

## Effective Reading Strategies Operating Interactively

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### □ ABSTRACT □

This research deals with the strategies effective reading requires: bottom-up, top-down and interactive-compensatory models. This has implications for how we can design classroom materials for foreign language reading; in other words, knowledge of reading models has a great effect on classroom methodology and material design. The research also presents three reading tasks as examples to show how this theoretical knowledge of different types of processing can be related to professional practice. There are certain factors which influence decisions about how theory might be related to practice, though.

**Keywords:** bottom-up, top-down, interactive-compensatory

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## نماذج القراءة الفعّالة التي تعمل بشكل تفاعلي

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### □ ملخص □

يسلّط هذا البحث الضوء على استراتيجيات القراءة الفعّالة وهي طريقة القراءة من الأسفل للأعلى، طريقة القراءة من الأعلى للأسفل و طريقة القراءة الفعّالة.

تشكّل هذه الاستراتيجيات جزءاً هاماً عند تصميم مواد القراءة في اللّغة الأجنبية. وبمعنى آخر فإن لنماذج القراءة هذه تأثيراً كبيراً على طرائق التدريس و تصميم المناهج. يقوم هذا البحث أيضاً بمناقشة ثلاثة تمارين قراءة كأتمثلة هدفها ربط المعرفة النظرية لاستراتيجيات القراءة بالتطبيق العملي. وفي هذا السياق، يوجد العديد من العوامل التي تؤثر على ربط نماذج القراءة نظرياً بتطبيقها عملياً في الصّف.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** طريقة القراءة من الأسفل للأعلى، طريقة القراءة من الأعلى للأسفل، طريقة القراءة الفعّالة

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## 1. Introduction

There are four skills that are fundamental in language learning. They are listening, speaking, reading and writing; and each one of them is important for acquiring and developing the other ones. Dealing with these skills is an important topic in applied linguistics, and in my paper I talk about reading for it is the basic tool in language learning. Reading has been defined as the act of responding to the printed symbols, so that meaning is created. Thus teaching reading is making students delve into the printed page and draw a unified thought out of it. In addition, reading is a creative act which underlies teaching in schools and influences students' lives.

In the following pages, I will be dealing with models of reading which are the bottom-up view, the top-down one and the interactive-compensatory model. After this, I relate theory to practice through investigating the effects that the knowledge of these models has on methods of teaching and material design. Grammar and vocabulary are the two aspects that fall into the domain of bottom-up strategy; moreover, the activities for building schema and those for activating it fall within the framework of the top-down model. The interactive-compensatory model assumes that the reader should not depend on the bottom-up approach nor on the top-down one; both models should be combined. Finally, a lesson plan will be introduced as a practical example before locating certain factors that affect relating theory to practice.

## 2. Models of Reading

### 2.1 The Bottom-Up Approach to Reading

Cambourne (1979, cited in Nunan 1991: 64) says that the bottom-up or the 'outside-in' strategy is the basis of the reading schemes. According to this view, when learners read they first recognise each letter that they encounter, then they match these letters or what can be called graphemes with the phonemes or the sound system of the language. So, readers should know the operations of blending and matching to reach the ultimate aim of this which is meaning. A very clear definition of this processing strategy is introduced by Hedge (2000:406) saying that it means decoding the text 'step by step, from the smallest elements, for example sounds or letters, gradually building up to larger units of meaning such as sentences.' In brief, this approach sees reading as a matter of decoding a series of written symbols into their aural equivalents (phonemes) which are already known to readers and this enables them to identify the unknown words they encounter.

The first objection the bottom-up approach faces is related to speed. It makes readers slow because it really takes a relatively long time to discriminate letters from one another and then match them with the sounds of language in order to derive meaning from the blended sequence. Moreover, this model is criticised since readers might forget the beginning of the word that they are reading while trying to decode it. Thus, teachers cannot be sure whether the readers grasp meaning or they only read letters. This is a real problem for second language readers because they are not supposed to know the meaning of every word they read; on the contrary, they read to get meaning. Škudienė (2002) notes that advanced language learners do not need to use this strategy because decoding words at this level is automatic.

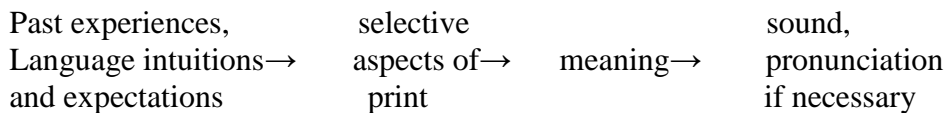
Another criticism undermining the bottom-up approach is based on the research into the human memory. As it depends on decoding letters and matching them with sounds, an objection against this idea is that there is no one-to-one correspondence between the

sounds and the letters of the language and this is a problem for both first and second language learners.

As I have said earlier, many pronunciations could be attached to one letter, so the correspondence between letters and sounds is very complex. But the question remains: How to determine which sound to use? The answer is: the context determines the sound. In other words, it is not possible for the student to know which sound is to be used unless s/he finishes the pronunciation of the word. It seems, however, that while decoding the text, readers are faced with what is called lack of anticipation or unpredictability of which sound to use.

## 2.2 The Top-Down Approach to Reading

Secondly, there is the top-down approach to reading or what can be called 'the psycholinguistic' strategy. Contrary to the previous view, it concentrates on the reader as the heart of the reading process not as the one who only makes operations of decoding, matching and blending. Moreover, it demands the use of readers' background knowledge and employing it in order to extract meaning from the text being read. Thus, it is obvious that the emphasis here is on meaning rather than on the decoding of form. Cambourne (1979, cited in Nunan 1991:65) provides the following diagram to explain the top-down approach:



According to this model, readers use their knowledge of the subject derived from past experiences in addition to their information and expectations about how language works to add to their understanding of the topic. This pushes us immediately to take into consideration the two types of schemata: content and formal schemata. Content schema is the background knowledge about the content of a certain text. This knowledge should be activated by the minds of readers to increase their interest in the topic, to enhance comprehension and understanding, and also to create that sense of motivation which pushes readers towards a greater opportunity of involvement. On the other hand, formal schema refers to 'the organisational forms and rhetorical structures of written texts' as Aebersold and Field (1997:17) define it. Here it is worth noting that sometimes the reader fails to bring his/her background knowledge to the text because schema is culture- specific. Consequently, this is an important idea for teachers to keep in mind in order to avoid misunderstanding.

Hedge (2000) has introduced these two types of knowledge which readers can bring to the text calling them 'systemic' or linguistic knowledge versus 'schematic' knowledge. The former requires readers to possess syntactic knowledge first which has something to do with how words come together. For example, a person who knows something about parts of speech (i.e. nouns, verbs, adverbs, etc.) or how they can exist together in one sentence in a way that fits the system of the language, is considered to have syntactic competence and this allows him/her to use correct and well-structured sentences. The second type of linguistic knowledge relates to morphology and knowledge about the combination of morphemes (i.e. the smallest meaningful units in language). For instance, the readers' knowledge that the word 'successful' is a combination of two morphemes: 'success' and 'full' will be helpful in text processing. Hedge continues to state four kinds of knowledge, which seem to go under the title of schematic knowledge. The first one is 'general world' knowledge or as its name suggests, what the reader knows about general

facts or what s/he believes to be true. Sociocultural knowledge is the second one and Hedge states an example when readers come across words like 'tower' or 'steeple', their background about the architecture of churches will facilitate interpreting these two words. Topic knowledge seems to be the most important aspect that contributes to text comprehension. For example, knowing something about a certain natural phenomenon like 'floods' makes reading a text about it an easy task. The last type of schematic knowledge is 'genre knowledge'. Recognising the genre of the passage (i.e. scientific, literary, etc.), readers will be able to 'make sense of the text' as Hedge (2000:188) says. For instance, a scientific text talking about the phenomenon of eclipse will make readers' minds oriented towards a specific direction.

A very important point has been made against the top-down approach showing that it could not distinguish between students of various levels: beginners, intermediate and advanced. The text introduces new experiences which might be similar to past experiences, expectations and information. It seems that beginners find it difficult to link similar experiences together. They are also unable to recognise words when they look at them especially if they are new words. Fatemi, Seyyedrezaie and Vahedi (2014) stress this point when they say that 'top-down model of reading seems not to be useful for learners at elementary levels.' This approach suits good or advanced readers because they will be reading quickly. They will be able to recognise the word as a whole not as a construction of letters; in addition, they will be able to recognise more than one word or chunks of sentences due to the effect of eye movements. Thus, the time of reading is reduced and fluency is increased.

### 2.3 The Interactive-Compensatory Model

The shortcomings of the previous two approaches led some researchers to come up with a third model of reading: 'the interactive compensatory model' as Smith (1980, cited in Nunan 1991:67) calls it. This approach adopts neither the bottom-up view on reading nor the top-down one; however, it advocates the combination of both because a successful strategy appears to integrate and combine information from both sources (i.e. bottom-up decoding or text-based process and top-down analysis or knowledge-based process). This means that the text as well as the reader with his/her information or background knowledge are equally important in the reading process in order to reach meaning. In other words, reading is seen as a kind of dialogue between the reader and the text; moreover, following this model will enable the learner to compensate for deficiencies at one level by means of utilising knowledge at another level whether it is phonological, lexical, semantic or syntactic knowledge.

Still there is a very important point to be made here of which teachers should be aware: balance between the two models of reading ought to be created when they are combined in the classroom. In fact, it seems that when the focus is on the background knowledge more than it is on the text, the lesson will be difficult for students. While, the opposite seems to put limitations on the students, and confine them to the printed page. So, one can say that the ideal reading lesson employs both strategies correctly to help students and this of course has some important implications for choosing material in classrooms.

### 3. The Knowledge of Reading Models and its effect on Classroom Methodology

For reading models to be balanced (i.e. to be interactively efficient throughout the lesson), it is very important for teachers to be aware of the materials they introduce as well

as of the students' needs which determine that choice. In other words, teachers should try to make their plans and methods focused on certain aspects which students need to develop. Thus, teachers should carefully select reading materials and this can be facilitated by taking into consideration reading processing models.

### 3.1 Bottom-Up Strategy and Material Design

Awareness of the mechanism of this model of reading, and of the areas that it tries to develop in students enables teachers to select appropriate materials which fulfil the function of developing those specific areas. As it is a matter of decoding, blending and matching phonemes, grammatical skills and vocabulary development are the two important points of focus which develop the bottom-up processing model.

#### Grammatical Skills

Grammar seems to be an important stone in building comprehension while reading. Specifically speaking, textual devices (i.e. cohesive ties or conjunctive words) which are to be mastered or at least recognised by readers are linguistic elements that fall within the framework of grammatical skills:

Mackay (1979) and Cowan (1976) have similarly argued that recognition of conjunctions and other intersentential linguistic devices is crucial to the information-gathering skills of second language readers. Thus, 'holding in the bottom', enhancing second language readers' bottom-up reading skills, should include classroom instruction on the cohesive devices of English, and their function across sentences and paragraphs, such instruction can make students aware of how ideas in a text are unified by these cohesive elements.

(Carrell *et al* 1988:241)

It is obvious then that constructing a unified thought about the text and following its organisational pattern throughout reading seems to be achieved through paying attention to cohesive ties that are crucial in the process. This seems to pave the way for the readers to improve their bottom-up skill.

#### Vocabulary Development

This area of research has been made to shed light on how vocabulary development aims at enhancing readers' bottom-up decoding abilities.

Carrell (1988:243) presents certain points he thinks are important to increase 'learning from the text' through the process of what he calls 'preteaching vocabulary'. He sees that teaching 'key words' in a text is of great benefit because it focuses students' attention and makes them remember those specific words and learn about their uses within context. Here, it seems worth noting that in every text readers encounter what is called content words (i.e. key words) as well as function words like articles, conjunctions and so on. Still attention is always paid to content words and teachers have to focus on them in order to widen the range of students' knowledge.

Another thing that Carrell (1988) suggests for teachers to support their attempts to develop the vocabulary repertoire of students is to be careful about the relationship among words while teaching them. He says they must be 'semantically and topically' related to one another to enable students to get not only their meanings but also to develop a sense of

background knowledge about them. It is obvious then that such an idea guarantees keeping these words in long-term memory and shaping that kind of schema about them.

This brings us to another idea which suggests that if readers tend to engage themselves in processing meaning more deeply, they will have a greater chance to develop their vocabulary and remember them for a longer time. One can say that by ‘processing’ Carrell means guessing it from the textual clues in order to reach meaning by means of prediction from what is there in the reading passage.

The last thing I would like to shed light on within the framework of vocabulary development is that it is much better for students to be taught only a few words per lesson than stuffing their minds with a lot of words that they will forget easily. Thus, quantity does not matter; what really counts is keeping the new vocabulary in mind and learning them perfectly.

As a result, grammatical skills and vocabulary development are two cornerstones that support the building of decoding skills, more specifically, the bottom-up model. This gives rise to certain points that deserve teachers’ attention in order to be able to select appropriate materials that meet students’ needs and develop their points of weakness.

### **3.2 Top-Down Strategy and Material Design**

In the process of selecting appropriate materials for reading classes, teachers should take into consideration their knowledge not only about the bottom-up process but also about the top-down one as well. In other words, reading-teachers should be aware of the importance of bringing background knowledge to the text and the role this plays in facilitating comprehension. In addition, teachers should have the ability to make the distinction between the knowledge readers possess and the knowledge they exert from the text they read. This takes us immediately to admit the significance of building such knowledge and activating it in the reading lesson and this of course affects material design, lesson goals and methodology.

#### **Building Schema**

The absence of schema while reading seems to be a hindrance to comprehension, so schema availability is something crucial. Two important points are to be mentioned here. The first one is that the genre of the text determines what kind of knowledge to activate in mind. The second point sheds light on the idea that schema is culture- specific, so its availability to all students is a matter of sharing the same culture. This makes us ask a question: what if the students lack schemata to apply to the text?

Carrell (1988) has talked about the importance of showing students that the bottom-up processing approach is not such a good way to make sense out of the text. On doing this, he is stressing the importance of schemata availability, so one can say that it is the responsibility of the teacher to build schema through putting certain activities and texts at work.

The use of anomaly or nonsense texts is one technique to build schemata as Pearson and Spiro (1982, cited in Carrell 1988) have noticed. A nonsense text deals with a topic which is familiar to readers but has anomalous words and sentences. This aims at discussing these anomalous bits in order to make students aware of the importance of applying background knowledge to texts and predicting from this knowledge to reach a clear understanding of the text. Moreover, this technique will enable the teacher to fill the gaps in students’ minds, that is to say, gaps in terms of knowledge and schema.

### Activating Schema

Not only are teachers responsible for building students' knowledge, but also they are responsible for activating the appropriate schemata that already exist in learners' minds. Background knowledge activation is the other face of the top-down model of reading which can be tackled through having a look at what researchers call phases of the reading lesson. They are pre-, while- and post-reading stages as Williams (1984, cited in Hedge 2000) puts them.

The pre-reading phase has a lot of aims to achieve in order to activate what learners have in their minds. It helps the teacher to motivate students and enhance their interest in what there is to come in the reading phase. The while-reading phase, on the other hand, has different goals to achieve. Williams (1987) observes that this phase 'draws on the text' and aims at making readers able to get relevant information from what they are reading, and at this point teachers can introduce many activities to check students' comprehension. The post-reading phase helps students to reflect on the text and relate what they have acquired from it to similar situations from their real-world experience.

Another thing that is worth mentioning is 'teaching predicting'. Carell (1988: 249) introduces many techniques for teachers to follow in order to foster students' abilities of predicting content. The first thing is 'revealing a text in small chunks and asking readers to predict the substance of what will come next'. Teachers can also give students the first and last sentences of the text and ask them to posit what has been deleted. It is clear that by applying these techniques, teachers are highly encouraging prediction and anticipation. In addition, they are making students' minds at work by activating their knowledge.

## 4. Tasks

### Reading Task 1

Substitution, reference, ellipsis, cohesive ties and conjunction are linguistic techniques related to grammatical cohesion used to process texts. Lexical cohesion which is related to vocabulary can be added to complete the picture of cohesion. Thus, readers' knowledge about them is very important when the aim is to develop the bottom-up strategy. In this section, I will try to relate what have been theorised about the bottom-up approach to a task which seems to be focussing on both reference and lexical cohesion. First, reference as a cohesive device is a property that certain items of language have. Reference words do not have meaning in themselves, but they refer to something else in the text. Some words refer to something already mentioned (anaphora); other words refer to something that will be mentioned (cataphora). Second, lexical cohesion related to vocabulary has many kinds as Halliday and Hassan (1976) explain. In this task, the focus is on one type which is reiteration. It involves repeating the same lexical item or word many times or using synonyms.



# The Noblest Roman of Them All

## Origins of the story

William Shakespeare probably wrote *Julius Caesar* in 1599. It was the first of his Roman history plays, but it is always included in his Tragedies rather than his Histories. Shakespeare's main source was the Roman historian, Plutarch. His book, entitled *Lives of Caesar, Brutus and Mark Antony*, contains the main plot of the Shakespeare play.

## The real Caesar

Gaius Julius Caesar was born in Rome around 100 BCE. He was a very successful military leader. He won battles in northwest Europe, and even crossed the English Channel twice to fight in Britain. He wanted political power as well as military success, and returned to Rome. He became the most powerful man in the country – too powerful for some people. They assassinated him on the 15<sup>th</sup> March, 44 BCE.

## The play

The events in Shakespeare's play follow the historical facts very closely. Julius Caesar, the general, returns to Rome in triumph, but important people in the capital envy him. A man called Cassius persuades Brutus, a friend of Caesar's, to join a conspiracy to kill Caesar. 'It is for the good of Rome,' he says. The conspirators decide not to kill Mark Antony, another important Roman. This decision turns out to be a fatal mistake. Brutus, Cassius and the others plan to kill Caesar on the 15<sup>th</sup> March. The night before,

Caesar's wife, Calpurnia, has a dream about Caesar dying at the Senate. She tries to stop Caesar going to the government building. Her attempt fails, he goes, and the conspirators kill him. Brutus strikes the last blow to kill Caesar. Mark Antony cleverly persuades the conspirators to let him speak at Caesar's funeral. In his speech, he reminds the crowd of all Caesar's good qualities and actions: Cassius and Brutus have to leave the city as the citizens become angry with them. A civil war starts between the people who are backing Brutus and Cassius and the supporters of Mark Antony.

At first, Brutus and Cassius appear to be winning. However, Mark Antony finally wins, and Cassius and Brutus commit suicide. When Mark Antony sees the body of Brutus, he is very sad. 'He was the noblest Roman of them all,' he says. 'The other conspirators killed Caesar because they envied him. Brutus killed him for the good of Rome.'

## The themes

Firstly, *Julius Caesar* is a play about persuasion. People persuade other people to do things which they do not want to do. Cassius persuades Brutus to kill Caesar. People persuade Caesar to go to the Senate. Brutus persuades the other conspirators not to kill Mark Antony, then they persuade him to allow Mark Antony to speak at Caesar's funeral. Mark Antony in turn persuades the mob that the death of Caesar was a crime.

Secondly, *Julius Caesar* is also a play about power, or, more accurately, it is about the abuse of power. The play shows that leaders must always be careful about using power. It shows that there will always be someone who wants to take power away, through conspiracy and even murder. Critics say this timeless theme makes *Julius Caesar* a very important play.

Finally, Shakespeare leaves us with a strange thought. Brutus, says Mark Antony, was 'the noblest Roman of them all.' Not Caesar, the great soldier and politician, but Brutus, a conspirator and a murderer.

The previous article is about a play by Shakespeare found in the reading resources. In the reading course book, Philips (2007: 37) presents two exercises about it. The first exercise asks students what the following pronouns refer to in the text: him (line 19), She (line 41), him (line 48), them (line 55), he (line 64), He (line 65) and him (line 81). Students here should understand the relations between parts of the text through reference and more specifically anaphoric reference. For example, the pronoun him (line 19) refers back to Gaius Julius Caesar, and the pronoun She (line 41) refers back to Caesar's wife, Calpurnia. In both cases, there is no need to repeat the names.

The second exercise asks students to find and underline each noun or noun phrase in the article about *Julius Caesar*, and then to match the words that refer to the same thing.

- |                    |                            |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Rome            | a. mob                     |
| 2. the Senate      | b. the capital             |
| 3. assassinated    | c. general                 |
| 4. military leader | d. the government building |
| 5. crowd           | e. killed                  |

For example, 'Rome' (line 25) refers to 'the capital' (line 27) of which it is a synonym. 'The Senate' (line 41) refers to 'the government building' (line 42). These are two examples about reiteration which involves giving synonyms or near-synonyms of certain words.

In brief, presenting this task or similar tasks for students will be a great idea towards directing their attention to master or at least encounter cohesiveness. The previous task illustrates two kinds of cohesive devices; one type is grammatical cohesion involving reference words, and the other kind is lexical cohesion which is reiteration involving the use of synonyms. This leads not only to comprehension but also to building in the bottom.

### Reading Task 2

The following reading task is put forth to be related to the top-down processing model and more specifically to the idea of activating schema. This task 'Preventing Disease' starts with exercise A that asks the students to mark the things that people can prevent and then to talk about ways to prevent them. Exercise B tells students to read the article and answer true or false. A writing task follows asking students to complete a notice about preventing problems in the kitchen with words and expressions found in a box. Then students are asked to go over a list of problems to discuss and list ideas for preventing each problem and then to share their ideas with their classmates.

## D GOAL 4 LEARN AND TALK ABOUT PREVENTION

### Reading

**A** Check the things we can prevent. Compare your answer with a partner's answers. How can we prevent them?

- ☐ flu
- ☐ rain
- ☐ toothache
- ☐ headache

#### Word Focus

**prevent** = avoid a problem  
**infectious disease** = a disease you can get from another person  
**vaccine** = medicine to prevent a disease

**B** Read the article. Circle **T** for true and **F** for false.

- There is a vaccine for measles. T F
- All children are vaccinated against measles. T F
- There is a vaccine for malaria. T F
- Malaria only affects people in hot countries. T F
- Influenza is a problem in hot countries. T F

## Preventing Disease

Many people, especially children, die from **infectious diseases** every year. We can **prevent** many infectious diseases. Let's look at the most dangerous ones.



Measles is mainly a children's disease. There is a very good, cheap vaccine for measles. All children should get the vaccine but unfortunately not all do. About 900,000 children die every year from measles.



▲ All children should get a measles shot.



Malaria is one of the world's biggest killers. About 40% of the world's population is at risk from malaria. In sub-Saharan Africa as many as 2,800 children die of malaria every day. There is no vaccine for malaria, but it is not difficult to prevent. All you need is a \$5 mosquito net.



▲ Children should sleep under a mosquito net.



Influenza (or flu) is caused by a virus. The virus changes every year so scientists have to make a new vaccine every year. People at risk—for example, older people—should have a flu shot every year. There are good years and bad years. In a bad year, influenza can kill millions of people.

### Writing

**A** Complete this notice. Use the words and expressions in the box.

**cover gloves switch off wash your hands clean**



**You should always:**

Before entering the kitchen: \_\_\_\_\_ your face.

Keep the kitchen electrical equipment \_\_\_\_\_.

### Communication

**B** Discuss how you can prevent these problems.

**toothache car accidents heart attacks computer viruses**

You should brush your teeth.  
 You should wear a seat belt.  
 You should see a dentist.  
 You should use a virus protection program.

**Goal 4 Learn and talk about prevention**

Share your best ideas from the communication activity with the class.

Lesson D 119

Activating schema (Johannsen, pp. 118 - 119)

This task is obviously a typical example of how a teacher can manage activating relevant schema throughout the three phases of the lesson. In the pre-reading phase reflected in exercise A, readers are oriented to the content of the text and its main idea which is prevention. The teacher can also help prepare students anticipate the content by talking about the title of the article, the pictures and the maps which accompany the article. The while-reading phase aims at making students understand the information in the article in exercise B. Teachers can encourage students to use their background knowledge about the diseases mentioned in the article as a way of activating schema and knowledge about measles, malaria and influenza. The post-reading stage aims at checking comprehension and examining students' abilities to deal with the text and extract information out of it. This is reflected in the writing and communication exercises after the article. These two exercises review the idea of preventing illness as a way to focus on the content of the article and to ensure that students are now able to discuss health problems and ways to prevent them.

In summary, this reading task shows the three-phase procedure in which students read an article with an introductory exercise, comprehension questions and post reading activities. In the three phases, the tasks draw on the readers' existing knowledge of the topic and employ this knowledge to work on the meaning of the text and this is how we can describe the top-down processing.

### Reading Task 3

The following task is an example about the interactive-compensatory model involving activities which are not strictly bottom-up nor top-down ones but a combination of both. Reading here is not only a matter of applying linguistic knowledge to the text. It is a matter of interaction between what we already know about the topic and what the writer introduces in the text. This summarizes schema theory and the application of background knowledge to the text to get meaning.

The task starts with encouraging students to become oriented to the text by asking them about their ideal holiday location and the information they wish to find in a guidebook about this place in exercises A and B. This helps learners turn in to the content of the text. The pre-reading phase continues to draw student's attention to the two countries they are going to read about by the help of maps, and then it asks them to recommend a holiday destination to a friend in exercise C. Next, the topic sentences are introduced to help students check ideas in the previous exercises. At this stage, the use of these different activities raises student's interest in the topic. The teacher can also discuss certain ideas about these two countries as a way of activating schema or even introduce new ideas to build schema. Another suggestion for teachers at this stage is that they can pre-teach certain words to make the task easier later. These two suggestions reflect the teacher's awareness of the top-down and bottom-up approaches respectively. Exercise F asks students to read the whole article and check their ideas in the previous exercises. This while-reading activity encourages learners to be active because it checks their comprehension of certain pieces of information about the two countries. A wide range of activities could be introduced at this stage to check comprehension. Then two post-reading activities are presented; they are exercises G and H. The former concentrates on vocabulary which is one of the features of the bottom-up approach as mentioned earlier. The latter is a question which aims at making students reflect on the text and give their own opinions about their favorite holiday destination.



### Lesson 2: Reading

**A** What is your ideal holiday location? Make a list of things that the place must have, or that you must be able to do there.  
**Examples:**  
 It must have a good beach.  
 You must be able to go skiing.

**B** Imagine you are trying to choose a place to go on holiday. What information will you find in a guidebook?

**C** You are going to recommend a holiday destination to your friend. You have to choose between the two countries on the right. Look at the maps.

- 1 Can you identify each country?
- 2 Which region is each country located in?
- 3 What do you think is good about each country for a person on holiday?

**D** You are going to read an article that compares the two countries. Look at the topic sentences. Check your answers to B1 and 2 above.

**E** Read the information about your friend in the blue box.

- 1 Write a question for each point.  
**Example:**  
 What language do they speak in each country?
- 2 In which paragraph of the article might you find the answer to each question?



**F** Read the article on page 12 of the Reading Resources book.

- 1 Find answers to your questions in D1.
- 2 Choose one of the two countries for your friend's holiday.

**G** Which word or phrase in the article means:

- 1 a place to go?
- 2 the natural things to see?
- 3 very high?
- 4 planes, trains, boats?
- 5 you can live there?
- 6 occupied?
- 7 send things to another country?
- 8 bring things from another country?
- 9 the average weather?
- 10 climbing mountains?
- 11 the broken walls of old buildings?
- 12 it's your choice?

**H** Which country would you prefer to go to on holiday? Why?

What do you want from a holiday destination?

Tunisia is located in North Africa.

Switzerland is located in Western Europe ...

Tunisia has a long Mediterranean coastline.

Both Tunisia and Switzerland are small in terms of population.

Both countries are agricultural.

So why do people go to each country on holiday?

You decide.

**My friend:**

- speaks French.
- likes water-skiing.
- likes mountain climbing.
- doesn't like very hot weather.
- loves fruit and chocolate.

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Activating schema and vocabulary (Philips, p. 24)

### 5. Local Factors which Affect Relating Theory to Practice

Relating theory to real situations in the classroom is the most significant part. In this respect, there are three factors which affect our professional practice in ELT. They are related to learners, teachers and classroom materials.

The first factor is concerned with age and nature of learners as they are the core of the teaching-learning process. When learners are small children, it seems that the bottom-up approach is very relevant to them in the sense that they are able to decode letters and match them with sounds then blend them altogether in order to reach meaning. In other words, teachers cannot thoroughly apply what they have in mind about other strategies (i.e. the top-down and the interactive compensatory model) to students of various levels.

The second point is educational traditions of teachers. Some teachers stick to their traditional plans and methods that they think are suitable for all learners. They do not take into consideration students' interests and needs to be able to apply appropriate methodology to the classroom. Thus, traditional ways of teaching may not be useful in all contexts and teachers should feel free to apply what they think is relevant to the situation. So, implications of research and studies based in language classrooms is crucial to take into consideration while teaching reading; however, what is more important for teachers is developing their work and methodology according to the situation they have. In other words, flexibility of teachers is a key quality here.

Third, another fundamental issue is related to learning materials. In fact, Hedge (2000:37) says that 'the content and quality of textbooks will determine the extent to which teachers can make use of insights from research into learning and learners.' This ensures that textbooks sometimes have limitations and constraints which affect relating theory to practice. In this case, it is definitely the role of the teacher not only to select the appropriate reading material for learners, but also to modify it according to whether s/he wants to reinforce grammatical skills, vocabulary acquisition, background knowledge, or any other area.

### 6. Conclusion

Reading has been the unit of analysis in the previous few pages. First, a discussion about reading models or strategies that readers use while processing is introduced. They are the bottom-up, the top-down and the interactive compensatory models. Awareness of these strategies of reading is not something theoretical; rather, it has significant implications for classroom methodology and material design. As a result, teachers' awareness of students' need to develop the bottom-up skill shifts the attention to grammar and vocabulary development. On the other hand, building and activating schematic knowledge seems to improve students' top-down processing skills. Then three reading tasks are introduced as examples of how theory relates to practice. The last part deals with certain factors that have influence on the previously mentioned relation between theoretical and practical issues.

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