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**READING COMPREHENSION RESEARCH  
THROUGH THINK-ALOUD PROTOCOLS**

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**İNGİLİZ DİLİ EĞİTİMİ BİLİM DALI**  
**DOĞRULUK BEYANI**

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**Başlık:** Sesli Düşünme Protokolleri Aracılığıyla Okuduğunu Anlama Üzerine Araştırma

**Yazar:** Meltem BAYSAL ÇALIŞKAN

## ÖZET

Bu çalışma dil öğretiminde sesli düşünme protokolleri kullanımının okuma sürecinde öğrenciler ve okuduğunu anlama becerileri üzerinde önemli bir etkisi olup olmadığını belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma karma araştırma deseni ile yürütülmüştür. Veriler ön ve son testler, kontrol listesi ve kontrol formu, sözlü protokoller ve görüşme sonuçları ile toplanmıştır. Çalışmanın katılımcıları Trakya Üniversitesi, İngilizce Öğretmenliği bölümünden 83 birinci sınıf öğrencisidir. Öğrenciler rastgele deney ve kontrol grubu olarak atanmıştır. Çalışma bir akademik dönem olan 14 haftalık bir sürede tamamlanmış ve deney grubunda sesli düşünme protokollerinin uygulandığı 12 öğretim uygulaması yapılmıştır. Ön test ve son test, kontrol listesi ve kontrol formunun sonuçları istatistiksel olarak karşılaştırılmış ve anlamlı bir fark olup olmadığını araştırılmıştır. Öte yandan, sözlü protokoller ve görüşmeler nicel verilere katkıda bulunmak için nitel olarak analiz edilmiştir. Sonuçlara göre, sesli düşünme protokolleri uygulanmasının öğrencilerin okuduğunu anlamalarını olumlu yönde etkilediği görülmüştür.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Okuduğunu Anlama, Sesli Düşünme Protokolleri, Okuma Stratejileri

**Title:** Reading Comprehension Research through Think-Aloud Protocols

**Author:** Meltem BAYSAL ÇALIŞKAN

## **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to determine whether the use of Think Aloud Protocols (TAPs) in language teaching has a crucial impact on students and their achievement in reading process in means of promoting reading comprehension. The study was conducted with a mixed methods research design. Data were collected through pre and posttests, the checklist and check sheet, verbal protocols and interview results. The participants of the study were 83 freshmen students in English Language Teaching (ELT) department at Trakya University. The students were randomly assigned as experimental and control groups. The study was completed in one semester, which is a 14-week time period and the experimental group had 12 intervention session consisting of TAPs. The results of the pretest and posttest, checklist and check sheet were statistically compared to find out if there was a significant difference. On the other hand, the verbal protocols and interviews were analyzed qualitatively to contribute to the quantitative data. According to the results, the implementation of TAPs had a positive effect on promoting reading comprehension of the students.

**Keywords:** Reading Comprehension, Think-Aloud Protocols, Reading Strategies

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Introduction

The first chapter includes the statement of the problem, research questions, the aim and the scope of the study, the significance of the study, assumptions, limitations, and definitions of terms. Afterwards, literature relevant to Think-Aloud Protocols (TAPs) is presented.

### 1.2. Background of the Study

At the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the emergence of psychology as a scientific field of study, consciousness became the main concern of many researchers. Introspective studies were carried out to shed light on controversial issues concerning the inner-thoughts of humans. However, for a period of time, the introspective method was disgraced and the psychological studies became more reliant on other tasks performed in laboratory. Nevertheless, the cognitive revolution in 1960s inspired the importance of thought process and subjects were asked to think-aloud which emerged a new type verbal report of thinking that differed from the earlier introspective methods and became the core method of protocol analysis (Ericsson & Crutcher, 1991).

The central assumption of protocol analysis is that it is possible to instruct subjects to verbalize their thoughts in a manner that does not alter the sequence of

thoughts mediating the completion of a task, and can therefore be accepted as valid data on thinking (Ericsson & Simon, 1993). According to Patton (2002);

Protocol analysis or, more literally, the think-aloud protocol approach, aims to elicit the inner thoughts or cognitive processes that illuminates what's going on in the person's head during the performance of a task, for example, painting or solving a problem. The point is to undertake interviewing as close to the action as possible. While someone engages in an activity, the interviewer probes to get the person talk about what the person is thinking as he or she does the task. The basic strategy of think-aloud interviewing involves getting people who are doing something to verbalize their thoughts and feelings as they do whatever they are doing. (p.89)

This description of TAPs characterizes data collection with second language acquisition in which informants describe each strategic step in learning or comprehending information immediately after it occurs. Respondents are typically intercepted at various points as they are listening and asked to describe what they were just thinking rather than asked to perform a task simultaneously while reporting on their thought processes (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). The protocols can also be applied to model what readers are supposed to do during and after reading. It can also be applied to elicit prior knowledge of a subject, guess word meanings, encourage the readers to connect with the text, present an example of how to be successful reader (Block & Israel, 2004).

In conclusion, the implementation of TAPs may enhance students' abilities of thinking process and comprehend what they read, and it may allow the reader to connect meaning and understanding with the text by applying some reading strategies.

### **1.3. Statement of the Problem**

Research studies during the past several decades have demonstrated that when students interact with text while reading, reading comprehension improves. As

it is already known, reading is mostly a silent, hidden process, and researchers cannot determine what is happening in the brain while reading by simple observation or by product-based assessment. Asking readers to provide verbal reports or protocols is the most direct way to access this process. Therefore, thinking-aloud might alter reading processes because thinking-aloud differs from silent reading. In short, the implementation of TAPs in the English reading comprehension classes is needed to be studied.

#### **1.4. Research Questions**

These research questions will be investigated in this thesis study to attain the aims stated in the following part:

RQ 1: Is the implementation of TAPs effective on promoting reading comprehension of students?

RQ 2: Do TAPs play a contributive role to understand and observe the students' use of reading strategies to promote learning?

RQ 3: Is there a relationship between the success of reading comprehension of students who are trained in TAPs and the text type used in reading classes?

RQ 4: What are the opinions of the participants regarding the effectiveness of TAPs in reading comprehension?

#### **1.5. Aim and Scope of the Study**

Ample research evidence demonstrates that active reasoning while reading enhances reading comprehension. Research has demonstrated the positive effects on reading comprehension when teachers ask thought-provoking questions while students are learning to read and particularly while reading increasingly difficult new texts. Finally, numerous studies have demonstrated that good readers are active

thinkers while reading (Davey, 1983; Kucan & Beck, 1997; Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995). Afflerbach (2000) also points out as benefits of the methodology that think-aloud yields detailed descriptions of task-induced reader behaviors and complexity in readers' thoughts. It also imposes the positive effect of affective states on reader-text interaction. In line with that, this study aims to determine whether the use of TAPs in language teaching has a crucial impact on students and their achievement in reading process.

### **1.6. Significance of the Study**

The number of the studies conducted on determining the effects of TAPs on reading performance of ELT students in Turkey is limited. Therefore, this study aims to determine whether the use of TAPs in reading classes has a crucial impact on ELT students' performances. This study is significant as it is supposed to bring innovation into reading courses by focusing on the importance of creating creative and dynamic students who are expected to apply and comprehend reading texts by implementing TAPs. It may also contribute to professional development of ELT students who are prospective teachers. Moreover, the study may motivate teachers to improve themselves in teaching reading by using TAPs.

### **1.7. Assumptions**

Within the context of this study, it was assumed that the verbal protocols of the students and their answers for the interview question reflected their true beliefs and opinions. It was also assumed that the techniques used for the data collection were sufficient in means of providing answers to the research questions.

## 1.8. Limitations

There a number of limitations to the present study. First of all, it is limited to a small scale of students (83) in ELT department at Trakya University. Secondly, the intervention sessions were not videotaped, because some participants expressed that they would not like to be recorded even though they were all volunteered for the study. Another limitation is that only freshmen students participated in the study. Finally, the implementation of TAPs, which requires a good practice, was limited to 12 weeks.

## 1.9. Definition of Terms

**Language:** It is a semiotic system of meaning making (Halliday, 2003).

**Reading:** It is a cognitive process which includes the reader, the text, the interaction between the text and the reader. Furthermore, the process includes reader's background, purpose, attitude and how one reads and decodes a text, also strategies that are used to decode the text (Aebersold and Field, 1997; Eskey, 2005; Grabe, 2004; Nunan, 1999; O'Donnell and Wood, 2004; Schoenbach, Greenleaf, Cziko, & Hurwitz, 1999).

**Schema:** It represents information about objects and their relationships with one another, events and sequences of events, actions and their sequences (Rumelhart, 1980).

**Think-Aloud Protocol:** Think-aloud protocol is a method used to elicit data from testing to reading in a range of social sciences. In a broad sense, they are the verbalization of participants' cognitive processes while they are performing a set of specified tasks (Ericsson & Simon, 1980).

## 1.10. Abbreviations

ANOVA: Analysis of Variance

ELT: English Language Teaching

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

RQ: Research Question

TAPs: Think Aloud Protocols

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1. Language and Language Learning Skills

The vital role of language has brought numerous definitions to the literature throughout the decades. Bloch and Trager (1942) define the language as “a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group co-operates” (cited in Crystal and Robins, 2013; p. 1). In his definition, linguist Noam Chomsky (1957) defines language as “a set (finite or infinite) of sentences, each finite in length and constructed out of a finite set of elements” (p.13). As he further argues, “Language is innate, that crucial parts of the human language ability are built into the brain and are programmed into our genes” (p.13). There are more definitions formulated by other linguists. In The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language, Crystal (2003) gives a definition for language as “the systematic, conventional use of sounds, signs or written symbols in a human society for communication and self-expression” (p. 464). Another description of language is expressed by Halliday (2003); “A language is a system of meaning - a semiotic system” (p.2).

In a broad sense, being a medium of communication to express virtually anything that someone can think of like thoughts, feelings, experiences and many more, language is a term for which there are always going to be continuous definitions. Having such an important role and place in life, language is always a high-priority tool. Therefore, language learning is an inevitable process of lifelong learning since it begins at birth and continues through life.

The process of language learning is eminently individual and complex (Launer, 2010). It is also a creative and playful process. The core focus in language learning is on using the language to understand and convey meaning which means to develop language skills. While language is essentially accepted as a basic skill itself, it involves four golden sub-skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Listening and reading are considered as receptive skills; on the other side speaking and writing skills are known as productive ones. Through the processes of listening and reading, the listener or the reader is usually passive and receives information. On the other hand, in speaking and writing the user is active and productive, s/he uses sounds and letters. To be a versatile communicator, the user must be proficient in each of four language skills. These four macro skills give user an opportunity to create contexts to use the language for real knowledge exchange, understand and convey meaning.

Among the four macro skills, reading, with a paramount importance, is considered crucial in language teaching by having its own unique significance. It is given priority since it is a very powerful skill to get a wide range of information from literature to science and more. The next section explains the fundamentals of reading skill.

## **2.2. The Nature of Reading**

As a fundamental component of language and language learning, reading is a vital skill for academic and lifelong learning with a role of making one literate and all the more. According to the definition of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2018), reading literacy refers to “active, purposeful and functional application of reading in a range of situations and for various purposes” (p. 12).

As stated by Grabe (1991), reading does not only include a receptive process of selecting information from the page word by word, yet it is an eclectic process determined by an active process of comprehending. Therefore, reading is broadly a basic necessity for human beings to have world knowledge. Besides, apart from being a daily necessity or event, reading is indisputably vital for education as well. It has a crucial role in academic life, because it all starts by reading for learning. Along with the definitions for language, there are surely diverse definitions for reading.

### **2.2.1. Definition of Reading**

Reading skill has been considered by majority as it is taught and learned in the first years of school and it improves in the following few years. Widdowson (1979) defines reading as the process of having linguistic information via print. According to Rumelhart (1985), it is the process of understanding written language. In line with that, Winerbrenner (1996) says that getting meaning from the printed words is the ability of reading. On one hand, reading is a process in which the reader identifies and decodes the words, then constructs an understanding and comprehends the text (Schoenbach, Greenleaf, Cziko & Hurwitz, 1999). On the other hand, reading is an overly complex process, and there are many factors behind it. With an upsurge of studies in the area, attention in reading shifted from basic lexical skills to comprehensive and interactive ones. Carrel (1988) states that;

The most significant recent theoretical advance in reading has been the introduction of a cognitive psychological perspective which views reading as a process or set of processes involving complex mental operations and interactions between the reader and text, and within the reader. (p.245)

Accordingly, Aebersold and Field (1997) state that “The text and the reader are the two physical entities necessary for the reading process to start. It is however, the interaction between the text and the reader that constitutes actual meaning” (p.15). In a broad sense, reading process, as defined by many researchers (Aebersold

& Field, 1997; Eskey, 2005; Grabe, 2004; Nunan, 1999; O'Donnell & Wood, 2004; Schoenbach, Greenleaf, Cziko & Hurwitz, 1999), is a cognitive process which includes the reader, the text, the interaction between the text and the reader also the reader's background, purpose, attitude and how one reads and decodes a text and the strategies that are used to decode the text.

According to Grellet (1981), "reading is a constant process of guessing and what one brings to the text is often more important than what is found in it" (p.7). Being an active process, reading requires involvement. Bernhardt (1991) mentions that having a cognitive perspective means handling the reading process as an intrapersonal problem-solving task which takes place within the brain's knowledge structures.

Based on the definitions above, it can be inferred that reading is an essential requirement to foster ones' habit of developing interest not only in learning but also for deriving pleasure from literacy. It includes attention, perception, concentration and patience. Better reading skills polish readers' understanding, feature social skills and broaden individuals' horizons. It is often a very fulfilling experience; as if one would get a step into a whole different world. It is not only about understanding what is written and what is meant on the surface, but to be able to grasp what is implied, what is there between the lines, and what lurks beneath the surface. Moreover, reading is a lifelong journey, and while reading, the individual is expected to think critically (Frankel, Becker, Rowe & Pearson, 2016).

According to the research by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2000), reading has a pivotal role to have a happy, productive and successful life. If a child reads, then it means s/he is confident and highly self-esteem. Reading opens the doors to have an access to the ideas ever written from childhood to ever after. It enables an individual to learn the other skills as well. In its broadest sense, reading is indeed one of the most important skills one can acquire. It

offers a whole new world and helps to develop one's intellectual level, vocabulary and command on language (Bayless, 2010).

### **2.2.2. Purpose of Reading**

Reading has always been singled out as one of the most common habits of many people. Apart from being a hobby, the purpose of reading can shift from gaining knowledge and perspective to amusement or pure enjoyment at the glory of language. Knutson (1997) states "having a purpose means having a reason to read and approaching a text with a particular goal in mind, whether that goal involves learning or entertainment" (p. 49).

One can have different reading goals such as reading for pleasure, getting an insight into something, obtaining information, passing an exam etc. Wallace (1993) points out the awareness of the reading purposes as the most important essential phase of reading and she highlights three reading purposes: reading for survival like signs, reading for learning which is goal orientated but does not have to be merely school related and reading for pleasure which is carried out for its own sake. Also, Grabe (2009) notes there are obviously different purposes of reading. However, even if it is not possible to classify every single of it, there is a list of six:

- Reading to search for information
- Reading for quick understanding
- Reading to learn
- Reading to integrate information
- Reading to evaluate, critique and use information
- Reading for general comprehension

Likewise, Hedge (2003) sets forth some common reading goals as having the ability to read varied texts in English, being able to build knowledge by information, having an ability to interpret text meaningfully by schematic knowledge, having an ability to adapt the reading style according to reading purpose, developing an awareness of the structure of written texts in English, and taking a critical stance to the content of the text. Furthermore, reading improves all parts of language; vocabulary, spelling, grammar and writing etc. It helps develop language intuition in the corrected form. Then, the brain imitates them, producing similar sentences to express the desired meaning (Elley, 1991; Miller & Moss, 2013; Worthy & Roser, 2010). Accordingly, reading is an important skill to be covered in language learning.

### **2.2.3. Reading in Language Learning**

Reading is considered as a means of learning language. Besides being an indispensable skill for learners, reading is precisely in the core of language learning process, especially for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) (Aebersold & Field, 1997; Anderson, 1991; Birch, 2007; Eskey, 2005; Grabe, 1991; Grabe, 2004; Schwartz, 1984). Within the perspective of EFL/ESL students, reading is a complex process which includes problem solving, mental stimulation, vocabulary expansion, analytical thinking skills, diverse range of knowledge, engaging imagination and synthesis along with critical evaluation skills (Celce-Murcia, 2001). Ovando (2005) argues that while students use a single language in First Language (L1) texts, in Second Language (L2) texts, they have at least two languages to command. Therefore, it requires more attention and labour to work on a text in a foreign or second language. Rivers (1981) emphasizes that reading is a crucial activity in any language classroom setting; not just because it is a source of information but also it is a pleasurable activity, moreover, it is a means of consolidation and it extends one's knowledge of the language.

Having such an important role for EFL/ESL learners, reading and reading comprehension became a growing body of empirical research inevitably. According to Carrell and Eisterhold (1983), reading comprehension in EFL/ESL involves background knowledge which exceeds linguistic knowledge. They also emphasize the importance of schema theory in EFL/ESL as part of a reader-centered, psycholinguistic processing model of reading. According to Zhao and Zhu (2012), the theory interprets that when people correlate the information in a text with their own background knowledge, they are able to comprehend. In this process, the prior knowledge and knowledge structure works effectively in people's cognitive activities. Hence, the role of reading comprehension and schemata in EFL/ESL will be discussed in the following section.

### **2.3. Reading Comprehension and Schema Theory**

Reading comprehension is one of the most effective components of reading education that have been discussed for years by researchers, educators and teachers. It is a common fact that the most significant target in reading is comprehension. While the definition for reading comprehension can simply be stated by constructing meaning (Jennings, Caldwell & Lerner, 2006), there are crucial underlying factors for the term. Lipson and Wixson (1986) define comprehension as a complex process which entangles interactions between the reader and the text in numerous contexts for numerous purposes. Similarly, Hirsch (2003) states that:

Reading comprehension depends on the reader filling in the blanks and silently supplying enough of the unstated premises to make coherent sense of what is being read. Once print has been decoded into words, reading comprehension, like listening comprehension, requires the active construction of inference that are chock full of unstated premises and unexplained allusions. (pp.19-20)

According to the definition of The RAND Reading Study Group (2002) comprehension is “the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing

meaning through interaction and involvement with written language” (p. 11). Gough, Hoover and Peterson (1996) state that there are two essential features in reading; decoding and comprehending. Also, they suggest when the readers fail at either one of the two features, there is no good reading comprehension process. In line with that, the Literacy Information and Communication System online (2010) assert that the reason for reading is comprehension. If readers can read the text but cannot comprehend the meaning, then it means they are not reading at all. Good readers not only read purposefully because they have a reason to read, but also they become active readers because they try to make sense of what they read (Frankel et al., 2016).

All along the reading process, readers come across new knowledge that they need to interpret and connect to schemata or their background knowledge to comprehend (Anderson & Pearson, 1984). The term *schema* was first expressed by Barlett (1932) as an active organization of past reactions or experiences (as cited in Zhao & Zhu, 2012, p.201). Then it was used in reading by Rumelhart (1980). He defines schema as “a data structure for representing the genetic concepts stored in memory” (p.34). The plural version of schema, which means previously acquired knowledge and information packets and structures, is known as *schemata* (Barrlett, as cited in Rumelhart, 1980).

In reading comprehension, the role of schema has been introduced as schema theory by Carrel and Eisterhold (1983). As aforementioned, a text itself does not carry meaning, yet the readers need to bring the relevant prior knowledge or schemata on to the stage and then make sense out of the text. In this theory, schemata represent information about objects and their relationships with one another, events and sequences of events, actions and their sequences. Another well-known definition of schemata is “knowledge already stored in memory” (Anderson, 1984, p. 255). In his research, Afflerbach (1987) proves that the prior knowledge of the readers influence main idea construction, including making prediction, monitoring comprehension, deriving meanings of words, and assigning importance. Similarly,

Brantmeier (2003) states that the familiarity of topic plays a significant role in L2 comprehension.

Conspicuously, the notion of reading comprehension includes identification of genre, knowledge of the content and topic, prior linguistic knowledge and decoding features all of which activate readers' schemata and allow them to comprehend the text. The schemata, which are known to have a great influence and an important role in reading comprehension, have different types.

### **2.3.1. Types of Schema**

There are various classifications of schemata as formal, content, linguistic, cultural, ideological and social. However, in reading comprehension, Carrell (1984) focuses on linguistic schema, content schema and formal schema. Linguistic schema refers to prior linguistic knowledge and decoding features, including phonetics, grammar and vocabulary, of a reader in order to understand how words are organized and ordered in a sentence (Eskey & Grabe, 1988). Content schema refers to knowledge about the subject matter, content and topic of a text (Carrell, 1988). It includes the knowledge about the content domain of the text. A formal schema stands for "background knowledge of the formal, rhetorical organizational structures of different types of texts" (Carrel & Eisterhold, 1983, p.79). It covers the genre and the type of the text such as poem, story, novel, letter etc. and its macro structure. Consequently, based on the definitions, it can be concluded that readers' different kind of schemata play an efficient role and allow them comprehend the text.

Apart from comprehension which focuses on the product of reading, it has also been a concern to shed light on the models of reading which is primarily centered on the process. It can be assumed that readers may engage in very different reading processes, however, their level of comprehension can end up similar. On the other hand, schemata play an important role in aspects of some reading models.

Therefore, it matters to understand what happens when the readers use models of reading.

## **2.4. Models of Reading**

The process involved in reading has been one of the most commonly explored research areas in both EFL and ESL contexts. From the research have emerged three different models of reading: bottom-up (letters, morphemes, syllables, words, phrases, grammatical cues, discourse markers etc.), top-down (prior knowledge, reader characteristics, etc.), and interactive models (orthography, semantic knowledge, texts, content, organization, etc.) which attempt to explain how learners read and comprehend the texts.

Models of the reading process try to elaborate and predict the behavior of reading and the readers. According to Davies (1995), “A reading model is theory of what is going on in the reader’s eyes and mind during reading and comprehending (or miscomprehending) a text” (p.59). In this section, all the three reading models are described.

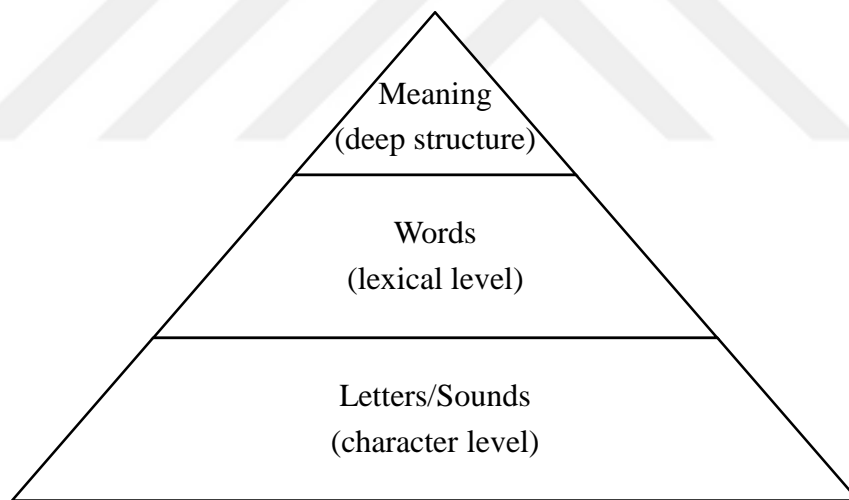
### **2.4.1. Bottom-Up Model**

In the bottom-up model, reading is a decoding process which focuses on the written text and it proceeds from part to whole. Gough (1972) suggests that reading is a process in which decoding letter-by-letter process takes place. According to Nunan (1991), the bottom-up model of reading is basically a matter of decoding a series of written symbols into their phonics in the quest for making sense of the text.

In this model, reading is achieved by a process that starts with symbols and results in meaning. It does not concentrate on the background knowledge or language

ability of the reader but more generally on the text. This process is also assumed as data-driven. That is why, this model is often criticized and it is also targeted for being inflexible and insufficient because it bases on the formal and symbolic features of the language and the reader is positioned as a passive recipient of the text and it emphasizes one-way direction. (Paris & Hamilton, 2009).

According to Grabe and Stoller (2001), the “bottom-up model suggests that all reading follows a mechanical pattern in which the reader creates a piece-by-piece mental translation of the information in the text, with little interference from the reader’s own background knowledge” (p.32). Although it has a great deal of contribution to reading research, the limitations of the bottom-up model led to research for top-down reading model (Adams, 1990; Eskey, 2005; Grabe, 2004).



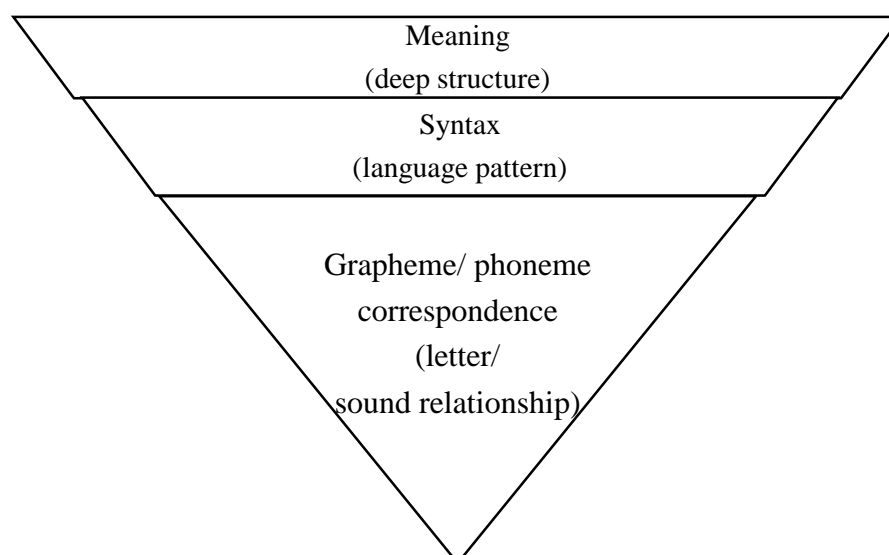
**Figure 1.** Bottom-Up Model (cited in Liu, 2010, p.156)

### **2.4.2. Top-Down Model**

Contrary to the previous one, the top-down model of reading assumes that the reading process begins in the head of the reader with a theory or guess about the meaning of some print or unit (Pearson & Kamil, 1978). In such a model, reading is driven by meaning, so it is also called as concept driven. In contrast to the bottom-up

model relying on a holistic approach, the top-down model of reading proceeds from whole to part and the reader has an active role. Goodman (1976) suggests that reading is a psycholinguistic guessing game where the readers sample the text, and make hypotheses to analyze the text features and confirm or reject them. Also, Smith (1978) says “reading is asking questions of printed text, and reading with comprehension becomes a matter of getting your questions answered” (p. 105). Both researchers state the importance of being active readers and the knowledge driven from the text. With such a transformation into cognitive skills in views of reading, the focus on the reading comprehension shifted from text driven to reader driven.

However, this model also brings its insufficiencies with it just because it totally concentrates on the readers and their prior knowledge. As Rumelhart (1977) mentions if our background knowledge is not adequate enough and if it does not provide an understanding of the incoming data from the written text, we unavoidably will have problems while we process and understand the text. In general, the notions of ‘bottom-up’ and ‘top-down’ have a great deal of influence on reading process though they are not without their problems.

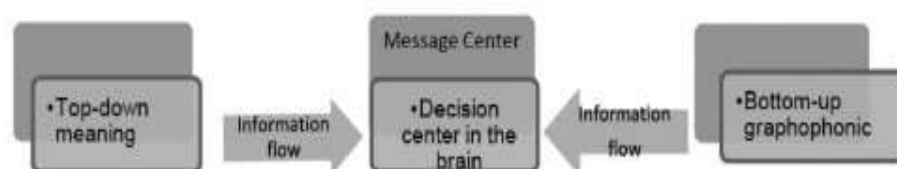


**Figure 2.** Top-Down Model (cited in Liu, 2010, p.157)

### 2.4.3. Interactive Model

Reading theorists recognized that reading process is much more complex and comprehensive than two models that have been set forth, so Rumelhart (1977) suggests an interactive model in which the reader makes use of the background knowledge and decoding simultaneously. According to Pearson and Kamil (1978), “An interactive model resembles a committee meeting, in which different committee members, who have been assigned different tasks, negotiate with one another to achieve a common solution” (p.6). In the interactive model which is an example of balance between bottom-up and top-down processing, there is interaction between the text and the reader and also between identification and interpretation (Grabe, 1988). Efficient readers simultaneously make use of both these processes (Carell & Eisterhold, 1983). In this model, efficient readers are both effective decoders and interpreters of text. As their reading skills develop, their decoding skills become more automatic but no less significant (Carrell, Devine & Eskey 1988).

In conclusion, the interactive approach incorporates both processes of bottom-up and top down, also includes cognitive processes which are varied, complex and multi-dimensional. Effective readers have an understanding of this complexity and better comprehension and they are able to use the interactive approach. According to Heilman, Blair, and Ruply (1990), it is the most applicable approach to reading instruction.



**Figure 3.** Rumelhart’s Interactive Model (cited in Dechant, 1991, p. 29)

## 2.5. Types of Reading and Assessment

Considering the fact that there are a variety of reading models, there are also different types of reading that can be selected and adopted in accordance with these models. In this respect, researchers have classified a number of different types of reading, for example, according to Grellet (1981), there are four kinds of reading, skimming, scanning, extensive reading, and intensive reading. Similarly, Urquhart and Weir (1998) assert five main ways of reading: scanning, skimming, search reading, careful reading and browsing.

On the other hand, according to Brown (2004), in the context of reading, there are four types of reading from simplest to most complex and various assessment tasks. In his detailed explanations, Brown enlightens four types of reading and the way of assessment with comprehensive examples. In this part, there is a detailed explanation of four reading types: perceptive, selective, interactive and extensive and their assessment process suggested by Brown (2004).

### Perceptive Reading

Perceptive reading is focused primarily on bottom-up processing, therefore the primary goal here is not to understand or comprehend the text but to recognize “the alphabetic symbols, capitalized and lowercase letters, punctuation, words and grapheme-phoneme correspondences” (Brown, 2004, p. 230).

There are some kinds of assessment tasks on perceptive reading such as reading aloud, written response, multiple choice, and picture-cued items.

- **Reading Aloud:** In the assessment type of reading aloud, the students need to see separate letters, words and short sentences, and they should read aloud

one by one. This assessment type is commonly used in the classroom especially for basic level.

- **Written Response:** In the assessment type of written response, the task of the students is to reproduce the probe in writing, the evaluation of the response, on the other hand, must be carried out with a tedious treatment.
- **Multiple Choice:** In the assessment type of multiple choice, it should be kept in mind that the only option is not choosing one of three or four possible answers. There are other formats such as true/false, circle the answer and matching, especially for lower levels of reading.
- **Picture-Cued Items:** In the assessment type of picture-cued items, the students are shown a picture and afterwards they are expected to perform a number of possible tasks related.

### Selective Reading

Selective reading requires recognition of lexical, grammatical, or discourse feature of language within a very short stretch of language. In order to be successful at this level, the student needs to use both bottom-up and top-down processing. The way of assessment in this category is largely in a format of brief paragraphs and short reading passages. There are several assessment tasks for selective reading such as multiple choice, matching tasks, editing tasks, picture-cued tasks and gap filling tasks.

- **Multiple Choice:** In multiple-choice tasks, students are expected to choose one of three or four possible answers. This task is commonly preferred to check reading knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. It can be in the form of contextualized or cloze tests.
- **Matching Tasks:** In matching tasks, students are simply expected to match an appropriate format correctly especially in vocabulary. This task offers an option over traditional multiple-choice or fill in the blank formats and it is

easier to construct, however, it becomes more of a puzzle-solving process rather than a comprehension test, as students try for a match among 10 or 20 items.

- **Editing Tasks:** In editing tasks, students are supposed to make editing for grammatical or rhetorical errors. It is a widely used test method to evaluate linguistic competence in reading. Therefore, it does not only focus on grammar but also gives an opportunity for the simulation of an authentic task of editing errors in written passages.
- **Picture Cued Tasks:** In picture cued tasks, students are expected to make combinations of picture and words and describe the picture or diagram. Hence, the complexity of the language is enhanced accordingly when compared to the same type of task in perceptive reading.
- **Gap Filling Tasks:** Finally, in gap filling tasks, the response for the students is to create sentence completion items where they read part of a sentence and then complete it by writing a phrase.

### **Interactive Reading**

In interactive reading, students are required to read several paragraphs to one page of text or more and linguistically interact with the text, in other words, they are expected to negotiate meaning to identify relevant features and retain information which is conceptually processed. Therefore, in interactive reading, the process is mostly top-down. Typical genres, which are also more authentic in nature, that take place in interactive reading are: short narratives and descriptions, anecdotes, excerpts from longer active reading texts, questionnaires, memos, directions, announcements, recipes, and the like. There are several types of assessment tasks such as cloze tasks, impromptu reading plus comprehension questions, short answer, editing, scanning, ordering tasks, and information transfer.

- **Cloze Tasks:** In this assessment type, students are supposed to fill in gaps or supply missing details in an incomplete sentence or image.
- **Impromptu Reading Plus Comprehension Question:** In this assessment, students are supposed to read the passage and answer some related questions. They need to choose one of three or four possible answers. It is commonly used to test reading comprehension in aspects of main idea, supporting ideas, vocabulary in context, unstated details and grammatical features.
- **Short Answer:** In this assessment, classically, students are expected to read the passage and answer some questions related in one or two sentences.
- **Editing:** In this assessment, editing tasks are relatively more complex when compared to selective reading by featuring modal auxiliaries, verb complements, noun clauses, adverb clauses, adjective clauses etc.
- **Scanning:** In this assessment, students are expected to read a text and find relevant information. Also, they are required to make rapid identification of relevant bits of information.
- **Ordering Tasks:** In this assessment, students are expected to arrange the jumbled sentences of a little story.
- **Information Transfer:** In this assessment, students are expected to comprehend charts, maps, graphs, diagrams, etc. They are also expected to comprehend specific conventions of the various types of graphics, labels, headings, numbers and symbols, possible relationship among elements of the graphics and make inferences that are not presented.

### **Extensive Reading**

In extensive reading, students are required to read longer texts in order to assess global understanding of a text rather than the understanding of minute details. It applies to texts of more than a page, and includes professional articles, essays, technical report, short stories, and books. Tasks that can be applied in extensive reading is similar to interactive reading such as impromptu reading plus comprehension questions, short answer tasks, editing, scanning, ordering information

transfer and interpretation (discussed under graphics). Additionally, there are some tasks specific to extensive reading: skimming tasks, summarizing and responding, note taking and outlining.

- **Skimming Tasks:** In this assessment, students are required to skim a text and answer questions about main idea, author, purpose, etc. “It is a prediction strategy used to give a reader a sense of topic and purpose of text, the organization of the text, the perspective or point of view of the writer, its case or difficulty and its usefulness to the reader” (Brown, 2004, p. 253).
- **Summarizing and Responding:** In this assessment, students are required to write a synopsis or overview of the text. In the responding part, they are expected to provide their own opinion on the text as a whole or on some part or a statement within it.
- **Note Taking and Outlining:** In this assessment, students are required to write key information including main idea and supporting details in an organizational framework.

Brown’s classification conceptualizes reading as a multi-componential construct where reading can be broken down into subskills or strategy components. In his framework, Brown (2004) emphasizes that extensive type, which is constructed on careful and expeditious reading, provides not only local level but also global level understanding.

As aforementioned, in extensive reading, students read long texts in order to assess global understanding of a text rather than the understanding of minute details. In this study, it is intended to make use of extensive reading with literary texts and the participants are encouraged to do skimming tasks, summarizing and responding, note taking and outlining.

## **2.6. Language Learning and Reading Strategies**

Concerning the fact that language learning strategies play a vital role not only in cognitive processing of language learning but also in the reading comprehension, in what follows, there are definitions and lists of taxonomies classified for language learning and reading strategies.

### **2.6.1. Language Learning Strategies**

With the developments in cognitive psychology, the 1970s and 1980s witnessed a plethora of research in language learning strategies. Therefore, there are numerous definitions emerged for these strategies (e.g. Anderson, 1991, 2003; Cohen, 1990; Hosenfeld, 1977; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990, 1993, 2002; Rubin, 1987; Stern, 1992). Rubin (1987) explains learning strategies as "... any sets of operations, steps, plans, routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval, and use of information" (p.19). According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990), language learning strategies are "the special thoughts or behaviours that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information" (p. 1). In line with that, Cohen (2011) defines language learning strategies as "thoughts and actions, consciously chosen and operationalized by language learners, to assist them in carrying out a multiplicity of tasks from the very outset of learning to the most advanced levels of target language performance" (p.7).

The strategies that learners choose to employ depend upon what their learning goals are and what language they are learning. However, not all the learners are aware of the strategies they use. Therefore, language learning strategies tend to be more organic rather than mechanical. As Oxford (1989) states learning strategies are "... specific actions taken by the learner to make learning more easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations" (p. 8).

With a crucial role in language learning, the strategies applied in this process have drawn considerable attention. Even though, they are similar in terms of their infrastructure, there are various classifications for language learning strategies by many scholars. Taxonomies of language learning strategies suggested by Rubin (1987), Oxford (1990), O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Russo & Küpper (1985) and Stern (1992) are listed below:

Rubin (1987) classifies three types of strategies as;

- Learning Strategies
- Communication Strategies
- Social Strategies

Oxford (1990) divides strategies in two as;

1. Direct Strategies
  - Memory
  - Cognitive
  - Compensation strategies
2. Indirect Strategies
  - Metacognitive Strategies
  - Affective Strategies
  - Social Strategies

O'Malley et al. (1985) group three types of strategies as;

- Metacognitive Strategies
- Cognitive Strategies
- Socioaffective Strategies

Stern (1992) mentions five types of strategies as;

- Management and Planning Strategies
- Cognitive Strategies

- Communicative - Experiential Strategies
- Interpersonal Strategies
- Affective Strategies

### **2.6.2. Reading Strategies**

Apart from being as one strand of literacy, reading requires generating a gist of the text which helps the reader to build a framework for comprehension. During this process, readers are expected to make use of some strategies. According to Goodman (1988), reading is a receptive psycholinguistic process where the reader uses strategies to create meaning from text. Afflerbach, Pearson & Paris (2008) define the reading strategies as “deliberate, goal-directed attempts to control and modify reader’s efforts to decode text, understand words, and construct meanings of text” (p. 368). Moreover, Garner (1987) explains reading strategies as “Generally deliberate, playful activities undertaken by active learners, many times to remedy perceived cognitive failure” (p. 50).

Interaction with the text makes the readers monitor their comprehension and they are supposed to make use of a variety of strategies to build up their comprehension (Ruddell & Unrau, 1994). Therefore, reading strategies are widely accepted as a crucial process for proficient reading in both L1 and L2. However, these strategies share similarities with cognitive strategies and there are some debates on whether they are global or have their own specific features (Carrell, 1989). Also, it is not crystal clear whether they are performed consciously or intentionally. That is why there exist different definitions and classifications for these strategies among scholars.

First of all, a wealth of studies suggests that there is a distinction between reading skills and strategies (Brown, 2007; Cohen, 1990; Duffy, 1993; Oxford, 1990; Paris, Wasik & Turner, 1991). Oxford (1990) defines *skill* simply as “ability,

expertness or proficiency that is gained incrementally during the language development process” (p.6). Similarly, Cohen (1990) suggests that “a skill is an overall behavior or general class of behaviors, whereas a strategy is the specific means for realizing that behavior.” (p. 83). According to Paris et al. (1991), strategies for reading are the tactics which are used by the readers to have a better understanding of the text. On the other hand, Grabe and Stoller (2001) claim that “the distinction between skills and strategies is not entirely clear precisely because that is part of the nature of reading” (p.15). Even though there is not a consensus yet vagueness in terms of the definition of reading strategies, it has been credited by the same scholars that these strategies are undoubtedly employed by most of the readers in means of fostering the comprehension of the text and understanding what they read in all stages of reading namely before, during, and after reading.

### **2.6.2.1. Stages of Reading**

The stages of reading play a pivotal role in the process and they are usually subcategorized as pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading. Nutall (1982) suggests that “Before the students begin to read the text, we can do quite a lot to make their task more explicit and their way of tackling it more effective” (p.152). Therefore, in pre- reading stage, readers can be modeled and encouraged in terms of using prior knowledge to think about the topic, making predictions about the meaning of the text, and previewing the text by skimming and scanning to get a sense of the overall meaning.

It is worth mentioning that skimming and scanning are typically applied techniques, sometimes called strategies, in reading. As Grellet (1981) points out, skimming and scanning are “specific reading techniques necessary for quick and efficient reading” (p. 19). Nutall (1982) explains skimming as the “process of rapid glancing through a text either to search for a specific piece of information (a name, a date) or to get an initial impression of whether the text is suitable for a given

purpose” (p. 49). According to Urquhart and Weir (1998), skimming means a quick reading through of a text to get the gist or to form an overall idea about the topic. On the other hand, they state that scanning refers to the process of going quickly through a text to find specific information, like phrases, figures, names, and etc. In other words, scanning is a tool for searching a specific fact or piece of information without reading the whole text word by word.

Grellet (1981) mentions the advantages of skimming and scanning as follows:

- Skimming helps the readers go through the text in a flash to get the gist.
- Skimming helps the reader to understand how the text is organized.
- Skimming helps the reader to get an overview of the tone or the intonation of the author.
- Scanning helps the reader try to find specific information.
- Scanning helps the reader to follow the linearity of the text.
- Scanning helps the reader to use the time effectively.

In while-reading process, readers monitor their own comprehension by questioning, critical thinking, and over thinking on the ideas of the author in relation to the topic. Additionally, they can make use of use skimming and scanning in this stage as well (Davies & Pearce, 2002).

Finally, in post-reading process, readers reflect upon the ideas and information in the text to clarify unclear meanings and they make use of their prior knowledge to clarify their understanding of the text. They can make evaluation, create a visual map of the text, analyze the language, content, and pattern of the text, focus on the specific features of text to make connections between different texts and those that are unique to a particular text or subject area.

### 2.6.2.2. Classification of Reading Strategies

When it comes to the classification of the reading strategies, there is neither a standard nor an established taxonomy in the literature. However, according to Brown (2007), there exist two broad categories of strategies: learning strategies and communication strategies. While learning strategies are mostly related to input which is mostly available in listening and reading, communication strategies concern output and the production of language in speech or writing. As aforementioned, in the learning strategies, most of the taxonomies involve metacognitive and cognitive strategies which are also related to reading (Oxford, 1990; O'Malley et al., 1985; Stern, 1992).

While metacognitive strategies are concerned with monitoring and evaluating the success of the learning process, cognitive strategies cover the specific contexts and learning tasks. Wenden and Rubin (1987) define cognitive strategies as “mental steps or operations that learners use to process both linguistic and sociolinguistic content” (p.19). On the other hand, Salataci and Akyel (2002) refer to metacognitive strategies as a process of thinking about thinking and define them as planned, deliberate, targeted and future-oriented mental processing that can be used to accomplish cognitive tasks.

The other classifications are listed according to chronological order: Block (1986) groups strategies into two categories: general strategies and local strategies. According to Block (1986), general strategies are the ones that are used in “comprehension-gathering and comprehension-monitoring” (p.472) and local strategies which involve “...attempts to understand specific linguistic units” (p.473). Anderson (1991) proposes five reading strategies: supervising strategies, support strategies, paraphrasing strategies, strategies for establishing coherence in the text, test-taking strategies. Moreover, Grabe (1991) classifies the strategies into six as follows: automatic recognition skills, vocabulary and structural knowledge, formal

discourse structure knowledge, content or word background knowledge, synthesis and evaluation skills or strategies, and metacognitive knowledge and skills monitoring. On the other hand, Pressley and Afflerbach (1995) divide reading strategies into three main categories: identifying and learning the text content, monitoring, evaluating.

The fundamental tenet of reading strategies suggests that successful readers both in L1 and L2 are inclined to make use of them. There is a paramount number of studies investigating the strategy use of readers while constructing meaning and comprehending the text. (Block, 1992; Carrell, 1989; Chamot & O'Malley, 1994; Clarke, 1980; Koda, 2005; Young & Oxford, 1997; Zhang & Wu, 2009). They prove that the readers' interaction with texts and effective use of strategies can improve their efficiency in reading and text comprehension. However, some of them have a common ground in terms of examining the effects of employing TAPs on reading comprehension (e.g. Anderson, 1991; Block, 1986; Hosenfeld, 1977; Nassaji, 2003, Olshavsky, 1976; 1990; Yaylı, 2010). They not only suggest the effectiveness of reading strategies but they have involved the implementation of TAPs in reading comprehension. In what follows, there is a comprehensive presentation of TAPs which are of the essence in this study.

## **2.7. Think Aloud Protocols**

TAPs as a concern of cognitive psychology and education have its roots in psychological research for over decades. However, over the past several decades they became versatile diagnostic tools to examine the underlying thoughts of individuals from social sciences to medicine through verbal protocols. Cohen (1996) defines think-aloud as a “stream-of-consciousness disclosure of thought processes” (p.7).

Someren, Barnard and Sandberg (1994) suggest that TAPs involve asking people to verbalize their thoughts while solving a problem and then analyzing these

verbal protocols. Therefore, verbal reports shed light into “what is going on in the mind” (Bowen, 1994). They also provide data for different disciplines such as accounting, anthropology, care planning, counseling, drug and alcohol addiction treatment, ergonomics, marketing, psychology, software engineering, medicine, the treatment of autism and developmental disorder, speech pathology, neurology, cardiology, and nursing (Bowles, 2010). According to Bowles (2010), “In each of these fields, verbal reports are used to provide insight into participants’, clients’, or patients’ decisions, actions, and behaviors” (p.6). It can be asserted that, in TAPs, the participants in a process such as reading, problem-solving or decision making are supposed to perform a task and then they are encouraged to verbalize their task-relevant thoughts as they perform.

### **2.7.1. The History of Think Aloud Protocols**

The foundation of TAPs goes back to the psychology studies carried on late 1800s and early 1900s when the structuralism was on the stage. Wilhelm Wundt, as a pioneer of structuralism, founded the first psychology laboratory in Leipzig, Germany and used a method called *introspection* to discover the inner thoughts of the patients. He asked his patients to verbalize their processes of senses and thoughts and gathered verbal reports. Later on, his student E. Titchener and W. James took the idea of introspection to beyond and they made studies on themselves. According to them, experienced psychologists could observe their own thinking processes with the help of *introspection method* on themselves to gather data about consciousness (Willis, 2008).

However, *introspection method* was criticized for being too subjective and biased. According to Someren et al. (1994), “Introspection is based on the idea that one can observe events that take place in consciousness more or less as one can observe events in the outside world” (p.29). Then, behaviorism became popular in 1920s and the behaviorists emphasized the significance of behavior as something that

need to be observed and measured objectively (Willis, 2008). Someren et al. (1994) state “The history of the Introspection Method in psychology makes psychologists suspicious of methods that resemble introspection” (p.30).

Later, in 1930s, Lev Vygotsky and Jean Piaget observed *inner speech* and *egocentric speech* of children (van der Veer & Zavershneva, 2018). Vygotsky (1962) proposed *inner speech* enables a child to carry forward the process of developing word meaning (Charters, 2003). To have a glimpse to the underlying history of think-aloud, it is noteworthy to understand Vygotsky’s observation of the compounded relationship between thought and verbalized inner speech. Vygotsky (1962) stated that speech takes its form from communicative social speech to inner egocentric speech. The inner speech is not directed by anyone but it reflects the memory, thoughts, creativity, and problem solving etc. (Bowles, 2010). Similarly, TAPs are verbalization of inner feelings and thoughts rather than a means of communication.

Behrens (2003) referred to Karl Duncker’s, who was a member of the Gestalt school of psychology, problem solving test The Candle Problem. In this test, the subjects were given a candle, a box of thumbtacks, and a box of matches, and they were asked to fix the lit candle to the wall so that it would not drip wax onto the table below. He also asked the subjects to verbalize their problem solving process so he could observe. Rather than asking subjects to analyze their experience and own thoughts (which differs from introspective method), Duncker asked participants to express express their thoughts in a direct way and concurrently so they can also still focus on the experimental task. It was also one of the first examples of think-aloud.

In 1960s, Adriaan de Groot also employed TAPs for analyzing the consciousness of chess players. Rather than introspection method, by implementing TAPs, he made the chess players to amplify their thoughts without interference their performances (Gobet, 2006). To emphasize the importance of TAPs, Groot (1965) says

This deviation from the old methodology was an important novelty. By this relatively simple technique it appeared to be possible experimentally to investigate and systematically to analyze complicated, lengthy processes - provided the experimenter is content with a somewhat rougher, more macroscopic overall picture of the thought process. (as cited in DeTombe, 2015, p.60)

In 1970s, the cognitive revolution made a sensation in higher-level cognitive processes and how thinking allows individuals to generate solutions to novel tasks. In 1972, Newell and Simon wanted to figure out the problem-solving process of people and the sequence of the process that people experience when studying on a problem. Therefore, in their studies, they combined think- aloud, task analysis, problem solving, and model building. Then they demonstrated the use of strategies employed by the subjects in several areas such as, playing chess, solving logical and mathematical problems, and computational models (Kucan & Beck, 1997). Moreover, they attributed a vital role to TAPs because their studies showed that it is possible to get detailed explanation of verbal data (Someren et al., 1994).

In the 1980s, the methodology of TAPs was validated by Ericsson and Simon. They called TAPs as verbal protocol analysis which helps to understand participants' cognitive processes. According to Ericsson and Simon (1980), "Verbal reports elicited with care and interpreted with full understanding of the circumstances under which they are obtained, are a valuable and thoroughly reliable source of information about cognitive processes" (p. 247). Even though verbal reports in TAPs are always open to debate, it is still one of the best ways to identify learners' mental processes, strategies and techniques for completing a task (Chamot, 2005). In line with that, there are numerous studies emphasize the importance of verbal reports (Garner, 1987; Hosenfeld, 1977; Olshavsky, 1977; Pressley & Afflerbach 1995).

In the past four decades, the think-aloud procedure has become more popular among scholars as an instructional technique as well as a data collection tool in areas such as problem solving and second language learning. (Afflerbach, 2000; Cohen, 1996; Ericsson & Simon, 1980, 1993; Newell & Simon, 1972; Pressley &

Afflerbach, 1995). Firstly, applied as a diagnostic and data collection tool, TAPs then became an instructional technique in reading comprehension (Womack, 1991).

### **2.7.2. Think Aloud Protocols and Reading**

Since the cognitive processes which take place in reading are unobservable, TAPs provide valuable data to monitor what is invisible. Moreover, apart from being a means of observing the cognitive process, TAPs make the readers more engaged in the text. Oster (2001) refers to the think-aloud “as a technique in which students verbalize their thoughts as they read and thus bring into the open the strategies they are using to understand a text” (p.64). Pressley and Hilden (2004) clarify that the verbal protocol “captures just about all the conscious processes during reading, at least those that can be verbalized” (p. 312).

According to Baumann, Jones and Seifert-Kessell (1993), the main aim of TAPs is to help readers develop the ability to observe their own reading comprehension and apply strategies for better comprehension. In TAPs, readers are required to stop in places and reflect on how a text is being processed. It means readers pause occasionally during the reading process and think about what is significant in the text. These pauses are useful for understanding “what comprehension actually looks like during reading” (Keene and Zimmermann, 2007, p.38).

Ward and Traweek (1993) state that in thinking aloud process “the examiner instructs the subject to express verbally all thoughts that come to mind while performing the task” (p. 474). In other words, TAPs are the nets hold by the researchers and teachers to catch the introverted and hidden thoughts of the participants. TAPs provide direct access to the reader's mind through their thoughts that they revealed. When employed in reading classes, the instructions have to be explicit and concise. First, TAPs need to be modeled and then readers are invited to

think-aloud. Eventually, with all the supported practice, the readers should be allowed to internalize the thinking-aloud procedure and use them for independent reading and thinking. Simply put, to avoid any obstacles, the readers should become familiar with TAPs with guidance and assistance of teachers or researchers.

In a project by San Jose Public Library, The Santa Clara City Library and California State Library; an adult literacy tutor introduces the think-aloud tutoring strategy as a way to develop metacognition and monitor comprehension while reading independently, and to improve reading comprehension. In what follows, there is the script of the video which can also be watched on <https://youtu.be/PMFyWkTeUkE>.

As a good reader you automatically think strategically and actively to understand what you read. As a tutor your challenge is to learn specific reading comprehension strategies to teach explicitly one at a time to your learner. By learning comprehension strategies, your learner will become aware of how to think in order to make meaning while reading. Good readers constantly and automatically monitor their comprehension while they read. They can figure out what does not make sense to them and find ways to fix problems that have caused a breakdown of meaning. The think-aloud comprehension strategy makes the process of comprehension monitoring explicit to your learner, it allows your learner to hear how you think while you read to tune into the conversations you have with yourself.

Today I am going to model for you using a think-aloud. A think-aloud is a strategy for comprehension. Lots of times, when we are working with our learners, our learners are so busy learning the words, working on decoding that when they are finished reading they do not know what they read. So the think-aloud is a strategy that really helps you think about your thinking. That word “metacognition” to think about what you are thinking and this strategy forces you to do that. So, I am going to model with my learner who has never seen this strategy before or used it. I am going to read a passage and while I am reading, I am going to talk about what I am thinking. While I am trying to make meaning of the text and when I get confused; I am going to say things like “Oh I am confused about that. I do not understand what they mean right now.” I am even going to put a little sticky note at those places because I am stuck and then I am going to use strategies, different strategies to help my learner know that you use strategies to fix up all of those sticky places that you get.

As a tutor when you are going to use this strategy with your learner you need to think very carefully about what text you are going to use. You need to choose something that has some sticky points in it. It cannot be so simple that it is very, very easy to move through the piece without any questions. I spent some time thinking about that and I actually I chose a text from a book about the “Dust Bowl”, because there were some difficult words and the whole concept itself is maybe something that is new to my learner. And if you noticed, I put lots of sticky notes for myself as I went through the first time preparing for my think-aloud and you are going to need to do that too. What is it that you want to make sure that your learner is seeing you do. If you want to make sure that they see you going back and summarizing, then put a little sticky note. I want to summarize right here. Should I read on? Put a little sticky note. I have a little sticky note here. Oh, foreshadowing. I want to make sure that I see what is coming. Something is changing, so it is always important for you go ahead put sticky notes on.

Think-alouds, it is not a strategy that you learn quickly, it takes practice. It seems awkward at first talking about your thinking while you are reading out loud and my suggestion is when you are starting to use think-alouds with your learner, model it often. Model it many, many times before you have your learner actually try to do it. In this situation, the learner is, I modeled it once and I asked one learner to try it. That is not something that I recommend for you, they need to see it done many times first. I enjoy it for many reasons. One; you can use it for lots of different reasons. Maybe you want to work on predicting. Then you usually think-aloud about predicting. Maybe you want to use your think-aloud to; for inference, you can do it. You can use it with any level learner that you have. So it is a good strategy in that way. I actually made up a little worksheet too. So, this is a good thing for you to do. Give them some questions. For instance; does this word or sentence make sense? Am I confused right now? Maybe, if they do not understand, as they are trying to do think-alouds the first time, maybe when you model, when you are confused put your finger right here on your forehead. Oh, I am confused right now and they know that I am not reading the words right now. Oh I am thinking. Then also, I listed strategies for my learner. Okay, list all the different strategies that they should do. Maybe they need to preview; maybe they need to read a portion of the text again. You are going to see this in the video. I try to cover a lot of those strategies in the video. Give it a try, it is awkward at first but I think you will really enjoy it and it is going to help your learner become metacognitive. They are going to be thinking about what they are thinking while they are reading. Have fun!

With consistent practice your learner can understand and internalize the think-aloud strategy and begin to think the way good readers do while they read. The goal is for your learner to become an expert in monitoring her own comprehension. The goal of practicing reading comprehension is for your learner to master and internalize more and more comprehension strategies to choose from and use in a variety of reading situations.

To sum up, effective think-aloud sessions require detailed modeling to avoid any drawbacks. According to Lapp, Fisher and Grant (2008), “an interactive think-aloud provides a means for modeling, scaffolding, and practicing” (p. 378). Wilhelm (2001) suggests that teacher generated think-alouds include the following steps:

1. The selection of a short section of a text
2. Teacher selection of a few relevant and purposeful strategies
3. Teacher statement of the purpose for reading and a deliberate focus on particular strategies
4. Reading the text aloud to students while modeling the chosen strategies
5. Having students annotate the text, or make notes for possible sources of confusion
6. Brainstorming of cues and strategies used
7. Teaching students to generalize the strategies
8. Reinforcement of the think-aloud with follow-up lessons. (as cited in Ness, 2014, pp.5-6)

After a careful set up and preparation on the teacher’s part, readers become more aware of the cognitive processes while performing TAPs. Moreover, while they are talking about their reading processes, they realize, identify and evaluate their own strategy use (Ness & Kenny, 2016). McKeown and Gentilucci (2007) state that while performing TAPs, readers increase self-regulation and more awareness in strategy use. Similarly, Nash-Ditzel (2010) suggests that with implementation of TAPs, readers become more aware of how to use reading strategies and they start to internalize these strategies. TAPs are also the process of talking about the reading strategies employed within the content of the text being read (Wilhelm, 2001). As stated by Wenden (1987), the best way to have an idea about what strategies learners are employing is directly asking them. Also, Afflerbach and Pressley’s (1995) study demonstrates that verbal reports provide rich and elegant descriptions of their learners’ reading processes.

Prado and Plourde (2005) hypothesize that reading strategies are means of comprehending reading guided by teachers to help students understand what they are reading. To help students for their comprehension at various levels and with various text types, there are hundreds of reading strategies available. Therefore, in this case, it is needed to list the commonly applied reading strategies during think-alouds:

**Table 1.**

*Reading Strategies Applied during Think Alouds*

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|   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Overviewing the text                 | The reader sets purposes for reading and looks over the text for information.   |
| 2. Making predictions                   | The reader becomes actively involved in reading and it helps keeping the level of interest high.  |
| 3. Activating and using prior knowledge | The reader makes connections, draws inferences, thinks critically and builds concept maps to the text.  |
| 4. Visualization                        | The reader feels more connected to the text and creates more personal experiences by using her/his own imagination.                               |
| 5. Drawing conclusions                  | The reader finds the implied meaning by using the clues and s/he gets the opportunity to have deeper understanding.                               |
| 6. Understanding the author's purpose   | The reader becomes more aware of the purpose or style of the author. It provides an insight to authorial intentions and a disclosure on the text. |
| 7. Rereading                            | The reader gets the chance of re-thinking the messages in the text and seeing features s/he has not noticed in initial reading.                   |

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|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| 8. Paraphrasing | The reader forms individual sentences or puts a section of text into her/his own words to have a better understanding. |
| 9. Summarizing  | The reader gathers or synthesizes information in the text to explain the main idea or the gist.                        |

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(adapted by Block & Israel, 2004; Caldwell, 2008; Caldwell, & Leslie, 2006; Davey, 1983; Wilhelm, 2001)

### **2.7.3. Categorization of Think Aloud Protocols**

The verbal reports are not always in same standards, when compared they seem to collect verbalized data of different kinds and quantities. Therefore, they are categorized on different criteria. According to Bowles and Leow (2005), the former verbalization is non-metalinguistic in which the reader is centered on the task and only think-aloud without any explanations. The latter verbalization is metalinguistic in which the researcher may ask reader specific information and the reader provides metacognitive report. Cohen (2000) states that metalinguistic verbal report is self-observational, on the other hand nonmetalinguistic one is self-revelational.

Another broad categorization comprises concurrent reports and retrospective reports (Ericsson & Simon 1993). In the concurrent report which is also called introspective, the participant is required to think out and say aloud while working on a task during the process and it requires immediate awareness. Concurrent reports are largely based on the view of information processing and they reflect ongoing cognitive activities. Ericsson and Simon (1993) state that concurrent protocols should contribute “dramatic increase in the amount of behaviour that can be observed when a subject is performing a task while thinking aloud compared to the same subject working under silent conditions” (p. xiii). In concurrent verbalizations, the fact that

the participants say aloud their thoughts may also cause “reactivity problem” (Stratman & Hamp-Lyons, 1994, p. 90). It may cause a difference from usual as a result of verbalizing their thoughts. Stratman and Hamp-Lyons (1994) state that there are some factors that may lead reactivity in concurrent verbal protocols:

- Experimental task directions to subjects that elicit an inappropriate level of verbalization
- Limited short-term memory capacity for talking and attending at the same time
- Hearing one’s own voice
- Learning that occurs because thinking out loud increases subjects’ critical attention to their activities
- Direct or indirect experiments influence through verbal or nonverbal cues (Stratman & Hamp-Lyons, 1994, p. 95)

On the other hand, in retrospective report, which is also called offline, the participant is asked to talk only after the process of completing a task and to recall what s/he has been thinking. Ericsson and Simon (1980) state that in retrospective verbalization “a subject is asked about cognitive processes that occurred at an earlier point in time” (p. 218). Retrospective verbalizations are related to the notion of reflection in action (Schön, 1995). Concurrent verbalization, as mentioned above, might interfere with or slow down task performance of the readers, and in doing so it might influence the reliability, task efficiency and efficacy. In contrast, the retrospective method instructs readers to recall their thoughts after they have finished reading. During the process, readers verbalize their thoughts while reviewing text. In this way, no direct interference occurs in aspects of affecting the performances of the readers. However, it yields substantial forgetting in some texts and tasks. Therefore, they should be carried out immediately after the task because as the time passes it gets complicated for the participant to recall the process (Cohen, 1996). On the other hand, Ericsson and Simon (1993) make it clear that in the process of retrospective

research, some information may be lost. Another limitation of retrospective method is that it takes long time to employ (Alhadreti, 2016).

All in all, it depends on multiple variables to decide on which protocol to be employed. Payne (1994) asks the question “Are some tasks better suited to be studied using verbal protocols than other tasks?” (p. 247). The answer is explicit; it absolutely depends on the fundamentals of a research. Moreover, there are various modes or types of TAPs; they can be employed in groups or by individuals. Therefore, it is important to decide which or what kind of protocol to put into practice accordingly. The factors affecting the decision making process can be shortlisted as the aim, setting, participants and the field of the study. Thus, it requires tedious assessment to employ one or the other or sometimes both types of the protocols in the study, research and classroom settings.

#### **2.7.4. Strengths and Weaknesses of Think Aloud Protocols**

Every method, tool, technique and strategy brings its advantages and limitations with itself. There is no denying that it is the very case for TAPs. Many scholars share the strengths of TAPs as listed (chronologically);

- They make readers have a plan for reading and studying the text, and they allow readers to monitor themselves when employing certain strategies (Davey, 1983).
- They help to elicit data on underlying cognitive processes, decision making process and responses of participants (Afflerbach & Johnston, 1984).
- They foster student’s ability of learning (Meyers, 1989).
- They make the learner engaged in a real task and provide data on cognitive process (Wade, 1990).
- They are an excellent choice for getting a rich source of data (Ericsson & Simon, 1993).

- They are significantly important for the development of not only the common language but also the reading theory (Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995).
- They provide detailed data for reader behaviours and thoughts (Afflerbach, 2000).
- They can provide the opportunity and assistance to the readers to become independent while using reading strategies (Farr & Conner, 2004).
- They eliminate the time gap between the process and report (Yoshida, 2008)

As listed above, TAPs contribute to teaching, observing and assessing reading in many aspects. They also help the readers focus and concentrate on the text, get clues about unknown vocabulary and gist and have a chance for self-monitoring during reading. They make the reader become aware of the relationships they establish and they can realize subsequent stages of reasoning. Furthermore, reader's critical thinking may be accelerated by TAPs and they may become more self-confident in time while verbalizing their thoughts.

Nevertheless, there are also some drawbacks of the protocols which are spotted by scholars in their studies. The limitations of TAPs are listed (chronologically);

- They might be incomplete or poor in aspects of reflecting cognitive processing in cases readers are not aware of or do not perform thinking aloud (Nisbet & Wilson, 1977).
- They are more applicable for students with high-level cognitive development, but it is more complicated for those who are less capable of monitoring their own thinking (Wade, 1990).
- They can affect the accuracy of actual performance and behaviour of the subject (Ericsson & Simon, 1993).
- They are time consuming in means audio tapes' verbatim (Ericsson & Simon, 1993).

- They might be incomplete because of the limited short-term memory capacity which affects the simultaneous process of talking and attending (Stratman & Hamp-Lyons 1994).
- They might be hindering the process because of the uneasiness of verbalizing and hearing one's own voice during a task (Stratman & Hamp-Lyons 1994).
- They might have the problem of validity. The interpretation of the speaker's verbal protocols which is carried out by the researcher should thus be checked (Smagorinsky, 2001).
- They interrupt the reading process and might cause questions about the reliability of such techniques (Sharp, 2003).
- They might be affected by the differences in the linguistic and speaking competences of participants (Smith & King, 2013).

As listed above, TAPs might lead some drawbacks in teaching, observing and assessing reading. To sum up, the limitations of TAPs can be listed as reactivity problem, difficulties in organizing logical thinking, problems of verbal expression, issues of memory and veridicality/validity. Considering the strengths and weaknesses, the usefulness of TAPs can be optimized. If handled effectively, the results can contribute to the field as listed below in relevant research.

### **2.7.5. Relevant Research on Think Aloud Protocols**

Several studies have been conducted on the relationship between TAPs and cognitive processes. Some of them are specifically centered on TAPs and reading strategies and comprehension (e.g. Anderson, 1991; Block, 1986; Hosenfeld, 1977; Liaw, 1995; Nassaji, 2003, Olshavsky, 1976; Yaylı, 2010). In these studies, various groups in means of age, gender, background and educational programs are examined. As one of the aims of this study is to determine whether the use of TAPs can reveal what strategies are often used by the participants, there is a list of related studies below.

In an early think-aloud study, Olshavsky (1976) compared comprehension strategies of twenty-four successful and less successful 10th-grade readers. According to the findings, even though all readers used the same strategies, good readers were observed to use certain strategies significantly more often than poor readers.

In her study with ninth graders (20 successful readers and 20 poor readers), Hosenfeld (1977) employed TAPs for each sentence read by the participants and she found out that while successful readers were ascribing meaning to sentence, poor readers focused on understanding unknown vocabulary.

In another study, Block (1986) investigated nine ESL and native English students in a remedial reading course in university and similarly implemented TAPs for each sentence read by the participants. The study puts forth that more successful readers had a tendency to use their general knowledge, to focus on the gist of the text, to integrate new information with the help of schemata, to differentiate main ideas from supporting ones. On the other hand, unsuccessful readers rarely made use of formerly mentioned strategies.

Anderson (1991) investigated 28 ESL university students to infer their individual differences in means of using reading strategies for two types of reading tasks: 1) reading academic texts and 2) a standardized reading comprehension test. The significant difference that was found between those with successful readers and unsuccessful readers is that good L2 readers apply the strategies more frequently, effectively and appropriately. He states that

Strategic reading is not only a matter of knowing what strategy to use, but also the reader must know how to use a strategy successfully and orchestrate its use with other strategies. It is not sufficient to know about strategies; a reader must also be able to apply them strategically. (pp. 468-469)

Liaw (1995) reports improvement in L2 students' reading comprehension with the implementation of TAPs. Two groups of university EFL students were involved in the study. After the interventions, the difference between the two groups was not found significant. However, there were differences between the mean scores of the first and second reading comprehension tests. The responses to the questionnaire were in line with the quantitative data. In conclusion, according to Liaw (1995) while implementing TAPs, certain considerations are needed. However, in the end, TAPs have improved the reading comprehension of participants and it could be a viable approach to enhance the reading comprehension.

Nassaji (2003) conducted a study with twenty-one adult ESL learners who have different language backgrounds. In this study, both types of protocols were used but the data were elicited mainly through the introspective protocols because “they involve more direct and online reporting of what learners are doing at the time of the task” (Nassaji, 2003, p. 651). The study aimed to distinguish lexical inferencing abilities of the readers and strategies employed in L2. According to the findings, different strategies contributed to infer meaning successfully for students who were more proficient in vocabulary knowledge.

In her study, Yayli (2010) analyzed the use of cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies of six proficient and six less proficient English learners by applying different types of texts. She found out that cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies were implemented more frequently by proficient readers when compared to less proficient group for different text types.

Yusuf, Nasir and Rohiman (2018) carried out a think-aloud study with eighth grade students of a junior high school. They employed one group pretest and posttest design. According to the results, reading aspects that improved were detailed information, main idea, understanding inferences, vocabulary and finding references. In conclusion, TAPs were reported to improve the ability of their students' EFL reading comprehension.

While mentioned studies mainly focused on TAPs and reading strategies, there are several other studies concerning comprehension of literary texts through TAPs. (Earthman, 1992; Eva-Wood, 2004; Langer, 1990; Peskin, 1998; Rogers, 1991; Smith, 1991). As another aim of this research is to determine whether the use of TAPs has a crucial impact on readers and their achievement in reading comprehension of literary text, related studies are reviewed and listed below.

Langer's (1990) think-aloud research aimed to find out readers' meaning making process while reading literature. Langer carried out the study with middle and high school students (grades 7-11). In the study, thirty-six students were asked to employ think-alouds as they read two short stories, two poems, one science and one social studies texts. According to the findings of Langer's study, there were four stances that the readers took as they developed meaning making. "They are; being out and stepping into an envisionment, being in and moving through an envisionment, stepping back and rethinking what one knows, and stepping out and objectifying the experience" (Langer, 1990, p. 229). Eventually, despite the fact that most of the students implemented all the stances, it was found out that poor readers often inclined to be in the being out and stepping into an envisionment stance.

Roger (1991) investigated interpretive processes of 8 ninth-grade students through TAPs in literature classes. In intervention sessions, the participants were asked to read a story and then they were encouraged for reflection and reexamining their point of view about interpretation and their instructional experiences. The results of the study showed that after the intervention sessions, students applied self-regulated strategies such as questioning and evaluating more. "After participating in an alternative response-centered instructional unit, students were more intertextual in terms of their preferences related to the interpretive process and more interpretive in their reasoning about literary works" (Roger, 1991, p.391).

Similarly, Smith (1991) conducted a think-aloud study on five successful and five less successful students of ninth grade. In the study, two short stories were read by the participants. According to the findings, successful readers were observed to use more processes.

In another study, Earthman (1992) applied TAPs with eight graduate students and freshmen to find out the differences while they read poem and short stories. In the procedure, there were five sessions with each participant, these sessions included a follow-up discussion and a think-aloud protocols. In each case, Earthman found that expert readers had an open manner and more developed interactions with the texts.

Peskin (1998) investigated think-aloud responses of eight doctoral candidates who were experts and eight undergraduates or upper-grade high school students who were novices. According to Peskin, the expert readers possessed more elaborate responses and utilized reading strategies while the novices had been through some challenges for meaning making and they had only a general overview for the figurative language. She stated that the novices “were consumed by the task of building up a representation of the subject matter, whereas the experts could focus on higher level interpretations” (p. 243).

In her study “How Think-and-Feel Aloud Instructions Influences Poetry Readers”, Eva-Wood (2004) conducted a study on eleventh-grade college students who were divided into control (think-aloud) and experimental groups (think-and-feel-aloud). They had instructions for 4-week on reading poetry. After the intervention sessions, the analysis showed that experimental group students made more elaborative and better quality comments, identified more poetic devices and showed higher interest in the poems than control group students.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the design of the conducted study is presented. The chapter describes research method, participants, data collection tools and procedure, finally data analysis and interpretation. As the main aim of the present study is to investigate the effects of TAPs on reading comprehension, it is centered on finding answers to the following research questions:

RQ 1: Is the implementation of TAPs effective on promoting reading comprehension of students?

RQ 2: Do TAPs play a contributive role to understand and observe the students' use of reading strategies to promote learning?

RQ 3: Is there a relationship between the success of reading comprehension of students who are trained in TAPs and the text type used in reading classes?

RQ 4: What are the opinions of the participants regarding the effectiveness of TAPs in reading comprehension?

#### 3.2. Research Method

This study was conducted with mixed methods research design which is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. As suggested by Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutman and Hanson (2003), a mixed methods involves:

...the collection or analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study in which the data are collected concurrently or sequentially, are given a priority, and involve the integration of data at one or more stages in the process of research. (p. 212)

It can be suggested that a mixed methods is an approach which aims for more in-depth information and knowledge of the problem as well as providing rich datasets. Therefore, it employs different paradigms, whereby the goals are just not convergence or comparison of data, but corroboration through convergence of findings, elaboration, by providing richness and detail, and initiation, by prompting new interpretations and suggesting areas of further exploration through recasting the entire research question.

Furthermore, an experimental design was conducted in which participants in an experimental group received the special treatment and the control group, which received a conventional treatment, to measure the significant effect of this model instruction (Hatch & Farhady, 1982). To put it simply, the study involved two groups; experimental and control. While the experimental group received interventional teaching in reading with TAPs, the control group was instructed with conventional reading comprehension methods. The experimental and the control groups were randomly assigned.

The quantitative design of the study presented the results of the pretests, posttests, checklist and check sheet which aimed to measure improvement in the students' EFL reading comprehension by applying thinking aloud in the experimental group. On the other hand, the explanatory qualitative design of the study relying on the verbal protocols, written reports, teacher's journal and observations, semi-structured interview results of the participants in the experimental group also provided an insight to effectiveness of TAPs on reading comprehension.

### 3.3. Participants

The participants were eighty-three freshmen students in ELT department at Trakya University which is a public university in the north-west of Turkey. The students were in their 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> year depending on their enrollment in the preparation class, which lasts one academic year, at the School of Foreign Languages at the same university. The participants were nonnative speakers of English. Since they were the students of ELT department; their language proficiency level was considered to be upper intermediate level (B2) according to the Common European Framework because the students either passed the B2 level foreign language proficiency test or enrolled at School of Foreign Languages and completed one academic year successfully.

The students were randomly assigned as experimental (think-aloud) and control groups (non-think-aloud). The experimental group included 40 participants. 28 of the participants were female and 12 were male. The ages of the participants ranged from 17 to 24. Participation in the think-aloud group was on voluntary basis and they received instructions and training about TAPs. In the control group, there were 43 participants. 30 of those were female and 13 were male with ages ranging from 17 to 22. The non-think aloud group, on the other hand, received regular reading instruction.

T-test results showed that the experimental and control groups were not significantly different in terms of their pretest scores in both texts before the interventions. The comparison of the experimental and control groups in terms of their mean pretest scores in first text are tabulated below.

**Table 2.***Pretest Score Comparison of the Groups in First Text*

| Group        | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>p</i> |
|--------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|
| Experimental | 40       | 60.03    | 13.59     | 0.789    | 81        | .433     |
| Control      | 43       | 57.58    | 14.56     |          |           |          |

As shown in the table, the pretest scores of the experimental ( $M = 60.03$ ,  $SD = 13.59$ ) and control ( $M = 57.58$ ,  $SD = 14.56$ ) groups in first text were not significantly different ( $t = 0.789$ ,  $df = 81$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Mean pretest score comparison for the experimental and control groups in second text is presented below.

**Table 3.***Pretest Score Comparison of the Groups in Second Text*

| Group        | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>p</i> |
|--------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|
| Experimental | 40       | 61.70    | 13.59     | 1.129    | 81        | .262     |
| Control      | 43       | 57.91    | 14.56     |          |           |          |

The results showed that the experimental ( $M = 61.70$ ,  $SD = 13.59$ ) and control ( $M = 57.91$ ,  $SD = 14.56$ ) groups were not significantly different in terms of their pretest scores in second text ( $t = 1.129$ ,  $df = 81$ ,  $p > .05$ ).

### 3.4. Data Collection Tools and Procedure

#### 3.4.1. Data Collection Tools

To collect data, pre and posttests, TAPs (written verbal reports), teacher's journal, checklist and check sheet and semi-structured interview were implemented in this study.

The first data collection tool was a reading comprehension test which was administered to all participants in the experimental and control groups. The test was implemented to the all participants as the pretests and posttests (**see Appendix 1**). They were in the form of a piece of literature to be read with five open-ended questions to follow for each text. To ensure content validity, the learning materials were taken from Sylvia Plath and Virginia Woolf and with the open ended questions it was aimed to evaluate the understanding of participants regarding the main idea, supporting details, the figurative language of the texts, author's intention and conclusion. As Brown (2001) states, tests are applied to show strengths and directions improved in the knowledge of the students and whether they know specific set of information about a skill or structured knowledge. The tests were prepared by the researcher by adapting some similar tests used to check reading comprehension of nonnative speakers of English.

Secondly, *Stop, Ask, Fix: Student Checklist* (**see Appendix 2**) and *Conversing with the Author Check Sheet* (**see Appendix 3**) by Wilhelm (2001) were used in the study and aimed at providing self-monitoring practice in the use of TAPs for the experimental group. The checklist and the check sheet were applied only to the experimental group simply because they were treated by TAPs while the control group was instructed by regular reading instructions. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the *Stop Ask Fix: Student Checklist* was calculated to be .85, indicating high reliability. The *Conversing with the Author Check Sheet* was seen to have a high level of reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of .89.

Thirdly, this study heavily relied on the verbal protocols of the participants, which were mostly in written form, and teacher's observations and notes. Verbal protocols are assumed as one of the richest data sources revealing the hidden part of the reading process (Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995). As Afflerbach (2000) also states,

This methodology can enlighten our understanding of such factors as reader characteristics - processes and strategies used by readers, readers' motivation

and affect, the interaction of readers' motivation and affect with their cognitive responses - and the examination of contextual variables: text task, setting, and readability. By examining these factors as they relate to reading comprehension processes, verbal protocols research can be used to refine existing theory and break ground for new theory. (p. 431)

As there was only one researcher who was also the teacher, data transcription of video-tapes and audio records would be very long running and would have reliability issues, for these reasons, the participants were suggested to write their verbal protocols. Although there were the times that they only provided verbal protocols, mostly they tried to put their verbal protocols into words. During the times they preferred to provide only verbal reports, the researcher took notes and wrote reports to prevent data loss. Furthermore, during and after each TAPs session, the teacher's journal was kept to keep the track of verbal reports, behaviours, attitudes, feelings and opinions of the participants.

As Caldwell (2008) states, think-alouds are not supposed to be in oral form, the students can take notes wherever they want such as post-its, page in a textbook, paper or in a journal. Actually, there are some advantages of written think-aloud comments, they provide more to the teacher to examine and compare. In the cases the participants avoided or forgot to write their verbal protocols, the researcher kept a teacher journal and by the help of retrospective protocols of the participants, she took all the notes on these protocols and observations. Because Rankin (1988) states that "as an additional safeguard, it may be advisable to have subjects do a retrospective analysis of the research passage after the thinking aloud session" (p. 125).

The last tool was a semi-structured interview (see **Appendix 4**). According to Willig (2001) and Taylor (2005), semi-structured interviews are the most widely-used method of data collection in qualitative research. The experimental group was interviewed by an open ended question. This instrument was used to gain information about their opinions on the effectiveness of TAPs.

### 3.4.2. Data Collection Procedure

#### 3.4.2.1. Selection of Reading Texts

As mentioned before, reading is a foundational process for language acquisition, communication, sharing information and ideas. When it comes to reading literary texts, it also means a strong requirement for creativity, critical thinking and analyzing. Moreover, readers of literary texts deviate from literal words to create mental images that make sense to them. Since reading literature is a complex process, it cannot be framed into one or two pictures or interpretations. There are no strict laws in reading literature per se; it provides readers a door which opens to their own mental garden. Therefore, when we read literary texts, we do not only think and comprehend but also can feel. As Rosenblatt (1995) suggests, literature makes students “think rationally within an emotionally colored context” (p.217).

Broadly speaking, reading literary texts is considered more difficult than informational ones especially in terms of comprehending the main idea and the details being read. Success in reading, on the other hand, is mostly measured as comprehension. Hence, TAPs were implemented for this research, as it was believed to help the participants comprehend their literature texts better. Moreover, to avoid any obstacles, all participants in the study had training on figurative language beforehand to have better understanding and meaning making of the literary texts.

In the study, three literary texts were used. The first text was *The Chrysanthemums* by John Steinbeck (see **Appendix 5**). The short story is one of the most difficult types of prose to write and one of the most pleasurable to read. This text was used as a warm-up session for TAPs in the experimental group. For this reason, no pretests and posttests were implemented.

The second text was the poem *Daddy* by Sylvia Plath (see **Appendix 6**) which is composed of 16 stanzas, each with five lines, making a total of 80 lines. Ransom (1937) says:

Poetry distinguishes itself from prose on the technical side by the devices which are, precisely, it means of escaping from prose. Something is continually being killed by prose which the poet wants to preserve. But this must be put philosophically. Philosophy sounds hard, but it deals with natural and fundamental forms of experience. (p. 342)

Therefore, a poem as an indispensable part of literature was included in this study, as it is believed to be most powerful way of analyzing a literary text. Finally, the third text was Virginia Woolf's *A Haunted House* (see **Appendix 7**) which is a relatively short text as a short story. In sum, all the texts in this study were chosen from literary texts. As there were numerous studies on the relationship between TAPs and informational texts, it was also aimed in this study to analyze the relationship between success in the reading comprehension of students who were trained in TAPs and literary text type.

### **3.4.2.2. Procedure**

The study was completed in one semester, 14-week time period, where the pretests were administered in Week 1. *The Chrysanthemums* was presented to both groups and this was considered as a pilot think-aloud study for the experimental group in Week 2. They received thinking aloud introductions while it was a regular reading class for the control group. The think-aloud was an entirely new experience for the experimental group participants. Therefore, they watched videos on TAPs and had clear instructions about the procedure.

It is crucial to eliminate the problems such as anxiety of the participants while thinking-aloud. Therefore, researchers need to provide students the opportunity to

practice. (Block 1992; Ericsson & Simon, 1993; Green, 1998). On that account, in Week 3, while the control group had conventional reading classes which featured literary analysis, vocabulary building and sometimes translation, the experimental group continued to be trained in TAPs. For example, participants practiced thinking aloud by reading short paragraphs before reading the longer ones so that they could perform better in the main data collection procedure. Furthermore, think-aloud procedure was introduced to the experimental group and they were instructed at the beginning of the process as follows:

In this study, the main interest is your ‘thinking’. Please just relax and concentrate on what you are doing. This is a kind of an experimental to improve your reading comprehension. In this experimental it is aimed to highlight what you think when you read in English. In order to find out, there is going to be some instructions to think-aloud as you read. What is meant by think-aloud is that you are kindly invited to tell everything you are thinking, from the time start reading sample text you are given, until you complete the reading task. You are kindly asked to talk constantly from the time you start the sample until you finish reading. Please jot down every single thing you can think of and please feel free to use the margins of the text or a separate paper for your notes. You neither are supposed to try to plan out what you say nor try to explain what you are saying. Just act as if you are alone in the classroom speaking to yourself. The important thing is that you keep talking and please write them down, and talk clearly and loudly enough to be heard. If you are silent for any period of time, you will be reminded to talk by saying “What are you thinking?” Similarly, if you begin to talk softly, you will be invited to speak more loudly. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask. (adapted from Jourdenais et al., 1995, p,194)

During the intervention sessions, the researcher followed some guidelines like Singhal’s (2001) to avoid possible complications because a think-aloud research requires careful planning, successful design and tedious data collection. Singhal (2001) adapted the following list by featuring Ericsson and Simon (1993) and Garner (1987) and presented some recommendations about how verbal-reports should be collected:

1. Avoid asking about processes that are engaged in automatically and which are therefore inaccessible upon reflection. Complex, difficult, and novel tasks may provide more information than much-practiced simple tasks.
2. Reduce the interval between processing and reporting.
3. Use multiple methods to assess knowledge and use of strategies (interview questions, questionnaires, data from verbal-reports and think-alouds).
4. Avoid general questions asking subjects to provide a generalized description of their processing as this may fail to reflect processing accurately.
5. Emphasize that reporting should reflect exactly what is being thought.
6. Provide directions to subjects that encourage intermediate and final products of processing rather than descriptions of explanations of processing.
7. Use reliable categories to code verbal and think-aloud reports.
8. Recognize that there are individual differences in the ability to provide think-aloud reports and in thinking.

Regarding the recommendations mentioned above, in Weeks 4-8, the researcher held five intervention sessions with the experimental group on *Daddy* which is an unfamiliar poem for them. In Weeks 9-13, the experimental group had five intervention sessions more for an unfamiliar short story, *A Haunted House*. At the same period of time, the control group participants received ten regular sessions each week for both texts.

In essence, all instructional conditions were identical for both groups but the intervention sessions. With a synthesis of ten intervention sessions, the experimental group received the full excerpt instruction within the applications of TAPs in order to determine if the think-aloud was an effective technique for helping students learn to monitor their comprehension and comprehend better. While working on the tasks,

participants were encouraged to think-aloud as thoughts occurred to them or they did so whenever they wanted and also at some intervals specified by the researcher (Ericsson & Simon, 1993). In the intervals, it was aimed to draw conclusions about cognitive and comprehension processes and also the strategies implemented by the participants.

Most importantly, the participants were reminded to verbalize every thought that occurred to them while they figured out the texts during the sessions. These sessions were broken into some parts to observe the participants' comprehension and reading strategies. Sometimes, participants were asked to verbalize their thoughts upon completion of the task. Therefore, there were not only concurrent but also retrospective protocols as the main point was to invite the participants to express out loud the thoughts that occurred to them naturally and jot them down. The participants were not instructed to focus on the cognitive processes involved in task completion nor were they trained in the self-observation of cognitive processing. The role of the teacher-researcher was primarily coaching and modeling in the first sessions but then, it turned into a listener, an observer and a facilitator and a moderator when needed.

Likewise, the control group participants received the full excerpt instruction in ten regular sessions but the sessions mostly featured teacher explanations, questions and answers, vocabulary building, literary analysis, interpretation and group discussion. The control group was also being informed about the experiment and TAPs, and they were invited to join think-aloud training and TAPs session after the study, if they would like to.

As the final step, in Week 14, the posttests were administered. The semi-structured interview was then conducted with the participants in the experimental group in the same week to have their opinions regarding the effectiveness of TAPs in reading comprehension.

**Table 4.***Research Procedure for Experimental and Control Group*

| <b>Week</b> | <b>Experimental Group Orientations</b>   | <b>Control Group Orientations</b>   |
|-------------|--|---|
| Week 1      | Pretests (45-60 minutes each)  | Pretests (45-60 minutes each)   |
| Week 2      | The text: <i>The Chrysanthemums</i> by John Steinbeck<br>Introduction of TAPs<br>To watch a sample video on TAPs and an analysis of think-aloud process<br>Teacher Think Aloud Model/Coach   | The text: <i>The Chrysanthemums</i> by John Steinbeck<br>Conventional reading class<br>Teacher Explanation<br>Question/Answer                                 |
| Week 3      | The text: <i>The Chrysanthemums</i><br>Warm-up session with TAPs<br>Teacher modeled TAPs<br>Practicing Individual Verbal Protocols<br>Reader Responses   | The text: <i>The Chrysanthemums</i><br>Literary Analysis<br>Vocabulary Building<br>Discussions  |
| Week 4-8    | The text: <i>Daddy</i> by Sylvia Plath<br>Intervention Sessions<br>Individual Verbal Protocols both Concurrent and Retrospective<br>Written Reports<br>Outlining the core parts<br>Annotating moments of confusion<br>Clarifying<br>Use of strategies            | The text: <i>Daddy</i> by Sylvia Plath<br>Teacher Explanation<br>Question/Answer<br>Literary Analysis<br>Vocabulary Building<br>Interpretation<br>Discussions |
| Week 9-13   | The text: <i>A Haunted House</i> by Virginia Woolf<br>Intervention Sessions<br>Individual Verbal Protocols both Concurrent and Retrospective<br>Written Reports<br>Outlining the core parts<br>Annotating moments of confusion<br>Clarifying / Use of strategies | The text: <i>A Haunted House</i> by Virginia Woolf<br>Literary Analysis<br>Vocabulary Building<br>Interpretation<br>Group Discussion                          |
| Week 14     | Posttests (45-60 minutes each)<br>Semi-structured Interview  | Posttests (45-60 minutes each)  |

### 3.5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

For the comparisons of the pretest and posttest scores, means and standard deviations were calculated. Also, the skewness and kurtosis values were computed together with their standard errors. The results are presented below.

**Table 5.**

*Skewness and Kurtosis Values for Pretest and Posttest Scores*

| Variable                 | Skewness | $SE_{Skewness}$ | Kurtosis | $SE_{Kurtosis}$ |
|--------------------------|----------|-----------------|----------|-----------------|
| Daddy Pretest            | 0.126    | 0.264           | -0.487   | 0.523           |
| Daddy Posttest           | -0.277   | 0.264           | -0.816   | 0.523           |
| A Haunted House Pretest  | -0.396   | 0.264           | -0.196   | 0.523           |
| A Haunted House Posttest | -0.726   | 0.264           | -0.019   | 0.523           |

According to Tabachnik and Fidell (2014), skewness and kurtosis values within a range of  $\pm 1.5$  indicate a normal distribution. As seen in the table, skewness and kurtosis values  $\pm$  their standard errors for the continuous variables in this study fell within the  $\pm 1.5$  range, indicating normal data distributions for all score variables.

Moreover, ANOVA models are typically robust to minor deviations from a normal distribution (Schmider, Ziegler, Danay, Beyer & Bühner, 2010). For this reason, the pretest and posttest scores were compared by means of Repeated Measures ANOVA's using the group variable (i.e. experimental and control) as the between-subjects variable. Also, the mean posttest scores of the experimental group in *Daddy* by Sylvia Plath and *A Haunted House* by Virginia Woolf were compared by means of a paired-samples t-test.

Since the *Stop Ask Fix: Student Checklist* collected dichotomous responses as Present (1) and Absent (0), the variables were treated as categorical frequencies. The experimental and control groups were compared with respect to the responses to this

checklist by means of Chi-Square tests that allow for comparing categorical frequency data (Agresti, 2007).

The responses to the *Conversing with the Author Check Sheet* (not yet, sometimes, always) were treated as ordinal variables. For this reason, median values were computed and the experimental and control groups were compared in each item by means of Mann-Whitney U tests, which is a non-parametric procedure used to test hypotheses with ordinal data in research designs with two independent samples (Sheskin, 2004).

Content analysis was conducted by reading all verbal protocols of the participants and the teacher's journal. They were numbered and possible themes, categories, subcategories and codes were obtained according to theory-driven and/or empirically driven categories. Verbal protocol coding changes from one study to another dramatically. In any case, researchers need to consider the issues of internal validity. According to Kasper (1998), researchers either can apply an existing coding scheme or develop their own when analyzing the verbal reports. If the existing coding schemes are not equivalent with the study's theory, then there will be a need for a new coding scheme. Therefore, the coding scheme for a think-aloud research can differ, yet the main determinant in this respect is the collected data.

All in all, a researcher can use a coding scheme that has been designed by other researchers with or without modifications (Anderson, Bachman, Perkins & Cohen, 1991; Kasper, 1998; Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995). In this study, existing coding schemes which belong to Caldwell (2008), Caldwell and Leslie (2006) and Wilhelm (2001) were modified according to available data.

In order to specify a more compatible coding system, Leslie and Caldwell (2001) classified 11 categories of think-aloud reports that are widespread in the research literature and shortlisted them into two groups: those which specify

understanding on the part of the participants and those that specify lack of understanding. However, because of the negative correlation between these two categories, they then limited them into eight as paraphrasing or summarizing, inferring, questioning, noting understanding or lack of it, connecting to prior knowledge and reacting personally. Leslie and Caldwell (2006) found that paraphrasing/summarizing is the most frequent type of think-aloud statement which rates from 40% to 75% of the time.

Likewise, Wilhelm (2001) suggests summarizing, using background knowledge, making inferences, predicting, questioning, visualizing, indicating awareness of problems and using monitoring strategies as coding categories. These two coding schemes were the bases of this study in terms of coding reading strategies. So categories such as the most frequent types of think-aloud statements, namely paraphrasing/summarizing, predicting, using background knowledge, connecting to prior knowledge, reacting personally and visualizing were included in the coding scheme of this study. However, for the comprehension of the literary texts, there were extra categories belonging to meaning making.

Consequently, there were some modifications and additions in the coding scheme of the collected data covering literacy comprehension. The coding categories were specified by the researcher and two other experts in the field.

In the study, the participants were supposed to focus on meaning and generate insights from a dynamic interaction between their thoughts and that of the author through the literary texts. They were also supposed to have an intellectual intercourse with the author by verbalizing their thoughts. It was also a goal for this study to make the participants create mental maps, make use of their prior knowledge, navigate the textual terrain of the texts and also make use of all the keywords, important phrases and sensory expressions of the author, namely the figurative language. Furthermore, it was aimed to observe the implemented reading strategies of the participants on literary texts.

As a poem and a short story differ in many aspects, the coding scheme for this study differed according to texts. For example, *activating and using prior knowledge* code for both texts was subcategorized different from one another. Also, there were diverse data regarding the code *author* for both texts. For this reason, the subcategories for *author* were set accordingly.

According to the data collected from the participants within the five intervention sessions for the poem *Daddy*, the categories and subcategories were figured as follows:

**Table 6.**  
*Coding Scheme for the Poem Daddy*

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Activating and Using Prior Knowledge</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A specific period of history</li> <li>• A specific event in the history</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Different religions</li> <li>. Different cultures</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Personal impression and the expression</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal experiences</li> <li>• Personal feelings</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Personal beliefs</li> <li>. Personal metaphors</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Author</b>                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Predictions about the author's life</li> <li>• Curiosity for the other works of the author</li> <li>• Background knowledge about the author</li> </ul> |   |
| <b>Fix-up and Other Reading strategies</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading Aloud</li> <li>• Rereading</li> <li>• Thinking Aloud</li> <li>• Paraphrasing</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Drawing Conclusion</li> <li>. Visualization</li> <li>. Predictions</li> <li>. Summarizing</li> </ul> |
| <b>Literacy Comprehension</b>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theme of the poem</li> <li>• Rhythm of the poem the poem</li> <li>• Mood and tone of the poem</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Language of the stpoem</li> <li>. Figurative language of</li> </ul>                                  |

According to the data collected from the participants within the five intervention sessions for the short story *A Haunted House*, the categories and subcategories were figured as follows:

**Table 7.**

*Coding Scheme for the Short Story A Haunted House*

|  |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| <b>Activating and Using Prior Knowledge</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Background knowledge about the author</li> <li>• Curiosity for the other works of the author</li> <li>• Predictions about the author's life</li> </ul>   |  |   |
| <b>Personal impression and the expression</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal feelings</li> <li>• Personal beliefs</li> <li>• Personal experiences</li> </ul>   |  |   |
| <b>Fix-up and Other Reading strategies</b>   | <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tbody> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading Aloud</li> <li>• Rereading</li> <li>• Thinking Aloud</li> <li>• Paraphrasing</li> </ul> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>.Drawing Conclusion</li> <li>.Visualization</li> <li>. Predictions</li> <li>. Summarizing</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading Aloud</li> <li>• Rereading</li> <li>• Thinking Aloud</li> <li>• Paraphrasing</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>.Drawing Conclusion</li> <li>.Visualization</li> <li>. Predictions</li> <li>. Summarizing</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading Aloud</li> <li>• Rereading</li> <li>• Thinking Aloud</li> <li>• Paraphrasing</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>.Drawing Conclusion</li> <li>.Visualization</li> <li>. Predictions</li> <li>. Summarizing</li> </ul>   |  |   |
| <b>Literacy Comprehension</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theme of the story</li> <li>• Elements of the story</li> <li>• Tone/ Language of the story</li> <li>• Figurative language of the story</li> </ul>  |  |   |

### **3.6. Findings**

This part includes the results and interpretation of the analysis of the data collected from the participants in the study.

#### **3.6.1. Findings of the First Question**

To find out the answer for the first research question, (*Is the implementation of TAPs effective on promoting reading comprehension of students?*) the results of the pretest and posttest were compared. The first literary text that the participants received as a part of the study was the poem *Daddy* by Sylvia Plath. The pretest and posttest scores regarding this text are presented below.

**Table 8.***Pretest and Posttest Scores for Daddy by Sylvia Plath*

| Test     | Group        | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>Min</i> | <i>Max</i> |
|----------|--------------|----------|----------|-----------|------------|------------|
| Pretest  | Experimental | 40       | 60.03    | 13.59     | 30.00      | 90.00      |
|          | Control      | 43       | 57.58    | 14.56     | 30.00      | 90.00      |
|          | Total        | 83       | 58.76    | 14.07     | 30.00      | 90.00      |
| Posttest | Experimental | 40       | 79.80    | 12.98     | 55.00      | 100.00     |
|          | Control      | 43       | 67.88    | 16.77     | 40.00      | 100.00     |
|          | Total        | 83       | 73.63    | 16.12     | 40.00      | 100.00     |

As seen in the table, the mean pretest score for the poem in the pretest was 58.76 ( $SD = 14.07$ ) with a minimum of 30 and maximum of 90. In the pretest, the experimental group had a mean score of 60.03 ( $SD = 13.59$ ). In this test, the minimum score was 30 and the maximum score was 90. Also ranging from 30 to 90, the pretest scores of the control group was found to have a mean score of 57.58 ( $SD = 14.56$ ).

In the posttest, the mean score was seen to be 73.63 ( $SD = 16.12$ ) with a minimum of 40 and a maximum of 100. In this test, the mean score of the experimental group was 79.80 ( $SD = 12.98$ ), with scores ranging from 55 to 100. The control group was seen to have a mean score of 67.88 ( $SD = 16.77$ ) with scores ranging from 40 to 100 in the posttest.

The repeated measures ANOVA results for the comparison of the pretest and posttest scores are tabulated below.

**Table 9.***Repeated Measures ANOVA Results for Daddy by Sylvia Plath*

| Source               | <i>SS</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>MS</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>p</i>   | $\eta^2_p$ |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|------------|------------|
| Measurements         | 9373.44   | 1         | 9373.44   | 173.66   | <b>.00</b> | 0.68       |
| Measurements * Group | 929.75    | 1         | 929.75    | 17.23    | <b>.00</b> | 0.18       |
| Error                | 4372.02   | 81        | 53.98     |          |            |            |

The comparison results revealed that there was a statistically significant difference with a very large effect between the pretest and posttest scores in the poem ( $F_{(1, 81)} = 173.66, p < .001, \eta^2_p = 0.68$ ). Moreover, a statistically significant interaction with a very large effect was found out between test results and being in the experimental or control group ( $F_{(1, 81)} = 17.23, p < .001, \eta^2_p = 0.18$ ). Based on these findings, it was seen that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group in the poem.

The second text that was studied by the participants was the short story *A Haunted House* by Virginia Woolf. The scores taken by the participants in the pretest and posttest of this text are presented below.

**Table 10.**

*Pretest and Posttest Scores for A Haunted House by Virginia Woolf*

| Test     | Group        | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>Min</i> | <i>Max</i> |
|----------|--------------|----------|----------|-----------|------------|------------|
| Pretest  | Experimental | 40       | 61.70    | 16.18     | 25.00      | 90.00      |
|          | Control      | 43       | 57.91    | 14.43     | 20.00      | 80.00      |
|          | Total        | 83       | 59.74    | 15.32     | 20.00      | 90.00      |
| Posttest | Experimental | 40       | 89.78    | 8.49      | 65.00      | 100.00     |
|          | Control      | 43       | 69.95    | 15.95     | 35.00      | 100.00     |
|          | Total        | 83       | 79.51    | 16.24     | 35.00      | 100.00     |

The results revealed that the mean pretest score for the short story was 59.74 ( $SD = 15.32$ ) with a minimum of 20 and a maximum of 90 for the whole group. In this test, the scores of the experimental group ranged from 25 to 90 with a mean score of 61.70 ( $SD = 16.18$ ) and the scores of the control group ranged from 20 to 80 with a mean score of 57.91 ( $SD = 14.43$ ).

The mean posttest score for the whole group was found to be 79.51 ( $SD = 16.24$ ) with a minimum of 35 and a maximum of 100. In the posttest, the mean score of the experimental group was 89.78 ( $SD = 8.49$ ) with scores ranging from 65 to

100. The posttest scores of the control group ranged from 35 to 100 with a mean score of 69.95 ( $SD = 15.95$ ).

The repeated measures ANOVA results for the comparison of the pretest and posttest scores are given below.

**Table 11.**

*Repeated Measures ANOVA Results for A Haunted House by Virginia Woolf*

| Source               | SS       | df | MS       | F      | p   | $\eta^2_p$ |
|----------------------|----------|----|----------|--------|-----|------------|
| Measurements         | 16679.19 | 1  | 16679.19 | 258.35 | .00 | 0.76       |
| Measurements * Group | 2661.98  | 1  | 2661.98  | 41.23  | .00 | 0.34       |
| Error                | 5229.34  | 81 | 64.56    |        |     |            |

The results of the repeated measures ANOVA showed that there was a statistically significant difference with a very large effect between the pretest and posttest scores in the short story ( $F_{(1, 81)} = 258.35$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2_p = 0.76$ ). The interaction between test results and being in the experimental or control group was also found to be statistically significant, indicating a very large effect ( $F_{(1, 81)} = 41.23$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2_p = 0.34$ ). The findings showed that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group in the short story.

### 3.6.2. Findings of the Second Question

The second research question was to investigate the following “*Do TAPs play a contributive role to understand and observe the students’ use of reading strategies to promote learning?*”

The comparisons of the responses to the *Stop Ask Fix: Student Checklist* which given by the experimental and control groups are provided below.

**Table 12.**

*Comparison of Stop Ask Fix: Student Checklist Findings for the Experimental (n = 40) and Control Groups (n = 43)*

| Item   | Group        | Responses            |                     | $X^2$  | df | p          | $\phi$ |
|--|--------------|----------------------|---------------------|--------|----|------------|--------|
|  |              | $f_{\text{present}}$ | $f_{\text{absent}}$ |        |    |            |        |
| 1. I periodically stop and ask: "Does this make sense?"  | Experimental | 37                   | 3                   | 14.317 | 1  | <b>.00</b> | 0.42   |
|  | Control      | 24                   | 19                  |        |    |            |        |
| 2. I express the difference between my own knowledge and beliefs and ideas expressed in text.                      | Experimental | 27                   | 13                  | 2.287  | 1  | .13        | 0.17   |
|  | Control      | 22                   | 21                  |        |    |            |        |
| 3. I express awareness and or lack of awareness of what the content means.   | Experimental | 33                   | 7                   | 15.972 | 1  | <b>.00</b> | 0.44   |
|  | Control      | 17                   | 26                  |        |    |            |        |
| 4. I express doubt about understanding when I am unsure or when meaning is unclear                                 | Experimental | 34                   | 6                   | 5.247  | 1  | <b>.02</b> | 0.25   |
|  | Control      | 27                   | 16                  |        |    |            |        |
| 5. I ask "Where did I lose track?"   | Experimental | 34                   | 6                   | 14.956 | 1  | <b>.00</b> | 0.42   |
|  | Control      | 19                   | 24                  |        |    |            |        |
| 6. I identify the place where I began to lose comprehension.   | Experimental | 34                   | 6                   | 13.504 | 1  | <b>.00</b> | 0.40   |
|  | Control      | 20                   | 23                  |        |    |            |        |
| 7. I use fix-up strategies when I experience problems.   | Experimental | 22                   | 18                  | 7.488  | 1  | <b>.01</b> | 0.30   |
|  | Control      | 11                   | 32                  |        |    |            |        |
| 8. I reread.   | Experimental | 33                   | 7                   | 9.103  | 1  | <b>.00</b> | 0.33   |
|  | Control      | 22                   | 21                  |        |    |            |        |
| 9. I read on and try to clear up the confusion.  | Experimental | 35                   | 5                   | 5.677  | 1  | <b>.02</b> | 0.26   |
|  | Control      | 28                   | 15                  |        |    |            |        |
| 10. I substitute words I know (and that fit the context) to replace words I don't understand to see if that works. | Experimental | 29                   | 11                  | 9.115  | 1  | <b>.00</b> | 0.33   |
|  | Control      | 17                   | 26                  |        |    |            |        |

|   |              |    |    |        |   |            |      |
|---|--------------|----|----|--------|---|------------|------|
| 11. I make mind pictures to "see" in my head what the text means.   | Experimental | 36 | 4  | 24.681 | 1 | <b>.00</b> | 0.55 |
|   | Control      | 16 | 27 |        |   |            |      |
| 12. I connect what I am reading to what I have read previously in this text, and what I have read and knew before I read this text. I may ask an author-and-me question because my personal knowledge may help me figure out the meaning. | Experimental | 27 | 13 | 6.506  | 1 | <b>.01</b> | 0.28 |
|   | Control      | 17 | 26 |        |   |            |      |
| 13. I ask myself questions (Why did the character do this? Why did the author put this in? How is this important? Am I supposed to "think and research" or infer?).   | Experimental | 31 | 9  | 8.400  | 1 | <b>.00</b> | 0.32 |
|   | Control      | 20 | 23 |        |   |            |      |
| 14. I use other strategies: [WOL]   | Experimental | 29 | 11 | 16.486 | 1 | <b>.00</b> | 0.45 |
|   | Control      | 12 | 31 |        |   |            |      |
| 15. I ask for help if I have made attempts to understand but can't get it. I ask a peer and then I ask my teacher or another adult.   | Experimental | 33 | 7  | 9.103  | 1 | <b>.00</b> | 0.33 |
|   | Control      | 22 | 21 |        |   |            |      |

The results of the Chi-Square tests showed that all items of the *Stop Ask Fix: Student Checklist*, except for item 2 ( $X^2 = 2.287$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p > .05$ ,  $\phi = 0.17$ ), were significantly different in the experimental and control groups ( $p < .05$ ).

Among the items whose responses were significantly different, only item 11 produced a difference with a large effect ( $X^2 = 24.681$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\phi = 0.55$ ).

Significant differences with medium effects were found in item 14 ( $X^2 = 16.486$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\phi = 0.45$ ), item 3 ( $X^2 = 15.972$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\phi = 0.44$ ), item 1 ( $X^2 = 14.317$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\phi = 0.42$ ), item 5 ( $X^2 = 14.956$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\phi = 0.42$ ), item 6 ( $X^2 = 13.504$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\phi = 0.40$ ), item 8 ( $X^2 = 9.103$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\phi = 0.33$ ), item 10 ( $X^2 = 9.115$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\phi = 0.33$ ), item 15 ( $X^2 = 9.103$ ,

$df = 1, p < .001, \phi = 0.33$ ), item 13 ( $X^2 = 8.400, df = 1, p < .001, \phi = 0.32$ ) and item 7 ( $X^2 = 7.488, df = 1, p = .01, \phi = 0.30$ ).

The significant differences were found to have small effects in item 12 ( $X^2 = 6.506, df = 1, p = .01, \phi = 0.28$ ), item 9 ( $X^2 = 5.677, df = 1, p < .05, \phi = 0.26$ ) and item 4 ( $X^2 = 5.247, df = 1, p < .05, \phi = 0.25$ ).

The Mann-Whitney U group comparisons of the items in the *Conversing with the Author Check Sheet* are provided below.

**Table 13.**

*Comparisons of Conversing with the Author Check Sheet Findings for Experimental (n = 40) and Control Groups (n = 43)*

| Item   | Group        | Mdn  | Mean Rank | U      | Z | p          | r    |
|--|--------------|------|-----------|--------|---|------------|------|
| 1. notice/comment on the way a text is organized or the way in which information is withheld and presented | Experimental | 2.50 | 51.34     | 486.50 | - | <b>.00</b> | 0.40 |
|  | Control      | 2.00 | 33.31     |        |   |            |      |
| 2. notice/comment on the words and vocabulary used   | Experimental | 3.00 | 53.40     | 404.00 | - | <b>.00</b> | 0.50 |
|  | Control      | 2.00 | 31.40     |        |   |            |      |
| 3. notice/comment on the style of the author   | Experimental | 2.00 | 48.00     | 620.00 | - | <b>.02</b> | 0.26 |
|  | Control      | 1.00 | 36.42     |        |   |            |      |
| 4. notice and identify conventions/textual codes used by the author  | Experimental | 2.00 | 48.90     | 584.00 | - | <b>.00</b> | 0.32 |
|  | Control      | 2.00 | 35.58     |        |   |            |      |
| 5. notice and comment on how conventions and constructions are used to make the author's point             | Experimental | 3.00 | 51.20     | 492.00 | - | <b>.00</b> | 0.42 |
|  | Control      | 2.00 | 33.44     |        |   |            |      |
| 6. evaluate the way the text is written  | Experimental | 3.00 | 51.41     | 483.50 | - | <b>.00</b> | 0.41 |
|  | Control      | 2.00 | 33.24     |        |   |            |      |

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|   |              |      |       |        |      |            |      |
|---|--------------|------|-------|--------|------|------------|------|
| 7. indicate some conception of the author, what kind of purpose she has in writing this text, what kind of person she might be, and so on | Experimental | 3.00 | 53.60 | 396.00 | -    | <b>.00</b> | 0.51 |
|   | Control      | 2.00 | 31.21 |        | 4.66 |            |      |
| 8. consider the author's meaning, the point being made through the text   | Experimental | 3.00 | 54.25 | 370.00 | -    | <b>.00</b> | 0.54 |
|   | Control      | 2.00 | 30.60 |        | 4.95 |            |      |
| 9. indicate agreement, adaptation to, or argument with the author's meaning   | Experimental | 3.00 | 52.20 | 452.00 | -    | <b>.00</b> | 0.44 |
|   | Control      | 2.00 | 32.51 |        | 4.00 |            |      |
| 10. indicate reason for agreement or disagreement   | Experimental | 2.00 | 48.65 | 594.00 | -    | <b>.01</b> | 0.29 |
|   | Control      | 1.00 | 35.81 |        | 2.62 |            |      |
| 11. indicate ways in which story meaning may inform my own thinking and action  | Experimental | 3.00 | 52.88 | 425.00 | -    | <b>.00</b> | 0.48 |
|   | Control      | 2.00 | 31.88 |        | 4.35 |            |      |

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Mann-Whitney U results showed that all the items in the *Conversing with the Author Check Sheet* differed significantly between the experimental and control groups with small to large effects ( $p < .05$ ).

The findings indicated significant differences with large effects in item 8 ( $U = 370.00, p < .001, r = 0.54$ ), item 7 ( $U = 396.00, p < .001, r = 0.51$ ) and item 2 ( $U = 396.00, p < .001, r = 0.51$ ).

Significant differences with medium effects were observed in item 11 ( $U = 425.00, p < .001, r = 0.48$ ), item 9 ( $U = 452.00, p < .001, r = 0.44$ ), item 5 ( $U = 492.00, p < .001, r = 0.42$ ), item 6 ( $U = 483.50, p < .001, r = 0.41$ ), item 1 ( $U = 486.50, p < .001, r = 0.40$ ) and item 4 ( $U = 584.00, p < .05, r = 0.32$ ).

Item 10 ( $U = 594.00$ ,  $p = .01$ ,  $r = 0.29$ ) and item 3 ( $U = 620.00$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r = 0.26$ ) were found to have significant differences with small effects between the experimental and control groups.

The interpretations of verbal and written protocols of the participants which indicated their tendencies to apply reading strategies for the poem were also analyzed. The table below shows the mentions of the participants featuring their implemented reading strategies according to coding scheme of this study.

**Table 14.**

*Implemented Reading Strategies by the Participants for the Poem Daddy*

|   |  |   |                                       |                                  |               |           |
|---|--|---|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|-----------|
| <b>Activating and Using Prior Knowledge</b>   | A specific period of history             | A specific event in the history             | Different cultures                    | Different religions              |               |           |
| <b>Mentions</b>                               | <b>16</b>                                | <b>13</b>                                   | <b>10</b>                             | <b>10</b>                        |               | <b>49</b> |
| <b>Personal Impression and the Expression</b> | Personal experiences                     | Personal feelings                           | Personal beliefs                      | Personal metaphors               |               |           |
| <b>Mentions</b>                               | <b>19</b>                                | <b>15</b>                                   | <b>13</b>                             | <b>4</b>                         |               | <b>51</b> |
| <b>Author</b>                                 | Predictions about the author's life      | Curiosity for the other works of the author | Background knowledge about the author |                                  |               |           |
| <b>Mentions</b>                               | <b>17</b>                                | <b>15</b>                                   | <b>12</b>                             |                                  |               | <b>44</b> |
| <b>Fix up and Other Reading Strategies</b>    | Reading Aloud/ Rereading/ Thinking Aloud | Paraphrasing                                | Predictions                           | Summarizing / Drawing conclusion | Visualization |           |
| <b>Mentions</b>                               | <b>22</b>                                | <b>18</b>                                   | <b>17</b>                             | <b>22</b>                        | <b>10</b>     | <b>89</b> |

Looking at the responses, it was observed that 16 participants talked about their prior knowledge about a specific period of history. They mentioned their background knowledge about World War II and they clarified that it helped them to have some information about the war to understand the text better.

*“The poet mentions the time of war. When was this war? May be his father died because of the war, or she wanted him to die in the war, not sure.”*

*“There are motifs of Nazism and Holocaust in the poem. She mentions the character of the daddy with imagery of Nazism, and pride in the Nazi regime.”*

*“From a historical point of view, she can be seen victim of a war. She made references to the Holocaust. From a sociological view point, she was also victim of her father.”*

Thirteen participants mentioned their background knowledge about some specific events in the history. Some of the participants (7) explained their ideas about the Holocaust mentioned in the poem.

*“There are a lot of references to the holocaust in the poem. I should learn more about the details, I think.”*

*“Luftwaffe” is the German air force, I have read it somewhere before. It is interesting to come across this word in a poem.”*

*“I love history and to learn from history. I have read about Nazis and Holocaust of Jews. If she was a victim of the war, it is quite normal to have depressed life and some big problems about anything in life. Who had a wonderful life during a war?”*

As Paulston and Bruder (1976) state, reading comprehension can be fostered “when the cultural background is familiar and students can draw on cultural information in the decoding process” (p.5). Therefore, reading comprehension can be considered as a function of cultural knowledge. Moreover, *Daddy* is a culture-loaded

poem. In the study, 14 participants stated that they did not have sufficient knowledge about the cultural and religious items and statements mentioned in the poem. Hence, they had some troubles and hesitations as in the following examples;

*“There are a lot different countries included in the poem, and some German words, I think I need to know more about these countries and their language their cultures.”*

*“There are a lot of unknown things for me because of the cultural context of the poem such as a Frisco seal, Nauset, Meinkampf, Dachau, Auschwitz, Belsen. It makes it difficult to make meaning when you don’t have enough prior knowledge about some stuff.”*

*“What is “swastika”?” It sounds like a religious item.”*

*“I just wondered what kind of funeral they had for him. Did they burn him? What did she do with the ashes? Do the Jews burn their dead bodies anyway? May be they just buried him. I am sure she never went the cemetery to honour him.”*

However, 6 participants stated that they had some information. As a result of this, they could comprehend the text better.

*“I knew some staff about the Jews and the Holocaust they had been through. I mean of course not very detailed but it is enough for me to understand her father tormented her somehow.”*

Eighteen participants expressed their personal experiences related to the poem. Some shared that they also had some problems with their fathers. On the other hand, a participant expressed that she could not even imagine hating his father.

*“In my opinion, everybody hates his father in some period of his or her life, sometimes for a short, sometimes for a long time, sometimes a little bit,*

*sometimes more than a lot. I hated a little bit, but I guess she hated a lot, more than a lot...*"

*"She likens her relationship with his father to the German-Jewish relationship. I think this is brutal. Why does she compare his father to Nazis? It doesn't make sense for me even if she hates him. I could not even imagine that I hate my father. I love him, that's why I couldn't make empathy with her."*

Employing think-aloud was like holding a mirror to the inner voices of the participants. As it was aimed in the very beginning of this study, it became possible and observable for the researcher to hear, read, and take down notes about the feelings and beliefs of the participants by the help of TAPs. Twenty-eight participants expressed their feelings and beliefs about the poem. Additionally, 4 participants used their personal metaphors.

*"She mentions some bad and poor conditions of a miserable life. I would think the same things if I wrote a poem about my life. There would be a deep sense of sadness too. And I would say high heeled shoe for my father."*

*"Love this poem and I especially loved more her own narration of it, we can open it up again on Youtube if anyone wants to listen. it has an immense power and meaning that I couldn't quite get from simply reading it myself."*

*"I did not know the poem, though I knew of it. I knew of Plath's background and I knew she was very disturbed. Writing such a personal poem takes courage because you're baring your soul to the world."*

The poet was a great concern for some participants. Seventeen of them made some predictions about Sylvia Plath and her life. While some of them talked about the difficult parts of her life, one participant said Plath could have written about someone else's life.

*“I think in real life she hates her father but also loves him.”*

*“The writer is hurt and in search of somebody to blame for all her sorrows. She chooses her dearest ones. It made feel that I am not alone.”*

*“I do think that all writers use their lives in their work, so maybe her father was just a normal person. And she has just imagined all these things.”*

Fifteen participants became curious for the other works of Plath. Some of them wanted to learn more to find out whether she had the same style in her other works. Obviously, the poem triggered the participants’ innate desire to know how and why.

*“When someone talks about poetry, love or separation always comes up to mind. This is a poem about hate though. It was different. It was unusual. When I read, I became curious about his relationship with his father in real life and I wonder the reason for this hatred.”*

*“-It is clear that she had a trauma when she was a child. I didn’t like the poem; I don’t think I will search for Plath.”*

*“Daddy is one of Plath's most well-known poems. But I need to read more of her.”*

*“I wonder whether she is such painful in her other works.”*

Seven participants declared that they had some background knowledge about Sylvia Plath while 6 participants mentioned their insufficient knowledge about her. Some stated that it would be better know some information about the poet to analyze the poem better.

*“I watched a documentary about the life of Ted Hughes, in which Plath is heavily featured like all about their relationship and lives. So when reading this poem, I feel like I am with her in every step she takes, every move she*

*makes, every pain she feels, and everything she hates. I have read this poem and I will read it again and I will love it even more.”*

*“If I knew about Plath, I would understand better if she had really survived a painful childhood by the death of her father.”*

To understand what reading strategies the participants used, the verbal reports were analyzed. Considering the verbal reports, it was realized that the participants mostly mentioned the reading strategies they preferred during the reading process. As the main focus of the study was to use TAPs to improve reading comprehension, the participants were invited to think-aloud very often. Therefore, nearly more than half of the participants mentioned thinking aloud, its effect on reading comprehension and process. There are some different opinions of the participants. Most of the participants, 18 out of 22, mentioned the advantages of thinking aloud.

*“Reading this poem and thinking aloud during reading helped me feel the language, meaning and the rhythm of the poem.”*

*“As we think aloud, I realized that we have some similarities and differences with my classmates while comprehending the poem. I think rereading for several times and thinking aloud helped us to understand better. This poem has a very deep meaning and it wouldn't be possible for me to understand it just by reading silently.”*

On the other hand, one of the participants expressed his negative feelings as he felt interrupted during reading process.

*“I prefer not to think aloud I mean I felt like I have been interrupted by several times.”*

They also talked about reading aloud and rereading. One of the drawbacks for a participant was the noise around. As TAPs were implemented in a large group,

three participants expressed their confusion because of the thinking aloud environment.

*“Offf be quiet ya! (laughters).Ahhh, so many noise around, I need to read the same sentence again and again.”*

*“I was affected by my classmates most of the time. Well I mean, there was a lot of noise around. I felt uncomfortable.”*

The paraphrasing strategy is known to help readers to understand and recall the main ideas, specific facts of materials they read. Research shows that students who can implement strategies requiring paraphrasing are more tempted to recall text and comprehend the gist (Best, Rowe, Ozuru, & McNamara, 2005).

In the current study, paraphrasing was the second mostly used and mentioned reading strategy by the participants. There were 18 participants who applied paraphrasing during the process.

*“You do not do, any more black shoe, I lived there for long, even though I didn't want to!”*

*“...she has had to kill him, as if she's already murdered him.”*

Efficient readers make predictions as they read. As it is suggested by many teachers, predicting helps students become actively involved in reading and helps to keep their interest level high. Seventeen participants made predictions about the characters which helped them analyze the poem better.

*“She wants to kill her dad but he dies before she tries, I think this aroused more hatred for her.”*

*“I think she had an awful and tormented life because firstly of her father than her husband.”*

*“There are a lot of questions in my mind. Is she warning the reader? Is the fact her father was a 'Nazi' affect how she feels? Is this a cry for help? I don't know but I am sure for one thing, there is a victim of patriarchy...”*

*“Here it says her father was a Nazi. But I don't think it is true at all and think it is an exaggeration about the character.”*

In poems, instead of direct speeches, it is quite common to see hidden meanings. There are some hints or clues that help readers to find the implied meaning and draw conclusions about the text. Using these clues, readers are supposed to have a deeper understanding. Particularly impressive is the way in which good readers draw conclusions. There are 15 participants who expressed some conclusions about the poem.

*“Finally the poem is an allegory of female in the dominance of man, violence, depression, hate and chaos on the one hand, but on the other hand it mentions the desperate love for a father.”*

*“The poem gives the message that every domestic violence victim who finally lets go the abuser.”*

*“In conclusion, I think not every woman but every human loves a Fascist, whether a father, mother, sibling or a lover.”*

Summarizing is the ability to gather or synthesize information in a text to explain what the text is about, namely the gist or the main idea. The readers focus on key points and use their own words to explain them. Summarizing is an important strategy because the reader can recall the text and text organization. There are 7 participants who reported their preference for summarizing as follows:

*“This is a confession poem; I suppose. It is all about love and hate; she hated both her husband and her father and put it into words.”*

*“In the poem’s final line, the poet says, “Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I’m through.” I think that’s the summary of the poem. She cried out her hate and buried into silence.”*

*“Nevertheless, in the poem, Plath takes her revenge by claiming that she killed both her father and the model of her father (which she made herself) - her husband. This poem shows how terrible his father was and how long he stayed in Plath’s mind, but in the end she declares that she is done with him.”*

Visualization is also an important strategy which helps readers in comprehension and makes them feel more connected to the text. As Harvey and Goudvis (2000) state “visualizing personalizes reading, keeps us engaged, and often prevents us from abandoning a book” (p. 132). So it is possible by visualization to create more personal experiences. Here are the visualizations that 10 participants mentioned.

*“So when I close my eyes I see her father as a fat, ugly and a brutal man who shouts and swears all the time.”*

*“The beginning image is, aaaa, I don’t know so odd, the foot in the black shoe, but super descriptive! I can picture in my mind that sweaty, trapped foot. Ughh, disgusting!”*

*“I see the image of a skinny lady who cries all the time with sore eyes.”*

The interpretations of verbal and written protocols of the participants who showed tendency to apply reading strategies for the short story were also analyzed. The table below shows the mentions of the participants featuring their implemented reading strategies according to coding scheme of this study.

**Table 15.**

*Implemented Reading Strategies by the Participants for the Short Story A Haunted House*

|   |  |   |                                     |               |             |           |
|---|--|---|-------------------------------------|---------------|-------------|-----------|
| <b>Activating and Using Prior Knowledge</b>   | Back ground knowledge about the author   | Curiosity for the other works of the author | Predictions about the author's life |               |             |           |
| <b>Mentions</b>                               | <b>24</b>                                | <b>12</b>                                   | <b>8</b>                            |               |             | <b>44</b> |
| <b>Personal Impression and the Expression</b> | Personal feelings                        | Personal beliefs                            | Personal experiences                |               |             |           |
| <b>Mentions</b>                               | <b>26</b>                                | <b>13</b>                                   | <b>10</b>                           |               |             | <b>49</b> |
| <b>Fix up and Other Reading Strategies</b>    | Reading Aloud/ Rereading/ Thinking Aloud | Paraphrasing                                | Summarizing / Drawing conclusion    | Visualization | Predictions |           |
| <b>Mentions</b>                               | <b>30</b>                                | <b>25</b>                                   | <b>22</b>                           | <b>10</b>     | <b>9</b>    | <b>96</b> |

Some people call it schema, some say background or prior knowledge, and some others see it just as experience, but whatever the name is, activating and using prior knowledge is an important reading strategy. It helps readers to make connections, draw inferences, think critically, build concept maps to the text they are reading; as a result, their comprehension increases.

It is assumed unnecessary to have knowledge about an author in order to understand her/his work by some (Bakhtin, 1981; Barthes, 1977; Ransom, 1937). As it is in the practice of close reading which is one of the reading techniques used by New Critics who aim to read a literary text without any knowledge about the author. Others (Leitch, 2001; Phelan, 2006) suggest that the contextual background of a text is crucial, so it is perceived as vital to know the intention of the author and her/his motivations to be able to understand the purpose. It is considered crucial to have knowledge about an

author because it provides the readers with an insight to authorial intentions. Often, readers get confused while interpreting and analyzing. Therefore, any prior knowledge about the author becomes helpful to having disclosure on the text.

Activating and using prior knowledge is one of the reading strategies employed by the readers in this study. Twenty-four participants shared their background knowledge about Virginia Woolf. While 12 of them expressed their curiosity for the other works of the author, 8 participants made predictions about her life.

*“Woolf is a famous writer in English literature. She committed suicide as far as I know. She favored stream of consciousness but not in this one I think.”*

*“The author protects her privacy by using ghost. It gives a sense of curiosity, so it makes the story more immersive.”*

*“I'm not sure how I feel about the story. There is a lot going on and it doesn't seem to be presented to us in the clearest manner. Perhaps I need to read more Woolf to understand or get a feel for the style better.”*

*“We had read a short story of Virginia Woolf when we were in high school. I like this one better”*

*“This is my first experience with Virginia Woolf, and I do perhaps wish I had read one of her full novels instead of this. It isn't that I did not enjoy A Haunted House, I simply found myself wishing there was more there.”*

*“Virginia Woolf has this power of making you fall in love with her novels before you even turn page one. I loved this short story and how she embodied the characters and their emotions”*

*“A ghost story it is, but not the kind that will make you scared to turn out the lights at night. Woolf writes a beautiful tale of a treasure that continues on even after death: love.”*

*“I like how short and easy everything is to read. While it isn't a masterpiece, it's a good introduction into Virginia Woolf.”*

As every human being is unique and different, it is considered extremely normal to have positive or negative, normal or absurd, important or unimportant beliefs, feelings, attitudes or experiences on almost anything. As this is also the case for the reading process, every single reader brings her or his own world on the stage and blends it with text, then comes the ideas, emotions and sometimes confessions. One of the most important aspects in this study was to encourage the participants to share their ideas all the time regardless of their positivity or negativity. Even though she hesitated at first, one of the participants shared her opinion about the story and the author. Nonetheless, then she realized that it felt better to say whatever she wanted to say.

**Researcher:** *“Do not forget to share your emotions, feelings, ideas, experiences; it doesn’t matter whether you have a positive or a negative attitude or opinion. What matter here is your attendance, your expressions and your utterances. I would like to know what is in your mind regardless it is true or not, positive or negative, important or simple. Just talk, it is very nice to hear your voices. Come on guys, let’s hear it!”*

**Participant:** *“Well OK it is nice to know that, hmmm, you won’t judge me. You won’t judge me right? OK, maybe it is not nice to say this in a literature class, but I think she is overly exaggerated in the literature world like Shakespeare. I don’t understand what is so special about them. Yep, I think there are so much more talented writers but there so many admirers of them. Wow, it feels so nice to say I am not a very big fan of neither Shakespeare nor Woolf.”*

By employing TAPs in this study, most of the participants were observed to become interactive readers. They expressed their beliefs, feelings and experiences about the short story while they were thinking aloud and also their verbal reports showed that some participants asked questions to themselves about story and the author. Also, 26 participants expressed their feelings about story and the style of the author, and some realized that they liked or did not like the genre. Thirteen

participants shared their beliefs about the story, and 10 of them talked about their personal experiences.

*“I loved this short story. I had never read a short story like this before and it truly stands out. One of the lines that has remained with me was ‘Death was the glass; death was between us ...’ Love the brevity of the story too—kind of like being given a private glance into the other side of reality.”*

*“I don’t like short stories, I realized this one more time. There too many details and descriptions but it is not flowing! Am I wrong?”*

*“Although the story seemed dull at first, it started to become interesting when I read more. Because the writer tries to keep the attention awake and constantly direct with her descriptions. Isn’t she talented?”*

*“Does Woolf’s account agree with my own life experience in the world? Nope, it doesn’t. I don’t believe in ghosts. Why would I? Maybe the point here is not the ghost story but love. Even so the characters are ghosts; I would never try to tell a love story by ghosts.”*

*“We can probably all relate to the experience of being alone in a house and feeling that every creak, every hum, every far-off sound betokens something – a ghost, or an intruder, for instance.”*

Through the think-aloud process in this study, the participants were steadily encouraged to write reflections of what they were thinking, so the reading strategies they employed could be analyzed. A reflection is known as a connection between the readers’ life and the text; namely their applied prior knowledge; a connection between other readings and the text; a connection between the world and the text; making a mental image of the meaning of the text; making an inference about the deeper meaning of the text; generating questions about the text; evaluating the significance of the text; or summarizing and determining the underlying messages in the text. Therefore, the reflections and the verbal reports of the participants and also the notes of the researcher provided a large amount of data about the reading strategies of the participants.

According to the data collected from the participants, it became clear that 30 participants were involved in reading aloud/rereading and thinking aloud. 25 participants made paraphrasing. Summarizing and drawing conclusions were also applied by 22 participants. While 10 of them made visualizations, 9 participants made predictions.

*“Did I like the story? Well, I did. It was enjoyable to say everything I thought. I am a talkative person. So it was show time for me.”*

*“Here it tries to say, the treasure is safe. They didn’t need to worry. The house said it. Their love is safe and there.”*

*“A lovely ghost couple, I can see them hand in hand. A white haired and a bald granny”*

*“I guess the ghostly couple is their grand grandparents, and this is a nice coincidence. Even if it isn’t, it would be nice.”*

*“A ghost couple walking through their former house and they are watching the couple currently living there while they are in sleep, reminiscing the beautiful times they spent together in their former life. They realize that they had the treasure of love. It’s super short, but very touching and poetic.”*

*“In a house with ghosts, a couple tries to find themselves again. They are trying to understand each other in that fine line between life before death and life after death.”*

*“Because it seems like to me if she only hears them when she wakes or when she’s reading that they only exist in her mind and not in “reality.”*

*“I can see and hear their steps, vanishing in dust after they pass. Bigger steps for man and tinier for the woman.”*

### **3.6.3. Findings of the Third Question**

The third question of the study was determined as *“Is there a relationship between the success of reading comprehension of students who are trained in TAPs*

and the text type used in reading classes? ". By this question, it was aimed to see if TAPs contributed into success in reading comprehension by means of the selected texts which were a poem and a short story. In order to answer this question, two ways were exploited. First, the results of the posttests of experimental group for both texts were compared to see if there was a significant difference. Second, the experimental participants' verbal and written protocols which showed their comprehension regarding the literary texts were coded.

**Table 16.**

*Posttest Scores of Experimental Group for the Poem Daddy*

| Test     | Group        | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>Min</i> | <i>Max</i> |
|----------|--------------|----------|----------|-----------|------------|------------|
| Posttest | Experimental | 40       | 79.80    | 12.98     | 55.00      | 100.00     |
|          | Control      | 43       | 67.88    | 16.77     | 40.00      | 100.00     |
|          | Total        | 83       | 73.63    | 16.12     | 40.00      | 100.00     |

In the posttest, the mean score was seen to be 73.63 ( $SD = 16.12$ ) with a minimum of 40 and a maximum of 100. In this test, the mean score of the experimental group was 79.80 ( $SD = 12.98$ ), with scores ranging from 55 to 100.

**Table 17.**

*Posttest Scores of Experimental Group for the Short Story A Haunted House*

| Test     | Group        | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>Min</i> | <i>Max</i> |
|----------|--------------|----------|----------|-----------|------------|------------|
| Posttest | Experimental | 40       | 89.78    | 8.49      | 65.00      | 100.00     |
|          | Control      | 43       | 69.95    | 15.95     | 35.00      | 100.00     |
|          | Total        | 83       | 79.51    | 16.24     | 35.00      | 100.00     |

The mean posttest score for the whole group was found to be 79.51 ( $SD = 16.24$ ) with a minimum of 35 and a maximum of 100. In the posttest, the mean score of the experimental group was 89.78 ( $SD = 8.49$ ) with scores ranging from 65 to 100.

Paired samples t-test comparison revealed that the posttest scores of the experimental group in *Daddy* and *A Haunted House* were significantly different with a large effect ( $t = 5.323$ ,  $df = 39$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 0.91$ ).

To have an understanding and insight on participants' comprehension levels of the texts, the coding scheme was developed to analyze the verbal and written reports of the participants. The table below shows the frequency of the mentions on the categories related to the literacy comprehension for the poem.

**Table 18.**

*Literacy Comprehension Categorization for the Poem Daddy*

| Literacy Comprehension                 | Categories         |                 |                |            |              | Total     |
|--|--------------------|-----------------|----------------|------------|--------------|-----------|
|  |                    |                 |                |            |              |           |
| <b>Theme of the Poem</b>               | Death              | Hate            | Anger/Rage     | Loneliness | Oppression   |           |
| <i>Mentions</i>                        | <b>29</b>          | <b>11</b>       | <b>7</b>       | <b>5</b>   | <b>2</b>     | <b>54</b> |
| <b>Rhythm of the Poem</b>              | Rhythmic           | Random          | Beat           | Flowing    | Marching     |           |
| <i>Mentions</i>                        | <b>17</b>          | <b>8</b>        | <b>7</b>       | <b>4</b>   | <b>2</b>     | <b>38</b> |
| <b>Mood and Tone of the Poem</b>       | Pessimistic/ Dark  | Hateful/Enraged | Confessional   | Desperate  | Respectful   |           |
| <i>Mentions</i>                        | <b>25</b>          | <b>13</b>       | <b>8</b>       | <b>5</b>   | <b>3</b>     | <b>54</b> |
| <b>Language of the Poem</b>            | Unknown Vocabulary | Obscure         | Comprehensible | Catchy     |              |           |
| <i>Mentions</i>                        | <b>22</b>          | <b>11</b>       | <b>10</b>      | <b>3</b>   |              | <b>46</b> |
| <b>Figurative Language of the Poem</b> | Metaphors          | Symbolism       | Imagery        | Allusions  | Onomatopoeia |           |
| <i>Mentions</i>                        | <b>19</b>          | <b>11</b>       | <b>10</b>      | <b>2</b>   | <b>1</b>     | <b>43</b> |

According to Baldick (2001), theme is “a salient abstract idea that emerges from a literary work’s treatment of its subject-matter; or a topic recurring in a number or literary works” (p. 258). Hence, a theme is an idea, a general message, a statement or a feeling about a subject that is made prominent in a story or a poem. It is possible through the various themes of literature that authors can convey the intended meaning which lies behind their work, namely, the moral idea that they are conveying through their text. As successful readers are expected to comprehend the intended meaning of the texts, it is inevitably important for them to realize and understand the theme of a text. In this study, as it can be seen from the table of content analysis, most of the participants mentioned the theme. Twenty-nine of them stated that they assume death as the primary theme of the poem. They expressed their thoughts about the theme and commented on the effect of death in the poem.

*“Hmm, I think death is absolutely a pervasive theme in the poem. It is obvious right? Yeah, it is the reality of life so I think it is common to have “death” as a theme in a poem. However, this is a bit unusual because the death of a father is mentioned as a celebration.”*

Death is followed by hate. Twenty-nine of the participants mentioned hate as an important theme of the poem. While 7 of them pointed anger/rage, 5 of the participants thought loneliness is the main theme of the poem. Finally, 2 of them mentioned oppression.

*“The entire poem is based on the concepts of hate, loneliness, oppression and anger. It is very much like me, I love that kind of darkness.”*

*“A girl who likes her father and mentions to leave, to die and I think the major theme is loneliness. I liked it a lot. We are alone even in our parental relationships.”*

The rhythm can be called as the heartbeat and the musicality of a poem. It also contributes to meaning because the rhythm in a poem is a form of expression, and its expression leaves a trace on the reader. Considering the verbal reports, 17 participants agreed that *Daddy* is a rhythmic poem while 8 of them expressed that it has a random rhythm.

*“You do not do, you do not do,” “achoo,” black shoe, glue, you, do, du, “I do, I do,” shoe, two, screw, through, gobbledygoo, Jew, blue.... This repeated “ooo-ooo” sounds rhythmic. It sounds nice when I read fast.”*

*“There are sixteen verses of five lines each. It has a random rhyme that we can see in some stanzas more than others. It is not irritating, I don’t like very rhythmic poems and I just have realized this. That I don’t like rhythmic poems.”*

On the other hand, 7 participants talked about beat and 4 mentioned flowing rhyme. Finally, 2 of the participants indicated marching. They stated that the poem sounds like a march.

*“Oh, I think it just flows like a river.”*

*“The rhyme of the poem sounds like a marching. It is more than a poem but a confession marching.”*

Mood and tone of a poem are often used interchangeably. In simple terms, it can be said that they give purpose, meaning and attitude to the tension and emotion of a poem. Thus, the poem might convey a range of different emotions such as love, amusement, mystery, humor, joy, sadness, anger, hate, forgiveness or many more. Basically, it can be assumed that mood and tone enhance the poetry experience and literature. As a result, it is important for readers to feel the poem itself by realizing the mood and the tone. Examining the reports, it was apparent that the mood and the tone of the poem were pessimistic/dark for 25 participants.

*“There is a pessimistic atmosphere in the first stanza of poem. But, I prefer more cheering things.”*

Thirteen of them had the idea that the poem had hateful/enraged mode and tone. Moreover, while 8 of the participants explained that it was confessional, 5 of them stated that desperate was the mood. Additionally, 3 participants declared that they thought it was respectful.

*“There is always a negative manner, violence and unhappiness. However, everybody feels things like that for sometimes inwardly, in my opinion. This poem is full of hate though”*

*“The desperate tone of the poem is overwhelming for me.”*

*“Despite everything, she still respects her father. She is just a little bit brutal when she expresses it, but the general mood is respectful anyway. I liked it, this is what most of the people survives through in their daily lives. They just don't want to confess it.”*

When it comes to the language of the poem, 22 participants mentioned the effect of unknown vocabulary on the comprehension of the poem. Most of them commented on the difficulty of unknown words. Some of them stated that they did not have a strategy to understand the text better because of unknown vocabulary. Twelve of them tried to guess the meaning, while 3 participants stated that they skipped the unknown vocabulary.

*“What is Frisco seal? Hmm. A special kind of a seal or what?”*

*“I don't know what Frisco means. I can't even guess from the other words around. I'll skip it!”*

*“What is a Polack? Someone who is from Poland? It must be so. Because it said 'Polish town' before. Hmmm yes it means Polish I think.”*

*“A lot of unknown vocabulary for me, sometimes I feel I like I lost the meaning. Rereading won’t help.”*

While 11 of the participants expressed that the language was obscure, 10 of them mentioned the comprehensibility of the text. And 3 students said that the poem was catchy.

*“It has an obscure language to easily grasp the meaning. I needed to stop and think and search most of the time.”*

*“The poem has both complicated and simple language. It is understandable most of the time though.”*

*“It really is a very melancholic poem to read. It is also difficult to understand sometimes but it is nice and different. Not a regular love or pastoral poem. So that’s why it is catchy for me.”*

Metaphor is a way to express the nuances of emotions, images, experiences, spirit and so on for which no standard, specific vocabulary exists. With a metaphor, the writer carries meaning to the reader, and does so poetically that the reader can enjoy the vivid image of the intended meaning by her/him. As human brain is very good at making associations, metaphors are stimulating and enjoyable devices for the reader to be noticed. Examining the verbal reports, it was clear that metaphors were the most noticed ( $n = 19$ ) figurative language in the poem.

*“The courage of using Holocaust metaphors to describe your personal life – oh my God, what a brilliant poem, I liked it a lot.”*

*“The poet uses emotional, and sometimes, painful metaphors to depict her own opinion of “daddy”.”*

*“‘... a bag full of God’ is used as a metaphor for her father. It is very striking to use a metaphor like that for a human being that even you hate.”*

Poetry and prose writers paint a mental picture and create images as symbols; very often a material object standing for something more abstract. Symbolism can elevate a poem, and then readers can enjoy the taste of it. Moreover, a poem containing imagery is also one that touches one or more senses. Actually, imagery could easily trigger a response in more physical senses like touching and tasting, as well as in the purely sensory ones. In the study, the mentions of symbolism followed the metaphors. Eleven of the participants mentioned symbolism and 10 of them talked about imagery.

*“She uses symbols of Nazis, vampires, and communication to reveal facts about her dad.”*

*“The poet uses imagery to compare her father to a shoe and God to make similarities between her father and her husband.”*

*“She chose these images to describe him; a black shoe that confines a foot, a marble-heavy statue that towers over her life, a Nazi sending Jews to their deaths, a fascist kicking h in the face with a boot, a vampire that only drinks her blood.”*

*“The poem is filled with strong, literal and vivid imagery. When I close my eyes, I see a little girl in the war area, crying, screaming and waiting for her father. Then comes the father but ignores her, when she catches him by his foot which is in a big, dirty, black shoe. But he yells to her and wants her. “*

As allusions present us a deeper understanding of an author's message, they are also an important part of comprehension of a text. As it is in the table, 2 of the participants mentioned allusions and one of them referred to onomatopoeia.

*“The poet uses an allusion to describe her father as Hitler when she says ‘And your neat moustache / And your Aryan eyes, bright blue.’”*

*“Here says ‘achoo’. Isn’t it onomatopoeia?”*

*“There are some natural sounds like achoo.”*

*“I think it makes t realistic when you use sounds of everyday life like sneezing sound.”*

The table below shows the frequency of the mentions on the categories related to the literacy comprehension for the short story.

**Table 19.**

*Literacy Comprehension Categorizations for the Short Story A Haunted House*

| <b>Literacy Comprehension</b>           | <b>Categories</b> |                      |                       |                   |                       | <b>Total</b> |
|---|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| <b>Theme of the story</b>               | Love              | Commitment           | Immortality           | Death             | Loss                  |              |
| <i>Mentions</i>                         | <b>33</b>         | <b>15</b>            | <b>4</b>              | <b>3</b>          | <b>2</b>              | <b>57</b>    |
| <b>Elements of the story</b>            | Characters        | Setting of the story | Conflict of the story | Plot of the Story | Point of View         |              |
| <i>Mentions</i>                         | <b>19</b>         | <b>17</b>            | <b>6</b>              | <b>4</b>          | <b>3</b>              | <b>49</b>    |
| <b>Tone/ Language of the story</b>      | Comprehensible    | Mysteriours          | Unknown Vocabulary    | Calm              | Playful / Distinctive |              |
| <i>Mentions</i>                         | <b>24</b>         | <b>10</b>            | <b>10</b>             | <b>3</b>          | <b>3</b>              | <b>50</b>    |
| <b>Figurative language of the story</b> | Metaphor          | Symbolism            | Irony                 | Hyperbole         |                       |              |
| <i>Mentions</i>                         | <b>12</b>         | <b>8</b>             | <b>6</b>              | <b>4</b>          |                       | <b>30</b>    |

The theme of the story was a great concern for the participants. Thirty-three of them realized that love is the major theme. Fifteen of the participants mentioned commitment. For 4 participants, immortality was the theme. On the other hand, 3 of them decided on death as the leading theme. Finally, 2 of them mentioned loss.

*“The theme is love before and after death. Yeah, the eternity of love at all!”*

*“I didn’t expect to read a love story because of the title but voila love is on the air!”*

*“What a commitment! I don’t think I would be looking for my love when I am dead.”*

*“I think, it is interesting, this story is about immortality and love not about some scary ghosts.”*

*“Do you know who suffers more? The one who is left behind, I guess. To lose someone you love hurts even after you are dead. That is the main idea here for me.”*

A dictionary definition for short story is “an invented prose narrative shorter than a novel usually dealing with a few characters and aiming at unity of effect and often concentrating on the creation of mood rather than plot” (Merriam-Webster's Online Collegiate Dictionary, 1999). Short stories are the reflections of life which includes some elements. These key elements which are essentially the same for a novel or short story are setting (where the story takes place), conflict (events that move the characters to action), characters who are involved, plot (a delineated outline of events and point of view) and narrators.

According to Callella (2000), strategic readers are able to summarize and organize the key elements of a story, namely they can consider and analyze the setting, conflict, characters plot and point of view. In this study, it was also aimed to find out whether readers could analyze the elements of the story they were working on. By the help of TAPs, it became clear that 17 participants commented on the setting of the story. A few examples are as follows:

*“The setting is a house where a couple once lived. They are dead now and visiting the house as ghosts. They tour the living room, the garden with its trees, and their old bedroom.”*

*“The house is the setting where the couples find the true love.”*

*“...the house, and the garden, the ghosts are wandering. This is the setting, right? Also it was a long time ago, the weather was good, the couples were comfortable and the atmosphere was calm, hmm let’s say light!”*

As a second necessary element of the story, the participants talked about the conflict. Conflict is assumed as the struggle between opposing forces or the collision of the opponents. It can happen inside or outside of the characters. The significance of the conflict is that it engages the reader; therefore, it would be very difficult to attract the reader without a conflict in a story. For *A Haunted House*, the conflict is reflected by 6 participants. Some examples are as follows:

*“Each of the ghosts is searching for the treasure that they have lost, they are afraid that the young couple can find it. This is the conflict of the story.”*

*“The ghost couple is in conflict with themselves because they couldn’t remember where the treasure is.”*

The set of characters is the element which shapes a story as a driving force; therefore, it is the heart of the story. Then, tension and the conflict also depend on the characters. That is how the readers get involved in the story. The story becomes meaningful when readers relate to characters, observe their choices, actions, consequences, dynamics of their relationships, and notice how they change and react to a situation. Nineteen participants commented on the characters of the story. Some examples can be seen below:

*“There are major and minor characters, ghostly and living couples. The ghostly couple is looking for love.”*

*“The main characters are the couple and the narrator.”*

*“...the ghost couple and the alive couple are the characters. Well, the ghost couple are back in the house searching for something while the alive couple are simply going about their life.”*

*“Dead couple, the former occupants of the house is the main characters, while the living couple is the current occupants of the house.”*

The plot of the story is a series of events and action of the characters that make up the story. Forster (1927) states that “‘The king died and then the queen died’ is a story. ‘The king died, and then the queen died of grief’ is a plot” (as cited in Velleman, 2003, p.2). Therefore, the plot can be called as the spine of a story. It is of course important for readers to understand the plot. In this study, 4 participants commented on the plot of the story. Two of them can be seen in the quotations below:

*“The couple is search for treasure. They initially search for the treasure, but it isn’t clear what it is or why they are looking for. In the middle, there are some memories of the dead couple came together. Finally it became clear that treasure is their love and their old, precious times.”*

*“Wow I don’t know. Nothing related to horror or spooky about it, it is quite different from the title suggests. A ghost couple wanders around a house inhabited by a living couple sums up the plot.”*

The point of view basically refers to the narrator who tells the story. There are, of course, different point of views such as first person or third person narrators. The readers need to consider some details such as the narrator and the main character being the same person or not. Three participants mentioned the point of view as follows:

*“I don’t know, I couldn’t understand first who the narrator was, but now I can understand the differences between the couples and their subtle interaction.”*

*“The living lady is the narrator I suppose, no no the husband is.”*

*“Who tells the story? Well, yes there was something like 3<sup>rd</sup> person omniscient, this is it!”*

When it comes to the tone and language of the poem, 24 of the participants stated that they thought the story was comprehensible.

*“The story is a sweet one, with just calmness. The language she uses is beautiful, without being overly complex. I didn't feel like I was falling in love with this one, but I did enjoy it.”*

*“I like how Virginia Woolf writes, but I did not find anything special in this story which I see more as an exercise of writing which was easy to understand.”*

*“It is fairly straight forward and comprehensible.”*

Ten of them commented on the tone as mysterious. Three of them stated that the story was told in a calm tone and other 3 participants expressed that it was playful/distinctive. Ten participants talked about the effect of unknown vocabulary on the comprehension of the story. Some examples of these mentions are given below:

*“This is good story for me because it is written in a distinctive voice.”*

*“I think the story attracts the reader so that not only we stick with it until the end, but we want to know how things turn out because it is creating suspense”*

*“The ghostly couple is looking for something worthwhile for them. It has a mysterious language. So this makes me feel excited and impatient to know the following actions and their results.”*

Seven of them said it was easy to guess the meaning of the unknown vocabulary, while 3 of them stated that they needed to skip sometimes.

*“This is more like a simple love story and the narrative gave me the impression that there was something more magical about her “ghosts” and instead of the usual unwanted demonic presence haunting a house. The vocabulary is easy for me”*

*“There aren’t a lot of unknown words, the ones are easy to infer.”*

As an indispensable feature of stories, the figurative language is the most effective trump of a writer. It allows the reader to imagine the scenes taking place in the text; therefore, it makes the writer to become a painter. This increases both the enjoyment of the reader and the quality of the text when the writer dresses the words and creates a rainbow. Cacciari and Glucksberg (1994) claim

Perhaps the most important is the recognition of the figurative language in general, and metaphor in particular, plays a central role not only in everyday discourse but also in reflecting (and perhaps shaping) how people think in a broad range of domains. (p.448)

The figurative language of the story was commented on by the participants. Twelve of them mostly mentioned the metaphors of the text, a few examples of which can be found below:

*“I like to find the metaphors in the text it is kind of a riddle for me.”* Safe, safe, safe” the pulse of the house beat softly there is one.

*““Death was the glass” this is another one.”*

Symbolism is another figure of speech which is mentioned by 8 participants. The irony in the story was noticed by 6 participants. Finally, 4 participants made some expressions about the hyperbole in the story as can be seen below.

*“The treasure mentioned in the story is the symbol for “love”.*

*“How ironic, I thought it would be scary. They turned out to be friendly ghosts.”*

*“The ghosts were in love when they were alive.” Kisses without number” this is a hyperbole.”*

### **3.6.4. Findings of the Fourth Question**

The fourth research question of the study is *“What are the opinions of the participants regarding the effectiveness of TAPs in reading comprehension?”*. To seek an answer to this question, the participants who were interviewed at the end of the intervention ( $n = 40$ ) were asked if the intervention with TAPs helped them improve their level of comprehension. A semi-structured open-ended question was asked and the participants were requested to write their opinions.

According to the results 26 participants out of 40 believed that they had a better comprehension of the texts by applying TAPs. Below are some examples of their answers:

*“Thinking aloud is kind of non-stop self-reflection. It fits me. I love to comment on anything, so it is enjoyable to listen yourself aloud. We all meet boring people who have closed minds and mouths, I am not one of them so I will make use of thinking aloud at home when I am reading.”*

*“TAP is something flowing. I mean, when you speak out your ideas, it means your brain has already constructed it. It is already there, but not available for the audience, not even for you. But when you say it loud, you make it available for more conscious part for yourself and you share it to public. IT was so useful to have classes with TAPs. I liked it.”*

Twelve participants, on the other hand, stated their hesitations and uneasiness of TAPs. Below are some examples of their answers:

*“I am a very shy person. I don’t even answer questions in the class if it isn’t asked to me. So it was difficult for me to speak all the time, since I find myself making more logical and better organized when writing things down, writing is the most efficient mode of thinking for me. I can write my thoughts but I don’t like to say it aloud. It isn’t easy when I try to formulate my thoughts into full sentences all the time.”*

*“... I couldn’t even think aloud. I thought aloud but I couldn’t say the things I thought. It was easier to say aloud in Turkish but I needed to think more to speak English.”*

Apparently, 8 participants, who were positive about the use of TAPs, thought it was effective to think-aloud. Five of them expressed that it was enjoyable to share what they thought. Three of them stated that it was motivating to verbalize their thoughts. Ten participants made other comments with descriptions of feelings such as happy, active, great, engaged, funny etc.

However, responses elicited through interviews indicated that two of the participants had complicated feelings. They explained that it was interesting first and comfortable most of the time but sometimes it was boring and too loud. On the other hand, 12 participants made it clear that sometimes they felt uncomfortable, nervous, frightened, ashamed, bored and overwhelmed. Another problem stated by 5 participants was that they were anxious in such a crowded group; otherwise, they would perform better individually.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the findings of the study which aims to investigate the effect of TAPs on the improvement of students' achievement in reading process are discussed. The section provides information about the results of the study and discussions about the results. The discussions are presented by addressing the research questions one by one.

**Result and Discussion of RQ1.** *Is the implementation of TAPs effective on promoting reading comprehension of students?*

To answer the first research question, the results of the pretest and posttest for both texts were compared. The first text was the poem *Daddy* and the second text was the short story *A Haunted House*. While the experimental group had a mean score of 60.03 ( $SD = 13.59$ ) in the pretest of the poem, the scores of the control group was found to have a mean score of 57.58 ( $SD = 14.56$ ). On the other hand, the mean score of the experimental group was 79.80 ( $SD = 12.98$ ) in the posttest of the poem and the control group was seen to have a mean score of 67.88 ( $SD = 16.77$ ).

In the pretest for the short story, the scores of the experimental group had a mean score of 61.70 ( $SD = 16.18$ ) and the scores of the control group were with a mean score of 57.91 ( $SD = 14.43$ ). On the other hand, in the posttest for the short

story, the mean score of the experimental group was 89.78 ( $SD = 8.49$ ) and for the control group the mean score was 69.95 ( $SD = 15.95$ ).

The results of statistical analysis indicate that while there were improvements in the posttest scores for the poem in both groups, there was a statistically significant improvement in reading comprehension of the students in the experimental group when compared to the control. The findings also showed that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group in the short story as well.

Results that address the first question highlight the fact that the implementation of TAPs is effective on promoting the students' reading comprehension. This finding is congruent with the theories on the positive effect of TAPs on reading comprehension and it resembles the findings of studies by Anderson (1991), Baumann et al. (1993), Block (1986), Hosenfeld (1977), Nassaji (2003), Olshavsky (1976), Oster (2001), Yaylı (2010) and Yoshida (2008).

The results also share similarities with the study carried out by Jahandar, Khodabandehlou, Seyedi and Abadi (2012). In their study among Iranian college-level EFL learners, they reported a significant difference between the experimental group for which think-aloud modeling and reading strategy training included and control groups. To sum up, the results that were gathered through the first research question of this study and the results of other previous studies imply that the implementation of TAPs has the potential to promote learners' reading comprehension.

**Result and Discussion of RQ2.** *Do TAPs play a contributive role to understand and observe the students' use of reading strategies to promote learning?*

The comparisons of the responses to the *Stop Ask Fix: Student Checklist* which were given by the experimental and control groups were analyzed to have an

understanding whether the use of TAPs played a contributive role to understand and observe the students' use of reading strategies to promote learning.

The results of the Chi-Square tests showed that all items of the *Stop Ask Fix: Student Checklist*, except for item 2 (*I express the difference between my own knowledge and beliefs and ideas expressed in text*) were significantly different in the experimental and control groups. On the other hand, among the items that whose responses were significantly different, only item 11 (*I make mind pictures to "see" in my head what the text mean*) produced a difference with a large effect. Significant differences with mostly medium and rarely small effects were found in the other items.

Mann-Whitney U results showed that all the items in the *Conversing with the Author Check Sheet* differed significantly between the experimental and control groups with small to large effects ( $p < .05$ ). The findings indicated significant differences with large effects in item 8 (*consider the author's meaning, the point being made through the text*) item 7 (*indicate some conception of the author, what kind of purpose she has in writing this text, what kind of person she might be, and so on*) and item 2 (*Notice/comment on the words and vocabulary used*). Significant differences with medium and small effects were observed in the other items between the experimental and control groups.

It can be inferred from these findings that the participants in the experimental group favored the strategies more such as visualizing, asking questions, rereading, self-monitoring, and activating background knowledge. The findings are congruent with the study by Roger (1991) who found that with the implementation of TAPs, students applied self-regulated strategies more effectively e.g. questioning and evaluating.

The interpretations of verbal and written protocols of the participants in the experimental group for both texts also showed their tendencies to apply reading strategies. For the poem, the participants mostly used fix up and a variety of other reading strategies which were *reading aloud/rereading/thinking aloud* (22 mentions), *summarizing/drawing conclusion* (22 mentions), *paraphrasing* (18 mentions), predictions (17 mentions), and finally visualization (10 mentions). There were a total of 89 mentions which indicated that the participants mostly made active use of fix up and other aforementioned reading strategies. The findings are similar to those found by Leslie and Caldwell (2006) who presented that paraphrasing/summarizing is one the most frequent type of think-aloud statement which rates from 40% to 75% of the time.

The second most frequent reading strategy applied by the participants was found to be related to *personal impression and the expression*. There were 19 mentions for *personal experiences*, 15 mentions for *personal feelings*, 13 mentions for *personal beliefs* and finally 4 mentions for *personal metaphors*. There were a total 51 mentions which indicated that the participants mostly made active use of *personal impression and the expression* reading strategies.

Thirdly, the participants used *activating and using prior knowledge* strategies. There were 16 mentions for *a specific period of history*, 13 mentions for *a specific event in the history*, 10 mentions for *different cultures*, and finally 10 other mentions for *different religions*. There were a total of 49 mentions which indicated that the participants frequently made use of *activating and using prior knowledge* strategies.

Finally, the participants used reading strategies related to the author. They made 44 comments featuring the author. There were 17 *predictions about the author's life*, 15 mentions concerned *curiosity for the other works of the author*, and finally 12 mentions related to their *background knowledge about the author*. There were a total of 44 mentions which show that the participants actively employed strategies related to author.

On the other hand, for the short story, the participants again mostly used fix up and other reading strategies which included *reading aloud/rereading/thinking aloud* (30 mentions), *paraphrasing* (25 mentions), *summarizing /drawing conclusion* (22 mentions), *visualization* (10 mentions), and finally *predictions* (9 mentions). There were a total of 96 mentions which indicated that the participants made active use of fix up and other aforementioned reading strategies more than they do in the first text.

The second mostly used reading strategy by the participants for the second text covered *personal impression and the expression*. There were 26 mentions for *personal feelings*, 13 mentions took place for *personal beliefs* and finally 10 mentions for *personal experience*. There were a total of 49 comments on *personal impression and the expression* which indicate that the participants mostly made active use of this reading strategy for both texts.

Thirdly, the participants again preferred *activating and using prior knowledge* strategies for the second text. There were 24 mentions related to their *background knowledge about the author*. While 12 mentions concerned *curiosity for the other works of the author*, there were 8 mentions related to their *predictions about the author's life*. There were a total of 44 mentions which show that the participants actively employed strategies related to author. Meanwhile, the number of the mentions was observed to be same for both texts.

The results of the second research question imply that participants in the experimental group were more inclined to implement cognitive and metacognitive strategies. As suggested by O'Malley and Chamot (1990), through the training students become more successful while using cognitive strategies. Also, the results supported the earlier study by Oster (2001) that TAPs have the potential to facilitate students' use of metacognitive strategies.

Moreover, similar to the findings of earlier studies, advanced learners much preferred to use reading strategies often. As Anderson (1991) claimed there is a significant difference between successful readers and unsuccessful readers in means of applying the strategies. The successful readers are observed to use the strategies more frequently, effectively and appropriately. All in all, regarding the research results of this present thesis study, it can be inferred that the more the students use reading strategies, the more likely they obtain higher scores on reading comprehension posttests.

**Result and Discussion of RQ3.** *Is there a relationship between the success of reading comprehension of students who are trained in TAPs and the text type used in reading classes?*

For the third research question, the results of the posttests of experimental group for both texts were compared to see if there was a significant difference. Then, the experimental participants' verbal and written protocols which showed their comprehension regarding the literary texts were coded.

In the posttest for the poem, the mean score of the experimental group was 79.80 ( $SD = 12.98$ ), with scores ranging from 55 to 100. On the other hand, in the posttest for the short story, the mean score of the experimental group was 89.78 ( $SD = 8.49$ ) with scores ranging from 65 to 100. The improved test scores may demonstrate that the participants had a better understanding for the short story with the help of TAPs.

Moreover, the interpretations of verbal and written protocols of the participants in the experimental group for both texts also showed their literacy comprehension level of the texts. The content analysis of the protocols indicated that the participants commented on the important components of literacy elements.

For the poem, the participants mostly commented on the *theme of the poem*. They figured out death, hate, anger/rage, loneliness and oppression as the theme. There were a total of 54 mentions for the theme. *The mood and tone of the poem* was also mentioned 54 times. The participants considered the pessimism/darkness, hate/enrage, confession, desperateness and respect as the mood and the tone. On the other hand, there were a total of 46 mentions related to *the language of the poem*. Unknown vocabulary, the obscurity, comprehensibility and the catchiness were the mostly mentioned features of the language realized by the participants.

The other literary element that the participants commented on was *the figurative language of the poem*. There were 43 comments for the figurative language which indicated that the participants were able to analyze the poetic language. When the content of the comments analyzed, it can be asserted that the participants realized most of the elements of metaphors, symbolism, imagery, allusions and onomatopoeia. On the other hand, there were no specific comments on the figurative language when the participants in the control group were not directed and asked to talk about. Finally, the participant commented on the *rhythm of the poem* 38 times. Some of them (n=17) stated that it is rhythmic while other (n=8) commented that it has a random rhyme. There were also other comments such as it beating, flowing and marching.

For the short story, the participants mostly commented on the *theme of the story* with a total of 57 mentions. They figured out love, commitment, immortality, death and loss as the theme of the story. On the other hand, there were a total of 50 mentions related to *the tone/language of the story*. They commented on the comprehensibility, mystery, the unknown vocabulary, calmness and playfulness/distinctiveness of the language. The other literary element that the participants commented on was *the elements of the story*. The characters, setting, conflict and plot of the story were commented 49 times by the participants. Finally, they commented on *the figurative language of the story* 30 times by including metaphors, symbolism, irony and hyperbole.

The results of the last research question are congruent with the earlier relevant study by Earthman (1992) who implemented TAPs with students to find out the differences between reading a poem and a short story. Earthman (1992) found that expert readers had an open manner and more developed interactions with the texts equally which is also the case for this study. The participants were observed to express themselves better in time. Moreover, the number and the length of the verbal protocols were recorded to be more in the last weeks of intervention sessions. Therefore, it can be suggested that, the participants of think-aloud group became more proficient in time. Overall, the findings manifested that implementation of TAPs smoothes reading comprehension processing.

The findings also indicate that the participants in the experimental group had higher scores in the posttest for the short story when compared to the poem. Moreover, they provided more verbal protocols for the short story as well. The improved test scores may demonstrate that the participants performed better in the short story. However, it is also difficult to draw that conclusion without a further study to figure out if they were successful because of the text type or they gained more expertise for implementing TAPs or the last option that the short story is more comprehensible than the poem.

The difference between a poem and a short story is not always explicit but to establish some differences, the length is the most obvious. Poems are almost always shorter than a short story. Therefore, short stories may include more details and explanations and they are generally centered more on building characters. In poems, on the other hand, there are concise, effective and complex messages. As Goldman (2003) states, "Poetry condenses expression more than any other form of literature" (p.132). Consequently, *Daddy* which is a culture-loaded poem with many unknown words for the participants might be more difficult to comprehend when compared to the short story *A Haunted House*.

**Result and Discussion of RQ4.** *What are the opinions of the participants regarding the effectiveness of TAPs in reading comprehension?*

The findings indicated that the majority of the participants (n=26) had positive feelings and thoughts for TAPs while a relatively small number of them (n=12) had some concerns and problems. The participants who expressed their positive attitudes towards TAPs stated that it was effective, enjoyable, motivating to verbalize their thoughts. Some participants made descriptions of feelings such as happy, active, great, engaged, funny etc.

On the other hand, the noise around and being in a group were the problems stated by other participants. They reported that they felt anxious, uncomfortable, nervous, frightened, ashamed, bored and overwhelmed especially because they were in a group. However, there were several other reasons can be listed for these negative feelings such as learner differences, the difficulty of the texts, disruptiveness of the reading continuity and the verbal ability of the participants.

Some participants (n=7) expressed that they felt interrupted. This result was in line with what Block (1986), Liaw, (1995), Ward and Traweek (1993) have put forth, for some participants the process of think-aloud was disruptive in means of reading continuity.

Additionally, two of the participants expressed their complicated feelings. They stated that even though it was interesting first and comfortable most of the time, sometimes they felt it was boring and too loud. However, some responses elicited through interviews made it clear that some participants (n=5) started to perform better as they got accustomed to TAPs. On the whole, however, more than a half of the participants expressed that the intervention sessions with TAPs had effectively helped them improve their reading comprehension abilities.

The result of the fourth research question of this thesis is parallel with Liaw's study (1995). She also reported both positive and negative responses from her participants when asked in a questionnaire related to the implementation of TAPs during reading. According to the findings of the questionnaire, half of the participants believed that TAPs had helped them to get higher scores in the comprehension tests, thirty-five percent of them said that they did not know, and fourteen percent of the participants responded that they did not think that TAPs had affected their scores.

The findings also lend support to the idea that before integrating TAPs into reading instruction, the strategy training must be handled tediously to make sure that the students become comfortable and strategically self-regulated. Scholars who have advocated the implementation of TAPs as an instructional or data collection tool have suggested that practice is essential to familiarize the participants with the technique (e.g. Ericsson & Simon, 1993; Steinberg, Bohning & Chowning, 1991, Ward & Traweek, 1993, Womack, 1991). Oster (2001) states that students are observed to become more comfortable with TAPs as they use it. As it is suggested, teacher modeled think-alouds is most effective when it is clear and not leaving much to student to infer about (Duke & Pearson, 2006).

All in all, regarding the responses of the participants in the study and observations of the researcher, it can be asserted that introducing and practicing think-aloud plays a crucial role to take benefits from the procedure. Additionally, it may be assumed that using think-aloud practices in reading classes may make students more creative and autonomous, since they develop critical thinking abilities. By referring to the potential benefits of TAPs both from the results of this study and the other studies on the topic, it is possible to insist that TAPs help readers observe their own reading experiences and reading skills development, and such practices may encourage students to develop better reading strategies.

Moreover, teachers, educators, and researchers can get satisfactory information about their students' feelings and thoughts during reading process. TAPs also help readers focus and concentrate on the text, get clues about unknown vocabulary and gist, and have a chance for self-monitoring during reading. Moreover, reader's critical thinking may be accelerated by TAPs and they may become more self-confident in time while verbalizing their thoughts.



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

#### 5.1. Conclusion

Research especially in reader-response criticism and psychology of reading during the past several decades has demonstrated that when students interact with text while reading, reading comprehension improves. In this respect, think-aloud is a good facilitator to mirror the interaction of readers with texts. It is also the beginning of a metacognitive conversation about content, reading process, and meaning-making. Therefore, TAPs might alter reading processes because thinking-aloud help students focus on comprehension and help instructors know when and how students' comprehension gets lost. Hence, the implementation of TAPs not only encourages students to gain self-monitoring and better comprehension skills but also provides teachers with the opportunity to consider when and how to intervene to students in reading process.

The aim of this study was to investigate the effects of TAPs on promoting students' reading comprehension performance. The study was conducted with a mixed research design which is both qualitative and quantitative. Eighty-three ELT freshmen students were assigned as experimental and control groups. Both groups took pretest and posttest before and after the intervention sessions. Both of the groups had reading classes for 14 weeks. In this period, while the experimental group had instructional interventions with TAPs, the control group had conventional reading comprehension instructions. The data collection was carried out by pretests and posttests, TAPs, teacher's journal, checklist and check sheet and semi-structured

interview. According to the results, TAPs had a positive effect on promoting students' reading comprehension.

In the first chapter of the study, the problem and the rationale for the study was presented comprehensively in that think-aloud had a significant impact on the course of reading comprehension. Following these, the aim and the significance of the study was presented, showing that TAPs can both serve as a data collection and an instructional tool in reading comprehension, thus needs to be studied. The last points mentioned in the first chapter were key concepts, definitions and abbreviations.

In chapter two, the relevant literature was reviewed in relation to TAPs and reading comprehension. Language and language learning skills were briefly presented to have a better infrastructure for reading skill. The nature, definition and purpose of reading were reviewed before mentioning reading comprehension and schema theory. Different types of schema and three models of reading were also studied in detail. Then, types of reading and assessment were handled before presenting language learning and reading strategies. Along with the stages of reading, classifications of reading strategies were focused on and different reading strategy taxonomies were listed. Being the major concern of the present study, TAPs were explained in detail. First, the history of think-aloud was presented, then the implementation of TAPs in reading was handled. Another point of importance concerning TAPs was the categorization which was also studied in detail. After that, strengths and weaknesses of TAPs were listed and the last section of this chapter was related to the relevant research on TAPs.

In the relevant literature review, it is emphasized that the intent behind TAPs is to help students develop the ability of self-monitoring and use several strategies to guide or facilitate their understanding. With a basic definition, it can be asserted that TAPs require a reader to stop periodically and then reflect on how a text is being processed and understood, and verbalize what reading strategies are being used

(Baumann et al., 1993). This metacognitive awareness, namely having the ability to think one's own thinking, is a pivotal segment of learning, because it enables learners to assess their level of comprehension and adjust their strategies for more prominent achievement (Oster, 2001). More importantly, several studies have reported that students who are involved in TAPs while reading score significantly higher on comprehension tests (Anderson, 1991; Baumann et al., 1993; Block, 1986; Hosenfeld, 1977; Nassaji, 2003; Olshavsky, 1976; Oster, 2001; Yaylı, 2010; Yoshida, 2008). This study also aimed to investigate the effects of TAPs on promoting students' reading comprehension performance.

In the third chapter, the research structure and the design of the study were presented. Moreover, information about the participants, setting of the study, data collection tools and procedure were documented. After that, the detailed information regarding the participants of the study was given to enlighten the sample. The participants of this research divided into an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group was treated by TAPs in reading classes, on the other hand the control group was taught by conventional method.

Then, the data collection part is explained. Data collection instruments were pretests and posttests, verbal reports, teacher's journal, checklist and check sheet and a semi-structured interview. To reveal the statistically significant differences between experimental and control groups, different types of tests and statistical analyses were carried out. For this respect, ANOVA, Chi-Square Correlation, t-test as well as mean, standard deviation and frequency analyses were interpreted to reveal the findings of the study.

The fourth chapter covered the results and discussion part. To summarize the findings of the current study, the results of the research questions are listed shortly as follows. First, this study provides insight as to the effects of TAPs, as it compares achievement between an experimental group and a control group that did not receive any form TAPs. Although there was no significant difference between the mean

scores of experimental and control groups in pretests, suggesting that both groups were at a similar base line in terms of their reading comprehension ability, the posttest mean scores of the experimental group were significantly higher than those from the control group for the both texts in the study. Therefore, it can imply that TAPs have the potential to provide significant improvement to the students' reading comprehension. It is also worth to mention that while conventional reading instruction provided the improvement in the students' reading comprehension, the learning outcomes were not significant.

Second, the results implied that TAPs significantly helped the students to increase their use of cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies. The results also suggested that after trained to think-aloud, the participants favoured the strategies more such as visualizing, asking questions, rereading, self-monitoring, and activating background knowledge. Furthermore, it can be concluded that the participants applied self-regulated strategies more effectively with the help of TAPs.

Third, although the findings indicated that the experimental group participants had higher scores in the posttest for the short story when compared to the poem and also they provided more verbal protocols for the short story, it is not possible to draw the conclusion that the text type played a significant role. There might be several other factors. First, the participants were observed to gain more expertise as they used TAPs, therefore it was possible for them to have better scores and to make more verbalizations for the second test, short story. Then, the poem could be considered more complex when compared to the short story. To sum up, the text type might not play a significant role to see the superior effects of TAPs.

Finally, the results of the questionnaire showed that TAPs were found to be effective by the participants. It could be drawn from the answers of the questionnaire that most of the participants believed that learning reading through TAPs could improve their comprehension. However, there were also some difficult and challenging stages of TAPs which also affect the process of reading comprehension.

Apart from the results of the answers for the research questions in this study, also some other noteworthy conclusions were drawn. It can be asserted that the implementation of TAPs has lots of important steps and each of them require time and effort to spend. Therefore, it is possible to say that merely the conscious and tailored use of TAPs can lead to desired and effective results in reading.

Additionally, it is quite important to realize the potential of think-aloud method as an instructional tool in reading comprehension. In cases implemented consciously, think-aloud is a promising reading instruction method. Moreover, employing TAPs creates an interactive and dynamic reading instruction setting which has the potential to make the students engaged. Block and Israel (2004) suggest that students believe that think-alouds are beneficial to their thinking process when the correct method is taught to them, therefore, they become engaged readers. As Morrow (1996) stated engaged readers are strategic, knowledgeable, motivated, and social in their approach to learning and using literacy.

TAPs have been commonly used as a strategy of instruction by instructors to model for students the thinking process (Dunston & Headley, 2002). Think-aloud helps to promote students' comprehension and abilities of the thinking process, also it allows for the reader to connect meaning and understanding with the text to promote comprehension (Block & Israel, 2004). To conclude, apart from enriching students' reading comprehension abilities, TAPs are needed to be employed meticulously to improve their motivation and self-regulation. Last but not least, there are naturally limitations to this study. Therefore, further research could be made in order to study some other respects concerning TAPs.

## **5.2. Limitations**

The results of the experimental research in this study present some advantages of TAPs; however, there are some limitations of the study. The present study is small scaled which is limited to the 83 freshmen ELT students studying at Trakya University in Edirne, therefore, the data collected with that participant group cannot be generalized for all ELT students. In other words, since this study is limited to ELT freshmen students in Edirne, Turkey, the findings may not be generalizable to other ELT populations who are not students from Trakya University.

Another point to be mentioned is the text types used in the research. The study is confined to particular literary genres: a poem and a short story. Instead, other text types can also be used and a detailed comparison and analysis can be made between different practices. In addition, data collected throughout the research is mostly limited to written verbal protocols. Lastly, think-aloud instruction was practiced for only two weeks. The process of implementation can be longer to realize the long-term efficiency of TAPs. Since the length of practice may help students get engaged more and gain more skills thanks to TAPs, the finding and results may be different than expected.

In conclusion, regardless of all limitations mentioned above, the current thesis study is considered to be productive and effective in terms of its findings and results. Hence, TAPs can be studied with different groups with other purposes from various points of views.

## **5.3. Suggestions for Further Study**

While conducting this research, there arose some potential limitations that might be studied in further research. First, students in different grades can be sampled to get a broader sense of how TAPs work for other age groups. In addition,

the text types used in the study can be broadened by asking students' opinions. There might be different alternatives that the students can make choices. A further study can be designed by getting information about students' need and expectations in terms of their preferences for text types. Lastly, the enjoyment and motivation of students in reading process by using TAPs could be assessed through a more detailed study. Therefore, future research needs to be made to overcome the limitations mentioned by conducting the research over a longer period of time, perhaps with a larger sample group, with different text types and more detailed data collection tools and assessment.



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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

#### Pretest and Posttest Questions

##### Reading and Discussion Questions for *Daddy* by Sylvia Plath

As you read *Daddy* make notes on the story. Mark sentences or details that you see as significant: evidence of Plath's style that you find interesting; items that may be symbolic. After reading the entire poem, please answer each of the following questions.

1. What is tone used by Sylvia Plath in *Daddy*?
2. How would you describe the speaker's depiction of her father?
3. What would be a theme in Sylvia Plath's poem *Daddy*.
4. In "Daddy" by Sylvia Plath, how is the theme of loneliness developed?
5. How can Sylvia Plath's poem *Daddy* be described as an elegy?

##### Reading and Discussion Questions for *A Haunted House* by Virginia Woolf

1. What is the theme of "A Haunted House"?
2. What is the setting of the story "A haunted house"?
3. What is the climax, or moment of change in the story?
4. Why does the house beat "Safe, Safe, Safe" in the story?
5. In the end, what is the "the light in the heart" that the ghosts are looking for?

## Appendix 2

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Stop, Ask, Fix: Student Checklist

Give yourself a short self-assessment. Read through the following list and put a check mark next to the strategies you regularly use to read a difficult book or piece of writing. Which ones don't you use? These should be strategies to keep in mind the next time you read something challenging. Keep this checklist at your side as you read a text. Use it to help prompt you to use the appropriate strategies available for watching and fixing your comprehension.

ASK, When reading a difficult text...

- I periodically stop and ask, "Does this make sense?"
- I express the difference between my own knowledge and beliefs and ideas expressed in text.
- I express awareness or lack of awareness of what the content means.
- I express doubt about understanding when I am unsure or when meaning is unclear.
- I ask "Where did I lose track?"
- I identify the place where I began to lose comprehension.
- I use fix-up strategies when I experience problems.
- I reread.
- I read on and try to clear up the confusion.
- I substitute words I know (and that fit the context) to replace words I don't understand to see if that works.
- I make mind pictures to "see" in my head what the text means.
- I connect what I am reading to what I have read previously in this text, and what I have read and knew before I read this text. I may ask an author-and-me question because my personal knowledge may help me figure out the meaning.
- I ask myself questions (Why did the character do this? Why did the author put this in? How is this important? Am I supposed to "think and search" or infer?).
- I use these other strategies: [WOL]
- I ask for help if I have made attempts to understand but can't get it. I ask a peer and then I ask my teacher or another adult.

This is an expansion and adaptation of the Stop-Think Strategy of Sue Mowery

### Appendix 3

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### Conversing with the Author Check Sheet

(\_+ for always, \_ for sometimes, \_- for not yet)

I, the reader:

- \_\_\_ notice/comment on the way a text is organized or the way in which information is withheld and presented
- \_\_\_ notice/comment on the words and vocabulary used
- \_\_\_ notice/comment on the style of the author
- \_\_\_ notice and identify conventions/textual codes used by the author
- \_\_\_ notice and comment on how conventions and constructions are used to make the author's point
- \_\_\_ evaluate the way the text is written
- \_\_\_ indicate some conception of the author, what kind of purpose she has in writing this text, what kind of person she might be, and so on
- \_\_\_ consider the author's meaning, the point being made through the text
- \_\_\_ indicate agreement, adaptation to, or argument with the author's meaning
- \_\_\_ indicate reason for agreement or disagreement
- \_\_\_ indicate ways in which story meaning may inform my own thinking and action

Which of these moves did you make in your latest backtalk? Give examples. Which ones did you not try but think you might like to try with your next reading?

## Appendix 4

### Interview Question

1. What is your opinion about using Think Aloud Protocols while reading?



## Appendix 5

### *The Chrysanthemums* by John Steinbeck

The high grey-flannel fog of winter closed off the Salinas Valley from the sky and from all the rest of the world. On every side it sat like a lid on the mountains and made of the great valley a closed pot. On the broad, level land floor the gang plows bit deep and left the black earth shining like metal where the shares had cut. On the foothill ranches across the Salinas River, the yellow stubble fields seemed to be bathed in pale cold sunshine, but there was no sunshine in the valley now in December. The thick willow scrub along the river flamed with sharp and positive yellow leaves.

It was a time of quiet and of waiting. The air was cold and tender. A light wind blew up from the southwest so that the farmers were mildly hopeful of a good rain before long; but fog and rain did not go together.

Across the river, on Henry Allen's foothill ranch there was little work to be done, for the hay was cut and stored and the orchards were plowed up to receive the rain deeply when it should come. The cattle on the higher slopes were becoming shaggy and rough-coated.

Elisa Allen, working in her flower garden, looked down across the yard and saw Henry, her husband, talking to two men in business suits. The three of them stood by the tractor shed, each man with one foot on the side of the little Fordson. They smoked cigarettes and studied the machine as they talked.

Elisa watched them for a moment and then went back to her work. She was thirty-five. Her face was lean and strong and her eyes were as clear as water. Her figure looked blocked and heavy in her gardening costume, a man's black hat pulled low down over her eyes, clod-hopper shoes, a figured print dress almost completely covered by a big corduroy apron with four big pockets to hold the snips, the trowel and scratcher, the seeds and the knife she worked with. She wore heavy leather gloves to protect her hands while she worked.

She was cutting down the old year's chrysanthemum stalks with a pair of short and powerful scissors. She looked down toward the men by the tractor shed now and then. Her face was eager and mature and handsome; even her work with the scissors was over-eager, over-powerful. The chrysanthemum stems seemed too small and easy for her energy.

She brushed a cloud of hair out of her eyes with the back of her glove, and left a smudge of earth on her cheek in doing it. Behind her stood the neat white farm house with red geraniums close-banked around it as high as the windows. It was a hard-swept looking little house, with hard-polished windows, and a clean mud-mat on the front steps.

Elisa cast another glance toward the tractor shed. The strangers were getting into their Ford coupe. She took off a glove and put her strong fingers down into the forest of new green chrysanthemum sprouts that were growing around the old roots. She spread the leaves and looked down among the close-growing stems. No aphids were there, no sowbugs or snails or cutworms. Her terrier fingers destroyed such pests before they could get started.

Elisa started at the sound of her husband's voice. He had come near quietly, and he leaned over the wire fence that protected her flower garden from cattle and dogs and chickens.

"At it again," he said. "You've got a strong new crop coming."

Elisa straightened her back and pulled on the gardening glove again. "Yes. They'll be strong this coming year." In her tone and on her face there was a little smugness.

You've got a gift with things," Henry observed. "Some of those yellow chrysanthemums you had this year were ten inches across. I wish you'd work out in the orchard and raise some apples that big."

Her eyes sharpened. "Maybe I could do it, too. I've a gift with things, all right. My mother had it. She could stick anything in the ground and make it grow. She said it was having planters' hands that knew how to do it."

"Well, it sure works with flowers," he said.

"Henry, who were those men you were talking to?"

"Why, sure, that's what I came to tell you. They were from the Western Meat Company. I sold those thirty head of three-year-old steers. Got nearly my own price, too."

"Good," she said. "Good for you."

"And I thought," he continued, "I thought how it's Saturday afternoon, and we might go into Salinas for dinner at a restaurant, and then to a picture show—to celebrate, you see."

"Good," she repeated. "Oh, yes. That will be good."

Henry put on his joking tone. "There's fights tonight. How'd you like to go to the fights?"

"Oh, no," she said breathlessly. "No, I wouldn't like fights."

"Just fooling, Elisa. We'll go to a movie. Let's see. It's two now. I'm going to take Scotty and bring down those steers from the hill. It'll take us maybe two hours. We'll go in town about five and have dinner at the Cominos Hotel. Like that?"

"Of course I'll like it. It's good to eat away from home."

"All right, then. I'll go get up a couple of horses."

She said, "I'll have plenty of time to transplant some of these sets, I guess."

She heard her husband calling Scotty down by the barn. And a little later she saw the two men ride up the pale yellow hillside in search of the steers.

There was a little square sandy bed kept for rooting the chrysanthemums. With her trowel she turned the soil over and over, and smoothed it and patted it firm. Then she dug ten parallel trenches to receive the sets. Back at the chrysanthemum bed she pulled out the little crisp shoots, trimmed off the leaves of each one with her scissors and laid it on a small orderly pile.

A squeak of wheels and plod of hoofs came from the road. Elisa looked up. The country road ran along the dense bank of willows and cotton-woods that bordered the river, and up this road came a curious vehicle, curiously drawn. It was an old spring-wagon, with a round canvas top on it like the cover of a prairie schooner. It was drawn by an old bay horse and a little grey-and-white burro. A big

stubble bearded man sat between the cover flaps and drove the crawling team. Underneath the wagon, between the hind wheels, a lean and rangy mongrel dog walked sedately. Words were painted on the canvas in clumsy, crooked letters. "Pots, pans, knives, scissors, lawn mores, Fixed." Two rows of articles, and the triumphantly definitive "Fixed" below. The black paint had run down in little sharp points beneath each letter.

Elisa, squatting on the ground, watched to see the crazy, loose-jointed wagon pass by. But it didn't pass. It turned into the farm road in front of her house, crooked old wheels skirling and squeaking. The rangy dog darted from between the wheels and ran ahead. Instantly the two ranch shepherds flew out at him. Then all three stopped, and with stiff and quivering tails, with taut straight legs, with ambassadorial dignity, they slowly circled, sniffing daintily. The caravan pulled up to Elisa's wire fence and stopped. Now the newcomer dog, feeling outnumbered, lowered his tail and retired under the wagon with raised hackles and bared teeth.

The man on the wagon seat called out, "That's a bad dog in a fight when he gets started."

Elisa laughed. "I see he is. How soon does he generally get started?"

The man caught up her laughter and echoed it heartily. "Sometimes not for weeks and weeks," he said. He climbed stiffly down, over the wheel. The horse and the donkey drooped like unwatered flowers.

Elisa saw that he was a very big man. Although his hair and beard were graying, he did not look old. His worn black suit was wrinkled and spotted with grease. The laughter had disappeared from his face and eyes the moment his laughing voice ceased. His eyes were dark, and they were full of the brooding that

gets in the eyes of teamsters and of sailors. The calloused hands he rested on the wire fence were cracked, and every crack was a black line. He took off his battered hat.

"I'm off my general road, ma'am," he said. "Does this dirt road cut over across the river to the Los Angeles highway?"

Elisa stood up and shoved the thick scissors in her apron pocket. "Well, yes, it does, but it winds around and then fords the river. I don't think your team could pull through the sand."

He replied with some asperity, "It might surprise you what them beasts can pull through."

"When they get started?" she asked.

He smiled for a second. "Yes. When they get started."

"Well," said Elisa, "I think you'll save time if you go back to the Salinas road and pick up the highway there."

He drew a big finger down the chicken wire and made it sing. "I ain't in any hurry, ma'am. I go from Seattle to San Diego and back every year. Takes all my time. About six months each way. I aim to follow nice weather."

Elisa took off her gloves and stuffed them in the apron pocket with the scissors. She touched the under edge of her man's hat, searching for fugitive hairs. "That sounds like a nice kind of a way to live," she said.

He leaned confidentially over the fence. "Maybe you noticed the writing on my wagon. I mend pots and sharpen knives and scissors. You got any of them things to do?"

"Oh, no," she said quickly. "Nothing like that." Her eyes hardened with resistance.

"Scissors is the worst thing," he explained. "Most people just ruin scissors trying to sharpen 'em, but I know how. I got a special tool. It's a little bobbit kind of thing, and patented. But it sure does the trick."

"No. My scissors are all sharp."

"All right, then. Take a pot," he continued earnestly, "a bent pot, or a pot with a hole. I can make it like new so you don't have to buy no new ones. That's a saving for you.

"No," she said shortly. "I tell you I have nothing like that for you to do."

His face fell to an exaggerated sadness. His voice took on a whining undertone. "I ain't had a thing to do today. Maybe I won't have no supper tonight. You see I'm off my regular road. I know folks on the highway clear from Seattle to San Diego. They save their things for me to sharpen up because they know I do it so good and save them money.

"I'm sorry," Elisa said irritably. "I haven't anything for you to do."

His eyes left her face and fell to searching the ground. They roamed about until they came to the chrysanthemum bed where she had been working. "What's them plants, ma'am?"

The irritation and resistance melted from Elisa's face. "Oh, those are chrysanthemums, giant whites and yellows. I raise them every year, bigger than anybody around here."

"Kind of a long-stemmed flower? Looks like a quick puff of colored smoke?" he asked.

"That's it. What a nice way to describe them."

"They smell kind of nasty till you get used to them," he said.

"It's a good bitter smell," she retorted, "not nasty at all."

He changed his tone quickly. "I like the smell myself."

"I had ten-inch blooms this year," she said.

The man leaned farther over the fence. "Look. I know a lady down the road a piece, has got the nicest garden you ever seen. Got nearly every kind of flower but no chrysanthemums. Last time I was mending a copper-bottom washtub for her (that's a hard job but I do it good), she said to me, 'If you ever run acrost some nice chrysanthemums I wish you'd try to get me a few seeds.' That's what she told me."

Elisa's eyes grew alert and eager. "She couldn't have known much about chrysanthemums. You can raise them from seed, but it's much easier to root the little sprouts you see there."

"Oh," he said. "I s'pose I can't take none to her, then."

"Why yes you can," Elisa cried. "I can put some in damp sand, and you can carry them right along with you. They'll take root in the pot if you keep them damp. And then she can transplant them."

"She'd sure like to have some, ma'am. You say they're nice ones?"

"Beautiful," she said. "Oh, beautiful." Her eyes shone. She tore off the battered hat and shook out her dark pretty hair. "I'll put them in a flower pot, and you can take them right with you. Come into the yard."

While the man came through the picket fence Elisa ran excitedly along the geranium-bordered path to the back of the house. And she returned carrying a big red flower pot. The gloves were forgotten now. She kneeled on the ground by the starting bed and dug up the sandy soil with her fingers and scooped it into the bright new flower pot. Then she picked up the little pile of shoots she had prepared. With her strong fingers she pressed them into the sand and tamped around them with her knuckles. The man stood over her. "I'll tell you what to do," she said. "You remember so you can tell the lady."

"Yes, I'll try to remember."

"Well, look. These will take root in about a month. Then she must set them out, about a foot apart in good rich earth like this, see?" She lifted a handful of dark

soil for him to look at. "They'll grow fast and tall. Now remember this. In July tell her to cut them down, about eight inches from the ground."

"Before they bloom?" he asked.

"Yes, before they bloom." Her face was tight with eagerness. "They'll grow right up again. About the last of September the buds will start."

She stopped and seemed perplexed. "It's the budding that takes the most care," she said hesitantly. "I don't know how to tell you." She looked deep into his eyes, searchingly. Her mouth opened a little, and she seemed to be listening. "I'll try to tell you," she said. "Did you ever hear of planting hands?"

"Can't say I have, ma'am."

"Well, I can only tell you what it feels like. It's when you're picking off the buds you don't want. Everything goes right down into your fingertips. You watch your fingers work. They do it themselves. You can feel how it is. They pick and pick the buds. They never make a mistake. They're with the plant. Do you see? Your fingers and the plant. You can feel that, right up your arm. They know. They never make a mistake. You can feel it. When you're like that you can't do anything wrong. Do you see that? Can you understand that?"

She was kneeling on the ground looking up at him. Her breast swelled passionately.

The man's eyes narrowed. He looked away self-consciously. "Maybe I know," he said. "Sometimes in the night in the wagon there—"

Elisa's voice grew husky. She broke in on him. "I've never lived as you do, but I know what you mean. When the night is dark—why, the stars are sharp-pointed, and there's quiet. Why, you rise up and up! Every pointed star gets driven into your body. It's like that. Hot and sharp and—lovely."

Kneeling there, her hand went out toward his legs in the greasy black trousers. Her hesitant fingers almost touched the cloth. Then her hand dropped to the ground. She crouched low like a fawning dog.

He said, "It's nice, just like you say. Only when you don't have no dinner, it ain't."

She stood up then, very straight, and her face was ashamed. She held the flower pot out to him and placed it gently in his arms. "Here. Put it in your wagon, on the seat, where you can watch it. Maybe I can find something for you to do."

At the back of the house she dug in the can pile and found two old and battered aluminum saucepans. She carried them back and gave them to him. "Here, maybe you can fix these."

His manner changed. He became professional. "Good as new I can fix them." At the back of his wagon he set a little anvil, and out of an oily tool box dug a small machine hammer. Elisa came through the gate to watch him while he pounded out the dents in the kettles. His mouth grew sure and knowing. At a difficult part of the work he sucked his under-lip.

"You sleep right in the wagon?" Elisa asked.

"Right in the wagon, ma'am. Rain or shine I'm dry as a cow in there."

"It must be nice," she said. "It must be very nice. I wish women could do such things."

"It ain't the right kind of a life for a woman."

Her upper lip raised a little, showing her teeth. "How do you know? How can you tell?" she said.

"I don't know, ma'am," he protested. "Of course I don't know. Now here's your kettles, done. You don't have to buy no new ones."

"How much?" "Oh, fifty cents'll do. I keep my prices down and my work good. That's why I have all them satisfied customers up and down the highway."

Elisa brought him a fifty-cent piece from the house and dropped it in his hand. "You might be surprised to have a rival some time. I can sharpen scissors, too. And I can beat the dents out of little pots. I could show you what a woman might do."

He put his hammer back in the oily box and shoved the little anvil out of sight. "It would be a lonely life for a woman, ma'am, and a scary life, too, with animals creeping under the wagon all night." He climbed over the singletree, steadying himself with a hand on the burro's white rump. He settled himself in the seat, picked up the lines. "Thank you kindly, ma'am," he said. "I'll do like you told me; I'll go back and catch the Salinas road."

"Mind," she called, "if you're long in getting there, keep the sand damp."

"Sand, ma'am?... Sand? Oh, sure. You mean around the chrysanthemums. Sure I will." He clucked his tongue. The beasts leaned luxuriously into their collars. The mongrel dog took his place between the back wheels. The wagon turned and crawled out the entrance road and back the way it had come, along the river.

Elisa stood in front of her wire fence watching the slow progress of the caravan. Her shoulders were straight, her head thrown back, her eyes half-closed, so that the scene came vaguely into them. Her lips moved silently, forming the words "Goodbye—good-bye." Then she whispered, "That's a bright direction. There's a glowing there." The sound of her whisper startled her. She shook herself free and looked about to see whether anyone had been listening. Only the dogs had heard. They lifted their heads toward her from their sleeping in the dust, and then stretched out their chins and settled asleep again. Elisa turned and ran hurriedly into the house.

In the kitchen she reached behind the stove and felt the water tank. It was full of hot water from the noonday cooking. In the bathroom she tore off her soiled clothes and flung them into the corner. And then she scrubbed herself with a little block of pumice, legs and thighs, loins and chest and arms, until her skin was scratched and red. When she had dried herself she stood in front of a mirror in her bedroom and looked at her body. She tightened her stomach and threw out her chest. She turned and looked over her shoulder at her back.

After a while she began to dress, slowly. She put on her newest underclothing and her nicest stockings and the dress which was the symbol of her prettiness. She worked carefully on her hair, pencilled her eyebrows and rouged her lips.

Before she was finished she heard the little thunder of hoofs and the shouts of Henry and his helper as they drove the red steers into the corral. She heard the gate bang shut and set herself for Henry's arrival.

His step sounded on the porch. He entered the house calling, "Elisa, where are you?"

"In my room, dressing. I'm not ready. There's hot water for your bath. Hurry up. It's getting late."

When she heard him splashing in the tub, Elisa laid his dark suit on the bed, and shirt and socks and tie beside it. She stood his polished shoes on the floor beside the bed. Then she went to the porch and sat primly and stiffly down. She looked toward the river road where the willow-line was still yellow with frosted leaves so that under the high grey fog they seemed a thin band of sunshine. This was the only color in the grey afternoon. She sat unmoving for a long time. Her eyes blinked rarely.

Henry came banging out of the door, shoving his tie inside his vest as he came. Elisa stiffened and her face grew tight. Henry stopped short and looked at her. "Why—why, Elisa. You look so nice!"

"Nice? You think I look nice? What do you mean by 'nice'?"

Henry blundered on. "I don't know. I mean you look different, strong and happy."

"I am strong? Yes, strong. What do you mean 'strong'?"

He looked bewildered. "You're playing some kind of a game," he said helplessly. "It's a kind of a play. You look strong enough to break a calf over your knee, happy enough to eat it like a watermelon."

For a second she lost her rigidity. "Henry! Don't talk like that. You didn't know what you said." She grew complete again. "I'm strong," she boasted. "I never knew before how strong."

Henry looked down toward the tractor shed, and when he brought his eyes back to her, they were his own again. "I'll get out the car. You can put on your coat while I'm starting."

Elisa went into the house. She heard him drive to the gate and idle down his motor, and then she took a long time to put on her hat. She pulled it here and pressed it there. When Henry turned the motor off she slipped into her coat and went out.

The little roadster bounced along on the dirt road by the river, raising the birds and driving the rabbits into the brush. Two cranes flapped heavily over the willow-line and dropped into the river-bed.

Far ahead on the road Elisa saw a dark speck. She knew.

She tried not to look as they passed it, but her eyes would not obey. She whispered to herself sadly, "He might have thrown them off the road. That wouldn't have been much trouble, not very much. But he kept the pot," she explained. "He had to keep the pot. That's why he couldn't get them off the road."

The roadster turned a bend and she saw the caravan ahead. She swung full around toward her husband so she could not see the little covered wagon and the mismatched team as the car passed them.

In a moment it was over. The thing was done. She did not look back.

She said loudly, to be heard above the motor, "It will be good, tonight, a good dinner."

Now you're changed again," Henry complained. He took one hand from the wheel and patted her knee. "I ought to take you in to dinner oftener. It would be good for both of us. We get so heavy out on the ranch."

"Henry," she asked, "could we have wine at dinner?"

"Sure we could. Say! That will be fine."

She was silent for a while; then she said, "Henry, at those prize fights, do the men hurt each other very much?"

"Sometimes a little, not often. Why?"

"Well, I've read how they break noses, and blood runs down their chests. I've read how the fighting gloves get heavy and soggy with blood."

He looked around at her. "What's the matter, Elisa? I didn't know you read things like that." He brought the car to a stop, then turned to the right over the Salinas River bridge.

"Do any women ever go to the fights?" she asked.

"Oh, sure, some. What's the matter, Elisa? Do you want to go? I don't think you'd like it, but I'll take you if you really want to go."

She relaxed limply in the seat. "Oh, no. No. I don't want to go. I'm sure I don't." Her face was turned away from him. "It will be enough if we can have wine. It will be plenty." She turned up her coat collar so he could not see that she was crying weakly—like an old woman



## Appendix 6

### *Daddy* by Sylvia Plath

You do not do, you do not do  
Any more, black shoe  
In which I have lived like a foot  
For thirty years, poor and white,  
Barely daring to breathe or Achoo.

Daddy, I have had to kill you.  
You died before I had time——  
Marble-heavy, a bag full of God,  
Ghastly statue with one gray toe  
Big as a Frisco seal

And a head in the freakish Atlantic  
Where it pours bean green over blue  
In the waters off beautiful Nauset.  
I used to pray to recover you.  
Ach, du.

In the German tongue, in the Polish town  
Scraped flat by the roller  
Of wars, wars, wars.  
But the name of the town is common.  
My Polack friend

Says there are a dozen or two.  
So I never could tell where you  
Put your foot, your root,  
I never could talk to you.  
The tongue stuck in my jaw.

It stuck in a barb wire snare.  
Ich, ich, ich, ich,  
I could hardly speak.  
I thought every German was you.  
And the language obscene

An engine, an engine  
Chuffing me off like a Jew.  
A Jew to Dachau, Auschwitz, Belsen.  
I began to talk like a Jew.  
I think I may well be a Jew.

The snows of the Tyrol, the clear beer of Vienna  
Are not very pure or true.  
With my gipsy ancestress and my weird luck  
And my Taroc pack and my Taroc pack  
I may be a bit of a Jew.

I have always been scared of *you*,  
With your Luftwaffe, your gobbledygoo.  
And your neat mustache  
And your Aryan eye, bright blue.  
Panzer-man, panzer-man, O You——

Not God but a swastika  
So black no sky could squeak through.  
Every woman adores a Fascist,  
The boot in the face, the brute  
Brute heart of a brute like you.

You stand at the blackboard, daddy,  
In the picture I have of you,  
A cleft in your chin instead of your foot  
But no less a devil for that, no not  
Any less the black man who

Bit my pretty red heart in two.  
I was ten when they buried you.  
At twenty I tried to die  
And get back, back, back to you.  
I thought even the bones would do.

But they pulled me out of the sack,  
And they stuck me together with glue.  
And then I knew what to do.  
I made a model of you,  
A man in black with a Meinkampf look

And a love of the rack and the screw.  
And I said I do, I do.  
So daddy, I'm finally through.  
The black telephone's off at the root,  
The voices just can't worm through.

If I've killed one man, I've killed two——  
The vampire who said he was you  
And drank my blood for a year,  
Seven years, if you want to know.  
Daddy, you can lie back now.

There's a stake in your fat black heart  
And the villagers never liked you.  
They are dancing and stamping on you.  
They always *knew* it was you.  
Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I'm through.

## Appendix 7

### *A Haunted House by Virginia Woolf*

Whatever hour you woke there was a door shunting. From room to room they went, hand in hand, lifting here, opening there, making sure—a ghostly couple. "Here we left it," she said. And he added, "Oh, but here too!" "It's upstairs," she murmured. "And in the garden," he whispered "Quietly," they said, "or we shall wake them."

But it wasn't that you woke us. Oh, no. "They're looking for it; they're drawing the curtain," one might say, and so read on a page or two. "Now they've found it," one would be certain, stopping the pencil on the margin. And then, tired of reading, one might rise and see for oneself, the house all empty, the doors standing open, only the wood pigeons bubbling with content and the hum of the threshing machine sounding from the farm. "What did I come in here for? What did I want to find?" My hands were empty. "Perhaps it's upstairs then?" The apples were in the loft. And so down again, the garden still as ever, only the book had slipped into the grass.

But they had found it in the drawing room. Not that one could ever see them. The window panes reflected apples, reflected roses; all the leaves were green in the glass. If they moved in the drawing room, the apple only turned its yellow side. Yet, the moment after, if the door was opened, spread about the floor, hung upon the walls, pendant from the ceiling—what? My hands were empty. The shadow of a thrush crossed the carpet; from the deepest wells of silence the wood pigeon drew its bubble of sound. "Safe, safe, safe," the pulse of the house beat softly. "The treasure buried; the room..." the pulse stopped short. Oh, was that the buried treasure?

A moment later the light had faded. Out in the garden then? But the trees spun darkness for a wandering beam of sun. So fine, so rare, coolly sunk beneath the surface the beam I sought always burnt behind the glass. Death was the glass; death was between us; coming to the woman first, hundreds of years ago, leaving the house, sealing all the windows; the rooms were darkened. He left it, left her, went North, went East, saw the stars turned in the Southern sky; sought the house, found it dropped beneath the Downs. "Safe, safe, safe," the pulse of the house beat gladly. "The Treasure yours."

The wind roars up the avenue. Trees stoop and bend this way and that. Moonbeams splash and spill wildly in the rain. But the beam of the lamp falls straight from the window. The candle burns stiff and still. Wandering through the house, opening the windows, whispering not to wake us, the ghostly couple seek their joy.

"Here we slept," she says. And he adds, "Kisses without number." "Waking in the morning—" "Silver between the trees—" "Upstairs—" "In the garden—" "When summer came—" "In winter snowtime—" The doors go shutting far in the distance, gently knocking like the pulse of a heart.

Nearer they come; cease at the doorway. The wind falls, the rain slides silver down the glass. Our eyes darken; we hear no steps beside us; we see no lady spread her ghostly cloak. His hands shield the lantern. "Look," he breathes. "Sound asleep. Love upon their lips."

Stooping, holding their silver lamp above us, long they look and deeply. Long they pause. The wind drives straightly; the flame stoops slightly. Wild beams of moonlight cross both floor and wall, and, meeting, stain the faces bent; the faces pondering; the faces that search the sleepers and seek their hidden joy.

"Safe, safe, safe," the heart of the house beats proudly. "Long years—" he sighs. "Again you found me." "Here," she murmurs, "sleeping; in the garden reading; laughing, rolling apples in the loft. Here we left our treasure—" Stooping, their light lifts the lids upon my eyes. "Safe! safe! safe!" the pulse of the house beats wildly. Waking, I cry "Oh, is this your buried treasure? The light in the heart."

