The Effect of Using Figurative Language on the Reading Comprehension of First Secondary EFL Students in Jordan

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of using figurative language on the reading comprehension of first secondary EFL students. The sample of the study consisted of 75 students at The Arab Model Schools in Amman. Six different reading passages were taught to the experimental and the control groups for two months. Data were analyzed using means, standard deviations and ANCOVA. The results of the study showed there were statistically significant differences (α=0.05) in the total reading comprehension, the literal reading comprehension, and the analytic reading comprehension of students. Those differences were in favor of students in the experimental group. As for the evaluative level, there were no statistically significant differences. Based on these results, the researchers recommended that there should be more emphasis on incorporating and teaching figurative language in order to facilitate reading comprehension. (Key words: Figurative language, reading comprehension, EFL).

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أثر استخدام الاضرب البلاغية في اللغة الإنجليزية على التحصيل القرائي لدى طلبة الصف الأول الثانوي في الأردن

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ملخص: هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى معرفة أثر استخدام الاضرب البلاغية في اللغة الإنجليزية على التحصيل القرائي لدى طلبة الصف الأول الثانوي في الأردن. تكونت عينة الدراسة من 75 طالب و طالبة في المدارس النموذجية العربية في عمان. درست كلتا المجموعتين التجريبية والضابطة ستة نصوص قرائية مختلفة لمدة شهرين و لتحليل النتائج استخدمت المتوسطات الحسابية والانحرافات المعيارية، إضافة إلى اختبار تحليل التباين المصاحب (ANCOVA) و أظهرت نتائج الدراسة وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية عند (0.05=α) بين طلبة المجموعتين التجريبية والضابطة من حيث الاستيعاب القرائي الكلي والاستيعاب القرائي الحرفي، والاستيعاب القرائي التحليلي، إذ كانت الفروق لصالح طلبة المجموعة التجريبية. أما فيما يخص الاستيعاب التقويمي، فلم تظهر فروق جوهرية. وبناء على هذه النتائج تمت التوصية بالتركيز على استخدام الاضرب البلاغية لتسهيل الاستيعاب القرائي لدى الطلبة وزيادتها. (الكلمات المفتاحية: الاضرب البلاغية، الاستيعاب القرائي، اللغة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية)..

Introduction: Reading is a complex process that can be hindered or facilitated by many linguistic and non-linguistic factors affecting readers, such as text difficulty, purpose of reading, the reader's linguistic schema, self-confidence, risk taking, hypothesis making, and cultural schemata. Reading is much more than a process of decoding letters, words or even meanings of individual sentences. It is an interaction between the reader and the text during which the reader tries to make meaning from any semantic and syntactic cues available in the text.

Many researchers, such as Layton (1979); Yu (2004); Fisher (1984); Littlewood (1976); and Spinelli and Williams (1981) believe that literature should be included in curriculum. However, when asking about the relevance of some reading material for students, it is important to know to what extent they will probe beyond the surface to the underlying meaning. Therefore, before making any selection and including them in a syllabus, we must ensure that the students are linguistically, intellectually and motivationally ready to

get to the underlying level proposed. If reading is to be viewed as an integrated process, the teaching of reading must do more than simply exercise reading in the target language. Students need to have a wide scope of literary experiences, taking not only the individual work, but also the context in which it emerged.

Tice (1990) argues that metaphors are used in all languages because they meaningfully evoke pictures of interactions, objects, or states of affairs that capture important aspects of what we understand about them. Collie and Slater (2000:5) also write:

"Figurative language yokes levels of experience that were previously distinct, casting new light on familiar sensations and opening up new dimensions of perception in a way that can be exhilarating but also starting and even unsettling."

According to McKay (1982), literature offers several benefits to ESL classes. For example, it can develop the linguistic knowledge of readers, both on a usage level and a use level. Secondly, to the extent that students, It may also increase their motivation to interact with a text, enjoy reading literature and consequently increase their reading proficiency. Finally, literature may increase their understanding of the target culture .Therefore, literature must be included in the ESL curriculum. Certainly, one common experience of

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most ESL students is their struggle with a language and culture with which they are unfamiliar. But, our success greatly depends upon a selection which will not be too difficult on either a linguistic or a conceptual level.

One of the difficult tasks facing an EFL teacher is the selection of appropriate reading passages for his students because not all teachers may agree on a set of criteria for this selection. Reading passages might be selected according to such factors as interest, exploitation, readability, cultural relevance, and purpose of reading (Day, 1994). Readers like to find the reading material not only interesting, but also a bit challenging so that they integrate the lower –level of comprehension into the higher levels of analysis, inference and evaluation.

According to Conley (1995), reading comprehension has two levels: text comprehension and comprehesion beyond the text. In the former, the reader understands the meanings of new vocabulary items, selects important information and comes up with deductions based on the text. This is usually referred to as literal comprehension. The second level of comprehension, which is considered higher and more advanced, is called comprehension beyond the text. At this level the reader matches the information he gets from the text with what he already knows to come up with a new understanding of the topic.

In their attempts to go beyond the printed word, good readers usually merge the words they read with the store of information they have in their possession, while poor readers do not progress beyond the printed words. Good reading requires readers to analyze, synthesize and read critically. Accordingly, Lazar (1996) argues that the author generally presents the literary image and a good reader analyzes it trying to find what is similar between the metaphor used and the subject of the text. Once the connection is established, the reader unites with the text and so the meaning is no longer ambiguous. Therefore, students have to be trained to read different materials, on different occasions, in different ways, and for different purposes.

Figurative language is used in all languages and it underlies different cultural connotations. People may use figurative language un-awaringly in their daily transactions, and so they find the reading material that has figures of speech more rewarding than the traditional simplified reading material. Therefore, Lindsay (2000) asserts that EFL/ESL teachers have to teach the reading texts that include figures of speech because these mental images are usually meant to make a text easier to understand.

Karl (1994) contends that not only sophisticated people use the figurative language, but also all types of people and in different domains of life use it. For example, using metaphor or comparisons in a reading passage makes unclear ideas closer to the mind of the reader. Other devices such as metaphors, similes, elaborate descriptions, and colloquialisms usually give life to the reading text.

Statement of the Problem: Jordanian EFL curricula are centralized, and so teachers have no control over the selection of the reading passages in students' books or even the methods of teaching reading. Reading passages in the student's book are selected by curricula planners, and the teaching methods are also prescribed in the teacher's book. For example, in most reading classes, teachers are asked to focus on teaching new vocabulary items, new structures, and set students to skim or scan a reading passage in order to answer display questions. They explain the entire text sentence by sentence, analyzing many of the more difficult grammar structures, rhetoric, and style for the students, who listen, take notes, and answer questions. Teachers' lesson plans and reading exams do not have enough evidence that they ask students to read analytically or critically.

Therefore, this study was an attempt to investigate if the reading materials, which were modified by the two researchers and validated by a panel of EFL experts to include some figures of speech, would improve the reading comprehension of first secondary students in Jordan.

Purpose and Questions of the Study: The main purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of using figurative language on the reading comprehension of Jordanian EFL learners. More specifically, the study aimed at answering the following main question : Are there any statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the total reading comprehension of first secondary EFL students in Amman that can be attributed to using figures of speech in the reading text?

Three sub-questions were also derived from this main question:

1. Are there any statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the literal reading comprehension of first secondary EFL students in Amman that can be attributed to using figures of speech in the reading text?
2. Are there any statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the analytic reading comprehension of first secondary EFL students in Amman that can be attributed to using figures of speech in the reading text?
3. Are there any statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the evaluative reading comprehension of first secondary EFL students in Amman that can be attributed to using figures of speech in the reading text?

Significance of the Study

Studies conducted in Jordan included miscue analysis, reading strategies, reading attitudes, reading comprehension and methods of teaching reading. The present study aimed at investigating the effect of using figurative language on the reading comprehension of first secondary EFL students in Jordan as far as the researchers know.

Therefore, the results of the study are expected to give teachers and curricula planners some insights about

the need for incorporating different types of reading materials in the EFL curricula in Jordan. The results may also encourage ESL teachers to reconsider their methods of approaching the reading materials they use in their classrooms, so that their students improve their reading comprehension and they enjoy what they read.

Definition of Terms: The main terms used in this study are operationally defined as follows:

Figures of speech:" They are different forms of expressions used to convey meaning or heighten effect often by comparing or identifying one thing with another that has a meaning or connection familiar to the reader or listener″. Miller et al., 1989: 6)". The figures used to achieve the purpose of this study are:

- Metaphor: A comparison between two basically unlike things that have something in common, but use no connectives such as *like* or *as*.
- Simile: A direct comparison between two basically unlike things that have something in common. It is usually signaled by the word *as* or *like*.
- Personification: Endowing abstracts, ideas, animals, or inanimate objects with human qualities.
- Hyperbole: A great exaggeration. Its purpose is to emphasize, for either serious or comic effect.
- Allusion: A brief reference to a person, event, or place, real or fictitious, or to a work of art.
- Conceit: An elaborate and surprising way of comparing two very dissimilar things. It usually involves intellectual cleverness and ingenuity.
- Idiom: A group of words with a meaning of its own that is different from each of the separate word when put together.

Examples of the figures of speech included in the modified reading passages are: Metaphor (the whole world has become a big green house.), simile (workmen toiling like bees in a hive), personification (leaving this ancient architecture to puzzle the world), hyperbole (feeling completely shattered), allusion (A second Venice is to be born), conceit (it's like conquering a virgin land), and idioms (a double- edged sword).

Reading comprehension: It is the ability of readers to understand the surface and the hidden meanings of the text using the available grapho-phonic, syntactic and semantic cues. The total reading comprehension includes:

a. Literal comprehension: The reader is expected to grasp the general clear meaning of the text.
b. Analytic comprehension: The reader is expected to analyze what he reads and connect it to his own personal experience.
c. Evaluative comprehension: The reader performs a high level of thinking where he gives judgments and evaluations over the reading material based on his understanding of the text.

Review of Related Literature: According to Wang (1997), students' comprehension of figurative language in English has not been studied in any depth to formulate a comprehensive body of research. Most ESL studies dealt with methods of teaching adapted reading passages in students' textbooks only. However, a review of related literature showed that there are some studies which dealt with using figurative language to teach reading.

Horne (1969) conducted a study on 145 sixth grade students in Georgia investigate the effectiveness of activities centered around children's literature on pupils' use and understanding of figurative language and on their reading vocabulary and comprehension. Students in the experimental took part in 24 work sessions to increase their grasp of figures of speech. Following the work sessions, the experimental group scored significantly higher (.01 level) in frequency of use and understanding of figures of speech, but scores on literal reading comprehension and vocabulary in the two groups did not differ significantly. It was concluded that sixth-grade pupils profit from instruction in figurative language and that work sessions based on children's literature are effective in motivating children to produce images.

Malgady (1977) studied the ability of 60 children ranging in age from 5 to 12 to interpret and appreciate similes in some selected reading passages. Results revealed that those children were able to interpret similes and to indicate their preference for each simile as a figure of speech. Results also replicated previous findings that even kindergarten children were able to interpret figurative language and that interpretive skill increased with age; but appreciation of figurative meaning appeared to require formal operational thinking. It was concluded that non-literal meaning may emerge earlier in the course of a child's cognitive development than previously supposed, but the ability to appreciate figurative language is tied to increased cognitive sophistication.

Gambrell and Bales (1986) conducted a study to investigate the effect of mental imagery upon the reading comprehension of 124 fourth- and fifth- grade poor readers at some Maryland public schools. The experimental group was given instructions to induce imagery. The control group was given general instructions. After reading the texts silently, students were asked to identify implicit and explicit inconsistencies in the texts. The results were in favor of the students who used mental imagery. It was concluded that poor readers can be better readers with mental imagery.

Ortony and Larson- Shapiron (1985) studied the effect of exposing children to figurative language through verbal street games on a metaphorical language comprehension test. The result of the study indicated that students' ability to understand the uses of metaphor and simile encountered in the class improved due to the use of figurative language.

Readence, et al. (1987) conducted a study on a group of 52 third- grade students at a private school in a large southern city in the USA to investigate the effect of using figures of speech on students' reading comprehension. Results showed that teaching students

how to figure out meanings of metaphors helped them become independent readers and to enjoy what they read.

Taylor (1997) used children's literature to investigate the effect of explaining figurative language, such as onomatopoeia, simile, personification, and metaphor on the writing of fourth-grade students. The results showed that students who used figures of speech in their writing produced better pieces of writing.

Hawamdeh (1999) measured the effect of teaching figures of speech to 100 freshman university English majors on their ability to interpret figurative language and their abilities to use them in classroom interaction. Results showed that using figurative language enhanced and facilitated reading comprehension. She recommended that instructors should concentrate on teaching the figurative aspect of language instead of over- emphasis on grammar and vocabulary.

Fizzano (2000) studied the impact of using story drama on the reading comprehension of third graders. The experimental group read and role-played selected folktales using teacher-directed drama and student-directed drama. Results of interviews and observations revealed that students in the experimental group were better at the levels of reading comprehension (literal, inferential, and critical) during their story enactments than the control group. In conclusion, the experimental groups manifested a heightened use of metaphoric creative oral language, which demonstrated their language complexity and symbolic thought.

Method

Population and Sample of the Study: The population of the study consisted of all the first secondary students enrolled in secondary schools in Amman Directorate of Education II in the academic year 2000/2001. One of those schools, The Arab Model Schools, was selected to conduct this study because both the school principal and English language teachers agreed to cooperate with the researchers to conduct this study This school had four first- secondary class sections. One Arts section and one Science section were selected randomly to represent the experiment group, while the other two sections comprised the control group as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: The distribution of the four sections with regard to gender and academic track

Track / Gender	Arts Students	Science Students	Total
Female	16	21	37
Male	20	18	38
Total	36	39	75

Research Design: This is a quasi- experimental study which has one independent variable and one dependant variable. The independent variable was the teaching method which has two levels: teaching reading using figures of speech and teaching reading without using figures of speech. The dependent variable was the reading achievement which has four levels: total comprehension, literal comprehension, analytic comprehension, and evaluative comprehension.

Research Instruments

1. The reading passages: Six reading passages were selected from the first secondary student book with the following figures of speech added to them: metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole, allusion, conceit, and idioms.
2. The reading achievement test: The test consisted of one reading passage and 25 questions covering the literal comprehension level, the analytic comprehension level, the evaluative comprehension level, and the total comprehension level, plus their model answers.

Validity and reliability of the research instruments

A group of nine EFL experts (5 university professors, 2 supervisors and 2 teachers) were selected to validate the two research instruments which were originally developed by the researchers. Those experts were first asked to select six reading passages from the first secondary textbook used at the Arab Model Schools. Each passage was modified to include some figures of speech in such a way that they did not sound strange to the reader or out of place. The modified passages were then approved by the experts (Appendix 1).

Another reading passage was also selected by the experts to be used as a reading comprehension test. After that, the researchers prepared 33 multiple –choice comprehension questions on the passage, which were finally reduced by the experts to 25 questions covering the literal reading comprehension, the analytic reading comprehension and the evaluative reading comprehension and the total reading comprehension. The experts also gave weight for each of the four levels of reading comprehension and verified the model answers of all questions (Appendix 2).

After the test had been validated by the experts, it was administered to two first- secondary sections with a total number of fifty students chosen randomly from the population of the study. The same test was re-administered to the same group of students after one week. The reliability of the test was established by using Cronbach's Alpha. The reliability coefficient was 0.81, which was considered sufficient to use this test as the research instrument to achieve the purpose of this study.

Procedures: The following steps were used to conduct this study:

1. Permission was taken from The Arab Model Schools to conduct this study.
2. A group of nine EFL experts were selected to validate the research instruments.
3. Six reading passages from the first secondary English textbook were selected and modified by adding some figures of speech to each.
4. The experts validated the modified passages before they were taught to students.
5. The six passages were taught to the experimental group while the unmodified ones were taught to the control group.
6. Another reading passage was selected and approved by the experts. A thirty-three- item exam

with the model answers was developed by the researchers. The final version of the exam which consisted of twenty-five items and their model answers were validated and approved by the experts. The test was then tried out on a pilot group to establish test reliability using the test-retest formula.

7. The researchers explained to the teacher, who agreed to teach the two groups, to focus on teaching the figures of speech in the reading passages of the experimental group, and to teach the control group as she used to do. To ensure that the teacher fully understood what to do with each group, the researchers attended a few classes and answered all her questions. The actual treatment lasted for six weeks from mid February to the end of March.

8. The reading comprehension test was finally administered to the sample of the study.

9. Data were collected and analyzed, using descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviations. The analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was also used to find out whether differences between groups were statistically significant ($\alpha=0.05$) or not.

Results of the Study: The main aim of this study was to investigate the effect of using some figurative language on the reading comprehension of the first secondary grade students in Amman in the academic year 2000/2001. This reading comprehension includes the total reading comprehension, literal reading comprehension, analytic reading comprehension, and evaluative reading comprehension. Therefore, mean scores and standard deviations are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations with regard to total reading comprehension, literal reading comprehension, analytic reading comprehension, and evaluative reading comprehension of both groups

	Experimental group		Control group	
	Means	Standard Deviations	Means	Standard Deviations
Total comp.	16.88	4.11	15.31	4.15
Literal comp.	4.32	1.14	3.75	1.37
Analytic. comp.	9.70	2.79	8.58	2.81
Evaluative comp.	2.85	.95	2.97	1.10

Table 2 shows that students in the experimental group had higher mean scores than students in the control group in the total reading comprehension, the literal reading comprehension, and the analytic reading comprehension, but a lower mean score than those in the control group with regard to evaluative reading comprehension. Overall, this may indicate that using figurative language improved the reading comprehension of the target group.

However, to see if those differences were statistically significant or not, the univariate analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used (Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6).

Table 3: Univariate Analysis of Covariance for the total reading comprehension of the two groups

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
School grades	49.24	1	49.24	3.64
Treatment	60.27	1	60.27	4.46*
Error	945.36	70	13.51	

*Significance at ($\alpha=0.05$)

Table 3 shows that the treatment was significantly effective. This means that the students in the experimental group who were taught through the use of figurative language were better comprehenders on the total reading comprehension level.

Table 4: Univariate Analysis of Covariance for the literal comprehension of the two groups

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
School grades	.45	1	.45	.33
Treatment	7.71	1	7.71	5.63*
Error	95.57	70	1.37	

*Significance at ($\alpha=0.05$)

Table 4 shows that the treatment was significantly effective. This means that the students in the experimental group who were taught by using figurative language were better comprehenders at the literal level.

Table 5: Univariate Analysis of Covariance for the analytic reading comprehension of the two groups

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
School grades	26.39	1	26.39	4.02
Treatment	30.94	1	30.94	4.72*
Error	459.41	70	459.41	

*Significance at ($\alpha=0.05$)

Table 5 shows that the treatment was significantly effective. This means that the students in the experimental group who were taught by using figurative language were better comprehenders at the analytic level.

Table 6: Univariate Analysis of Covariance for the evaluative reading comprehension of the two groups

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
School grades	1.45	1	1.45	1.43
Treatment	.33	1	.33	.32
Error	70.89	70	1.01	

Table 6 shows that there are no statistically significant differences ($\alpha=0.05$) between the two groups with regard to their evaluative reading comprehension.

Discussion of the results

The results of this study showed that students who were taught through the use of reading passages featuring figurative language scored higher than those who were taught through the use of reading passages that did not have those figures of speech at all levels of reading comprehension (i.e. total reading comprehension, literal reading comprehension, analytic reading comprehension, and evaluative reading comprehension). However, the univariate analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) showed that the treatment was significantly effective at all levels of comprehension except at the evaluative level.

It seems that figurative language helped students to skim the reading passage to get meaning. Students in the experimental group might have used those figures of speech to compare, contrast, and relate ideas in the

whole passage to understand its general meaning. In other words, efficient readers do not take the presented information for granted; they question what they read and connect it to their own experiences. In fact, these results are similar to the results of other studies such as those of Hawamdeh (1999) Thompson (1986) and Whitmer (1986) who found that students' reading comprehension improved as a whole because of the use of figurative language.

The presence of figures of speech in the reading passage might have helped students in the experimental group to have a sufficient understanding of the overall meaning of the reading. Such understanding was pre-requisite for better analytical reading comprehension on the part of students in the experimental group compared with the reading comprehension of students in the control group. There was an element of mystery in the reading passages, which would force the reader to think and analyze the material being read. This constant search for meaning seemed to have forced the reader to use more of the stored language he has. This, in turn, improved the comprehension of the texts not only on the literal level, but also on the analytic level.

The results presented in Table 6 indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between the experimental group and the control group with regard to the evaluative level of reading comprehension. A possible reason for this might be that teachers did not feel the need to emphasize higher order thinking skills such as synthesis, analysis and evaluation because they are emphasized in the Jordanian EFL curriculum and textbooks. This might also explain why EFL teachers do not include evaluative reading questions in their exams.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that:

1. Curricula planners incorporate more reading passages that have a variety of figures of speech in the EFL curricula and textbooks so that students are introduced to a variety of literary genres. Teachers' books should also include more suggestions for teachers to make use of extensive literature in their classes.

2. More emphasis be given to teaching critical reading skills that activate students' reflection and evaluation since teaching English in Jordan like teaching any other school subject expects students to memorize more than learn critically.

3. Other studies need to be carried out to investigate the effect of using figurative language on improving other language skills such as writing, listening and speaking, because language learning is integrative.

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Appendix (1)
A sample of the reading texts in which the figures of speech are underlined

Passage One:

You are going to read a magazine article about pyramids. Read the text carefully, and then answer the questions that follow:

The Egyptian pyramids are the best-known archaeological monuments in the world, due partly to their **distinctive** and **instantly** recognizable design .A design that attracts speculation. The fact that the original reason for their **construction** is a mystery only adds to their popularity. Veiled beauty is doubly intriguing. Over the ages they have captured worldwide attention and with it, a multitude of speculative theories, from the mundane to the fantastic. Everybody has tried his or her hands at the new creative theory.

Speculation over the **origin** of these "grand mountains of stone" started with the Greeks - gods of civilizations. They believed that the first pyramid was constructed as a memorial to the wicked King Chufa's daughter - a princess who had led a very sad and difficult life. During the dark ages-the pyramids were explained in relation to biblical texts. Thus, according to tradition, they were believed to be large **storehouses** for grain, built in preparation for the famine that was predicted in the Bible. Along the same lines, Arab philosophers saw these pyramids as warehouses for Egyptian scientific and medical **wisdom** that would otherwise have disappeared during the Great Flood.

More modern theories suggest that the role of the pyramids could be that of a mechanism for predicting the future as Egyptians were thought to have the touch of gods; or even as a **road sign** for **alien** beings for many thought the pyramids are the gates to stars. The former is a theory devised by Charles Piazzi Smyth, who **converted** the dimensions of the pyramids' corridors and **chambers** into numbers, which corresponded to calendar dates. These dates were then used to predict significant events of the future. The **later** stems from the more astrological and scientific study of Erich Von Daniken and Graham Hancock. They attributed the building of the pyramids to super -intelligent aliens as a means of prediction the apocalypse. This theory, however, underestimates the ability and achievements of man.

Despite all these theoretical contrasts, the actual archaeological **evidence** behind the evolution of the pyramid, and their means of construction were beyond doubt. It is now crystal clear for the Egyptologists as they have been researching these questions for over a century and have produced conclusive proof. They discovered that the tomb holding the deceased body is only one part of the pyramid, which in fact also includes parts constructed for the funeral and the afterlife of the God of Egypt.

In addition, they have traced the **entire** history of the pyramids' construction. Their evolution began with the small, rectangular, **mud-brick** tombs favored by the First and Second dynasties, moving on up the ladder to the stone step-pyramid of the Third Dynasty. The Fourth Dynasty saw a great **advance** both in size and construction techniques-further moves towards fascinating architecture, evidence of which we can see today in the Giza plateau. After this **era**, during the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties, the pyramids were built on a much smaller scale, showing a great reduction in skill. The age of Tutankhamun brought an end to the constructions of pyramids, leaving this ancient architecture to puzzle the world.

Apart from the theory concerning the building of the pyramids by aliens, it is widely agreed that the pyramids' construction is an amazing human achievement proving that a man's mind is so fertile. Evidence from the archaeological sites of workmen's villages and stone quarries shows the organization of the **workforces** involved, workmen toiling like bees in a hive. This alone must have taken careful planning and military-style co-ordination. Added to this, the traces of building ramps and copper and stone tools found by the researchers emphasize the simple technology that was available at that time, and thus the amazing size and design of the pyramids. In the case of the Great Pyramid of King Khufu at Giza, more than two million blocks were moved a challenge as big as building a modern skyscraper.

In contrast to popular opinion, it is now believed that the men working on the pyramids actually did so as a form of taxation and not under the master's whip or out of religious duty, as was previously thought. They were not treated like animals forced to finish the labor. Some were even appointed as architects, skilled stone-workers and co-coordinators, and were thus respected as such.

Passage Two:

You are going to read an article about unemployment. Read the text carefully, and then answer the questions that follow:

The **growth** of the **global** economy is leaving millions of workers behind. The world is becoming a small village. Diseases like **inequality**, unemployment and **poverty** are all signs of this. **Rapid** technological change and **heightened** international competition are damaging the job markets of the major **industrialized** countries.

This is not how things were supposed to work. Some see technology as backwardness! The failure of capitalism to distribute **wealth** fairly **poses** a challenge not just to politicians, but to economists as well. Despite a continuing boom in international trade and finance over the past decade, productivity has decreased, while inequality in the United States and unemployment in Europe have increased. Some people made the most of it; others were poverty stricken.

Another case is Germany, where the **rate** was below 1 per cent; but with the rat race of technology, today it is approaching 10 per cent. In Belgium, the unemployment rate has quadrupled over the past 20 years.

One of these puts the blame on developing countries, or rather our relationship with them. <u>The weak is always the scapegoat!</u> Historically, developing countries provided the industrial world with **raw materials** in exchange for manufactured goods. <u>The line has to be drawn somewhere.</u>

Some economists assert that technology <u>has the upper hand</u> and must be responsible for these changes. According to this school of thought, the introduction of new technology such as computers creates a surplus of unskilled **labor**. At the same time, the new technology creates a demand for skilled workers who know how to run it, <u>some workers are even likened to wizards in their capability of using the new technology.</u>

A final explanation is **immigration**, <u>a double- edged sword</u>. The legal immigration of **skilled** workers actually helps the economy as it **supplies** talents that are needed, creates businesses and jobs, and raises output.

It seems that **retaining** workers would be the key to solving the problem of unemployment and unequal pay, but the trouble is that while more training programmers are needed, there is less and less money available to fund them. <u>The remedy for the disease is known but it cannot be supplied</u>. Governments are being forced to cut back on their spending in order to compensate for **reduced** production and income, and so <u>parents of the population have to pay the price.</u>

The starting point for any positive **policy** would be to make it each nation's **goal** to improve the lives of its citizens. This means that economic policies should be **structured** so that working people can earn a living wage, <u>which makes them above poverty</u>

Appendix (2)
The reading comprehension test with correct answers in bold
Read the following text carefully:

I recall the day several years ago when my former mother-in-law initiated me into the art of treasure hunting in antique markets. To celebrate, I bought a delicate china teapot, which seemed the rarest object I'd ever possessed. Gazing for the hundredth time at my new purchase, I finally abandoned myself to that strange joy, collector's bliss.

Since then, I've always kept an eye open for flea markets, and I've learnt that sizing the stalls up requires skill. Informed taste, a keen eye, patience, tactics and timing when moving in for the kill are essential. Don't go in the hope of discovering a priceless object at a low price; the right frame of mind is to acquire pieces just because you like them.

Stalls sell anything from old clothing and discarded knick-knacks to rare prints and books, china, glass, clocks and an infinite range of other enchanting collectable items.

Buyers can be observed among the market stalls, peering and poking in every corner. It's as if they're sleepwalking. When someone really wants to buy something, they may be thinking so hard that they wouldn't recognize a close friend.

Bargaining demands disciplined strategy. First of all, keep quiet. On the day of my initiation as a buyer, I saw a charming 19th century musical box. "It's wonderful!" I exclaimed. My mother-in-law gave me a strange look, then dragged me behind a big grandfather clock. "You've just managed to double the price," she said - all too accurately.

Since then, I've perfected a cold-blooded stalking style when pursuing the object of my desire. Pretending to be indifferent, I wander round the stalls and, like a hunting hound, start sniffing out my prey. Smiling graciously, I ask politely for the price of something I'm not really interested in, testing the seller. The price is usually stacked up straight away, only to come down to reasonable level after a bit of bargaining. This is the time to make a subtle move for what you're really after.

The biter can be bitten, of course. Once, I spotted what looked like an early edition of Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*. The bookseller assured me it was a first edition. I felt like a seasoned connoisseur, so I bought it. It looks very nice in my bookcase, but it turned out not to be a first edition after all.

Now choose the best word or phrase to complete the following:
1. The author became interested in flea markets through:
a. reading b. a colleague c. **a relative** d. an acquaintance
2. The author:
a. was convinced of this type of art b. was against this art
c. decided to ignore it d. did not understand this art
3. The word "initiated", paragraph one, line "2" means:
a. introduced b. caused c. induced. d. completed
4. The author is explaining to us:
a. what to buy b. the importance of bargaining
c. how to buy d. the importance of antiques
5. "Moving in for the kill", paragraph two, line "3" means:
a. destroying the purchased piece b. choosing the wanted piece
c. buying the badly needed piece **d. going to buy the wanted piece**
6. In a flea market one finds:
a. rare, original pictures b. crystals of all sorts
c. used books d. **collectable items**
7. The author's mother-in-law got angry because the author:
a. likes antique things b. is noisy

c. expressed her liking to the music box openly d. was rude to the seller

8. The style of the author is:

a. formal b. **informal** c. scientific d. conversational

9. " The biter can be bitten", paragraph seven, line "1" means:

a. the experienced one is always careful

b. the experienced one can be deceived

c. the experienced one can deceive others easily

d. the experienced one must be careful not to be deceived

10. According to the passage, when you see merchandise you've chosen to buy, you should:

a) act casually

b) show that you like the piece, but not willing to buy it

c) check the merchandise carefully to see if there is anything wrong in it

d) start bargaining at once

11. " I felt like a seasoned connoisseur", paragraph seven, line "3" means: I felt

a. Lucky b. like a cook c. like a hunter d. **like an expert**

12. Buyers around stalls:

a. are extremely nervous b. **concentrate on what is exhibited only**

c. enjoy meeting friends d. think hard about buying something they need

13. Which one of the following is un true?

a. The author started searching for flea markets

b. The author wanted very much to go there

c. The author observed them closely when she found them

d. **The author photographed them**

14. The author bought a delicate china teapot and she:

a. returned it b. **found it great** c. put it away d. sold it again

15. Based on the text, only one of the following is correct:

a. Even the experienced collector can be cheated."

b. It is easy to differentiate between a real original piece of antique and a fake one.

c. All merchants are experienced sellers.

d. An experienced collector cannot be deceived.

16. The seller lowers the price of the merchandise when he sees that the buyer is:

a. interested. b. nagging c. **indifferent** d. careful

17. According to the author, one buys the antique mainly because it is:

a. needed b. cheap c. priceless d. **rare**

18. The author let herself be drifted in:

a. shopping in stores **b. buying antique things**

c. bargaining sellers d. gazing at beautiful things

19. The word "graciously", paragraph six, line 3 means:

a. greatly b. sadly c. **kindly** d. quickly

20. The tone of the author is:

a. serious. b. sarcastic c. **humorous** d. factual

21. The best title for the text is:

a. The Art of Buying b. The Open Market

c. My talent d. The Jungle Book

22. Skills required to size up the stalls are:

a. taste, timing, patience, great knowledge, and a big house

b. taste, good observation, patience, and wealth

c. taste, keen eye, patience, certain strategies, and a car

d. taste, certain strategies, timing, patience, and good observation

23. The skill needed most in bargaining is:

a. good observation. b. **steel nerves.** c. great knowledge. d. good taste

24. According to the passage, the writer is:

a. still married b. widowed c. **divorced** d. single

25. According to the author, the buyer in the flea market:

a. studies the history of the piece

b. checks every single corner in the market

c. enjoys the beauty of the piece

d. thinks of the loved ones