, without short-term memory, even with its limitations, reading would not be possible. As Smith (1978a:41) says: "The only way to read is to look for meaning, and to put meaning into short-term memory."

Long-term memory, on the other hand, is part of the memory system where information is stored more permanently: it is a network, a structure of knowledge. Long-term memory holds some advantages over short-term memory. First, long-term memory capacity appears to be inexhaustible, infinite, whereas short-term memory can barely retain half-a-dozen items. Second, the contents of long-term memory seem to persist

indefinitely, while the contents of short-term memory are erased as soon as the person is distracted by anything else but the items he is holding.

Long-term memory also has its limitations, however. Firstly, it requires rather more positive action to get information out of storage; it is by no means as immediate and effortless as retrieval from short-term memory. Smith (1978b:49) explains that retrieval from long-term memory is more laborious because long-term memory is like a network of knowledge, an organized system in which an item of information is related, in some way or other, to everything else. Whether or not we can retrieve information from long-term memory depends on how the desired information is organized. The secret of recall from long-term memory is to tap one of the interrelationships. Success at retrieving information from long-term memory depends on the cues we can find to gain access to it and on how well it was organized into long-term memory in the first place.

When we read meaningfully, i.e. making sense of text and relating it to nonvisual information, we add new information to our knowledge of the world. When we learn something we either modify or elaborate the organization of information that we already have in long-term memory. Entry into long-term memory is extremely laborious and time-consuming: "It takes 4 or 5 seconds for one item to become established in long-term memory"(Smith 1978a:45). For this reason, a reader who tries to store too many details in long-term memory fails to comprehend the text. Smith gives an example of a reader with tunnel vision (see p.10) who cannot hold in short-term memory more than the few letters he sees in a single fixation. This reader will be even more confused if he tries to put isolated letters or bits of words into long-term memory. This effort to memorize can completely destroy comprehension in reading. Smith (1978a:45)says that:

Every time you try to cram another detail into long-term memory, you distract your attention from the text for at least 5 seconds undermining the whole process of making sense of what you are reading.

An efficient reader should not be concerned with long-term memory. He should be primarily concerned with comprehension. If he is able to make good use of 'saccade'-fixation pauses together with short-term memory in order to apprehend the meaning of the text, storage in long-term memory will take place naturally.

Comprehension takes care of memorization. If you comprehend what you read or hear, then long-term memory will reorganize itself so efficiently and effortlessly that you will not be aware that you are learning at all; that you are storing information in long-term memory. (Smith 1978b:50)

The figure below will show how short-term memory and long-term memory work while one reads meaningfully:

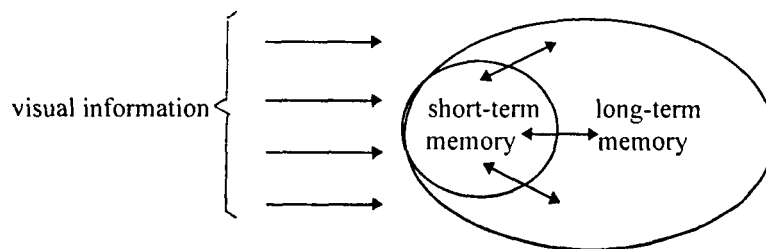


Figure 7: A diagram for memory. Adapted from Smith (1978b:53)

iv) Surface and deep structure

Frank Smith (1978a:71) has sui generis definitions of surface and deep structures. The surface structure of written language is the visual information that intermittently presents itself to the brain through the eyes, i.e. all the observable characteristics of language. "Reading, thus, is not a matter of decoding the surface structure of speech; the sounds will not make sense of their own accord" (Smith, 1978b:72-3). Reading will only occur when the reader extracts the meaning: deep structure.

Deep structure is where meaning lies. For Smith these two aspects of language are independent, i.e. "there is not a one-to-one correspondence between the surface structure of language and meaning" (Smith, 1978a:71; 1978b:72-3). He gives an example to justify his claim:

"The cat is chasing the bird.

The bird is chased by the cat.

Le chat chasse un oiseau.

The warm-blooded feathered vertebrate is pursued by the domesticated feline quadruped." (1978a:71)

These four sentences describe the same event. However, the actual meaning lies beyond words which have different forms.

Therefore, "grammar does not reveal meaning; meaning must precede grammatical analysis"(1978a:71). Meaning determines the grammatical structure of the sentences, not the surface structure markers, i.e. the grammar depends upon the meaning. Surface structure does not stand on its own; "there is only one way in which language can be understood, that print can be comprehended, and that is by having meaning brought to it" (1978b:76).

Therefore, for Smith, the surface structure of a text is visual information, and deep structure is synonymous with cognitive structures, that is, nonvisual information. Consequently, in order to read efficiently and effectively, a reader must use his nonvisual information - his knowledge of the language, subject matter and knowledge of the world - to be able to compose meaning out of a text. In order to use these sources of knowledge stored in the brain he needs to use a dynamic strategy : prediction.

v.) Prediction

Smith (1978b:76) says that prediction is far from being reckless guessing, nor is it a matter of forecasting the most likely outcome. He claims:

Prediction is the prior elimination of unlikely alternatives.... We use our theory of the world to tell us the most possible occurrences, and leave the brain to decide among those remaining alternatives until our uncertainty is reduced to zero.

For instance, if a reader comes across the passage below with a blank to be filled in, what would be his prediction?

"As soon as the crew realized that they were in the middle of a cyclone, the captain shouted: 'Put on a _____.'"

If the word predicted was "lifebuoy/ lifebelt" or something similar, that would probably be the guess of a great majority who read it, because they might share similar knowledge of language and subject matter. Prediction is synonymous with asking questions and comprehension is synonymous with getting the questions answered.

2.3.3.2. Goodman's view of the reading process

For Goodman (1976:498) reading is a psycholinguistic guessing game, and prediction is a vital part of the process.

Reading is a selective process. It involves partial use of available minimal language cues selected from perceptual input on the basis of the reader's expectation. As this partial information is processed, tentative decisions are made to be confirmed, rejected or refined as reading progresses.

This 'guessing game' involves an interaction between thought and language. Efficient reading does not result from precise perception and identification of all elements, but from skill in selecting the fewest, most productive cues necessary to produce guesses which are right the first time. The ability to anticipate that which has not been seen, of course, is vital in reading(1976:498).

Prediction is essential and is part of the interaction between thought and language. Goodman (1976:503) criticizes the notion of a one-to-one relationship between print and meaning by saying:

The 'end of the nose' view of reading will not work. The reader is not confined to information he receives from a half inch of print in clear focus. Without graphic input reading would be impossible. However, it is not enough, the reader needs to use knowledge of the language and the world in order to predict and anticipate what is coming in the text so he can restructure the message.

For Goodman, other skills and strategies are as important as predicting. He (1976:507-8) outlines a model for his view of reading as a psycholinguistic guessing game, and defines the skills and strategies efficient readers should be able to use. This model does not necessarily occur in the sequence presented. There may be variations depending on the outcome of the process. The models presented by Goodman in two articles, "Reading: a psycholinguistic guessing game" (1976:497-508) and "Behind the eye: what happens in reading" (1976:470-496) were modified in 1988 (Goodman, 1988: 11-21). Goodman continues to define reading as a psycholinguistic guessing game: "It starts with a linguistic surface representation encoded by a writer and ends with meaning which the reader constructs" (1988:12). Goodman's 1988 revised model consists basically of three kinds of information which is available and used in language: the optical (for reading), the language structure (the grammar, the set of syntactic relationships), and the semantic system (which is a set of meanings as organized in concepts and conceptual structure).

The reading process can be represented as a series of cycles. Readers employ the cycles more or less sequentially as they move through a story or any other text.

Based on the cycle of reading, Goodman (1988:16) built a detailed model of reading considering five processes which are efficiently employed by good readers:

Recognition-imitation - The brain must recognize a graphic display in the visual field as written language and initiate reading.

Prediction - The brain is always anticipating and predicting as it seeks order and significance in sensory input.

Confirmation - If the brain predicts, it must also seek to verify its predictions. So it monitors to confirm or disconfirm what is expected with subsequent input.

Correction - The brain reprocesses when it finds inconsistencies or its predictions are disconfirmed.

Termination - The brain terminates the reading when the reading task is completed, or when reading is not being effective.

These processes have an intrinsic sequence. Based on these processes

Goodman (1988:17) reorganized his model of reading as follows:

Optical:

- Scan in direction of print display.
- Fix-focus eyes at point in the print.

Perception:

- Sample-select. Choose cues from available graphic display.
- Feature analysis. Choose features necessary to choose from alternate letters, words, structures.
- Image formation. Form image of what is seen, and expected to be seen. Compare with expectations.

Syntactic cycle:

- Assign internal surface structure.
- Assign deep structure. Seek clauses and their interrelationship.

Construct meaning:

- Decode.
- Assimilate/accommodate. If possible, assimilate, if not, accommodate prior meaning.

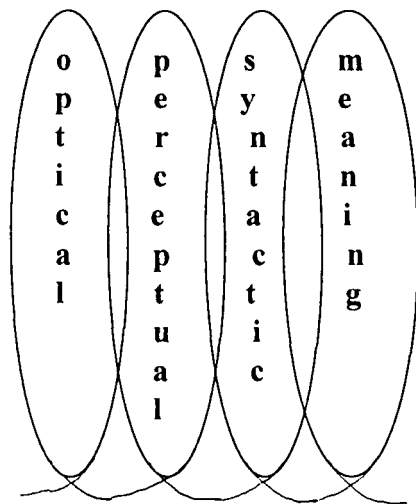


Figure 9: Cycles of reading. Goodman (1988:15).

It seems that Goodman only rearranged his model. The basic principles of the 1976 model still remain. The only difference is that he subdivided the skills and strategies into categories (four processes, as he calls them) such as optical, perceptual, etc.

The Goodman model is a general description of the reading process based on the premise that there is a single reading process. However, it has become evident that successful reading at all levels necessarily and inevitably follows the cognitive processes outlined by Frank Smith (1978a, 1978b) and Kenneth Goodman (1976, 1976, 1989). The Interactive Approach to reading which emerged in the 80's - and is still generally accepted up to the present - is a direct consequence of the fruitful psycholinguistic theories of the 70's.

2.3.4. The Interactive approach

The psycholinguistic theories of the 70's were the catalysts for a wide range of current theories and models of the reading process. Cognitive psychology still dominates much thinking about reading. However, new views have changed and

influenced the models of human information processing. Whereas the models of the 70's tended to be linear information processing models (see Goodman's cycles of reading - 2.3.3.2. or Smith's reading process 2.3.3.1.), current models tend to be interactive in the sense that more than one 'approach' is involved in the reading process.

For Eskey (1989:94)

the interactive model does not presuppose the primacy of top-down processing skills - the gradual replacing of painful word-by-word decoding with educated guessing based on minimal visual cues - but rather posits a constant interaction between bottom-up and top-down processing in reading, each source of information contributing to a comprehensive reconstruction of the meaning of a text.

In this model a proficient reader both decodes and interprets a text.

Decoding, here, consists of skills which become more automatic but no less important as the reading skill develops, and therefore, should not be underestimated. Good reading, for Eskey, is more a language-structured affair than the guessing-game metaphor. Good readers know the language (native language or second language): they are able to decode, with occasional exceptions, vocabulary and grammar they encounter in texts. This kind of decoding is not prediction or guessing from context, but automatic identification which does not require cognitive effort. "It is precisely this 'automaticity' that frees up the minds of fluent readers of a language to think about and interpret what they are reading - that is, to employ higher-level, top-down strategies like the use of schemata (see 2.3.5) and other kinds of background knowledge." (Eskey, 1989:94) Skilful decoding is one of the components of good reading, which is why the model is of interactive top-down and bottom-up approaches working together in order to make reading efficient. Skilful decoding is also knowledge: knowledge of the language which is a cognitive process too. Knowledge of a language is an integral part of whatever background knowledge is required to achieve comprehension of a text.

This model refers to the interaction between information apprehended by bottom-up decoding and information brought by the top-down process, both of which depend on prior knowledge and information-processing skills.

Rumelhart (1977:573-603) who is Eskey's main source of influence, shares the principles mentioned above. In his model information from syntactic, semantic, lexical and orthographic sources converges upon a pattern synthesizer. These knowledge sources all together provide input which is stored in a 'message center' (= pattern synthesizer). He states:

The message center keeps a running list of hypotheses about the nature of the input string. Each knowledge source constantly scans the message center for the appearance of hypotheses relevant to its own sphere of knowledge. Whenever such a hypothesis enters the message center, the knowledge source in question evaluates the hypothesis in the light of its own specialized knowledge. As a result of its analysis, the hypothesis may be confirmed, disconfirmed and removed from the message center, or a new hypothesis can be added to the message center. This procedure continues until some decisions can be reached. At that point the most probable hypothesis is determined to be the right one. (p.589-590)

Successful reading occurs when higher-order stages are able to influence the processing of lower-order stages: there is the interaction between knowledge of the world and the synthesized patterns of lexical, syntactic and orthographic information.

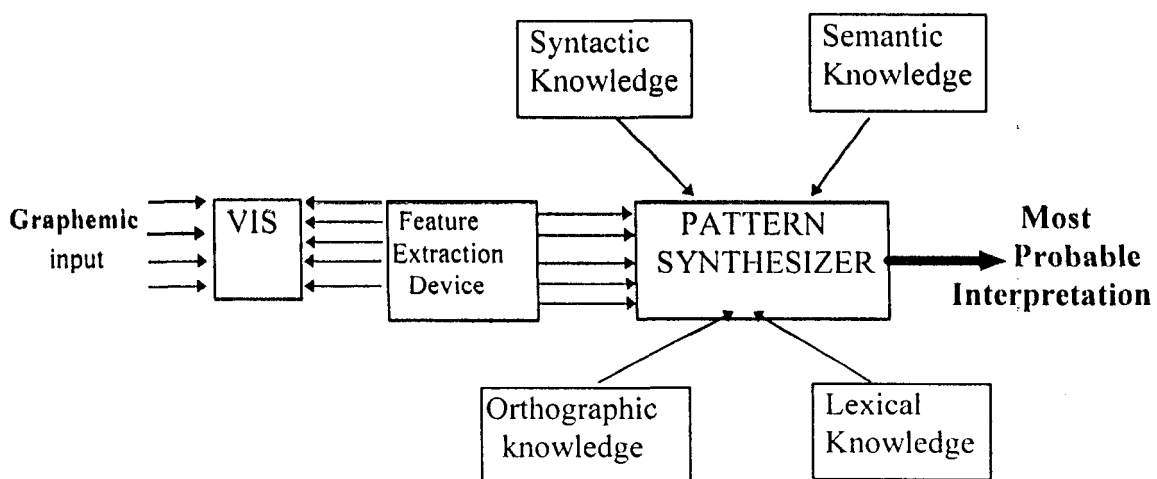


Figure 10: Toward an interactive model of reading. In: Rumelhart 1977:588.

The figure above shows that the graphemic information enters the system and goes into the visual information store (VIS). A feature extraction device operates on the information given by the VIS, extracting the critical features from it. The features mentioned above serve as sensory input to a pattern synthesizer. In addition to these sensory features, the pattern synthesizer also works with nonsensory information such as orthographic structure of the language, information about the lexical items as well as knowledge of syntax and semantics (including pragmatics). The pattern synthesizer uses all the information described above in order to produce the most probable interpretation of the graphemic input.

i) The interactive-compensatory model

Another relevant interactive model of reading was developed by Stanovich in the 80's, integrating concepts from different sources. Stanovich (1980:32) states:

Interactive models of reading appear to provide a more accurate conceptualization of reading performance than do strictly top-down or bottom-up models. When combined with an assumption of compensatory processing (that a deficit in any particular process will result in a greater reliance on other knowledge sources, regardless of their level in the processing hierarchy,) interactive models provide a better account of the existing data on the use of orthographic structures and sentence context by good and poor readers.

Stanovich states that a key concept of a reading model is that a process at any level can compensate for deficiencies at any other level. Therefore, if a good reader is faced with a text where he is not acquainted with the topic or has little or no background knowledge, he will compensate for the deficiencies by relying more on the linguistic information the text offers, such as lexical, syntactic, and semantic knowledge. If, on the other hand, a good reader is faced with a text in which the subject is very familiar, he will consequently rely more on his prior information of the subject in order to reconstruct the message. The same process happens to poor readers. If a poor reader is faced with a text in which the subject is not familiar to him, he will try to rely on his

linguistic knowledge, and here he is caught in a trap of language deficiencies. Poor reading is the result of deficiencies in extracting meaning from linguistic knowledge, since a poor reader (especially readers of a foreign language) has little command of the target language structure. This deficiency inhibits the reader from making up for lack of prior knowledge of the subject. Stanovich's model is therefore called the "interactive-compensatory model."

Stanovich appears to ignore a second factor which might be the cause of poor reading. Not only is poor reading the result of linguistic deficiencies (low-order strategies) as mentioned above, but it might also be caused by lack of knowledge or use of high-order strategies. As Alderson (1984:5-19) suggests that poor reading in a foreign language might be due to poor reading ability in the first language.

2.3.5. Other theories

There are many other theories which attempt to unravel the mystery of the reading skill. Anderson & Pearson (1989) posit a schema-theoretic view of basic processes in reading comprehension. A schema is a summary of what is known about a variety of cases that differ in many particulars, i.e. a schema is an abstract knowledge structure. Based on schema-theory Anderson & Pearson (1989:37) define comprehension as follows:

When one has comprehended a text, he has found a mental 'home' for the information in the text, or else he has modified an existing mental home in order to accommodate that new information.

Other theorists who follow Anderson's cognitive theory are O'Malley and Chamot (1993) and Carrell (1989). Van Dijk (1983), by contrast, focuses on the sociocultural dimension of reading comprehension. He claims that:

...discourse processing is not merely a cognitive event, but also a social event. The social dimension of discourse interacts with the cognitive one. The cognitive model should also provide for the fact that discourse, and hence the process of understanding a discourse, is functional in the social context.(p.6)

Wallace (1992) also shares the same concern with the sociocultural dimension of reading. Eco (1984) even constructs a 'Model Reader' by establishing features a writer should consider when producing a text.

The above theories have only been mentioned superficially since, although they are of crucial importance to the understanding of reading comprehension, they will not be part of the background to the research of this dissertation.

2.3.6. Final comments

In this chapter we first focused on the purpose of reading and its influence on how we read. We then outlined some theories which attempt to describe and explain the process of reading comprehension. Reading began to be the object of serious study in the 70's with the ideas of Frank Smith (1978a, 1978b) and Kenneth Goodman (1973, 1976a, 1976b, 1988), the pioneers who considered the reading process from a psycholinguistic perspective. Their ideas were so innovative that some prominent current theories derived from theirs, such as Eskey's and Rumelhart's 'interactive approach', Stanovich's 'Interactive-compensatory model', and Anderson & Pearson's 'Schematheoretic' view of the reading process. The chapter also briefly mentioned another dimension in which reading is studied: the sociocultural dimension.

The main problem when one studies reading is that although it is an active process it is still a receptive skill which makes it extremely difficult to understand the phenomenon that takes place inside the head.

The reading phenomenon cannot be fragmented and explained as it has been up to now. It cannot be explained solely according to psycholinguistic or sociocultural perspectives. Reading comprehension must be considered as a holistic phenomenon - it involves psycholinguistic as well as sociocultural aspects. It involves the intention of the reader as well as that of the writer. Reading still raises many questions which remain unanswered owing to the limitations of the theories that are available. Huey⁵ came to the following conclusion:

To completely analyze what we do when we read would almost be the acme of a psychologist's dream for it would be to describe very many of the most intricate workings of the human mind, as well as to unravel the tangled story of the most remarkable specific performance that civilization has learned in all its history.

Smith, Otto and Hansen (1978:19-20) humorously comment on the attempts scholars have made to build theories of the reading process by citing the following poem:

*It was six men of Hindustan,
to learning much inclined,
who went to see the elephant,
(though all of them were blind);
that each by observation
might satisfy his mind.
And so these men of Hindustan
disputed loud and long,
each of his own opinion
exceeding stiff and strong,
though each was partly in the right,
and all were in the wrong!*

by John Godfred Saxe

⁵ Huey, 1968 (quoted by Anderson & Pearson, 1988, p.37)

3. TESTING

3.1. *The State of the Art in Language Testing*

Language testing has changed considerably in the last forty years. Having passed through phases such as the psychometric-structuralist and psycholinguistic-sociolinguistic era, testing has now entered a new era, the communicative paradigm.

3.1.1. Testing from the 40's to the 60's

Weir (1990:02) states that during the 2nd World War a new era emerged for the testing of second languages: the psychometric-structuralist era. Baker (1989:35) observes that "from the structuralist descriptions of language theorists took the hierarchial analysis of language for the purpose of teaching and testing. From psychometric testing theory it borrowed the discrete-point 'objective' test formats and the statistical apparatus used for test development." Hughes (1994: 16) defines discrete point testing as an instrument which measures one element of a language at a time, item by item. Weir (1990:02) sees some advantages in testing 'discrete' linguistic points:

- 1) They are easily quantifiable;
- 2) They allow a wide coverage of items;
- 3) Scores based on discrete-point items are reliable owing to their objectivity.

Oller (1986 : 212) outlines the disadvantages of this kind of testing:

Discrete point analysis necessarily breaks the elements of language apart and tries to teach them (or test them) separately with little or no attention to the way those elements interact in a larger context of communication. What makes it ineffective as a basis for teaching or testing languages is that crucial properties of language are lost when its elements are separated. The fact is that in any system where the parts interact to produce properties and qualities organisational constraints themselves become crucial properties of the system which simply cannot be found in the part separately.

3.1.2. Testing in the 70's

Since discrete point tests were considered inadequate as indicators of language proficiency, another kind of test gained support: the integrative test (Weir, 1990:03). The psycholinguistic-sociolinguistic approach viewed integrative testing as an instrument which measured the ability to unite disparate language skills in ways which more closely approximated the actual process of language use. Oller (1986: 37) states that:

The concept of an integrative test was born in contrast to the definition of a discrete point test. If discrete items take language skill apart, integrative tests put it back together. Whereas discrete items attempt to test knowledge of language one bit at a time, integrative tests attempt to assess a learner's capacity to use many bits all at the same time, and possibly while exercising several presumed components of a grammatical system, and perhaps more than one of the traditionally recognized skills or aspects of skills.

'Holistic' test procedures such as oral interviews, compositions, cloze tests and dictations were considered by Oller (1986:37) as global integrative tests due to the fact that they went beyond the measurement of a limited part of language competence.

However, there are many theorists who are critical of integrative tests. Weir (1990:5-6) supports the idea that the cloze test and dictation do not elicit spontaneous production from the testee, and the language norms used are not the testee's, but the examiner's. He also claims that both types of tests measure knowledge of the language system and not the ability to operate it in a real-life situation. In other words, these tests tell us about a candidate's linguistic competence and not about his performance ability.

Alderson (1980:59) questions the reliability of cloze tests. Based on the results of his research he showed that testees' scores on a cloze test are affected by altering the point where the deletions are started from, or by using a different n/th rate deletion.

Davies (1981:182), also points out the deficiencies of integrative tests:

Although Oller has claimed that his integrative tests represent total language proficiency better than any other single test or combination of tests, this is not in itself an argument in favor of the unitary competence hypothesis, as measures such as cloze and dictation are so integrative that they contain most or all language abilities anyway. High correlations between cloze and other measures may only reflect that they are measuring different skills which are highly correlated among individuals; however, this does not mean that there will be no individuals whose performances in the various skills differ considerably.

The controversies which arose from discrete-point and integrative tests gave way to a new approach to language testing: communicative testing.

3.1.3. Testing in the 80's and 90's

According to Bachman (1991), the 1980's and 90's could be characterized as decades of 'communicative testing'. There is a shift in emphasis from the linguistic to the communicative dimension. The emphasis is no longer on linguistic accuracy, but on the ability to function effectively through language in particular contexts or situations.

Weir (1990:9) demonstrates where communicative testing stands by stating:

Communicative testing, as well as being concerned with what the learner knows about the form of the language and about how to use it appropriately in contexts of use (competence), must also deal with the extent to which the learner is actually able to demonstrate this knowledge in a meaningful communicative situation (performance), i.e. what he can do with the language - his ability to communicate with ease and effect in specified sociolinguistic settings.

Madsen (1983:7) also defines communicative testing as exams which combine various subskills. "In particular, communicative tests need to measure more than isolated language skills: they should indicate how well a person can function in his second language."

For Hughes (1994:19-20) communicative testing should occur when there is a need to measure the ability to take part in acts of communication (including reading and listening).

Baker (1989:77) defines communicative testing as 'the direct performance-referenced test'. For him, this kind of test involves near-simulation of some future or potential activity and results of the test can be used to predict the candidate's ability to perform that or similar tasks in the future.

A major problem the test writer faces when constructing and applying a communicative test is lack of reliability (see 3.2.2). Although this kind of test has high validity (see 3.2.1), it lacks reliability. Weir (1990:15) observes:

Other than serious marker reliability problems, associated with the assessment of performance, the major issue affecting an adoption of a 'communicative' approach to language testing is the generalisability of the results produced by a test.

All the tests referred to above have some sort of problem: they either lack validity, or reliability, or practicality. In the following section we will examine these concepts and their importance when deciding how to test our students.

3. 2. *Validity, reliability and practicality*

3.2.1. The concept of validity

Good evaluation of our tests can help us measure students' skills more accurately. It can also help us find out if the tests are suitable in relation to our teaching approach. The quality of our exams is intimately related to the effort we make to verify if they are valid. A valid test is one that in fact measures what it claims to be measuring. When closely examined, however, the concept of validity can be divided into basically four aspects - content validity, criterion-related validity, construct validity and face validity. There is also a phenomenon called the washback effect. Although all these

aspects of test quality are interrelated, for the sake of clarity, each of them will be considered separately.

3.2.1.1. Content validity

According to Hughes (1994:22) a test is said to have content validity if its content constitutes a representative sample of the language skills, structures, etc., with which it is meant to be concerned. Anastasi (1961:135) provides a set of useful guidelines for establishing content validity:

- 1) The behaviour domain to be tested must be systematically analysed to make certain that all major aspects are covered by the test items, and in the correct proportions;
- 2) The domain under consideration should be fully described in advance, rather than being defined after the test has been prepared;
- 3) Content validity depends on the relevance of the individual's test responses to the behaviour area under consideration, rather than on the apparent relevance of item content.

The directness of fit and adequacy of the test sample is thus dependent on the quality of the description of the target language behaviour being tested. Therefore, the best safeguard against items which might undermine content validity is to write full test specifications and to ensure that the test content is a fair reflection of these.

3.2.1.2. Construct validity

The main question a test-writer asks when checking construct validity is: "What does this test really measure?" Undoubtedly, this question is not easy to answer since not all language abilities are directly observable.

Hughes (1994:26) defines construct validity as follows:

A test, part of a test, or a testing technique is said to have construct validity if it can be demonstrated that it measures just the ability (not the content) which it is supposed to measure. The word 'construct' refers to any underlying ability (or trait) which is hypothesised in a theory of language ability.

Bachman (1991:254) points out that 'construct validity concerns the extent to which performance on tests is consistent with predictions that we make on the basis of a theory of abilities, or constructs.' Alderson (1995:183) views this concept as follows:

The term construct refers to a psychological construct, a theoretical conceptualisation about an aspect of human behaviour that cannot be measured or observed directly. Examples of constructs are intelligence, achievement motivation, anxiety, achievement, attitude, dominance, and reading comprehension. Construct validation is the process of gathering evidence to support the contention that a given test indeed measures the psychological construct the makers intend it to measure. The goal is to assure that the scores mean what we expect them to mean.

Construct validity is a central concern of this dissertation, since what is being questioned is the construct validity of multiple-choice and cloze tests, i.e. are they really good instruments for measuring reading comprehension?

3.2.1.3. Criterion-related validity

According to Weir (1990:27), criterion-related validity is a predominantly quantitative and a *a posteriori* concept, concerned with the extent to which test scores correlate with a suitable external criterion of performance. Criterion-related validity is divided into two types:

a) concurrent validity - "where the test scores are correlated with another measure of performance, usually an older established test, taken at the same time"(Weir 1990:27). Hughes (1994:23) gives an example of concurrent validity. For instance, forty-five students have to take an oral test based on fifty functions which were taught during a language course. It would be impractical to spend more than an hour with each student to make sure they were proficient in all the fifty functions. Therefore, a concurrent validation is necessary. A ten-minute oral exam is given to all students. Only the most representative functions are covered. Then, a sample of students are chosen (at random) and take the full hour test covering all the fifty functions, using four or five scorers to

ensure reliable scoring. This would be the criterion test against which the shorter test would be judged. The students' full score would be compared with the scores they got on the ten-minute test. If the comparison of the two tests shows a high level of agreement, then the shorter version of the test may be considered a valid test. If the comparison shows a low level of agreement, then the shorter version of the test must be re-examined.

b) predictive validity - "where test scores are correlated with some future criterion of performance" (Weir 1990:27). Hughes (1994:25) gives as an example of predictive validity the extent to which a proficiency test predicts a student's ability to cope with a graduate course at a British university.

3.2.1.4. Face validity

This is a much more subjective and less scientific aspect of validity than content and construct validity. According to Hughes (1994:27) a test is said to have face validity if it looks as if it measures what it is supposed to measure. This inevitably involves the judgement of both the tester and testees. The more face validity the test has, the more motivation the testees will have to take it and to rely on it as a trustworthy instrument of evaluation. If a test lacks face validity it may not be accepted by candidates, teachers, educators, as a valid test, even though it may actually have high content, construct and criterion-related validity.

Anastasi (1961:138) points out that face validity

is not validity in the technical sense; it refers, not to what the test actually measures, but to what it appears superficially to measure. Face validity pertains to whether the test 'looks valid' to the examinees who take it, the administrative personnel who decide on its use, and other technically untrained observers. Fundamentally, the question of face validity concerns rapport and public relations.

However, problems might arise. A test might have high face validity but lack construct or content validity. Another problem might be when teachers and test-writers consider a test to have face validity, but the test-takers do not or vice-versa.

Washback effect

Washback is concerned with how the test result produces change on the teaching and learning which precedes it. Heaton (1990:16) explains that washback is a phenomenon which occurs when educators are geared to adapting their teaching very closely to the examinations which students will face in the future. Therefore students are trained during a language course with the objective of passing an examination. Examples of this effect are the preparatory courses for the 'TOEFL' ('Test of English as a Foreign Language' - designed by The Educational Testing Service, College Entrance Examination Board), 'The Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency' (designed by University of Michigan) and 'The Certificate of Proficiency in English' (designed by University of Cambridge - Local Examination Syndicate).

3.2.2. The concept of reliability

Unless a test is reliable it cannot be valid. When we consider reliability we have a question in mind: how far can we depend on the results that a test produces, i.e. could the same results be produced consistently? The objective of reliability is to produce a test which has very similar scores if the same test is applied to similar (or even the same) population at different times. The more similar the scores are, the more reliable the test is. Reliability is concerned with such issues as:

- 1) will the same marker give the same grade to the same test at different times?
- 2) will different markers give the same scores at the same time?
- 3) will the test enable testees to score the same at different times?

There are three common methods used by test writers to estimate reliability. The test-retest method, the equivalent forms method, and the split-half (Brown, 1993:99). The test-retest method is estimated by administering the same test twice to one group of subjects and then calculating a correlation coefficient between the pairs of scores from the two administrations. The equivalent form method consists of administering two equivalent tests to one group of subjects and calculating the correlation coefficient between the scores. The *split-half method* consists of scoring separately the even-numbered and odd-numbered items on a test and then calculating the correlation between these two subtests. Finally the resulting coefficient is adjusted for full-test reliability using the Spearman-Brown prophecy formula. This kind of method is applicable to discrete-point tests because the test items must have equal means and variances, i.e. the items have to be measuring the same ability or trait.

3.2.3. Practicality

In addition to validity and reliability, a good test must also be practical. This means that it should be usable within the limits of time and budget available. It should have a high degree of cost effectiveness. For instance, a test might be very long and would therefore require too much time for the students to take it and for the teacher to correct it. Another example of an impractical test would be a 30-minute individual interview to measure oral performance of a large number of people, with only a few

examiners available. A possible solution would be to either have a group interview, or a shorter individual interview.

3.2.4. The dilemma of validity, reliability and practicality

Validation would be of little use unless care has also been taken over test reliability. A test can be reliable without being valid; however, the contrary is not true. In order for a test to be valid it must be reliable. This leads to a dilemma: Weir (1990:33) states that sometimes it is essential to sacrifice a degree of reliability in order to increase validity. If, however, validity is sacrificed to increase reliability, we finish up with a test which is a reliable measure of something other than what we wish to measure. Now if a test becomes valid and to a certain degree reliable, but not practical, then this test must also be re-examined. It is hard to achieve a high level of all three qualities at the same time.

The dilemma can be visualized as follows:

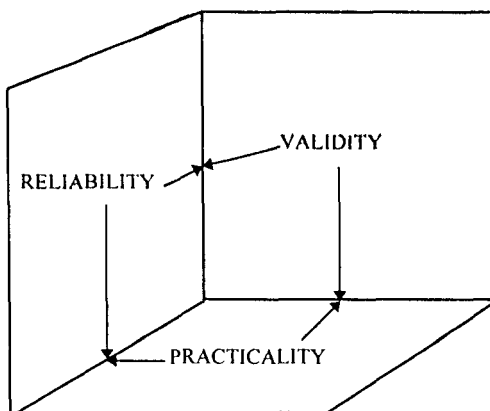


Figure 10 : The three-fold dilemma of validity, reliability and practicality

The figure above shows that a test should have an equal balance of the concepts of validation, reliability, validity and practicality, even if one of them has to be lowered to achieve the equilibrium of validation. For instance, a multiple-choice test might have high reliability and practicality, but might have low validity. On the other hand, an 30 minute oral interview might have high reliability and validity, but have low practicality. In both cases an adjustment has to be made somewhere to correct the imbalance.

3.3. The multiple-choice test

3.3.1. Characteristics

The multiple-choice test is one of the most popular test item types among teachers and institutions. When answering a multiple-choice item, a testee has to choose an answer from a number of alternatives offered. There are commonly from 3 to 5 alternatives or options for each question, only one of which is the correct answer, the remainder being called 'distractors'. Distractors are alternatives intended to distract the attention of a weak testee: a candidate who is not prepared to answer the questions will fall into the trap of the distractors and answer them incorrectly.

Multiple-choice is suitable for questions which may be anywhere on a concept from discrete to integrative. They are discrete-point items when they aim at one and only one linguistic point such as the meaning of a particular word. However, they are integrative items when they aim at measuring several skills and/or sub-skills simultaneously: For instance, certain items in a reading test may require the testee to

make use of various abilities such as knowledge of vocabulary, knowledge of morphology, syntax, structure, etc.

Multiple-choice has the advantage of being highly reliable. Hughes (1994:59) refers to multiple-choice as a type of test whose scoring is perfectly reliable. Weir (1990:43) says that "multiple-choice tests are not only applicable to the construction of tests of listening comprehension, structure and vocabulary, but also reading." For him, multiple-choice items have the advantage that "there is almost complete marker reliability."

On the other hand, multiple-choice tests are very hard to write. Weir (1990:43) warns that "a large number of items have to be written carefully by item writers who have been specially trained and these then have to be pre-tested before use in a formal examination". Hughes (1994:43) says that good multiple-choice items are notoriously difficult to write and always require extensive pretesting. Oller (1986:237-9) too claims that a multiple-choice test is extremely difficult to write. He says (1986:237-9) that

"the first problem in writing multiple-choice items is to decide what sort of items to write. The second problem is to write the items with suitable distractors in each set of alternatives. In both steps there are many pitfalls...during the writing stage, each item must be evaluated for appropriateness of content."

According to Oller (1986: 238-39), a test writer should therefore have the following questions in mind while preparing a multiple-choice test:

- i) Does this item ask for information that people would normally be expected to pay attention to in the discourse context in question?
- ii) Is the decision that is required one that really seems to exercise the skill that the test as a whole is aimed at measuring?
- iii) Is the correct choice really the best choice for someone who is good at the skill being measured?
- iv) Are the distractors actually attractive traps for someone who is not so good at the skill in question?
- v) Are they well balanced in the sense of going together as a set?
- vi) Do they avoid the inclusion of blatant clues to the correct choice?
- vii) Is the item a well-conceived basis for a choice between clear alternatives?

Therefore, achieving validity is an exhausting task. However, if it is achieved reliability is also guaranteed.

3.3.2. Advantages and disadvantages

According to Weir (1990:43-44), Hughes (1994:59-62) and Oller (1986:233-245) there are many points to consider before choosing a multiple-choice test as an evaluation device. The advantages are:

- 1) There is almost complete marker reliability. Since it is an objective type of test, the testee's mark cannot be affected by the personal judgement of a marker;
- 2) Besides being reliable, the marking is also simple, more rapid and often more cost effective than other forms of written tests.
- 3) The format of the multiple-choice test provides clear and unequivocal items. Because of this feature the testee knows exactly what is required of him.
- 4) Multiple-choice tests, when used to measure reading comprehension, seem to measure the skill in focus. A testee has to mark an 'X' to answer; he does not have to make use of other abilities such as writing the correct answer or giving answers orally.
- 5) The point of constructing a multiple-choice test is to attain greater economy of administration and scoring.

Despite these positive features of multiple-choice tests, there are a larger number of disadvantages, which are listed below:

- 1) A testee might get an answer wrong not because he did not know the answer, but because there was some kind of flaw in either the stem or alternatives. Frequently the

tester uses an answer sheet to correct the test and overlooks possible problems the test might present.

2) It is much more difficult and time-consuming to prepare a multiple-choice test. Besides selecting the items carefully, a test writer must also choose appropriate distractors, and finally a serious professional should, before using it officially, pre-test it and then carry out an item analysis.

3) Multiple-choice is not considered to be a communicative task, as in real-life one is rarely, if ever, presented with four alternatives forms from which to make a choice to signal understanding.

4) Cheating may be facilitated. Because the responses on a multiple-choice test may be a, b, c, or d and therefore are simple to mark, it is also easy to give the answers nonverbally to another testee.

5) Testees have a possibility of guessing the correct alternative.

6) Multiple-choice tests might evoke the use of test-wisness strategies by 'wise and trained' test takers. According to Allan (1992:101)

test-wisness is the ability to use test-taking strategies to select the correct response in multiple-choice tests, without necessarily knowing the content or using the skill that is being tested. Test-wisness is therefore a source of test invalidity.

The testee might thus use test-wisness strategies instead of using reading strategies to get satisfactory scores. Some examples of test-wisness strategies are:

i) eliminating options which are known to be incorrect and choosing from among the remaining options. Allan (1992:111) gives the following example:

Mount Reid is a mountain peak in the
 *(a) Klondike Range
 (b) Great Plains
 (c) Sahara Desert
 (d) Canadian Prairie

Some testees might recognize that plains, desert and prairie are not commonly associated with mountains.

ii) choosing neither of two options which mean the same thing. Allan's (1992:113) example would be:

A mental disorder which is often classified as a neurosis is:

- * (a) hysteria
- (b) dementia praecox
- (c) schizophrenia
- (d) involuntional melancholia

If the testee is familiar with the subject matter he will notice that (b) and (c) mean the same thing, and since they cannot both be right, they must both be wrong.

iii) choosing one of two statements which contradict one another, for example:

Croesus was famous for

- * (a) his extreme wealth
- (b) his extreme poverty
- (c) conquering many countries
- (d) governing his people justly (p113-4)

Alternative (a), if correct, implies the incorrectness of alternative (b), and vice versa. There is a good chance that one of them is the correct answer.

Allan (1992:190) reports his findings of a number of test-wiseness techniques. He claims that these techniques can be avoided provided tests are well-written and piloted. However, most language tests are not designed by good test writers, but by 'harassed teachers'. "Therefore, because teacher-made tests are not significantly validated or pretested they are vulnerable to test-wise examinees".

As described above, the multiple-choice test presents a large number of disadvantages which can weaken its validity.

3.4. The cloze test

3.4.1. Characteristics

W.L. Taylor is responsible for the technique and the coinage of the word 'cloze'. The word 'cloze', which is a spelling corruption of the word 'close', was chosen to refer to the process of closure defined by Gestalt psychologists. The principle behind this theory is that when words are deleted from a text, filling in the blanks by guessing the missing words is a special kind of closure, which is why the technique is called 'cloze'. (Oller, 1986:340)

There are basically two types of the cloze procedure. In the traditional procedure we never choose which words we want to omit: we delete the words systematically. First, we decide on the length of the interval between the missing words: we choose whether we want to delete every 5th, 6th, 7th,...12th word - and we keep strictly to that number. The testee's job is to read the text and try to fill in the blanks with the word which is missing.

Another type of cloze test, which can be considered a variation on the traditional type, is called 'selective deletion gap filling', or 'rational cloze'. In this kind of test the words to be deleted are selected on the basis of what is known about language, about difficulty in the text and about the way language works in a particular text. Linguistic reasoning is used to decide on deletions and so it is easier to state what each test is intended to measure.

Oller (1986:348-53) is an advocate of the cloze procedure as being an excellent instrument to measure not only the readability of a text, but also students' level

of proficiency and reading comprehension. Alderson (1978:225), on the other hand, is critical of them, claiming that in his research he found that, depending on the deletion rate and which word is used as the starting point, a tester gets significantly different marks for the same tests.

Although the validity (see 3.2.1) of the cloze technique is controversial among researchers, it is still used for comprehension tests. Heaton (1994:90) says that "cloze tests measure students' general reading comprehension rather than their understanding of certain features in the text." Oller (1986:357), who is a loyal supporter of cloze tests, claims that "ever since Taylor's first studies in 1953, it has been known that cloze scores were good indices of reading comprehension." Bormuth⁶ states that "cloze tests are valid and uniform measures of reading comprehension ability." Hughes (1994:129) however, argues that "while cloze tests obviously involve reading to quite a high degree, it is not clear that reading ability is all that they measure."

Although cloze tests arouse great controversy about whether or not they are an efficient instrument to measure reading comprehension, they are referred to as reading comprehension instruments in most bibliographies (Hughes, 1994; Weir, 1990; Heaton, 1994). Before deciding whether to adopt a cloze test or not one must therefore consider the advantages and disadvantages carefully to see whether this kind of test will meet his expectancies.

⁶ Bormuth, 1962 (quoted by Weir, 1990:46)

3.4.2. Advantages and disadvantages

Weir (1990), Hughes (1994:62-71) and Oller (1986) comment on the advantages and disadvantages of the cloze procedure. According to these authors, cloze tests have the following advantages:

- 1) Cloze tests are easy to construct and easy to score (if exact word scoring is adopted).
- 2) If a fifth word deletion rate is chosen, it will allow the tester to evaluate a large number of items from one short text.
- 3) It is an excellent instrument to measure the reading difficulty level of a text.
- 4) It is more difficult to cheat on a cloze test than on a multiple-choice test.

The disadvantages are:

- 1) Although many researchers are favorable towards the cloze procedure, many other researchers question its validity, claiming that it is not clear what the cloze test really measures.
- 2) If a tester varies the deletion rate procedure, the scores of the test might vary considerably.
- 3) Hughes (1994:65) asks why, if the cloze procedure is really a valid and reliable test, do intelligent and educated native speakers vary quite considerably in their ability to predict the missing words? Some of them do less well than many non-native speakers.
- 4) Weir (1990:48) and Alderson (1978:225) claim that the cloze procedure seems to produce more successful tests of syntax and lexis at sentence level than of reading comprehension in general or of inferential or deductive abilities, which might be termed higher order abilities. The cloze procedure seems to be essentially sentence-bound.

5) It is not clear what a cloze test measures nor is it easy to predict what performance a testee will be capable of in real-life on the basis of cloze scores.

6) The exact word scoring procedure might be unfair if some testees are able to produce a better text than the original one, and hence use different words which would fit the blanks perfectly. Adopting the criterion of semantic acceptability may lower reliability, however.

3.5. Final comments

In this chapter we made a brief review of recent trends in language testing and the different kinds of test which have been developed. Before concentrating on multiple-choice and cloze tests, which are the object of this study, we also reviewed validity, reliability and practicality, which are important features to consider in order to measure how effective and efficient a test is.

The research, which was carried out during the months of December/95 and January/96, enabled me to produce an inventory of the strategies - high and low level reading comprehension strategies, test-wisness strategies - a testee uses in order to answer multiple-choice and cloze tests. In the next chapter, we describe the research which was carried out in order to draw up this inventory .

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. *The subjects*

Twenty-three Brazilian informants who have the Cambridge Proficiency Certificate were asked to take three multiple-choice tests and one cloze test, and to answer two questionnaires - one for each type of test. The informants did not have any previous knowledge about the purpose of the study.

It was decided that only people who had the Cambridge Proficiency Certificate would be subjects of the study because we wanted to avoid a problem that might arise if this variable were not controlled. The inventory of strategies used in multiple-choice and cloze tests would be useless if one could argue that the strategies used by the testees were due to poor reading skills. Only proficient English speakers, readers, writers and listeners pass this examination and therefore, only efficient readers took the tests.

The methodological approach which was used in this dissertation was basically similar to that used by Cohen (1984). His data was collected through a verbal self-report, whereas in this research the data was collected through written self-report.

4.2. *The tests*

4.2.1. *The multiple-choice tests*

Three multiple-choice tests were chosen from 'the University of Cambridge International Examinations'- Certificate of Proficiency in English - June 16, 1993 (see appendix 2 p.101). The first text (see appendix 2 p.102) - passage one (406 words) - was

about the relationship between an old man and his child; the second text (see appendix 2 p.104) - passage two (333 words) - was about the writing process; the third text (see appendix 2 p.106) - passage three (351 words) - was about TV advertisements. Each text was followed by 5 multiple-choice questions, each question containing 4 alternatives of which only one was the correct answer. By the end of the three multiple-choice tests each informant had therefore answered a total of 15 questions.

Some undesirable variables were controlled as follows:

- 1) We made sure that the topics of the tests were familiar to all the informants, i.e. the content was part of the testees' knowledge of the world. This avoided a situation where testees made mistakes not because they did not know how to read, but because they did not know enough about the subject.
- 2) The tests were taken from the Cambridge Proficiency Examinations because they are valid and reliable tests. Any multiple-choice test, before officially being used as a test, needs to go through a validation process which consists of pre-testing (the test maker prepares a test and has it piloted); item analysis, (the test maker analyses each alternative correcting any faults found). The Cambridge Proficiency Examination goes through a thorough validation process before being used throughout the world, which is the reason why these tests were chosen.

4.2.2. The cloze test

For the cloze test we used a text selected from the Cambridge Proficiency Examinations. However, the deletion procedure was altered: the Cambridge Proficiency test followed a rational deletion criterion also called 'variable-ratio method' (Oller 1986:345). According to Weir (1990:48) this criterion is used when items are selected for

deletion based on what is known about language, about text difficulty and about the way language works in a particular text. Since the intention of this research was to deal with the fixed-ratio method (Oller - 1986:345), i.e. when the deletion rate is mechanically set, usually between every fifth and eleventh word, we decided to keep the text and change the rational criterion to fixed-ratio deletion, deleting every 6th word. Twenty words were deleted. The first sentence as well as the last two were left intact so that the testee could have a better idea of what the text was about. The topic was about 'Illiteracy' (219 words), which can be assumed to be part of the testees' knowledge of the world (see appendix 03 p.108). The informants were instructed to fill in the blanks with only one word and to read the whole text before starting to answer it. Since none of the texts were on topics unfamiliar to the testees we assume that they were not extremely difficult, such that the reader could not understand the message.

4.3. The questionnaire

Together with the tests a separate handout (see appendix 1 p.92) was designed with the following information:

- a) Instructions about what was expected from the informants, i.e. they would have to read the texts, answer the questions in the multiple-choice tests and fill in the blanks in the cloze. As soon as they finished each test, they had to go to the handout and write about how they arrived at each answer, i.e. the mental process they went through in order to answer the questions or fill in the blanks.
- b) Directly after the instructions, there was a guideline containing questions which showed the subjects some possible procedures someone may adopt when reading, and some other procedures a test-wise candidate may adopt when taking a test. They were

asked to use the guideline just for reference: they were not supposed to answer the questions. Both the instructions and guidelines came before the space provided for the testees to write their comments on each item. There was one set of instructions and guidelines for the multiple-choice tests and another set for the cloze test. This part was read out loud together with the informants so they could ask any questions about the task they would have to perform. They were also instructed not to stop in the middle of a test - they had to take one test and soon afterwards write about each question. Breaks between tests were allowed.

4.4. Criteria adopted for scoring the tests

4.4.1. Criterion for the multiple-choice tests

Since there was only one correct answer for each question, the criterion was to consider correct the answers which were officially chosen by the Cambridge Proficiency Examination board.

4.4.2. Criterion adopted for the cloze test

The informants' performance in the cloze test was measured not by the exact word method but by the acceptable word method, i.e. any word which was grammatically, semantically and stylistically suitable was considered correct.⁷

⁷ An experienced British EFL professor, Michael Alan Watkins-UFPR, judged which words were acceptable or not in the cloze test.

4.5. Data analysis and identification of strategies

The answers from the open questionnaires from both tests were analysed as follows:

1. The answers were classified according to whether they were correct or incorrect.
2. Frequency distributions of correct and incorrect answers for the two test methods were established.
3. Procedures used by subjects were identified and listed.
4. The frequency of occurrence of each procedure was measured.
5. These procedures were then classified into two main categories: reading micro-skills and test-wisness techniques (the criteria adopted to classify the procedures can be found on page55)
6. Flow-charts for each test method was constructed to show how the micro-skills and test-wisness techniques were combined to form strategies.
7. The two test methods were compared to identify similarities and differences in the micro-skills and test-wisness techniques.
8. The two test methods were also compared to identify similarities and differences in strategies.
9. Reading processes widely accepted by theoreticians were compared with strategies used by test-takers in order to answer multiple-choice tests to identify similarities and differences.
10. The same reading processes were then compared with strategies used by test-takers in order to answer cloze tests to identify similarities and differences.
11. Based on steps 9 and 10, the construct validity of the two test methods was evaluated.

4.6. Definition of terms

a. **Micro-skills:** The term adopted in this dissertation was taken from Munby's "Communicative syllabus design" (1981:40-1). The word 'skill', in language learning and language teaching, is used both as a macro and as a micro-concept. As a macro-concept, 'skill' is related to the four language abilities: speaking, listening, reading and writing, whereas a 'micro-skill' is a term used to refer to the individual processes and abilities which are used in carrying out a complex activity (in the case of reading, a complex activity carried out would be comprehending a text). The term 'micro-skill' is distinguished here from the macro-skill of an activity, to which its relation is that of enabling factor to resultant activity.

b. **Strategy:** The definition of 'strategy' which is used in this dissertation is the same as that posited by Van Dijk (1983:64). For him, "a strategy is the idea of an agent about the best way to act in order to reach a goal"; therefore, a strategy, in the case of taking a reading comprehension test, is the sequence of two or more micro-skills in order to reach a correct answer. For example, in order to comprehend a text, a reader may use micro-skills such as skimming to obtain the gist of the text, scanning to locate specifically required information, understanding relations between parts of a text through lexical cohesion devices and others (see Munby 1978:123-131).

c. **Test-wiseness techniques.** According to the Dictionary of Language Teaching & Applied Linguistics "test-wiseness is a test-taking skill which enables a person to do well on certain kinds of test by using their familiarity with the characteristics and formats of tests to help them arrive at the correct answer. For example, in taking a reading comprehension test based on multiple choice questions, a testee may analyze the

alternatives given, eliminating unlikely choices, until only one remains, and then choose this as the correct answer.”

The criteria used to distinguish micro-skills from test-wiseness techniques were the following:

- a. The procedures were considered micro-skills when they were identical to those established by Munby (1978).
- b. The procedures were considered test-wiseness techniques when they were identical to those established by Allan (1992), or when they fitted the definition given in the Dictionary of Language Teaching & Applied Linguistics.

5. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The results of this study will be presented as follows: for both tests, multiple-choice and cloze, first the frequency distribution of correct and incorrect answers and the general index of correct and incorrect answers will be presented. Secondly, the reading micro-skills and test-wiseness techniques which were used by the test-takers in order to answer the two tests will be identified and explained. Thirdly, for each type of test, a flow-chart will be shown of strategies the informants reported that they used in order to come to a conclusion and answer the questions correctly. Fourthly, both types of tests will be compared to detect the similarities and differences between them in terms of micro-skills, test-wiseness techniques and strategies. Finally, current reading processes widely accepted by theoreticians will be compared with strategies used by test-takers in order to answer multiple-choice and cloze tests to verify similarities and differences among them and thereby evaluate these tests' degree of construct validity.

5.1. MULTIPLE-CHOICE TESTS

5.1.1. Frequency distribution of correct and incorrect answers achieved by informants and their average index of correct and incorrect answers

As mentioned above, there were three multiple-choice tests. Each test consisted of a text and five questions with four alternatives for each question (see appendix 2 pg.101). There were thus 15 questions to be answered, and since there were 23 informants, a total of 345 answers to be analyzed.

Table 1 shows the frequency scores of the correct and incorrect answers and their respective percentages.

Table 1: Informants' general correct and incorrect answer index in multiple-choice tests.

QUESTIONS#	CORRECT ANSWERS		INCORRECT ANSWERS		TOTAL FREQUENCY SCORES
	FREQUENCY SCORES	%	FREQUENCY SCORES	%	
1	18	78.26	05	21.74	23
2	08	34.78	15	65.22	23
3	14	60.87	09	39.13	23
4	17	73.92	06	26.08	23
5	15	65.22	08	34.78	23
6	14	60.87	09	39.13	23
7	22	95.65	01	04.35	23
8	09	39.13	14	60.87	23
9	17	73.92	06	26.08	23
10	17	73.92	06	26.08	23
11	06	26.09	17	73.91	23
12	18	78.26	05	21.74	23
13	23	100	00	00	23
14	14	60.87	09	39.13	23
15	16	69.57	07	30.43	23
TOTAL	228	66.09	117	33.91	345

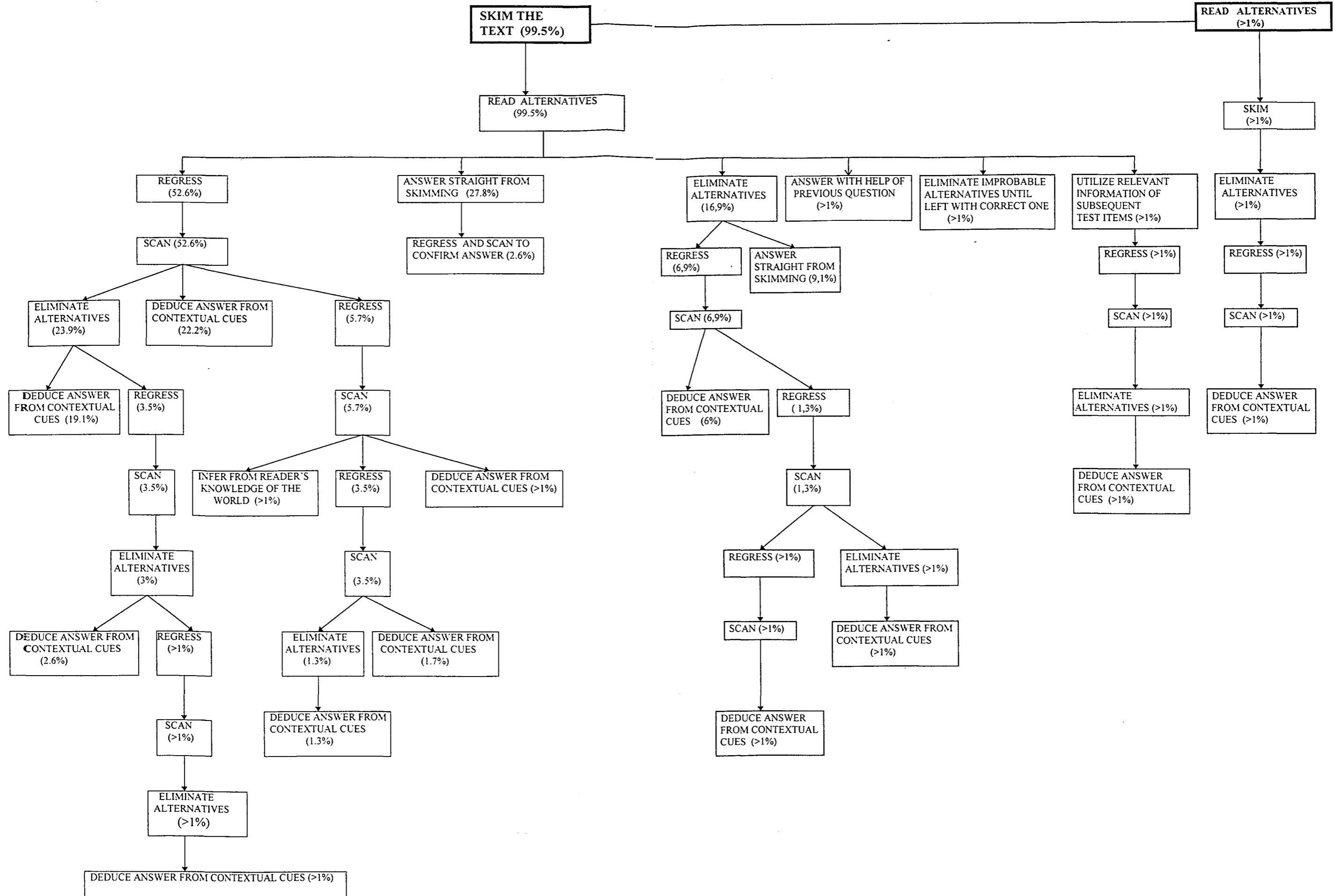
In the last line of the table, we have the total number of correct and incorrect answers and the general index of correct answers: 66.09 compared with 33.91% wrong answers.

5.1.2. A flow-chart of the strategies used by the test-takers in order to arrive at the correct answers in the multiple-choice tests.

In chapter one, we saw that, in order to comprehend a text while reading, the reader has to make use of micro-skills in a sequence to form a strategy, and that depending on the strategy a reader uses he will comprehend the text successfully or not.

In this chapter, we will show how the micro-skills and test-wiseness techniques were combined to form strategies.

FLOW CHART 1: STRATEGIES USED IN MULTIPLE CHOICE TESTS



5.1.2.1. Micro-skills and test-wiseness techniques used in multiple-choice tests

Flow-chart 1 shows all the micro-skills and test-wiseness techniques the test-takers used in order to compose their strategies and arrive at the correct answers. These micro-skills and test-wiseness techniques are defined below. We will then explain how they were combined to form strategies.

a) **SKIMMING**: we are *skimming* when we run our eyes over the text, searching for the main points of the text, i.e. its general idea. Skimming, which is a micro-skill, is commonly used while taking a multiple-choice test because the test-taker has to have an idea of what the text is about before actually searching for specific information which may help him answer the questions.

b) **READING STEMS/ALTERNATIVES BEFORE SKIMMING**: while taking a multiple-choice test, some test-takers prefer to read all the stems together with their alternatives before actually reading the text. They probably adopted this test-wiseness technique in order to start reading the text with a specific purpose: trying to identify in the text where probable answers to those items can be found. This technique saves time since the test-taker knows beforehand what he is reading for.

c) **READING STEMS/ALTERNATIVES AFTER SKIMMING**: after having skimmed the text, some test-takers adopt this test-wiseness technique: they generally go back to a stem and its alternatives so that they are able to either answer it straightaway or get more information to narrow down the possibilities. They then return to the text and look for specific information which may lead them to find the correct alternative.

d) **REGRESSION**: this micro-skill seems to serve a different purpose from the original term used by Frank Smith (Chapter 1 pg.7). When taking a multiple-choice test, the test-taker sometimes needs to go back to parts of the text in order to look for specific information which can lead him to find enough cues in the text to choose the correct alternative.

e) **ANSWER WITH HELP OF PREVIOUS QUESTIONS**: this test-wiseness technique consists of finding enough cues to answer a question on the basis of other questions which have already been answered.

f) **ANSWER STRAIGHT FROM SKIMMING**: some informants skimmed the text once just to get the gist of it and were able to remember enough to choose the correct alternative right after '*reading the question/alternatives after skimming*'. Of course this test-wiseness technique depends upon the nature of the question. If the item requires specific/detailed information, the informants most probably will have regressed and scanned to look for it instead of '*answering straight from skimming*'. However if the item requires knowledge of the general idea of the text, then the test-taker may use this micro-skill in order to answer it. This does not mean that only items related to the general idea of the test are answered straightaway. Questions about details of the text might also be answered straight from skimming if the test-taker is able to remember specific parts of the text.

g) **UTILIZE RELEVANT INFORMATION FROM SUBSEQUENT TEST ITEMS AND ALTERNATIVES**: this test-wiseness technique consists of searching for cues in subsequent stems/alternatives in order to find specific information to help them reach the correct alternative.

h) ELIMINATE ALL THE IMPROBABLE ALTERNATIVES UNTIL ONE IS LEFT WITH THE CORRECT ANSWER: this test-wiseness technique consists of going back to the text several times to find cues which can help eliminate alternatives which are not mentioned in the text or which carry a different meaning from it. Sometimes the test-takers are able to eliminate all the alternatives which are distractors and therefore are left with only the correct one.

i) ELIMINATE ALTERNATIVES WHICH ARE KNOWN TO BE INCORRECT AND CHOOSE FROM AMONG THE REMAINING ONES: when we refer to this test-wiseness technique we mean that the test-taker regressed and scanned (see 'd' p. 61 and 'j' p.62) to look for cues in order to reject one or more alternatives; for instance, alternatives which are not mentioned in the text, or those which contain the opposite idea. Therefore, this technique demands careful search and analysis of the cues in the text. Sometimes the test-taker is left with only one possible relevant alternative. Sometimes he is left with two possibilities, which reduces his chances of making the wrong choice since he is left with a 50% chance (out of two alternatives) if he has to guess the answer. Of course some informants were able to eliminate alternatives without having to regress to the text because they were able to recall the parts they needed to reject or confirm the alternatives they were working on.

j) SCANNING TO LOCATE SPECIFICALLY REQUIRED INFORMATION: test-takers use this micro-skill when they read with the aim of extracting only specific information from the text. For instance, it is commonly used when we are looking for a number in a telephone directory. Scanning works together with regression in the same proportion. A test-taker regresses in order to scan and look for cues which can help him

reject one or more of the alternatives he is dealing with, or to concentrate on the alternative he suspects is the correct one.

k) **REGRESS AND SCAN TO CONFIRM ANSWER:** some informants decided to regress to the text and scan to look for the cues which confirmed or rejected the alternative they had already chosen as the correct one. This test-wiseness technique was used by cautious test-takers.

l) **DEDUCE ANSWER FROM CONTEXTUAL CUES:** this test-wiseness technique was used when the informants needed to either find the answer explicitly stated or infer it from the context. Naturally, the sort of contextual cues used in order to reach the correct answer depended on the nature of the items themselves. For example, (item # 10) required the informant to identify the adverb of time and therefore was classified in this research under "lexical item".

m) **INFER FROM READER'S BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE:** this micro-skill was not widely used by the test-takers. In item # 10 , for example, one informant stated that he knew a lot about the subject, as a result of which he was able to answer it without having to go back to the text to look for more information.

n) **GUESSING:** this test-wiseness technique consists of reaching the correct answer by guesswork, i.e. choosing an alternative without being sure of its correctness. If there are four alternatives a testee will have a one-in-four chance of reaching the right answer by guessing. This technique casts doubts on the validity of this kind of test.

5.1.2.2 Strategies used in the multiple-choice tests.

Flow-chart 1 also shows how micro-skills and test-wiseness techniques were combined to compose different kinds of strategies which test-takers used in order to achieve the correct answers in the multiple-choice tests.

In the great majority of the answers given, 99.5%, the informants started off by skimming the text, whereas in very few of the cases, less than 1%, they decided to read the stems and alternatives before skimming which was obviously an exception. In the latter case this minority continued their strategies by then *skimming the text* (>1%) followed by the *elimination of alternatives* (>1%), *regressing* again to certain parts of the text in order to *scan* and try to locate information which could help them *deduce the answer from contextual cues* (>1%). In the large number of cases where the informants *skimmed the text* first, the informants continued by adopting the test-wiseness technique *reading the question/alternatives after skimming*. From this step on, six different micro-skills and test-wiseness techniques gave rise to the development of six major strategies, which were divided into minor strategies.

The first major strategy, which began with the micro-skill *regression*, was used in 52.6% of the correct answers. After this micro-skill the test-takers continued by then *scanning* the text (52.6%), to search for specific information in order to either find cues and *eliminate more alternatives* (23.9%), *deduce the answers from contextual cues* (22.2%), or *regress* again (5.7%) to some parts of the text. In the majority of cases those who chose to *eliminate alternatives* (23.9%) continued their strategy by *deducing the answers from contextual cues* (19.1%). Some of them decided to take a longer path instead, *regressing* (3.5%) to parts of the text in order to *scan* (3.5%) and find specific

information to help them *eliminate alternatives* (3%) so they could, from then on, either *deduce the answers from contextual cues* (2.6%) or *regress* for the third time (>1%). The testees who *regressed* continued by *scanning* (>1%) to locate cues and *eliminate alternatives* so they could *deduce the answers from contextual cues* (>1%).

In cases where the test-takers *deduced the answers from contextual cues* (22.2%), they were able to find some information while scanning in order to give a definite answer.

The cases in which the test-takers opted to *regress* again were quite few (5.7%). In such cases they continued by scanning the text in order to search for information so that they could take three different paths. In the first, informants decided to *regress* (3.5%) again to some parts of the text to *scan* (3.5%) and from then on either *deduce the answers from contextual cues* (1.7%) or *eliminate alternatives* (1.3%). Those who *eliminated alternatives* ended the strategy by *deducing the answers from contextual cues* (1.3%). In the other two cases, which represent an exception, the informants either *inferred the answers from their knowledge of the world* (>1%) or *deduced the answers from contextual cues* (>1%).

The second major strategy, which began with the micro-skill *reading the stems/alternatives*, was adopted by testees who decided to *answer the question straight from skimming* (27.8%). Of this percentage, in only a very few of the answers did the informants (2.6%) decide to *regress* to the text in order to *scan* and *find information to confirm their answers*.

The third major strategy started off with the test-wiseness technique *elimination of alternatives* (16.9%). From this point on, in 9.1% of the answers, the informants were ready to *answer straight from skimming*, while in 6.9% of the answers

the test-takers had to *regress* to the text to *scan* and from then on either *deduce the answer from contextual cues* (6%) or *regress* again to *scan* (1.3%) and look for information. They continued by either *eliminating alternatives* (>1%), so they could *deduce the answer from contextual cues* (>1%) or *regressing* (>1%) and *scanning* (>1%) for the third time to find information which enabled them to *deduce the answers from contextual cues*. (>1%)

The fourth, fifth and sixth major strategies were followed by testees who decided to continue their paths after having *read the stems/alternatives*. Very few informants used these strategies to reach their answers: less than 1% of the answers given. Some informants answered the question with the *help of previous questions*. Others decided to *eliminate improbable alternatives until they were left with only one correct alternative*. The third group *utilized relevant information from subsequent test items* followed by *regression* and *scanning*, *eliminating alternatives* and *deducing answers from contextual cues*.

5.2. THE CLOZE TEST

5.2.1. Frequency distribution of correct and incorrect answers achieved by informants and the average index of the correct and incorrect answers

As explained in chapter three, a cloze test was selected from 'The University of Cambridge International Examinations'- Certificate of Proficiency in English - June 16, 1993 (see appendix 3 p.108). We changed the deletion rate from a rational deletion criterion (see Chapter 2 pg 45) to a fixed-ratio deletion (see Chapter 2 pg.45), i.e. we mechanically deleted every 6th word. Twenty words were deleted. We left the first and last two sentences intact so the reader could have a better idea of what

the content was about. Since there were 23 informants and 20 blanks to be filled in, we had a total of 460 items to be analyzed. Again only the correct answers were analyzed because we were only interested in micro-skills and strategies which led to the correct answers.

Table 2 shows the frequency scores and the average index of the correct and incorrect answers the test-takers achieved.

Table 2: Informants' general correct and incorrect answer index in the cloze test.

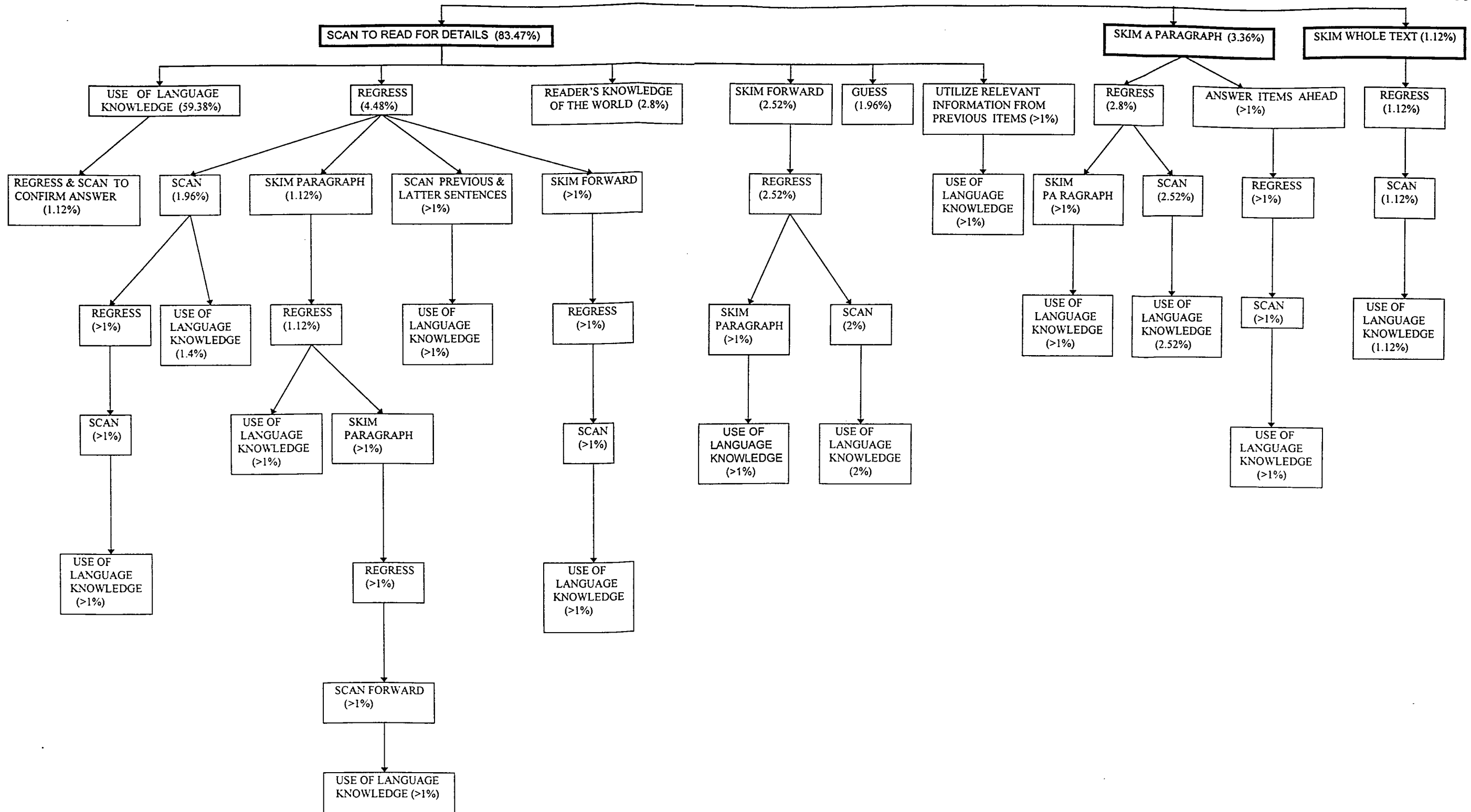
QUESTION #	CORRECT ANSWERS		INCORRECT ANSWERS		TOTAL # OF ANSWERS
	FREQUENCY SCORES	%	FREQUENCY SCORES	%	
01	21	91.30	02	8.70	23
02	23	100	00	00	23
03	23	100	00	00	23
04	23	100	00	00	23
05	04	17.39	19	82.61	23
06	21	91.30	02	8.70	23
07	23	100	00	00	23
08	08	34.78	15	65.22	23
09	19	82.61	04	17.39	23
10	10	43.48	13	56.52	23
11	22	95.65	01	4.35	23
12	12	52.17	11	47.83	23
13	14	60.87	09	39.13	23
14	23	100	00	00	23
15	23	100	00	00	23
16	15	65.22	08	34.78	23
17	18	78.26	05	21.74	23
18	22	95.65	01	4.35	23
19	15	65.22	08	34.78	23
20	17	73.91	06	26.09	23
TOTAL	356	77.39	104	22.61	460

The table shows the total number of correct and incorrect answers and the average index of correct answers: 77.39% was the percentage of correct answers as against 22.61% of incorrect answers.

5.2.2. Flow-chart of strategies found in the cloze test.

Flow-chart 2 on page 69 shows the micro-skills and test-wiseness techniques adopted by testees in order to compose strategies to reach the correct answers.

FLOW CHART 2: STRATEGIES USED IN THE CLOZE TEST



5.2.1.1. Micro-skills and test-wiseness techniques used in the cloze test and their explanation.

a) **SCANNING**: The testees claimed to have used this micro-skill (see 'j' p.62) in order to locate detailed information which they needed to complete the blank.

b) **SKIM A PARAGRAPH**: skimming here continues being the search for the central idea of the text. However, it is possible to look for the main ideas of each paragraph. Some informants decided to use this micro-skill in order to have a general idea of what that paragraph was about before working further on it.

c) **SKIM THE WHOLE TEXT**: (see 'a' p. 60)

d) **USE OF LANGUAGE KNOWLEDGE**: This micro-skill was definitely the most commonly used. The test-takers had to work with this skill not only in order to analyze the blanks, but also the sentences and paragraphs. These analyses led them to reach the correct answers.

Some informants claimed to have used only knowledge of grammar such as verb tenses or preposition use. However, when one is trying to fill in blanks in cloze tests, it seems that the test-taker is using different kinds of grammatical knowledge at the same time, even if he is not aware of that. It seems that not only does a test-taker use syntactic analysis, but also semantic analysis (not only the word in relation to the text, but also collocation, i.e.the way that some words occur regularly whenever another word is used.).

e) **REGRESSION**: (see 'd' p. 61)

f) **READER'S PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE OF THE SUBJECT**: Some test-takers claimed to have used this micro-skill which helped them infer the answers to some items. For instance, blank# 04 was about the Greek and Latin languages. One informant,

who is a history teacher, wrote that when she read '_____ and Latin', Greek came to her mind immediately, because in history these two cultures were interrelated and always came together in history books. Other informants who did not have the same background were misled into supplying the word 'English' just because they were taking a reading comprehension test in the English language.

g) **SKIMMING FORWARD:** Some informants had to stop trying to fill in the blank where they were and skim forward, i.e. read for a general idea of the following part of the text, in order to understand the paragraph so that they could regress to the blank they were stuck on and attempt to answer it. Although skimming is a micro-skill related to reading, skimming forward seems to be a test-wiseness technique because testees use it in order to help them fill in the blank(s).

h) **GUESSING:** (see 'n' p. 63)

i) **UTILIZE RELEVANT INFORMATION FROM PREVIOUS TEST ITEMS:**

(see 'e' p.61)

j) **ANSWER ITEMS AHEAD FIRST AND THEN REGRESS TO ANSWER**

BLANK IN QUESTION: In this case only one or two blanks, which were ahead of the one the testees were stuck on, were answered. Right after that the test-taker regressed immediately and tried to link what has been answered to the blank he was working on. This test-wiseness technique sometimes helped the testee to get a better idea of what the text was about.

k) **REGRESS AND SCAN TO CONFIRM ANSWER:** see ('k' p. 63)

l) **READ PREVIOUS AND LATER SENTENCES:** This test-wiseness technique consists of regressing to a previous sentence and reading it and then from where you are

(i.e. the blank you are at) going forward to read the next sentence before going back to the original blank and completing it.

m) **AFTER HAVING FINISHED THE TEST GO BACK TO COMPLETE BLANKS WHICH WERE LEFT UNANSWERED:** some test-takers were not able to fill in some blanks. Therefore, they left these blanks aside and continued completing the remaining ones. When they finished the test they went back to the blanks which were left incomplete and tried to complete them. This test-wiseness technique helped them because once most of the text was filled in they were able to have a very good idea of what the text was about, which definitely helped them choose an appropriate word for those blanks which had been left incomplete.

n) **INDEFINITE ANSWERS:** some test-takers were not able to find appropriate words for some blanks and left them unanswered. Others were not able to describe how they found the correct answers. Perhaps the cloze test is one of the most difficult tests to understand in terms of what it really measures and how one comes to a plausible answer.

5.2.1.2. Strategies used in the cloze test.

Flow-chart 2 shows how the informants arrived at the correct answers by using different strategies.

In 83.47% of the answers given, the informants started their tests by *scanning* in order to read for details, as against a minority who took two different paths. In 3.36% of the cases, the informants started their tests by *skimming one paragraph*. In only 1.12% of the answers given the test-takers started by *skimming the whole text*.

In the majority of the cases, the informants who began by *scanning* to read for details, continued their strategies by taking six different paths:

First, 59.38% of the correct answers were achieved by informants who *used language knowledge* to complete the blanks. Few of the the answers (1.12%) were reached by informants who decided to *regress* and *scan to confirm the answers*.

Secondly, in a minority of the cases (4.48%), the informants *regressed* to parts of the text and from there on took four other paths: 1.96% of the answers were achieved by informants who *scanned* to locate specific information which could help them, together with the *use of language knowledge* (1.4%), to complete the blanks. In less than 1% of the cases, the informants decided to *regress* again and *scan* to locate specific information and *use their knowledge of the language* to come to an answer. In other answers (1.12%) the informants *skimmed the paragraph*, *regressed* (1.12%) to parts of the text to either *use knowledge of the language* (>1%) to come to an answer or *skim the paragraph* (>1%) again. From then on less than 1% of the answers were reached by *regressing* for the third time. Then they decided to *skim forward* (>1%) in order to find clues so they could *use their knowledge of the language* (>1%) and complete the blank. In a small minority of the answers given, less than 1%, informants *scanned previous and later sentences* so they could find cues and *use knowledge of the language* to arrive at an answer. In other cases still, (>1%), the informants decided to *skim forward* and then *regress* in order to *scan* and locate cues to *use knowledge of language* in order to complete their strategy.

Thirdly, in a minority of the answers given - 2.8% - the informants answered the blanks based on their *knowledge of the world*.

Fourthly, in 2.52% of the cases, the informants *skimmed forward*, *regressed* (2.52%) to either *scan* (>1%) to locate specific cues so they could *use their*

knowledge of the language (>1%) to answer the items or to *skim a paragraph* (>1%) and from then on *use knowledge of the language* (>1%) to answer the item adequately.

Fifthly, in 1.96% of the answers given, the informants claimed to *have guessed* the correct answers.

And finally, in less than 1% of the answers given, the informants claimed to have *utilized relevant information from previous items* to find cues which could lead them to *use their knowledge of the language* and answer the items correctly.

The testees who decided to start answering the test by *skimming a paragraph* (3.36%) took two other paths. Some (2.8%) *regressed* in order to *scan* (2.52%) and locate information which could lead them to use knowledge of language (2.52%) and complete the blanks. Others *skimmed a paragraph* (>1%) to be able to make *use of language knowledge* (>1%) and answer the test. In less than 1% of the cases, the informants *answered items ahead*, followed by *regression and scanning*, and finally made *use of their language knowledge* to complete the blanks.

The third group's answers were achieved by testees who started their tests by *skimming the whole text* (1.12%). They continued by *regressing* (1.12%), *scanning* (1.12%) and using knowledge of the language (1.12%) to reach the correct answers.

Again, if we view the flow-chart as a whole we may conclude that since there are various different strategies a test-taker can adopt in order to reach a correct answer, the percentage of frequency of these strategies tends to decrease owing to the various paths one can take.

5.3. COMPARISON OF MULTIPLE-CHOICE WITH CLOZE TESTS

Multiple-choice and cloze procedures lead test-takers to use strategies which are peculiar to each test type. In multiple-choice tests subjects tended to use strategies which included micro-skills and test-wiseness techniques such as *skimming the whole text* (99.5%), and *reading alternatives after skimming*(99.5%). We may see that in this type of test there are three main typical branches a test-taker follows after *reading alternatives after skimming*: *regression* (52.6%), *answering straight from skimming* (27.8%) and *elimination of alternatives* (16.9%). In the cloze test, subjects tended to start their strategies using micro-skills such as *scanning to read for details* (83.47%) and *use of language knowledge* (59.38%). The comparison of the two flow-charts shows that the combination of the micro-skills and test-wiseness techniques into strategies is peculiar to each kind of test. Each type of test led test-takers to use particular strategies because of the format of these tests, that is, the way and order in which they are arranged and presented. Therefore, there are no strategies which are common to both tests. That is to say, the strategies used to answer multiple-choice or cloze tests consist of either different ordering of micro-skills and test-wiseness techniques which are common to both tests, or different ordering of these skills and techniques which is specific to each test. Consequently, the strategies these test-takers used in order to reach the correct answers were peculiar to each type of test. Below are the micro-skills and test-wiseness techniques which were used to compose the strategies of the two tests. We will divide this section of the discussion of the results into three parts:

- i) micro-skills and test-wiseness techniques common to both tests;
- ii) micro-skills and test-wiseness techniques peculiar to multiple-choice tests;
- iii) micro-skills and test-wiseness techniques peculiar to cloze tests.

When comparing the two flow-charts, one can perceive that some test-takers used the same micro-skills and test-wiseness techniques in both tests while others were used exclusively in either the multiple-choice or cloze tests.

5.3.1. The micro-skills and test-wiseness techniques which were used in both tests

- a) *regress and scan for specific information*: when the questions or blanks required specific information to answer them, testees were forced to return to parts of the text in order to scan it and try to locate the necessary information. These micro-skills were commonly typical to both tests. 52.6% of the answers given in multiple-choice tests contained this micro-skill and 83.47% in the cloze test. In both tests there was significant use of *regression* and *scanning for specific information*, because both tests cause testees to search for more information in the text they are reading if they intend to find the correct answers.
- b) *skim text*: this micro-skill was used when the testees wanted to have an overall view of what the text was about. Once they had a general idea of the whole text it made it easier to work on parts of it, i.e. look for details. Although this micro-skill was common to both tests it was not typical of both of them. 99.5% of the answers given in the multiple-choice tests contained this micro-skill, whereas only 1.12% of the answers given in the cloze test contained it.
- c) *infer the answer from knowledge of the world*: when the testee had previous knowledge of the subject of the text, it was easier at times to predict the answers on the

basis of this existing knowledge. Although this micro-skill was common to both tests it was not typical. This micro-skill was used in less than 1% of the answers given in the multiple-choice tests and in the cloze test only 2.8% of the answers were achieved by utilizing this micro-skill.

d) *regress and scan to locate specific information to confirm answer* : some testees found it safer to return to the text again to scan and locate information where they could confirm their answers. Although this test-wiseness technique was common to both tests, it was not typical. This technique was used in 2.6% of the answers given in the multiple-choice tests and 1.12% in the cloze test.

5.3.2. Micro-skills and test-wiseness techniques which were restricted to the multiple-choice tests

a) *read stems/alternatives after skimming* : the format of the multiple-choice test determines the use of this test-wiseness technique. This test-wiseness technique was typical: it was used in 99.5% of the answers given.

b) *eliminate alternatives* : this technique was used in many of the strategies and sometimes more than once in one strategy. Together with *regression*, *scanning* and *deducing answer from contextual cues*, *eliminating alternatives* was one of the most common test-wiseness techniques used because test-takers found it safer to *eliminate alternatives*. They were left with fewer options to choose from, increasing the probability of getting the answer right. For instance, if a testee is left with two alternatives, even if he has to guess which one is correct, he will have a 50% chance of guessing the correct alternative.

- c) *answer straight from skimming* : usually when general comprehension questions were asked testees were able to retain enough information from the first reading to answer the question soon after.
- d) *eliminate improbable alternatives until you are left with only one correct alternative*: Although this technique is very similar to '*eliminating alternatives*', in the sense that test-takers eliminate options by analyzing parts of the text, it differs because, here, the testee is able to discount all distractors and reach the correct answer by a process of elimination.
- e) *answer with help of previous question* : answers to previous questions allowed test-takers to have a better comprehension of the text, which facilitated their answering of other questions.
- f) *deduce answer from contextual cues* : contextual cues here made it possible for test-takers to find out more about the message. Sometimes an adverb of time helped them answer the questions. At other times a small part of the text contained essential information.
- g) *read questions/alternatives before skimming* : this test-wiseness technique is only used when there are alternatives to choose from, which is not the case in cloze tests.

These test-wiseness techniques are peculiar to multiple-choice tests because they are a reflection of the format of this kind of test. Some of them are typical, that is, they happen more often than others. If there are questions and alternatives, for instance, the test-taker has to either read them before reading the text or after reading it - most of the informants (99.5%) preferred to read them after skimming the text. Another typical technique, which occurred once or twice in various strategies, was elimination of

alternatives. Test-wisness techniques presented here were therefore only used in the multiple-choice tests because of the particular characteristics of this type of test.

5.3.3 Micro-skills and test-wisness techniques which were confined to the cloze test

- a) *use of knowledge of the language* : most of the informants claimed to have used syntactic and semantic analysis, verb tense knowledge, and other kinds of grammatical knowledge in order to be able to complete the blanks. This micro-skill was peculiar to the cloze test owing to its format, i.e. when filling in blanks one must have a notion of the structure of the language to find out what is missing and why. It was also the skill which was most used by the informants to reach the correct answers. All the strategies (100%) ended with this skill showing its supremacy in this type of test.
- b) *answer items ahead*: some informants found it necessary to complete the text which was ahead of the items they were working on so they could have a better idea of the message of the text. Of course one can leave one question behind and answer the others first in the multiple-choice test; however, this did not happen with our informants in this kind of test, but only with the cloze test. Perhaps it happens more often in cloze tests owing to the importance of having to have the whole filled in to be able to understand its parts.
- c) *skim forward* : also peculiar to the cloze test, because when a testee gets stuck on a blank he feels the need to quickly read ahead in order to comprehend the text in depth and maybe be able to go back and answer the blank he had problems with.

d) *scan previous and later sentences* : since cloze tests cause test-takers to work more at sentence level, they often read the sentences which precede and follow the one they are working on in order to look for details which might help them complete the blank .

Again, the micro-skills and test-wiseness techniques which were exclusively used in the cloze test were determined by the characteristics of this kind of test. Some techniques and skills were not typical, such as *answering items ahead*, *skimming forward*, *scanning previous and later sentences*; however, *use of language knowledge* occurred in all strategies.

5.4. COMPARISON OF CURRENT READING PROCESS THEORIES WIDELY ACCEPTED BY THEORETICIANS WITH STRATEGIES USED IN MULTIPLE-CHOICE AND CLOZE TESTS

In this section, current reading process theories widely accepted by theoreticians will be compared with the strategies used in multiple-choice and cloze tests which were identified in this research. Firstly, we will show figures illustrating different theoreticians' views of the reading process. Secondly, we will compare these figures to the multiple-choice test strategies. Thirdly, we will compare the same figures to the cloze test strategies. Finally we will compare the strategies used in the multiple-choice and cloze tests with normal reading strategies.

Smith's (1978a, 1978b) view of the reading process can be summarized in the figure below.

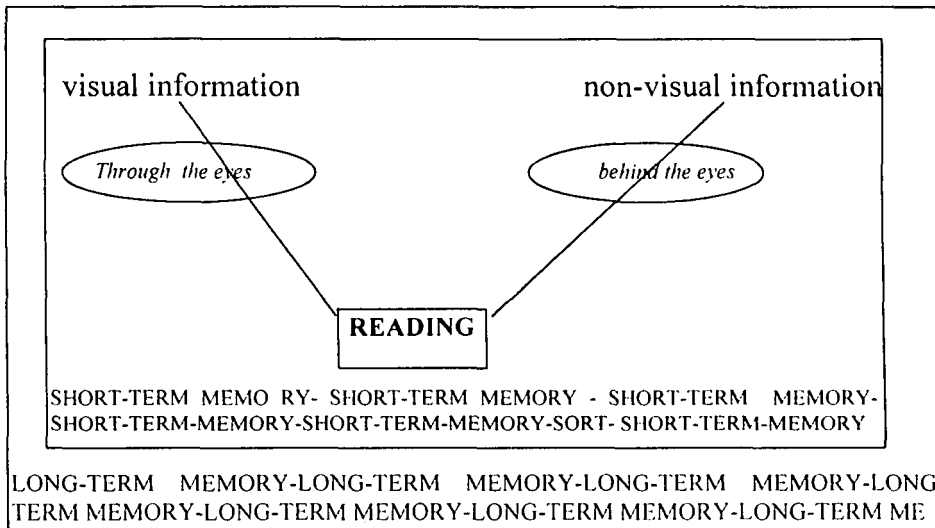


Figure 11: Adapted from Frank Smith's model of reading (1978b - p.5)

Figure 12 summarizes Goodman's view of the reading process:

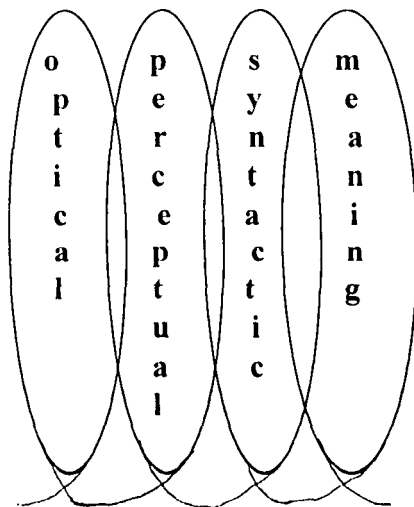


Figure 12 : Cycles of reading in Goodman 1988:15.

Figure 13 shows Rumelhart's idea of reading as an interactive approach.

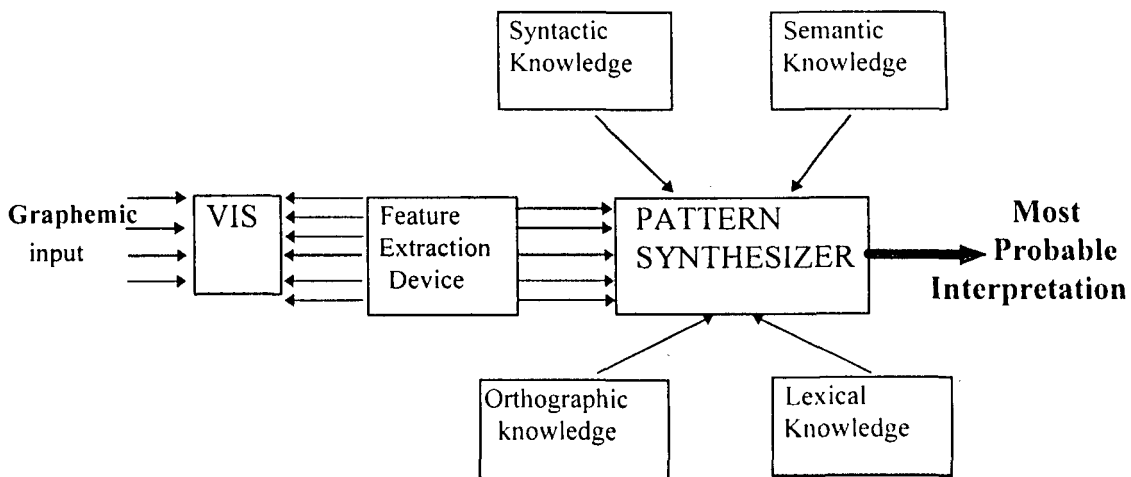


Figure 13: Rumelhart's interaction approach to reading comprehension 1977 p.588

Finally, figure 14 synthesizes Stanovich's model of reading.

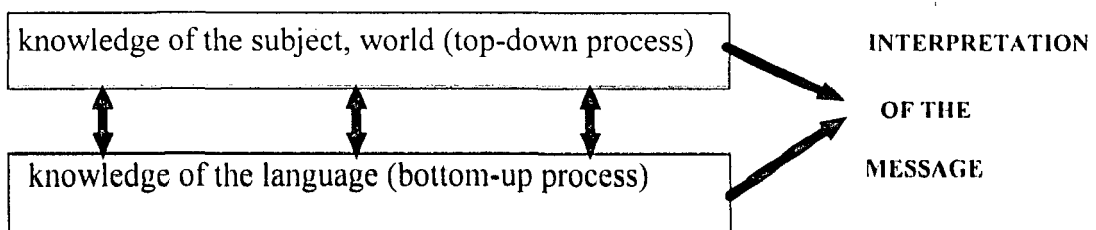


Figure 14: Adapted from Stanovich's Interactive-compensatory reading model (1980)

When comparing the reading process described by different theoreticians, whose views are summarized in the figures above, to the test-taking strategies, we are able to perceive that both multiple-choice and cloze reading comprehension tests demand a tremendous effort from the testees: much more than if they were merely reading the text. The figure below shows the paths readers take when simply reading or when taking multiple-choice and cloze reading comprehension tests.

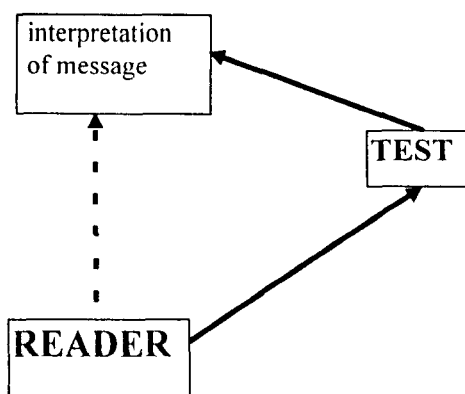


Figure 15: The paths readers take when simply reading (- - -) and when taking a multiple-choice or cloze reading comprehension test (———).

We can notice that when testees take a multiple-choice or cloze test, the path they take in order to interpret the message is different from a common interactive approach to reading. In the flow-chart of the cloze test, we can perceive that all the strategies end with the micro-skill 'knowledge of the language'. This indicates that the test-takers concentrate their reading on a 'visual' (bottom-up) level. Therefore, if we take a look at figure 11 we will see that the testee utilizes more 'visual' than 'non-visual information'. This causes overloading of short-term memory (see p.14) and consequently a 'bottleneck effect' (see p.9) and then 'tunnel vision' (see p.10). In figure 12 we can see that when a testee is taking a cloze test he spends more time on the 'optical', 'perceptual' and 'syntactic' cycle, neglecting 'meaning'. This means that more time is spent on the attempt to fill in the blanks than on actually comprehending the message of the text as a whole. According to figure 13, people-taking a cloze test devote too much time to 'syntactic' and 'semantic knowledge', making the 'pattern synthesizer' unstable in the sense that instead of quickly analyzing the features in four ways (syntactic, semantic, orthographic and lexical) they spend too much time on two of them: 'syntactic and

semantic'. In figure 14, test-takers of a cloze test work almost exclusively on the knowledge of the language (bottom-up process), interrupting the interaction with the knowledge of the subject and world (top-down process).

Multiple-choice tests also present problems. If we compare figures 11, 12, 13 and 14 to flow chart 1 we will notice that besides getting engaged in an interactive form of reading, multiple-choice test-takers also get trapped in the arduous task of choosing a correct alternative to a question. Some items make testees regress to the text and read it in an interactive way. For instance, item #1, in the first passage, causes testees to return to the text and re-read paragraph one in such a way that they are able to apprehend the general meaning of that part. Other items induce testees to carry out a bottom-up analysis of the text. For instance, in item #10, in passage two, the testee inevitably has to find and understand the word 'nowadays' in order to arrive at the correct alternative. Sometimes, the answers are found in one single sentence as in item #14, in passage three, ('America sells the steak, while Britain sells the sizzle'). We will have an interactive form of reading in multiple-choice tests, depending on the nature of each question. Some questions will lead to interactive reading approach while others will narrow the process down to the bottom-up level as described in connection with the cloze tests. However, even though a test writer spends time and effort pre-testing and analyzing the items, multiple-choice tests continue leading testees to use test-wiseness strategies which may lower the validity of this kind of test. Weir (1990), Hughes (1994) and Oller (1986) also show other problems related to multiple-choice tests. They explain why multiple-choice tests are time-consuming and impractical. These theorists also claim that a test-writer will face problems such as writing subjective questions, finding suitable distractors, and so on.

We can therefore posit that both multiple-choice and cloze tests have low construct validity. Cloze tests induce test-takers to work on their reading comprehension in a bottom-up way. While taking a cloze test, testees usually get so bogged down in the task of analyzing the structures of the sentences in order to find the appropriate missing word that they lose track of the message of the text, which is not the objective when one is attempting to measure reading comprehension. This phenomenon, i.e. the cloze test inducing test-takers to use bottom-up strategies, is understandable if we consider when it was devised. W.L.Taylor introduced the cloze procedure in 1953, at that time when reading was first analyzed into its basic parts, which were then taught separately. For instance, readers had to identify individual letters, building them up to words, sentences and then paragraphs. The cloze procedure reflected the philosophy of that period. It makes a testee work at word level rather than at text level. Multiple-choice tests have low construct validity because the test-takers have to concentrate on composing strategies which enable them to select the correct alternative rather than on normal reading strategies.

In short, choosing an appropriate test type and preparing the test is a demanding job. A test writer should be aware of all the complexity which tests involve before embarking on the task.

5.5. OTHER ALTERNATIVES

There are numerous types of tests designed to evaluate reading comprehension. Besides multiple-choice and cloze, Weir (1990:42-51) mentions 'cloze elide', 'information transfer', 'C-Tests', 'Selective deletion gap filling' and 'short answer questions'. 'The cloze elide test' is a kind of test where words which do not belong to the text are inserted into it and the testee has to indicate where these 'nonsense' words are and usually cross them out. In 'information transfer', the testee has to transfer verbal information to a non-verbal form, for instance by numbering a sequence of events, completing a chart, etc. 'The C-test', which was developed by Klein-Braley (Weir 1990:49), is similar to a cloze test. However instead of having whole words deleted, they are only partially deleted - testees are given the first half of every second word and have to supply the missing half. 'Selective deletion gap filling', also called 'rational cloze', is when the items to be deleted are selected according to the test writers objectives. For instance, he might want to delete all the prepositions, or all the verb tenses, etc. 'Short answer questions', which is the type of test Weir (1990:45) thinks is most appropriate to measure reading comprehension, is when the testee has to write down specific answers to specific questions in a space provided. Hughes (1994:122) gives other examples of reading comprehension tests such as 'guided short answers', and 'summary cloze'. He suggests that 'short-answer questions' might lead a testee to fail because he might not be able to express the answer well in written form; the response could be obtained, however, by framing the item so that the testee has only to complete sentences presented to him. For example, a paragraph might be summarized with blanks to be filled in. The blanks require one, two or more words. Heaton (1990:84) also suggests 'true/false items', where

statements are made from a text and testees have to say whether the statements are true or not according to the text.

Although there are many different types of tests which are considered good instruments to measure reading comprehension, one must be cautious about which type to adopt. Perhaps similar research to that carried out in this dissertation should be done with all these types of tests so we can find out what really goes on when a testee is taking them. Up to now, strategies test-takers use in order to answer the tests described above are unknown. If one does not exactly know what a test demands from a testee, how can we consider it a valid instrument of evaluation?

6. CONCLUSION

The objective of this dissertation was to first of all make an inventory of strategies testees used while taking multiple-choice and cloze tests, and check if these types of tests induced test-takers to use particular strategies. We then compared current reading process theories with multiple-choice and cloze test strategies, to establish which strategies were common to both tests and which were specific to one or the other type.

Firstly, it was found that multiple-choice and cloze tests each cause test-takers to use particular strategies in order to reach the correct answers, although some strategies are composed of micro-skills and test-wiseness techniques which are common to both types of test.

Secondly, both multiple-choice and cloze tests demand more than reading abilities: they cause test-takers to use strategies which are specific to each type of test. Students taking multiple-choice and cloze tests not only become engaged, even if partially, in the reading process as described by Smith (1978a, 1978b), Goodman (1976), Eskey (1989), Rumelhart (1977) and Stanovich (1980), but also in a test-taking process which demands the use of particular test-taking strategies (specific to each test) in order to reach their objective of arriving at the correct answers.

Finally, construct validity might be reduced in multiple-choice and cloze tests since they induce test-takers to use test-wiseness techniques, which is not what these tests are intended to measure.

FURTHER RESEARCH

In addition to achieving a deeper understanding of multiple-choice and cloze tests, this research also brought to light many more questions to be answered about testing, and which therefore need investigation.

Some points connected with the reading models presented in Chapter 1 (related to multiple-choice and cloze tests) are worth looking at:

i) Regression: as we have seen, Smith (1978a, 1978b) defines regression in reading as a phenomenon which may occur if the reader loses the stream of the message he is apprehending. For him, regression is a backward movement of the eyes along a line of print when reading. It may occur either because the reader has poor reading abilities and therefore gets lost quite often, or if the text is too difficult and even a good reader has to rely on this technique to get back into the stream of the message.

When regression is used in multiple-choice or cloze tests it serves a different purpose. When testees return to a certain point in the text, they also scan to read for detail in order to locate cues which may help them reach the correct answer. They are more concerned with answering the question than getting hold of the stream of the message. Regression in reading therefore seems to have a different objective from when used in testing, and for this reason further investigation is needed to verify if regression does serve different purposes depending on when it is used.

ii) Frank Smith (1978a, 1978b) refers to short-term memory as a part of the memory where information is received and stored for short periods of time while it is being analyzed and interpreted to form meaningful units.

When a test-taker is working on a cloze test it seems that this test process interferes with short-term memory. While reading the text/test, the test-taker comes to a blank

where he has to stop what he was doing ('saccade'- fixation- short-term memory - meaning) in order to search (in his memory) for a word which fits the blank.

If this occurs, then the whole reading process is halted in order for the answering to be achieved. If the test-taker takes longer than a few seconds to answer (and he usually does), then short-term memory might be overloaded with other kinds of thoughts (searching for words having in mind elements such as syntax , semantic analysis as well as collocation, etc) and therefore, the reader might sink into tunnel vision (see chapter 1 pg10), which is an undesirable, unproductive phenomenon caused by poor reading. In short, further research must be done in order to verify if cloze tests lead proficient readers to tunnel vision. In other words, do cloze tests lead readers into undesirable, unproductive reading habits?

iii) Prediction

According to Smith (1978a:76) "prediction is the prior elimination of unlikely alternatives... we use our theory of the world to tell us the most possible occurrences, and leave the brain to decide among these remaining alternatives until our uncertainty is reduced to zero."

Therefore prediction, for Smith, is synonymous with asking questions, and comprehension is synonymous with getting the questions answered, while for Goodman it is the ability to anticipate that which has not been seen, and is vital in reading. However, when completing a cloze test, a test-taker may predict what the missing word is but not be able to confirm his predictions because the word has been deleted. Of course, he can check if it makes sense in context, but prediction seems to take a different path in testing. We would also need more research in this area to discover how prediction works in cloze tests.

Multiple-choice and cloze tests cause test-takers to use particular strategies in order to answer the questions correctly. These strategies are different from reading comprehension strategies used by proficient readers. This dissertation enabled us to see that the testing of reading is a complex issue, which should be studied in depth before particular item types are selected for use with students on a large scale.

APPENDIX 1 - THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Curitiba, November 1, 1995

Dear colleague,

Thank you so much for agreeing to help me with my research. I'd like you to take three multiple-choice and a cloze tests. When you have answered each question, could you please write in the space provided for each question HOW it was that you arrived at your answer, i.e. what was the mental process you went through to arrive at the answer. Do not take a break while you're working on a particular text. Breaks between texts are alright. You can work on each text whenever you want to. Below are some questions which may serve as a guideline:

FOR THE MULTIPLE-CHOICE TESTS

- a) Could you answer a question without having to look back at the text ?
- b) Did you have to read any part of the text more than once in order to understand it?
How many times?
- c) If yes, why did you have to go back to a sentence or paragraph and read it more than once?
- d) How familiar were you with the topic of the text?
If you were very familiar or familiar with the topic, did it help you answer the question?
If you were not familiar with the topic, did it hinder you from answering a question?
- e) Did you get lost in any part of the text?
If yes, Where? and Why do you think it happened?
- f) Did you make use of morphology, syntax, structure or any language analysis in order to answer the question/blank? If yes, how?
- g) Was there any answer, in the multiple-choice, that you used the following strategies:
 - eliminate options which are known to be incorrect and choose from among the remaining options.
 - choosing neither or both of two options which imply the correctness of each other - for example, if you are aware that two options describe the same condition then most probably they are being used as distractors.
 - eliminate options that are known to be incorrect or which have no obvious logical association with the text.
 - choose neither or one (but not both) of two statements one of which, if correct, would imply incorrectness of the other - for example, when alternative 'a' is obviously the opposite of 'b'.
 - restrict choice to those options which encompass all or two or more given statements known to be correct - if you reduce the number of options that are possible to be correct your chances of getting it correct increases.
 - utilize relevant content information in other test items and options - use other questions in the test in order to help you answer the question.
- h) Did you use any other strategy (path) to arrive at the answer?
What were there? How did it work?

Multiple-choice test

FIRST PASSAGE

01)

02)

03)

04)

05)

SECOND PASSAGE

06)

07)

08)

09)

10)

THIRD PASSAGE

11)

12)

13)

14)

15)

QUESTIONS FOR THE CLOZE TEST

- a) Could you answer a question without having to look back or forward in the text ?
- b) Did you have to read any part of the text more than once in order to understand it?
How many times?
- c) If yes, why did you have to go back to a sentence or paragraph and read it more than once?
- d) How familiar were you with the topic of the text?
If you were very familiar or familiar with the topic, did it help you answer the question?
If you were not familiar with the topic, did it hinder you from answering a question?
- e) Did you get lost in any part of the text?
Did you fix your eyes at any blank for some time and then lost track of the message?
If yes, Where? and Why do you think it happened?
- f) Did you make use of morphology, syntax, structure or any language analysis in order to answer the question/blank? If yes, how?
- g) Did you use any other strategy (path) to arrive at the answer?
What were there? How did it work?
- h) While doing the cloze test, were there any blanks that you were not able to answer or answered wrong and after checking the correct answer you found out that the missing word was familiar to you (and even easy) - you would have understood it while reading if it hadn't been deleted?

CLOZE TEST

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

6)

7)

8)

9)

10)

11)

12)

13)

14)

15)

16)

17)

18)

19)

20)

APPENDIX 2 - INFORMANTS' ANSWERS TO QUESTIONNAIRE

ANSWERS AND COMMENTS OF INFORMANTS TO THE QUESTIONNAIRES

informant 1

FIRST PASSAGE

1 A and B were the very opposite, C was out of question because, for Judith, her father came first - he was her first priority. I thought D described the situation better, she helped her father out of daughterly affection.

2 I saw no irony on the other sentences, on the contrary, they all seemed to state exactly what it is written, except "her true colors", when she is compared to a vampire.

3 B could not be because it is written in the texts that the shares should seem equal, but they were not. D was not right either, because the author implies that Hester would get less - "Not that he was not fond of Hester". As I did not accept the idea of Judith as somebody greedy, I chose A, after all, she did sacrifice herself and her family to take care of her father.

4 On line 20, we have "It was natural, of course,..." it is as if he agreed with her attitude, as if her decision was part of a flow of events which had to happen no matter what. It was natural!

5 He was old, and had become bitter and nasty with the nearest and dearest ones. In addition, if we have a look on line 25, we'll find "...Mr. Handforth decided" which implies that it is something new, he chose to think that way for a while.

P.S.: I found these questions awfully tricky, the answers are not in the text, we have to infer and try to guess what the right answer is which is very demanding and annoying!

SECOND PASSAGE

6 It's written in the text that writing is an empirical art, which can only be learned by doing it, but the skill is acquired in a haphazard way, therefore it could not be letter A, B or C.

7 It is written in the text that writing is an art, and as in every art you must have at least the foundation of a gift, without which it is useless to proceed; that's why I chose A. C is not related to the question, B is irrelevant and D brings the reader which is not mentioned at all.

8 It could be A, but the word usually made me desconsidered it; it could also have been C, but the word too made it very assertive. I had to choose between B and D. B found echo in lines 7 and 8 of the text where we have "wastage among...most survivors have to rely on another job. But D has lines 9 and 10 in its favor: "...it can also be a vital source of material and incentive, particularly for the fiction writer." I ended up by marking B, because I thought it would be a broader view of the facts than D. (I had to read the paragraph twice)

9 The answer is in the text; line 16: "it may also use up horsepower to the point of exhaustion."

10 Again, the answer is in the text: "Interruptions nowadays, however, are a professional hazard that all authors have to contend with..."

THIRD PASSAGE

11 I thought it was letter C because in the very first paragraph the author says: "...happy families may be relied upon to gather at breakfast-time for convivial bowls of cornflakes, their teeth free of decay, their hair innocent of dandruff, their shirts whiter than snow". It's all symbolic and idealistic, somehow very different from reality.

12 Different from American commercials, which concentrate on the products and sell them very effectively, British commercials tend to concentrate on the emotional needs of its audience and that is written in the 2nd and 3rd paragraphs.

13 It's letter B because it is clearly said so in the beginning of the 3rd paragraph: "What on earth was it selling? ..Search me."

14 "America sells the steak, while Britain sells the sizzle" was the sentence that led me to choose letter A.

15 My answer can be justified through paragraph number 4, mainly by the end where the author himself gives the function of TV commercials. "They help us keep in touch with lost innocence."

P.S.: I found passages 2nd and 3rd much more interesting and rewarding to work on, because I could find the answers in the actual passages, therefore I did not feel as frustrated as I felt when doing the first passage.

CLOZE TEST

1 I was in doubt between the verbs "mention" and "use", but I decided to write "use" (in the past) after I read the whole sentence. It sounded more precise in a way.

2 Obvious because of the expression *yvars ago*.

3 The verb "refer" made it very easy to write the preposition "to", I did not even think about it.

4 As I once studied History and the concept of being a barbarian involved the same principle; I wrote "Greek" without any doubt.

5 The connector "however" made me aware that something (idea/argument) was to be either compared or changed pretty soon, then, after the blank I had *university examiners* which immediately brought me the expression "it seems unlikely".

6 I got the wrong answer. I wrote "kind" instead of "sort", I knew both, but I just do not use "sort" as often as "kind"

7 We were talking about university examiners who reported on illiteracy, it had to be the personal pronoun "they" to make the anaphorical reference accordingly.

8 Obvious: "reported" appeared before the blank with the combination "in a"; well, we usually report in a report!

9 The use of the present perfect was obvious: ____ become (Pure syntax?)

10 It was the last blank I filled in, I knew the word tendency, but for some reason, I refused to write it immediately as I thought of.

11 Obvious: it was a list, we needed a conjunction to add something to it.

12 All the previous items were examples of ways of writing, therefore, I only needed a general term to conclude the idea.

13 As I have been reading about writing, this is a sentence which sounded absolutely familiar to me. I did not even read the whole thing before I write the answers.

14 (same as 13)

15 Quite obvious linking word. I could not think of any other alternative option to use there.

16 I had to read the paragraph more than twice to realize that "their complaint" was referring back to "university lecturers" (which was misspelt right in the beginning of the paragraph), but that was not enough, I only got it right when I read it out loud and paid attention to what came after the blank. their own subject without teaching.... there it was!

17 Anaphorical reference to "university lecturers".

18 "A duty to..." made me choose the verb *have* in the sense of they have an obligation, it is part of their job.

19 I wrote RELEVANCE when the right word was IMPORTANCE. I know both words, and IMPORTANCE is a word of my vocabulary. I cannot explain why I did not write it.

20 I read the whole paragraph before I wrote my answer, and the answer itself was stated in the text: "...insist on the connection between clear thinking and ...".

P.S.: I found this passage very clear and easy, because I was very familiar with the topic. In addition, I would like to mention that I did not keep my eyes fixed at any of the blanks.

informant 2

FIRST PASSAGE

1 A indicação "in paragraph two" ...me leva obrigatoriamente ao texto após a leitura. Mas depois que assinei a alternativa B eu percebi que as demais alternativas teriam sido facilmente descartáveis porque elas não têm nada a ver com o conteúdo geral do texto. Cheguei à conclusão de que não precisaria voltar ao parágrafo para lê-lo novamente.

2 Nessa questão li todas as alternativas e estou inclinada a assinalar a alternativa D, mas decidi voltar ao texto para checar cada um dos contextos em que as frases aparecem. Depois de ler optei pela alternativa D mesmo, pelo conteúdo metafórico de "her true colors" que associa as cores de um vampiro com as intenções de Judith.

3 Nessa questão fiquei em dúvida entre A e C, porque no início do texto ficou claro que o pai reconhecia, com culpa, o sacrifício da filha, mas, voltando ao texto, vejo no primeiro parágrafo que Mr. Handforth era crítico em relação aos que estavam próximos dele, como a própria Judith. As alternativas B e D foram descartadas logo de cara porque não têm relação explícita com o conteúdo do texto. Finalmente optei por A porque no texto não está claro que o pai quer mostrar à filha que ele percebeu sua ganância (alternativa C), apenas que ele tinha consciência das intenções da filha.

4 Descartei A e B porque não têm relação lógica com o texto. Pensei em C porque o texto menciona duas vezes a palavra "natural" ("It was natural, of course", "...for the most natural reasons in the world") quando se referiu à atitude de Hester se casar. Por essa razão pensei que o pai poderia considerar razoável a decisão da filha. Mas no fim das contas pensei que o merecimento de Hester era o que contava (alternativa D), pois o texto afirma "in his mind and affections she had always played second fiddle to her sister" e, além disso, o texto diz que o pai deu a maior parte da herança para a filha mais velha, que cuidou dele durante parte de sua vida, enquanto que a mais nova "abandonou o ninho" para se casar.

5 Nessa questão a alternativa certa é B porque C e D são incompatíveis com o texto. As evidências no texto indicam que a ganância de Judith foi concluída pelo pai já em sua idade avançada, conforme fala o parágrafo 1 (nessa questão voltei ao texto uma vez) e o último parágrafo ("Mr. Handforth decided, they were the worst", "At last she had shown herself in her true colors").

SECOND PASSAGE

6 Para responder as questões dessa segunda parte, optei por ler o texto e, logo em seguida, todas as questões relativas a ele. Para essa questão estive em dúvida entre alternativas A e D porque essas duas idéias estão presentes no texto. Mas ao reler concluí que a alternativa certa é a A (by methodical practice) pelas sentenças que estão abaixo:

"The fact is that writing is an empirical art, which can only be learned by doing it"
"Success is largely a matter of persistence and of making the most of opportunities."

7 Enquanto li o texto para responder a questão 31 aproveitei e li a parte do texto que se refere à 32 que se encontra abaixo:

"As in every art you must have at least the foundation of a gift, without which it is useless to proceed"

Nesse caso, considero o campo semântico da palavra gift pertencendo ao da palavra talent, na alternativa A. As outras alternativas foram descartadas logo de cara.

8 Para essa questão tive que voltar ao texto porque lembro de idéias que têm a ver com o fato dos escritores se desgastarem em tarefas rotineiras mas não sei se geralmente (usually) é assim, conforme a alternativa A diz. Quando leio o texto vejo que a situação do escritor que tem outro emprego tem prós e contras ("The pros and cons of that situation are debatable"). De fato os 2º e 3º parágrafos apontam para os aspectos positivos e negativos respectivamente. Descarto as alternativas A e B porque elas contêm palavras que dão sentido radical às idéias (usually harmful, essential in most cases). A alternativa C contém o fator de tempo, que não é mencionado no texto. Fico com a alternativa D (helpful in researching facts) que, para mim, tem a ver com a oração "working out in the world is not solely a form of insurance, it can also be a vital source of material and incentive, particularly for the fiction writer".

Obs.: Ao conferir a resposta do gabarito, percebi que não assinei a alternativa B porque para mim a idéia não estava tão em evidência ou clara no texto quanto a da alternativa D. Mas reconheço que ela também pode estar correta porque podemos fazer a relação entre as frase "most survivors have to rely on another job" (texto) com a frase "essential in most cases" (alternativa do teste). Buááá! Errei de novo! (Acho que existe um outro problema que é o que eu entendo por "research", que, além do significado formal do dicionário, para mim pode ser "fonte de informação para embasar histórias". Não sei se os nativos teriam a mesma idéia dessa palavra.)

9 A alternativa é a B porque o autor enfatizou no segundo parágrafo a idéia do segundo trabalho usar parte da energia mental do autor. Não precisiei voltar ao texto porque já tinha lido essa parte para responder à questão anterior.

10 Nessa questão descartei logo de cara as questões A, B e D. Apesar da oração "They cannot expect to work without interruption" dar uma idéia absoluta da situação, escolhi a alternativa C porque ela tem conteúdo semelhante com o seguinte trecho do texto: "Interruptions nowadays, however, are professional hazard that all authors have to contend with".

THIRD PASSAGE

11 Como eu tive que voltar ao texto quando fiz os testes anteriores decidi ler o texto uma única vez só para pegar a idéia central. Nessa primeira questão eles colocam a família como o tema principal. Voltei ao texto para verificar o que eles disseram sobre família e encontrei adjetivos do tipo "teeth free of decay", "shirts whiter than snow", "hair innocent of dandruff" que dão a idéia de "carefree" (alternativa D)

12 Nessa questão optei por B porque "emotional needs" tem a ver com "security" (2o. parágrafo)

13 A questão deixa claro que só pode ser a letra B pelas questões que o autor coloca no texto: "What on earth was it selling? The champagne? The car? Isso significa que o comercial não atingiu seu objetivo: vender produto X ou Y.

14 De cara descarto C e D porque essas questões se referem aos comerciais americanos e não aos britânicos. Fiquei entre as alternativas A e B. Escolhi a letra A por considerar os comerciais britânicos mais sutis do que os americanos na hora de vender o produto. Levei em consideração meu conhecimento extra-linguístico sobre o assunto.

15 Rejeito a alternativa A porque os símbolos dos comerciais britânicos não são da vida moderna B e D têm conteúdo parecido, para mim ser ultrapassado tem a ver com coisas não importantes. Acho que C é a alternativa correta porque a função dos comerciais é dar ao público os símbolos, e estes, segundo o texto, são o que uma nação precisa.

CLOZE TEST

De uma maneira geral, a ausência das palavras que foram apagadas não impediu o entendimento do texto. Fui colocando as palavras à medida que li o texto pela primeira vez, sem ter que ir até o fim dele antes de preencher as lacunas. Com a exceção dos números 8, 10, 12 e 16, consegui preencher tudo e deixei esses números quando voltasse ao texto. O tema analfabetismo não é familiar mas não creio que conhecer o assunto seria imprescindível para preencher as lacunas. Não houve nenhum momento em que me perdi na compreensão do texto. O que houve foi um "quebra-cabeça" para encaixar as palavras 8, 10, 12 e 16 de forma que elas soassem bem nos ouvidos.

1 Para a palavra número 1 eu só segui o fluxo da oração e vi que nesse espaço era preciso um verbo para ligar o sujeito (English writer) ao objeto (the word). Coloquei a palavra "created".

2 Para a palavra 2 eu supus que ela só poderia ser years porque nessa época o latim era uma língua importante e ele é mencionado na linha seguinte. Além disso, sei que a palavra analfabetismo só pode ter sido criada há duzentos anos e não séculos, dias ou meses atrás.

3 Aqui eu segui a preposição que acompanha o verbo "to refer" - sei que é refer to - para ligá-lo ao objeto.

4 Como o escritor que criou essa palavra era inglês, supus que fosse óbvio que ele se referisse às pessoas que não soubessem falar a sua própria língua e o latim. Depois que conferi a palavra no gabarito concluí ser muita ingenuidade minha que ele se referisse apenas à sua língua e ao latim. Não sabia que o grego era uma língua tão importante naquela época.

5 Para essa palavra -possível- segui o fluxo da oração "It seems..." que geralmente pede um adjetivo. Quando conferi com o gabarito percebi uma grave falha minha ao permanecer apenas "nas redondezas da palavra". Ao reler o texto eu vi que não faria sentido principalmente levando em consideração o conectivo "However" que dá ideia de oposição, i.e., apesar de a palavra ter sido criada 200 anos atrás parece improvável que os examinadores tivessem esse conceito em mente em 1988. Nesse caso acho que me deixei enganar pelo estilo de raciocínio que o teste exige - olhar o que vem antes e depois da palavra apenas - preencher as lacunas sem ter que olhar para o texto como um todo.

6 Aqui também segui o fluxo do sintagma - the idea of disability in mind, the concept of disability in mind.

7 Esse espaço pede pelo sujeito da oração que só pode ser os examinadores (they), a quem o texto se refere. Além disso, a posição do verbo "reported" ajudou a fazer essa inferência.

8 Como já disse lá em cima, essa foi uma das palavras que deixei em branco ao preencher o texto. Quando voltei a ela pensei na palavra "feedback" mas descartei porque feedback não é contável. Pensei em "report" mas também descartei porque a palavra já foi mencionada na linha anterior e achei que ia ficar meio repetitivo. Escolhi a palavra "comment" (verbo), sem muita convicção.

9 Pela construção da frase "Over the years, university lecturers _____ become aware" pede pelo uso do Present Perfect. Completei com o auxiliar "have"

10 Essa foi outra palavra que deixei em branco. Quando voltei a ela pensei que deveria ser um substantivo pelo uso do adjetivo que antecede a lacuna. Pensei em "tendency" que se encaixa bem aqui (an increasing tendency).

11 Coloquei o conectivo and porque o texto estava elencando os problemas de escrita dos alunos (sloppiness, poor spelling, gramatical imprecision) e supus que o último só poderia ser ligado por and porque era o último da lista.

12 Essa palavra foi a mais demorada porque o texto estava tão claro sem ela (poderia estar escrito "in their students' essays", "in their students' assignments") que demorei um tempo para escolher uma outra palavra que se encaixasse com "of". Eu me ocupei mais com o conjunto que formava com a preposição do que com o significado dessa parte do texto que já estava explícito. Optei por "skills of writing", mas também sem muita convicção.

13 e 14 Em 13 só pode ser o verbo "to be" porque o texto está dando a definição de "sloppy writing". Em 14 coloquei of porque após a palavra "reflection" usamos a preposição "of".

15 Aqui usei a palavra that porque é o que a estrutura pede, tanto em português quanto em inglês - "A reclamação era que". "The complaint was that."

16 Escolhi a palavra "with" mas sem ter certeza se seria isso mesmo.

17 Aqui é their undergraduates porque se refere aos alunos dos professores universitários. Nesse momento o texto está relatando o ponto de vista desses professores e logicamente os alunos que o texto menciona só pode ser os desses professores.

18 Have Foi a palavra escolhida porque primeiro falam de duty (dever) dos professores. Todos sabemos que "dever" é uma coisa que se "tem". Além disso a palavra que falta só pode ser um verbo devido à sua posição na oração (precedido por um pronome - they - e sucedido por uma palavra que parece um objeto - a duty).

19 Escolhi a palavra "need" por um ponto de vista pessoal. Particularmente acho que a manutenção de pensamentos claros é uma necessidade para se produzir qualquer texto, seja ele oral ou escrito.

20 Thinking é uma palavra que vai bem com clear. Além disso a mola geradora de qualquer texto, como disse acima, é o pensamento.

informant 3

FIRST PASSAGE

1 B - The author writes all the time about her sacrifice in relation to her father.

2 D - She can't hide her intentions in taking care of him.

3 A - I'm not sure about this answer, but I think it was the answer the fit with the question.

4 I don't know if I'm right, but I think the old man thought that only Judith was willing to help him.

5 C - Even though he knew about Judith's feelings, was difficult for him to accept that situation.

SECOND PASSAGE

6 I chose D since the author says that you just lean writing by doing it.

7 I am not sure about this answer but the others answers don't make sense to me.

8 I think this text is very difficult to understand. I read the text four times and still have doubts about the answer In this one B seems to be the right one.

9 I suppose B is the answer, because the author mentioned the word exhaustion.

10 Nowadays the writers need to rely on another job, that's what the author wants to mention in his text.

THIRD PASSAGE

- 11 C - I read the text twice, and then I thought this was the best answer.
- 12 B - The author mentioned that in the text when he wrote the difference about commercials in different countries.
- 13 B - This was my choice because the author mentioned the commercial was very confused; the commercial wasn't clearly enough to show what it wanted to sell.
- 14 D - I read three times to answer it and I'm still not very sure if it is the right one
- 15 C - That seems the right answer to me.

CLOZE TEST

- 1 invented - I read the beginning and the rest of the paragraph to answer it.
- 2 Years - I didn't have to read the rest because the word ago was enough to guess the word.
- 3 to - after the verb refer you have to use this preposition.
- 4 English - he was talking about languages: latin, so the other one was English.
- 5 nowadays - As the author used seems (in the present) I think there wasn't another word to fill in the blank.
- 6 idea - I'm not sure about it.
- 7 they - someone reported something, in this case I think it is "they"
- 8 Research - I'm not sure about it.
- 9 Have - here just could be present perfect (have become)
- 10 I didn't answer it; I don't know what is the word.
- 11 And - a lot of things.
- 12 ability - that's the word that fits here.
- 13 'is' - I don't know way
- 14 of - after reflection you use of.
- 15 that - there's no another word to put here.
- 16 about - the same as 15.
- 17 the - again, I didn't find another word to write here.
- 18 have - just a verb could be here.
- 19 need - I'm not sure about this answer.
- 20 writing - I read the paragraph twice to answer it.

Informant 4

FIRST PASSAGE

- 1 B - I had to read the 2nd paragraph twice. I came to this conclusion because of the sentences: "As she herself had said ... She had even suggested ... priority." In other words, I looked for clues.
- 2 A - B - If the author hadn't mentioned there was irony in the text, I couldn't have noticed it. So, after her true character was revealed, lines 26, 27, which also contain alternatives C and D, it was easier for me to realize that behind these lines was something ironical he hadn't mentioned. After reading question 5 and having reread the last paragraph I changed my mind and my answer to B
- 3 "Shavs that should seem equal" made me decide between C and D and choose D. To come to this conclusion I had to reread the text twice
- 4 D I was in doubt between C and D but after rereading, the sentence: "How can one tell ... by one's side?" I chose D.
- 5 To tell you the truth I didn't understand lines 23 and 24, which might have clarified my doubts about number 5's answer (D) Without considering these lines, I'd choose B.

SECOND PASSAGE

- 6 D. I just read the question and then looked for the answer in the text.
- 7 A. The same process as above.
- 8 D (As the process above). But had to reread twice the text in order to find clues; sentences with words that made me come to that conclusion. I found "It can be a vital source of material and incentive, ..."
- 9 B - (The same process used above) Because of the sentence: "A regular stint of ... horsepower to the point of exhaustion". And the sentence behind that: "but a routine ... creative output."
- 10 C - (The same process used above, that is, read question first, then read the text). Because of the sentence: "Interruptions nowadays, however, ... a living literature."

THIRD PASSAGE

- 11 I've decided to read the questions first. They give an idea of how complicated the text is going to be and how attentive I should be! I had problems with the meaning of "self-indulgent". I acted as if doing a real test and didn't look it up. I opted for C - idealistic = the way it should be, but isn't
- 12 It was very difficult for me to choose one. After rereading the question and then the paragraph several times I chose D 'cause of the words: "obsessed of symbols... Security".
- 13 B.

14 A : "America sells the steak, while Britain sells the sizzle".

15 D - "TV commercials provide us of those symbols of sanity and beauty in a world less sane and less beautiful each day"

CLOZE TEST

1 "used" (I had to look back or forward in the text only in questions 10 and 20. I reread in order to understand each sentence that had a blank. It was a grammatical process rather than an understanding one. I was very familiar with the topic of the text. I looked for grammatical clues. Frankly speaking, I didn't concentrate on the meaning of the text, but on old structures I had in mind, things /verb+preposition that go together, immediate meaning, clues (ago - @ - become), fixed structures, etc.)

2 "years" clue - ago

3 "to" refer + to + something. Because of the preposition that belongs to this verb.

4 or - exclusion English writer - English or latin

5 logical/true - It sounded easy to understand, but I couldn't come up with any other words.

6 term/terminology

7 They - university examiners

8 report on something - because of the prep.

9 become (past participle) - only alternative - have + over the years (present perfect).

10 tendency - that seemed to be the idea.

11 no commas, so - and

12 ability of (Because of the prep.)

13 a fact - simple past tense "is"

14 reflection + of (Because of prep.)

15 "that" - after "Their complaint was...", that is the only word that makes sense and follows the structure of the sentence.

16 they had enough to do with You have enough to do + with (they come together).

17 their = University lecturers.

18 to have a duty

19 need of (because of the prep. and the idea)

20 clue given later on in the text "between clear thinking and ... clear," thinking.

informant 5

FIRST PASSAGE

1 B - For me the answer to this question was more or less easy to choose. I think that B suits better and as I was almost convinced I just went back to the text to confirm it. I found letters A and D unacceptable according to the text and letter C possible but not the best one.

2 A - Here I had to go back to the text to have the phrases in context and I believe the only one which is really ironic is letter A because the others seem to convey the reality as it was. I think the choice of words "render mercies" plus the use of the intensifier "very" have no doubt about the purpose of being ironic.

3 B - It was very difficult to choose an answer in this case. I had to re-read the text a couple of times, mainly paragraphs 3 and 4 and I reached the conclusion that the father wanted to be fair to both sisters in the sense that he wanted to give each of them what they really deserved.

4 C - For me this was the most difficult question to answer. The meaning of lines 19-21 is not clear for me. I rejected letters A and B because I don't think they are suitable and I was left with letters C and D, so I chose letter C.

5 B - I think here the expression "at last" lines 26,27 helped me choose letter B. I eliminated letter D as not possible and in fact chose B because of the reason above.

SECOND PASSAGE

6 A - I think none but answer A is acceptable in this case mainly because of what is stated in the text: "can only be learned by doing it" (line 3) and "Experience is a hard school" (line 7)

7 A - Here I found answers B and D unacceptable and letter A the only suitable answer according to lines 5 and 6.

8 D - When answering the question I rejected answers A and C and found it difficult to make up my mind between answers B and D because both seemed possible and correct. Finally I opted for letter D because I found the words "essential" and "most" too strong in letter B.

9 A - At first I thought letter B would be the best answer but when I re-read the text I related imagination to creativity and changed to letter A. Both letters C and D seemed completely inadequate.

10 - When I first read the questions I chose letter C mainly because of the word "interruption" that also appears in the text. While re-reading the last lines of the text I confirmed my choice as being the most suitable one.

THIRD PASSAGE

11 C - My first reaction was to choose letter C and after re-reading the question I stuck to it. Lines 2 and 3 where they mention "an idealized well-ordered land" helped me opt for this letter. The only doubt I had was the meaning of letter A which did not seem suitable in the end.

12 D - Letters A and B seemed out of question, when choosing between C and D I opted for letter D because I think it matched better with "the symbols of good life" and "evidence of old-fashioned security".

13 B - I had no doubts about this question because letter B was the only one that could be accepted

14 A - Again, I found this question easy to answer although the question itself can be tricky.

15 C - At first I chose letter D because I was still thinking about the previous questions. Then, I re-read the last paragraph and realised the tone was different, so I finally opted for letter C

CLOZE TEST

1 This one seemed quite easy because it was clear that a verb was missing. At first I wrote the verb "wrote". Then I changed to "invented", although I was not quite sure if the choice was correct. Anyway, a verb in the past tense is the correct answer.

2 Very easy to complete. It could only be "years" because of the whole context of the word.

3 Again very easy because of the verb preceding the blank.

4 Here "Greek" seemed to be the most logical choice because of "Latin" and the date "200 years ago".

5 Difficult to decide. Different words came to my mind such as "odd, strange, funny". After spending some time thinking I opted for "strange" because "However" introduces a contrast.

6 At first I didn't fill in the blank. Only after re-reading it a couple of times I wrote "sense". Then, when re-reading again I chose "concept" because of the first line of the text.

7 Easy to fill in because a pronoun was missing and it referred back to "university examiners"

8 "A" restricted the answer which should be a noun starting with a consonant. It took me some time to come up with the word "report"

9 Very easy because of the expression "over the years" and the following verb "become"

10 "Interest" was the only word that came to me to fill in this blank, although I was not satisfied with that. But I had no doubts a verb should be placed here.

11 Easy to guess because it was a sequence of words.

12 I didn't fill in the blank the first time I read the text but I did it the second time.

13 Very easy. It's a statement that requires the verb to be.

14 Very easy. A preposition to go with "reflection".

15 Very easy. The word came naturally to my mind.

16 It took me some time to think of a word to go into this blank. But all of a sudden, "with" came to my mind and it seemed so obvious in the end

17 Very easy again. The blank required a definite article

18 "Have" came to my mind as a chunk together with "a duty".

19 Again it took me some time to find out a proper word and when I thought of "need" it seemed very obvious.

20 This was the last blank I filled in and I am still not satisfied with the word I chose. But it was the only one that came to my mind after reading and re-reading the paragraph and the whole text.

General comments: The text was relatively easy. The topic wasn't difficult but I got stuck in some blanks

Informant 6

FIRST PASSAGE

1 I chose B after having read the text twice and the second paragraph twice again. Some parts of the second paragraph confirm my answer, such as "neglecting ... her own family and her own affairs to console him ...", and "her family would have been larger than it was ... if she had not felt that her father was her first priority". I inferred that Charlotte is Judith's daughter and Seymour must be Judith's husband because of the context of family. When I first read paragraph 2, I thought that beck in line 2, should be back, but after reading it again, I thought it is probably an expression "at his beck and call" and it means she was always ready to help him.

2 I chose D, but I am not very sure about it. The first time I read the text, I thought there was irony only in the last paragraph. Then when I read the question and the four alternatives, I tended to read all the text again with a different intonation (although my reading was silent) and I thought that everything could be read with irony. I was very much influenced by the words ironic way and thought that all the alternatives could fit here, but as I had to decide about only one, I followed my first impression and chose D.

3 I chose A, because in paragraph 3, Mr Handforth had a feeling of guilt and gratitude towards Judith, he gave her presents from time to time and re-made his will many times leaving unequal shares to his daughters. Besides that, alternatives B, C, D are not suitable here, so by exclusion, I also chose A.

4 I chose D, because of the context of paragraphs 4 and 5, especially because of the sentence: "How can one feel towards someone who (...) has thrown one over as one feels towards someone who (...) has stayed by one's side?" I don't know the meaning of throwing someone over but I think it means "abandon". If I chose A, I think B could also be possible; C is the less likely to be correct but it is not wrong either. I considered the best alternative after reading both paragraphs (4 and 5) many times and all the alternatives again and going back to the text again.

5 I was in doubt between A and B. Again, I was influenced by the question. Before reading the question and the alternatives I thought that it was all of a sudden that Mr Handforth saw Judith in a sceptical way; this was reinforced by the adverb at last. But when I read the last paragraph again after reading the question and the alternatives, I was attracted by the second and the third lines, read them more carefully and did not know what to answer if A or B. Again I followed my intuition and my first impression.

SECOND PASSAGE

6 D - First I read the text just once and read question 6 with all the answers. Then I went back to the text and read the first sentence twice because I missed some commas and I wanted to make the right pauses. Then I read lines 3 and 4 and chose alternative D.

7 I read lines 3-7 twice or three times before choosing alternative A. I was also helped by vocabulary, especially by the word quit

8 I was in doubt between B and D. Then I went to the next question, went to the text, and read again twice or three times from line 7 to 16. I answered question 9 then went back to 8. I knew that the right answers cannot be A or C. I tended to consider B as the right one, although D is not completely wrong.

9 I answered this question before the previous one. I considered B correct, mainly because of lines 12, 13, 16.

10 I read the last paragraph four or five times before choosing answer A, but I am not very sure about it. I did not consider B or C completely wrong. In a situation like this, the more we read, the more in doubt we get. Now, while I am answering this, I wonder if D can be the right answer. There is nothing wrong with D either. In spite of not knowing the meaning of some words, I do not think this could affect my decision

THIRD PASSAGE

11 I read the text once, then answered question 11 choosing letter C then read the first paragraph again just to make sure my answer was right. Lines 4-5 can prove it's right.

12 Paragraph 2 and 3 helped me to choose A as the right answer. Lines 6 to 9 state that British advertising lack message

13 None of the alternatives were correct except B. Line 11 says "What on earth was it selling?" All the third paragraph claimed that the message of the commercial was not achieved.

14 I answered B because I was helped by the previous answer and also because I read the third paragraph again

15 If I read only the last paragraph I would tend to answer B, because everything relates to the past. But after reading paragraph three again I thought the right answer should be D, considering that British commercials don't get to the point wasting time in details and not in the message

CLOZE TEST

1 In order to use the word created I looked forward as far as Latin so that I could have an idea about the meaning of the full sentence. And of course, syntax helped me here because as there was a subject, I needed a verb to complete it.

2 Years - I used the knowledge of morphology and the words two hundred and ago helped me with that

3 to - This preposition came out of my mind automatically because of the verb refer (I remembered that with refer we have to use the preposition to)

4 Greek - I was familiar with the fact that Greek and Latin used to have a high standard among the foreign languages taught at schools a long time ago, and this helped me to answer this question.

5 Strange - I felt like using no word at all here, then I got stuck, and I am still not very sure about my answer. I had to read three times the full sentence to understand everything and to make it acceptable. The verb seems helped me to use an adjective after it. (So grammar + meaning helped me here)

6 Concept - I was in doubt between idea and concept and I chose concept because I thought it was more formal and more suitable for this kind of text (Stylistic notions helped me here)

7 they - I had to go back to make sure what the referent was. As the referent was university examiners (=subject), I used the pronoun they in order to replace the subject.

8 research - I was in doubt between report and research. I didn't use report because the verb reported had been used before. In order to avoid repetition, I preferred the word research. (Stylistic notions helped me here again).

9 have - Grammar knowledge helped me to use the Present Perfect here. The concept of something that started in the past and it is still going on in the present, the adverb over the years, and the verb become (P. Participle) helped me here.

10 Illiteracy - I read this sentence three times before using this word. I am still not very sure about it. According to the meaning of the paragraph, I think it is suitable, but I was in doubt if we can say an increasing illiteracy. (So my problem here perhaps is lack of grammar knowledge)

11 and - I knew that a preposition should be used here in order to link two nouns, and also because of the previous comma

12 pieces - This word came out automatically, perhaps because I am familiar with the classroom jargon.

13 was - I read up to the end of the sentence before filling with this verb.

14 of - I know that after the word reflection the preposition which is required is of.

15 that - The clause their complaint was helped me to use the word that. But also the other clause helped me to come out with that word. (So I looked back and forward again).

16 about - I read the sentence three times before using this preposition. First I used with, but then I preferred to use about because I thought it was more suitable. I am still not sure about this preposition.

17 their - I looked back and I found the phrase university lecturers as a referent. Knowing grammar (possessive adjectives) was very helpful here and understanding the reference was helpful as well.

18 have - First I used had and I hadn't realized it was wrong. It was very silly of me, I was absent-minded. Then I read it again and I realized that all verbs of the paragraph were in the present tense, then I changed had to have.

19 importance - The context helped me here.

20 thinking - First I used the word communication but as soon as I finished the sentence I thought I should avoid repeating words. My idea was confirmed when I read the rest of the paragraph when the noun phrase clear thinking is mentioned.

Informant 7

FIRST PASSAGE

1 I didn't think A was right - except if I had read it all wrong. B seemed right. Reading C and D I confirmed my choice. Felt slightly tempted to look back at the text, just to make sure.

2 I recognized A as correct. Then turned the page to confirm. The others didn't seem to qualify as much.

3 Had to look back. My doubts were B and D. Still not totally convinced - had to read the passage twice or three times - Have decided for A. Choice based more on line 11 than any other, but to a small degree to lines 15-17.

4 Had to reread paragraphs 4 and 5. I was in doubt between A and B. Don't see much evidence on either side, but still feel that B is right (I didn't know anything about the subject, and the ironic tone of the narrator never let me be totally sure of the answers. I didn't use language analysis. I answered this at the bus depot, which might have made a lot of difference.)

5 I think, after reading the last paragraph again, that it's B.

SECOND PASSAGE

1 I read it once through. Now down to work. The subject is much more familiar to me. No portion of text is obscure to me.)

6 A seemed to be right. B and C didn't. D gave me a second thought. But I decide for A, and didn't even have to look back.

7 A was obvious to me, mostly because the subject was familiar and I understood the author's point from the start.

8 If I understood the author's point as well as I think I did, then D must be the choice. B and C are slightly tempting. A is too drastic. Again, felt no need to reread passage.

9 B is quite obvious to me. I relate mental strength to other words I remember from the text, like using up his horsepower, etc.

10 Again no difficulty, I remember the point quite clearly.

(This text was much easier, probably because I was more familiar with the subject, so that I could rule out alternatives much more easily. Also, the style was more straight-forward.)

THIRD PASSAGE

11 A and C were wrong, so I just weighed B and D against each other. Decided D, had a quick look back to confirm.

12 A and D were distracting, but I chose B. In doing this, I'm trying to remember the essence of the text, ruling out vague references that make A and D almost possible. Didn't look back.

13 Again, I'm relying on my impression of the message, of the core of the text. I remember the point the author was trying to make. So it's B.

14 Don't need to look back to remember it's D. Quite obvious.

15 I think this and other answers were easy because when reading this text, I could go for the tone and message/content and sort of ignore the form. In the first passage I much more concerned how things were written, so that the phrasing of the alternatives prevented an immediate recognition of correct answer. Here ideas mattered more than words. The journalistic style was easier to follow and to memorize, less trapsdoors. It seems to fit a rhetoric pattern in my mind, whereas the first text was new ground.

CLOZE TEST

1 I had to reread the first sentence to make sure I understood the connection with the second. I simply searched my mind for alternatives such as invented, created, and then chose the one that seemed to me the most likely to be chosen by a native speaker writing an article.

2 This was immediate, almost automatic.

3 Automatic. I didn't think of grammar, it came to my mind as a collocation or expression would have.

4 Here I had to look back quickly to confirm that the writer was English.

5 I had to go on reading to check the relationship between this half of the sentence and the remaining part. In doing this I automatically filled in the other blanks mentally.

6 Automatic, just a second thought to choose from alternatives like kind, type.

7 Automatic. Didn't even have to look back to check the subject.

8 Had to think of other possibilities: comment, for instance. Some of these were ruled out because of grammar. Complaint wouldn't do with the preposition on.

9 This was a grammar decision. But I had to look at the continuation to see why an adverb such as slowly, gradually, eventually, wouldn't do.

10 The idea was clear to me from the start, but I had to weigh tendency, trend, bias, relapse against each other.

11 Almost automatic. But I found it too easy to be true and reread the sentence.

12 Doubt. I'm not sure what's in the writer's mind. Samples doesn't sound right (writing samples?). Styles? Maybe. Exercises, no. Form, no, it's not the form, it's the product. Samples.

13 I used grammar knowledge to define what sort of word to choose. Easy, and a relief compared with 12.

14 Automatic.

15 Automatic.

16 I knew it was a prep., just had to decide which. I went over the possibilities in my mind and for sounded better.

17 I was in doubt between article and possessive. Chose the most likely.

18 Automatic.

19 Had to read twice. First thought of value, then chose importance, probably because of of.

20 I try to imagine what writer had in mind. I guess I am only too aware of how the exercise is made. I know there was a word were that was deleted. Instead of imagining any word, I look for the one that was there originally. I weigh alternatives such as style, presentation. Form occurs to me after reading through the end.

Informant 8

FIRST PASSAGE

1 I had to re-read lines 14 and 15 two times to understand it completely. I eliminated the options I didn't think were relevant to the text.

2 I didn't have to read the text again to answer this question and again I eliminated the ones I thought weren't relevant.

3 I had to read the paragraph twice to get the real idea of what were the man's intentions and after that I eliminated the one's I thought were incorrect. I was in doubt about two of the options so I read the paragraph once more before answering.

4 I had no problems with this question. I found the answer by eliminating the ones I thought were incorrect. To answer this question and to be sure I re-read the paragraph.

5 I re-read the last paragraph and using my favorite strategie, eliminating options I think were wrong are wrong I came to my conclusion.

SECOND PASSAGE

6 Reading the passage I had a few problems, but when I started answering the questions I had no problems. I eliminated the wrong options and tried to choose the one I thought was best.

7 I simply remembered the text and answered the question.

8 I believe it is this answer and I arrived at it by looking back at the text once and re-reading the sentence in which it was in.

9 To arrive at this answer I also had to look back at the text, because I couldn't remember

10 I answered this question but I must be honest. I'm not sure of the answer. I re-read the part of the text and came to a conclusion

THIRD PASSAGE

11 I eliminated the ones I thought weren't relevant and chose the answer I thought fit best.

12 Feeling familiar with the topic of this test, I answered B

13 I chose simply by eliminating the other options.

14 I remembered the text and answered the question.

15 I re-read the last paragraph so that I could answer the question.

CLOZE TEST

1 I had to read ahead to understand what I needed to use in this blank.

2 I wasn't very familiar with this topic so I had some problems answering the question. To be honest I'm not very good at answering cloze tests

3 I had no problem coming to this conclusion.

4 To be honest I really had to refer back to the beginning of the test to be sure of my answer

5 I'm still unsure of my answer to number 5. I have a feeling it could be *clear* or some other word like that.

6 I re-read the text once more from the beginning before answering.

7 No problem with this answer.

8 Reading the text from the beginning I came to this conclusion.

9 No problem with this answer.

10 I couldn't come to a conclusion to this answer.

11 No problem with this question.

12 Not sure of this answer I tried to find a word that fit.

13 No problem. I came to this answer by reading the text over again.

14 Questions 13 and 14 seemed to work together so if you answer 13 the answer to 14 comes easy.

15 The next two numbers I wasn't so sure of so I tried to find two words that fit

16 (same as 15)

17 Answering with the words I used in 15 and 16 I could only come up with other for 17.

18 After reading the whole text again I came to this word.

19 Since the word for 18 came easily 19 simply had to fit in.

20 I answered this question but I'm still not sure of the answer.

Informant 9

FIRST PASSAGE

1 After reading the four alternatives, I eliminated options B and C, because they were clearly incorrect. After that, I came back to the text in order to choose between A and D, since they were both possible answers for me. I finally chose D because of the last words of the paragraph "her father was her first priority" which imply daughterly affection.

2 The process which I went through to answer this item is the same of the preceding one. I eliminated alternatives C and D because they are distractors they are not ironic statements: they are the truth about Judith's character. Besides that, restricting the choice to two options increases the chances of getting it correct. Then, I eliminated B too, because she is attentive to her father, indeed. However, her kindness is not due to her "tender mercies", but to her greed.

3 It was clear for me that A was the right answer, since rewarding Judith for her sacrifices was Mr Handforth's true intention. There were no distractors, so I did not have to use any of the strategies that you mentioned in the guide.

4 Mr. Handforth's disapproval of Hester's attitude in the past meant he considered that she could not care less about him, so I chose B. But before making up my mind, I confess that I was in doubt between A and B, because both convey a negative judgement of Hester. So, A may be considered as a distractor. I had to go back to the text in order to answer this question.

5 I had to read the last paragraph twice in order to read this question. It was when I found out that B was the correct answer. The sentence "No, Mr Handforth decided, they were the worst." shows that he had changed his affections towards Hester deliberately, from one moment to another.

SECOND PASSAGE

6 I was in doubt between A and D, because both convey the idea of making some effort to acquire the skill of writing. However, when I read the first paragraph again, I realized that the correct answer would be D, because of the very first statement of the text: "the fact is that writing is an empirical art."

7 It was quite easy to answer this question (and I hope I have answered it right!) because the writer makes it clear through the statement: "... you must have at least the foundation of a gift, without which is useless to precede."

8 There is no doubt that the author is realist in relation to the necessity of a writer's second job. So, I chose B right away. By the way, I think that A and C are distractors because the author mentions some disadvantages of having a second job, and this may confuse the reader.

9 This question was also easy to be answered because the reader may remember well the "pros" and "cons" of having a second job. Besides that, the sentence of alternative B contains the same prepositional verb that appear in the last paragraph "... it may also use up horsepower to the point of exhaustion."

10 Just as the preceding questions, this one has just one possible answer. I was able to answer it right away without having to look back at the text.

THIRD PASSAGE

11 It was hard for me to choose between B and C because both were possible answers for me. So, I read the first paragraph again and then I decided to choose C because the last sentence conveyed images of an ideal world of health and happiness, although it can only be afforded by wealthy people.

12 I think alternative B may be the right answer for two reasons: 1) It is quite clear in the second paragraph that British TV advertising induces people to buy products by evoking the well-known symbols of good life. 2) The only alternative that expresses this idea is B.

13 The path I followed to answer this question was the same as the preceding one. The correct answer is clearly B because the idea that it expresses is the same that is conveyed by the third paragraph. Besides that there are no distractors.

14 I chose alternative B right away because it matched the message of the third paragraph, which emphasizes the British and the American ways of advertising products. D could be a distractor if the reader understood the question in the other way around, considering the American advertising style.

15 Again, there was no difficulty to find the correct answer, for C summarizes the fourth paragraph. No other alternative conveys a similar idea, so there are no distractors.

CLOZE TEST

1 A verb was missing, so I used syntax in order to fill out this blank.

2 "years ago" is a well-known expression, so it was it to deduct that between the number and the adverb ago, the missing word would be the noun "years". In this case I used syntax and structure.

3 Again, according to grammar rules, the verb refer always goes with a preposition.

4 I found that "English" was the missing word because of the reference to "English writers".

5 The most appropriate word in this case would be "improvable" since there must have been occurred some changes concerning the concept of the word "illiteracy" in such a long period. The hint of the answer was given by the content of the preceding sentences.

6 I followed the same path of the preceding question in order to answer this one.

7 I used the subjective pronoun "they" because it functions as an anaphoric reference and its presence in a sentence like this is obligatory according to the English structure.

8 I used the word "report", but other words came to my mind, such as "commentary", "article", "evaluation" and all of them seemed to fit the sentence.

obs.: The informant hasn't commented the questions from 9 to 20.

informant 10

FIRST PASSAGE

1 In this question I had to look back at the paragraph two times due to the alternatives themselves. They kind of mixed me up. I was not familiar with the topic, but it did not hinder me from answering the questions. I did make use of language analysis to answer it, and I also eliminated options that were known to be incorrect.

2 In this question I did not look back at the text and I marked A straight away (maybe I am mistaken).

3 In this question I had to look back at paragraph three about three times to make sure I had understood it right. I also eliminated the options that were known to be incorrect.

4 The word "natural" gave me the hint to answer this question. I went back to paragraph 4 once.

5 I went back to the last paragraph once and by analyzing the language I decided to select the first option.

SECOND PASSAGE

6 I did not look back at the text to answer this question. I marked the alternative straight from what I could remember from the first reading.

7 Again I did not look back to answer it. I used the information I had obtained after the first reading.

8 I had to read half of paragraph one and paragraph two again and analyse the words to get the answer.

9 As I had to reread almost the whole text to answer the question above I had the information fresh in my mind. I used the elimination strategy.

10 When I read the second paragraph I was not in doubt about the content. However, when I read the alternatives I got confused for the way they were written. Therefore I had to read the paragraph again and again till I made my decision.

THIRD PASSAGE

11 I had to read the first paragraph once again to get to the answer. Then I was in doubt between alternatives C and D, but thinking about the fact of not having "teeth decay" I decided for "idealistic".

12 I eliminated the options which had no logical association with the text.

13 I did not have to read the text again and I decided straightforward for alternative B.

14 I did not have to look back at the text. I eliminated the options which had no logical association with the text.

15 (same as 14)

CLOZE TEST

1 To answer this one I had to look forward in the text to grasp the idea of what word to use. The context was useful to me.

2 The structure told me what word to use.

3 The syntax helped me grasp the word.

4 The context helped me.

5 I am still in doubt if I have used the right word.

6 (same as 5)

- 7 The syntax helped me.
- 8 The context helped me.
- 9 The expression "over the years" helped me decide on the verb tense to use, and the syntax told me I had to use a verb
- 10 The context helped me.
- 11 I made use of syntax to realize the necessity of using a linking word and the context made me see the word should add ideas
- 12 I am still in doubt of having used the right word.
- 13 The context helped me grasp the word.
- 14 I made use of syntax to fill in this gap.
- 15 (same as 14)
- 16 (same as 12)
- 17 I made use of syntax.
- 18 I am not sure if the word I have chosen is the correct one, because for me it makes more sense to say "... they have the duty" instead of " a duty "
- 19 The context has helped me.
- 20 (same as 19)

informant 11

FIRST PASSAGE

1. Very confusing. I had to read the paragraph over and over again. Tried to eliminate alternatives. Still not very sure about my answer
- 2 I had to read the paragraph twice. After the second time I changed my answer. (I Used my own knowledge of what irony is)
- 3 I found this paragraph confusing. I was not sure of the answer. After reading about 4 times I chose B. (by elimination)
- 4 I think he didn't accept either what Hester had done to him or what Judith wanted from him - his money. The sentences which refer to both are very clear: (- "not that he was not fond of Hester, but" & - "Everything his daughter Judith had done for him ... the greed of gain."
- 5 I'm still not sure about the answer. Even after reading many times I haven't been able to decide whether A, B or C is correct

SECOND PASSAGE

- 6 I read the passage just once to answer this question.
- 7 Knowing that talent can mean gift helped me answer this question.
- 8 The author says that a routine job consumes mental energy. The right alternative has the word mental, the phrasal verb use up which is similar to consume and strengthen which can mean energy (alternative B)
- 9 I could eliminate alternatives A, B, but I was in doubt between C and D. I think both are correct.
- 10 I think the word nowadays in the last paragraph helped me answer.

THIRD PASSAGE

- 11 I read the paragraph twice. The topic was about something familiar, the language was easier than in the second passage and much easier than in the first passage. The description of the commercial made me think of the word idealistic, as they showed a perfect situation and the author said we are "wafted away from this cruel world into an idealized well-ordered land". (I guessed the meaning of wafted)
- 12 The commercial described is very appealing to people's senses, thus they are thrilled by the beautiful and luxurious images. I felt thrilled when I read the first sentence and imagined myself watching the commercial.
- 13 The only logical alternative is B. The rest were not stated in the text. I think I used some deduction in order to get to my answer: "What on earth was it selling?"
- 14 Again, C was the only logical alternative. A, B and D go against what the author says in the text (have no logical association)
- 15 Alternative C summarizes what is said in the last paragraph. I also think the other alternatives have no association with the text (although D is true if you consider that they are showing many things (images) to sell a particular one)

CLOZE TEST

- 1 I read this part once. I thought this was the best word.
- 2 The structure helps because 200 something can only be years, not weeks or days.
- 3 In this case, the study of grammar helped. The preposition to follows the verb refer. I read it once.
- 4 I think this was the only logical word as the author was English. I read it once.
- 5 I couldn't find a word to write here. I read it several times.
- 6 I associated the word disability with problem. I had to read it 3 x.
- 7 I put they because it agrees with examiners I read it once.
- 8 As you can use the verb comment with the preposition on and they are talking about students' examinations, I chose to use it I read the sentence 2x
- 9 By having learnt the Present Perfect Tense, one is able to fill in this blank with the auxiliary have. I read this sentence once.
- 10 I wasn't able to do this one. I read it several times, but couldn't find a suitable word.
- 11 I think you need this word to connect the parts of the sentence. It's the same as in Portuguese. I read it once

12 I thought this word was appropriate at first. But then I re-read it and decided it was not possible because you have the ability to and not of. I don't know what word to use here.

13 As they are comparing sloppy writing with sloppy thinking (using the word reflection) we need verb to be. I read it twice and changed

14 grammar - a reflection of. I read it once.

15 I wasn't very sure here and decided to follow my senses.

16 I read this part about four times. I had used the word with and then changed to concerning but I was not satisfied.

17 No word is necessary here. As we learn in Grammar you teach someone or teach something to someone. I read it once

18 I wasn't able to find a better word here, but I wasn't sure. I read it 3/4 times.

19 I think the word importance is logical in this context. I read it twice.

20 Syntax helped me here. We need a noun here. By the context I think communication is suitable.

Obs.: I don't approve of this kind of exercises because it's just not useful. As you said, most times, if the words haven't been deleted, we are able to understand their meaning. On the other hand if we are writing we will choose the words based on style, grammar, formality, etc. except for grammar, learning this kind of exercise doesn't really check knowledge. Options 3, 7, 9, 11, 14, 13 are structural, therefore they have only one answer. Questions 1, 2, 4, etc. follow a choice of words based on logic or observation of how people speak. The others have more alternatives and I don't know if there are there to check syntax or vocabulary. (I also don't know if my answers are correct).

informant 12

FIRST PASSAGE

1 I read it twice, analysed each choice before deciding for B.

2 C and D are too obvious. They're not ironic. As far as irony goes I prefer A. It's more ironic.

3 I read it three times. I wanted to make sure of his intentions.

4 Read it twice.

5 I guessed because this text was rather irritating.

SECOND PASSAGE

6 I read all the alternatives firstly. Then I eliminated the obviously incorrect ones. Final step - I chose from among the remaining ones.

7 Same as in 6

8 Same procedure

9 Same procedure

10 Same procedure

THIRD PASSAGE

11 I don't agree with the alternatives. Idealized would suit it better.

12 I love reading about Advertising. It was real pleasure. Anyway, in order to answer the exercise I read all the alternatives firstly, checked them in the text and finally eliminated the ones I believe incorrect.

13 Same procedure

14 Same procedure

15 Same procedure. I read the text twice

CLOZE TEST

1 First paragraph was easy to fill in I didn't get lost. I don't know if they are all correct. They were not difficult, though. I preferred "erented" to "used".

2 before ago - "years" comes easily. No need to think much about it

3 refer - prep. - to

4 Greek/Latin - traditional languages

5 clear / obvious would be OK.

6 I couldn't find a better word here.

7 they - the verb needs a subject

8 I used "review" because report would be repetitive the words account/statement/abstract came to my mind but, then we had "a" and the prep. on - so.

9 I didn't have any doubt.

10 no doubt.

11 no doubt

12 I thought of "skill" too.

13 OK

14 OK

15 OK

16 OK

17 OK - I thought of leaving it blank. It would make sense.

18 OK

19 OK

20 It is in the text.

informant 13

FIRST PASSAGE

1 Not until the last paragraph did I know she was helping her father out of interest. So the last paragraph made me interpret the 2nd. She made a point in lettin her father know she was throwing part of her life away for his sake.

2 It's immediately followed by the word 'VAMPIRE'

3 I had to read it more than once for the answer. 'Not that he was fond of Hester' in line 17 suggests he intended to leave more things to Judith after his death, so I could exclude alternative B and D. The last paragraph says he was aware of Judith's greediness, but there is nothing that says this made him change his mind about benefiting her in his will. So, I decided on for alternative A

4 Since she got married young and hardly ever saw him

5 I ruled out alternatives C and D. I'm in doubt between A and B (Let me read it again) I conclude it's A, since in the first paragraph it says his wits inclined him to be critical of those dearest to him: It had always been kept secret.

SECOND PASSAGE

6 At first, the article seems boring. I need to read it a second time. (11:05 am) It's 11:09. I've finished reading for the second time. Now I think I'm ready to go over the questions. At this stage I'm inclined to alternative D, but I'm not sure about it. The emphasis in doing (parag. 2), and continuity (par. 3) has led me to think A is the right alternative.

7 It's obvious: The foundation of a gift (p. 2)

8 Without going back to the text I would answer D but let me check: He says that "the pros and cons of the situation are debatable" A is ruled out. B, C, D seem to apply. I would exclude C too. (He never said it's too time consuming, only "creativity" consuming. Now, we've got B and D. I'll stick to D)

9 C is out because talent is a gift, A, too because working out may promote creativity (fact searching). D is not implied. I would chose B

10 I need to go back to the text for this one. C is the right one. In the last paragraph we have "Interruptions nowadays" The word "nowadays" was the only word that could suggest a comparison to the past
Obs: (The passage turned out to be interesting, after all)

THIRD PASSAGE

11 I read paragraph 1 over gain and the idea that came to me is that people are always happy in commercials. Thus D. The easiest to exclude would be A (which conveys excessive behavior) words satisfaction - which would go against the perfect-looking family

12 Before reading for the 2nd time I'd choose B and eliminate A (since A is more similar to American commercial) But I'm not sure. Let me go back to the text: I go straight to paragraph 2 it says "exploits a yearning for old-fashioned security."

13 B, I'm positive. Because he said he didn't know what the product being advertised was.

14 I'd go for A. The word "sizzle" as opposed to "steak" corroborates my choice

15 1. A nation needs symbols 2. We want to be reminded that they still exist 3. TV commercials provide us with those symbols. The sentences above led me to think C is the right alternative.

CLOZE TEST

1 a) yes

2 a) yes

3 a) yes the preposition "to" came easily (after refer)

4 a) no. It must be language, too. (because of "or Latin)

5 I feel the need for an adjective (after "SEEM"). I'll leave it blank and continue reading

6 I had to read the 1st paragraph again. Yes, "concept" fits here. Number 5 could be clear (Somehow, one higgered the other)

7 I'm inclined to writ "THEY" (immediately followed by the verb reported)

8 (no comment)

9 The expression "Over the years" should require a Present Perfect (have become)

10 This one is hard; I don't know whether to write tendency or trend

11 I felt the need for a connective (structure analysis)

12 (no comment)

13 Somehow the expression "all too often" was a distractor

14 Easy (reflection of - purely structure analysis)

15 (no comment)

16 I need to read from the beginning. I'm stuck I've got to read forth, too

17 At first I would write "their", but it doesn't sound right. I'll go forth and skip this

18 Because it's at the beginning of the paragraph, the word came very easily. I didn't have to worry about links as I would have if the word had been in the middle of the paragraph.

19 Structure: It required a noun.

20 I had written language but corrected myself after re-reading the rest of the paragraph. Well, I've finished reading but numbers 5, 16 and 17 are still blank. I'll try to read the text as a whole, get the main idea. Somehow "WROTE" in (1) is too shallow. "Introduced" is better number 16. The word "in" seems to fit now.

number 17: I can only think of a pronoun "their" or a noun "COLLEGE"

informant 14

FIRST PASSAGE

1 Yes, I could answer the question without looking back. I got a little lost in the middle of the text when the narrator starts to talk about Hester. In order to answer, I tried to eliminate the other possibilities.

2 To answer this question I tried to reason how would the character express irony. I thought that the expression "true colors" would be a hint.

3 I had to go back to the text in order to answer this question, though it seems to be the main "message" of it. The fact is that, at the end, I had to read the text all over in order to understand it.

4 I thought that, by the way he describes Judith's attitude in the end, he was more fond of Hester than of Judith. But this is a little confusing in the text, I had to go back to answer it.

5 It seems to be that. As he was very fond of Judith in the beginning. At the end of the text he starts to say that he thought.

SECOND PASSAGE

This passage seemed more objective than the first one, which was more sentimental and more confusing.

6 I found this text easier than the first one. I didn't get lost in any part of the text, but I had to read some sentences more than once to make sure I got it right. The author says that there is no other way of writing other than doing it.

7 This is the second argument of the text and it is clearly stated, I didn't find any difficulty in answering this question.

8 To answer this question I had to ponder between A and C. But the word "usually" somehow led me to the idea that is expressed in the text.

9 The word "creativity" is somewhere mentioned I figured that the "mental strength" that the answer mentions would be better linked to a work of writing than "imagination".

10 This is a part of the text which I didn't understand very well. I didn't have to go back to the text to answer it, but since it mentions "nowadays" I thought it would be connected to the last sentence.

THIRD PASSAGE

11 The text states this argument in the first paragraph, it was clear and I did not have to go back to the text or eliminate other alternatives.

12 I had to go back to the text to answer this one the British commercial that the author describes seemed not to have achieved its purpose, but I'm not sure it wants to concentrate only on the question of modern life. I was not sure if I should choose B or C. Also, the lack of knowledge disturbed me, I had to look "sizzle" up, when I found I remembered what it meant, I had come across this word before, but the text didn't enlighten me.

13 It was clear to me, as said in the third paragraph that the author did not remember what was being advertised.

14 Looking up the word "sizzle" made me be sure of this answer, even though I had already answered it.

15 Answers A, B and C seemed totally against everything the author had said before.

CLOZE TEST

1 I had thought of another answer before but erased it after reading the whole text again.

2 This was the easiest one.

3 I thought it would be a preposition since it came after "referring".

4 This might be a stupid answer, but it seems a little strange to me that people would worry about the illiteracy of 90% of the population 200 years ago, people who couldn't even read English.

5 I had thought of the word "clear" before, but after reading the sentence once again it didn't make any sense with the rest of the arguments.

6 Before "of disability".

7 It seemed to me that "reported" need a subject.

8 It was the first word to come to my mind.

9 An auxiliary verb before "become".

10 Because of the preposition "towards", but I had a little trouble finding a word that would fit there.

11 After enumerating several characteristics I thought that a "conjunction of addition" would do some good.

12 It was the first word that came to my mind.

13 I'm not sure if this word fit there, the sentence seems a little loose in the middle of the paragraph because of the gerund.

14 After "reflection" I would only think of "of" as a preposition.

15 The pronoun goes as a linker, I can't imagine the sentence without it.

16 I had a little trouble finding a preposition. That would fit better with "do", "with" seems a little too informal but it makes some sense.

17 The possessive gives a tone of irony to the sentence, I thought it might be a good idea.

18 This verb seemed to fit pretty well in the meaning of the whole sentence.

19 There weren't many words that came to my mind, I thought that "importance" would help to give a clearer meaning to the sentence.

20 Writing is a way of communication, of expression, somehow I thought that the second one was more objective.

informant 15**FIRST PASSAGE**

- 1 I had to read the second paragraph again with more attention, having in mind the options which were given in the question
- 2 I had some idea but I read it again just to confirm my idea; I gave the same answer I had before re-reading the text.
- 3 I could answer it without looking back at the text
- 4 I had to re-read this part of the text again (3 or 4 times) because in my opinion it didn't answer any of the questions in n. 4. I eliminated A and B and decided that B was the most probable one.
- 5 I had an idea but read the text (last paragraph) again just to confirm it.

SECOND PASSAGE

- 6 I eliminated two options and read the 2nd paragraph again twice to confirm my idea
- 7 I didn't need to look back at the text again.
- 8 (same as 7)
- 9 (same as 7)
- 10 After re-reading the text once, I could answer it quite easily. This text seemed to be quite easy to me, so I read all the answers at once and re-read the text again just to confirm my ideas and pay more attention to question n.10. I had to be a bit attentive to n. 6, and I had to read lines 3, 4, 5 a couple of times.

THIRD PASSAGE

- 11 I didn't need to look back at the text.
- 12 I re-read a sentence in the text again to confirm my idea.
- 13 I could answer on the spot.
- 14 I didn't need to look back at the text again.
- 15 I just read through the last paragraph for checking.

CLOZE TEST

- 1 I know it is a verb, but I'm not sure which one.
- 2 I could answer it on the spot.
- 3 (same as 2)
- 4 I know it is a language, so I've guessed one.
- 5 I've guessed it.
- 6 I know it is a noun, so I've guessed it.
- 7 I had this idea while reading it for the first time and I couldn't find a better one
- 8 I thought of other nouns with similar meanings, but as I read the word "lecturers" later on, I decided to use the word "lecture"
- 9 I had this idea while reading it for the first time and I couldn't find a better one.
- 10 I couldn't think of the right word although I could understand what the content is.
- 11 I've guessed it.
- 12 I think it should be known, so I've chosen one related to the content of the text.
- 13 I've guessed it.
- 14 I know it should be a preposition and I think that's the one that follows this noun.
- 15 I had this idea while reading it for the first time and I couldn't find a better one.
- 16 (same as 15)
- 17 (same as 15)
- 18 (same as 15)
- 19 (same as 15)
- 20 I had thought of another noun with similar meaning, but I chose this one because it is written in the text.

informant 16**FIRST PASSAGE**

- 1 After having read the whole text and read the part which corresponded to the question I chose answer B
- 2 B - This one seemed more ironic to me, even though I can't say why.
- 3 A - Options B, C and D have no obvious association with the text.
- 4 C - This is the alternative which describes Hester better. The others are not mentioned in the text.
- 5 A - The second time I went through the text I could find this answer in the first paragraph.

SECOND PASSAGE

6 A - The clue here is obvious

7 A - Quite obvious

8 Obvious too. B

9 B - Clues: - A routine job consumes mental energy. - It may also use the horsepower to the point of exhaustion.

10 C - The word nowadays gave me the clue

THIRD PASSAGE

11 A - None of the remaining options depict families in TV commercials.

12 B - This is clearly stated

13 B - Nobody know what was being advertised.

14 C - Clues - All elements in the British commercial were expensive. Besides they are not subtle, they aren't of a lower standard and don't communicate more effectively.

15 D - Letter D eliminates all the other alternatives.

CLOZE TEST

1 used - there should be a verb in the past tense because of the word ago.

2 years - it wouldn't be possible to use other expressions of time such as days, months or weeks

3 to - the verb refer demands the preposition to after it

4 English - It should be the name of another language because of the word or. The author refers to an English writer in the text.

5 unlikely - Not everything was agreed with.

6 idea. People usually have ideas in their minds.

7 they - referring to university examiners.

8 study, research. I don't know if this is correct

9 have - the verb must be in the present perfect tense.

10 tendency - There should be a noun.

11 and - Last part of quoted things

12 way - Most obvious

13 being - a present situation - verb in the present continuous.

14 of - reflection of

15 that - People complain about, but the complaint was that

16 with - I'm unsure about this one

17 other. It was the only alternative I could think of.

18 have - They have

19 importance. I was in doubt. Importance was the first word that came to my mind.

20 correctness. I was in doubt about this one.

Informant 17

FIRST PASSAGE

1 I looked back to the text many times and eliminated the other choices. Because there weren't any words or expressions that would have made me choose them. Then, I thought that the expression "She herself had said..." gave me the hint to choose letter B.

2 Again I first eliminated the other options. I looked back to the text to see the context where the expressions appeared. But I am still not sure about the answer. In fact I think looking at the text as a whole and the contradiction exists between all the expressions in the alternatives and the fact that She (Judith) took care of her father because she was interested in gaining sth, all the expressions sound ironic then. I think I thought about the meaning of the text as a whole.

3 I probably have chosen the B choice, at the beginning, maybe because I was influenced by my own beliefs, not because I got this in the text. Then, I reread the text and decided that the C choice was the right one. I based myself on the expression "leaving the residue of his state in unequal shares. ...". But I am not sure. I always feel confused with the reading exercises of CPE.

4 I based myself on the expression: "It was natural, of course." to choose choice C.

5 I think this conclusion (A) is also based on my knowledge of the world. If the father had showed Judith what he really thought of her, she probably would have not continued treating him as she used to. Am I wrong?

SECOND PASSAGE

I am familiar with this topic.

6 The other choices were too restrictive (limited). Letter D is the one which is a synonymous expression for "empirical art", "can only be learned by doing it".

7 A is the only choice that express the same as: "You must have at least the foundation of a gift"

8 D was the less radical, limited choice.

9 B I think A + C are also included in letter B while letter D is not mentioned in the text.

10 C is statement similar to "Interruptions, nowadays, however, are a professional hazard that all authors have to contend with" B it couldn't be H because it says "most survivors have to rely on another job" not all + not the modern ones.

I always do this kind of exercise in the following way:

- 1) I read through the text to have a general idea about it
- 2) I read all the questions + the alternatives
- 3) I reread the text trying to see if I get the answers.
- 4) Then I reread each question & the alternatives & and try to find cues to confirm or refute each choice

THIRD PASSAGE

11 I looked for a word that would involve more things, a word that would not limit the description of the families.

12 I use elimination in this answer, too. It couldn't be letter A because there is an idea that sometimes we don't even know what product the British ads are selling. So, it couldn't be A. It isn't letter C because we know through the text that British ads tend to show that old times things were better. Letter D is not mentioned anywhere in the text. And the expression: "America sells the steak, Britain sells the sizzle" suggests the same as letter B.

13 For me letter B is obvious because the author says that he couldn't even know or remember what this commercial was selling.

14 Elimination of alternatives B, C, D because I couldn't find in the text anything that would make me choose one of them while the sentence: "Viewers reveled in the medium and forgot the message" together with the contrast, made by the author, with the American way of advertising: "No art, no craft, just the message" seemed to me enough to conclude that the British advertisements adopted a more suitable approach.

15 I decided on letter C because I found this idea in the paragraph, too, through words + expressions like a nation needs, we need, we want to, symbols. Tv commercial provides us with those symbols. provide a link with the way we like to think we were. & the conclusion

CLOZE TEST

1 I made an analysis of the meaning, + syntax to answer most of the blanks in the cloze test. I think it is better to say, to answer all the blanks. I also used co-reference.

2 I think we can say that 200...ago is a kind of idiom. So, this helped me. Very well-known expression. Collocation analysis used

3 The grammar was the most important clue here. Easy!

4 If I had been more concerned with the meaning as a whole, I think I would have chosen the right choice. But I was more concerned with the right grammar, not the perfect choice. I should have used my history prior knowledge.

5 I was not patient enough to try to get another word. (That's personality!)

6 idem to n. 5.

7 Co-reference - university examiners = they. Easy

8 Semantic analysis used.

9 Here, I didn't consider grammar so important. I thought the meaning was more important. But considering this as a proficiency test I got it wrong, of course.

10 I don't know exactly how I got this choice. But it came to me easily when I read the text for the 3rd time. But I think it was the analysis of the meaning + syntax, too.

11 Grammatical analysis. Easy

12 meaning + grammar analysis

13 Grammar knowledge. Easy

14 Collocation + grammar knowledge. Easy

15 (same as 13)

16 meaning analysis

17 I thought about 2 alternatives: "their" + "the" then I decided for the 2nd one because I thought it would be less personal + more general. Prior knowledge interference, I guess.

18 Grammar + meaning analysis. Easy!

19 meaning analysis. Easy.

20 meaning + grammar analysis.

I'm usually not good at cloze tests. I think I got a better result with this one because the topic is familiar & it helped me, too.

informant 18

FIRST PASSAGE

1 read all answers/ don't consider B (impossible)/ back to text/ choose letter C (implied in lines 4 to 10 - slight ironic)/ don't even consider A and D (same thing)

2 read all answers/ unable to discard any/ back to text/ difficult to decide/ re-read question/ eliminate C (not ironic)/ only D seems to imply something that it is not/ B and A discarded (very similar, didn't sound ironic in the text)/ choice: D

3 read through questions 3/ 4/ 5 to see if q. 3 refers to his initials intentions or his late decision/ back to text/ had to check whole text/ think question is not well-prepared/ OK: refers to initial intention/ then, obviously letter A (see paragraph 3) (eliminates alternatives B & D)/ alternative (-r topic comes only later in the text

4 easy to answer/ checked paragraph 4/ discarded A, B, D immediately/ choice: C

5 choice B / not necessary to go back to text/ remembered references to changes in old age in 1st paragraph

Note: all questions involved recognizing text as part of literary work/ previous knowledge implied: knowledge of the world in general (family relationships, more specifically).

SECOND PASSAGE

6 choice: D. In doubt about A & D - back to 1st sentence/ B discarded as illogical, C refuted by text (no need to check it)

7 B, C, D immediately discarded. Quite predictable. choice: A

8 A & C immediately discarded (back to text) choice: B (because of grammar: most cases, not all cases) / C should be rephrased as "can be helpful in ..."

9 logical: B (A: opposite statement in text; C: no mention in text; D: no mention in text)

10 read all alternatives (back to text/ last paragraph: key words: interruption/ nowadays/ answer: C. A & D: absurd./ B: only reference paragraph 1/ last sentence (writers in the past also had to work?))

Note: very easy/ short text about writers, their jobs and their difficulties. Particularly interesting for me ("writing"), and predictable, too.

THIRD PASSAGE

11 not sure/ A & B out (illogical)/ "Families depicted as idealistic"? - does it mean an idealistic way" or "an 'idealistic' family" ?/ choice: D (free of problems: teeth, hair, clothes - all OK)

12 A out, D out (illogical); C out (although it relates to the text, TV advertising doesn't concentrate on the quality of modern life, it creates illusions for people in the modern world). Choice: B (paragraphs 1, 2 + last one)

13 B - too easy A B and D not mentioned in the text - main point: criticism of excess in production and not selling the product (main aim)

14 A - opposite/ direct approach. No. B - not mentioned. No. C - (same as B) D - choice

15 choice C. A - untrue B - untrue D - not mentioned

I don't know what strategies I used. Some questions are too easy, the text itself is easy (even though I can't figure out what point he's trying to make), the options are too direct. All questions were answered without looking back at the text. The topic of the text is easy to access. - too general

CLOZE TEST

1 didn't answer straightaway. Read up to "1988" filling in questions 2, 3 and 7, went back, decided to write down the 1st word that had come to my mind because of the particle 'over' (____ over - phrasal verb).

2 syntax - word order helped two hundred/ years/ ago

3 grammar: refer to sth/sb

4 left blank

5 left blank.

6 left blank, went back, type/ kind - options based on context + structure (____ of sth)

7 university examiners - subject - they

8 at survey/ comment/ study/ criticism ? + on

9 [2nd paragraph] Read up to write filling in blanks with easiest answers. Question 9: grammar Over the year + subject + ____ + become ... (past participle)

10 increasing + noun - context - choice of word 'tendency' + towards sth

11 gram. struct. X, Y and W

12 not sure, needed a noun

13 choice of verb tense used in previous sentence and the following sentence (past)

14 prep. a reflection of sth.

15 connector/ subordinate clause

16 preposition, but which? left blank guess: about? on? for?

17 adjective/ possessive pronoun? 1st choice 'illiterate' 2nd choice 'their' Back to 16.

18 struct. + word 'duty' {3rd paragraph} 'I have the duty to ...' present tense (believe...)

19 noun + of - context - importance, need, etc.

20 left blank for moments noun - thought, communication read on clear thinking? clear + expression + through?

Informant 19

FIRST PASSAGE

1 B - the whole text gives you the idea of the story.

2 C - Vampire is the word that led me to answer C.

3 A - the story again gave me the ide to answer it, I had to back to the text 2 times.

4 B - I'm not so sure about this one even though I read the paragraph 3 times.

5 A - the only one that seems to make sense to me.

SECOND PASSAGE

6 D - what gave me the clue was the sentence "the fact is that writing is an empirical art ... only be learned by doing it."

7 I had to go back to the text. "foundation of a gift" led me to answer A.

8 at first I chose D but I had to back to the paragraph and now I'm more inclined to answer B.

9 B - the word exhaustion led me to this answer

10 I went back to the text because this is the last question but the answer is not in the last paragraph.

THIRD PASSAGE

11 C - I went back to the text to be able to answer it

12 B - the description of the text is clear enough for me to answer it.

13 B - Again the text itself explains the idea well enough for me to answer it

14 A - idem acima

15 C - idem acima

CLOZE TEST

1 used: I read the beginning twice to be able to use the word

2 years: It wasn't necessary to look back. Only forward. The hint was ago and two hundred

3 to: I referred to the verb

4 English: "or Latin" gave me the clue.

5 now: In this particular case I have to read back three or four times and I wasn't so sure

6 idea: the same as above

7 they: the syntax helped me here. After a verb it should be a pronoun or Noun

8 the article "a" gave the hint

9 "become" showed me it was part of a Verb Tense

10 it's obvious it's a Noun because the Adj before

11 "and" because there's a list of things

from 12 to 20 em todos os casos a função gramatical é a fonte mais reveladora da palavra a ser usada combinada é lógico com o sentido do contexto

informant 20

FIRST PASSAGE

1 I had to read the text several times to understand it. I decided for letter B because I don't think the others are in the text

2 I think D is the correct answer, but I can't explain why.

3 A and B are not correct according to the text. C is not possible. D was my choice because the text says that.

4 the only alternative that is in the text is C, as I can see.

5 that's a difficult question to answer, but I think A is the correct answer just by inference from the text.

SECOND PASSAGE

(I read the text 3 times before looking at the questions, OK?)

6 The answer must be either A or D, I decided for D because the author says "...which can only be learned by doing it"

7 letter A because in the text: "...You must have at least the foundation of a gift"

8 Difficult to decide at first sight. Let me think and go back to the text. OK. B or D can be the answers. Let me read the 7th/ 8th lines (1st paragraph again). OK, D is (seems to be) the best answer.

9 OK. I paid attention to the word damage now. Let me go back to the text. 2nd paragraph, I found the word might (2nd line) Is the answer there? Let me read again. A seems to be the right choice Why? Because of some kind of relationship between the word imagination (letter A) and creative output (in the text).

10 OK. Modern is the word now. Let me try the text (Sorry for my handwriting now! I'm trying to think and write what I feel now! the word nowadays seems to connect the answer to the question. I'll read again, one moment. Yeah, writers have to interrupt writing somehow. Is it because they need to rely on another job? Yeah. I think so, I'll keep letter A.

THIRD PASSAGE

11 The text seems to be easy. I read just once. Let me have a look at the questions now. Yeah, the questions are difficult. Families. né? OK. The answer is B or C. Let me try again. (Read again). OK. C is the answer (We'd like our families to be like that).

12 I got to the conclusion that A is not the answer. Now, let's get back to the text. Well, B, C and D seem logical. OK. I have to make up my mind, only one is correct, yeah? So, let's try! D! Don't ask me why I decided for D, OK?

13 that's another difficult question, because, at first sight, all the answers are right. Let me read again and get back to the text. He said it was superb. He didn't mention anything about it being long. Ah, OK! B is the answer because the author didn't know what it was selling. (the car? the champagne?...)

14 D is not the answer (according to what I understood from question 38). B doesn't seem right. Now, let me read the paragraph again. Difficult, but I guess letter A can be the answer, since C is not in the text. Am I right? I'm not sure whether I understood what a "more subtle approach" is.

15 C because the function is to provide symbols, remind us that lovely things still exist in this insane world. Is it right?
P.S. When I go back to the text I read only the lines connected to the question, OK?

CLOZE TEST

I had to read the first paragraph about three times before answering questions 1 and 5. Questions 2, 3 and 4 were easy to guess, maybe because they were (or seemed to be) obvious to me. I decided for "English" in number 4 because a famous "English" writer mentioned the word. Number 6 was difficult, and I don't know if that's the right answer. Number 7 was easy because "They" refers back to University examiners. Number 8 was not easy, I'm not sure about it, but I didn't think of any better word. Number 9 - grammar helped me. Number 10 - I don't know the answer. Number 11 - the structure of the sentence helped me. Number 12 - I'm not sure if it's right, but the context seems to ask for this word. Numbers 13 to 17 = the structure of the text, grammar, logical thought. Numbers 18 to 20 = Although they make some sense to me, I don't think these are the right words.

informant 21

FIRST PASSAGE

- 1 had to reread the paragraph, but still have some doubt whether the answer is D or not.
- 2 - no need to reread - base my answer on structure and vocabulary.
- 3 - Alternatives A, C + D have the same meaning and by rereading I reconfirmed that B was the answer. (I went back to reread the paragraphs to see if they matched any of the alternatives.)
- 4 This part of the text I reread several times (+ - 4 times). It's really hard to say.
- 5 First I had chosen alternative D then I reread and changed it to B. I guess that after I compared it this was the closest one.

SECOND PASSAGE

- 6 No need to reread - understood
- 7 All the alternatives are in the text however, by rereading it is very clear that the answer is A.
- 8 The answer to this question is in the question next question (9) "damage" and alternative A "harmful"
- 9 If B happens then A + C does too.
- 10 In this question I am in doubt. I think all the answers are possible but the author does use the word "interruption" in the text. So I guess that's how I chose the answer.

THIRD PASSAGE

- 11 Compared vocabulary words with "happy"
- 12 I associated this answer to the sentence "America sell the steak, while Britain sells the sizzle." In other words America sells the product, while Britain works with the emotional needs.
- 13 Just reread to confirm my answer.
- 14 I based my answer on the description of the car commercial and the woman in the kitchen commercial.
- 15 Reread to check the answer. Of the 3 I find that this is the easiest text because of other texts on the subject that I've read in the past. So to my answer these questions I also used my own information on the topic.

CLOZE TEST

- 1 Used knowledge and structure
- 2 Used structure
- 3 Used structure
- 4 Because of Latin it had to be another language and since the writer was English I figured the word was English.
- 5 guessed/ I'm really not sure about this answer and I read the text over at least 4 times.
- 6 used structure
- 7 used structure "who reported?" the examiners one word = they.
- 8 not able to answer
- 9 used structure
- from 10 to 14 - used structure, however, I reread it at least 3 times to make sure I used the right words and even so I made some changes.
- from 15 to 17 - used structure (no need to reread)
- from 18 to 20 - read the whole paragraph first and then tried to fill in the blanks. By reading the whole thing I got a better idea of what to put in the blanks rather than stopping at each blank. The blanks in which I just used structure it was OK to stop at each blank. This text was not so hard because of my previous knowledge on the topic. When you know something about the topic it helps.

informant 22

FIRST PASSAGE

- 1 I had to read the 2nd paragraph twice. The sentences: "As she herself had said ... She had even suggested ... priority." Helped me find the answer.
- 2 I read parts of the text twice. Answered. Looked back at the text to certify answer.
- 3 Went back to the text twice. Found answer in a line.
- 4 Difficult to answer. Had to reread paragraph 4 several times. Found answer in a sentence.
- 5 Reread parts (last paragraph) several times. Still a bit confusing. Don't know exactly the answer.

SECOND PASSAGE

- 6 Paid attention to punctuation. Eliminated A, B, C. Looked back at the text to certify the answer.
- 7 Chose A. Paid attention to "useless to proceed."
- 8 Read paragraph 3 twice. Confusing, many commas, meaning isn't clear.
- 9 Reread paragraph 3 three times. Confusing, many commas, meaning is not clear. Eliminated some alternatives. But still not sure.
- 10 I read only the question items but not the alternatives. Eliminated an alternative. Reread paragraph.

THIRD PASSAGE

- 11 Read some sentences twice. Answered straight away
- 12 Read paragraph 2 twice. A bit confusing. The answers confused me. Eliminate some answers, but still not sure.
- 13 Answered straight away!
- 14 (same as 13)
- 15 Had to read some parts twice. Eliminated alternatives. Tried to answer the question. I looked back at the text to certify answer.

CLOZE TEST

- 1 Read the sentence twice. Was able to answer because of the structure of the sentence.
- 2 Chose words that would collocate with either the previous one or the next one, then, if that word made some sense or not or if that word was grammatically correct.
- 3 Read the sentence twice. Chose word which would collocate with the previous or next ones.
- 4 Same as 3
- 5 Read sentence. Got lost? tried to reread it several times. Tried to get the meaning by using words that would collocate. Still not sure
- 6 Had to reread 4 times. Got lost? I tried to find a suitable word. Still not sure.
- 7 Easy. Answered straight away. Subject missing.
- 8 Read sentence twice. Tried to collocate word. Went back to read whole sentence to see if it makes sense.
- 9 Easy. Verb tense. Present Perfect.
- 10 Difficult. Got lost. Reread sentence more than 5 times.
- 11 Read sentence twice. Chose word "and" to connect ideas. Easy.
- 12 Read sentence twice. Try to collocate word. Went back to see if it makes sense.
- 13 Linking verb. Easy.
- 14 Read it twice. Preposition missing.
- 15 "That" Straight away
- 16 Another preposition missing. Easy.
- 17 Answered straight away. Very easy.
- 18 A verb is missing. Yes, you "have a duty".
- 19 A noun is missing. Relevance, importance. I'll stay with importance
- 20 Another noun. Cataphoric reference. "clear thinking" appears in following sentence.

informant 23

FIRST PASSAGE

- 1 I read the questions and the alternatives. I read the text 4 times
- 2 I didn't realize there was irony in the text. I guess I found the answer in lines 26, 27. After reading the last paragraph I changed my mind to B
- 3 Went back to the text twice. Eliminated alternatives C and D. A is the correct answer.
- 4 I chose D, because of paragraphs 4 and 5, the sentence: "How can one feel towards someone who (...) has thrown one over as one feels towards someone who (...) has stayed by one's side?" helped me come to the correct answer. Eliminated A and C. I had to choose from B and D
5. Eliminated A and C. I had to decide from B and D again. Read. opted for B.

SECOND PASSAGE

- 6 I eliminated A, B, C. Chose D. I went back to the text to check the answer.
- 7 Chose A. I chose it straight away. I don't know why.
- 8 I read paragraph 3 twice. I wasn't sure which one to choose. I eliminated A and C. Then D.
- 9 I eliminated some alternatives. I went back to the text to look for more information. Chose B.
- 10 I eliminated alternatives A and D. I read parts of the texts again. Eliminated C.

THIRD PASSAGE

- 11 I answered straight away. B. I didn't even had to go back to the text.
- 12 I read paragraph 3 twice, eliminated alternatives A and C. Chose B
- 13 I read this part only once. Answered straight away.
- 14 This one was easy too. I eliminated the three alternatives and was left with the only correct possibility
- 15 I went back to the text twice, eliminated alternatives A and B. I answer the question: D. I looked back to check answer.

CLOZE TEST

- 1 used. - I knew I had to use a verb in the past tense. Thought about creat, and invent too.

- 2 The only possible word is YEARS because of ago.
- 3 You refer TO something.
- 4 Addition of countries. Latin and English.
- 5 This one was hard. Maybe improbable makes sense.
- 6 I'm not sure. Maybe research?
- 7 A pronoun is missing. They.
- 8 You report a survey, research, finding. I opted for research.
- 9 Present Perfect.
- 10 Possible words: tendency or trends. Opted for tendency..
- 11 and - addition of ideas.
- 12 ability of writing, speaking, listening.
- 13 Verb to Be. Simple present.
- 14 a reflection OF something. I knew a prep was missing.
- 15 "That". Of course.
- 16 to do something about something else. Another prep?
- 17 definite article missing.
- 18 You "have a duty".
- 19 Relevance, importance, need. I think importance sounds better.
- 20 Maybe thought suits this blank. It's a noun.

APPENDIX 3 - THE MULTIPLE-CHOICE TESTS

Section B

In this section you will find after each of the passages a number of questions or unfinished statements about the passage, each with four suggested answers or ways of finishing. You must choose the one which you think fits best according to the passage. On your answer sheet, indicate the letter A, B, C or D against the number of each item 1 to 15 for the answer you choose. Give one answer only to each question. Read each passage right through before choosing your answers.

FIRST PASSAGE

Mr. Handforth in his old age, in his second childhood - advanced by his stroke - had kept his wits about him, and they, as old people's wits sometimes will, inclined him to be critical of those who were nearest and dearest to him.

Undoubtedly, it was Judith who was - or who had been - nearest and dearest to him. Throughout the many years of his widowerhood - how many! - she had been at his beck and call, neglecting, as she herself had said and as he had had ample opportunities of confirming, her own family and her own affairs to console him in his solitude. She had even suggested, and he had gratefully though guiltily agreed to her suggestion, that her family would have been larger than it was, that Charlotte might have had brothers and sisters, as Seymour hoped she would have, if she had not felt that her father was her first priority. 5 10

This combined feeling of guilt and gratitude he had tried to acknowledge to her from time to time, by presents smaller and greater; and he had made and re-made his will many times, with the object of leaving the residue of his estate, already much reduced by Judith's inroads on it, in unequal shares, to Judith and Hester - shares that should seem equal, though they were not. Thus he got his house and its contents valued at a very low figure, well knowing that it would be worth far more at his death, to balance a rather higher figure of shares to Hester, the value of which he had good reason for thinking would go down rather than up. 15

Not that he was not fond of Hester, but in his mind and affections she had always played second fiddle to her sister; though younger, she had married earlier; like an almost unfledged bird she had abandoned the nest, and made another for herself far, far away. It was natural, of course; Jack had swept her off her feet, she had thrown in her lot with him, leaving her father to Judith's very tender mercies. 20

How can one feel towards someone who, for the most natural reasons in the world, has thrown one over as one feels towards someone who, for the best reasons in the world, has stayed by one's side? 25

But were they the best reasons in the world? No, Mr. Handforth decided, they were the worst; everything his daughter Judith had done for him, all her kindness and her assiduous attentions when he had been alone and/or ill, had been inspired by one motive, and only one: the greed of gain. At last she had shown herself in her true colours - the colours, whatever they were, of a vampire.

01. In paragraph two the author implies that Judith helped her father
- A without expecting any gratitude.
 - B while ensuring that he recognised her sacrifice.
 - C because she felt her family came first.
 - D simply out of daughterly affection.
02. Which phrase describes Judith's character in an ironic way?
- A "Judith's very tender mercies" (lines 21-22)
 - B "her kindness and her assiduous attentions" (line 26)
 - C "the greed of grain" (line 27)
 - D "her true colours" (line 28)
03. In his will Mr Handforth intended to
- A reward Judith for her sacrifices.
 - B be fair to both sisters.
 - C show Judith he had noticed her greed.
 - D give Judith less than Hester.
04. He considered that Hester
- A had treated him badly
 - B did not feel anything for him.
 - C had acted reasonably.
 - D had got what she deserved.
05. His sceptical view of Judith
- A had always been kept secret.
 - B had come about suddenly.
 - C continued to shock him.
 - D was encouraged by Hester.

SECOND PASSAGE

Writers learn as apprentices do except that they have no master to work for except themselves and the market.

The fact is that writing is an empirical art, which can only be learned by doing it. This fact is no reflection on the art of writing. Because skill is acquired in a seemingly haphazard way, it is none the worse, indeed sometimes the better, for it. As in every art you must have at least the foundation of a gift, without which it is useless to proceed; but if the foundation exists, then success—not merely economic—is largely a matter of persistence and of making the most of opportunities. Experience is a hard school. Wastage among aspiring writers is high and most survivors have to rely on another job. The pros and cons of that situation are debatable. Working out in the world is not solely a form of insurance; it can also be a vital source of material and incentive, particularly for the fiction writer. Many well-known authors laboured away at other jobs for part or all of their lives, and either profited therefrom or made their names notwithstanding.

Economic security fress the mind from worry, but a routine job also consumes mental energy which might otherwise be harnessed to creative output. This applies as much to journalism and other ancillary activities of authorship as to non-literary employment. A regular stint of reviewing, reading manuscripts for publishers, boradcasting, lecturing, and the like, may oil the machinery of the mind, but it may also use up horsepower to the point of exhaustion. Moreover, continuity of creation is often vital - whether for the construction of a work of fiction or for historical research or, indeed, for any idea that has to be digested into literary form. Interruptions nowadays, however, are a professional hazard that all authors have to contend with, but they are not insuperable and not the worst threat to a living literature.

06. According to the author, how is the skill of writing acquired?
- A by methodical practice.
 - B by studying the market.
 - C by following another writer's example.
 - D by producing one's own work.
07. In the author's opinion, it is impossible to become a successful writer without
- A some talent.
 - B early publication.
 - C another source of income.
 - D consideration for the reader.
08. How does the author regard a writer's second job?
- A usually harmful to one's writing.
 - B essential in most cases.
 - C too time-consuming.
 - D helpful in researching facts.
09. How might a second job damage a writer?
- A by restricting his imagination.
 - B by using up his mental strength.
 - C by destroying his talent.
 - D by removing the need to write.
10. How do modern writers differ from those of the past?
- A They have less mental energy.
 - B They need to rely on another job.
 - C They cannot expect to work without interruption.
 - D They learn their art more thoroughly.

THIRD PASSAGE

In a world increasingly fearsome and fragile, TV commercials represent an oasis of calm and reassurance. For six minutes in every hour, viewers know that they will be wafted away from this cruel world into an idealized well-ordered land. You and I may experience real-life as largely harassed and chaotic but in the world of the TV commercials happy families may be relied upon to gather at breakfast-time for convivial bowls of cornflakes, their teeth free of decay, their hair innocent of dandruff, their shirts whiter than snow.

TV advertising in Britain, obsessed with the symbols of the good life, exploits a yearning for evidence of old-fashioned security. Things were better in the old days: bread was crusty and beer was a man's drink. But in selling the idea of a better life, it strikes me that most British commercials fail in their primary function. I cannot be alone among those who usually remembers everything about TV advertising except the product it is designed to publicise.

In one superb commercial, a distinguished-looking Italian butler drives a car headlong into a vast dining-hall to serve champagne. What on earth was it selling? The champagne? The car? What car? Search me. Viewers revelled in the medium and forgot the message. American advertisers don't make such mistakes. A typical U.S. commercial features a woman in a kitchen holding a highly-visible bottle of something or other and selling it hard. No art, no craft, just the message. America sells the steak, while Britain sells the sizzle.

A nation needs symbols. We need proof that lovely things still endure, like a team of shire horses criss-crossing the landscape at sundown. We want to be reminded that they still exist, that we may still come across pockets of sanity and beauty in a world less sane and less beautiful each day. TV commercials provide us with those symbols. They provide a link with the way we like to think we were. They help us keep in touch with lost innocence.

11. Families in TV commercials are usually depicted as
- A self-indulgent.
 - B wealthy.
 - C idealistic.
 - D carefree.
12. British TV advertising concentrates on
- A the appearance of the product.
 - B the emotional needs of its audience.
 - C the quality of modern life.
 - D the need for good quality products.
13. What does the writer think of the car commercial?
- A It was too long.
 - B It did not achieve its main aim.
 - C It lacked originality.
 - D It was poorly produced.
14. How are British commercials different from American ones?
- A They adopt a more subtle approach.
 - B They are generally of a lower standard.
 - C They are more expensively produced.
 - D They communicate more effectively.
15. In the last paragraph, the writer suggests that British TV advertising
- A accurately reflects modern life.
 - B is too old-fashioned.
 - C fulfils a useful function.
 - D concentrates on unimportant things.

APPENDIX 4 - INFORMANTS' ANSWERS TO MULTIPLE-CHOICE TESTS

ANSWERS TO THE MULTIPLE-CHOICE TESTS

CORRECT ANSWERS

01. b	06. d	11. d
02. a	07. a	12. b
03. a	08. b	13. b
04. b or c	09. b	14. a
05. b	10. c	15. c

INFORMANT 1

01. D
02. D
03. A
04. C
05. B
06. D
07. A
08. B
09. B
10. C
11. C
12. B
13. B
14. A
15. C

INFORMANT 2

01. B
02. D
03. A
04. C
05. B
06. A
07. A
08. D
09. B
10. C
11. D
12. B
13. B
14. A
15. C

INFORMANT 3

01. B
02. D
03. A
04. B
05. C
06. D
07. C
08. B
09. B
10. B
11. C
12. B
13. B
14. D
15. C

INFORMANT 4

01. B
02. B
03. D
04. D
05. B
06. D
07. A
08. D
09. B
10. C
11. C
12. D
13. A
14. A
15. D

INFORMANT 5

01. B
02. A
03. B
04. C
05. B
06. A
07. A
08. D
09. A
10. C
11. C
12. D
13. B
14. A
15. C

INFORMANTS 6

01. B
02. D
03. A
04. D
05. B
06. D
07. A
08. D
09. B
10. A
11. C
12. A
13. B
14. B
15. B

INFORMANT 7

01. B
02. A
03. A
04. B/C
05. B
06. A
07. A
08. D
09. B
10. C
11. D
12. B
13. B
14. D
15. C

INFORMANT 8

01. B
02. B
03. B
04. C
05. B
06. A
07. A
08. D
09. A
10. C
11. D
12. B
13. B
14. D
15. B

INFORMANT 9

01. D	04. B	07. A	10. C	13. B
02. A	05. B	08. B	11. C	14. A
03. A	06. D	09. B	12. B	15. C

INFORMANT 10

01. B
 02. A
 03. B
 04. C
 05. A
 06. D
 07. A
 08. D
 09. B
 10. B
 11. C
 12. B
 13. B
 14. A
 15. C

INFORMANTS 11

01. B
 02. A
 03. B
 04. A
 05. B
 06. D
 07. A
 08. D
 09. B
 10. C
 11. C
 12. B
 13. B
 14. C
 15. C

INFORMANT 12

01. B
 02. A
 03. A
 04. D
 05. B
 06. D
 07. A
 08. D
 09. A
 10. C
 11. C
 12. B
 13. B
 14. D
 15. C

INFORMANT 13

01. B
 02. D
 03. A
 04. B
 05. A
 06. A
 07. A
 08. D
 09. B
 10. C
 11. D
 12. B
 13. B
 14. A
 15. C

INFORMANT 14

01. B
 02. D
 03. C
 04. C
 05. B
 06. A
 07. A
 08. A
 09. B
 10. C
 11. C
 12. C
 13. B
 14. A
 15. D

INFORMANT 15

01. B
 02. D
 03. D
 04. C
 05. A
 06. D
 07. A
 08. D
 09. A
 10. A
 11. C
 12. D
 13. B
 14. B
 15. C

INFORMANT 16

01. B
 02. B
 03. A
 04. C
 05. A
 06. A
 07. A
 08. B
 09. B
 10. C
 11. A
 12. B
 13. B
 14. C
 15. D

INFORMANT 17

01. B
 02. A
 03. C
 04. C
 05. A
 06. D
 07. A
 08. D
 09. B
 10. C
 11. C
 12. B
 13. B
 14. A
 15. C

INFORMANT 18

01. B
 02. D
 03. A
 04. C
 05. B
 06. A
 07. A
 08. B
 09. B
 10. C
 11. D
 12. B
 13. B
 14. D
 15. C

INFORMANTS 19

01. B
 02. C
 03. A
 04. B
 05. A
 06. D
 07. A
 08. B
 09. B
 10. B
 11. C
 12. B
 13. B
 14. A
 15. C

INFORMANT 20

01. D
 02. D
 03. A
 04. B
 05. B
 06. D
 07. A
 08. B
 09. B
 10. C
 11. C
 12. B
 13. B
 14. A
 15. C

INFORMANT 21

01. C
 02. B
 03. B
 04. B
 05. B
 06. A
 07. A
 08. A
 09. B
 10. C
 11. D
 12. B
 13. B
 14. C
 15. C

INFORMANT22

01. A
02. B
03. A
04. B
05. A
06. D
07. A
08. D
09. B
10. C
11. C
12. D
13. B
14. A
15. C

INFORMANT 23

01. B
02. A
03. A
04. D
05. B
06. D
07. A
08. B
09. B
10. B
11. B
12. B
13. B
14. A
15. D

APPENDIX 5 - THE CLOZE TEST

SECTION A

1. Fill each of the numbered blanks in the passage with one suitable word.

ILLITERACY

Illiteracy may be considered more as an abstract concept than a condition. When a famous English writer (1) _____ the word over two hundred (2) _____ ago, he was actually referring (3) _____ people who could not read (4) _____ or Latin. However, it seems (5) _____ that university examiners had this (6) _____ of disability in mind when (7) _____ reported on 'creeping illiteracy' in a (8) _____ on their students' final examination in 1988.

Over the years, university lecturers (9) _____ become aware of an increasing (10) _____ towards grammatical sloppiness, poor spelling (11) _____ general imprecision in their students' (12) _____ of writing; and sloppy writing (13) _____ all too often a reflection (14) _____ sloppy thinking. Their complaint was (15) _____ they had enough to do (16) _____ their own subject without teaching (17) _____ undergraduates to write.

Some lecturers believe that they (18) _____ a duty to stress the (19) _____ of maintaining standards of clear (20) _____ through the written word in a world dominated by visual communications and images. They insist on the connection between clear thinking and a form of writing that is not only clear, but also sensitive to subtleties of meaning. The same lecturers argue that undergraduates appear to be the victims of a 'softening process' that begins with the teaching of English in schools, but this point of view has, not surprisingly, caused a great deal of controversy.

APPENDIX 6 - INFORMANTS' ANSWERS TO THE CLOZE TEST

ANSWERS TO THE CLOZE TEST

POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

1. used, created, invented, introduced, coined, mentioned.
2. years
3. to
4. Greek, English
5. unlikely, improbable
6. sort, kind, type, idea, concept
7. they
8. report, comment
9. have, had
10. tendency, trend
11. and, in
12. ways, samples, pieces, style
13. is, seems
14. of
15. that
16. teaching, with, concerning, in, for
17. their, the
18. have
19. importance, relevance, necessity, need
20. thinking, expression, thought.

INFORMANT 1

- | | |
|--------------|---------------|
| 01. used | 11. and |
| 02. years | 12. ways |
| 03. to | 13. is |
| 04. Greek | 14. of |
| 05. unlikely | 15. that |
| 06. kind | 16. teaching |
| 07. they | 17. their |
| 08. report | 18. have |
| 09. have | 19. relevance |
| 10. tendency | 20. thinking |

INFORMANT 2

- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| 01. created | 11. and |
| 02. years | 12. skills |
| 03. to | 13. is |
| 04. English | 14. of |
| 05. however | 15. that |
| 06. idea | 16. with |
| 07. they | 17. their |
| 08. comment | 18. have |
| 09. have | 19. need |
| 10. tendency | 20. thinking |

INFORMANT 3

- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| 01. invented | 11. and |
| 02. years | 12. ability |
| 03. to | 13. is |
| 04. English | 14. of |
| 05. nowadays | 15. that |
| 06. idea | 16. about |
| 07. they | 17. the |
| 08. research | 18. have |
| 09. have | 19. need |
| 10. - | 20. writing |

INFORMANT 4

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| 01. used | 11. and |
| 02. years | 12. ability |
| 03. to | 13. is |
| 04. English | 14. of |
| 05. loyal | 15. that |
| 06. term | 16. with |
| 07. they | 17. their |
| 08. report | 18. have |
| 09. have | 19. need |
| 10. rate | 20. thinking |

INFORMANT 5

- | | |
|--------------|-------------------|
| 01. invented | 11. and |
| 02. years | 12. ways |
| 03. to | 13. is |
| 04. Greek | 14. of |
| 05. strange | 15. that |
| 06. concept | 16. with |
| 07. they | 17. the |
| 08. report | 18. have |
| 09. have | 19. need |
| 10. interest | 20. understanding |

INFORMANT 6

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 01. created | 11. and |
| 02. years | 12. piece |
| 03. to | 13. was |
| 04. Greek | 14. of |
| 05. strange | 15. that |
| 06. concept | 16. about |
| 07. they | 17. their |
| 08. research | 18. have |
| 09. have | 19. importance |
| 10. illiteracy | 20. thinking |

INFORMANT 7

01. coined
02. years
03. to
04. English
05. unlikely
06. sort
07. they
08. report
09. have
10. tendency

11. and
12. samples
13. is
14. of
15. that
16. for
17. the
18. have
19. importance
20. form

INFORMANT 8

01. invented
02. years
03. to
04. English
05. obvious
06. type
07. they
08. question
09. have
10. -

11. in
12. work
13. is
14. of
15. that
16. with
17. other
18. have
19. importance
20. expression

INFORMANT 9

01. used
02. years
03. to
04. English
05. improbable
06. concept
07. they
08. report
09. have
10. growth

11. and
12. pieces
13. were
14. of
15. that
16. with
17. their
18. have
19. necessity
20. thinking

INFORMANT10

01. used
02. years
03. to
04. English
05. clear
06. idea
07. they
08. survey
09. have
10. illiteracy

11. and
12. tasks
13. showed
14. of
15. that
16. with
17. their
18. have
19. necessity
20. thought

INFORMANT 11

01. used
02. years
03. to
04. English
05. -
06. problems
07. they
08. comment
09. have
10. -

11. in
12. ability
13. is
14. of
15. that
16. concerning
17. -
18. carry
19. importance
20. communication

INFORMANT 12

01. created
02. years
03. to
04. Greek
05. clear
06. idea
07. they
08. review
09. have
10. tendency

11. and
12. ability
13. is
14. of
15. that
16. on
17. some
18. have
19. need
20. thinking

INFORMANT13

01. introduced
02. years
03. to
04. Greek
05. clear
06. concept
07. they
08. Study
09. have
10. trend

11. and
12. pieces
13. is
14. of
15. that
16. in
17. college
18. have
19. importance
20. thinking

INFORMANT 14

01. created
02. years
03. to
04. Greek
05. difficult
06. kind
07. they
08. note
09. have
10. tendency

11. in
12. way
13. being
14. of
15. that
16. with
17. their
18. have
19. importance
20. expression

INFORMANT 15

01. mentioned
02. years
03. to
04. English
05. strange
06. kind
07. they
08. report
09. have
10. -

11. and
12. pieces
13. become
14. of
15. that
16. about
17. their
18. have
19. use
20. writing

INFORMANT16

01. used
02. years
03. to
04. English
05. unlikely
06. idea
07. they
08. study
09. have
10. tendency

11. and
12. way
13. being
14. of
15. that
16. with
17. other
18. have
19. importance
20. correctness

INFORMANT 17

01. created
02. years
03. to
04. English
05. today
06. idea
07. they
08. lecture
09. had
10. tendency

11. and
12. way
13. is
14. of
15. that
16. concerning
17. the
18. have
19. importance
20. thought

INFORMANT 18

01. spread
02. years
03. to
04. -
05. -
06. kind
07. they
08. -
09. have
10. tendency

11. and
12. samples
13. was
14. of
15. that
16. about
17. their
18. have
19. importance
20. expression

INFORMANT 19

01. used	11. and
02. years	12. ability
03. to	13. seems
04. English	14. of
05. now	15. that
06. idea	16. about
07. they	17. the
08. Study	18. have
09. have	19. need
10. percentage	20. writing

INFORMANT 20

01. used	11. in
02. years	12. ability
03. to	13. is
04. English	14. of
05. -	15. that
06. problems	16. concerning
07. they	17. -
08. comment	18. carry
09. have	19. importance
10. -	20. communication

INFORMANT 21

01. invented	11. in
02. years	12. style
03. to	13. is
04. English	14. of
05. more	15. that
06. kind	16. concerning
07. they	17. the
08. -	18. have
09. have	19. importance
10. trend	20. thought

INFORMANT 22

01. used	11. and
02. years	12. pieces
03. to	13. is
04. Greek	14. of
05. strange	15. that
06. concept	16. with
07. they	17. their
08. study	18. have
09. have	19. importance
10. trend	20. thinking

INFORMANT 23

01. used	11. and
02. years	12. ability
03. to	13. is
04. English	14. of
05. improbable	15. that
06. research	16. about
07. they	17. the
08. Study	18. have
09. have	19. importance
10. tendency	20. thought

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