



ASSESSING EFL LEARNERS' VOCABULARY IN READING ABILITY
WITH THE SRA MATERIALS: A CASE STUDY AT ASSUMPTION
UNIVERSITY

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FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN
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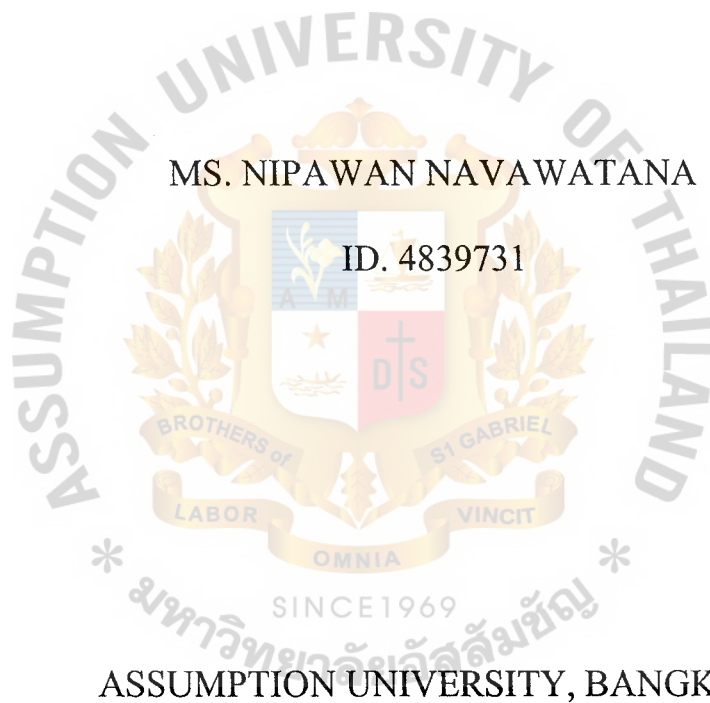
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Statement of Plagiarism

I certify that the contents of this thesis are entirely my own work that no act of plagiarism has been committed, and that complete and appropriate acknowledgement has been made of all sources of information.

Ms. Nipawan Navawatana



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Abstract

This research attempts to investigate EFL learners' reading ability in terms of vocabulary comprehension with the SRA Reading Laboratory tests.

The study was conducted in the first semester of the academic year 2006-2007 in the Institute for English Language Education (IELE) at Assumption University Bangkok, Thailand. The SRA Reading Laboratory tests were administered to 100 learners and the subjects were given one hour to complete the SRA Reading Laboratory tests.

The results show diversity in learners' reading abilities within a section. Moreover, the majority of the learners can perform part II (using word in new contexts) better than part I (word meaning from the context). As a consequence, the researcher strongly recommends the need to promote extensive graded reading such as SRA Reading Laboratory to increase learners' vocabulary and develop their reading comprehension. The researcher believes that when appropriate materials are chosen for ESL/EFL learners, they will have a higher rate of success. The findings will help teachers promote learners' reading ability and to learn new words effectively.

Based on the finding, recommendations of this study and suggestions for further research are discussed in the final chapter of the study.

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Chapter One

Introduction

This chapter presents the introduction, rationale, objective of the study, research questions, significance of the study and thesis organization.

1.1 Introduction

It could be claimed that English is the most acceptable and widely used means of communication in the world. Many countries which do not have English as one of their main language have put a great deal of effort and investment into developing many new English curriculums so that their people in the future will become fluent in the language. Thailand as one of those also realizes this and has made many attempts to change the curriculum.

The recent national fundamental education plans of the year 2001 made all the primary schools schedule English into the curriculums from the first grade through the twelfth. Consequently, the students are expected to learn English well and become competent in English; therefore, they will be more proficient in the future.

In the Thai educational context, the development of English skills among young people is an important component in their preparation for effective roles in the 21st century. It is important for Thai teachers of English to search for effective teaching and learning methods to improve their students' ability to read in English that fit comfortably with the cultural and educational contexts and their backgrounds.

Vocabulary acquisition is considered by many to be the single most important aspect of foreign/second language learning. Not only do a majority of students studying foreign/second languages cite vocabulary as their number one priority, but teachers of ten consider it to be a priority in language learning. Moreover, traditional vocabulary instruction has focused on having students look up word meaning and memorize them. This teaching approach is providing only a short-term learning of words. Students who memorize word meanings frequently have trouble applying the information in definitions and often make mistakes about the meaning.

However, from the researcher's experience as a student, many teachers give little or no classroom attention to vocabulary, assuming students will learn words incidentally. Laufer (1986: 72) argues that if fluency is understood as "the ability to convey a message with ease and comprehensibility", then vocabulary adequacy and accuracy matter more than grammatical correctness. Although vocabulary has attracted increased interest since the 1980s, language researchers and teachers continue to give less attention to it than syntax and phonology, closed systems that lend themselves more easily to linguistic abstractions and generalizations.

English is taught as a foreign language in Thailand. From researcher's opinion many ESL/EFL learners face the problems in English with many reasons including poor vocabulary. When students find it hard to deal with new or unfamiliar words, they tend to isolate and avoid using them. From the researcher's experience as a high school and university student, teachers do not really pay much attention to the vocabulary development of students in the EFL classroom. Moreover, students are not encouraged or trained to use any particular method of learning vocabulary. Parker (1969:4) claims that:

“Many years ago I discovered the importance of student self-determination as I worked with a seventh-grade class of thirty-five boys and girls averaging two years below grade level in reading”. From this situation, it is important for the teachers to know what level of each learner is. Moreover, the learners could get benefit from learning with appropriate reading materials and way of teaching.

Students who have inadequate vocabulary are at a much higher risk of performing poorly in high school, community college, or university (Hazenbergh & Hulstijn, 1996; Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997). The researcher believes that inadequate vocabulary will affect reading comprehension directly. Therefore, encouraging learners to read a wide variety of material will improve reading skill and vocabulary.

1.2 Rationale

It could be argued that vocabulary is the most important and basic tool for effective language learning. To know as many words as possible seems to be the ideal goal for any language learner.

Word knowledge is an essential component of communicative competence, and it is important for production and comprehension in a second language (Coady & Huckin, 1997). What does it mean to know a word? Vocabulary knowledge is the size of the vocabulary and the depth of vocabulary, which includes knowledge of pronunciation, spelling, multiple meanings, the contexts in which the word can be used, the frequency with which it is used, morphological and syntactical properties, and how the word combines with other words (Qian, 1999).

It is further estimated that an L2 reader of English must acquire a minimum of 3,000 base words to be capable of reading unsimplified text with some degree of comprehension (Nation, 1990). Nation and Waring (1997: 7) review vocabulary size studies and conclude that:

The best conservative rule of thumb that we have is that up to a vocabulary size for around 2,000 word families, we should expect that [English] native speakers will study and roughly 1,000 word families a year to their vocabulary size. This means that a (L1) five years old beginning school will have a vocabulary of around 4,000 to 5,000 word families.

Many students probably consider that their main problem is reading is not to having enough vocabulary. As a result, there have been a lot of materials to help learners increase their vocabulary size in successful ways. In this research, the researcher will find out the reading ability through SRA (Science Research Associate) Reading Laboratory: focus on vocabulary. The Reading Laboratory system is designed to know learners' differences in reading. The SRA program is meant to give a clear explanation to determine the level of each learner in terms of vocabulary comprehension. It is necessary to know if learners have enough vocabulary to read and understand texts. Therefore, the researcher assumes that the English I learners at Assumption University have the similar English proficiency would also have the same reading ability. The researcher expects the results of this study will help teachers to know what the reading level in terms of vocabulary and also what the types of errors the learners often connect in vocabulary. This can help teachers to prepare reading materials at the proper level for learners to improve their vocabulary skill in reading.

1.3 Objective of the study:

1. To investigate the reading ability of EFL learners (English as a foreign language) students testing through SRA Reading laboratory.

1.4 Research Questions

This study aims to investigate the reading ability of EFL learners by testing through the SRA Laboratory which focuses on two main objectives: 1) word meaning from the context 2) using words in new context. The research questions are given below:

1. What is the reading level of EFL learners in terms of vocabulary comprehension in the SRA Reading materials/texts?
2. What types of mistakes do the learners make in the tests?
3. What are the results of the comparison between the ability to deduce meaning from the contexts and the ability to use words in new contexts?

1.5 Significance of the study

1. The researcher hopes that the outcomes of this study would provide relevant information to those in the ESL/EFL field to help students improve their reading comprehension, particularly efficient vocabulary learning.
2. The researcher hopes that the outcomes of this study would help teachers to provide appropriate reading material and ways of teaching to the students which may have different abilities in the same class.

2.1.1 Definition of terms

2.1.1.1 Research Associate (SRA) Laboratory is designed for improving learners' reading skills. There is a range of levels in different reading. They have ten color-coded levels in the SRA kit which are Aqua, Blue, Purple, Violet, Rose, Red, Orange, Yellow, Brown, and Tan.

2.1.1.2 Power Builder is the core of the SRA program. Power Builder folders are arranged in color-coded levels of difficulty. The basic component of the power builders are stories with accompanying comprehension, vocabulary, and reading questions. The Power Builders are divided into ten different reading levels with fifteen stories per level. The stories are an eclectic mix of fiction and non-fiction with color photographs/illustrations.

2.1.1.3 Power Builder Key Cards: Each Power Builder has a corresponding Key Card with the answers to the Power Builder questions.

2.1.1.4 Reading Level ability is students have a wide variety of English language competence.

2.1.1.5 Extensive Reading: Extensive reading is meant to develop good reading habits, to build background knowledge of vocabulary and structure, and to develop a liking for reading in a second or foreign language.

2.1.2 Methodology

The study was conducted at the Assumption University or ABAC, Bangkok, Thailand.

The Assumption University provides various degree programs to both local and international students.

The students who attend the university are trained in various specialized fields of their choice.

The participants which participated in this study were from the Institute for English Language Education (IELE). The participants (100 learners) who completed the SRA tests were from the Institute for English I and the population included Thais and non-Thais. The convenience

sampling method was used to select the subjects for the tests. There are six texts in SRA Reading Laboratory which has 3 colors (Blue, Red and Tan) and 3 levels (the easy, moderate and difficult). The colors are representative of the level of difficulty. The researcher scored the students' tests by using the power builder keycards from SRA Reading Laboratory.

1.8 Thesis Organization

This thesis consists of five chapters; the first chapter as mentioned earlier, provides an introduction to the study. The researcher will discuss the background, objectives, research questions, significance and the methodology of the study.

Chapter two will discuss the SRA Reading Laboratory and review studies related to the teaching of reading with a special focus on vocabulary.

Chapter three will provide an overview of the research context, profiles of the subject, data collection instruments, and method of analysis used in the study.

Chapter four will provide a detailed description of the data and discussion on the significance of the findings of the study.

Chapter five will draw conclusions from the findings of the research. The limitations of this study will be discussed before providing some directions for future research related to teaching vocabulary in English language education.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

This chapter will review studies related to the role of multi-level reading ability in EFL, assessing vocabulary size, extensive reading, graded readers and vocabulary through reading. This chapter will also provide an overview of the SRA Reading Laboratory and cite similar studies where the SRA was used.

2.1 Introduction

The ability to read texts is considered one of the most important skills that university students of English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) need to acquire. Vocabulary plays an important role in learning. Vocabulary is also important in reading comprehension. It is necessary to improve learners' reading ability.

2.2 Multi-level Reading Ability

Students have a wide variety of English language competence. In multi-level adult English as a second/foreign language (ESL/EFL) classes, teachers are challenged to use a variety of materials, activities, and techniques to engage the interest of the learners and assist them in their educational goals.

The term *multi-level* is to identify any group of learners who differ from one another in one or more significant ways. Arguably, every class is multi-level because learners begin with varying degrees of competence and then progress at different rates in each of the language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Bell & Burnaby, 1984; Santopietro, 1991; Wrigley & Guth, 1992). However, in many adult ESL classes, there are even more variables that affect the levels within the class. Some programs (generally because of

funding constraints, learner scheduling difficulties, number of learners, and program logistics) place learners of all levels, from beginning to advanced, in a single class. Often such classes include speakers of many native languages, some learners use the Roman alphabet, some that do not. Learners may have varying degrees of literacy in their first language as well as in English (Bell, 1991; Santopietro, 1991; Wrigley & Guth, 1992). Other factors that add to diversity in the classroom and to rate of progress in learning English are the type and amount of a learner's previous education; the learning style and preference; learner expectations of appropriate classroom activities; and the culture, religion, sex, and age of each learner (Guglielmino & Burrichter, 1987).

The phrases "within their language proficiency range" or "beyond their language proficiency range" have certain implications in the context of reading. The parameters of students' language proficiency range are likely to vary even within one class. For example, a multi-level reading lesson could allow students choose their own topics, and focusing on a variety of topics and (language) levels in order to allow students to improve their reading skills.

2.3 Assessing vocabulary size

An average size of 17,000 word families suggests that the "learning burden" of the task associated with direct English vocabulary teaching to non-native speakers is not as daunting as once believed. Exceptional adult second language learners do achieve vocabulary sizes that are like those of educated native speakers. A recent study (Cervatiuc, 2007) suggests that the average receptive vocabulary size of highly proficient university-educated non-native English speakers ranges between 13,500 and 20,000 base words, being comparable to that of university-educated English native speakers (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Comparison between the findings of Cervatiuc's (2007) study and those of Goulden, Nation, and Read (1990)

| | Cervatiuc's study (2007) Sample: 20 highly proficient non-native speakers | Goulden, Nation, and Read's study (1990) Sample: 20 university-educated native speakers |
|---|--|--|
| Receptive English vocabulary size range | 13,500 - 20,000 base words | 13,200 - 20,700 base words |
| Receptive English vocabulary size average | 16,512 base words | 17,200 base words |

Goulden, Nation, and Read (1990: 356)

A vocabulary acquisition rate of 2650 base words per year would allow adult learners of English as a second/foreign language to achieve a native-like vocabulary size of 17,200 base words in 6.49 years. This rate may not be representative of the average English as a second/foreign language learner, since the participants in Milton and Meara (1995) were top students and exceptional learners, but it suggests that acquisition of a native-like vocabulary size in a second/foreign language as an adult learner is an achievable goal.

Hazenberge and Hulstijn (1996) conclude that L2 speakers of Dutch need a minimum initial threshold level of some 10,000 words to cope with academic reading requirements in first-year university studies in the Netherlands. Although these figures are based on measures of the number of words for which learners can recognize and give a meaning, how well the words are known also plays a role in comprehension.

056 c.1

Nation and Waring (1997) suggest that by knowing the 2000 most frequent word families, plus the Academic Word List (AWL), a second/foreign language reader would understand about 90% of the words encountered in any academic text.

Some researchers (Laufer & Yano, 2001 and Nation 2001) claim that the total amount of EFL students' vocabulary is much lesser than that of native speakers, especially for high school and university students. Around a quarter of a century ago, Yoshida (1978) conducted a study to find the English vocabulary size of Japanese children. He found that a Japanese child who learns English as a foreign language in a nursery school, taking 2 to 3 hours of English classes a day acquired 570 to 660 words annually in his/her receptive vocabulary. Two decades later, Barrow, Nakanishi and Ishino (1999) measured vocabulary knowledge of Japanese College freshmen and discovered that on an average their participants recalled 2,304 basic words. Earlier, Barnard (1961) and Quinn (1968) found that Indian and Indonesian students who learned English as a foreign language (EFL) acquired only 1,000 to 2,000 words after five years of four or five English classes a week.

2.4 SRA Reading Laboratory

For over 40 years, SRA (Science Research Associates) Reading texts have helped more than 100 million students around the world improve their reading skills. A range of reading levels encourages students to learn independently and at their own pace. The texts allow an entire classroom of readers at different levels. The readers simply initiate the program with a placement test. Then, students progress through each level at their own rate.

The SRA Reading Laboratory program produces measurable results in terms of standardized reading test scores in classroom throughout the world. (Parker, 1969: 4) The SRA Reading Laboratory meets the needs of slow, average, and superior learners by providing multi-level learning materials in the classroom. The reading materials and associated skills exercises in any one Laboratory kit are organized into a series of color-designed difficulty levels that range both above and below the average for that grade or age group. There are ten color-coded levels in the SRA Reading Laboratory kit which are Aqua, Blue, Purple, Violet, Rose, Red, Orange, Gold, Brown, and Tan. Each level is represented by a different color, and each is more difficult to read than the previous level

The practice selections in the kit are by no means just sterile skills exercises. They are short stories and articles that students actually enjoy reading. They are sources of a great deal of incidental learning as well – about plants, animals, history, science, discovery, fine arts, social institutions, sports, values, cultural heritage, and much more.

Students do not just learn to read better in the Reading Laboratory program: they discover what it means to become readers. The students gain pleasure, information, and – if the ultimate goal succeeds – a lifelong love of reading in all kinds of subject areas. The students learn to read for a variety of purposes, and students discover what it is to read in a wide range of content areas.

The four main goals of the learning materials in the Reading Laboratory kit are:

1. To develop vocabulary and word analysis.
2. To reinforce specific skills in which students may show a weakness.
3. To improve reading rate.

4. To interest students in reading and to enlarge students' specific knowledge, using a wide array of quality factual and fictional selections.

For example, Skrybant (2008)

The pupils in the preparatory school enjoy the short stories and giving short one word answers. They work hard to move up the levels and this has a positive effect on their self esteem. Moreover, in the senior school I have used SRA to help pupils to increase their comprehension skills and also improve their reading speed.

<http://www.mcgraw-hill.co.uk/sra/reviewcentre/readinglabs.html>.

2.5 Extensive reading

Extensive reading is appropriate at all stages of language learning; it is never too early – or too late – to learn to read a second language. Extensive reading also is “intended to develop good reading habits, to build up knowledge of vocabulary and structure, and to encourage a liking for reading”. (Richards, Platt, & Platt, 1922: 133) Teachers are lucky to have a large library with books of various levels; it is a good idea for all students to begin by reading very easy books. This will quickly build confidence and make it easier for students to begin to build both sight and general vocabulary. Any group of students will display a range of levels of language ability and reading fluency, even though students may have all studied the second language for an equal amount of time. In an extensive reading program, it is easy to accommodate everyone because reading materials appropriate for a wide variety of levels can – and should – be ordered.

Research also suggests that learners gain vocabulary knowledge through extensive reading. (See Burt, Peyton, & Adams, 2003, for a detailed discussion of vocabulary knowledge and its relationship to reading in adult second language learners.) Moreover, reading accompanied by vocabulary building activities can increase vocabulary knowledge

(Paribakht & Wesche, 1997; Wesche & Paribakht, 2000). Teachers should include reading opportunities in class and assist learners by selecting texts that are of high interest and appropriate level. They should preview the key vocabulary in a reading passage, teach high-frequency words, and help learners use dictionaries effectively (Burt, Peyton, & Adams, 2003).

According to the literature, one of the ways to learn English, other than living among speakers, is to read extensively. (Nuttall, 1996: 128).

2.6.1 The characteristics of an extensive reading approach

1. Students read as much as possible, perhaps in and definitely out of the classroom.
2. A variety of materials on a wide range of topics is available so as to encourage reading for different reasons and in different ways.
3. Students select what they want to read and have freedom to stop reading material that fails to interest them.
4. The purposes of reading are usually related to pleasure, information and general understanding. The purposes are determined by the nature of the material and the interests of the students.
5. Reading is its own reward. There are few or no follow-up exercises after reading.
6. Reading materials are well within the linguistic competence of the students in terms of vocabulary and grammar. Dictionaries are rarely used while reading because the constant stopping to look up words makes fluent reading difficult.
7. Reading is individual and silent, at the student's own pace, and, outside class, done when and where the student chooses.

8. Reading speed is usually faster rather than slower as students read books and other material they find easily understandable.
9. Teachers orient students to the goals of the program, explain the methodology, keep track of what each students read, and guide students in getting the most out of the program.
10. The teacher is a role model of a reader for the students, an active member of the classroom reading community, demonstrating what it means to be a reader and the rewards of being a reader.

(Day & Bamford, 1998: 7-8)

By reading widely, the learners can learn how words are being used in different contexts. Moreover, by encountering words in different contexts many times, learners will be able to remember and use words more easily.

2.6 Graded readers

Graded readers first gained widespread use in the 1980s and have become the cornerstone of extensive reading programs (Bamford, 1984). The graded readers are fiction and non-fiction materials that have been specially written for learners of English as a foreign or second language. Graded readers are a major role of EFL/ESL learners at all ability levels from the beginners through advance. Graded readers also provide the learners a variety of reading materials with appropriate level and interest. Graded readers allow students to deepen their awareness knowledge grammar and vocabulary. (Nation, 1997).

2.7 Vocabulary through reading

The most important ways in which teachers can help learners improve their vocabulary in context are:

- Helping learners to find and choose reading materials of appropriate level of difficulty. This will expand vocabulary knowledge of the learners.
- Reading is a good source of improving vocabulary. The more the learners read, the more they gain new words from the contexts.
- Providing training in guessing from the context. Therefore, learners read without their dictionaries to understand or guess the words in the contexts.

Reading quantity not only develops and increases vocabulary knowledge, but also improves reading skills in terms of fluent reading.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the role of multi-level reading ability, assessing vocabulary size, SRA Reading Laboratory, extensive reading, graded readers and the importance vocabulary through reading. The following chapter will discuss the research methodology of this study.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

This chapter presents the research methodology of the study. It describes the setting of the study, the subjects of the study, the instruments for data collection, and the method of analysis.

Restatement of the research questions

1. What is the reading level of EFL learners in terms of vocabulary comprehension in the SRA Reading materials/texts?
2. What types of mistakes do the learners make in the tests?
3. What are the results of the comparison between the ability to deduce meaning from the contexts and the ability to use the words in new contexts?

3.1 Setting of the study

Assumption University initially originated from Assumption Commercial College in 1969 as an autonomous higher education institution under the name of Assumption School of Business. In 1972, with the approval of the Ministry of Education, it was officially established as Assumption Business Administration College or ABAC. In May 1975, the Ministry of University Affairs accredited it. In 1990, it was granted new status as "Assumption University" by the Ministry of University Affairs. The University is a non-profit institution administered by the Brothers of St. Gabriel, a worldwide catholic religious order, founded in France in 1705, devoted to education and philanthropic activities. The congregation has been operating many educational institutions in Thailand since 1901.

English language is also taught in the Institute for English Language Education (IELE) apart from the English Department. The students who enroll in Bachelor’s degree programs choose one of these departments to do theirs compulsory English courses. The objectives of the IELE are shown in Tables 3.1 and 3.2 (as of March 2007).

Table 3.1 English language teaching in the IELE at Assumption University

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| | IELE |
| Students | Top and bottom 10% of students from the AU admission test for Bachelor's degree courses |
| Types of English courses | 1.English I to IV (see Table3.2) |
| Teaching Methods | Literature-based, communicative language teaching |
| Aims | 1. To help student for academic study 2.To conduct experiments and research in EFL courses. |

Table 3.2 English courses in the IELE

| Level | | IELE |
|-------------|--------|--|
| English I | BG1012 | Focus on a performance-based approach to English language study through reading, writing, listening and speaking. |
| English II | BG1022 | The emphasis is on the application of English in communication through a performance-based platform. |
| English III | BG2033 | Major emphasis will be the playwriting, either individually or in groups, the rehearsal of a play or plays and staging of a play for an audience. |
| English IV | BG2044 | The culmination of the IELE performance based program is to apply the methodology learned in the previous semesters through the production of a video and/or screenplay developed by each section of English IV. |

3.2 Subjects of the study: Learners

The study includes approximately 27 students from each class. A total number of 100 students did the SRA tests. All the subjects (100 learners) were non-native speakers (both Thai and Non-Thais) doing English I in the first semester (June-September) of the academic year 2007-2008. There were 94 Thai students and six students from other countries such as China (3 students), Philippines (1 student), South Korea (1 student) and Turkey (1 student). The study includes 52 male students and 48 female students. The average age of the students was 18 years. All the students in sections (882, 883, 885, and 886) were students who study at Assumption University's Faculty of Law (English is the medium instruction in all the faculties except the Faculty of Law) and the students in

sections are assumed to have the same reading proficiency. For example, blue color presents the easiest tests; red color presents the moderate tests and tan color presents the most difficult tests.

Table 3.2

Composition of subjects

| <u>SRA Reading Laboratory</u> | <u>Section</u> | <u>Program</u> |
|-------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1a | 882 | Law |
| 1b | 886 | Law .. |
| 2a | 885 | Law |
| 2b | 832 | General |
| 3a | 801 | General |
| 3b | 883 | Law |

The sections for the study were selected by the researcher on the basis of the teachers who cooperated with the researcher to administer the tests in their classes.

3.3 Instruments for Data Collection

The tests/texts selected were taken from SRA Reading at 3 levels. As mentioned earlier, the colors are representative the level of difficulty. Each level has 2 tests which focus on vocabulary. Each test contains about ten words. The tests focus on two main objectives: 1) word meaning from the context 2) using words in new context. The six sections were randomly assigned to complete the SRA Reading Laboratory tests. Moreover, the learners were given one hour to complete the tests and vocabulary load of Power Builder (see p.5) is checked against widely accepted word lists such as *European Day of Language (EDL)* and *The Living Word* to ensure that the burden of unfamiliar words do not become

excessive at any level. Each level (for Power Builder) of the test is a little more difficult than the one before it. In addition, the length of the reading selections increases at every level and also the word-skill section requires more complicated ways of reading. The SRA Reading Laboratory program produces measurable results in terms of standardized reading test scores in classroom throughout the world. (Parker, 1989: 4). Examples of the question in SRA Reading Laboratory are:

Example 1 (1a, Odysseus and the Sirens)

Pole that supports the sails on a ship (4) _____

The objective test was designed specifically to find word meaning from the context that was provided in paragraph 4 of the text.

Example 2 (1b, Where'd That Silly Sun Go)

The children formed a _____ round the teacher. (4)

The objective test was designed specifically to use words in new contexts was provided in paragraph 4 of the text.

Example 3 (3a, The story of Uncle Tom)

Pitched (8)

a. threw b. set up c. rocked

The objective test was designed specifically to elicit periphrastic definitions of words and choose the target word that provided in paragraph 8 of the text.

The details of data collection in this study are given in Table 3.4

Table 3.3

Schedule of data collection

| <u>Time / Date</u> | <u>Section</u> | <u>Total number of student</u> | <u>SRA levels</u> |
|-----------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| 8.00 - 9.00 Date 15/11/07 | 885 | 14 | 2a |
| 11.00 - 12.00 Date 15/11/07 | 882 | 24 | 1a |
| 12.30 - 13.30 Date 15/11/07 | 886 | 11 | 1b |
| 14.00 - 15.00 Date 15/11/07 | 832 | 12 | 2b |
| 15.30 - 16.30 Date 15/11/07 | 883 | 26 | 3b |
| 8.00 - 9.00 Date 19/11/07 | 801 | 23 | 3a |

3.3.1 The study includes the following six tests/texts from the SRA Reading Laboratory.

- 1a (Odysseus and the Sirens) and 1b (Where'd That Silly Sun Go?) represent the easiest level. The tests are in Blue Color.
- 2a (I Leave It to You) and 2b (The Cave Party) represent the moderate level. The texts are in Red Color.
- 3a (The story of Uncle Tom) and 3b (Life in Prairie Land) represent the most difficult level. The texts are in Tan Color.

The six texts are provided in Appendix A. Moreover, the list of power builder titles, authors, sources and cultural literacy are provided in Appendix B and Appendix C.

3.4 Data Analysis

The researcher will use the power builder key cards to score the students' tests. Every power builder has the answers to the questions. The researcher has defined the terms power builder and SRA teacher's handbook in Chapter one (see p. 5).

The SRA Reading tests will be analyzed based on the percentages according to the teacher's handbook. The test scores will be used to draw conclusions about the test takers' vocabulary as a part of reading ability in English I. The tests scores will be helpful to answer the research questions. Although, SPSS was used for descriptive statistics, sophisticated statistical devises like ANOVA were not used in this study due to the fairly small sample size.

The researcher will use the scoring criteria adapted from the SRA Handbook for evaluating the tests. Eighty percent or higher means these students are superior learners and they are capable of doing much better with a hard text. These students are ready to move to the next level and the students could complete at least 8 out of 10 before moving to the next level. Sixty percent or higher means these students are fair learners. These learners may need to read at their proper level for a few more times. Any score below sixty percent means that students read at a low level. Students may need to read at this level several times before moving to the next level.

3.4.1 Criteria for identifying errors in the tests

The following types of errors will be identified in the tests to know what types of vocabulary errors the learners often make. For example, word forms, spellings and so on which are difficult for learners. The analysis of the errors will help to raise learners' awareness.

1. Item without answers
2. Misspellings
3. Wrong words
4. Similar meanings (different forms in terms of tense)

- Incorrect form of verb (errors from present simple, past simple, present perfect, etc)
- Incorrect form of noun (errors from countable noun and uncountable noun)
- Incorrect form of adjective (errors from verb not having –ed)
- Incorrect form of adverb (errors from not having –ly)

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the research context, the subjects, the instruments (SRA tests) for data collection and the criteria for analyzing the data (scoring criteria of the tests). The following chapter will discuss the major findings of the study.



Chapter Four

Findings and Discussion

This chapter presents the results of the study in three majors sections. It describes the learners' scores and the learners' mistakes in percentage, the overall findings of the tests, and the comparison of the mistakes in part one and part two across each level of the SRA tests.

Restatement of the research questions

1. What is the reading level of EFL learners in terms of vocabulary comprehension in the SRA Reading materials/texts?
2. What types of mistakes do the learners make in the tests?
3. What are the results of the comparison between the ability to deduce meaning from the contexts and the ability to use the words in new contexts?

The criteria for evaluating the tests are given in Chapter three (see pp. 23-24) which were adapted from the SRA Teacher's Handbook by the researcher. There are two main objectives for each test: 1) word meanings from the context 2) using words in new contexts.

SRA Reading Laboratory Tests

As mentioned in Chapter 3 (see p. 22), there were six reading tests, namely:

- 1a (Odysseus and the Sirens) and 1b (Where'd That Silly Sun Go?) represent the easiest tests. These represent the Blue Color.
- 2a (I Leave It to You) and 2b (The Cave Party) represent the moderate tests. These represent the Red Color.

- 3a (The story of Uncle Tom) and 3b (Life in Prairie Land) represent the most difficult tests. These represent the Tan Color.

The above mentioned six tests are provided in Appendix A.

Table 4.1

Table 4.1 shows students’ scores on Odysseus and the Sirens” (1a) Section: 882. The Blue level test (the easiest one), was written by 24 learners from the SRA Reading Laboratory. The story in this test is entitled Odysseus and the Sirens.

| Student | Raw Score | Percentage % |
|---------|-----------|--------------|
| 1 | 1 | 10 |
| 2 | 7 | 70 |
| 3 | 9 | 90 |
| 4 | 7 | 70 |
| 5 | 5 | 50 |
| 6 | 6 | 60 |
| 7 | 6 | 60 |
| 8* | 6 | 60* |
| 9 | 9 | 90 |
| 10 | 4 | 40 |
| 11 | 4 | 40 |
| 12 | 6 | 60 |
| 13 | 8 | 80 |
| 14 | 1 | 10 |
| 15 | 3 | 30 |
| 16 | 3 | 30 |
| 17 | 3 | 30 |
| 18 | 6 | 60 |
| 19 | 3 | 30 |

| | | |
|--------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 20 | 6 | 60 |
| 21 | 4 | 40 |
| 22 | 10 | 100 |
| 23 | 5 | 50 |
| 24 | 6 | 60 |
| | | |
| Score | Total Students | % of Students |
| 80 - 100 | 4 | 16.67 |
| 60 - 79 | 9 | 37.50 |
| 0 – 59 | 11 | 45.83 |
| | 24 | 100.00 |

Only four out of 24 learners got 80 percent or higher which means these four are superior learners. These four learners are capable of reading much better than the others. These learners are ready to move to the next level. It is necessary that the learners could complete at least eight points out of 10 before moving to the next color level.

There were nine learners who got 60 percent or higher, which means these are fair learners. The learners may need to read at this level for a few times. According to the SRA Teacher's Handbook, the fair learners have to read Power Builder more than the superior learners.

There were 11 learners in this section got below 60 percent, which means the majority, read at a low level. Their percentages are low even in the easiest test. Most of the learners in this section must have found the test very difficult and they made many mistakes. Most of the learners did not follow the directions. For example, they answered sentences or

phrases rather than words. The learners in this level have to read a lot before moving to another step (based on SRA Reading Handbook Criteria).

There was a significant level of multi-level of reading ability (in this section students have a wide variety of reading competence in terms of vocabulary in one class) so the teacher has to prepare lessons and choose appropriate reading materials for different level of learners.

Fair and low level learners often read less than superior learners so the teacher has to support them to read more to improve their vocabulary. Then learners can apply and use words in different contexts.

Table 4.2
Percentage of learners' mistakes for 1a

| Item | Items without Answers | Spelling Errors | Wrong Words | Incorrect Form of Verb | Incorrect Form of Noun | Incorrect Form of Adjective | Incorrect Form of Adverb |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------|-------------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | 8.33% | - | 37.50% | - | - | - | - |
| 2 | 4.17% | - | 16.67% | - | - | - | - |
| 3 | 4.17% | 4.17% | 50.00% | - | - | - | - |
| 4 | 4.17% | - | 33.33% | - | - | 4.17% | - |
| 5 | 4.17% | - | 70.83% | - | - | - | - |
| 6 | 4.17% | - | 58.33% | - | - | - | - |
| 7 | 4.17% | - | 33.33% | - | - | - | - |
| 8 | - | - | 20.83% | 12.50% | - | - | - |
| 9 | - | - | 16.67% | - | - | - | - |
| 10 | 4.17% | - | 91.67% | - | - | - | - |

Table 4.2 shows the types of mistakes in 1a blue level (Odysseus and the Sirens). There were 24 learners who did the test. About 4.17% and 8.33% of the learners did not write answers to items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 10. Around 4.17% gave the wrong spelling for item number 3 out of which 12.50% of the learners wrote the incorrect form of the verb. Most of the mistakes were the use of wrong words especially for item 10 (91.67%). As shown below, some learners made mistakes in paragraphs 9 and 11 from story named “Odysseus and the Siren” (1a)

Paragraph 9

Odysseus made wild faces. He twisted and turned. He struggled to free himself. His men did as they were told; they paid no attention. But when it looked as if Odysseus might get loose, they rushed to him. They bound him even tighter.

- Fay turned and _____ her neck to see the man behind her. (9)

This example shows learners' mistakes related to the incorrect form of verb. In these blank learners are required to write “twisted” but some students (12.50%) just answered “twist”, they did not include -ed. Superior learners wrote this word correctly. Only one fair learner did not write this word. Moreover, five low level learners wrote this word correctly in terms of the verb form. Learners should pay more attention to the simple past tense. If they read the sentence carefully, they will know the tense.

Paragraph 11

*This tale has given us the word siren. It has several meaning today. A siren is a warning sound – a wail that tells people of danger. A siren is also any woman who leads men into trouble. If we say a person “hears a siren song,” we mean that the person is **attracted** to something dangerous.*

- Maria felt very _____ to Paco. (11)

(Example of the test named Odysseus and the Sirens 1a which the learners got the highest percentage mistakes)

In this example, the answer should be an adjective and six out of 24 learners knew that they had to write an adjective. However, they wrote the wrong adjective. For example, they answered “dangerous” instead of “attracted”. Learners need to read carefully to understand the context. On the other hand, 16 out of 24 learners did not write the correct word form. Learners answered with a noun such as danger, trouble, siren and song. This shows that the learners have not understood this sentence clearly.

This information might be beneficial for the teacher to know the weak points of the learners to raise learners’ awareness in the teaching of vocabulary. Limited vocabulary prevents learners to comprehend the text and extensive reading is one of the ways to improve learners’ vocabulary.

Table 4.3 shows the test results of “Where’d That Silly Sun Go?” (1b) written by learners in Section 886. There were 11 learners did this story from the SRA Reading Laboratory Kit.

Table 4.3

| Student | Raw Score | Percentage % |
|---------|-----------|--------------|
| 1 | 8 | 80 |
| 2 | 7 | 70 |
| 3 | 4 | 40 |

| | | |
|----|---|----|
| 4 | 4 | 40 |
| 5 | 5 | 50 |
| 6 | 2 | 20 |
| 7 | 2 | 20 |
| 8 | 2 | 20 |
| 9 | 4 | 40 |
| 10 | 2 | 20 |
| 11 | 4 | 40 |

| Test Score | Total Students | % of Students |
|------------|----------------|---------------|
| 80 - 100 | 1 | 9.09 |
| 60 - 79 | 1 | 9.09 |
| 0 - 59 | 9 | 81.82 |
| | 11 | 100.00 |

There was only one superior learner. The learner is capable of reading much better than the others. This learner is ready to move to the next level. It is necessary that the learner could complete at least eight out of 10 before moving ahead to the next color level.

Also there was only one fair learner. The learner may need to read at this level for a few times. The fair learner will read Power Builder a bit more than the superior learner.

There were nine learners read at a very low level. Their percentages are very low even in the easiest test. Mostly, the learners in this section found the test very difficult and they made many mistakes. The results show that the teacher has to help the learners in this section because they may not have the ability to deal with unfamiliar words. The researcher would say that learners in this level have to work hard before moving to the next color.

There were a few differences of reading ability in this section (students have a little variety of reading competence in terms of vocabulary in one class). However, the teacher should prepare materials for improving students’ abilities in reading in terms of vocabulary.

Table 4.4
Percentage of learners’ mistakes for 1b

| Item | Items without Answer | Spelling Errors | Wrong Words | Incorrect Form of Verb | Incorrect Form of Noun | Incorrect Form of Adjective | Incorrect Form of Adverb |
|------|----------------------|-----------------|-------------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | - | - | 81.81% | - | - | - | - |
| 2 | - | - | 36.36% | - | - | - | - |
| 3 | - | - | 81.81% | - | - | - | - |
| 4 | - | - | 54.54% | - | - | - | - |
| 5 | - | - | 45.45% | - | - | - | - |
| 6 | - | - | 54.54% | - | - | - | - |
| 7 | 9.09% | - | 36.36% | - | - | 27.27% | - |
| 8 | - | - | 63.63% | - | - | - | - |
| 9 | - | - | 81.81% | - | - | - | - |
| 10 | 9.09% | - | 36.36% | 45.45% | - | - | - |

Table 4.4 presents the result of learners’ mistakes from 1b. Around 9.09% did not answer items seven and 10. However, some learners wrote incorrect form of the verb (45.45%) for item number 10 and adjective (27.27%) on item number 7. Learners were not aware of the differences between verbs with -ed and adjective. Items 1, 3 and 9 have the same percentage (81.81%) which was the highest for this test. The following examples show learners’ errors of “Where’d Silly Sun Go?”.

Paragraph 1

*Sometimes the moon hides the whole sun. The sky turns as dark as night. But it is still daytime. We call this a **total** solar eclipse.*

- Complete; whole (1)

10 out of 11 learners answered “whole, solar, hides and still” instead of “total”. They may not know the word “total” or they may not be sure of the meaning in this context. Even the learner who got the highest score, she did not write it correctly.

Paragraph 12

*The moon passes slowly across the sun. It **hides** the whole sun for just a few minutes. As the moon away from in front of the sun, its shadow no longer falls on the Earth. The eclipse is over.*

- Jim always _____ his money in his shoe. (12)

The answer is “hides”. Actually most of the learners got the right answer for this item in terms of meaning, but they made mistakes in terms of tense (present simple). Learners just wrote “hide” without “-s”. This example shows that learners do not know to apply the simple present correctly. Only one superior learner wrote this word correctly. Fair and low learners made mistakes both in terms of simple present and the meaning. This information will help teachers to improve students who have a limited vocabulary. Learners need to read more to improve their reading skills and vocabulary. When learners see a word many times, they will be familiar and will be able to use the word in different contexts.

Table 4.5 shows students’ performance on “I Leave It to You”.(2a) in Section 885. At the Red level (the moderate test), there were 14 learners did this story from the SRA Reading Laboratory Kit.

Table 4.5

| Student | Raw Score | Percentage % |
|------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1 | 5 | 50 |
| 2 | 6 | 60 |
| 3 | 8 | 80 |
| 4 | 5 | 50 |
| 5 | 8 | 80 |
| 6 | 7 | 70 |
| 7 | 6 | 60 |
| 8 | 4 | 40 |
| 9 | 7 | 70 |
| 10 | 8 | 80 |
| 11 | 6 | 60 |
| 12 | 6 | 60 |
| 13 | 5 | 50 |
| 14 | 6 | 60 |
| Test Score | Total Students | % of Students |
| 80 – 100 | 3 | 21.43 |
| 60 – 79 | 7 | 50.00 |
| 0 – 59 | 4 | 28.57 |
| | 14 | 100.00 |

There were three superior learners. The learners are capable of reading much better than the others. The learners are ready to move to the next level. It is necessary that the learners score at least eight out of ten before moving to the next level.

There were seven fair learners in this section. The learners may need to read at this level for a few times. The fair learners will find the Power Builder a bit harder than the superior learners.

There were four learners who read at a low level. If these learners practice harder, they could improve their reading ability better in terms of vocabulary.

There was a significant level of multi-level of reading ability In this situation, if the teachers plan activities that meet only fair learners, learners with a low reading ability may become frustrated, and the superior readers may be bored. So the teacher needs to select reading materials to suit learners' level.

Table 4.6

Percentage of learners' mistakes for 2a

| Item | Items without Answer | Spelling Errors | Wrong Words | Incorrect Form of Verb | Incorrect Form of Noun | Incorrect Form of Adjective | Incorrect Form of Adverb |
|------|----------------------|-----------------|-------------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | - | - | 92.86% | - | - | - | - |
| 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 3 | - | - | 50.00% | - | - | - | - |
| 4 | - | - | 85.71% | - | - | - | - |
| 5 | - | - | 42.86% | - | - | - | - |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--------|---|---|-------|---|
| 6 | - | - | 50.00% | - | - | - | - |
| 7 | - | - | 14.29% | - | - | 7.14% | - |

Table 4.6 presents the types of mistakes from 2a (Red level “I Leave It to You”). The mistakes of learners’ performance in the test were incorrect form of the adjective 7.14%. The highest mistakes were still the use of wrong words (92.86%). The learners used the wrong word every item except item 2. This is an example of learners’ mistakes from “I Leave It to You” from paragraph 16.

Paragraph 16

*Frank R. Stockton wrote the original of this story in 1884. It has been popular ever since. It also causes many readers to become very **agitated**. For some reason, they want to be told what fate the princess chose for her lover. But the answer is plain. Just ask yourself what you would have done if you had been that princess!*

- upset; uneasy in the mind (16)

(Example of the test named I Leave It to You)

In this example, the learners were asked to write an adjective. The learners should write **agitated**, but they just wrote **agitate** instead. Superior and fair learners have the ability to deal with the differences between verbs and adjectives. Even though, this section does not have major problems with recognition of word form (adjectives and verbs) teachers should emphasize the differences between verbs and adjectives.

Learners should be encouraged to read a variety of materials extensively to improve their vocabulary. Learners should also remember that learning vocabulary includes learning about grammatical patterns as well as meanings.

Table 4.7 shows the results of students’ performance on “The Cave Party” (2b) in Section 832. At the Red level (moderate test), there were 12 learners who did this story from the SRA Reading Laboratory Kit.

Table 4.7

| Student | Raw Score | Percentage % |
|------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1 | 10 | 100 |
| 2 | 5 | 50 |
| 3 | 7 | 70 |
| 4 | 6 | 60 |
| 5 | 6 | 60 |
| 6 | 7 | 70 |
| 7* | 7 | 70 |
| 8 | 8 | 80 |
| 9 | 6 | 60 |
| 10 | 6 | 60 |
| 11 | 6 | 60 |
| 12 | 6 | 60 |
| Test Score | Total Students | % of Students |
| 80 – 100 | 2 | 16.67 |
| 60 ÷ 79 | 9 | 75.00 |
| 0 – 59 | 1 | 8.33 |
| | 12 | 100.00 |

There were nine fair learners in this section. The learners may need to read at this level for a few times. The fair learners will do reading work Power Builder a bit more than the superior learners.

There were four learners who read at a low level. The researcher would say that if these learners practice of reading a bit harder, they could improve their reading ability in terms of vocabulary.

There were a few differences in terms of reading ability in this section. However, teachers should prepare appropriate materials to improve learners' abilities in reading in terms of vocabulary. Therefore, students would have the ability to deal with difficult and unknown words.

Table 4.8
Percentage of learners' mistakes for 2b

| Item | Items without Answer | Spelling Errors | Wrong Words | Incorrect Form of Verb | Incorrect Form of Noun | Incorrect Form of Adjective | Incorrect Form of Adverb |
|------|----------------------|-----------------|-------------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 2 | - | - | 66.67% | - | - | - | - |
| 3 | - | - | 41.67% | - | - | - | - |
| 4 | - | - | 50.00% | - | - | - | 3.85% |
| 5 | - | - | 75.00% | - | - | - | - |
| 6 | - | - | 33.33% | - | - | 7.69% | - |
| 7 | - | - | 58.33% | - | - | 7.69% | - |

Table 4.8 presents the types of mistakes in 2b of level 2 (the moderate test). There were wrong words and incorrect form of the adjective for items 6 and 7 (7.69%). Learners also

wrote the incorrect form of the adverb (3.85%). The highest mistakes were wrong words (75.00%) for item 5. Examples of learners' mistakes from "The Cave Party" (2b) are shown in paragraph 5.

Paragraph 5

*We reached the opposite side of the cavern and entered a narrow tunnel. The air became damper and we could hear the bats clearly. In fact, we could vaguely distinguish their bodies hanging from the roof. Some bats flew down, making little noises of **annoyance**.*

- irritation (5)

Learners may not know both **irritation** and **annoyance**. Most of them (nine out of 12 learners) wrote something else such as damper, distinguish, vaguely and so on. Learners might develop and increase their learning competence through the practice of various extensive reading materials such as short stories, poems, etc. Therefore, learners will learn more new vocabulary from different contexts.

Inadequate vocabulary could lead to learners' difficulties in reading. When learners see a word in several contexts or places, they will learn how to use and apply words in different contexts.

Table 4.9 shows the test results of "The Story of Uncle Tom" (3a) written by the learners in Section 801. At the Tan level (the difficult test), there were 13 learners doing this from the SRA Reading Laboratory Kit.

Table 4.9 shows the test results of “The Story of Uncle Tom” (3a) written by the learners in Section 801. At the Tan level (the difficult test), there were 13 learners doing this from the SRA Reading Laboratory Kit.

Table 4.9

| Student | Raw Score | Percentage % |
|------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1 | 5 | 50 |
| 2 | 3 | 30 |
| 3 | 5 | 50 |
| 4 | 5 | 50 |
| 5 | 5 | 50 |
| 6 | 4 | 40 |
| 7 | 5 | 50 |
| 8 | 0 | 0 |
| 9 | 9 | 90 |
| 10 | 3 | 30 |
| 11 | 4 | 40 |
| 12 | 6 | 60 |
| 13 | 4 | 40 |
| Test Score | Total students | % of Student |
| 80 – 100 | 1 | 7.69 |
| 60 – 79 | 1 | 7.69 |
| 0 – 59 | 11 | 84.62 |
| | 13 | 100.00 |

There are 13 learners who read at a low level in this class. Their percentages are not really low even it was the most difficult test. Most of the learners must have faced difficulties in terms of vocabulary and one learner got a zero in this section.

There were some differences of reading ability in this section (students have a little variety of reading competence in terms of vocabulary in one class). However, teacher should prepare appropriate materials for improving students' abilities in reading comprehension in terms of vocabulary. Therefore, learners have the ability to deal with difficult and unknown words.

Learners will become familiar when they see the same words in different contexts. When the learners see the words repeatedly, they learn to apply the words in different contexts.

Table 4.10
Percentage of learners' mistakes for 3a

| Item | Items without Answer | Spelling Errors | Wrong Words | Incorrect Form of Verb | Incorrect Form of Noun | Incorrect Form of Adjective | Incorrect Form of Adverb |
|------|----------------------|-----------------|-------------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | 7.70% | - | 23.08% | - | - | - | - |
| 2 | 7.70% | - | 23.08% | - | - | - | - |
| 3 | 7.70% | - | 53.85% | - | - | - | - |
| 4 | 7.70% | - | 33.77% | - | - | - | - |
| 5 | 7.70% | - | 38.46% | - | - | - | - |
| 6 | 7.70% | - | 69.23% | - | - | - | - |
| 7 | 7.70% | 7.70% | 69.23% | - | - | - | - |
| 8 | 7.70% | - | 76.92% | - | - | - | - |

Table 4.10

Percentage of learners' mistakes for 3a

| Item | Items without Answer | Spelling Errors | Wrong Words | Incorrect Form of Verb | Incorrect Form of Noun | Incorrect Form of Adjective | Incorrect Form of Adverb |
|------|----------------------|-----------------|-------------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | 7.70% | - | 23.08% | - | - | - | - |
| 2 | 7.70% | - | 23.08% | - | - | - | - |
| 3 | 7.70% | - | 53.85% | - | - | - | - |
| 4 | 7.70% | - | 33.77% | - | - | - | - |
| 5 | 7.70% | - | 38.46% | - | - | - | - |
| 6 | 7.70% | - | 69.23% | - | - | - | - |
| 7 | 7.70% | 7.70% | 69.23% | - | - | - | - |
| 8 | 7.70% | - | 76.92% | - | - | - | - |

Table 4.10 shows the learners' mistakes in level 3 "The story of Uncle Tom" (a3). 7.70% of every item without answer type comes from a learner in this section. About 7.70% of incorrect spelling. Most of the mistakes type result from the use of wrong word for item 10 (76.92%). The following example shows learners' mistakes from "The story of Uncle Tom" (3a) in paragraph 18.

Paragraph 18

Tom's *serenity* and deep religious faith enraged Legree, and Tom became the target of Legree's violent temper. When Tom refused to reveal what he knew about two escaped slaves, Legree had Tom brutally beaten. But even the vicious Simon Legree could not destroy Tom's spirit. As Tom lay dying, he forgave both Legree and the two servants who administered the merciless beating. Uncle Tom was dead, but his spirit lived on as an inspiration to all who had known him.

- peacefulness; clam (18)

In this example, the learners may know the meaning of **peacefulness** or **calm** but they may not know a word which has a similar meaning in this context. Most of the learners (10 out of 13 learners) wrote a completely wrong answer like temper, servants, inspiration and so on.

The teacher might help learners to remedy this error when learners read a variety of materials such as newspapers, novels, cartoons, etc. These types of texts must be meaningful and useful for learning unknown vocabulary.

Table 4.11 shows the result of “Life in Prairie Land” (3b) given to learners in Section 883. At the Tan level (the difficult test), there were 26 learners who did story from the SRA Reading Laboratory Kit.

Table 4.11

| Student | Raw score | Percentage % |
|---------|-----------|--------------|
| 1 | 5 | 50 |
| 2 | 5 | 50 |
| 3 | 3 | 30 |
| 4 | 4 | 40 |
| 5 | 2 | 20 |
| 6 | 3 | 30 |
| 7 | 2 | 20 |
| 8 | 3 | 30 |
| 9 | 3 | 30 |
| 10 | 4 | 40 |
| 11 | 1 | 10 |
| 12 | 8 | 80 |

| | | |
|----|---|----|
| 13 | 6 | 60 |
| 14 | 3 | 30 |
| 15 | 5 | 50 |

| Student | Raw score | Percentage % |
|---------|-----------|--------------|
| 16 | 4 | 40 |
| 17 | 0 | 0 |
| 18 | 8 | 80 |
| 19 | 4 | 40 |
| 20 | 7 | 70 |
| 21 | 5 | 50 |
| 22 | 8 | 80 |
| 23 | 4 | 40 |
| 24 | 2 | 20 |
| 25 | 2 | 20 |
| 26 | 3 | 30 |

| Test Score | Total Students | % of Students |
|------------|----------------|---------------|
| 80 – 100 | 3 | 11.54 |
| 60 – 79 | 2 | 7.69 |
| 0 – 59 | 21 | 80.77 |
| | 26 | 100.00 |

There were three superior learners. These learners are capable of doing much better if they practice the Power Builder at this level for a few times before moving to the next color.

There were two fair learners. The learners may need to read at this level for a few times. The fair learners will read Power Builder for a longer period than the superior learners.

There were 21 learners in this section who read at a low level. Their percentages are not really that low even in the most difficult test. Most of the learners in this section did not know how to deal with unknown words and one learner did not attempt even a single question.

There were a few differences in their reading ability in this section (students have a little variety of reading competence in terms of vocabulary in one class). However, the teacher should prepare appropriate materials for improving learners' reading abilities in terms of vocabulary. Therefore, learners develop the ability to deal with difficult and unknown words.

Table 4.12
Percentage of learners' mistakes for 3b

| Item | Items without answer | Spelling Errors | Wrong Words | Incorrect Form of Verb | Incorrect Form of Noun | Incorrect Form of Adjective | Incorrect Form of Adverb |
|------|----------------------|-----------------|-------------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | - | - | 30.77% | - | - | - | - |
| 2 | - | - | 65.38% | - | - | 7.69% | - |
| 3 | - | - | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| 4 | - | - | 73.08% | - | - | - | - |
| 5 | - | - | 65.38% | 23.08% | - | - | - |
| 6 | - | - | 15.38% | 3.85% | - | - | - |
| 7 | - | - | 53.85% | - | - | 3.85% | - |
| 8 | - | - | 46.15% | - | - | 3.85% | - |

Table 4.12 presents the types of mistakes of learners' performance from level 3 "Life in Prairie Land" (3b). There were wrong words for every item and especially item 3 (100%)

which had the highest percentage of mistake. Also there were incorrect form of the verb (item 5 = 23.08% and item 6 = 3.85%) and adjective (item 7 = 3.85% and item 8 = 3.85%). The following are some examples of learners' mistakes from the story named "Life in Prairie Land" (3b) in paragraphs 3 and 4.

Paragraph 3

*We journeyed several weeks through the blossoming orchards and fields of the **cultivated** countryside and at last penetrated into the abundant forests of Ohio and Indiana.*

- prepared for crops and planted (3) _____

In this example, the learners were asked to fill in an adjective but some learners just wrote in verb form. The learners should answer that **cultivated** but they answered that **cultivate** instead. One superior and one fair learner cannot recognize between verb and adjective form.

Paragraph 4

*Finally we emerged onto the great prairie that extends from the Wabash River west and north for nearly three hundred miles. There we began to appreciate the magnificence of the country. It was as if we had gone into a new creation, a Garden of Eden. The great silent plain with its quiet streams, its **lush** vegetation, the lovely flowers, the timid birds and animals that fled before us was an unbelievable spectacle! Occasionally a herd of deer bounded across our path or a solitary pair of startled birds rose and split the air like arrows, but except for these sounds we were quite alone in a heavy silence broken only by our own voices.*

- rich; thick (4) _____

In this example, the learners may know the meaning of **rich** or **thick**, but they may not know a word which has the same meaning in this context. Every learner (26 learners) wrote completely the wrong meanings such as emerged, fled, spectacle and so on. Superior, fair and low learners were not able to understand this word.

Lack of vocabulary is a serious problem for many learners because vocabulary is fundamental to reading comprehension. Learners cannot understand without knowing the meaning of words. The following section will discuss the major findings of the six tests.

Table 4.13
Findings in Percentage (Overall Result)

| Level of the test | easy | | moderate | | difficult | |
|----------------------|-------|-------|----------|-------|-----------|-------|
| | 1a | 1b | 2a | 2b | 3a | 3b |
| 80 - 100 | 16.67 | 9.09 | 21.43 | 16.67 | 7.69 | 11.54 |
| 60 - 79 | 37.50 | 9.09 | 50.00 | 75.00 | 7.69 | 7.69 |
| 0 - 59 | 45.83 | 81.82 | 28.57 | 8.33 | 84.62 | 80.77 |

The overall results contradict the researcher’s expectations. The researcher expected the subjects in all the six sections of the study to have similar reading abilities. The researcher made the assumption because all freshmen students coming from non English-medium Schools to Assumption University (ABAC) go through the same process of admission. The learners are placed either in Basic English or English I after they write an entrance exam in English and complete the requirements for a 60-hour intensive English course. Therefore,

it is fair to expect the students in English I, regardless of their major to have similar reading or language abilities in English. Hence, the subjects in the six sections should have the same reading ability and get the highest score on the easiest test and moderate score on the moderate test and the lowest score on the most difficult test.

Table 4.7 shows that only 16.69% and 9.09% could get a score of 80-100. Learners in these two did the easiest tests have a limited knowledge of words. These results question the reading ability of the learners in these two sections. This issue needs further investigation and if similar results are found the SRA materials can be considered for these classes in future.

The idea of using graded readers that have been chosen to match the reader's level; will no longer be viewed as a difficult task, and will help in building the reader's confidence. Graded readers come in multiple levels (SRA Reading have excellent choices and levels), with many different stories. This gives the students a lot of choice, and the ability to engage in English at the appropriate level. The stories at each level can be used with learners who have different reading abilities. Those who are bored with the 'easy' class material can move to the next level, and those who struggle can read without relying exclusively on translations.

Nation & Hu (2000), state that a vocabulary size of 98% of a text coverage will be necessary to achieve a very good comprehension of it. This means that only 2 out of 100 words should be unknown to the reader. Therefore, teachers have to use a variety of materials, activities, and techniques to engage the interest of learners and assist them in their educational goal. Also, learners need to take some responsibility for their own

vocabulary learning (reading newspapers, magazines, novels and so on), so that they can deal with difficult and unknown words more effectively. The next section will compare the results of the SRA tests across each level.

Table 4.14 shows the comparative scores of the tests across each level. All the six tests contain two parts. The objective of part one is “word meanings from the context”. The objective of part two is “using words in new contexts”. Level 1: “Odysseus and the Siren” (1a) and “Where’d That Silly Sun Go?” (1b). Level 2: “I Leave It to You” (2a) and “The Cave Party” (2b). Level 3: “The Story of Uncle Tom” (3a) and “Life in Prairie Land” (3b). Letter ‘N’ in the Table 4.14 denotes the number of students.

Table 4.14
Comparison each part by level

| | Level | N | Mean (%) |
|--------------------|-------|-----|----------|
| Part I | 1 | 35 | 48.00% |
| | 2 | 26 | 54.40% |
| | 3 | 39 | 42.31% |
| | Total | 100 | 47.44% |
| Part II | 1 | 35 | 49.72% |
| | 2 | 26 | 88.46% |
| | 3 | 39 | 39.74% |
| | Total | 100 | 55.90% |
| Part I and Part II | 1 | 35 | 48.86% |
| | 2 | 26 | 71.43% |
| | 3 | 39 | 41.03% |
| | Total | 100 | 51.67% |

Table 4.14 presents the comparative results of each part across the tests. The study includes 35 learners for the tests in level 1 and they got only 48% from part one (word meanings from the context) 49.71% in part two, 'using words in new contexts', which means the percentages are not different between part one and part two. About 26 learners did the tests on level 2 and they got only 54.40% from the first part, but they got 88.46% in the second part. There were 39 learners for the tests in level 3 and the percentages in the first part is 42.31% and 39.74% in the second part.

The result shows the learners who did the tests levels 2 could get the highest percentages (71.43%) on both part one and part two. While level 1 (48.86%) tests get a bit higher than level 3 (41.03%). The researcher expected the learners in level 1 (35 students) to score the highest percentage than the tests. If the learners know the meanings of words, they will also have the ability to use words in new contexts. Therefore, the results of part one and part two should not show major differences. Usually, learners will have one skill if they have the other. However, level two shows a significant difference in the percentages between parts one and two. This implies that learners may have the ability to apply words in new contexts more than knowing the meanings of words. Moreover, a word can have more than one meaning so teachers should provide various types of materials to develop and increase the success rate of reading comprehension and learning new words.

The results have shown that the subjects in this study have a range of reading abilities within a section of English I course at the IELE in Assumption University. Moreover, the majority of the learners can perform part two (using words in new contexts) better than part one (word meanings from the context). Based on the findings, the researcher strongly recommends the need to promote extensive graded reading such as the SRA Reading

Laboratory to increase learners' vocabulary and develop their reading comprehension. Moreover, teachers have to ensure that the learners are given an opportunity to read appropriate materials according to their level. According to Nation (2003), extensive reading alone cannot enrich learners' vocabulary because the readers tend to concentrate on the contents of the materials rather than individual words. Readers tend to use context clues and other discourse processing strategies to understand the overall contents of the material. However, this is not a serious issue with graded materials as the words used in the readers are meant to suit learners' level. However, extensive reading according to Bamford and Day (1998) is likely to increase proficiency, general knowledge, enjoyment and motivation in reading. Finally, enriching EFL learners' vocabulary promotes understanding of the texts.

Possible variables in the research

The potential variables in conducting the research need to be carefully addressed to ensure the validity and reliability of the results. In order to highlight the results from the potential incompatibility between the six classes, the variables were broken down into specific culture and non-specific culture variables. Non-specific culture variables were as extraneous variables resulting from the differences in class size, language abilities and so on were not taken into consideration when analyzing the data.

In a typical classroom there are many levels of learning so the researcher thinks that the learners should be encouraged to decide whether he or she is ready to move to an advanced level or remain in the existing level for a longer period. The next chapter will provide a summary of the major findings, discuss the limitations of this study, and give some directions for further research.

Chapter Five

Conclusions and Recommendations

This Chapter provides a summary of the research, limitations of the study, recommendations and some directions for future research after restating the research questions of this study.

5.1 Restatement of the research questions

1. What is the reading level of EFL learners in terms of vocabulary comprehension in the SRA Reading materials/texts?
2. What types of mistakes do the learners make in the tests?
3. What are the results of the comparison between the ability to deduce meaning from the contexts and the ability to use the words in new contexts?

5.2 Summary of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the reading ability in terms of vocabulary comprehension of EFL students through the SRA tests at the Institute for English Language Education (IELE) in Assumption University of Thailand. The research was conducted in September 2007. The results show the subjects of this study have a variety of reading abilities in terms of vocabulary comprehension. Learners who did the tests at levels one and two got a higher percent on Part II (using words in new contexts) than Part I (meanings from the context). Learners who did the tests in level three got higher a percent on Part I than Part II.

5.2.1 Major findings of the study:

1. The subjects have varied proficiency levels of reading in each section. Especially, learners who did tests 1a and 1b have a very low level of reading ability.
2. The learners' errors in the tests were incorrect spellings, incorrect forms of verbs, adjectives and adverbs. The most common error was the use of wrong words and it is considered to be a serious mistake in this study.
3. The learners performed better on Part II (using words in new contexts) than Part I (meanings from the contexts) of the SRA tests. This implies that most of the learners may have the ability to apply words in new contexts.

Based on number two and three above, the researcher realizes that learners lack adequate vocabulary has affect their performance in the tests. When the number of known words is insufficient, comprehension will decrease. Therefore, teachers must point out to learners that words have more than one form and meaning. It is necessary for teachers to keep this in mind while designing lessons for learners with different levels of reading within a class or a section. The researcher believes that when appropriate materials are chosen for ESL/EFL learners, they will have a higher rate of success. The findings will help teachers to be aware of learners' needs in order to help their learners to learn new words effectively.

5.3 Limitations of the study

There are some limitations which the researcher encountered while conducting this study. Firstly, time was a limiting factor. Although the IELE English classes are normally taught for 80-90 minutes, the first 15-20 minutes were used to mark attendance and provide instructions for the test. Therefore, the learners had only 60 minutes for each test which was insufficient. Secondly, all the subjects were chosen with the convenience sampling

method. The researcher could not get all the English I learners from the IELE as some teachers were not willing to assist in this study due to lack of time to complete their syllabus before the University examinations. Thirdly, the researcher thinks that learners' interest in doing the tests would have affected the results of this study. Fourthly, the researcher assumed that all English I subjects will have the same reading ability. Hence the researcher wanted to check whether the assumption was valid in the research context. Therefore, the researcher did not consider an experimental design for this study and it would not have been possible for the researcher to set up an experiment as a learner at Assumption University where there are several sections with the same curriculum. Fifthly, data were collected within a short period of time and at the end of the semester so it is possible that some useful information is missing in the study. For example, the all subjects should take all the tests level.

5.4 Recommendations

5.4.1 Recommendation for this study

If the university administrators find that there is a significant level of multilevel reading ability among learners within a section, the administrators have to carefully consider the selection of reading materials or suitable ways of teaching reading. Multilevel lesson plans should include strategies for organizing group, pair and individual work. For example, students with low ability can team up with learners with a higher reading level. Moreover, if teachers have the same teaching materials, they can design different tasks for learners depending on their reading skills. Teachers can mix and match groups provided the learners are comfortable with the grouping and do not feel threatened when they are asked to exchange or seek help from learners with a higher ability.

5.5 Suggestions for further research

The following section will provide some directions for further research in this area.

First of all, research can be conducted with sufficient time for data collection in order to gain reliable information. Secondly, the subjects of this study were drawn only from six sections of English I in the Institute for English Language Education (IELE), at Assumption University (AU) so the number of the participants was rather limited. Future research could include a larger sample population in order to obtain more insightful data. Also the SRA tests could be used as part of an experimental design rather than the only way of gathering data. Lastly, the following points will be helpful for researchers who wish to explore this field:

- 1 The importance of selecting linguistically appropriate tests which have interesting and relevant topics to suit learners' interests.
- 2 The importance of setting appropriate tasks/exercises, that is, tasks/exercises that allow learners to do what they need to do for vocabulary development.
- 3 The importance and usefulness of building learners' awareness of how new vocabulary may be accessed through different types of reading materials such as newspapers, books, novels, English magazines and so on. Learners will encounter a number of unfamiliar words from these materials. The more learners read the more new words they will learn. However, according to Nation (2003) over reliance on extensive reading may not be helpful for vocabulary development.

5.6 Conclusion

This study has investigated the reading ability of EFL learners using by the SRA Reading Laboratory and the results show varied types of reading abilities within a section.

Therefore, teaching with mixed reading abilities is a daunting task that requires great skill and sensitivity. Teachers should consider their learners' language skill, culture, educational background, classroom expectations, and learning styles in order to help EFL learners in classes with mixed reading abilities.



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APPENDIX A

SRA Reading Laboratory (Blue Color_1a)

*Assumption University
Institute for English Language Education (IELE)
English I*

Date: 15.11.2007

Duration: 1 Hour

Name: _____

Student's Code: _____

Teacher's Name: _____

Section: _____

- *Write your answers in the spaces provided in this paper*
- *No dictionaries or electronic devices allowed*

Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions

Odysseus and the Sirens

1 *The Odyssey is a tale from ancient Greece. It tells of the soldier-hero Odysseus and his men. They had fought in a long war against Troy. Now they were sailing home. Odysseus always escaped danger by using his brains, not just his strength. The Sirens were one danger he faced.*

2 *The Sirens were part woman, part bird. They lived among the rocks in the sea. They sang sweet songs to lead men to their deaths. They sang of rest and sleep. To tired sailors, after months at sea, the sound was like magic. They could not help themselves. They turned their ships toward the sound. The ships broke up on the rocks. The sailors drowned.*

3 Odysseus had heard of the Sirens. He wondered what their singing sounded like. He wanted to hear their wonderful songs for himself. But he did not want to put his ship in danger. He wanted to sail safely by. So he came up with a plan.

4 He told his men to tie him to the ship's mast. He told them not to untie him, no matter what. "Not until we have passed the Sirens' rocks."

5 His men wondered what this was about. But they did as he said. They tied him tightly.

6 Next, he ordered the sailors to plug their ears with wax. That was so that they could not hear the songs. But Odysseus did not plug his own ears.

7 The ship sailed near the Sirens' rocks. The Sirens' song floated across the waves. It was such a lovely song! Odysseus wanted to steer the ship toward the rocks. He could not help himself. He called out to his sailors. "Untie me! We must go to them!"

8 But they could not hear him. The wax took care of that. He ordered them to free him. He begged them. But it was no use.

9 Odysseus made wild faces. He twisted and turned. He struggled to free himself. His men did as they were told; they paid no attention. But when it looked as if Odysseus might get loose, they rushed to him. They bound him even tighter.

10 The ship sailed on; the song grew fainter. At last, Odysseus could no longer hear it. When the rocks were far behind them, and Odysseus was calm again, the men unstopped their ears. Then they untied him. Odysseus had become the only man who ever heard the Sirens' song and lived!

11 *This tale has given us the word siren. It has several meaning today. A siren is a warning sound – a wail that tells people of danger. A siren is also any woman who leads men into trouble. If we say a person "hears a siren song," we mean that the person is attracted to something dangerous.*

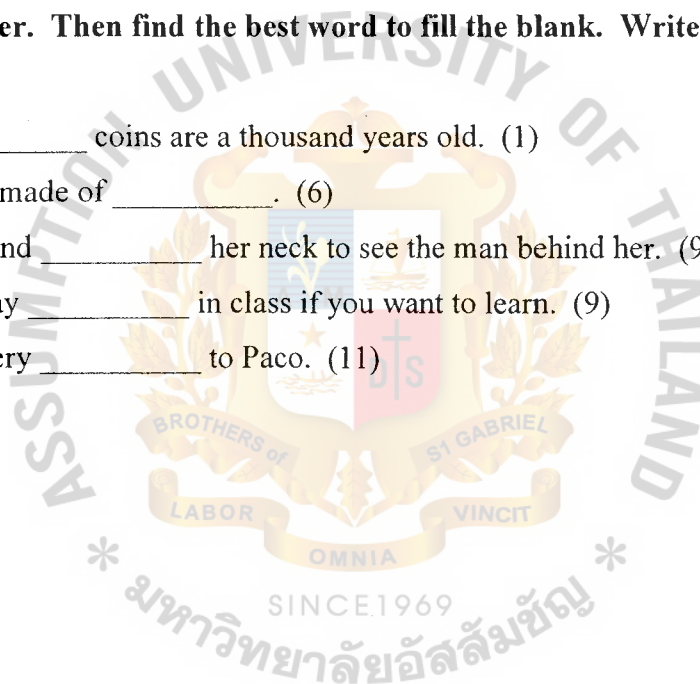
(Adapted from Homer's Odyssey)

A) Look at each number in parentheses. Find the paragraph in the story with the same number. Then find the word that fits the given meaning. Write the word.

1. pole that supports the sails on a ship (4) _____
2. close; fill up (6) _____
3. fought; worked hard (9) _____
4. quieter; less easy to hear (10) _____
5. loud, drawn-out sound (11) _____

B) Look at each number in parentheses. Find the paragraph in the story with the same number. Then find the best word to fill the blank. Write the word.

6. These _____ coins are a thousand years old. (1)
7. Candles are made of _____. (6)
8. Fay turned and _____ her neck to see the man behind her. (9)
9. You must pay _____ in class if you want to learn. (9)
10. Maria felt very _____ to Paco. (11)



SRA Reading Laboratory (Blue Color 1b)

*Assumption University
Institute for English Language Education (IELE)
English I*

Date: 15.11.2007

Duration: 1 Hour

Name: _____

Student's Code: _____

Teacher's Name: _____

Section: _____

- *Write your answers in the spaces provided in this paper*
- *No dictionaries or electronic devices allowed*

Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions

Where'd That Silly Sun Go?

1 Sometimes the moon hides the whole sun. The sky turns as dark as night. But it is still daytime. We call this a total solar eclipse.

2 Solar means "of the sun." Eclipse means "cut off from the light."

3 Sometimes the moon hides only part of the sun. That is a partial eclipse.

4 If a ring of the sun can be seen round the moon, it is an annular eclipse. Annular means "forming a ring."

5 In a total eclipse, there is a glow of bright light all round the moon. It is sunlight from behind the moon. The glow is called the solar corona. Corona means "crown."

6 The sun is four hundred times bigger than the moon. Yet in an eclipse, the moon seems to be the same size as the sun. It seems to cover the sun. How can this be?

7 Hold a coin by its edges between your thumb and first finger. Close one eye. Hold the coin in front of your other eye. Move the coin out from your eyes; then move it back towards your eye. While you do this, look at a friend across the room.

8 When the coin is close to your eye, it will cover your friend. Yet the coin is much smaller than a girl or boy. It seems to cover your friend because the coin is much closer to your eye.

9 That's how it is with the moon and the sun. The moon is much closer to us than the sun is. So it seems to be the same size as the sun. And in a total solar eclipse it hides the sun.

10 The moon always makes a shadow. When its shadow falls on the Earth, there is a solar eclipse. The moon's shadow falls on just a small part of the Earth. As the moon moves, its shadow moves too.

11 In a total eclipse, the moon's shadow makes a narrow path across the Earth. Only people who are in this path can see the eclipse.

12 The moon passes slowly across the sun. It hides the whole sun for just a few minutes. As the moon away from in front of the sun, its shadow no longer falls on the Earth. The eclipse is over.

13 There are at least two solar eclipses each year. In some years there are five. But they may not all be total eclipses.

14 Total eclipses can be seen from just a small part of the Earth. And when they take place, the sky may be cloudy.

15 But if you are in the right place at the right time, and if it is not cloudy, you will see an eclipse.

(By Franklyn M. Branley)

A) Look at each number in parentheses. Find the paragraph in the story with the same number. Then find the word that fits the given meaning. Write the word.

1. Complete; whole (1)

2. not complete (3)

3. hide (6)

4. shortest, thickest finger on the hand (7)

5. thin; not wide (11)

B) Look at each number in parentheses. Find the paragraph in the story with the same number. Then find the best word to fill the blank. Write the word.

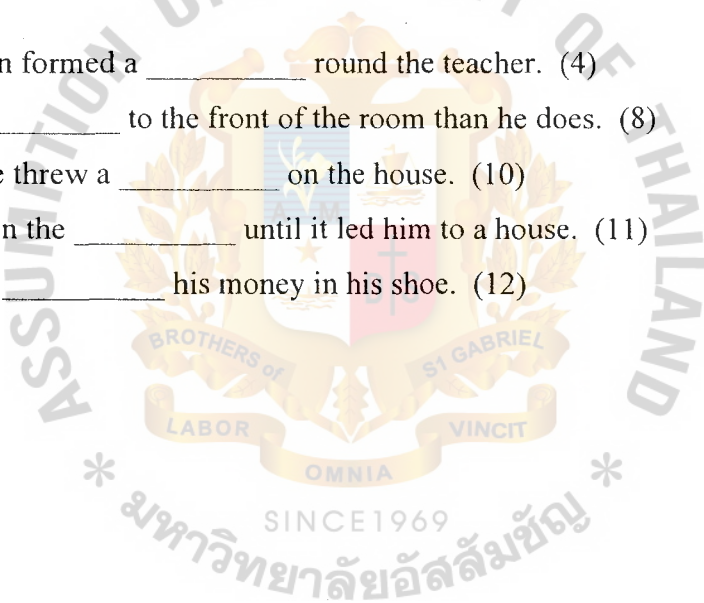
6. The children formed a _____ round the teacher. (4)

7. She sits _____ to the front of the room than he does. (8)

8. The tall tree threw a _____ on the house. (10)

9. He stayed on the _____ until it led him to a house. (11)

10. Jim always _____ his money in his shoe. (12)



SRA Reading Laboratory (Red Color 2a)

***Assumption University
Institute for English Language Education (IELE)
English I***

Date: 15.11.2007

Duration: 1 Hour

Name: _____

Student's Code: _____

Teacher's Name: _____

Section: _____

- ***Write your answers in the spaces provided in this paper***
- ***No dictionaries or electronic devices allowed***

Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions

I Leave It to You

1 Let me tell you a story about a princess, her father the king, and the man she loved. These three lived in the olden times, in a barbaric land where they had a peculiar way of dealing with men who were accused of lawbreaking. Such men were brought to an arena. This was an open place like a sports stadium, surrounded by seats where crowds could gather to watch.

2 In this arena, the accused man would face two doors, just alike. He had to open one of them.

3 Behind one door waited a half-starved tiger. If the man opened that door-well, he would certainly be torn apart and eaten!

4 But behind the other door stood a beautiful lady. If he opened that door, he would be married to the lady right there on the spot, and an uproariously happy celebration would follow. (Well, perhaps it was not always entirely happy. You see, the man and the lady had to marry, whether they wanted to or not. But that was surely better for him than being eaten by the tiger!)

5 Of course, the accused man never knew which door was which. Either one might open on the tiger; either one might open on the lady. He just had to take his chances.

6 Now, at this point some of you probably have a question. You are wondering what they did when the accused was a woman. Was there a handsome young man behind one door for her? I am afraid I do not know. This was a very long time ago, and the story does not say. It only tells what happened to men who were accused of wrong deeds.

7 Anyway, the king admired this way of doing justice. With everything left to chance, no judges or juries were needed. The people liked it too, as it provided a jolly outing for them. They enjoyed the excitement of coming to the arena, never knowing which spectacle awaited them. Half the time it was a bloody slaughter. Half the time it was a merry festival. Either event would brighten up their day, and either was therefore equally pleasing to them. As I said, it was a barbaric land.

8 Now one day the king received some information that upset him profoundly. His daughter, the princess, had been noticed in the company of a certain young man. Indeed, the two had been seeing each other secretly for some months, for they were deeply in love. But, as you know, very few young men are permitted to love a princess - and in the king's eyes, this young man was not among those few.

9 So the king announced that this young man must be taken to the arena. He must choose a door. He must be eaten, or he must be married. Either way, he'd be out of the princess's life.

10 The princess wept and tore her hair at first. But she was strong-minded, and she resolved to do whatever she could to aid her lover. By giving a large purse of gold to a servant, she learned which door would be which. Thus, when the trial came, she would be able to give her lover a signal. She could let him know which door to pick.

11 But which should it be? Naturally, she did not want to see him killed, for that would be horrible! But neither did she want to see him marry someone else. How could she stand that?

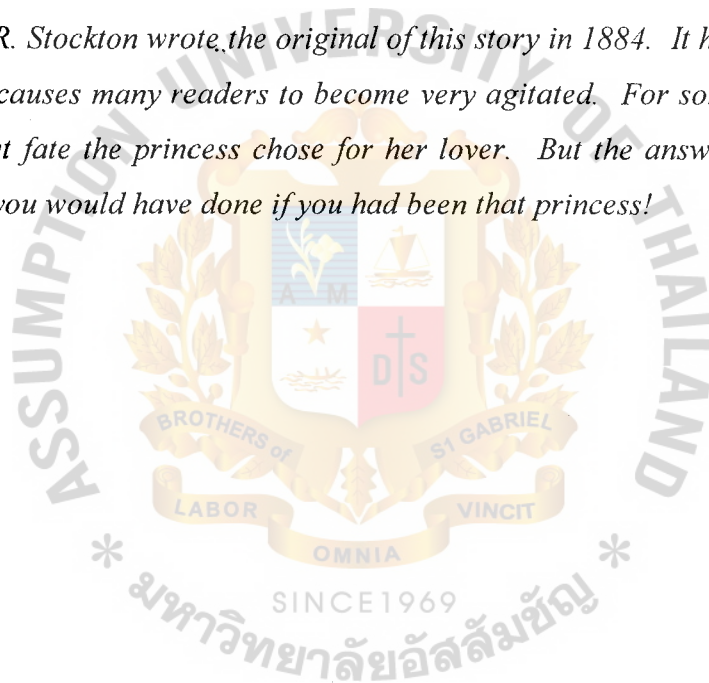
12 Worse yet, she had learned just who the lady behind one of the doors would be. It was a lady she hated! Just seeing her lover in conversation with this lady used to send the princess into fits, and if he were to marry this lady ... well, the princess's suffering would be beyond description!

13 For many days and sleepless nights, the princess was torn by indecision, asking herself: which door shall I send him to? It seemed impossible to make up her mind. But at last, when the day of the trial arrived, she reached her decision. Her mind and her purpose were finally clear.

14 At the trial, the princess was seated high up in the arena next to her father. Her lover entered. He looked up at her. She learned her hand just slightly towards the right. He alone noticed this gesture, and he knew what to do. He turned and stepped firmly to the door on the right. He opened it.

15 Well, I leave it to you. Which came out of the door? Was it the lady? Or was it the tiger?

16 *Frank R. Stockton wrote the original of this story in 1884. It has been popular ever since. It also causes many readers to become very agitated. For some reason, they want to be told what fate the princess chose for her lover. But the answer is plain. Just ask yourself what you would have done if you had been that princess!*



A) Look at each number in parentheses. Find the paragraph in the story with the same number. Then find the word that fits the given meaning. Write the word.

1. fierce and cruel; not civilized (1) _____
2. noisily; done with much uproar (4) _____
3. savage killing (7) _____
4. very deeply; very much (8) _____
5. made up her mind (10) _____
6. a very little bit (14) _____
7. upset; uneasy in the mind (16) _____

B) Look at each number in parentheses. Find the paragraph in the story with the same number. See how the word in bold type below is used in the paragraph. Decide whether it has meaning a or b. Circle a or b.

8. **admired** (7)
 - a. had romantic feelings toward
 - b. had a high opinion of
9. **spectacle** (7)
 - a. foolish display
 - b. public show or entertainment
10. **gesture** (14)
 - a. deed performed in order to show friendship
 - b. meaningful motion; hand signal

SRA Reading Laboratory (Red Color 2b)

***Assumption University
Institute for English Language Education (IELE)
English I***

Date: 15.11.2007

Duration: 1 Hour

Name: -----

Student's Code: -----

Teacher's Name: -----

Section: -----

- ***Write your answers in the spaces provided in this paper***
- ***No dictionaries or electronic devices allowed***

Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions

The Cave Party

1 I will never forget that day years ago when my friend asked eight of us in her class to a cave party. Anne's idea was to explore the cave on her farm, then come out and have a picnic lunch at the mouth of the cave.

2 The morning of the get-together was blazing hot, and we passed into the cool, dark cave with feeling of relief. We could hear water dripping in the distance.

3 We all had candles, although we could see little by their flickering light. As we went farther we could see even less. Suddenly, the cave walls and roof disappeared entirely because we had entered a cavern so huge that, with our feeble candlelight, we could see almost nothing.

4 We went on nevertheless, but much more slowly, because the floor was slippery and the sound of dripping water was much nearer. We could also detect the faint squeaking of bats.

5 We reached the opposite side of the cavern and entered a narrow tunnel. The air became damper and we could hear the bats clearly. In fact, we could vaguely distinguish their bodies hanging from the roof. Some bats flew down, making little noises of annoyance.

6 I would not be telling the truth if I said we passed by silently. Boys and girls screamed and threw up their hands when the bats flew close to their faces.

7 We pushed on rapidly to get out of that place, but it was hard going, as the roof gradually got lower and the walls came closer.

8 Finally the tunnel rose sharply and climbed to what at first seemed a blank wall. Then, at the end of the tunnel, we saw a small hole in the wall. We could feel air coming through it. A girl and a boy scrambled up to the hole and extended a candle through it. They could not see well, but they thought there was another cavern in there.

9 Everyone wanted to go on, but the hole was so narrow that only a thin person could get in. I was the thinnest person so I was selected to go through and see what was on the other side. Perhaps, it was thought, I could find a way for the others to get in.

10 I climbed up the slope. When I reached the hole, I got down on my stomach and cautiously put my hand with the candle through the hole. I placed the candle on the ground inside and slowly stuck my hands and arms through, then my head, then my shoulders – and then I got stuck. Wiggling to get free, I knocked over the candle. Blackness swept over me and I could not see or move.

11 I screamed for help. The other tugged at my feet until I thought my legs were coming off. Then I screamed for them to stop. I could hear my friends very faintly discussing the problem. Some of them thought of running to get help, but they realized that would take a long time.

12 Meanwhile the pressure on my sides was getting worse and I felt that I was really being crushed alive. The thought of all those tons of rock between me and the free air was terrifying, and if I had not been so frightened I would have cried. As it was, I just lay there suffering this nightmare.

13 Then, from somewhere, a memory of my sister Angela came to me. Early one summer had slipped her arms into it and got it over her head, but it was too small. She could not get it off or on.

14 My position was much more dangerous and uncomfortable, but I remembered what she had done to get out of the dress: she expelled all her breath, and then she practically ripped all her shoulders and head.

15 I will try the same thing no matter how much it hurts, I thought to myself. I yelled back to my friends to take my legs, and to pull when I gave a kick. They grasped my legs, and then, exhaling all the air in my lungs in one big whoosh! , I gave a kick and they started pulling. Perspiration poured from my body, and I am sure my face turned purple, but I slowly began to slide out of that narrow hole. My lungs ached for air, but I did not take a breath until I was pulled from that rocky prison. My legs and arms were scraped and bloody, but at last I was free.

16 The trip back was slow, and it seemed ages before we finally arrived safely back at the cave mouth. We did not stop there for our picnic, but went out into the blazing sunshine and ate in a field under a glorious blue sky.

(By Mary Wellington)



A) Look at each number in parentheses. Find the paragraph in the story with the same number. Then find the word that fits the given meaning. Write the word.

- 1. underground hole or hollow (1) _____
- 2. weak (3) _____
- 3. make out; notice (4) _____
- 4. not clearly; hazily (5) _____
- 5. irritation (5) _____
- 6. mashed by great pressure (12) _____
- 7. sweat (15) _____

B) Look at each number in parentheses. Find the paragraph in the story with the same number. See how the word in bold type below is used in the paragraph. Decide whether it has meaning a or b. Circle a or b.

- 8. **mouth** (1)
 - a. opening in the body where teeth are located
 - b. entrance
- 9. **extended** (8)
 - a. held out
 - b. made longer
- 10. **expelled** (14)
 - a. forced out
 - b. cut off from membership

SRA Reading Laboratory (Tan Color 3a)

***Assumption University
Institute for English Language Education (IELE)
English I***

Date: 15.11.2007

Duration: 1 Hour

Name: -----

Student's Code: -----

Teacher's Name: -----

Section: -----

- ***Write your answers in the spaces provided in this paper***
- ***No dictionaries or electronic devices allowed***

Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions

The story of Uncle Tom

1 *Harriet Beecher Stowe was born in Connecticut and lived briefly in Cincinnati, Ohio, where she witnessed the evils of slavery, which was then legal in many American states. In 1851 she wrote a novel called Uncle Tom's Cabin. Intended as an indictment of slavery, the book had consequences far beyond what Stowe had ever imagined.*

2 *Many other people – black and white, Northern and Southern – had spoken out passionately against slavery, but Stowe's novel had a special impact. Northerners, appalled at the horrors detailed in the book, became hostile toward Southerners, while Southerners accused Stowe of distorting the truth about the South and slavery.*

3 *Uncle Tom's Cabin helped ignite the fires that led to the Civil War and the emancipation of the slaves. When President Abraham Lincoln welcomed Harriet Beecher Stowe to the White House in 1863, he greeted her as "the woman who wrote the book that made this great war." Here are the main outlines of Mrs. Stowe's powerful story:*

4 In the days of slavery in America, when a black person could be considered a piece of property, George Shelby, a Kentucky planter, became indebted to an unscrupulous slave trader named Haley. As settlement for the debt, Haley demanded to be given two of Shelby's servants – the trusted, devoted Uncle Tom, and Harry, the infant son of Mrs. Shelby's favorite servant Eliza.

5 Eliza overheard Mr. and Mrs. Shelby discussing these matters. Then and there, she vowed that no one would take her child from her, regardless of what the laws of slavery permitted. That evening, clutching little Harry in her arms, Eliza crept stealthily away from the only home she had every known and headed toward the Ohio River, praying she would discover a way to freedom.

6 The following morning, the enraged Haley enlisted two of Shelby's slaves to help find the runaways. Through trickery, the slaves delayed Haley, and Eliza successfully reached the icy waters of the Ohio, but she stopped for some much-needed rest in a nearby farmhouse. There Haley spotted her through a window.

7 To Eliza, a thousand lives seemed concerned in that one moment. She grabbed her child, ran from the house, and fled down the steps toward the river. Haley glimpsed her just as she was disappearing down the bank, and throwing himself from his horse, he chased after her like a hound after a deer. In that dizzy instant, Eliza's feet seemed scarcely to touch the ground, and another instant carried her to the water's edge. Haley followed right behind. Steeled with strength such as God gives only to the desperate, Eliza sprang with one crazy leap over the churning current by the shore and onto the sheet of ice beyond.

8 The enormous greenish raft of ice on which she landed pitched and creaked beneath her weight, but she remained there only a moment. With wild cries and frantic energy, she leaped to another and still another fragment of ice, stumbling, leaping, slipping, springing upward again! Her shoes were gone, her stockings cut from her feet, and blood marked every step. Yet she saw nothing and felt nothing until, dimly as in a dream, she became aware of a man helping her up the bank on the river's far side.

9 Clutching frantically at Harry, Eliza begged the man to hide her. Sympathetically, the man directed her to a safe house, the first stop on the road to freedom.

10 Before Eliza had left Shelby's plantation, she had informed Uncle Tom of what awaited him. Tom was saddened that his beloved master would let him be separated from his family and lifelong home; but he determined to face the future with trust in God. Thus

it was that a few days after Eliza's escape, on a gray and drizzly February morning, Tom prepared to bid farewell to his family.

11 Aunt Chloe, Tom's wife, was ironing his shirts. Carefully she smoothed every fold and every hem, now and then stopping to wipe away the tears streaming down her cheeks.

12 Tom sat by with his Bible open on his knee, his head leaning upon his hand. Neither spoke. It was early, and the children lay asleep in their trundle bed. Tom rose and walked silently to look at them. He sensed he'd never see them again, and said so aloud. Chloe remained silent, rubbing over and over on the coarse shirt, already as smooth as hands could make it; finally, she set the iron down and wept.

13 Disturbed by the intensity of his wife's sorrow, Tom bravely put aside his own concerns to comfort her. At last, the time they both dreaded arrived. Haley appeared in the cabin and ordered Tom out to his wagon, where a crowd of plantation hands had gathered to bid farewell to their old friend. Tom had been respected both as head servant and as a Christian teacher, and there was much honest sympathy and sorrow about his departure.

14 Haley shouted for Tom to get into the wagon. Tom climbed up, and Haley drew from under the wagon seat a heavy pair of iron shackles, which he fastened around Tom's ankles. A smothered groan ran through the whole circle.

15 Chloe looked on indignantly, while her two boys, now seeming to understand their father's destiny, clung to her gown, sobbing uncontrollably. Haley whipped the horse, and Tom, with a steady, mournful look fixed on the old place, was carried away.

16 En route to New Orleans, Tom was purchased by a kind-hearted gentleman named St. Clare, whose daughter Eva immediately befriended Tom. But the fragile, saintly Eva, whose heart and soul were deeply troubled by the wickedness of slavery, soon became ill and died. Though bereft, her father found comfort in the gentle, noble character of Tom, who also grieved for Eva. In gratitude for Tom's compassion, St. Clare promised Tom his freedom. Before the papers could be drawn up, however, St. Clare died.

17 Tom was then shipped to the slave market, where he was sold at auction to Simon Legree, a cruel Northerner who owned a Southern plantation. Now Tom was plunged into new depths of misery. His handsome suits of clothing were replaced with shabby rags. By day he toiled under the scorching sun, picking cotton, while at night he slept on a pile of filthy hay in a crowded, dilapidated shack.

18 Tom's serenity and deep religious faith enraged Legree, and Tom became the target of Legree's violent temper. When Tom refused to reveal what he knew about two escaped slaves, Legree had Tom brutally beaten. But even the vicious Simon Legree could not destroy Tom's spirit. As Tom lay dying, he forgave both Legree and the two servants who administered the merciless beating. Uncle Tom was dead, but his spirit lived on as an inspiration to all who had known him.

19 *Uncle Tom's Cabin brought lasting changes to America's life and language. The phrase "a Simon Legree" is used today of any boss who pushes his workers too hard. Even a demanding teacher may be jokingly called "a real Simon Legree."*

20 *As time passed, "Uncle Tom" became a term having little relationship to Mrs. Stowe's hero. Today the phrase "an Uncle Tom" is often used contemptuously to mean a black person who submits passively to racial injustice or tries too hard to please white people. But the original Uncle Tom still commands a reader's admiration. As Mrs. Stowe conceived him, he symbolized the dignity, faith, and enduring courage of his people, and his moving story helped America's blacks attain their precious goal of freedom.*



A) Look at each number in parentheses. Find the paragraph in the story with the same number. Then find the word that fits the given meaning. Write the word.

- 1. severe criticism (1) _____
- 2. effect; force (2) _____
- 3. shocked and disgusted (2) _____
- 4. immoral; without principles (4) _____
- 5. secretly; quietly (5) _____
- 6. angrily; in an offended way (15) _____
- 7. deeply saddened; deprived of a loved one (16) _____
- 8. peacefulness; clam (18) _____

B) Look at each number in parentheses. Find the paragraph in the story with the same number. See how the word in **bold type** below is used in the paragraph. Decide whether it has meaning a, b or c. Circle a, b or c.

- 9. **pitched** (8)
 - a. threw
 - b. set up
 - c. rocked
- 10. **hands** (13)
 - a. workers
 - b. rounds of play in a card game
 - c. pointers on a clock or watch

SRA Reading Laboratory (Tan Color 3b)

***Assumption University
Institute for English Language Education (IELE)
English I***

Date: 15.11.2007

Duration: 1 Hour

Name: _____

Student's Code: _____

Teacher's Name: _____

Section: _____

- ***Write your answers in the spaces provided in this paper***
- ***No dictionaries or electronic devices allowed***

Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions

Life in Prairie Land

1 *The following story is a true account of the adventures that happened to a group of men and women who left their homes in the civilized eastern part of the United States and settled in the prairie land now known as the Middle West. In the 1840s, when this trip took place, it was still frontier country.*

2 One day my husband's father gathered us all together and, with what little money and furniture we had, we all started west together. It has now been almost eight years since we said goodbye to all our friends in the East and started on our journey. This area at that time was thought to be almost beyond the comprehension of civilized people. Our friends bade us farewell as if we were about to vanish into the most terrible deserts of the Old World instead of into the richest and most beautiful region of the New World.

3 We journeyed several weeks through the blossoming orchards and fields of the cultivated countryside and at last penetrated into the abundant forests of Ohio and Indiana.

4 Finally we emerged onto the great prairie that extends from the Wabash River west and north for nearly three hundred miles. There we began to appreciate the magnificence of the country. It was as if we had gone into a new creation, a Garden of Eden. The great silent plain with its quiet streams, its lush vegetation, the lovely flowers, the timid birds and animals that fled before us was an unbelievable spectacle! Occasionally a herd of deer bounded across our path or a solitary pair of startled birds rose and split the air like arrows, but except for these sounds we were quite alone in a heavy silence broken only by our own voices.

5 I thought of how many ages that plain had been spread out beneath those blue skies and that splendid sun, how its flowers had bloomed and faded, its grasses grown and decayed, how storms had swept over its enormous expanses and how in dry seasons the prairie fires raged in unrestrained fury from one horizon to the other.

6 We left the prairie at last, but the journey, the excitement that accompanied such a trip, and sheer exhaustion were just too much for me. When we reached the crossing of the Mackinaw about thirteen miles from where we live now, I was in a raging fever, but we traveled on, for no house existed where we might stop.

7 Our people heard in some way that a certain "claim" was for sale. They wished to buy an improved one – that is, one with a cabin in which we could live until a house was built and with grain enough on the ground for the season's use. As luck would have it, we did find the place, which had a large cabin as well as a low cabin and several acres of rich growing grain.

8 We all liked the situation and so a bargain was soon made with the owner, or the "squatter" as he termed himself, for his place. But there was one circumstance that was very difficult and awkward for us. He and his family could not leave the cabin until autumn and we were therefore obliged to live in that little pen of a cabin until our people could build another.

9 I scarcely knew how things went on those first few weeks, because I was ill and felt terribly wretched, but eventually a larger cabin was completed and we felt very comfortable in it.

10 The summer was considerably advanced by the time we arrived and our people were soon busily engaged in the harvest. The grain was stacked in the cowyard, for there were then no barns or other buildings of any description. But when the harvest was over,

we began preparation for carrying on farming more systematically the following year. We made fences, ploughed and sowed, and built a small log stable for the horses.

11 I remember the whole land seemed a paradise that summer and autumn. The extraordinarily large number of late flowers and wild fruits, the abundance of game, the richness of vegetation, the mildness of the climate delighted me. The men worked often in the woods, and we sometimes used to take a small basket of dinner and eat with them at noon. The sound of their distant axes and, as we drew nearer, the sound of their cheerful voices contrasted delightfully with the silence of the sleeping woods.

12 We all had good health and such good appetites that we had many jokes between ourselves about famine and the like. One who has lived here could understand how this climate acts on the appetite, but one has no idea how much food we ate as we adjusted ourselves to our new life and environment. We had plenty of grain, and meat more delicious than any to be found in the daintiest markets in the East was abundant everywhere, so we were grateful for our health and joyfully ate and continued our work.

13 The prairie below, which now has so many pleasant farms, was then unsettled. There was only one family near the Mackinaw, and they were our only acquaintances during our first two years here.

14 One may wonder if those were lonely years, and I reply that there were times when we talked of those we had left behind and indeed we would almost weep, but still there was not one day when we would have returned and abandoned this new land that we had adopted. Much as we wished for the society of our absent friends, we would not have exchanged our situation. We loved everything in the new country too much for that.

15 By the next summer the unnaturally large appetites that had taken hold of us all disappeared. But soon some of us were prostrated with a high fever, which in almost every case was followed by a shivering chill. Others got a strange skin disease, which was not pleasant at all but was at least less dangerous to life than the fever. Still, people suffered extremely from the skin irritation, to the point that their arms and legs were so sensitive that for a period of two or three weeks we had to feed these unfortunate people as if they were infants.

16 My husband and I both underwent the dreadful ordeal of a lengthy fever succeeded by a period of weakness, but we came through apparently with our constitutions unimpaired.

17 Still we have had many seasons of difficulty, because there has been more or less sickness in the country every summer and we cannot just sit down in our own homes with satisfaction when our friends are suffering. I have sometimes ridden two or three miles every day to visit an ill person, and please do not think these visits are social calls. We go to perform the duties of nurses for a day or night and then, regardless of weariness, move on to the next ailing family. We have even had to bring people into our own homes, where they have lain dangerously ill for a long time.

18 All these circumstances increased our burdens, but nevertheless, in general, we were happy.

(By Elizabeth Farnham)



A) Look at each number in parentheses. Find the paragraph in the story with the same number. Then find the word that fits the given meaning. Write the word.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------|
| 1. understanding (2) | _____ |
| 2. prepared for crops and planted (3) | _____ |
| 3. rich; thick (4) | _____ |
| 4. single; alone (4) | _____ |
| 5. desire for food (12) | _____ |
| 6. people one knows (13) | _____ |
| 7. forced to lie down (15) | _____ |
| 8. not harmed (16) | _____ |

B) Look at each number in parentheses. Find the paragraph in the story with the same number. See how the word in **bold type** below is used in the paragraph. Decide whether it has meaning a or b. Circle a or b.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 9. succeeded (16) | |
| a. inherited from | |
| b. attained a goal | |
| c. followed immediately | |
| 10. constitutions (16) | |
| a. laws | |
| b. physical makeups | |
| c. basic principles of government | |

APPENDIX B: Answer Keys from Power Builder Key Cards

Blue Level

Odysseus and the Siren (Blue 1a)

Part A

1. mast
2. plug
3. struggled
4. fainter
5. wail

Part B

6. ancient
7. wax
8. twisted
9. attention
10. attracted



Where'd That Silly Sun Go? (Blue 1b)

Part A

1. total
2. partial
3. cover
4. thumb
5. narrow

Part B

6. ring
7. closer
8. shadow
9. path
10. hides

Red Level

I Leave It to You (Red 2a)

Part A

1. barbaric
2. uproariously
3. slaughter
4. profoundly
5. resolved
6. slightly
7. agitated

Part B

8. had a high opinion of
9. public show or entertainment
10. meaningful motion; hand signal



The Cave Party (Red 2b)

Part A

1. cave
2. feeble
3. detect
4. vaguely
5. annoyance
6. crushed
7. perspiration

Part B

8. entrance
9. held out
10. forced out

Tan Level

The Story of Uncle Tom (Tan 3a)

Part A

1. indictment
2. impact
3. appalled
4. unscrupulous
5. stealthily
6. indignantly
7. bereft
8. serenity

Part B

9. pitched = rocked

10. hands = workers

Life in Prairie Land (Tan 3b)

Part A

1. comprehension

2. cultivated

3. lush

4. solitary

5. appetite

6. acquaintances

7. prostrated

8. unimpaired

Part B

9. succeeded = followed immediately

10. constitutions = physical makeups



APPENDIX C: Building Cultural Literacy with the READING LABORATORY Series

Level 1

Odysseus and the Siren (Blue 1). Drawn from Homer's great epic, *The Odyssey*, this selection tells how Odysseus, the Greek hero famed for his cleverness in difficult situations, managed to become the only man ever to hear the Sirens' song and live. Highly entertaining simply as a story, this episode also acquaints readers with the origins of the Sirens and the phrase "a siren song" to describe the allure of forbidden or dangerous pleasures.

Level 2

Dead to You (Red 1) is a retelling of Frank R. Stockton's classic story "The Lady, or the Tiger." It is famous for leaving the story up to the reader- to be decided according to the impression a reader makes about a leading character's psychology and motives.

Level 3

Uncle Tom's Cabin (Tan 1) was told by Harriet Beecher Stowe in her abolitionist novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. This selection recalls the major events of that novel and tells how it helped ignite the flames of Civil War in America, leading to the emancipation of millions of slaves. Two famous terms that it added to the language are "a Simon Legree" and "a cabin on Uncle Tom."

Appendix D: List of Power Builder Titles, Authors, and Sources

Blue

1. Odysseus and the Sirens

Retold for SRA from *The Odyssey* of Homer

2. Where'd That Silly Sun Go?

By Franklyn M. Branley adapted from *Eclipse, Darkness in Daytime* (Crowell)

Red

1. I Leave It To You

Retold for SRA from “The Lady, or the Tiger?” by Frank R. Stockton

2. The Cave Party

By Mary Wellington an original story written for SRA

Tan

1. The Story of Uncle Tom

Retold for SRA from *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe

2. Life in Prairie Land

By Elizabeth Farnham adapted from *Life in Prairie Land*

