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**IMPLEMENTING THE EUROPEAN LANGUAGE PASSPORT
STANDARDS INTO ADVANCED READING COURSE AT THE ELT
DEPARTMENT, GAZI UNIVERSITY**

M.A. THESIS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. General Background to the Study

Reading is one of the basic skills in foreign language learning and teaching. Teaching reading is not an easy task because it is a complex skill including some sub-skills and learning strategies. While reading, a learner should use some sub-skills such as skimming, scanning, deducing meaning from the text, inferencing and learning strategies. Therefore, while preparing a syllabus for a reading course, all those sub-skills and learning strategies should be taken into consideration.

For years, many educationalists have carried out studies on teaching reading, and they have come up with invaluable work on teaching reading. However, there is still a need for further studies related to syllabus design and teaching reading skill. A syllabus can be defined as lists of content to be taught through a course of study. While designing a syllabus, the selection of the items and their sequencing and integration are all required. Hence, syllabus design is the first step of meeting the needs of language learners as well as the needs of a country.

Turkey has been a member of Council of Europe since 1949 and is willing to become a member of the European Union. In order to become a member of the European Union, Turkey needs to improve the foreign language learning situation. Hence, our country needs better-equipped teachers.

Common European Framework, published in English by Cambridge University Press, was developed through a process of scientific research and wide consultation. This framework is increasingly used in the reform of national curricula and by international consortia for the comparison of language certificates. A recent European Union Council Resolution (November 2001) recommended the use of this Council of Europe instrument in setting up systems of validation of language competences. This framework provides a clear definition on the objectives of language teaching and learning. Hence, it is of

particular interest to course designers, textbook writers, testers, teachers and teacher trainers - in fact to all who are directly involved in language teaching and testing.

1.2. Problem

As it is mentioned, Turkey has been a member of the Council of Europe since 1949 and recently it has been going through some reforms so as to live up to the criteria defined by the European Union. Of all these reforms, the most important is the educational reforms. The education system in Turkey has been under reconstruction; the Ministry of Education and Council of Higher Education are offering certain changes and reforms in the current curricula, including primary, secondary and also higher education curricula. As for Foreign Language Education, the definitions of the Council of Europe; that is, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages is taken into consideration so that language teaching policies in Turkey will be parallel to those of other European countries.

The “Advanced Reading” course is offered at the third semester at the ELT Department, Gazi University as a part of the curriculum set by the Council of Higher Education. The present syllabus for the “Advanced Reading” course in the department is not totally parallel with the standards defined in the Common European Framework. That is why a syllabus parallel to the standards of the Common European Framework is needed.

1.3. Aim of the Study

The main aim of this study is to suggest a syllabus for the “Advanced Reading” course offered at the ELT Department, Gazi University according to the standards listed in the European Language Passport. Throughout the study, the following questions will be answered;

1. What is a syllabus?
2. What is European Language Passport?

3. How can the European Language Passport be implemented in English teacher education programs in Gazi University?
4. What are the needs of 2nd year ELT students in terms of reading?

1.4. Scope of the study

This study focuses on suggesting a syllabus for the advanced reading course in Gazi University English Language Teaching Department. The subjects of this study are the students who are taking Advanced Reading course at Gazi University English Language Teaching Department.

1.5. Methodology

In order to suggest a syllabus for Gazi University ELT department 2nd year advanced reading course according to the standards listed in the European Language Passport an interest checklist will be designed and administered. The results will be reflected in the syllabus which will be suggested as an outcome of the present study.

1.6. Assumptions

The following points are assumed in this study;

1. The data collection device shows the sincere thoughts and opinions of the respondents.
2. The results of data collection can be generalized for all ELT departments.

1.7. Limitations

This study will have certain limitations when attempting to suggest a syllabus for the advanced reading course. This study will be limited to;

1. Gazi University English Language Teaching department 2nd year students.
2. Three groups of second year students.

The number of the students who are included in the study is 102 and this sample group includes both normal and paid program students.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Syllabus Design

As Nunan (2001) suggests, a syllabus is a list of content to be taught or handled throughout a course of study. Designing a syllabus includes selecting the content for a particular course and sequencing the selected content. According to Stern (1984), three important aspects that should be considered in designing a syllabus are the objectives, the content and sequential arrangement. He also states that the scale that has been widely accepted over the past twenty years includes selection, gradation, presentation and testing.

Syllabus designers in the past tended to list down the titles that were going to be taught throughout a course. Then, they tried to find methods to teach the titles, which is more about methodology. The tendency today is different. Syllabus designers have to consider the learners' needs, for they are potential users of the language in some real situations.

Stern (1984) asserts that it was not the accurate thing to impose a syllabus on a teacher or learners. It was thought unacceptable to present the teacher an inventory of language items and expect them to follow the fixed list. On the contrary, what was necessary was a flexible and interactive syllabus. What is meant by flexible is that the syllabus should be open and negotiable and what is meant by interactive is that learners build up their knowledge by interpreting the information they get; they seek for ways to get information. They use problem solving technique to add to their knowledge. In short, the ideal syllabus supplied a two way interaction – from teacher to learner and from learner to teacher. Breen (cited in Stern, 1984) states that an ideal syllabus should focus on the learning process and guide learners on how to draw their own route maps.

Some other linguists argued that what was suggested was not a syllabus at all. Widdowson (1984), for example, argued that a syllabus is a must. He believes that the teacher knows the best, so there is no need to negotiate about it with the learners. By saying so he does not deny the necessity of communication; he argues that the teaching method should be communicative, not the syllabus. In *General English Syllabus Design*, he states that “There is no such thing as communicative syllabus: there can only be a methodology that stimulates communicative learning.” (Widdowson, 1984: 26), and he also states in the same book as follows; “I think that people who have been seeking to achieve a breakthrough in syllabus design have probably been fighting on the wrong front. It is methodology where reform is likely to be more feasible and more effective.” (Widdowson, 1984: 27)

Brumfit’s (1984) argument was similar to Widdowson’s. He argued that a curriculum should consider all kinds of practical purposes. More than being flexible or fixed, a syllabus, he argued, must be sufficient as regards its characteristics and quality. In designing a syllabus the concepts of language, language use and language learning must be taken into consideration. The syllabus should be efficient in that it specifies content, which is of course sequential. It should also be flexible so that the teacher can take the initiative if required.

Yalden (1984) was another linguist who believed in the necessity of a syllabus. Her idea of a good syllabus, similar to Widdowson’s, was an efficient syllabus. According to Yalden, it is our perspective that determines the syllabus. If we consider the process as learning, then a list of content or language items forms the syllabus. If the language use is the main perspective, the syllabus is designed according to the output of a needs analysis. Yalden states that “a syllabus for a second- language program is not a guide for private use by teacher and learner, nor is it the autonomous creation of either teacher or learner. It is a public document, a record, a contract, an instrument which represents negotiation among all the parties involved.” (Yalden, 1984:13)

2.2. Reading Skill

Reading is an indispensable part of our lives. No matter what you are or what you do, you are confronted with written language everywhere. It could be the signpost showing you the right way to go, or the sliding band on TV informing you about some latest news, the daily newspaper, the label of an item you are about to buy, e-mails in your mailbox, advertisements all around and so on. All these pieces serve for different purposes for reading. Depending on our purpose for reading, we use different approaches and strategies.

2.2.1. Factors Influencing the Reading Process

A reader makes use of his past experiences while reading; this is true for both learning how to read and adding reading in his life. Past experiences are formed by the influence of the family, school, community, culture and so on. All of these, combined with reader's characteristics, affect the experience of reading and probably make each reader have a unique style. That is to say that reader's comprehension of a reading piece differs from person to person.

Another factor that affects the reading experience is the text type. According to the text type, the reader adjusts his expectations; that is, we do not expect the same things from all text types. What is meant by text type are the genre, the grammatical structure, the vocabulary and the organization of the information in a text.

Knutson (1997) argues that the factors affecting the efficiency of reading can be divided into two as 'text-based factors' and 'reader-based factors'. Text-based factors are related with vocabulary, syntax and text organization. Reader-based one, on the other hand, include schemata about the topic of the text and genre; learners' level of interest in terms of the topic of the text, cognitive and metacognitive strategies and, maybe the most important of all, the purpose of reading (Knutson,1997).

Aeebersold and Field (1997) argue that the age and L1 language level when the reader starts L2 studies should be considered in all statements about the factors that

shape L2 reading because readers of different ages use different learning strategies and their L1 reading levels and reading strategies they acquired in L1 influence the reading process.

They also add that “Each person brings a preferred style, cognitive style, to the learning process (Aebersold and Field, 1997; 24). These different kinds of cognitive styles should be recognized by the reading teacher so that he/she will help students to adjust when they see that learners use inappropriate strategies.

Aebersold and Field (1997) list the factors influencing reading in L2 as follows:

- Cognitive development and cognitive style of orientation at the time of beginning L2 study,
- Language proficiency in L1,
- Metacognitive knowledge of L1 structure, grammar and syntax,
- Degree of difference between L1 and L2 (writing systems, rhetorical structures, appropriate strategies),
- Cultural orientation.

Alderson (1984) also points at the relation between L1 and L2 reading abilities. He mentions two hypotheses about the reading process:

1. Poor foreign language reading is due to incorrect strategies for reading that foreign language, strategies which differ from the strategies for reading the native language.
2. Poor foreign language reading is due to reading strategies in the first language not being employed in the foreign language due to inadequate knowledge of the foreign language. Good first language readers will read well in the foreign language once they have passed a threshold of foreign language ability.

Alderson (1984) argues the knowledge of the foreign language will have an effect on the development of foreign language strategies. In other words, when you do not have enough command on the foreign language, then you read as in your first language.

Uljin (cited in Alderson, 1984: 217) asserts that the insufficient knowledge of the foreign language grammar is not the major determinant in terms of comprehension; it is the lack of conceptual knowledge. This highlights the importance of vocabulary knowledge and knowledge about the subject matter. He argues that foreign language reading instruction should focus on improving students' vocabulary and guide them in recognizing unknown content words.

According to VanDuzer (1999), fluent readers;

- Read with a purpose and understand the purpose of different texts,
- Read quickly, automatically recognizing letters and words maintaining a flow that allows them to make connections and inferences,
- Use a variety of strategies, depending on the text, to read efficiently,
- Interact with the text, making use of background knowledge as well as the information on the printed page,
- Evaluate the text critically, determining whether they agree or disagree with the author,
- Expect to understand the text and get meaning from it, and
- Usually read silently.

2.2.2. Reading with a Purpose

It is a fact that in real life situations we always read for a certain purpose such as getting information or pleasure and so on. These purposes affect the way that a reader

approaches a text. If, for example, the reader is looking for some specific information, he will scan the text and spot the piece of information he is looking for; that is, he will not need to read each and every detail. The skill or strategy to be used is determined by the purpose of the reader (Knutson, 1997).

Brown (1994) mentions 7 main purposes for reading:

1. To obtain information for some purpose or because we are curious about some topic,
2. To obtain instructions on how to perform some task for our work or daily life (e.g. knowing how an appliance works),
3. To act in a play, play a game, do a puzzle,
4. To keep in touch with friends by correspondence or to understand business letters,
5. To know when or where something will take place or what is available,
6. To know what is happening or has happened (as reported in newspapers, magazines, reports),
7. For enjoyment or excitement.

“The nature of reading we perform- scanning, gisting, close reading, or rereading-depends on what exactly we want from the text, as well as situational factors such as the time available, and any constraints relative to place of reading. No matter what our agenda might be, why and where we read inevitably determine how we read” (Knutson, 1997; 50).

The teacher’s purpose is another significant point in the reading process. If the teacher, for example, wants students to find some specific information, he or she will encourage students to scan the text. Sometimes it will be enough to have one single reading of a text and sometimes two or three readings of the text will be needed. Nevertheless, this is not to say that the teacher should be the total authority defining the purpose for reading; on the contrary, the students should be required to establish purposes for reading. This is especially significant in terms of extensive reading (Aeebersold and Field, 1997).

Extensive reading is of great importance because one of the key factors, that is, greater exposure to written texts and materials, can be activated by extensive reading. As the learner is exposed to written materials, he/she will be exposed to vocabulary items repeatedly, which will certainly increase automaticity in low level processing. Studies have shown that learners who were engaged in extensive reading activities over a period of time improved their reading skills more than the ones who did not practice extensive reading at all (Walter, 2003).

2.3. Approaches to Reading

Research on second language reading dates back to the 1950's. It was after then that language specialists started to come up with ideas on reading in second language teaching. The approaches toward reading basically fall into four as bottom-up and top-down approaches, the interactive school and critical literacy.

2.3.1. (Phonics) Bottom-Up Approach

Phonics, or bottom-up, approach was dominant in the 1950's and 1960's. The approach is based on the smallest unit of sound; phoneme. The reader recognizes the written symbols. Starting from letters and sounding them, matching them with their aural equivalents, the reader blends these together to form new words (Nunan, 1999). In other words, the reader processes a text in a linear fashion starting from letters and going on with words, phrases, clauses and sentences. Therefore, some basic components of this approach are word recognition and automaticity. The faster the words are recognized, the better. When the learners' recognition of words is fast, he/she does not realize how the process works.

In the bottom-up approach the reader recognizes the written symbols. Then he recognizes the organization of these components. This way he decodes the message conveyed in the written piece. This process is called a data-driven process by Brown (1994; 284). This processing, he says, requires mastery of linguistic items; that is, mastery of language. With the help of this knowledge of language, the reader

comprehends the written text. In this aspect, the process is similar to a puzzle-solving process (Brown, 1994).

Walter (2003) mentions the importance of “automaticity both of word recognition and of lexical access”. When the learner recognizes a word, he/she records the word in his/her mental vocabulary storage and he/she recalls those words while reading. This recalling and matching process determines the comprehension speed. “The faster a reader’s speed of retrieval from the mental lexicon, which is linked to their level of vocabulary knowledge, the more proficient their reading comprehension will be” (Walter, 2003).

2.3.2. (Psycholinguistic) Top-Down Approach

Towards the end of the 1960’s and 1970’s, psycholinguistic approach came along. This approach, known as a top-down approach, emphasized meaning rather than the structure of the text. Phonics approach was not totally denied or ignored; however, it was emphasized that learners make some predictions based on their schemata and confirm their predictions or make new predictions as they are reading through.

Contrary to the basic motive in bottom-up approach, in top-down approach a reading text itself cannot carry a message to be decoded and comprehended by the reader. It is the reader’s background knowledge, experiences, emotions and culture that form the final message that he/she infers from the text (Brown, 1994). This theory, which is called as the “schema theory” was the basic concept in top-down approach. Aeebersold and Field (1997) define the top-down approach as;

“The top down school of reading theory argues that readers fit the text into knowledge (cultural, syntactic, linguistic, and historical) they already possess, then check back when new or unexpected information appears.” (Aeebersold and Field, 1997; 18).

The process in top-down approach is a conceptually driven one, while in bottom-up approach it is data-driven.

Reading is a psycholinguistic process and a “psycholinguistic guessing game” (Paran, 1996: 25). The reader makes some hypotheses while reading. The words he reads help him to have some presumptions about the rest of the written material. Along the reading process, he either sticks with the hypothesis or changes it. It is claimed that this is not specific to English reading, but it is universal. That is, the same approach can be applied to all languages (Paran, 1996).

Grellet also describes the process as a “constant process of guessing” (cited in Paran, 1996: 26). He says that readers do not read each and every letter or word while they are reading something. They constantly skip some words and make some guesses. In order to confirm their hypothesis, they go back or forward in the text.

“Reading is an activity involving constant guesses that are later rejected or confirmed. This means that one does not read all the sentences in the same way, but one relies on a number of words-or cues- to get an idea of what kind of sentence (e.g. an explanation) is likely to follow.” (cited in Paran, 1996: 26)

Wallace (cited in Paran, 1996) adds that it is more difficult for foreign language learners to adopt the bottom-up approach, for they are not as capable as L1 readers in recognizing contextual cues. She also says that in order to support the learners’ linguistic and schematic knowledge, appropriate texts and contexts must be chosen (cited in Paran, 1996:27).

Later studies on L2 reading showed that making predictions while reading does not accelerate the speed of reading as expected. As Paran states (1996: 28), the point that differentiates good readers from poor ones is their decoding skills, rather than their ability to guess. It is no doubt that L2 readers, especially the ones in the beginning stages, will need more help in handling a reading text. Because they fail to have good linguistic skills, they ‘compensate’ for their inability by depending more on context.

The tasks that are given to the readers should be presented in a way that background knowledge, context, and task all work together for the readers to achieve their goal (Paran, 1996). What Paran (1996) is suggesting is that L2 readers should depend more on bottom-up approach, and they should be less dependent on top-down approach; and it is L2 reading instruction that will guide readers towards bottom-up approach. However, he does not intend to claim that contextualizing texts is out-of-date; on the contrary, contextualizing should be used regardless of the level of L2 readers. His point is that learners should have the necessary skills to survive when no context is provided.

Catherine Walter (2003) states in her article that contrary to the bottom-up approach, in the top-down approach learners question the text rather than analyzing the text in details; they compare their in-brought expectations with the information in the text. Walter (2003) states that recent studies have not proven that either of these approaches overweighs the other. Depending on the purpose of reading, either approach could be employed by the learner. The task given to the learner determines the way to approach a text. Scanning, for instance, will not require the same type of processing as a general understanding task. What Walter comes down to here is the fact that in order to process a text very well and in order to comprehend, strategies should be used consciously. In other words, it is not only those approaches, but also reading strategies that count.

2.3.3. The Interactive School

The theorists of the interactive school argue that readers use both bottom up and top down approaches, sometimes at the same time and sometimes alternately. In the reading process, readers employ both approaches depending on their background knowledge, language proficiency level, motivation, strategy use and culturally shaped beliefs about reading (Aeebersold and Field, 1997). Using only one of the approaches, a reader cannot completely comprehend the reading text. Using both approaches and putting these interactions together, he or she will get the most of the reading experience. “The interactive model emphasized both what is on the written page and what a reader brings to it using both top-down and bottom-up skills” (Abraham, 2000).

Purcell-Gates (1998) states that Rumelhart, the father of the interactive reading model, acknowledges that there is reciprocal influence of different levels of knowledge held by a reader -- from letter featural knowledge of the features of letters to semantic knowledge -- and models these levels of knowledge as operating in interaction with each other. In other words, readers read by focusing on comprehension and on letter features roughly at the same time, granting that the reading event begins with graphic input. (Purcell-Gates, 1998)

2.3.4. Critical Literacy

As an alternative to psycholinguistic theory, in the 1980's and 1990's, some theorists came up with the Critical Literacy approach, which regards reading both as a psycholinguistic and social activity. Freire (1983) and Gee (1990), and Street (1993) (cited in VanDuzer, 1999) assert that reading is a social process in which the author and reader interact and build up a sort of relationship. In the process, the reader gets ideas about the cultural, social and political contexts in which the reading takes place.

Widdowson (in Alderson and Urquhart, 1984) also argues that there is some kind of communication between the reader and the writer. However, unlike spoken interaction, there is no open cooperation in the negotiation of meaning (Widdowson, 1984).

“The writer sends his messages by means of a covert interaction whereby he anticipates the likely reactions of an imagined reader” (Widdowson, 1984; 220). As for the reader, Widdowson argues that he/she recognizes the authority of the writer and because he/she wants to get access to the information provided, he/she adjusts his own frame of reference to accommodate the information (Widdowson, 1984). Nevertheless, this is not to say that the reader has to appreciate what the writer is trying to get across. As Widdowson (1984) states he can use it in any way that best suits his purposes, free to object to the discourse that the writer has put forth on his behalf. He may not wish to adjust his schemata to accommodate the information given; he may wish to reflect his own schemata on what he reads. This way, he decides what is significant and what is

not, free of the writer's authority. In other words, the reader may choose to be assertive, rather than submissive.

Widdowson (1984) concludes that the reader is free to choose either way considering his purpose; he may be assertive on his own scheme; or he may choose to be submissive, appreciating what the writer communicates.

“Whether the reader adopts an interpersonal attitude of submission or assertion, to achieve his ideational purpose he has to make a connection between the writer's frames of reference and his own.” (Widdowson, 1984; 224)

2.3.5. Schema Theory

Studies have shown that provided they are given enough background information, learners with linguistic deficiencies comprehend better, and they use their schemata to compensate for their linguistic deficiencies (Hauptman, 2000; 623). This is the basis for Schema Theory. “Schema Theory is essentially a theory that explains the role of past experiences, or background knowledge in comprehension” (Hauptman, 2000; 623). According to the theory, we keep a record of our knowledge and experiences in our brains and while reading we make associations and recall the knowledge. The question to be asked here is how one recalls the desired information in his schemata (Hauptman, 2000). According to Clarke and Silberstein (cited in Brown, 1994; 284), the basics of schema theory are as follows;

“Research has shown that reading is only incidentally visual. More information is contributed by the reader than by print on the page. That is, readers understand what they read because they are able to take the stimulus beyond its graphic representation and assign it membership to an appropriate group of concepts already stored in their memories... Skill in reading depends on the efficient interaction between linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the world”.

Researchers of the Schema Theory have come up with three schema types:

1. *Content Schema*: This means that the reader compares the information in a text and what he knows about the subject.
2. *Formal Schema*: It is about readers' identifying the structural, organizational and rhetorical structure in a text. A reader can differentiate a formal letter from a personal one. It is the formal schema of the reader, which is mostly formed throughout the education period, which the reader uses.
3. *Linguistic Schema*: This includes the decoding features we need to recognize words and see how they fit in a sentence (Aeebersold and Field, 1997; 17).

Research on Schema Theory has shown that background knowledge contributes to the comprehension skills of adults. L1 readers located and comprehended information in a text more easily when they already have some information about the content. Hauptman states that the theory is well supported by researchers. Carrell (cited in Hauptman, 2000; 625), for instance, considers the theory as part of a psycholinguistic model of L2 reading and explains that background knowledge should be activated in order to make sure that the learner comprehends the text. Roller and Eisterhold (cited in Hauptman, 2000; 625) also consider background knowledge as part of a psycholinguistic model. Barnet (1988) says when the new information in the text does not fit into a reader's schemata; the reader misunderstands, or ignores the new material. Or he revises the schemata to match the facts within a passage.

All these discussions come down to the question if it is always possible or necessary to find texts, the content of which is familiar to the learners. Isn't it also necessary to introduce new concepts and topics to the students? Widdowson (1984) argues that;

“The schema is projected on to events which are then interpreted with reference to it. But clearly if actuality always fitted neatly into anticipation and predictions were always confirmed, the schemata would fossilize into fixed stereotypes and nothing would be learned from reading or visual experience (Widdowson, 1984; 224).

Hauptman argues that it is not always possible for language teachers “to be able to acquire a sufficient number and range of texts so that all of the background knowledge areas of all the students can be accommodated (Hauptman, 2000; 626). What he suggests is that the learners should learn ‘how to attack’ a text when no relevant background knowledge is available.

Hauptman argues that similar to the idea that learners can use their schemata to compensate for linguistic deficiencies, they can compensate for background knowledge by using their knowledge about the text structure. Learners can make use of their strength in some areas of text processing to make up for weaknesses in others (Hauptman, 2000).

Hauptman also asserts that when learners do not have any or enough background knowledge of the text content, then signaling is there to make up for this deficiency. The information in a text is usually conveyed by means of cues and signals. Signals help readers to form a good idea of the content and the text structure, and they make the text more accessible. He quotes from Ausubel and Tonjes (cited in Hauptman, 2000) as follows;

“Signaling refers to those elements, both visual and linguistic, within a text that serve to increase redundancy for the reader and that are sufficiently abstract, general, and inclusive to give the reader an overview of the content and structure of the text”.

This is not the case for L2 readers only. L1 readers, as well, when provided with signals and cues comprehend remarkably more than the ones who read texts induced

with general background information. Based on this idea, Hauptman (2000) proposes another hypothesis: “Signaling becomes the primary ease factor in L2 reading when background knowledge is not useful for accessing content schemata” (Hauptman, 2000; 627).

Signaling could be iconic or non-iconic. Iconic signaling refers to charts, graphs, pictures, diagrams, or maps. Non-iconic one refers to titles, subtitles, bold facing, underlining, outlining and so on. Not all the forms mentioned can always be considered as a component of signaling. That is, a picture cannot sometimes serve as an iconic signaling component. For a cue to be considered as a means of signaling, it must be abstract and inclusive enough. Only if they are abstract and inclusive enough can they convey general and specific information about the content and structure of the text (Hauptman, 2000).

Another argument questioning the Schema theory is put forth by Walter. Walter (2003) argues that advanced learners do not need to use the context or background knowledge to understand a written material because they know the words. It is low level students who make use of the context and background knowledge to understand a text. She says that vocabulary difficulty cannot be overcome by topic familiarity. The more words they know, the better readers they are. What she is suggesting is that we should help L2 readers gain mastery of 10.000 or so words they will need to understand almost every text easily. Some class time should be spent on teaching vocabulary and strategies to learn vocabulary.

2.4. Strategies for Reading Comprehension

Successful readers make use of reading strategies, which are also called reading skills, while they are reading. It is a fact that each reader uses a different approach while he or she is reading, depending on his or her past experiences and background knowledge. However, there are strategies that can be employed by every reader. Some of these common strategies are deducing meaning from context, analyzing the grammatical structure of a text, adjusting strategies in accordance with the purpose of reading, being

aware of the difference between minor and major ideas in a text and so on (Aeebersold and Field 1997).

The biggest problem about reading is the learners' not being aware of the strategies to use in processing a text. To read more or to be more exposed to more written materials is not sufficient. Yet, most learners are already literate in their native language; that is, they can transfer those skills into L2 reading. Strategies, keys to get the required information from a given text, should be included in the reading syllabus or classroom instruction. Brown (1999) says that learners should be aware of the differences between text types and genres. It is the teachers who should help them develop reading strategies and "enlighten" the learners on the distinctive features of these genres.

In order to be efficient readers, students should be aware of what they do when they read, should become conscious of their own reading process. This way, students will be able to improve their reading abilities and comprehension (Aeebersold and Field, 1997). In order to increase the awareness of learners as regards reading strategies, Walter (2003) suggests a "think-aloud" technique, in which the teacher goes through a text voicing all the steps she takes as a critical reader. Then, learners do the same, first in pairs or groups, then individually.

Walter (2003) supports the idea that reading strategies may well support L2 readers and they should be used at all levels. She says it is not the number of the reading strategies known by the learner that differentiates adult learners from less-skilled ones. The only difference could be the fact that less-skilled learners may not know which strategy to employ or how to employ strategies at all. Therefore, classroom activities should focus more on how to use reading strategies.

Another point that Walter (2003) argues is that learners do not monitor their reading skills consciously after they have passed over the "threshold" level. Also readers cannot transfer the skills and strategies they use in their native language readings to their L2 reading until they have reached the threshold level. After they are proficient enough to cross over the threshold level they start to employ the skills and strategies they use in

L1 reading (Walter, 2003). This is also explained in ‘short-circuit’ theory, which is also known as ‘language threshold hypotheses. In the theory, Clarke (cited in Walter, 2003) suggests that the reader should achieve the threshold level of L2 knowledge; or else, there would be a ‘short-circuit’ in the reader’s reading system because he doesn’t have sufficient L2 knowledge (Walter, 2003).

Brown (1994, 291) mentions 10 strategies, all of which can be applied as part of the classroom instruction:

1. *Identify the purpose in reading.*

In real life we always read for a particular purpose, be it for pleasure, or to learn the steps of a task and so on. Our purpose determines the way how reading text should be approached. “Efficient reading consists of clearly identifying the purpose in reading something.”(Brown, 1994; 292) If a certain purpose is kept on mind, unnecessary details or information can be eliminated, which will increase the pace and the efficiency.

2. *Use graphemic rules and patterns to aid in bottom-up decoding. (for beginning level learners)*

Learners, especially the beginning level ones, may well produce the sounds that they hear. However, it might be relatively difficult for them to make correspondences between the sounds they hear and produce and their written forms; for example, spelling rules. That is to say that beginning level learners should be given hints about phonetic and orthographic rules.

3. *Use efficient silent reading techniques for relatively rapid comprehension. (for intermediate to advanced levels)*

By using or teaching a few silent reading rules, learners’ efficiency can be increased:

- “You don’t need to pronounce each word to yourself.

- Try to visually perceive more than one word at a time, preferably phrases.
- Unless a word is absolutely crucial to global understanding, skip over it and try to infer its meaning through its context”. (Brown, 1994; 292)

4. Skimming

Brown defines skimming, which is one of the most important reading strategies, as follows: “skimming consists of quickly running one’s eyes across a whole text (an essay, article, or chapter, for example) to get the gist” (Brown, 1994; 293). By using this strategy, learners can get an idea of the main topic, the attitude of the author, the purpose of the text and so on, which will help him/her smoothly move on to the next step. After skimming, learners can move on to reading for specific purposes.

5. Scanning

Another important strategy in reading is scanning. If this strategy is developed, learners will not have to deal with the whole text. Depending on their purpose, they will look for some specific information without having to read the whole text. This will help them save time and energy in the class or in real life reading situations.

6. Semantic Mapping or Clustering

In case of longer and more complicated texts, readers may get lost or confused while tracing the information in the text. By the help of semantic mapping or clustering, they can organize and group the ideas in a meaningful way. This will help the reader “to provide some order to the chaos” (Brown, 1994; 293).

7. Guessing

By using contextual, grammatical and situational clues, readers may ease their way throughout a text. This guessing could be guessing the meaning of a word, guessing what will happen next, or guessing a grammatical relationship and so on.

Readers do not, of course, come up with predictions out of the blue. If used efficiently, it will undoubtedly help readers handle a text. Brown says; “The key to successful guessing is to make it reasonably accurate” (Brown, 1994; 294). Teachers should help learners to become good guessers by encouraging them to use effective strategies and textual clues available for them.

8. *Vocabulary Analysis*

When readers come across unknown words, they might use lexical and grammatical clues to compensate for their lack of knowledge in terms of vocabulary. These clues, or techniques as Brown calls them, are; looking for prefixes and suffixes, looking for roots that are familiar, and looking for grammatical and semantic contexts (Brown, 1994; 295).

9. *Distinguish between literal and implied meanings*

Most of the time, especially in advanced reading texts, readers are supposed to comprehend more than the literal meaning of the words printed to form a text. They need to infer meaning, or in other words, read between the lines to understand the message in the passage. The ability to distinguish between literal and implied meanings is a distinctive feature separating good readers from poor readers.

10. *Capitalize on discourse markers to process relationships*

Efficient readers make the best use of discourse markers in a text. The relationships among ideas are expressed by discourse markers, that is, clauses, phrases and sentences. The better the reader comprehends the discourse markers, the more efficient the reading process is.

Some other strategies mentioned by Aeebersold and Field (1997) are as follows:

1. *Previewing the text to build expectations.*

This previewing process may include a general skimming of the text, reading the introduction and identifying the key issues to be discussed, reading the conclusion paragraph (Aeebersold and Field, 1997; 74).

2. *Sampling.*

Sampling is to read the first sentence of each main paragraph in the body of a text as a way to get an overview of the information.

3. *Adjusting.*

When a reader feels that the strategy he is employing does not meet his expectations, he or she should adjust strategies; that is, he or should change the strategy.

2.5. Vocabulary and Reading

Vocabulary is central to understanding reading texts. In order to get meaning out of a text, a reader should have a good command on vocabulary. Having a high level of grammatical competency does not enable learners to get the whole meaning; they also need to understand content words. However, it is not possible for a teacher to teach all the unknown content words in a text in a class hour. Therefore, they need to identify the words that should be taught before students read the text.

What is need to be considered in this decision process are, according to Aeebersold and Field,

- 1) What the students already know of the vocabulary in the text
- 2) What vocabulary students need to recognize to make sense of the text,
- 3) What vocabulary they will need to know to function in the L2 in the future. (Aeebersold and Field, 1997)

Vocabulary can be divided into two categories as receptive and productive vocabulary:

1) *Receptive Vocabulary*: These are generally topic-specific words. The reader recognizes these words when he or she sees it, but may not know its many meanings and meaning differences.

2) *Productive Vocabulary*: These are the words that learners actually use in speaking and writing.

Receptive vocabulary is often placed in the short term memory, while productive vocabulary is placed in the long term memory. In order to be sure that a word has become a part of the productive vocabulary, we should know that the learner knows the collocations of the word; that is, the words that come before and after it, the function of the word; that is, in what situations and contexts the word is used, and the meaning of the word, including various meanings and ‘nuances’ of a word, the synonyms and antonyms.

It is not an easy task to add a word into one’s productive vocabulary. The words are introduced in the class and the learner himself/herself should apply some vocabulary learning strategies in order to ‘learn’ the word. The words chosen to be introduced should be topic specific words so that they add to the comprehension process, because the real purpose of reading is to comprehend the text. Even if the learner does not know the word, they can get the grasp of it when they have the concept of the text on their mind.

The context is vital when learning a word. The context helps learners to comprehend and remember words. With the help of the context learners make associations and this helps them learn. The reading text provides the necessary context for the learners; that is why vocabulary teaching is considered to be associated with reading.

Students come across with unknown words while reading a text. Looking up every unknown word in a dictionary or asking the teacher what a particular word means would not help enough in the learning process. At this point, it is very vital that the

teacher guide learners to use learning strategies. The teacher can model some strategies so that learners get an idea of how to cope with unknown words in a text.

According to Aeebersold and Field (1997), when a word appears in the text frequently and if the learner cannot get the general idea without knowing what that particular word means, there are three vocabulary strategies that can help:

1. using the context surrounding the word to guess its general meaning,
2. analyzing the parts of the word to guess its probable meaning, and
3. using a dictionary to look up its exact meaning.

Of these three strategies, the most helpful one is probably guessing the meaning from the context. Whatever the purpose of reading or whatever situation it is, readers can benefit from this strategy.

The reading process should not be interrupted for teaching vocabulary or introducing a vocabulary strategy. Some time of the class hour should be spent for vocabulary studies. If a teacher, for example, wants learners to use some vocabulary strategies during the reading, he or she should introduce the strategies before reading. Otherwise, the reading process will be violated and so will the comprehension.

Vocabulary studies can also be handled after reading in order to;

1. “reinforce vocabulary skills,
2. highlight individual vocabulary words to be learned. “

(Aeebersold and Field, 1997; 148)

Taking the advantage of the context and word associations vocabulary exercises can be provided, which makes them easier to learn.

“Exercises that require students to produce the words to be learned should follow recognition exercises so that students can have further contact with the word, perhaps using it first to produce paraphrases and then original sentences about the

content of the reading, and finally, using it in a completely different context.” (Aeebersold and Field, 1997; 148)

2.6. COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK

2.6.1. What is Common European Framework?

The CEF attempts to contribute to the work of language teachers, administrators, examining bodies in a number of ways:

- “standardization of assessment;
- resources for learner self-assessment;
- a large range of descriptors for setting clear learning objectives;
- insights into the different kinds of competences in language learning;
- encouragement to reflect on methodological issues, with comprehensive descriptors of possible options;
- a strong statement of the educational and social value of language learning and teaching.” (Heyworth, 2005: 52)

“The Common European Framework provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe” (Council of Europe, 2001; 1).

The framework functions as a tool to define the expected levels of proficiency in language in terms of all four skills; namely, reading, listening, speaking and writing. It proposes that an individual should prove to have the necessary skills defined in the framework to interact effectively. In order to have a standard in measuring the level of learners, the framework defines proficiency levels comprehensively.

The intention of the framework is to build a ‘common basis’ for all countries in Europe in terms of all modern languages. Regardless of different education policies and systems in different countries, professionals will have a common understanding by the help of the framework.

“The provision of objective criteria for describing language proficiency will facilitate the mutual recognition of qualifications gained in different learning contexts, accordingly will aid European mobility” (Council of Europe, 2001; 1).

One of the most important educational objectives of the Common European Framework is to;

“promote methods of modern language teaching which will strengthen independence of thought, judgment and action, combined with social skills and responsibility.” (CEF, 2001: 4)

Although English has already become a lingua franca in Europe, the Council still insists on preserving all languages. Therefore, the Framework or the ELP can be applied to all languages so that a common understanding of proficiency levels can be achieved.

The approach promoted by CEF is an action-based approach. The learner abilities are “described in ‘can do’ statements, rather than as knowledge about language.” (Heyworth, 2005: 53) Rather than the negative deficiencies of the learners or users, their language abilities at their level are considered in formulation of the descriptions of proficiency for the CEF levels (Manual, Preliminary Pilot Version; 13). “Only positive formulations of levels of proficiency can be used as objectives”.

As mentioned above, the approach adopted in CEF is an action-based approach. That is, the individual is considered as a social agent who performs in social tasks by using his cognitive, emotional and volitional resources. A description of this is given in CEF as follows:

“Language use, embracing language learning, comprises the actions performed by persons who as individuals and social agents develop a range of competences, both general

and in particular communicative language competences. They draw on the competences at their disposal in various contexts under various conditions and under various constraints to engage in language activities involving language processes to produce and/or receive texts in relation to themes in specific domains, activating those strategies which seem most appropriate for carrying out the tasks to be accomplished. The monitoring of these actions by the participants leads to the reinforcement or modification of their competences” (CEF, 2001; 9).

2.6.2. Language Competences

Competences can be described as the total knowledge, skills and characteristics allowing a person to perform actions (CEF, 2001). Competences mainly fall into two categories as general competences and communicative language competences; which is divided into three categories as linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic.

2.6.2.1. General Competences

General competences refer to all kinds of actions along with language activities. Communicative language competences, which helps a person communicate or act by using linguistic means, is made up of three components: linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic.

2.6.2.2. Communicative Language Competences

1. *Linguistic competences* are composed of lexical, phonological, syntactical knowledge and other dimensions of language as system.

2. *Sociolinguistic competences* are related with socio-cultural conditions of language use. Because it is related to register, rules of politeness, norms, social groups, etc., every individual is highly affected by this component whether or not they are aware of this effect.

3. *Pragmatic competences* are about functions of linguistic resources, their production and production of speech acts. They are also concerned with discourse, cohesion and coherence, text types and forms, etc.

2.6.3. Language Activities

The communicative competences of learners are activated through the use of the various language activities, which consists of reception, production, interaction and mediation. (CEF, 2001)

Two main processes in language learning are reception and production, both of which are essential or interaction. Receptive activities involve silent reading and following the media. Production activities, on the other hand, involve oral presentations, written studies and reports.

Interaction has a central role in communication, which makes it of great importance. It includes both reception and production alternately. Be it oral or written interaction, turn-taking is strictly respected. That is to say that interaction is not all about reception and production.

Mediation is of great significance when two or more people cannot communicate for some reason. It could take place in receptive and productive modes and in oral or written exchange. When one of the interlocutors does not have access to the information or message given, translation, interpretation or a paraphrase becomes essential. (CEF, 2001)

2.6.4. Domains

Language activities are contextualized in domains. The domains are classified in CEF as fourfold:

1. *The public domain*, which refers to everything related with ordinary social interaction,

2. *The personal domain*, which refers to family relations and individual social practices,
3. *The occupational domain*, which refers to everything connected with a person's activities and relations in his or her occupational environment, and
4. *The educational domain*, which refers to everything related with the learning or training context, where the aim is to get specific knowledge or skills.

(CEF, 2001: 15)

2.6.5. The Need for the Common European Framework

One of the basic principles that led the European Council to set a common framework is “that it is only through a better knowledge of European modern languages that it will be possible to facilitate communication and interaction among Europeans of different mother tongues in order to promote European mobility, mutual understanding and co-operation, and overcome prejudice and discrimination” (Council of Europe, 2001; 1).

“Increased worldwide interdependence and the vision of a common European house demand a multilingual Europe and make effective communicative language skills for everyone more and more indispensable.” (Schärer, 1992:1)

The need for CEF was mentioned in the Intergovernmental Symposium held in Rüschlikon, Switzerland November 1991 as follows;

“It is desirable to develop a Common European Framework of reference for language learning at all levels to;

- promote and facilitate cooperation among educational institutions in different countries,

- provide sound basis for the mutual recognition of language qualification,
- assist learners, teachers, course designers, examining bodies and educational administrators to situate and coordinate their efforts...” (Manual, Preliminary Pilot Version; 13).

It was after then that the scale of defined levels in CEF was developed. Then in April 1997, CEF was officially approved by the Council of Europe representatives.

2.6.6. The Common Reference Levels

The Common European Framework (CEF) defines six criterion levels; A₁, A₂, B₁, B₂, C₁, C₂. This criterion has been developed in order to have a standard in language instruction. Classroom instructors, course designers, and administrators will take the reference into consideration while designing the language instruction or curriculum. This way a standard will be achieved throughout European countries. This scaling is, of course, based on research; it is not imposing some assumptions on language instructors or course designers.

While selecting the Common Reference Levels, Waystage and Threshold Levels, which were already specified by the Council of Europe, were taken into consideration. The Threshold Level was specified by the Council of Europe as what a learner should know or do to communicate effectively in everyday life and if the learner has the necessary skills and knowledge (www.ecml.at, Threshold Level). This description of the Threshold Level affected the language teaching to a great extent. First of all, the Council of Europe developed the model for English, and then it was developed and specified for French. Afterwards, it became a basis for planning of language programs, designing more interesting and appealing course books, designing syllabuses and assessment tools (www.ecml.at, Threshold Level). After developing and extending the Threshold level,

the focus of attention has been directed to “socio-cultural and ‘learning to learn’ components”, and a lower level, Waystage Level, and also a higher level of specification, Vantage Level, were developed.

These specifications are reflected in The Common European Framework levels as A2 (Waystage), B1 (Threshold), and B2 (Vantage) (www.ecml.at). The definitions of all the levels defined in the CEF are as follows:

1. Level A1 (Breakthrough)

This refers to the lowest level of generative language use. An A1 level learner can:

‘interact in a simple way, ask and answer simple questions about themselves, where they live, people they know, and things they have, initiate and respond to simple statements in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.’ (CE, 2001: 33).

2. Level A2 (Waystage)

A learner at Waystage level starts to;

‘use simple everyday polite forms of greetings and address; greet people, as how they are and react to news; handle very short social exchanges; ask and answer questions about what they do at work and in free time; make and respond to invitations; discuss what to do, where to go and make arrangements to meet; make and accept offers, make simple transactions in shops, post offices or banks; get simple information about travel; use public transport: buses, trains and taxis, ask for basic information, ask and give directions and buy tickets; ask and provide everyday goods and services.’

(CE, 2001: 33-34)

3. Level B1 (Threshold)

At this level, the learner starts to maintain interaction and can get across what he or she wants to in various situations and contexts. A learner at this level can;

‘generally follow the main points of extended discussion around him/her, provided speech is clearly articulated in standard dialect; give or seek personal views and opinions in an informal discussion with friends; express the main points he/she wants to make comprehensibly; exploit a wide range of simple language flexibly to express much of what he or she wants to; maintain a conversation or discussion but may sometimes be difficult to follow when trying to say exactly what he/she would like to; keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is very evident, especially in longer stretches of free production.’ The second feature is the ability to cope everyday life problems flexibly. Learners can ‘cope with less routine situations on public transport; deal with most situations likely to arise when making travel arrangements through an agent or when actually traveling; enter unprepared into conversations on familiar topics; make a complaint; take some initiatives in an interview/consultation (e.g. to bring up a new subject) but is very dependent on interviewer in the interaction; ask someone to clarify or elaborate what they have just said.

(CE, 2001: 34)

4. Level B2 (Vantage)

The learner himself can monitor his progress at this level. At the beginning of the level a learner can;

‘account for and sustain his opinions in discussion by providing relevant explanations, arguments and comments, explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options; construct a chain of argument; develop an argument giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view; explain a problem and make it clear that his/her counterpart in a negotiation must make a concession; speculate about causes, consequences, hypothetical situations; take an active part in informal discussion in familiar contexts, commenting, putting point of view

clearly, evaluating alternative proposals and making and responding to hypothesis.'

Through the second phase of the level, the learner becomes capable to;

'give feedback on and follow up statements and inferences by other speakers and so help the development of the discussion; relate own contribution skillfully to those of other speakers; use a limited number of cohesive devices to link sentences smoothly into clear, connected discourse; use a variety of linking words efficiently to mark clearly the relationships between ideas; develop an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points and relevant supporting detail; outline a case for compensation, using persuasive language and simple arguments to demand satisfaction; state clearly the limits to a concession.'

(CE, 2001: 35).

5. Level C1 (Effective Operational Proficiency)

The learner is rather fluent and spontaneous at this level. He or she has a good command on the L2. The learner at this level can;

'express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Has a good command of a broad lexical repertoire allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions. There is little obvious searching for expressions or avoidance strategies; only conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language; select a suitable phrase from a fluent repertoire of discourse functions to preface his remarks in order to get the floor, or to gain time and keep it whilst thinking; produce clear smoothly flowing, well-structured speech, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices' (CE, 2001: 36).

6. Level C2 (Mastery)

What is meant by mastery is not that the learner becomes as competent as a native speaker. However, the learner can use the language appropriately and fluently, accessing precise language items easily when required. The learner can;

‘ convey finer shades of meaning precisely by using, with reasonable accuracy, a wide range of modification devices; has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms awareness of connotative level of meaning; backtrack and restructure around a difficulty so smoothly the interlocutor is hardly aware of ’ (CE, 2001: 36).

In The Preliminary Pilot Version Manual it is suggested that it may be appropriate to divide the reference levels into some sublevels so that learners can easily monitor their own progress. In CEF it is mentioned as a “branching approach”. That is, a set of mini levels can be prepared. These mini levels, as stated in the Manual, could be used to organize a syllabus for three years of instruction (Manual, Preliminary Pilot Version; 17). However, while dividing the levels into mini levels, it must be made sure that all those mini levels created should be linked to the CEF.

“A premature adoption as a benchmark of a local standard claimed to be a CEF level can be counter-productive since people involved in the project will tend to no longer to refer to the CEF. They will tend to refer to the standard they know. Any error in the early linking of that standard to the CEF will then be magnified in the later work (Manual, The Preliminary Pilot Version, 24).

2.6.7. European Foreign Language Policies

Europe wants to grow more economically and politically. Because it consists of a lot of states, as a whole, it is multicultural and multilingual. The member countries individually are also multicultural and multilingual. That is why one of the basics of the Common European Framework is plurilingualism. The plurilingual individual has become the main target of language education policy. “Europeans should become

plurilingual and intercultural citizens, able to interact with other Europeans in all aspects of their lives” (Neuner, 2002; 8).

European Foreign Language Policy is based on three objectives:

1. *A pragmatic objective:*

By learning foreign languages, European citizens will be mobile and they will be able to exchange ideas in their private and professional interactions.

2. *An intercultural objective:*

It is believed that by learning foreign languages, European citizens will overcome prejudices and they will develop a mutual understanding, interest and tolerance among European citizens.

3. *A socio-political objective:*

By learning foreign languages linguistic heritage and cultural diversity will be protected and supported Neuner (2002).

Depending on all these objectives, Neuner (2002) comes to the conclusion that the basic principles of European foreign language policy are as follows:

- No language or culture should be discriminated. Foreign language teaching should create interest in the European cultures and develop a spirit of tolerance, openness and respect for difference and otherness.
- Plurilinguality, which is learning more than one foreign language, is becoming more and more essential, and therefore, it should be encouraged. Administrators should consider this and citizens all around Europe should be provided with the opportunity to learn more than one foreign language while they are at school.

- There does not have to be one standard set of objectives and methodology in foreign language instruction. Various objectives, methods and contexts could be used and the intensity of language learning program may also vary (Neuner, 2002; 9).

2.6.8. European Language Portfolio

Common European Framework is a tool not only for designing language teaching curricula, but also for individual learning. CEF stresses the importance of learner autonomy and life long learning. This is the basic motive behind the development of European Language Portfolio.

The European Language Portfolio has a format in which various kinds of language learning and intercultural experiences can be recorded and formally recognized. What CEF offers here is “a scaling of overall language proficiency in a given language, but also a breakdown of language use and language competences which will make it easier for practitioners to specify objectives and describe achievements of the most diverse kinds in accordance with the varying needs, characteristics and resources of learners” (Council of Europe, 2001;5).

ELP has three obligatory components:

1. ***a language passport***: This passport is a file that has brief records about the owner’s linguistic identity, the formal language qualifications that has been achieved, the owner’s significant L2 use experiences, and the owner’s self assessment of his or her current proficiency in the L2.
2. ***a language biography (map)***: This is used to define language learning goals and to find ways leading there, and it gives an overall idea about what has been achieved so far; “the position reached in the learning process at a given time”

(Schärer, 1992: 6). By the help of this biography, the progress of the learner is monitored, the development of language learning skills is recorded, the significant language learning and intercultural experiences are reflected on. (Little, 2005)

3. **a dossier:** This contains some selected work that best reflects the owner's achievements and language abilities (Little, 2005). In the dossier the learner keeps samples of his or her work, records and overviews of language learning process, and definitions of language assessment criteria and procedures. (Schärer, 1992)

ELP has two fundamental functions: developing learner autonomy by goal setting and self assessment and as a report illustrating the learner's learning achievements and experiences.

“The Portfolio would make it possible for learners to document their progress towards plurilingual competence by recording learning experiences of all kinds over a wide range of languages, much of which would otherwise be unattested and unrecognized. (CEF, 2001: 20)

The frequency of ELP user updates depends on the user's own preference, but it is essential that the updates be continuous identifying learning targets, monitoring self progress and self assessment of learning outcomes. (Little, 2005)

Current tests mostly fail to be parallel to teaching and learning process. CEF aims at constructing a common approach to curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment. This way, the language tests will be more related to teaching and learning process. (Little, 2005)

2.6.9. Communication Strategies

Brown (2000) quotes from Faerch and Kasper that communication strategies are “potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal” (Brown, 2000; 127). In Common European Framework, strategies are defined as

“a means the language user exploits to mobilize and balance his or her resources, to activate skills and procedures, in order to fulfill the demands of communication in context and successfully complete the task in question in the most comprehensive or most economical way feasible depending on his or her precise purpose” (CEF, 2001; 57).

What is meant by ‘strategies’ in CEF is that the learner adopts a particular line of action in order to achieve a maximum level of effectiveness. A learner’s ability to take part in ‘observable’ language activities and to make use of communication strategies clearly indicates that language learning is in progress (CEF, 2001). In the Common European Framework a scaling is suggested for both productive and receptive skills; only the latter will be mentioned here.

2.6.10. Reading Skill in CEF

Reading is a visual reception process; that is, the reader receives and processes written texts for various purposes such as reading for general orientation, reading and following instructions or reading for pleasure (CEF, 2001).

Reading is a part of communicative language processes. It is a receptive process. “The receptive process involves four steps which, while they take place in linear sequence (bottom-up), are constantly updated and interpreted (top-down) in the light of real world knowledge, schematic expectations and new textual understanding in a subconscious interactive process.” (CEF, 2001: 91)

To act as a reader, the reader must be able to carry out a sequence of skilled actions. The reader must be able to;

- perceive the written text (visual skills);
- recognize the script (orthographic skills);
- identify the message (linguistic skills);
- understand the message (semantic skills);
- interpret the message (cognitive skills).

(CEF, 2001: 91)

The language user may read:

- for gist;
- for specific information;
- for detailed understanding;
- for implications, etc.

CEF provides illustrative scales for:

- Overall reading comprehension;
- Reading correspondence;
- Reading for orientation;
- Reading for information and argument;
- Reading instructions.

2.6.11. Tables

OVERALL READING COMPREHENSION	
C2	Can understand and interpret critically virtually all forms of the written language including abstract, structurally complex, or highly colloquial literary and non-literary writings. Can understand a wide range of long and complex texts, appreciating subtle distinctions of style and implicit as well as explicit meaning.
C1	Can understand in detail lengthy, complex texts, whether or not they relate to his/her own area of speciality, provided he/she can reread difficult sections.
B2	Can read with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of reading to different texts and purposes, and using appropriate reference sources selectively. Has a broad active reading vocabulary, but may experience some difficulty with low frequency idioms
B1	Can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to his/her field and interest with a satisfactory level of comprehension.
A2	Can understand short, simple texts on familiar matters of a concrete type which consist of high frequency everyday or job-related language.
	Can understand short, simple texts containing the highest frequency vocabulary, including a proportion of shared international vocabulary items.
A1	Can understand very short, simple texts a single phrase at a time, picking up familiar names, words and basic phrases and rereading as required.

READING CORRESPONDENCE	
C2	As C1
C1	Can understand any correspondence given the occasional use of a dictionary.
B2	Can read correspondence relating to his/her field of interest and readily grasp the essential meaning.
B1	Can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters well enough to correspond regularly with a pen friend.
A2	Can understand basic types of standard routine letters and faxes (enquiries, orders, letters of confirmation etc.) on familiar topics.
	Can understand short simple personal letters.
A1	Can understand short, simple messages on postcards.

READING FOR ORIENTATION	
C2	As B2
C1	As B2
B2	Can scan quickly through long and complex texts, locating relevant details. Can quickly identify the content and relevance of news items, articles and reports on a wide range of professional topics, deciding whether closer study is worthwhile.
B1	Can scan longer texts in order to locate desired information, and gather information from different parts of a text, or from different texts in order to fulfil a specific task.
	Can find and understand relevant information in everyday material, such as letters, brochures and short official documents.
A2	Can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus, reference lists and timetables. Can locate specific information in lists and isolate the information required (e.g. use the 'Yellow Pages' to find a service or tradesman). Can understand everyday signs and notices: in public places, such as streets, restaurants, railway stations; in workplaces, such as directions, instructions, hazard warnings.
A1	Can recognise familiar names, words and very basic phrases on simple notices in the most common everyday situations.

READING FOR INFORMATION AND ARGUMENT	
C2	As C1
C1	Can understand in detail a wide range of lengthy, complex texts likely to be encountered in social, professional or academic life, identifying finer points of detail including attitudes and implied as well as stated opinions.
B2	Can obtain information, ideas and opinions from highly specialised sources within his/her field. Can understand specialised articles outside his/her field, provided he/she can use a dictionary occasionally to confirm his/her interpretation of terminology.
	Can understand articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular stances or viewpoints.
B1	Can identify the main conclusions in clearly signalled argumentative texts. Can recognise the line of argument in the treatment of the issue presented, though not necessarily in detail.
	Can recognise significant points in straightforward newspaper articles on familiar subjects.
A2	Can identify specific information in simpler written material he/she encounters such as letters, brochures and short newspaper articles describing events.
A1	Can get an idea of the content of simpler informational material and short simple descriptions, especially if there is visual support.

READING INSTRUCTIONS	
C2	As C1
C1	Can understand in detail lengthy, complex instructions on a new machine or procedure, whether or not the instructions relate to his/her own area of speciality, provided he/she can reread difficult sections.
B2	Can understand lengthy, complex instructions in his field, including details on conditions and warnings, provided he/she can reread difficult sections.
B1	Can understand clearly written, straightforward instructions for a piece of equipment.
A2	Can understand regulations, for example safety, when expressed in simple language.
	Can understand simple instructions on equipment encountered in everyday life – such as a public telephone.
A1	Can follow short, simple written directions (e.g. to go from X to Y).

EXTERNAL CONTEXTS OF USE

	TEXT TYPES
PERSONAL	Teletext, Guarantees, Recipes, Instructional material, Novels, magazines Newspapers, Junk mail, Brochures, Personal letters, Broadcast and recorded spoken texts
PUBLIC	Public announcements, Labels and packaging, Leaflets, graffiti, Tickets, timetables, Notices, regulations, Programmes, Contracts, Menus Sacred texts, sermons, hymns
OCCUPATIONAL	Business letter, Report memorandum, Life and safety notices, Instructional manuals Regulations, Advertising material, Labelling and packaging, Job description, Sign posting, Visiting cards
EDUCATIONAL	Authentic texts, Textbooks, readers, Reference books, Blackboard text, Computer screen text, Videotext, Exercise materials, Journal articles, Abstracts, Dictionaries

CHAPTER 3

THE ANALYSIS AND THE INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA COLLECTED

3.0. Introduction

This chapter mainly consists of the analysis and the interpretation of the data. The study was mainly interested in defining learners' interests in the topics to be used in the suggested syllabus.

3.1. Subjects

This study was conducted in Gazi University English Language Teaching Department. The groups consisted of randomly selected 102 second year ELT students consisting of both normal and paid program students.

3.2. Instruments

The instrument used for this study is an interest checklist, which was adapted from Metin (2002). The checklist consisted of two parts as Part A and Part B. Part A consists of a list of main topics to be scaled on an interest scale and sub-topics for each main topic. Students first respond to a 3- point scale ranging from 1 to 3. Each number represents a certain interest level; that is, 1- boring; 2- neutral; 3- interesting. The students respond to the checklist showing their ranking by encircling one of the numbers. Part B consists of a plain list of the main topics presented in Part A. Students, using the

sub-topic lists in Part A, choose their most favorite sub-topic for each main title and write his choice down in the space provided in Part B.

The validity of the checklist depends on how sincerely students have answered the checklist and whether each item has been understood accurately.

The overall objective of the checklist was to identify learner interests and more specifically, to collect data to form basis for the suggested syllabus.

In the checklist there is a total of 21 main topics, each followed by various sub-topics. Main titles listed are more general terms, whereas sub-titles are more specific. For example, the fourth main title is Arts and the subtitles provided are Literature, Poem, Music, Famous People in the Art World, Visual Arts, Pop Art, Modern versus Classical Art, Fashion and Cinema.

3.3. Data Collection

The checklist was administered to three groups of students who are taking Advanced Reading course at Gazi University English Language Teaching Department, in May 2004. A total number of 102 students were included in the process. Students were given 30 minutes to fill in the checklist.

3.4. Data Analysis

The aim of applying the checklist is to find about the learners' interests in terms of the topics they study in advanced reading courses. Because the interest level of students is directly proportional with the efficiency of the course, the topics used in the suggested syllabus are organized according to the results acquired from the checklists. To determine whether the main topics ranked high, medium or low, the number of students ranking each has been calculated. After the results for each main title has been calculated, the most favorite sub title for each main title has been identified by calculating the number of students who has chosen that particular subtitle. After the calculations are over, the 12 top ranking titles are listed. Only the top 12 topics are reflected in the syllabus because the suggested syllabus consists of 12 units.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.0. Introduction

The aim of this study is to identify the most favorite topics of the second year students so as to reflect the results to the syllabus to be designed. The topics chosen as a result of this study will be used in the syllabus.

4.1. Results

After the checklists had been collected, the results are calculated and they are ranked from the most favorite to the least favorite. The result of these calculations is shown in the list below, from the most favorite to the least favorite:

1. Mysteries of the world
2. Psychology
3. Arts
4. Health and Beauty
5. Miscellaneous
6. Relations
7. Issues in Education
8. Traveling
9. Addictions
10. Hot Issues
11. Famous People
12. Issues in Technology
13. Humor
14. Gender Issues
15. Historical Issues
16. Cultural Issues
17. Issues in Sports

18. Crime and Punishment

19. Work and Business

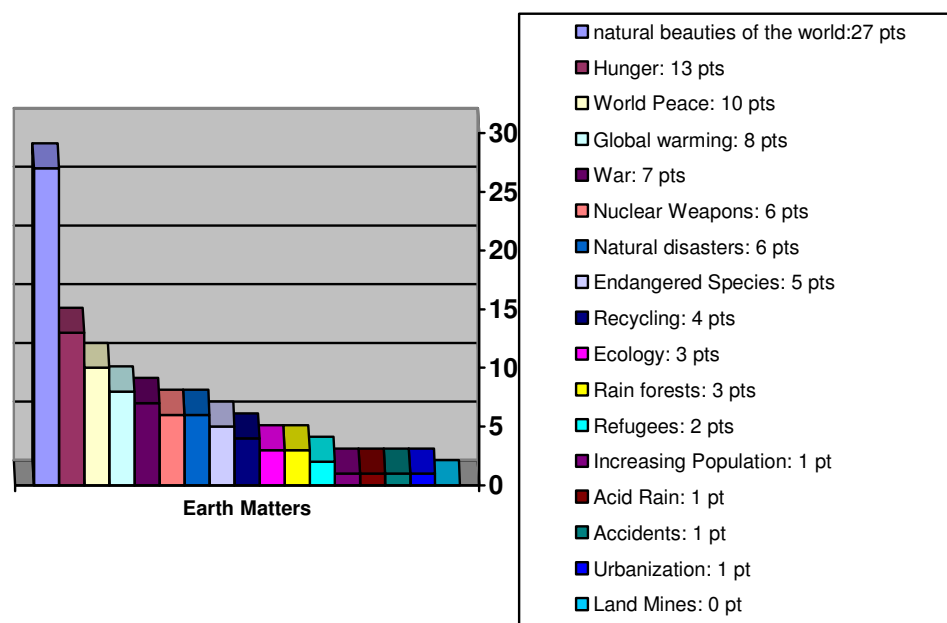
20. Earth Matters

21. Political Issues

Only the first twelve items are reflected in the syllabus, for a 12-unit syllabus is suggested. As very few of the students fill in the option to write down another topic that is not mentioned in the checklist, these are not taken into consideration.

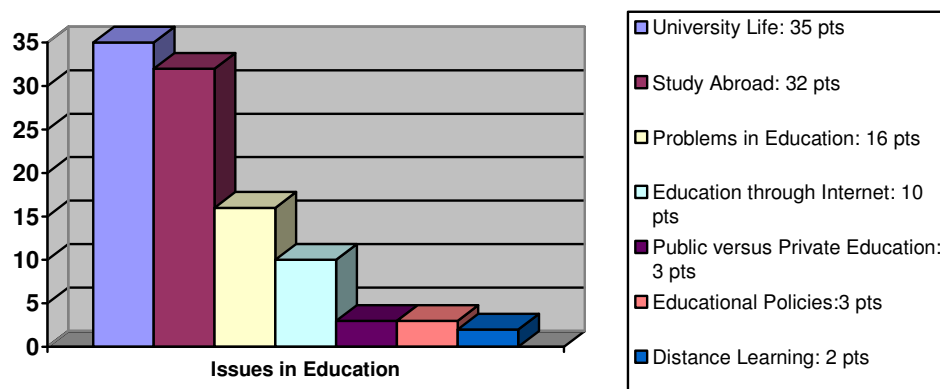
The results of the study are shown below in the graphic form:

1. Earth Matters



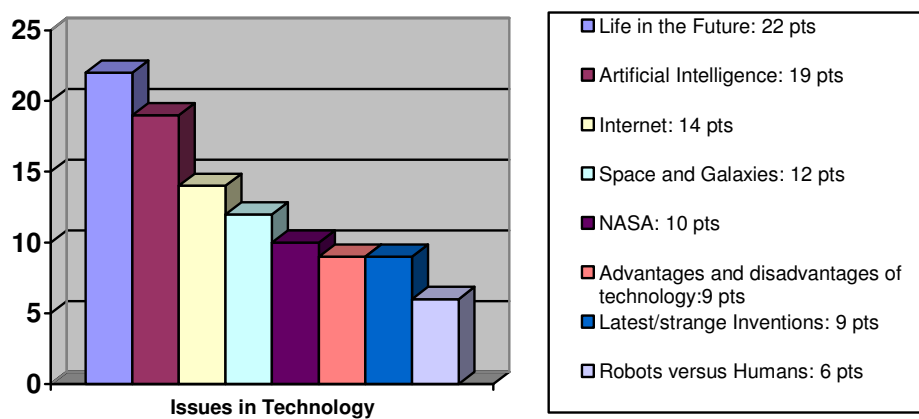
Of the seventeen sub-topics under the main title “Earth Matters”, Natural beauties of the world ranked the highest with 27 points.

2. Issues in Education



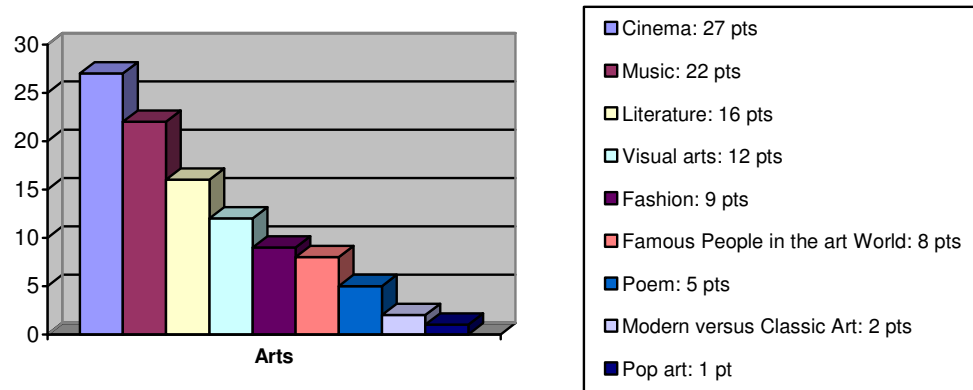
Of the seven sub-topics under the major title “Issues in Education”, University Life ranked the highest with 35 points.

3. Issues in Technology



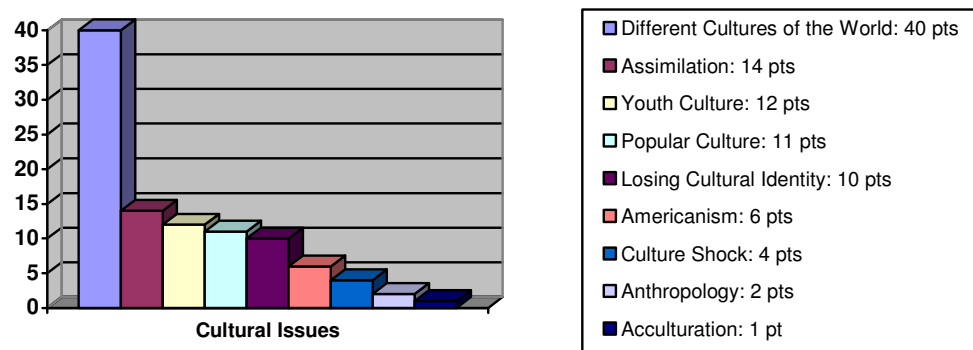
Of the eight sub-topics under the major title “Issues in Technology”, Life in the Future ranked the highest with 22 points.

4. Arts



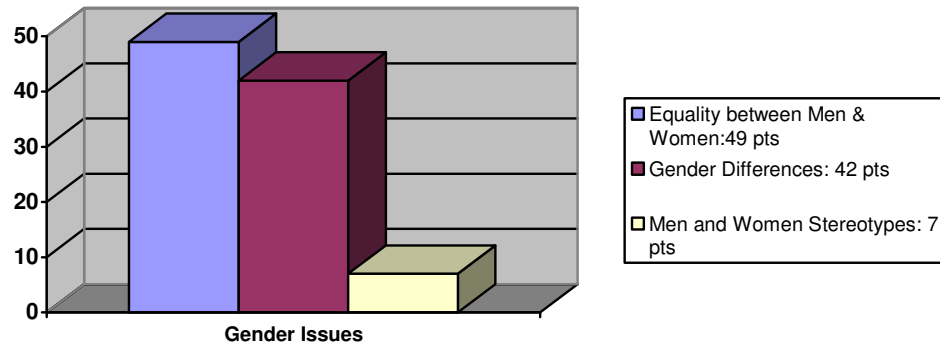
Of the nine sub-topics under the major title “Arts”, Cinema ranked the highest with 27 points.

5. Cultural Issues



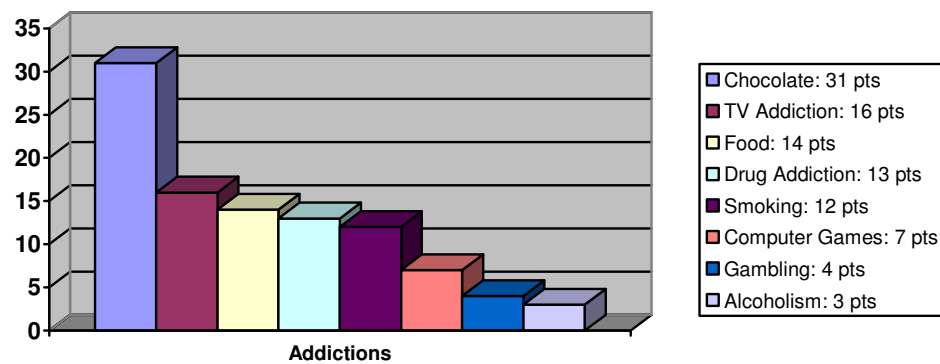
Of the nine sub-topics under the major title “Cultural Issues”, Different Cultures of the World ranked the highest with 40 points.

6. Gender Issues



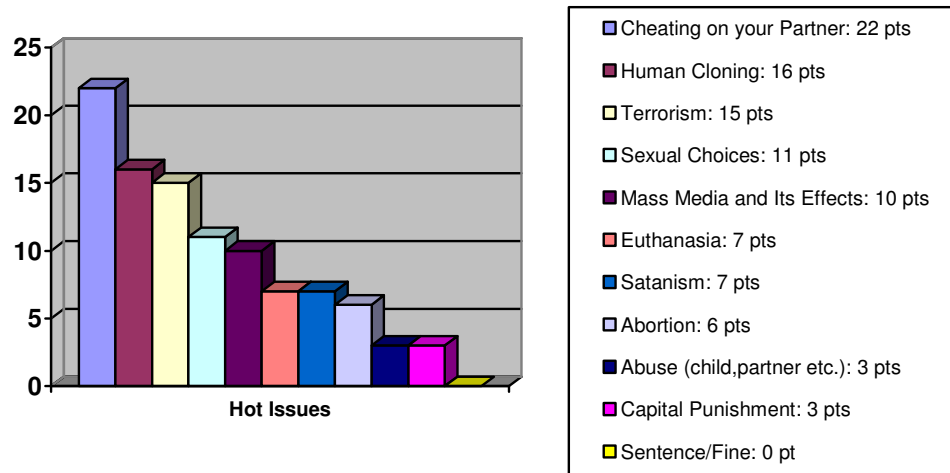
Of the three sub-topics under the major title “Gender Issues”, Equality between Men and Women ranked the highest with 49 points.

7. Addictions



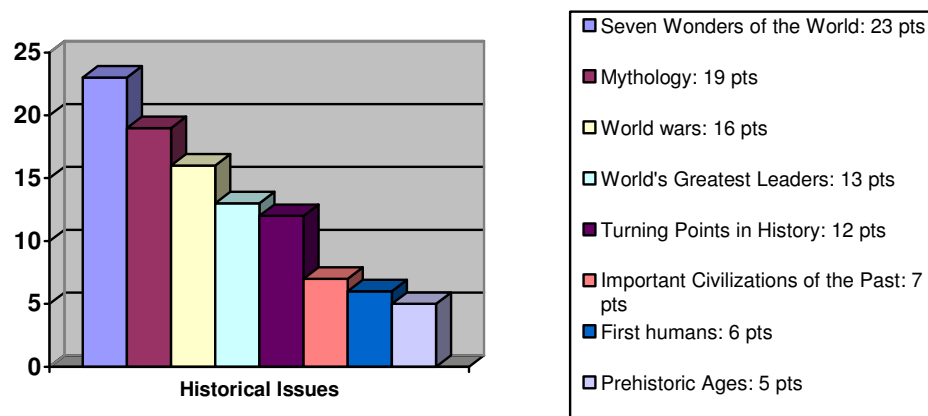
Of the eight sub-topics under the major title “Addictions”, Chocolate ranked the highest with 31 points.

8. Hot Issues



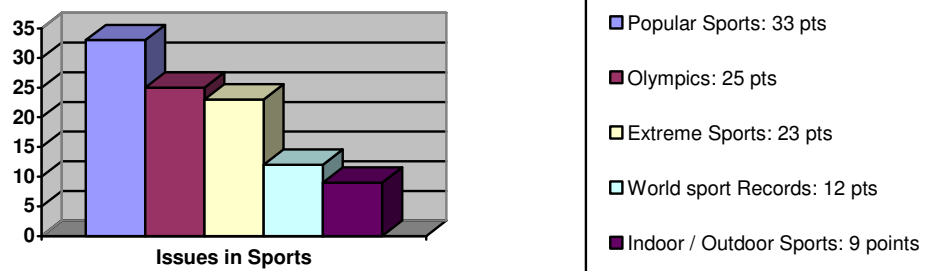
Of the 11 sub-topics under the major title “Hot Issues”, Cheating on your Partner ranked the highest with 22 points.

9. Historical Issues



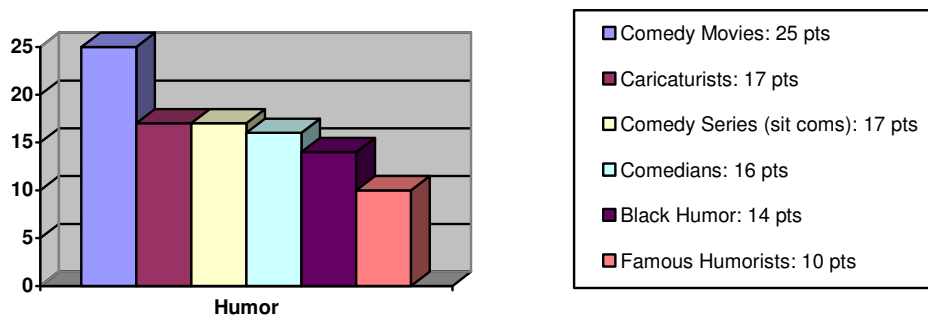
Of the eight sub-topics under the major title “Historical Issues”, Seven Wonders of the World ranked the highest with 23 points.

10. Issues in Sports



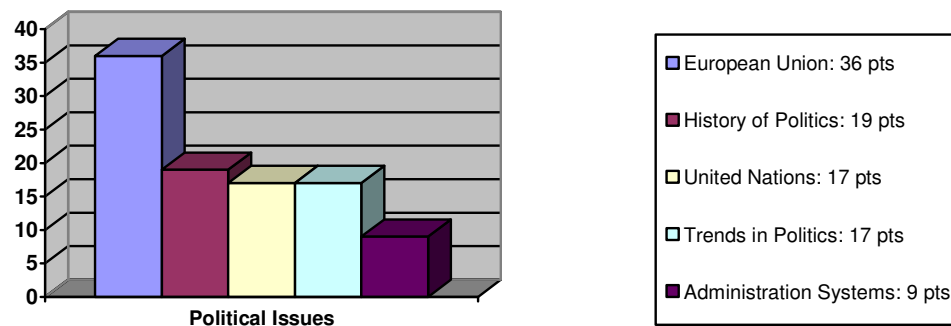
Of the five sub-topics under the major title “Issues in Sports”, Popular Sports ranked the highest with 33 points.

11. Humor



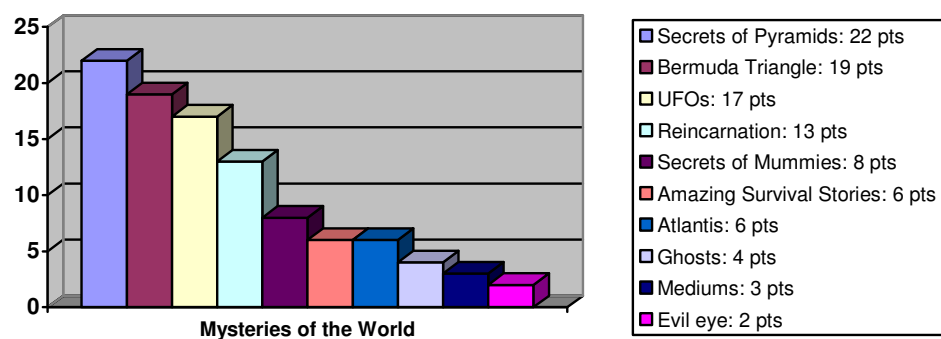
Of the six sub-topics under the major title “Humor”, Comedy Movies ranked the highest with 25 points.

12. Political Issues



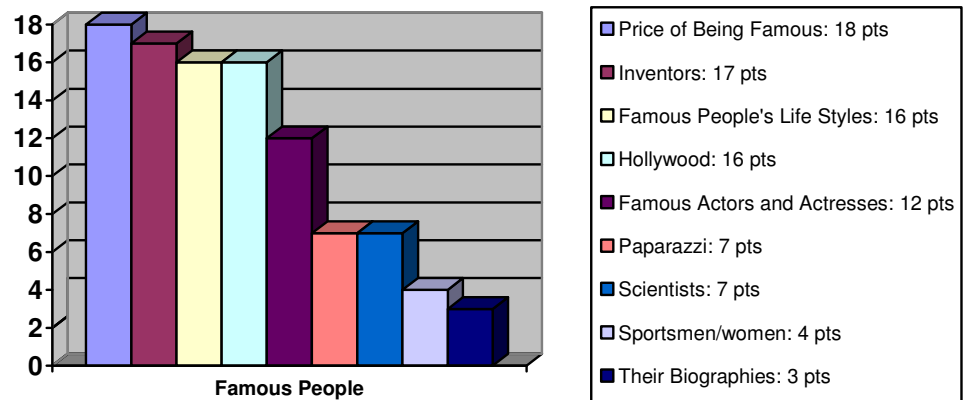
Of the five sub-topics under the major title “Political Issues”, European Union ranked the highest with 36 points.

13. Mysteries of the World



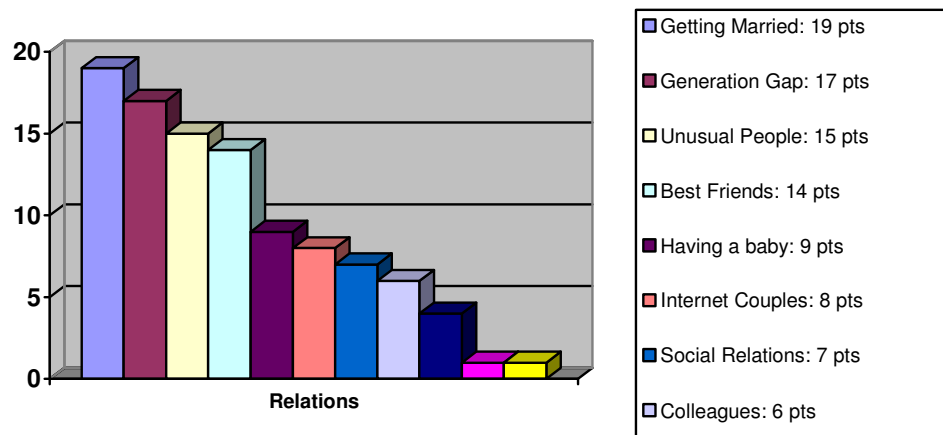
Of the ten sub-topics under the major title “Mysteries of the World” , Secrets of Pyramids ranked the highest with 22 points.

14. Famous People



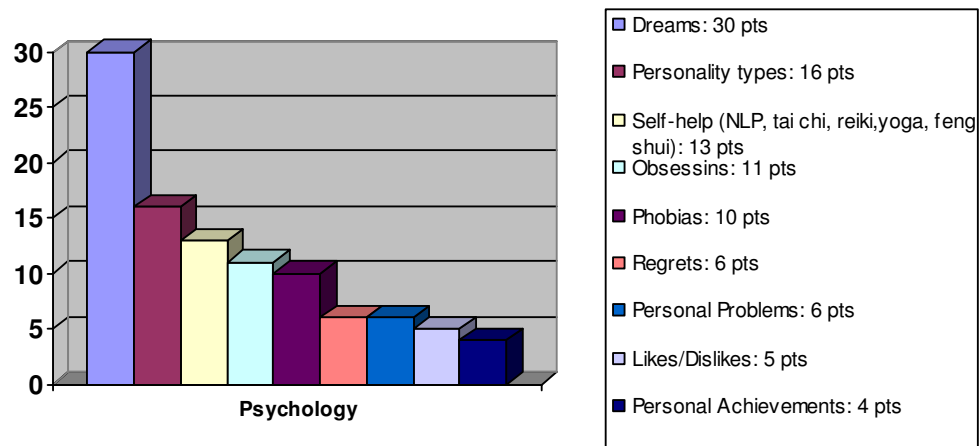
Of the nine sub-topics under the major title “Famous People”, Price of Being Famous ranked the highest with 18 points.

15. Relations



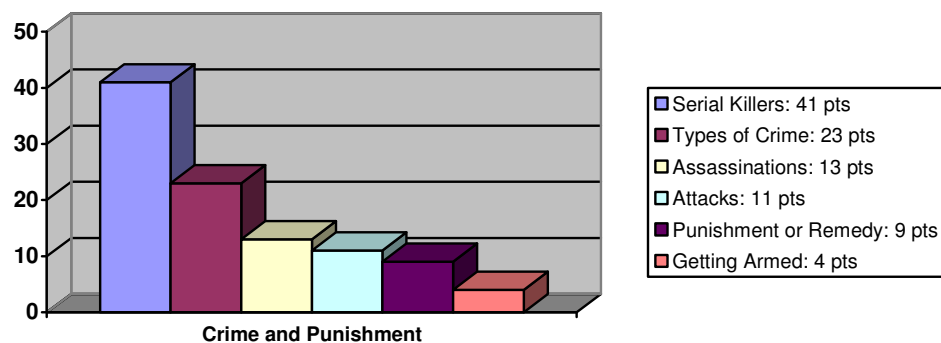
Of the eleven sub-topics under the major title “Relations”, Getting Married ranked the highest with 19 points.

16. Psychology



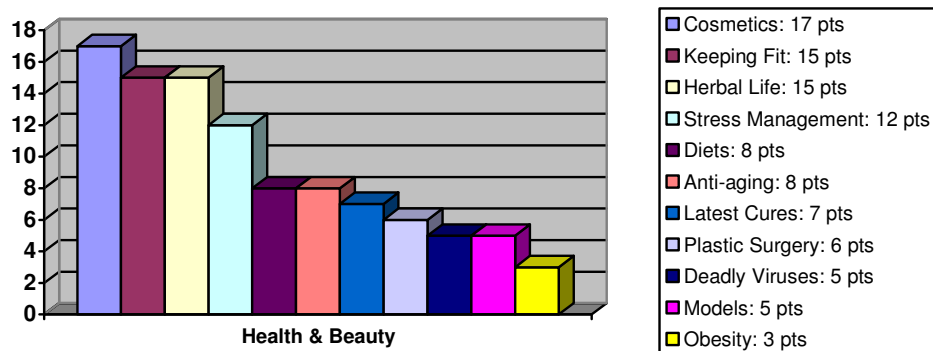
Of the nine sub-topics under the major title “Psychology”, Dreams has ranked the highest with 30 points.

17. Crime and Punishment



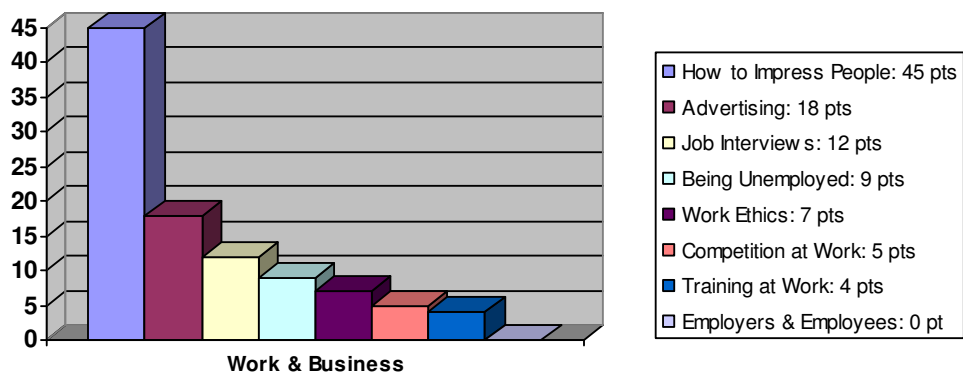
Of the six sub-topics under the major title “Crime and Punishment”, Serial Killers has ranked the highest with 41 points.

18. Health and Beauty



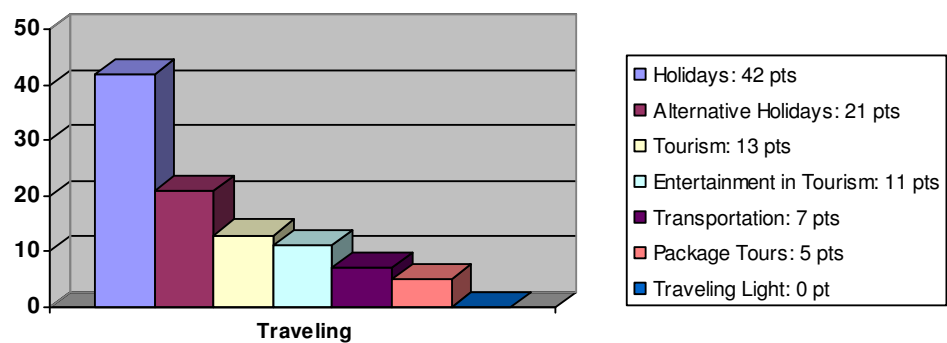
Of the eleven sub-topics under the major title “Health and Beauty”, Cosmetics has ranked the highest with 17 points.

19. Work and Business



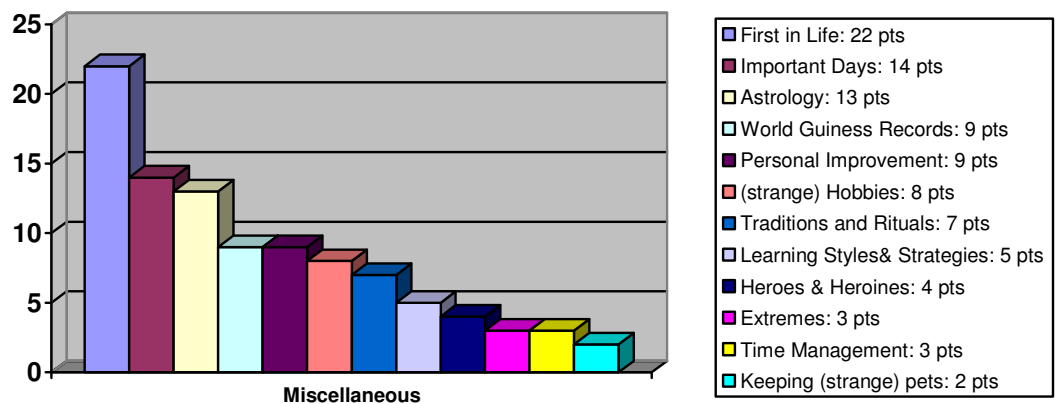
Of the eight sub-topics under the major title “Work and Business”, How to Impress People has ranked the highest with 45 points.

20. Traveling



Of the seven sub-topics under the major title “Traveling”, Holidays has ranked the highest with 42 points.

21. Miscellaneous



Of the twelve sub-topics under the major title “Miscellaneous”, Firsts in Life has ranked the highest with 22 points.

The twelve highest topics according to the results of the studies are as follows:

1. Secrets of Pyramids
2. Dreams
3. Cinema
4. Cosmetics
5. First in Life
6. Getting Married
7. University Life
8. Holidays
9. Chocolate Addiction
10. Cheating on your Partner
11. Price of Being Famous
12. Life in the Future

CHAPTER 5**A SUGGESTED SYLLABUS FOR THE ADVANCED READING COURSE**

	MODULES	TEXT TYPE	TASKS	SKILLS & STRATEGIES	VOCABULARY & IDIOMS
1	Firsts in life	- Magazine articles - Personal diaries or journals - Opinion poll reports	Reading and interviewing with a friend about his or her firsts in life. Writing a narrative essay about a first in life.	- reading for general information - making notes - skimming - questioning	Idioms related with memory. Vocabulary related with firsts in life <i>Vaguely/ distinctively remember</i> <i>Remember well/vividly/ as if it were yesterday</i>
2	University Life	- Magazine articles - Brochures - Leaflets - Graffiti - Notices - Newspaper articles	Reading to identify the attitude of the authors and the purposes of texts, Comparing the texts in terms of the above aspects. Discussion <i>Discussing the function of the Student Council</i>	- Inferring - reading for general information - Understanding implied info - Recognizing discourse markers - Using linguistic cues to access information	The language of notices Vocabulary related with university life Affixation : Prefixes

	MODULES	TEXT TYPE	TASK	SKILLS & STRATEGIES	VOCABULARY & IDIOMS
3	Addicted to cocoa! (Chocolate addiction)	- Magazine or newspaper articles - Labeling/packaging - Junk mail - Professional journals - Advertisements	Reading and discussing consumer opinions Looking for specific details to support one's ideas. Writing an essay based on one's comments on what has been read.	- Scanning - reading for general information - Making notes - Using the information in the text to form new ideas. - Sampling	Vocabulary related with eating habits/ addictive substances/ food etc. Vocabulary related with addiction
4	Dreams	- Personal letters / journals - Professional journals - Magazine articles - Reference books - Excerpts from novels - Photograph captions	Jigsaw reading Predicting the end of the essay/ story.	- Identifying discourse markers - reading for general information - Making predictions - Recognizing the organization of ideas in a text.	Expressions with dream <i>like a dream</i> <i>I wouldn't dream of</i> <i>It's a dream come true</i> <i>In your wildest dreams</i> Abstract nouns Idioms with sleep and dream

	MODULES	TEXT TYPE	TASK	SKILLS & STRATEGIES	VOCABULARY & IDIOMS
5	The price of being famous	• Biographies of famous people • Diary of a celebrity (e.g. Marilyn Monroe) • Reviews • Magazine Articles • Website forums • lyrics	Analyzing a text in terms of its purpose and tone Class discussion	• Recognizing the functions of sentences, phrases etc. • reading for general information • Outlining • Using morphological clues to cope with unknown vocabulary	Discourse markers Idiomatic expressions with life Phrasal verbs
6	Life in the Future	• Magazine articles • Excerpts from science fiction books • Essays • Scientific reports	Reading to fill out a grid using the information in the text. Finding the main idea of each paragraph in a text.	• Getting background from illustrations • Scanning • Avoiding unnecessary information • Summarizing	Vocabulary related with life in the future Phrasal verbs Affixation: suffixes

	MODULES	TEXT TYPE	TASK	SKILLS & STRATEGIES	VOCABULARY & IDIOMS
7	Cinema	• Movie reviews • Movie scripts • Advertising material • Timetables • Interview with an actor/actress/producer, etc. • Magazine articles	Producing texts Reading movie reviews and comments about them and choosing the one/ones appealing to you most, discussing your reasons with the group members.	• Comparing / contrasting • reading for general information • Guessing the meaning from the context • Scanning	Abbreviations Vocabulary related with cinema and movies/ film industry Phrasal verbs
8	The Secret of Pyramids	• Magazine articles • Reference books • Photograph captions • Professional journals • Internet articles	Reading a text to fill in a chart with the factual, figurative, descriptive, and sensory details in the text. Reporting to the class	• Reading for details • reading for general information • Making notes • Mind mapping • Transferring	Vocabulary related with history and archaeology Verbs related with beliefs and opinions

	MODULES	TEXT TYPE	TASK	SKILLS & STRATEGIES	VOCABULARY & IDIOMS
9	Cosmetics Industry	- Magazine articles - Reports - Labels and packaging - Instructional manuals - Advertising material - Recipes - Brochures	Pre-discussion for schema building. Reading to compare products Preparing an advertisement for cosmetic products	- Getting the gist of what others say - reading for general information - Using dictionaries - Getting information by analyzing graphs	Vocabulary related with cosmetics industry and pharmacology Adjectives describing appearances
10	Relations (Getting married)	- Magazine articles - Personal letters - Invitation cards - Holiday brochures - Contracts - Reference books about rituals of different cultures - Excerpts from books	Critical analysis of the text Discussing male/female roles Role-play	- Underlining - reading for general information - Inferring - Deducing meaning from context	Vocabulary related with family and marriage - <i>in good times and bad times</i> - <i>ups and downs</i> - <i>wedding vows</i> - <i>at each other's throat</i> - <i>clear the air</i>

	MODULES	TEXT TYPE	TASK	SKILLS & STRATEGIES	VOCABULARY & IDIOMS
11	Who are you deceiving? (Cheating on your partner)	• Magazine articles • Magazine quizzes • Personal letters • Advice columns • Reports	Pre-reading discussion Generating argument based on the text Role-play	• Reading for the gist • reading for general information • Using one's own knowledge of the outside world to make predictions about and interpret a text. • Rereading	Emotions and feelings Adjectives describing emotions and feelings
12	Holiday Time!	• Brochures • Leaflets • Postcards • Letters from friends • Photograph captions • Bills and receipts • Advertisements • Articles	Matching pictures with the descriptive excerpts. Designing a brochure Planning a trip	• Matching • reading for general information • Brainstorming • Comparing and contrasting • Information gathering (such as asking questions)	Vocabulary related with tourism and holidays Adverbs

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1. Overview of the Study

A syllabus is a list of content to be taught and handled throughout a course of study. Designing a syllabus means selecting the content for a particular course and sequencing the selected content. Syllabus design has evolved a lot since the first studies conducted on designing syllabuses. Still, depending on changing trends in education and approaches to teaching, designing syllabuses requires keeping up with the demands of the system.

As a member of the Council of Europe and a candidate member of the European Union, Turkey has been reconstructing the education system in terms of the syllabuses employed in primary, secondary and higher education institutions. Especially in foreign language instruction syllabuses, the standards defined by the Council of Europe; that is, The Common European Framework, are taken into consideration.

The Common European Framework functions as a tool that defines the expected levels of proficiency in language in terms of all four skills; namely, reading, listening, speaking and writing. What is proposed in the framework is that an individual should prove to have the necessary skills defined in the framework to communicate effectively.

The intention of the framework is to build a “common basis” for all countries in Europe in terms of all modern languages. The Common European Framework has three main objectives as pragmatic, intercultural and socio-political objectives.

The Common European Framework for Languages defines six criterion levels; A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2. These levels are named as follows in the framework:

1. Level A1: Breakthrough

2. Level A2: Waystage
3. Level B1: Threshold
4. Level B2: Vantage
5. Level C1: Effective Operational Proficiency
6. Level C2: Mastery

While designing syllabuses or language instruction, these reference levels are taken into consideration so that a standard in terms of language instruction will be achieved in all European countries.

Reading is one of the most important skills in language teaching and learning. One of the basics of reading instruction is the purpose for reading because the purpose of reading determines the strategies and approaches to be applied. The purposes for reading can basically be divided into two as text-based and reader-based. Both purpose types serve to improve the efficiency of the reading process.

The reading process is affected by various factors such as the text type, the purpose of reading, the age and the L1 knowledge and L1 reading abilities of readers, cognitive development, metacognitive knowledge of L1 structure, grammar and syntax, degree of difference between L1 and L2, cultural orientation, vocabulary knowledge and the knowledge about the subject matter. These factors affect the reading process and that is why each reader has a unique approach to the reading process.

Among the approaches to reading, the Bottom-Up Approach, The Top-Down approach, The Interactive School and The Critical Literacy Approach can be mentioned. In Bottom-Up approach, the reader recognizes the written symbols and the organization of the language components. In the Top-down approach, the reader employs his background knowledge to process the text, which is also referred to as Schema Theory. The theoreticians of the Interactive School argue that the reading text cannot be comprehended well enough only by using one of the approaches; the reader can make use of both bottom-up and top-down approaches alternately according to his or her purpose. Critical Literacy, on the other hand, focuses on regards the reading both as psycholinguistic and social activity. The reader and the author interact and there is some

sort of relationship between the reader and the author. The writer communicates his ideas and messages through his writing. The reader may choose to be submissive and appreciate what the author communicates or he/she may prefer to be assertive and disagree with what the author communicates.

Depending on the purpose of reading, the reader makes use of various reading strategies such as skimming, scanning, using graphemic rules and patterns, semantic mapping or clustering, guessing, sampling, adjusting and so on. The problem arises when readers are not aware of the necessary strategies to be employed in the reading process because merely being exposed to reading texts or reading a lot does not serve for the reading purposes enough. By the use of correct strategies readers will be able to get the required information or complete the task required in a more efficient way. Therefore, the reading instruction should include strategy training and reading syllabuses designed should focus on reading strategies. Strategy training could be used at all levels.

Another important issue in reading instruction is vocabulary. Vocabulary is essential in comprehending a reading text. Having a good command of grammatical structures alone is not sufficient for comprehension. Understanding the content words is also crucial. The vocabulary can be divided into two as receptive and productive vocabulary.

Receptive vocabulary may include topic specific words that the reader will need to understand a particular reading text and that is not frequently used in daily language. Productive vocabulary, on the other hand, includes words that the reader uses effectively in his communication. That is why not all the unknown words should be focused on in the reading process. Receptive vocabulary is stored in short-term memory. The ones that are wanted to be added to the productive vocabulary storage could be handled separately after reading by the guidance of the teacher; or the learner may prefer to add particular words of his or her own choice to add to his or her productive vocabulary. The main point here is that vocabulary teaching or studies should not interrupt the reading process.

6.2. The Syllabus

In the designing process of the suggested syllabus, the standards of the Common European Framework have been taken into consideration. The syllabus covers points like the external contexts of language, reading strategies, and communicative real life tasks. These are adapted in accordance with schemes and tables suggested in the Common European Framework.

The interest of learners is a basic factor in designing syllabuses because learners will be more motivated when they study the topics they are interested in. Therefore, before designing the syllabus, an interest checklist was prepared and conducted. The results of the checklist are reflected to the syllabus.

The syllabus designed consists of 12 units. The typical term in Gazi University is 14 weeks. Within this 14-week time, one week is mid-term week and the very first week of the term is allocated for introduction of courses, course books and so on. And so one-week-time will be allocated for each unit in the syllabus.

The text types suggested in the syllabus are parallel to the external contexts of use in the Common European Framework and real life reading situations are taken into consideration while suggesting text types.

The tasks suggested could be organized as pair, group or individual work depending on the purpose of reading; and it is the course book designer who will organize the frequency of pair, group or individual works. Because this syllabus is suggested for advanced learners, the tasks are about inferring, after reading discussions, comparing, identifying purpose, and analyzing rather than mere comprehension tasks.

For each unit various skills and strategies are suggested. Strategies will help learners to access information in a more conscious and practical way. With the help of strategies learner will have the chance to monitor their own reading process and understand how they read, which will certainly make a difference in terms of reading abilities.

The vocabulary is considered as a crucial component of a reading syllabus. The vocabulary suggested in the syllabus could be handled before, while or after reading without interrupting the reading process.

In conclusion, it is essential to re-design the present syllabus for the Advanced Reading course at Gazi University English Language Department. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages should be taken into consideration in designing language syllabuses so that language teaching policies in Turkey will be parallel to those of other European countries. Considering these, the standards defined in the Common European Framework should be implemented in the syllabuses of foreign language teaching in all education faculties in the Turkish universities.

6.3. Conclusion and Suggestions

This study aims at preparing an advanced reading course syllabus for second year students at Gazi University ELT Department according to the standards of European Language Passport. A checklist was prepared in order to determine students' interests. The reason why the syllabus is based on the results of the interest checklist is that learners are more interested, enthusiastic and motivated when they are provided with topics that they are interested in or that appeal to them. However, as the profile of the students might change from year to year, their interests in topics might also change. For this reason, new checklists can be applied to determine the changing interests of the students. Yet, strategy training and the skills in the syllabus remains if they are designed according to the new topics. Hence, standards required by CEF will still be employed.

In further studies, as the CEF standards become more widely accepted, syllabuses and language instruction can be developed for all educational institutions nation wide.

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APPENDIX

Dear Students,

We are currently conducting a research on the present advanced reading courses which are taught in the second year of ELT department at Gazi University. As being a participant of this course you are requested to answer the following checklist. You do not need to write your names. The information you provide will be kept confidential.

Thank you for your cooperation in advance.

Canan Terzi

Part A

Rank the following main topics below as follows:

1. boring 2. neutral 3. interesting

A.

EARTH MATTERS	YOUR SCORE: 1 2 3		
Global warming	ecology	Acid rain	
recycling	Endangered species	Rain forests	
Natural beauties of the world	Natural disasters	Accidents	
Hunger	Globalization	Urbanization	
Increasing population	Refugees	World peace	
Nuclear weapons	War	Land mines	

B.

ISSUES IN EDUCATION	YOUR SCORE: 1 2 3		
Public versus private education	educational policies and trends	distance learning	
university life	problems in education	education through internet	
Study abroad			

C.

ISSUES IN TECHNOLOGY	YOUR SCORE: 1 2 3	
advantages and disadvantages of technology	life in the future	space and galaxies
Robots versus humans	internet	NASA
artificial intelligence	latest/strange inventions	

D.

ARTS	YOUR SCORE: 1 2 3	
Literature	Poem	Music
Famous people in the art world	Visual arts	Pop art
Modern versus classic art	Fashion	Cinema

E.

CULTURAL ISSUES	YOUR SCORE: 1 2 3	
Culture shock	Popular culture	Youth culture
Different cultures of the world	Acculturation	Assimilation
Losing the cultural identity	Anthropology	Americanism

F.

GENDER ISSUES	YOUR SCORE: 1 2 3	
equality between men and women	gender differences	men and women stereotypes

G.

ADDICTIONS	YOUR SCORE: 1 2 3		
Drug addictions	Alcoholism	Smoking	
Gambling	TV addiction	Computer games	
Chocolate	Food		

H.

HOT ISSUES	YOUR SCORE: 1 2 3		
human cloning	abortion	euthanasia	
terrorism	mass media and its effects	capital punishment	
cheating on your partner	Satanism	sexual choices	
abuse (child; partner)	sentence/fine		

I.

HISTORICAL ISSUES	YOUR SCORE: 1 2 3		
Turning points in history	World wars	Mythology	
Important civilizations of the past	First humans	Seven wonders of the world	
World's greatest leaders	Prehistoric ages		

J.

ISSUES IN SPORTS	YOUR SCORE: 1 2 3		
Olympics	Extreme sports	Popular sports	
World sports records	Outdoor / indoor sports		

K.

HUMOR	YOUR SCORE: 1 2 3		
Famous humorists	Black humor	Comedians	
Caricaturists	Comedy series (sit coms)	Comedy movies	

L.

POLITICAL ISSUES	YOUR SCORE: 1 2 3		
administration systems	United Nations	European Union	
history of politics	trends in politics		

M.

MYSTERIES OF THE WORLD	YOUR SCORE: 1 2 3		
Bermuda triangle	Secret of pyramids	Secret of mummies	
UFOs	Reincarnation	Ghosts	
Amazing survival stories	Mediums, fortunetellers, etc.	Evil eye	
Atlantis			

N.

FAMOUS PEOPLE	YOUR SCORE: 1 2 3		
Famous actors/actresses	Sportsmen /women	Scientists	
Famous people's life styles	Inventors	Their biographies	
Hollywood	Paparazzi	Price of being famous.	

O.

RELATIONS	YOUR SCORE: 1 2 3		
Getting married	Getting divorced	Having a baby	
Internet couples	Generation gap	Parents & children relations	
Neighbors	Best friends	Colleagues	
Social relations	Unusual people		

P.

PSYCHOLOGY	YOUR SCORE: 1 2 3		
Personality types	Phobias	Dreams	
Obsessions	Regrets	Likes /dislikes	
Self-help (NLP, tai chi, reiki, yoga, feng shui)	Personal problems	Personal achievements.	

Q.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT	YOUR SCORE: 1 2 3		
Types of crimes	Serial killers	Attacks	
Assassinations	Getting armed	Punishment or remedy?	

R.

HEALTH & BEAUTY	YOUR SCORE: 1 2 3		
Keeping fit	Diets	Obesity	
Deadly viruses	Latest cures for illnesses	Herbal life	
Stress management	Anti-aging	Cosmetics	
Models	Plastic surgery		

S.

WORK & BUSINESS	YOUR SCORE: 1 2 3		
Job interviews	How to impress people	Employers & employees	
Competition at work	Training at work	Work ethics	
Being unemployed	Advertising		

T.

TRAVELING	YOUR SCORE: 1 2 3		
Transportation	Holidays	Tourism	
Traveling light	Alternative holidays	Package tours	
Entertainment in tourism			

U.

MISCELLANEOUS	YOUR SCORE: 1 2 3		
Firsts in life	(strange) Hobbies	Keeping (strange) pets	
Astrology	Extremes	Heroes and heroines	
Important days (birthdays, Valentine's day etc.)	World Guinness Records	Traditions and rituals	
Time management and planning	Learning styles and strategies	Personal improvement	

Part B

In this part choose your most favorite subtitle from each main title ONE ONLY:

- a. Earth Matters: _____
- b. Issues in Education: _____
- c. Issues in Technology: _____
- d. Arts: _____
- e. Cultural Issues: _____
- f. Gender Issues: _____
- g. Addictions: _____
- h. Hot Issues: _____
- i. Historical Issues: _____
- j. Issues in Sports: _____
- k. Humor: _____
- l. Political Issues: _____
- m. Mysteries of the World: _____
- n. Famous People: _____
- o. Relations: _____
- p. Psychology: _____
- q. Crime and Punishment: _____
- r. Health & Beauty: _____
- s. Work and Business: _____
- t. Traveling: _____
- u. Miscellaneous: _____
- v. Other _____ (any topic that you have a burning desire to study which is not mentioned in the present list)

(Adapted from Metin, 2002).