Chapter 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

'Creative reading takes place when there is literal comprehension, some critical insight, and some emotional interest.' (Morris, John)

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I shall try to apply the hypotheses discussed in Chapter two, to see if learners grammatical competence improve after extensive reading. For this research, only the verb is studied namely the tenses.

When we teach grammar, we are dealing with traditional grammar, with three tenses; the present, past and the future tense. Many grammarians are of the view that there is very little 'presentness' in the present tense, and that there is no future tense in English. Rather than expressing time, they refer to semanity. The simple present tense, for example, is not exactly that simple. One can refer to eternity using the simple present tense. Sentences or statements referring to universal truths or habitual actions make use of the simple present tense; but the question is, 'How much of presentness is there in these utterances/sentences?' The same goes for the future tense. This being the case, how do we teach these rules to learners, especially second language learners? (some examples given on page 81).

The students' performance before and after extensive reading will be tabled in percentages and analysed in Chapter 4, so that it will give a clear and true indication of their improvement. This is because, some essays are long, while
others are short; the longer ones will contain more errors, and numbers do not indicate the true strength or weakness of the writer's performance. Therefore to provide a more standard and valid measure between the students' grammatical competence before and after extensive reading, percentages instead of figures will be analysed.

3.1 The study group
For this research, a group of ten Chinese students (five boys and five girls), from a certificate course (1BB9) class, doing Business Studies in Tunku Abdul Rahman college (TAR) was randomly selected. Ages of these students range between seventeen and eighteen and they joined the course after their SPM. Their grades in English range from C4 to P8. Both in school and at home, they communicate in the Chinese language, and they come from homes where the newspapers read, radio and television programmes listened to and viewed are all in Chinese. Even after leaving their homes, they continue to use Chinese to write and speak to their friends and parents. On the campus, their lingua franca is also Chinese. These students have three hours of English per week.

3.2 AELE 201 syllabus
The syllabus of this course is for one semester of four months duration, after which they sit for an internal examination. The syllabus of this course does not have a grammar component, which means there is no teaching of grammar in the first semester. The components are reading comprehension, writing, role-play, and public speaking. For the role-play, students are divided into groups of three, and they are given situations by the lecturer. Students in each group sit
together in the class and discuss the situation. It was found that students prefer to discuss in Chinese, rather than in English.

3.3 Reading materials

John McRae (1985), argues convincingly,... that up until recently the emphasis in language teaching generally has been on referential language i.e., the language of description or information, as in survival English or functional syllabuses... [but that] what is needed is not only referential language that informs but [also] representational language that involves... language that ... reaches the areas of the mind that referential language just can't reach'. McRae makes his 'theoretical defence of literature based on the argument in Roman Jackobson’s influential paper 'Linguistics and Poetics' (1960). McRae advocates the use of literature with a small ' I ' in his book, "Reading between the lines" (GUP 1985) that shows 'how language and literature could be creatively and excitingly integrated!

I have over the years used interesting stories to teach English to learners whose mother tongue is not English. All the cases, I have cited in Chapter I, and II are learners for whom English was a second language and the home language, their respective mother tongues. One factor was common to all of them; they read a lot, especially stories, novels and later classical works.

For my students, the ten for this research, I selected interesting stories, essays and even articles which were exciting. The idea was to slowly, but surely develop an interest in them and make them creative readers. The stories
selected (given under Appendix B) were quite simple and interesting. Almost all of them were from my children's storybooks. Stories like, 'The Father', and 'The Teacher' from Catherine Lim's, 'Little Ironies: stories from Singapore', drew the students' interest a great deal. The discussions that followed the first and second readings proved to the healthy and critical. 'The Verger', 'The Necklace' and 'The Happy Prince' were with moral values and lessons for all. Most of the stories were narratives, some with adventure, like 'Aladdin and the Magic Lamp' and 'Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves'.

3.4 Writing assignment

Before the project, that is before the input, the students were asked to write an essay of not less than three hundred words on either 'My Family', or 'My Home town.' They were given one and a half hours to write the essay in the class.

At the end of the project, they were asked to write the same essays. The essays written at the end of the extensive reading programme were compared to the essays they wrote at the beginning of the semester. The essays written by the students before and after the project were examined for the tenses, to find out whether there was any improvement in their use of tenses among the students who were exposed to extensive reading materials. All the students in the class had reading comprehension, essay writing, role-play and public speaking as part of their AELE201 syllabus. But the group of ten students selected for the research were exposed to a lot of reading materials which included essays, short stories, a play and a few articles from magazines. All the materials were selected for their literary quality and style.
3.5 Reading comprehension activities

Students must comprehend what they are reading. For this to happen, the first activity that was carried out was Pre-reading activities. Before the Pre-reading activity, all the students read the story, essay or play on their own. After their first reading, I normally asked them, how much of the text they had understood. Usually, especially in the first few classes, they replied that they understood very little. Having read little or hardly anything before, vocabulary was a serious problem. After this, I read and explained the text paragraph by paragraph, giving meanings of difficult words too. After my reading and explanation, the students read the text again. At the end of their second reading, they understood the text better. Sometimes, there will be cultural content, which hinders comprehension. This is explained so that literal comprehension is not affected.

3.5.1 Pre-reading activities

After having shown that a text could be made comprehensible, even though at first reading it was incomprehensible, the learners were asked to do activities on their own, (viz: finding the meaning of words, their antonyms; literal and figurative meanings etc).

3.5.2 Dictionary skills

A dictionary has many uses, and finding the meaning is just one of them. But finding the appropriate meaning that suits the context in the text, is a skill that has to be cultivated among new language learners. If they know the context,
especially the words surrounding the difficult word, they could make safe
guesses. For example, discourse markers and negatives, can provide hints to
the meaning of a word. A word has several meanings and to choose the one
suitable for that particular context, such guesswork is helpful. Words beginning
with certain prefixes also provide hints. Prefixes like 'un', 'mis', 'dis', 'in' are just
a few that assist in the discovery of meaning within a context.

Learners, and even those who are proficient in the language have passive
vocabulary. They are words that one knows and understands but which students
are not confident to use.

Another category is the recognition vocabulary, words which one has seen
several times, but do not know the meaning. It is like seeing a familiar face
somewhere but is not a friend or acquaintance. And the other class, the active
vocabulary; these are words that one uses in one's communication.

At the start of the programme, students were advised to have a vocabulary note-
book and take down words/phrases which they came across in their reading.
These words with their different meanings and sample sentences provide an
excellent source for developing their English language proficiency. Language is
words, words and words strung together correctly to form meaningful sentences.
Words which are at first recognition vocabulary become passive vocabulary and
in the end, active vocabulary. The rate at which students learn the words and
make them part of their active vocabulary depends on individual students; some
learn faster than the others. We, in everyday terms call it a flair for languages.
Nevertheless, all of them do learn and improve. I have seen it happen to my students before and I see it happening now in TAR college. The group of ten students for the study made remarkable improvement, even though this is not the purpose of my present research.

Word power is further reinforced by doing synonym/antonym exercises. Sometimes words with the same meaning cannot be used in the same context. It becomes an interesting exercise and sharpens the learner’s vocabulary skills. For example, words like ‘dress’, ‘put on’, and ‘wear’ cannot be interchanged without being awkward and inappropriate. The following sentences illustrate this point.

(a) Schoolchildren **wear** uniform

(b) It’s cold. I think I’ll **put on** a pull over before I go out.

(c) I always **dress** very quickly.

Three words which have similar meanings cannot be interchanged in the above sentences. There are several such words and exercises of this kind make the students aware of using the wrong word in the wrong places. It is important for learners to realise that a word may have several meanings, and a good dictionary might have one or two pages of explanation for some words and it requires some skill on the part of the user of the dictionary to pick the right meaning for a word, as it is used in a text.

### 3.5.3 Background information

Some of the texts may have a lot of cultural input that the learner is unaware of. Viz: Customs, food, drinks, weather and social behaviour are some
of the topics that can make comprehension difficult. A different situation or place can also make reading uncomfortable. Say, for example, rural students who have not been to the air-port or travelled by air will find reading of texts with such information difficult without prior background information. This is because they don't have such knowledge with them (their schema) when they read. Therefore, such background information explained by the teacher helps in comprehending the text.

3.5.4 Reading-literal comprehension

After the Pre-reading activities, reading proper takes places for literal comprehension. For this, Kolzow, Lee Vogel's (1979) 'Idea Power for Reading comprehension' is borrowed. The acronym 'IDEA' stands for 'Identify', 'Define', 'Expand', and 'Articulate'. Other authors on 'READING' have different names for 'IDEA', namely 'Main Idea', 'Topic sentence', 'Supporting details' and 'Concluding sentence.'

The first letter of 'IDEA', 'I' stands for 'Identify' and it means to be able to discern specifically who or what the paragraph is about.' It is the ability to know exactly what the author has written about. After reading a paragraph, a story, a play or an article, the reader should be able to answer the question 'what is it all about?'

The next step, is to know more specifically about the topic, that is; what precisely is the author focusing on within his broad topic.

Say for example, if the author is writing about 'means of transportaiton', that is identifying the author's topic, but 'means of transportation' is broad, and so to
narrow it down, we ask another question, 'what kinds/types of transportation is he talking about?' 'Is he writing about motor driven vehicles or non-motor driven vehicles?' If he has written about the above two, he has defined his topic, narrowed it to two categories. This shows organisation. Motor driven and non-driven vehicles don't say anything about the various kinds of vehicles. The next step, will be expanding the idea, that is the various parts, or examples of motor driven and non-motor driven vehicles are given. Cars, aeroplanes and ships are examples of motor-driven vehicles. And the next and final step is articulate', that is stating precisely examples, like Ford, Nissan, Honda etc, and for aeroplanes, astro-jet, DC-10 etc and for ships, freighters, passenger steamers etc. Likewise, non-motor driven means can be divided into Land transportation and water transportation. Examples for Land, are skiing and roller-skating and for water can be sailing and swimming.

If the learners are able to do this, they would have achieved literal comprehension.

The next stage learners have to develop is to interact with the text, and critically evaluate the story, play or article. For critical appreciation/evaluation, Linda Markstein's ideas from her books 'Developing Reading Skills' (1993) and 'Expanding Reading Skills' are used (1994). Especially useful are 'Reader Response', 'Response Sharing' and 'Analysing the text' concepts that are discussed in her books.

In 'Reader Response', the learner is asked to write what he thinks about the story or whatever he has read. Is there anything that interests him in the text?
In the fifteen minutes or so he spends writing about what he has read, he writes about his own experiences, if any. He might have had similar experiences, something personal or someone else's experience he knows. He chooses to agree or disagree with the author. This is interacting with the text, a sort of literary criticism. Such activities make classrooms lively, and students actively participate because they feel strongly on certain issues that turn up in some of the materials they read. In my group of ten students, this happened first, when I introduced them to Jean Rhys's short story 'I Used to Live Here Once'. In this story there is an element of mystery and it revolves round a character who comes to visit the place where she once lived. It stirs an emotional interest in the learners, wanting to contribute their points of view, as to who the woman could be. The next stage in this activity that involves critical involvement is 'Response Sharing'. In 'Response Sharing', learners read each others written notes to know each other's view point. Most often, all of them have more or less the same views. Perhaps, they are not matured enough for sharper critical analysis. 'Analysing the Text', is an interesting part of critical evaluation. Different readers may interpret a text differently. This exercise is useful to find out the different views of the students who read and to see how their background influences their interpretation.

Catherine Lim's short story, 'The Father' (1980) with its Chinese background was found to be suitable for my students who were all Chinese. In this story, the father feels more for the dead daughter than when she was alive, by making offerings of the choicest food at her grave. A story like this touches us in so
many ways and one gets more interpretations with several readings and wider knowledge of the different cultures. While in India (1965-1984), I used to teach English to Pre-degree and degree students. In most places in India, English means English Literature. There (Kerala, Calicut and Madras universities—to name a few) the English syllabus consists of prose selections, poetry, short stories and plays. Students have to pass their English to continue their studies. But the drawback there is that the emotional involvement is lacking in most of them and the main focus is on passing the examination, rather than developing an interest in the books they read. Special guides and notes are available for students and they sometimes resort to these than the original texts, merely to pass exams. Many of them don't seem to read anything other than the prescribed texts. It defeats the very purpose of developing aesthetic sensibility in young readers. There are several reasons for this state of affairs, especially among rural and suburban students, who normally attend vernacular schools. Unlike in Malaysia, there are in India, English - medium schools, central schools and private schools modelled on the English public schools. There the standard of English is better and the students from these schools when they attend college perform better in English. However, the students from vernacular schools do not perform that well as they do not read extensively. Learners like Govind Menon (mentioned in Chapter 1) who read a lot and are encouraged at home, perform far better and are at times better than the students from public schools. This is my experience of teaching English to students in India from 1980-1985. This also goes to show that there should be a sufficient amount of input for a
language learner to become proficient in a language. In the case of most of the students who did not devote themselves to extensive reading, they did not show significant improvement in their grammatical competence in their writing. The materials (input) may be very good, but if they are not given in a steady dosage over a considerable time, the learners don't seem to benefit. Exam-oriented teaching rather than the proficiency-oriented approach is another factor hindering the learning process. Besides the lessons/lectures in the class, learners have to read for emotional satisfaction, that is for pleasure. Once a language learner develops an interest in reading, he is on his way to language proficiency, and that means grammatical competence.

Reading and writing go hand in hand and while teaching reading, we observe the connection between the two. Dr. Neil Anderson, of Bringham Young University, while conducting a half day workshop on 'The Writing-Reading Connection' at Rumah Universiti, University Malaya on Saturday, 12 December 1998, confirmed this when he drew an analogy from music to show how the two are integrated.

The story was about a Professor, who when he was young was very involved in music. He was preparing himself for a function and his part was to play the violin in the orchestra. His father listened to his violin piece only, which formed part of the whole. He was not impressed and said so. When the day of the function came, the son invited his father to the performance, which he did rather reluctantly attend. This time, when he listened to the entire piece performed by the orchestra, he was delighted and congratulated his son.
Dr. Neil J. Anderson's (1995) 'Reader Response and Second Language Reading' and 'Model Generic Response Sheet', were useful as they served to get the reader (college student) involved in his reading and respond with his own reactions. This is particularly true if the story or book is written by a foreigner and the culture and situations are different. The teacher can share his experiences, either agree or disagree with another and ask to what extent the readers agree or disagree. Do the characters in the story get their sympathy, or are they, the readers, like them? To what extent does the story have some relevance to their own lives? Different points of views are encouraged and shared among readers. The literary richness of the language can be brought to light by the teacher and shared with the readers, to show how simple words strung together enriches not only the language but is very thought provoking. This motivates the reader to think and emulate, the next time he writes. 'Reader Response' involves, a little writing too. This happens when they interact with the text, agree or disagree with the author's viewpoint, identify themselves with a character/characters. To illustrate, how this is done, a lesson plan based on a story from the Reader's Digest is given. The title of the story 'My Apple Tree', by Ronald Jager, is actually condensed from 'Eighty Acres: Elegy for a Family Farm'.

My Apple Tree

THAT JUNE EVENING I was about ten. As I stood on our front porch, my eye caught an unusual plant, not more than five inches high. It was the merest seedling, but my father identified it as a young apple tree. Immediately I adopted it. I would transplant it, care for it as my own, and it would thrive. When I was a man and farmed this land, it would bear good apples for me.
Dad proposed a spot between the driveway and garden, and that evening he dug up the sod for me. I planted my little tree there. In my innocence about fruit trees, I did not know that apple trees grown from seeds rather than grafts like the trees in our orchard are often barren or bear only inferior fruit. If my father knew it, he chose not to disturb my optimism. I took a boy's care of my tree, alternately negligent and tenderly attentive. I cheered it on as it slowly prospered in the face of weeds and the regular predations of our work-horse Pearl, who was partial to its taste and tried to snatch a branch whenever she could.

Came the years when my tree had a few blossoms but no fruit. Later I read disquieting news in a high school textbook: apple seed trees often produce prehistoric crabbed and wizened apple. Had I only known. Still, it was a nice tree and I was fond of it, so I pruned it by the book. At least it would look good. Then I went off to college and forgot about my tree.

My back was hardly turned when it began to bear - slowly at first, then generously then extravagantly tasty and versatile apples. They were good for eating and for sauce, superb for drying, and more free of insects and disease than those from our orchard trees.

For 35 years now, my tree has poured forth its nearly flawless bounty. Twenty bushels is nothing for that, tree. Every autumn relatives and neighbors come to shake the branches and bear the surplus fruit away.

I had foreseen it all. This perpetual bounty is what I fully expected all those years when I didn't know what I was doing. With even a little learning in these matters, I would not have bothered to transplant or tend the tree. It was nurtured on blind faith, and the harvest that was all but impossible becomes now all but inevitable.

3.5.5 Reading before Pre-reading activities

3.5.5.1 First Reading

The students are given the material 'My Apple Tree' and are asked to read. After they finish reading, they are asked whether they understand anything, and if they do, to what extent or how much they understand. This is their first reading without any Pre-reading activities.
3.5.5.2 Second Reading after individual vocabulary exercise

Since this is not their first Reading Comprehension activity, the students are now able to do on their own some of the activities, namely finding meanings of difficult words. They list down the difficult words. The list varies from student to student as their proficiency level is different. After this vocabulary activity, that is finding the meanings, they read the text for the second time. They would have improved in their comprehension of the text, but not fully. Some are unable to get the exact meanings of some of the words.

3.5.6 Lecturer assisted Vocabulary exercise

Together with the students, I find the appropriate meanings for them, and supply simple sample sentences using these words. Good dictionaries provide good examples. All students have their own dictionaries and vocabulary note-books.

3.5.7 Glossary

Paragraph 1

porch : covered entrance to a building esp. a church or a house.

unusual : not common, not customary

merest : most ordinary, nothing uncommon

identified : recognised

transplant : remove with roots (a growing plant) and replant elsewhere

thrive : grow well

farmed : grew crops or reared animals
Paragraph 2

proposed : suggested

driveway : private road, usually small

dug : broke up and remove, esp. Earth (have for planting)

sod : layer of earth with grass growing in it

innocence : knowing nothing

rather than : instead of

grafts : piece cut from a living plant and fixed in a cut in another plant

orchard : land where fruit trees are grown

barren : not good enough to produce crops (here, bear fruit)

inferior : of low/poor quality

optimism : always expecting the best; very positive.

Paragraph 3

alternately : to occur or do something one after the other

negligent : not giving proper care or attention to something

tenderly : with a kind and gentle nature

attentive : giving attention

cheered : gave support/gave shouts of joy

prospered : grew
weeds : wild plants growing where they are not wanted; growing among crops
regular : doing, happening repeatedly at the same time/place
predations : act of killing or eating other animals (here refers to the horse eating the young apple tree).
partial : showing too much favour or liking towards something
snatch : grab or seize something quickly/rudely.

Paragraph 4
blossoms : flowers, esp. of fruit
disquieting : causing anxiety, uneasiness, worry
prehistoric : ancient, very long ago
crabbed : small, hard sour taste
wizened : having a dried up and wrinkled skin
fond : kind and loving
pruned : trimmed and shaped

Paragraph 5
bear : (here) it means yield
generously : yielding plentifully
extravagantly : excessively
versatile : having various qualities
superb : excellent, splendid
Paragraph 6

flawless : without any fault, mistake
bounty : here, it means generosity in its yield, i.e. apples
bushels : measure for grains or fruit
surplus : amount left over after one had used all that one needs

Paragraph 7

foreseen : saw or knew what was going to happen
perpetual : continuing indefinitely, permanent fully completely, entirely
bothered : troubled
nurtured : nourish, encourage the growth of
tend : take care or look after

Supplying the meanings of difficult words alone does not mean, the exercise is over, for students require more information than is provided by the dictionary. Sometimes, some forms of the words as in the text are not available in the dictionary. Such words require some extra explanations and guidance as to how to go about getting the meaning. For example, two words, `merest' and `predations' are not in the dictionary and students find it difficult to decide their meanings. They require special assistance. The words `mere', `predator' and `predatory' are found in the dictionary. How can a low proficiency student for whom English is a second language arrive at the meanings of words like `merest' and `predations'? Their meanings have to be derived from the meanings of `mere' and `predator'/ `predatory'. The context in which they appear is also
important to arrive at their meanings. There are also words which may look related but their meanings are so different. Four words, for example, 'interesting', 'interested', 'disinterested' and 'uninteresting' cannot be considered in the same manner. Students will have to be warned before hand not to overdo this exercise. It would be better to seek assistance elsewhere. After going through the vocabulary, the students note down their meanings and example sentences in their vocabulary note-books. Then they read again.

Sentence structures

Their understanding of the text is not complete as there are some other difficulties. Certain phrases, though their individual words do not cause comprehension problems, taken as a whole, they are a problem. For example, 'I took a boy's care'... The phrase that follows explains the meaning of what comes before. The individual words, 'took', 'boy's' and 'care' are all simple words which do not require a dictionary but taken together in a phrase, they are difficult to understand. One should know how boys do things, then one would understand the meaning clearly. In paragraph four, there is a simple sentence (simple in the sense that there are no difficult words), 'Had I only known', is a clause used in the passage. Every word is understood by the students, but the message conveyed by the entire sentence is not clear. Readers must learn to understand what comes before and after. The sentence preceeding 'Had I only known', gives a negative message with words like 'disquieting' and the phrase 'often
produce a prehistoric crabbed and wizened apple'. What follows also hints at the meaning - 'still, it was a nice tree and I was fond of it,' ...

The students were asked later, what would he have done, if he had known?

Known what and known when? They were unable to answer these questions, which means they require more 'critical insight' exercises and coaching. They should be able to read between the lines, as the saying goes.

In the last paragraph, the author gives the reason or the answer to the question. The students, however were unable to relate it to the question. The author writes 'with even a little learning in these matters, I would not have bothered to transplant or tend the tree'. With the vocabulary exercise and sentence structure explanations, the students were in a better position to read and understand. They moved from a position of incomprehensible input to comprehensible input with my assistance. With, repeated training, they would and should be in a position to do all these activities on their own in their later readings.

The other activity for Pre-reading is the cultural input, that is, if the text requires it. In this article, 'My Apple Tree', however, there is not much cultural matter alien to the students, except for the fact that apples are used as sauce, and they are also dried. The father-child relationship is another point to be noted. These are minor issues that do not hinder comprehension. Some texts may have allusions and many cultural themes that are not known to our readers. Such texts were carefully avoided in my selection for reading, because my students (the study group) are beginners and texts with allusions and symbols will only make reading difficult. Next, to test to what extent, the learners have understood the text 'My
Apple Tree' can only be known by conducting some comprehension exercises.
First, questions based on the text were given.

3.5.8 Comprehension

1. What is `the merest seedling'? 
2. Why does the author call himself `innocent'? 
3. Did he take good care of the young plant? 
4. Name its two enemies. 
5. When did the author learn the truth about his adopted plant? 
6. When did his disappointment turn into a miracle? 
7. Explain `nurtured on blind faith' and `took a boy's care'. 
8. Provide the antonyms of the following words:
   a. barren        d. flawless
   b. inferior      e. perpetual
   c. optimism      f. inevitable
9. Write in about 150 words, what you think of this story. Does it remind you of something similar in your life or in the lives of people you know. Give your views and feelings freely.
10. Discuss with your friends:
    a. The father-son relationship
        How would your father have reacted in a similar situation?
11. Does `Blind Faith' always pay?
    Have you any similar experience?
Questions 9, 10 and 11 form 'Reader Responses' and later the readers share their views and opinions. This part of the lesson was interesting because the students sometimes came up with some strange views. In an interesting and exciting way, they interacted with the text. This part of the reading exercise forms what John Morris (1987) calls 'critical insight' which is very important, because reading is not just passively absorbing printed matter with no response/reaction from the reader. 'Critical insight' in fact leads to 'emotional interest'. As you react powerfully by either agreeing or disagreeing with the author's point of view, you develop an interest in what you are reading. In other stories, where there are powerful themes, ideas and emotions involved, the reader gets drawn towards the plot and gets emotionally involved. This also happens to people, when they watch television programmes. When they cry or laugh, what is happening is their emotions are drawn towards the story and they feel for the characters. They identify themselves as victims or sympathizers. All of us know that when we start reading an interesting novel, it is difficult to put it down till we finish reading. We take it wherever we go; our emotions are invested in that piece of work.

The materials for reading should be such that they will attract the emotional interest of the reader. In great literature, we have what is called catharsis or the purging of emotions.

Shakespeare in his tragedies especially, had interesting themes of the day and drew the attention of his audience dramatic start as in King Lear where Lear decides to divide his kingdom among his three daughters equally, but changes
his plans when his youngest daughter Coredella refuses to make a public
declaration of her love for him. She loses her share by doing so. In Macbeth, the
great hero is greeted by the Witches who predict his future. His secret ambitions
are revealed. A ghost appears before Hamlet to tell him of his father’s death.
When readers develop these skills, namely, critical insight and some emotional
interest, they become creative readers according to John Morries. Once this
stage is reached, their proficiency in that language is assured.

3.6 Conclusion
The students were given a story a day, that is seven stories in a week. This went
on for the entire semester, for four months. Later, some of them came back to
ask for more materials to read. Not all the stories, articles or plays were dealt
with the way I have shown in this chapter. Only the difficult ones were treated in
this manner. The rest were read and discussed. Every student in the group read
every story more than once. They did their vocabulary study on their own.
Reader response, response sharing and the writing of views were discussed in
class. Here class means not the regular AELE 201 class but special tutorials,
specially for this project. The students met before class every day at about 7.30
a.m. and I discussed the story which I had given them the previous day and
asked them to read. On Saturdays, we had long discussions based on what had
been read viz critical appreciation etc. They were given stories from India, China,
Malaysia and Singapore. Fables like ‘The Emperor and his Clothes’, ‘Ali Baba
and the Forty Thieves’ and even Enid Blyton’s stories were part of their reading
materials. At the end of the project, they had developed a healthy reading habit, which is a good sign.