THE ROLE OF NARRATIVE INPUT IN THE NEW HEADWAY ESL COURSE BOOKS

by

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ABSTRACT

Literature, while perceived as beneficial, is not widely used in the ESL arena. This study set out to investigate proven benefits of using literature in ESL through a review of the current research, at the same time establishing a link between *literature* and *narrative* based on 'story grammar' which biological determinism claims the human brain is hardwired to use as a language learning tool. Hypothesizing that there would be no correlation between theory regarding the presence and application of literature in ESL as presented in the current research and the practice as found in the prominent ESL course, *New Headway*, the study set out to identify narrative input in *New Headway*'s Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced Levels and analyzing the way in which narrative is used to teach language skills and communicative competence. Contrary to expectations a surprisingly high level of narrative was found and the narrative was exploited in full accordance with suggestions made in the current research. The findings indicate that the incorporation of narrative in *New Headway* is a pedagogically informed decision by the authors to exploit the benefits of literature while at the same time catering to a very heterogeneous audience of international ESL learners.

Key terms: literature, narrative, story, biological determinism, ESL course books, *New Headway*, language skills, communicative competence, vocabulary, text selection.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Harry Potter: The power of one book (Yankelovich/Scholastic 2006:1).
New study finds that the Harry Potter series has a positive impact on kids' reading and their school work (Wikipedia 2006).

Headlines like these are just too tempting for a language teacher to ignore, even more so since they are from reliable sources and not simply aimed at promoting Ms Rowling's stories. According to the Kids and Family Reading Report™ carried out by Yankelovich, a leading consumer trend tracker in America, and Scholastic, a global children's publishing, media and education company (Yankelovich/Scholastic 2006:9) the majority of *Harry Potter* readers claim that the books have raised their interest in reading other books and have helped improve their overall school performance. The series has had a huge impact on readers world wide and this reading craze is not limited to children only (Wikipedia 2006:2, Yankelovich/Scholastic 2006). I for one have to admit to devouring the books as soon as they appeared on the shelves.

In view of the unprecedented popularity and wide availability of the books, the thought of using *Harry Potter* novels instead of conventional course books, or even in conjunction with commercially available ESL texts came to mind. The use of the *Harry Potter* series would not only provide a solid materials base for a course, but would expose learners to authentic reading and literature, from which, according to my experience, they would benefit. Was it possible, I asked myself, to spread some of the magic to my classroom?

My career (and my interest) is not so much teaching English in a school situation to large classes, but rather teaching specific aspects of English to small groups or individual learners in countries where English is not a second language, which is what I have been doing for the past six years. I have spent most of that time in Japan and

Morocco, where I mostly taught learners of all levels from pre-beginner to advanced. My classes included English for Specific Purposes, conversation classes and exam preparation for FCE, CAE, TOEFL and GMAT. In most courses I was responsible (under guidance of a Director of Studies) for choosing materials from a wide variety of textbooks as well as developing my own course materials to meet students' individual needs.

I have been able to use literature in a few exceptional classes, either on its own or together with existing ESL courses. To most learners, narrative seemed to be more readily intelligible than expository texts not only for genetic, but also for cultural reasons. Learners seemed to gain motivational advantage from identifying with a protagonist, and the build-up of story schemata through the course of a novel provided helpful background knowledge that enabled learners to understand more and to enjoy the story more.

The positive results of these efforts strengthened my desire to develop a course built around *Harry Potter*: I have never taught literature in any form to which learners did not respond positively. Whether it was teaching *Ender's Game* to teenage boys, analyzing *The Hours* with a middle-aged business tycoon or simply reading the first *Harry Potter* novel with a group of retired teachers, learners have always shown a heightened desire to read, a heightened interest in and an awareness of language use as a result of introducing literature into classes.

As it seemed possible that *Harry Potter* could end my search for suitable course material, I became more interested in the proven benefits of using literature in the ESL classroom, which again raised questions about the total absence of literature in most such classes. I ascribe this absence to several factors.

The majority of ESL learners I have taught, even those at advanced level, are unfortunately not very open to the use of literature in the language courses they pay for. Many students want to learn only the English pertaining directly to their needs, such as Business English, Academic English or English for Exam Purposes. Considering the cost of the lessons, it is understandable that they do not want to invest time in the study

of literature, which, for them, would be considered a waste of both time and money. ESL learners mostly also feel more secure working with a textbook, progressing from unit to unit and passing pre-determined milestones at pre-determined times. Learners are not comfortable with the open-endedness of literature.

School management does not do much to encourage the use of literature either. Language schools are mostly privately owned and therefore profit-oriented and management mostly puts requirements and expectations of students ahead of sound pedagogic principles.

After a few attempts it became disappointingly clear that using *Harry Potter*, or any extended literature as the basis of an ESL curriculum, would not be easy within the current realities of mainstream ESL.

1.2 Research problem

The main problem underlying my research was therefore the resistance of students and management to the inclusion of literature in mainstream ESL programmes in spite of its many benefits.

On first registering for this degree it was my intention to investigate the incorporation of literature in ESL by using a *Harry Potter* novel with a group of upper intermediate ESL students. The novel would be taught in an integrative manner together with a commercially available ESL course, serving as a source of input for a variety of integrative skills activities directed at advancing the communicative competence of the group in comparison with a control group using only the conventional upper intermediate course.

Due to the difficulties of setting up the experiment and the likelihood that this research, no matter how successful, would not make many converts, it soon became apparent that such a study would not be viable.

Discussion with the English Department at Unisa regarding my interest and apparent disappointment in the use of literature in ESL courses led to the possibility of instead investigating the assumption out of which this interest arose, namely that the advantages inherent in the study of literature are not exploited in modern ESL.

The connection between literature, story and thus narrative (based on the concept of story grammar and biological determinism, according to which human brains are hard-wired to learn language through story), further generated the concept for this study: an investigation into the lack of exploitation of the benefits of literature through the inclusion and application of story in the form of narrative text in mainstream ESL course books.

Randomly investigating the inclusion and application of narrative in mainstream ESL courses is impractical within the given timeframe as there are so many similar courses available, both commercially and in-house, in universities and franchised language teaching organisations. To make this study practical, it was decided to identify the most prominent ESL course based on sales figures of Oxford University Press, and to focus on that course as a case study representative of ESL courses in general.

1.3 Research objectives

This study will firstly set out to show through a review of current research that the use of literature in the ESL classroom is not only beneficial, but practically achievable.

The main aim of this study is to ascertain to what extent narrative text is incorporated (or not) in the *New Headway* series (Oxford University Press 2008), which will be shown to be the most prominent among current ESL text books.

A further aim is to see, if indeed there is any narrative text, how the narrative text in *New Headway* (Oxford University Press 2008) is applied according to what is suggested in the literature in terms of teaching vocabulary, the four main language skills and the main aspects of communicative competence.

The study also aims to make a comparison between the use of narrative in beginning levels and its occurrence in more advanced levels.

1.4 Hypotheses

The main hypothesis of this study is that there will be no correlation between theory as presented in the current literature, and practice in the incorporation and application of narrative in ESL course books.

ESL, and inadvertently ESL course books are booming businesses with big money involved. Language institutions will lose learners if they use course books that do not yield results. Course book authors, who ultimately want to sell their books, therefore ensure that their courses are pedagogically sound and based on the most current research. However, the fact that no existing ESL course appears to incorporate a literature component leads me to believe that current research theories regarding the benefits of literature in language acquisition will not be reflected in practice.

My confidence in this hypothesis is based on the fact that while authors and curriculum developers of current EFL course books are likely to be fully informed about best teaching practice, their main concerns are more likely to be involved with consumer expectations which currently leave no room for literature.

A second hypothesis is that where narrative is present, it will be used more in beginning level course books, and gradually be phased out as learners progress to higher levels. Narrative is assumed to be the most readily understood kind of discourse and it can therefore be expected that narrative will be used more during the beginning stages of learning a foreign language, giving way to more difficult types of expository writing as learners' competence increases.

1.5 Delineation

This study involves only one ESL course, namely *New Headway* (Oxford University Press 2008). While *New Headway* might be the most widely used course in the ESL

arena, it is still only one course. Since other current ESL course books such as *Interchange*, *Cutting Edge* and *FCE* generally follow the same communicative-based recipe as *New Headway*, deductions made from the data can, to a certain extent, be assumed to be applicable to other course books (ibid.).

The study only considers three levels of *New Headway* (Oxford University Press 2008), namely the Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced Levels. The books do, however, follow the same pattern through all five levels. It can be assumed with relative certainty that data derived from these three levels will correlate to a significant degree with the data in the Pre-Intermediate and the Upper-Intermediate Levels.

1.6 Definitions of terms and concepts

Key concepts will be defined in this section. The terms to be defined include ESL/EFL, *New Headway*, literature, narrative and story, language skills and communicative competence.

1.6.1 ESL/EFL

EFL is the abbreviation for English as a foreign language. ESL is the abbreviation for English as a second language. While there may be small differences in approach and methodology between the two, the choice of one or the other is mainly based on assumptions about the role that English plays outside the classroom. Such assumptions have little influence on approach or course content. For the purposes of this study, the field of teaching English to non-native speakers in general will be referred to as ESL.

1.6.2 *New Headway*

New Headway (Oxford University Press 2008) is an ESL series on five levels which is published by Oxford University Press. This dissertation is largely based on *New Headway* and constant reference will be made to the series, so in order to facilitate reading, the bibliographical citation as provided here will be omitted from future references.

Each level comprises a set of four books and two CDs, of which only the class CD will be referred to in this study. As with the *New Headway* series, using full academic notation for individual books and CDs will seriously impede reading. Bibliographical citations are provided below, but for the duration of this study the individual books will be referred to without such citation:

Elementary Level Student's Book (Soars & Soars 2006b), *Elementary Level Workbook* (Soars, Soars & Wheeldon 2006), *Elementary Level Teacher's Book* (Soars, Soars & Maris 2006), *Elementary Level Teacher's Resource Book* (Krantz, Castle, Soars & Soars 2006), *Elementary Level Class CDs* (Soars & Soars 2006).

Intermediate Level Student's Book (Soars & Soars 2003d), *Intermediate Level Workbook* (Soars & Soars 2003e), *Intermediate Level Teacher's Book* (Soars, Soars & Sayer 2003b), *Intermediate Level Teacher's Resource Book* (Castle, Uribe, Soars & Soars 2004), *Intermediate Class CDs* (Soars & Soars 2003c).

Advanced Level Student's Book (Soars & Soars 2003), *Advanced Level Workbook* (Soars, Soars & Falla 2003), *Advanced Level Teacher's Book* (Soars, Soars & Sayer 2003), *Advanced Level Teacher's Resource Book* (Wildman, Soars & Soars 2003) and *Advanced Level Class CDs* (Soars & Soars 2003b).

1.6.3 Literature, narrative and story

It is important to not only define the three terms *literature, narrative* and *story*, but to clarify the manner in which they overlap and relate to each other.

According to the South African Concise Oxford Dictionary (Kavanagh & Pearsall 2002:676)*, literature* refers to "written works, especially those considered of superior or lasting artistic merit". For the purposes of this study, literature is taken to refer to both classics or high literature and modern works of popular fiction.

Most of what we think of as literature is in narrative form. The word *narrative* originates from the Latin *narrativus,* which means "telling a story". Although it will be

further delineated in later chapters, on the whole the South African Concise Oxford Dictionary's definition of *narrative* as "an account of connected events; a story" applies (Kavanagh & Pearsall 2002:773).

Further explanation of *narrative* entails the defining of *story.* According to the South African Concise Oxford Dictionary (Kavanagh & Pearsall 2002:1158), *story* is "an account of imaginary or real people and events told for entertainment ... a plot or story line ... a report of an item of news in a newspaper, magazine, or news broadcast ... a piece of gossip; a rumour ... a false statement or explanation; a lie ... an account of past events in someone's life or in the evolution of something".

As will be made clear in the review of the current research, using story in the form of narrative can lend the same advantages to ESL teaching as literature can. Since it has already been established that literature (in the form of novels) is not incorporated into existing ESL courses, this study will largely be an investigation into the use of narrative in ESL course books.

1.6.4 Language skills

Language skills are understood to refer to listening, speaking, reading and writing.

1.6.5 Communicative competence

Richards and Schmidt (2002:90-91) define communicative competence as:

> knowledge of not only if something is formally possible in a language, but also the knowledge of whether it is feasible, appropriate, or done in a particular [speech community]. Communicative competence involves four main aspects, namely:
>
> *a* **grammatical competence** (also formal competence), that is, knowledge of the grammar, vocabulary, phonology, and semantics of a language ...
>
> *b* **sociolinguistic competence** (also **sociocultural competence**), that is, knowledge of the relationship between language and its nonlinguistic context, knowing how to use and respond appropriately to different types of [speech acts], such as requests, apologies, thanks

and invitations, knowing which [address forms] should be used with different persons one speaks to and in different situations, and so forth ...

c **discourse competence** (sometimes considered part of sociolinguistic competence), that is, knowing how to begin and end conversations ...

d **strategic competence**, that is, knowledge of [communication strategies] that can compensate for weakness in other areas.

Having set out the research objectives and the hypotheses of this study and having briefly defined the relevant terms and concepts, it is fitting to examine the significance of the study and the wider contribution that the research could have.

1.7 Contribution of the research

Regardless of the findings, the research hopes to draw attention to the variety of ways in which narrative can contribute in ESL courses and it provides a framework for further examining those roles and comparing different courses using the same methods.

If the study shows, as hypothesized, that the *New Headway* series does not incorporate narrative text, it will expose a serious deficiency in an otherwise well-researched language tool which is used and trusted by teachers and learners all over the world.

Notwithstanding the outcome, this study hopes to build a strong case not only for the inclusion of narrative in ESL course books, but also for the possibility of building an ESL course around a continuous core narrative. There might be hope for *Harry Potter* after all.

1.8 Chapter overview

Chapter 2 of this study is a literature review of relevant research. The chapter first deals with what exactly the current research considers literature to be, touching on arguments for and against the inclusion of literature in ESL, after which the main theoretical considerations underlying the application of literature in language classes are discussed. This is followed by a closer examination of the practical application of literature in the ESL classroom with specific reference to the selection of texts that are suitable, vocabulary acquisition, language skills and communicative competence. Some focus is

then put on ESL course books in general, and the chapter is concluded with a discussion of expectations raised by the literature.

Chapter 3 is devoted to research methodology. In this chapter an in-depth look is taken at the research design of this study, as well as at the methodology involved in executing the study. The research instrument, together with the detailed procedure for applying the instrument, are discussed.

In Chapter 4 the findings and interpretation of the data are presented. In this chapter a reflection is given of the extent to which *New Headway* conforms to the expectations that were raised in the literature review in Chapter 2.

Chapter 5 starts with a brief summary of the findings. The final conclusions are then discussed, followed by a summary of the contributions of the study and some suggestions for possible further research.

1.9 Conclusion

The desire to harness *Harry Potter* as core material in an ESL course in order for learners to benefit from the tremendous impact the books have had and my subsequent difficulties in executing the plan, highlighted the fact that commercial ESL courses lack a literature component.

While this deficit is understandable within the logistical constraints of mainstream ESL teaching, it is not at all understandable in view of the potential benefits that are lost through the exclusion of literature. The lack of story seems to be a glaring shortfall in the composition of mainstream ESL courses, and merits a closer investigation.

In order to test the hypothesis that current research regarding the benefits of literature is not put into practice in ESL courses, this study will set out to find how much narrative text is used in *New Headway*, and how that text is applied.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Literature pertaining to the present study is reviewed in this chapter. The review has been divided into several sections which relate to various aspects of this study. Firstly, the definition of the term 'literature' according to current research will be discussed. After that, the role of literature in ESL syllabuses with reference to arguments for and arguments against the inclusion of literature in such syllabuses will be examined. The input hypothesis, schema theory and the role of story as input will be referred to as theoretical considerations underlying the application of narrative, after which the practical application of narrative in ESL will be discussed with reference to vocabulary, language skills and communicative competence. A closer look will then be taken at what the research states on ESL course books and the narrative text contained in them and the conclusion will address expectations raised by this review of the research.

2.2 Defining literature

Prior to looking at the role of literature in ESL and the theoretical and practical considerations underlying that role, it is necessary to define clearly what the research considers literature to be.

With regard to schema theory, Widdowson (1983:30) explains the difference between conventional discourse and literature. In conventional discourse, the participants have immediate expectations, aiming to achieve a "convergence" of schemata, which in turn achieves communication and thus understanding of each other. Literature, on the other hand, does not provide this sort of "established conventional schemata". The reader is not aware which frame of reference to apply and has to continue reading since it is the act of discourse which creates the background knowledge necessary to make meaning of the text. "Literary schemata are created internally, within the literature itself" (ibid.).

There can be no “shared meaning” derived from reading literature, since literature has no “shared meaning”. Neither does Widdowson (1983:30-31) believe literature to have any truth value as such. “It is representative of meaning and doesn’t refer to meaning outside itself”. He concludes: “[T]he conditions for literature are met if the discourse is dissociated from any normal social context, dislocated in that sense, and therefore requires the reader to create his or her own schematic information” by procedural work within the text (ibid.:31).

Another difference between literature and discourse as pointed out by Widdowson (1983:32) is the aim of the text. In normal discourse, comprehension is the aim and there is co-operation between writer and reader to relate what is written to already existing knowledge. In literature, on the other hand, suspense, and therefore the desire to continue reading, is the point. There is thus a constant search for meaning during which time linguistic tools need to be applied more extensively in order to anticipate what is to follow.

Literature is “immediate without being real and carries conviction without being true” which forces readers to implement interpretative procedures (Widdowson 1983:32). Readers get “hooked” on a fictional world which is much more stimulating than general discourse, but also creates a background against which learners can acquire a very important aspect of language learning, namely the ability to “infer meaning by procedural activity” (ibid.).

Another big difference between imaginative literature and discursive prose is that literature leaves “some things unexplained” (Irmscher 1975:108). Unlike discursive prose, narrative text allows learners to implement schemata in constructing meaning. It taps into story grammar.

Vincent (1986:215) feels that literature should be more widely interpreted so as to include “well-written works of non-fiction” such as philosophy, politics, history and biography. Marckwardt (1978:68) gives a much less technical interpretation of what literature is when he says literature is “language creation that is not utilitarian, language that is sheer fun, that at one and the same time feeds the interest in narrative and the concern for the miraculous”. A closer look will subsequently be taken at the role of literature in ESL.

2.3 Literature in ESL syllabuses

Within the paradigm of communicative language teaching, there are arguments for and against the inclusion of literature in ESL syllabuses. Both points of view will be discussed here.

2.3.1 Arguments against the inclusion of literature

Topping (1968:95-100) is against the use of literature in the ESL classroom and actively pleads for its exclusion from the ESL curriculum on grounds of its "structural complexity, lack of conformity to standard grammatical rules, and remote cultural perspective". Cook (1986:150) supports Topping in saying that the study of literary English is often unsuited to the needs of foreign students since mastering literary texts has little relevance to the learners' aim of understanding and producing more functional forms of the language. This supports Blatchford's (1972:6) take on literature in ESL classrooms as a "luxury that cannot be indulged" if learners are to be offered a "functional command" of English to enable them to deal with "simple" language situations. Difficulty due to ESL learners' possibly inadequate knowledge of the language, the ideas or the form used in literature leads to Burke and Brumfit (1986:173-174) suggesting that literature be taught as a "completely separate subject area from English language".

It is the very "deviation from the norms of English grammatical and lexical usage" which lends excellence to literature that can only aid in confusing foreign learners (Cook 1986:150).

2.3.2 Arguments for the inclusion of literature

In response to arguments against the inclusion of literature, Povey (1987:54) says that the case for the use of literature is of great importance and should be stated with defiance, rather than defensiveness and on "uncompromising terms". Nor should literature be seen as a means of conveniently introducing reading skills, but as an object worthy of appreciation for its own sake. Povey (ibid.) feels that issues regarding the

procedures around the use of literature in language teaching can only be addressed once the "desirability" of literature has been fully accepted.

Arguments for the inclusion of literature in EFL courses are many and varied. Brumfit and Carter (1986:15) posit that "literary texts provide examples of language resources being used to the full, and the reader is placed in an active interactional role in working with and making sense of this language", while Chomsky (1972:33) found clear indications that exposure to "the more complex language available from reading" does seem to go hand in hand with increased knowledge of the language.

In recent years the intellectual, cultural, academic and linguistic benefits of literature study are increasingly being acknowledged (Spack 1985:703). Widdowson (1975:83) places the value of literature in its helping learners to develop "a sharper awareness of the communicative resources of the language being learned". He feels that literature provides learners with the ability to interpret discourse and that such interpretive procedures can be applied to many different language uses, literary as well as non-literary, which learners can find both inside and outside the classroom (ibid.:84). This approach is supported by Salvatori (1983:659) who feels that literature should be taught as a method of "exploring, understanding and reflecting" on the strategies used by learners to generate meaning from the act of reading. According to Ghosn (2002:175), literature seems to offer not only "a medium that can create an acquisition-rich environment in the classroom context", but also various communication models by providing examples of "real-life language". Gajdusek (1988:227) feels that literary texts can potentially provide a basis for content-based, "intensely interactive" ESL classes.

2.3.2.1 An integrative approach

On the one hand there are those who advocate the use of literature solely for language study. According to Hirvela (1990:244) literature can by used in ESP courses but only where a scientific approach is used and where texts are meticulously examined and processes broken down in order to study the elements that form them. For him, "entertainment value" matters only to a very small degree and the standing of the text as a work of literature is "immaterial".

Povey (1979:163) on the other hand, cautions teachers not to set literature "at the mercy of language teaching" in a manner that "destroys the educational values of both". Choosing a specific text in order to teach specific vocabulary points or grammatical structures will be wrong since then that will be the only goal attained. Instead, Povey (ibid.) says the aim of grammatical explanations and vocabulary work should be "the comprehension of the story". When a text is being discussed, learners should be given the opportunity to initiate newly acquired vocabulary by communicating the new discoveries they make from the text.

Combining the above approaches, Short and Candlin (1986:92) plead for the integrative teaching of literature, saying reading can be used to break the monotony of language classes and at the same time parts of the text can be used as a focus for relevant aspects of the language class. Others who support an integrative approach are Adeyanju (1978:136); Carter (1986:110); Gajdusek (1988) and Spack (1985). It is, however, important to consider the opinion of Carrell and Eisterhold (1983:567) and Schultz (1983:127) that low level learners read word-by-word and the problems they encounter will be at word level.

Aski (2000:496) refers to two modes of information processing that can be used integratively when reading literature. In the bottom-up process, also known as intensive reading, learners decode linguistic cues in order to generate meaning. It is a word-by-word approach to text comprehension and stands in contrast with the top-down process, which is conceptually driven. Using the top-down approach, readers arrive at an understanding of the text through constantly "applying, testing and confirming" their schemata and predictions. While Aski (ibid.:498) does propose an integrative use of the two approaches to best attain text comprehension, she warns that elementary level learners are not adequately prepared for successfully applying intensive reading strategies and posits that confusion and anxiety in early learners can be avoided by focusing more on global, top-down strategies in beginning levels This is in notable contrast to Eskey's view (1988:93) that top-down models which presume good perceptual and decoding skills, are not suitable for less proficient readers.

Ghosn (2002:173) provides four main reasons to motivate the integrative use of authentic literature in EFL classes. She firstly refers to the motivational, meaningful context provided by literature because of children's natural affinity to stories. Next, she refers to the contribution that literature can make to language learning by presenting natural language to foster the development of vocabulary within context. Thirdly, she says that literature will develop academic literacy and also thinking skills thus preparing learners for instruction in English. Lastly, she refers to literature as an "agent of change" which, through dealing with certain aspects of the "human condition" can contribute to emotional development in children while fostering positive intercultural and interpersonal attitudes.

Carter (1986:112-113) refers to the "inherent potentiality of literature" to engender debate and discussion in the classroom.

2.3.2.2 Literature and culture

Some linguists feel that literature can and should be used to teach culture and international communication. Adeyanju (1978:135) feels literature should be used to familiarize learners with the spiritual, moral and aesthetic values of the target culture and the rules of that social system. Some of Adeyanju's statements are, however, culturally paternalistic in nature and hark back to early colonialism. For him the value of teaching English literature is the "inculcation of civilised values" (ibid.:143). He ascribes to the literature teacher the responsibility of developing "universal values" in learners who, after all "think and live only in tribes" and he refers to learners as being in a state of "moral confusion" (ibid.:137).

Oster (1989:87) fittingly reminds those who use literature mainly as a tool to teach a value system that whatever value system we choose to teach, it remains our own and not necessarily "valuable" in the community we are teaching to.

According to Marckwardt (1978:46), because "literature expresses both cultural values and universal human values, its study can promote internal as well as international communication among all English-speaking peoples". He raises the issue of whether

"the acquisition of a considerable degree of competence in the language should imply the acquisition of a second culture as well" (ibid.:47). Ghosn (2002:176) feels literature can be used to "transform, to change attitudes, and to help eradicate prejudice while fostering empathy, tolerance, and an awareness of global problems". She sees the possibility of EFL learners becoming global "bridge-builders across cultures".

Widdowson (1978) warns against using literature to teach other things, pleading for the retention of the "literary nature" of literature and against literature being turned into a "repository of factual data". These views are supported by McConochie (1982:232). Instead of using literature only to teach language usage or cultural content, the study of literature should be seen as "an inquiry into the way a language is used to express a reality other than that expressed by conventional means" (Widdowson 1975:83). With regard to using literature solely to teach culture, Marckwardt (1978:37) argues that:

> [i]t is only fair to recognize that if literary materials and approaches can serve as an instrument of political and social antagonism, they might just as easily be subverted in the opposite direction, as instruments of political advocacy, in short for propaganda, as the term is understood in English.

He goes on to warn that even though culture is very important in EFL situations, "cultural awareness, sensitivity, and rapprochement are not automatic by-products of foreign language instructions or of exposure to foreign literature" (ibid.:49).

2.3.2.3 Literature at university level

Several researchers (Brookes 1989; Brumfit & Carter 1986:17) plead for a definite inclusion of literature in second language programmes at university level. Brookes (1989:10) ascribes avoidance of literature by students and teachers to an inability to identify the true difficulty of literature and says: "... although there will be many new words and complex structures, it is often the cultural strangeness more than the technical difficulties that poses the greatest problem". This aspect of literature is discussed more fully under text selection on p.30.

One result of language courses with no literature component is non-native learners who, because of an "impoverished command of the language" and "little exposure to the reading of complex, connected text", are inadequately prepared for academic demands made by literature departments of tertiary institutions (Short & Candlin 1986:92).

McKay (1986:192) feels literature should be included in language programmes in spite of fears that it will not prepare learners for occupational or academic demands, stating that literature does not necessarily have to be taught to the exclusion of other texts. She poses the question of whether literature might not be able to contribute to academic and occupational goals in that it fosters "an overall increase in reading proficiency" (ibid.).

In spite of Blatchford's (1972:7) assessment that teachers are ill-equipped to deal with ESL literature and rarely trained in the field, others feel that teachers of ESL should not refrain from using literature because of a lack of literary background. "Literature does not have to be studied through formalist criticism that is bogged down in technical terminology and complex symbolism. Today it is acceptable, even preferable, to teach literature as an exploration of meaning" (Spack 1985:720). Nor should teachers refrain from using literature because they think it might be too hard for their learners (Gajdusek 1988:227). If literature is properly introduced, with the necessary patience, enthusiasm, and interactive lesson plans rewarding learners' efforts with new understanding, then the greater demands made by literary texts need not lead to discouragement and intimidation, but could lead to learners acquiring new techniques of text involvement (ibid.:233). Oster (1985:67) cites the readiness of foreign learners in English-speaking countries to study literature and Gajdusek (1988:228, 234-254) practically demonstrates how any ESL teacher of "mature, intermediate as well as advanced learners can confidently prepare and teach a literary text to achieve more communicative, interactive, involving ESL classes".

ESL learners taking a course that involves literature take pride in doing the same types of academically challenging work that native speakers are doing (Spack 1985:721), but even more importantly, they are able to take part in what Widdowson (1982:204) refers to as "the celebration of language". Povey (1979:163) feels that while the teacher of ESL literature assumes that learners have the necessary maturity and awareness to

become truly involved in texts in spite of their limited linguistic abilities, such assumptions would depend on the "sensible" selection of a text.

With the arguments for the inclusion of literature in communicative ESL courses firmly made, it is necessary to examine the theoretical constructs which underlie the use of narrative in such courses.

2.4 Theoretical considerations supporting the use of narrative texts in ESL

Several theoretical considerations underlie the use of narrative texts in the ESL classroom. The main considerations, namely the input hypothesis, schema theory and story grammar will be discussed here.

2.4.1 Input hypothesis

Stephen Krashen (1982, 1985, 1989) developed the input hypothesis. This hypothesis assumes that comprehensible input is the most essential element in successful language learning. Supported by the work of other researchers such as Cohen (1968:209), Krashen (1989:41) posits that "competence in spelling and vocabulary is most efficiently attained by comprehensible input in the form of reading". This theory is supported by many studies. Chomsky (1972:23) reports better grammatical competence among children who grew up in "richer print environments" while Krashen's own work (1984) shows that learners who read more outside of school tend to be better writers. Hafiz and Tudor (1989:10) also found that better acquisition of a L2 (as measured by various tests) can be associated with more exposure to comprehensible L2 input outside of the school environment. Many studies show rapid improvement in reading and language development among preschool children who are read to on a regular basis (Clark 1976; Wells 1986). Ghosn (2002:174) suggests that beginning learners might benefit from a certain amount of repetition in their reading with regard to formulaic expressions and grammatical structures. Another area in which the input hypothesis predicts improvement is that of vocabulary.

2.4.1.1 Vocabulary development using L2 reading as input

There is much evidence for the development of vocabulary through exposure to large amounts of comprehensible input in the form of L2 reading. Anderson, Wilson and Fielding (1988:285) found that voluntary reading was reported by fifth graders who outperformed their classmates on vocabulary texts. This is supported by findings of Greany (1980:354), Greany and Hegarty (1987:13), Meyer and Cohen (1975:112-113), Nagy and Anderson (1984:327), Nagy, Anderson and Herman (1987:240) and Rice (1997). Krashen cites two further studies, one by Ferris (1988) and one by Kiyochi (1988), which confirm that L2 learners can acquire vocabulary through reading, specifically through the reading of "authentic texts" (Krashen 1989:447). Unfortunately both these studies are unpublished papers not available for closer reference.

Greany (1970:27) conducted a study which compares increases in vocabulary after free reading with increases from traditional spelling and vocabulary instruction, and found no difference between the two. This leads to the conclusion that free reading can result in similar and even better vocabulary development than traditional programmes can and that reading alone is "at least as effective" as formal instruction for the development of spelling and vocabulary (Krashen 1989:452). The possible benefits to be derived from free reading merit a closer examination of programmes which specialize in extensive reading.

2.4.1.2 Extensive reading, sustained silent reading (SSR) and interactive reading programmes

Extensive reading aims to expose learners to large quantities of L2 input with very few or even no specific tasks related to this material. Such exposure to large quantities of interesting and meaningful L2 materials has been proven beneficial for L2 acquisition (Hafiz & Tudor 1989:5; Nuttal 1982:168; Wilkins 1972:132).

According to Pilgreen (2003:42) results from more than thirty studies on SSR showed that the programmes which increased learner comprehension and motivation to read all included eight common factors: "access to books, book appeal, comfortable

environment, encouragement, staff training, non-accountability, follow-up activities, and distributed time to read". Kim and Hall (2002:232-233) with their work on interactive book reading programmes confirm the benefits of extensive reading and SSR while Kelley and Clausen-Grace (2006:148) also claim that SSR "can increase students' wide reading, metacognitive awareness, and comprehension".

With regard to the quality of literature chosen for such free reading, Krashen (1989:455) suggests that "large quantities of light, 'low risk' reading, in which students are not held responsible for content, in which they can skip words without fear of missing anything that affects their grade, will result in vocabulary growth and overall language competence". The purpose is to get learners to read more. As for the use of "inferior" reading materials, Briton (1970:268) argues that "a taste for the stereotyped, for the second-rate may at times be the first rung of a ladder and not the first step to damnation". The "quality" of reading materials seems to be far less important than the reason for reading. Reading for the sake of acquisition (regardless of the type of text) seems to be more beneficial than the more prevalent "intense reading" where materials are studied and "explicitly exploited for language-learning purposes" (Elley & Mangubhai 1983; Hafiz & Tudor 1989: 5).

In spite of the clearly proven benefits of SSR and interactive reading programmes, and recommendations of researchers (Ducy-Perez 1991:3) that they be included in courses teaching English for Academic Purposes at University level, such programmes are currently not practically implementable in most ESL situations. The same underlying problem which generated the present study – time constraints, budget constraints and general unwillingness on the part of both learners and institutions to provide room for literature in ESL – is what mostly rules out SSR programmes in the mainstream ESL arena.

Another theoretical consideration underwriting the use of narrative texts in communicative ESL courses, is schema theory**.**

2.4.2 Schema theory

A clear breakdown of schema theory is provided by Gajdusek (1988:231):

> Reading is an active, two-way process of matching incoming data with our existing knowledge, not only of the language system, but of the world. We organize this knowledge into conceptually coherent systems called schemata and interpret or understand incoming language signals by matching them to these existing schemata. Additionally and simultaneously, we use the meaning thus produced and the schemata activated by the incoming data to predict and interpret subsequent incoming signals. Thus, comprehension never occurs in a vacuum, and the reader's prior knowledge, experience, and even emotional state are an important part of the process by which meaning is actively created.

Schema theory "asserts that activating or building readers' existing knowledge prior to reading would improve and/or alter reading comprehension and recall. Thus, the provision of vicarious or real experiences would fill in or expand the readers' existing culturally determined background knowledge of a topic and would prepare them to comprehend and retain material on that topic in the reading passage that followed" (Johnson 1982:10).

This theory is widely supported by most researchers in the field of ESL reading (Carrell, Devine & Eskey (Eds.) 1988; Carrell & Eisterhold 1983; Devine, Carrell & Eskey (Eds.) 1987; Johnson 1982; Nuttal 1982; Petrosky 1982). Carrell and Eisterhold (1983:567) say that in schema theory, the text does not contain a meaning that is static or inviolable, but that the text provides learners with directions for constructing meaning from their own cognitive frameworks (*schemata*) which are formed by previously acquired knowledge, feelings, personality, and culture.

Familiarity with a text through experience, through pre-reading on the topic and through advance warning of what the topic will entail, all aid in comprehension (James 1987:177; Nuttal 1982:3). Gaining familiarity with a text through interpreting it, learners become aware of how meaning is created through reading. Carrell and Eisterhold (1983:567) refer to "recent schema theory" in which it is posited that reading comprehension is not a simple act of information retrieval but an "interactive process between the reader's background knowledge and the text". How does schema theory impact on narrative text?

2.4.2.1 Schema theory and the interpretation of narrative text

Even when learners are familiar with a language system, the interpretation of literature requires the necessary schematic knowledge (Widdowson 1983:30). Johnson (1982:504) posits that EFL readers probably depend more heavily on topic schemata than on linguistic text analysis for reconstruction and comprehension since they have an incomplete knowledge of the language. A study which strongly supports this theory is that of Anderson, Reynolds, Schallert and Goetz (1977:369), who provided thirty physical education students and thirty music education students with the same narrative passage which could be interpreted to be about a prison break or else about wrestling. Another passage was used which could be understood to have either a card game or a rehearsal of a woodwind ensemble as topic. In spite of disambiguating multiple choice tests after the readings, the interpretation of the narratives showed a strong resemblance to the background of the subjects. Subjects distinctly gave each passage one of the interpretations and reported being unaware of other possible views while reading. The results show that high-level schemata can cause readers to interpret texts in specific ways without consideration of alternative interpretations. “The most important factor in learning from context is the degree to which the reader can integrate information in a passage into a coherent system consistent with his or her prior knowledge” (Nagy, Anderson & Herman 1987:264).

Johnson (1982) shows that in the same way that familiarity with the cultural background of a text facilitates understanding, familiarity with the topic of a text facilitates text recall. Anderson and Pearson (1988:53) add that the theory of schema should include inference in order to be complete and that readers rely not only on knowledge of particular texts, but on abstract and general schemata as well.

While Carrell (1988:245) does support schema theory, he bemoans the fact that “little clear guidance” is available on how to accomplish the suggested improvement of comprehension through improvement of background knowledge. Price (2001:18-24) makes some practical suggestions in this regard, advocating the use of children’s rhymes and riddles specifically for developing the schemata that can only be derived from such rhymes. As example she refers to *Humpty Dumpty*, which she taught to her

adult students purely for intonation purposes. The following day they came across a newspaper article referring to Yugoslavia as "Europe's *Humpty Dumpty*", which – even if the people wanted to – could not be put back together again. If they hadn't read the rhyme, her students would never have been able to catch the inference in the newspaper heading (ibid.:18).

While the input theory supports the inclusion of ample authentic narrative texts in ESL reading, schema theory advocates that benefit from such input can be optimized through building background knowledge and using input that might be somehow familiar to learners. Using narrative (story) as input makes sense against the background of both these theories.

2.4.3 Story as input – Is the human brain hard-wired for story grammar?

Story has been part of our society for millennia. From the earliest re-enactments of the hunt by cave dwellers, story (narrative) has become a primary source of language input and therefore language learning. Some believe that narrative goes back even further. According to Dautenhahn (1999:2) the development of narrative might have been a "crucial milestone" in the evolution of social intelligence among primates (including humans). The "narrative intelligence hypothesis" which Dautenhahn refers to, correlates the evolutionary origin of narrative with an increase in social dynamics in early primate societies, confirming the view that story has been part of human development from the outset. This endorses the biological determinist argument that evolution has hard-wired the human brain to learn language from story, which sets narrative dramatically apart from other input.

To expound on the definition of narrative provided in Chapter 1, Wikipedia, an online encyclopedia (Wikipedia n.d.), describes narrative as follows, with reference to the Oxford definition as well as to *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language*:

> **[N]arrative** is a construct created in a suitable medium (speech, writing, images) that describes a sequence of real or unreal events. It derives from the Latin verb *narrare*, which means "to recount" and is related to the adjective *gnarus*, meaning "knowing" or "skilled". (Ultimately derived from the Proto-Indo-European root *gn?-*, "to know".) The word "story" may be used as a synonym of "narrative", but can also be used to refer to the sequence of events described in a narrative. A narrative can also be told by a character within a larger narrative.

The Wikipedia entry for story (Wikipedia n.d) explicitly highlights the interwoveness of *literature*, *narrative* and *story* with each other:

> A sequence of events
> • A narrative, more specifically:
> • A piece of literature (also known as a tale):
> • Novel or specifically, an epistolary novel
> • Short story or a novella
> • Frame tale, a narrative technique
> • Fable, fairy tale or tall tale
> • Play, usually consisting chiefly of dialog between characters
> • Anecdote, a brief tale narrating an interesting or amusing biographical incident
> • A branching narrative, such as in a gamebook or certain video games
> • Bedtime story, an entertaining or instructive, soporific, and often extemporaneous tale for a child
> • Urban legend
> • Plot, the underlying structure holding a narrative together (also in the context of movies)
> • An essay or news article, in journalism slang
> • Organization story, in organization studies, is fragmented, collectively enacted, and co-constructed
> • User story is a way of illustrating software requirements, often used in extreme programming
> • A depiction of history
> • In older American slang, a soap opera, (e.g., "I'll talk to you later; my story is on.")
> • A happening in real life

Most importantly for the present purposes, the last part of the Wikipedia entry applies: “along with parable, a basic principle or pattern of the human mind” (ibid.).

2.4.3.1 The schematic structure of stories and its influence on comprehension (story grammar)

Part of the manner in which language is learnt from story is due to the unique characteristics of story grammar, which is defined by Richards and Schmidt (2002:515) as:

> a theory of the cognitive representation of narrative texts, including simple stories, folk tales, fables and narratives. Some or all of the characteristics of the structure of stories is said to be incorporated into people’s knowledge systems as a SCHEMA for stories. This describes the elements common to most stories, the kinds of situations, events, actors, actions and goals that occur in stories and the interrelationships among the elements of a story. People access story grammars consciously or unconsciously when encountering different types of stories. This serves as a source of prediction, inferencing, comparison, evaluation in understanding and following stories and narrative.

Beverley Randell is a children's author who has sold more than 25 million books around the world and whose books are mostly stories for use with 5-, 6- and 7-year old children who are learning to read. Randell (1999:3) says traditional stories have two main elements. Firstly there is a central character or characters who have a problem and secondly, the problem is resolved. To refine this simple concept of story, there is also the climax, or the pivotal moment in a story, which means the story as three parts: the tension created by the problem, the pivotal moment of crisis and finally the resolution of the problem. This 'recipe' for story is very, very old and is the same recipe used by Homer, and by Aesop more than 2500 years ago (ibid.). It is the same recipe used in great works of literature like the plays of Shakespeare.

While the use of novels and other extended pieces of literature, such as Shakespearean plays, might not be possible in most ESL classes, the use of that same recipe in the form of shorter narratives is a viable possibility. While most commercially available textbooks do not contain components on extended literature, it is possible for textbooks to make use of shorter narrative texts in order to tap into story grammar and thus derive the same kinds of benefits that might be derived from the teaching of literature.

The use of traditional story structure, or narrative, has many advantages that can bear fruit in the ESL classroom: it is extremely motivational in that learners want to continue reading in order to find out what happens next; the conclusion is usually satisfying to readers; it allows for the development of logical thought processes; and it requires proper and precise use of language (Randell 1999:3). From high literature to traditional stories to modern science-fiction stories all tap into the same narrative structure and can therefore be applied successfully for language teaching purposes (Yang 2001:63-72).

A collection of work where all the contributors strongly support using narrative based on the presence of narrative structure, is *The Cool Web* (Meek, Warlow & Barton (Eds.)1977). Hardy (1977:12-23) refers to the "universal need" for narrative. Cate (1977:25) says that telling tales and indulging in literature, "is a habit that seems as integral a part of our nature as breathing and sleeping". Britton (1977:40) refers to humans as deliberate "proliferators of images". Meek, Warlow and Barton (Eds.) (1977:74) say that "[s]tories told and read to children give them both the age-old

inheritance of their culture – whatever they make of it – and the templates, patterns, and symbolic outlines for their personal storymaking". Many other studies touch on the schematic structure of story and its influence on comprehension (Kintsch & Van Dijk 1978; Mandler & Johnson 1977; Meyer 1975; Meyer & Rice 1982; Rumelhart 1975, 1980).

Story grammar is not merely an aid to comprehension. Meek (1995:6) notes that stories allow children to be "intensely preoccupied with the present" while teaching them verb tenses "of the past and the future". Ghosn (2002:174-175) is in agreement and states that the familiar "story grammar" of stories provides an "ideal context for verb tense acquisition".

Apart from the obvious advantages that story grammar can hold for language learning, there are other aspects to fantasy and children's stories which can aid in the acquisition of language.

2.4.3.2 Children's stories

Tyrrell (1997:52) bemoans the fact that while "[m]uch is said about the magical world of the imagination and literature" not many teachers apply this "powerful force" in their classrooms. She suggests that young learners should write their own stories in the form of little books which will not only make the writing process more real to them, but allow for an audience other than the teacher.

It is suggested that the value of children's stories lies in their authenticity. Harris and Leung (1997:74) define "authentic language" as:

> the written and spoken language used every day in a language community. This encompasses language use on a broad spectrum of formality to informality dependent on subject and context. It will also mean that the language used is not, in an arbitrary way, homogenized or made suitable for children according to some preconceived notions of what constitutes ease of access.

Another factor which largely contributes to narrative being a suitable source of input is the fact that stories carry meaning (Randell 1999:3). With no meaning, the structures and functions of language are simply abstractions which have no communicative value (Aski 2000:503).

2.4.3.3 Meaning in stories

Elley and Mangubhai (1983:54) identify three main reasons why L1 acquisition takes place at a much faster rate than L2 acquisition. These are "strength of motivation", "emphasis on meaning rather than on form" and the "amount of exposure" to the language in question. They suggest that in order to make L2 learning more effective, teachers should try to reduce these differences between L1 and L2 acquisition and suggest that this can be done through the use of "an abundance of high-interest, illustrated story books, printed in the target language".

Elley and Mangubhai (ibid.:56) further hold that:

> [g]ood books provide strong intrinsic motivation for children and an emphasis on meaning rather than form. When read often, these books increase exposure to the target language. They become the basis for discussion about the pictures and story. Through expressive activities, the stories assist children to learn naturally, from context, and provide excellent models of written English.

These findings support the earlier findings of Cohen (1968:212) that children who were read to every day gained over a control group (who were not read to) in vocabulary, word knowledge, reading comprehension and quality of vocabulary. Other studies show that elementary school students who regularly listen to stories being read aloud show measurable gains in reading and listening skills (Elley 1980; Elley 1989:176). Ghosn (2002:174) agrees about including pictures, which should be pleasing while clarifying the text and providing "opportunity for discussions in which the key vocabulary can be exploited".

The same study by Elley and Mangubhai (1983) on the influence of extensive reading on language acquisition found that the learners unambiguously preferred story books

while information-based books did not elicit very favourable reactions. Mostly, they found that “entertainment value” drew readers. Elley (1989:176) deduces that children will learn and retain more from activities as entertaining as listening to stories being read aloud than from “working at contrived exercises”. If an appealing 8- to 10-minute story, read three times, with only brief explanation of word meanings, can produce 40% gains in vocabulary for typical children, there are clearly good linguistic grounds for increasing this activity, over and above the recreational and cultural reasons for doing so (ibid.:186).

Ghosn (2002:174) mentions three characteristics of story which all agree with the theory of natural language acquisition: “literature is not only interesting to children, but also facilitates integration of the language skills”. Literature offers “predictable yet natural language” through which word recognition, as well as opportunities for authentic reading and writing may be promoted and literature offers language which is not “grammatically sequenced”.

Allowing learners to make meaning is one of the aims of communicative language teaching, so where story and story structure provide such opportunities, there is a strong case for the use of narrative in the ESL classroom. How to include narrative is what will be discussed in the following section.

2.5 The practical application of narrative in the communicative ESL classroom

Widdowson (1979) bemoans the fact that literature is often relegated to the status of language teaching tool thereby losing the “literary nature of literature” and suggests (1975:80) that the study of literature should not be limited to either language usage or cultural content, but that literature should be viewed as discourse and the study of literature as “an inquiry into the way a language is used to express a reality other than that expressed by conventional means” (ibid.:83). The success of such an inquiry clearly depends on the selection of literary or narrative texts that are suitable.

2.6 Selecting narrative texts that are suitable for ESL

Much emphasis is put on the selection of appropriate texts. McKay (1986:193) feels selection might be the key to successful use of literature in ESL and Nuttal (1982:22) goes so far as to say that the selection of a text is more important than how it is taught. Widdowson (1983:31) implies that literature – and thus narrative – can be used with almost any student of English, regardless of level, age or background, with the impact being on the selection of suitable texts.

2.6.1 Needs analysis

Before touching on general guidelines for text selection, it is important to note the role of a proper needs analysis before making any selection. The needs of learners in each language course and also the general aims of the language institutions which present language courses (including the role of examinations), need to be taken into consideration (Adeyanju 1978:137). Littlewood (1986:177) says that in any given classroom situation, the individual needs of learners will require different functions from literary works and these may be best performed by different literary texts.

Scott (1980:8) warns that for literature to be taught to good effect, not only a thorough grasp of vocabulary is presupposed, but also a willingness with learners to “tackle the traditional liberal arts curriculum”. Even Povey, (1979:163) who is a great advocate of the use of literature, admits that in some obvious cases where students need to learn English only in order to write reports or attend conferences, “it is likely that literature will not be particularly useful”. The teacher needs to determine the need and the likely success that introducing narrative to the course will have.

Teachers are often responsible not only for the necessary needs analysis, but for the actual selection of texts through choosing, editing, modifying or even creating suitable materials (Eskey & Grabe 1988:229). There are many guidelines in the literature as to the selection of suitable narrative texts.

2.6.2 General guidelines for text selection

Nuttal (1982:25) cites readability, suitability of content and exploitability as the three main things to be considered. Under suitability of content, she mentions some very specific, relevant issues to take into consideration when selecting a text: will the text tell learners things they do not already know and make them think of things they haven't thought of before? Will it help them develop understanding for the way people with different problems, attitudes and backgrounds than their own think and feel? Will the text inspire learners to want to read further on their own? She then poses the question of whether the text challenges learners' intelligence while not making unreasonable demands on their foreign language knowledge (Nuttal 1982:30).

Some characteristics of stories are critical in determining whether such stories will lead to effective language learning. Elley (1989:184) says it is crucial that the text contain vocabulary beyond what learners know at the time of reading. Such unfamiliar words should be supported by a context of helpful words or pictures, and more than one exposure to each word is recommended.

In this regard, Brumfit and Carter (1986) suggest the cultural, linguistic and formal complexity of a text should provide i + input, which is input at and slightly above the learners' current level of understanding. They do add, however, that the successful teacher of literature should never focus on the teaching of a specific literary text, but on teaching abilities and skills which learners can apply to the reading of any literary texts. Littlewood (1986:181) mentions not only culture, but also interest and relevance as criteria in text selection. Brumfit (1986:189) adds text length, pedagogical role, genre representation and face validity to selection criteria, while Nuttal (1982:6) looks at the amount of previous knowledge brought to the text, the "complexity of concepts expressed" and vocabulary limitations as factors that can aid or hinder comprehension.

Much has been written about the difficulty level of texts, and about whether the focus should be on content rather on language, or the other way around.

2.6.3 Difficulty level of texts (language versus content)

Brookes (1989:10) found that while learners had difficulty with texts that were relatively easy in terms of structure and vocabulary, they seemed to have much less trouble with a complicated text such as Joseph Conrad's *The Lagoon*. She ascribes this to learners being able to identify with the grand universal themes used by Conrad which made it possible for the learners to successfully handle large amounts of vocabulary and syntax that might otherwise have been impossible for them to deal with. Johnson (1982:514) feels that a very high percentage of difficult vocabulary would be necessary in order to have any significant influence on reading comprehension and that normal text redundancy will enable learners to deal with unfamiliar words without it interfering too much with their comprehension. General background knowledge of the topic and theme of a text allows learners to construct meanings for unknown vocabulary items. Ghosn (2002:174) suggests making use of universal themes such as "fear, courage, hope, love, belonging, and the need to achieve". These findings tie in with what was discussed under schema theory on p.22 of this study.

Coady (1979:12) feels that strong semantic input together with background knowledge can compensate for weakness in syntactic ability and that interesting enough subject matter will overcome any syntactic difficulty that learners may have. Eskey (1988:96) does not agree with this view. He feels that if a learner is not familiar with the language of a text, no amount of background knowledge will enable understanding.

Where narratives are considered too difficult or too long for learners, they are often modified by means of simplification, abridgment or the use of extracts. These methods are commonly applied in L2 readers and textbooks, and this merits closer inspection.

2.6.4 Simplification

Povey (1987:56) bemoans the fact that it is assumed with very little empirical evidence that learners find shorter words and sentences easier to read than longer ones. Many recent studies show that semantically oversimplified text can impede reading comprehension. Devine (1988: 272) says beginning L2 learners should be exposed to

texts which allow "complete, self-contained examples of actual written language". Adeyanju (1978:136), Nuttal (1982:31) and Widdowson (1982:205) all support this argument as does Vincent (1986:211), who argues that reduction, an essential feature of simplification, may have a negative impact:

> The original book is shortened, the number of characters, situations, and events cut, the vocabulary restricted, and the use of structures controlled. More significantly, perhaps, any unusual use of language – colloquialisms, idiom, metaphor, allusion – tends to be ruthlessly expunged, and any ambiguity or uncertainty in the text resolved.

Brooks (1960:101) refers to simplification as an "act that does unwonted violence to the author's intent and lulls the reader into a false sense of security" while Honeyfield (1977:434-435) labels the product of simplification as "homogenized", containing "diluted" information and as making no contribution to developing reading skills.

Abridgment, as type of simplification, does not receive much support either. Marckwardt (1978:57-59) compared *The Invisible Man* by H. G. Wells to an abridgment of it done by Williams (1959). While there are some gains in terms of "ease of reading" and the speed at which the book can be completed, Marckwardt (1978:59) found the result of the abridgment to be a "loss of virtually all concrete, descriptive detail, and a reduction to whatever bare statements are necessary to keep the narrative moving".

2.6.5 Extracts

Cook (1986:150-151) takes issue with selecting extracts from literary works. Since extracts are often chosen from the middle of a literary work, the "excellence" found in the literary work as a whole may not necessarily be found in the extract, since it is given out of context to the preceding and following text "from which it has been artificially isolated for pedagogic purposes". For extract selection, Cook (ibid.:164) provides several guidelines, namely that extracts should not create "false texture" allowing for interpretations which seem true within the extract but are false in the context of the whole; should be introductory and not continuing or conclusive; should have "internally created moods" which do not show "unusual or peripheral facets" of characters; should not be chosen on literary merit and; should not be rich in allusions to information provided in preceding text.

Instead of using any of the above, Hirvela (1990:245) suggests that texts be chosen that are short enough to be viably taught within the given amount of time, and also for learners to read without "undue expenditure of time and effort".

Next to the difficulty level, a factor that carries much weight in the selection of suitable texts is that of culture.

2.6.6 Cultural criteria in text selection

It is widely agreed that L2 students have a better understanding of texts based on their own culture than of texts based on other cultures. This is thought to be true even if culturally different texts may be of equal difficulty linguistically and rhetorically (Burt & Dulay 1978:188; Carrell & Eisterhold 1983; Evans 1992:43; Hudson 1982; Paulston & Bruder 1976:160; Steffensen & Joag-Dev 1984:60). It is the shared cultural assumptions between writer and reader and the knowledge of social systems and ritual which allows a higher level of reader interaction with a text (Steffensen & Colker 1982; Steffensen, Joag-Dev & Anderson 1979). Coady (1979:7) goes so far as to say that learners from a Western background learn English faster than learners who are from other backgrounds.

Researchers such as Kachru (1986) and Marquardt (1967) state that using culture as a measure of text gradation is not only feasible, but also necessary in order to make texts more accessible to ESL students. McKay (1989), however, feels that such gradation would be impossible. As Evans (1992:45) states, it would be impossible for selectors to predict which (if any) cultural barriers to comprehension a specific narrative text might contain. In some cases, however, cultural barriers are very clear. Marckwardt (1978:46) uses the example of marriage, which, while "common to most societies", varies greatly in terms of relationship and ceremony between cultures. He points out specific examples in literature, citing Robert Frost's "something there is that doesn't love a wall" and the problems it could pose in a culture where "unmarked property boundaries" are totally outside the norm. Other practical examples are the use of *The Oxen* by Thomas Hardy in a country where learners might not be familiar with the legend of Christmas or Willa Cather's *The Sculptor's Funeral* with different cultural ways of showing grief and

different tastes in house decorating (ibid.). It is the role of the teacher to be constantly aware of the possibility of "cultural interference" where cultural assumptions between reader and writer are not necessarily shared. Marckwardt (ibid.:47) holds that by addressing possible areas of cultural difference, the teacher can create opportunities for learners to extend their vocabulary "by expressing ideas that are familiar" to them, but also to determine whether learners understand "the values and assumptions that are implicit in the literary selection".

With cultural content as selection criteria, there is always concern that certain phrases might be offensive to members of certain cultures (Carrell & Eisterhold 1983:563-564). Also when selecting texts and deciding about "good" or "bad" literature, it should be kept in mind that because values are subject to change, value judgments are not immutable and texts should be selected with a clear understanding that "different cultures will value different things" (Brumfit & Carter 1986:17).

For ESL learners to gain insight into the culture of their target language, it is important that they are exposed to contemporary fiction where characters are shown in contexts which are accurate reflections of the English-speaking culture as it is today. Ghosn (2002:177) warns that in the selection of, for example, folk tales, caution should be exercised and stories chosen which "mirror the prevailing cultural values and traditions of a people" while stories that "portray outdated customs and beliefs" should be avoided as they could lead to an impression of the target culture being "funny", "weird" or even "dumb".

Povey makes a similar plea for the use of twentieth century American literature, but he does so on the assumptions that the teacher is American and therefore familiar with American culture and that learners have America in mind as the target culture toward which their language learning is steering them (Povey 1979:164). Marquardt (1967:9-10) makes similar assumptions, but expresses his views in a very culture-centric manner, using literature to try and "Americanize" all learners who come into contact with it and even providing learners with a "checklist for American culture".

Scott (1980:8) mentions that taste is "a cultural variable very closely allied to personality, generation, social class, region, and nationality". With regard to taste, Marckwardt (1978:10) says that a good indication of public interest and taste can be found in the availability of translations of certain English books or works by certain authors who write in English.

When the difficulty level and cultural content of a text have been taken into consideration, an important factor to look at is the intention with which a text has been written. What the purpose of a text is can play a major role in the suitability of that text for ESL classes.

2.6.7 Purpose of the text

Nuttal (1982:20) advocates the selection of texts which have not been written for language teaching purposes, but for one of the "authentic purposes" of writing, such as informing or entertaining. This is supported by Widdowson (1982:205-208) and also the findings of Greany (1980:354) which show that even learners who spend their leisure time reading comic books, which is considered "impoverished language" by many, still show a relationship between their level of reading competence and the amount of leisure reading they do.

According to Hafiz and Tudor (1989:11) the "accepted literary merit" of a book is not a guarantee of it being successful with language learners. They have instead incorporated a wide variety of more recent, topical titles into their extensive reading programmes, suggesting that this also applies to selection of other authentic materials for more proficient readers. Apart from the fact that such titles, together with books by popular authors or book versions of popular movies will be more interesting and thus more accessible to most L2 learners than "high literature", such texts are also more likely to be representative of everyday vocabulary and recent idiomatic usage which learners can practically "incorporate into their productive repertoire" (ibid.).

Spack (1985:710) finds it best to select stories which she herself liked to read and teach and supports the choice of stories that had been made into movies as the movies can

provide learners with a visual interpretation of the story and make the story come to life in terms of scenery, costume and sound. Ghosn (2002:174) mentions the importance of "clear, uncomplicated" story-lines and "satisfying, unmelodramatic" conclusions, which would help to make even children's stories accessible for adult readers. Widdowson (1983:32) states that apart from the text having to engage the interest of the reader, the text has to be "in some sense consistent with the traditions that the learners are familiar with". Marckwardt (1978:70) holds that with age and interest in mind the selection should be "primary narrative, where the story interest – what happens – outweighs everything else". In terms of reading enjoyment, Marckwardt (ibid.:71) even suggests that novels be chosen which have been translated into the L1 of the learners and that the main body of the work be read in translation "but that the few really key chapters of a novel or scenes of a play be read in English" and be analyzed in the classroom. Povey (1979:163) suggests selecting various texts concerned with the same topic, or basing selection on prose or poetry dealing with similar attitudes, but adds that it is very important to choose texts dealing with subjects which will be of interest to learners from the outset. There are authors such as Adeyanju (1978:136) who feel that texts need not be "of great aesthetic quality as long as they are genuinely significant culturally".

Based simply on suitability and interest, Marckward (1978:66) suggests starting primary school learners with classics such as *Little Red Riding Hood, Jack and the Beanstalk* or *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. At a later stage, he recommends moving on to children's favourites such as *Charlottes Web*, or *Jonathan Livingstone Seagull*, while for secondary school learners who show a marked lack of interest in "anything that smacks of culture or literature", he suggests the use of biographies or autobiographies to captivate learners by "accounts of individual achievement". The use of folk material is also suggested, but above all, Marckwardt (ibid.) feels that the purpose should be to "stimulate an interest in reading for its own sake" and to show learners that English can be more than "lessons in grammar and drill on vocabulary". With regard to reading enjoyment, Lewis (1977:85) says: "No book is really worth reading at the age of ten which is not equally (and often far more) worth reading at the age of fifty" excepting books of information.

Following these guidelines and taking all the factors into consideration should enable teachers to make informed decisions when selecting narrative texts to use as basis for language learning in EFL/ESL classrooms.

2.7 Teaching language skills through literature

It will become evident in the following pages that when using narrative as input, the teaching of vocabulary and the four main language skills are all interwoven and only to some degree separable. While vocabulary is not a language skill as such, the manner in which the teaching of reading, writing, listening and speaking are interdependent with the teaching of vocabulary justifies discussing them under the same heading.

2.7.1 Vocabulary

This section examines the acquisition of vocabulary without formal instruction, the explicit teaching of vocabulary through narrative texts as well as the practical use of vocabulary in narrative texts.

2.7.1.1 Vocabulary acquisition without instruction

Working with Krashen's (1985; 1989) input hypothesis, many researchers have found that the acquisition of spelling and vocabulary can occur "without learning" (ibid.:442). Spack (1985:721) refers to such acquisition as learners "assimilating" vocabulary. Through informal observation of vocabulary acquisition without instruction among junior high school students, Miller (1941:665-666) found that "extensive reading by pupils having definite information goals ahead is most conducive to vocabulary growth". These findings are confirmed by the work of Nagy and Anderson (1984:327), Nagy, Anderson and Herman (1987:264) and also Elley (1989:180) who found that stories that are read aloud may be a "potential source for ready vocabulary acquisition" and that "repeated exposure and helpful context" were significant contributors to the acquisition of vocabulary. According to Spack (1985:72) exploration of literary texts encourages "extraordinary growth in vocabulary".

Nagy and Anderson (1984:328) conclude from their findings that:

> any program of direct vocabulary instruction ought to be conceived in full recognition that it can cover only a small fraction of the words that children need to know. Trying to expand children's vocabularies by teaching them words one by one, ten by ten, or even hundred by hundred would appear to be an exercise in futility. Vocabulary instruction ought, instead, to teach skills and strategies that would help children become independent word learners.

Johnson (1982:504) believes the pre-teaching of vocabulary to be not only ineffectual but actually detrimental to the improvement of comprehension through enforcing a word-by-word approach to the text. She finds pre-reading activities such as word maps and brain storming which establish relationships between words and ideas much more helpful. Vocabulary knowledge will influence comprehension on word level and sentence level, but it seems that background knowledge has a far greater effect on reading comprehension than vocabulary difficulty does (ibid.:514).

While he does not promote the explicit teaching of vocabulary, Elley's (1989:184) research does show that additional explanations by teachers of unknown words as they occur in the story can more than double vocabulary gains. Even learners with very low level vocabulary show the same amount of gains as the other learners and, based on post-test results, the learning that takes place in such a manner can be seen as permanent (ibid.).

Gajdusek (1988:235) finds pre-reading vocabulary to be necessary, if only to activate certain schemata that learners will need when negotiating the text. She identifies three types of vocabulary items, namely: words of which the meaning is to be derived from the text; words which contain clues vital to the emotional or cultural context of the text, and words which proficient readers "merely categorize" (ibid.). With regard to the final category, Povey (1979:167) suggests that these words be ignored "[a]s far as students will permit". Gajdusek's (1988:237) second category, which involves very specific information, necessitates the teacher acting as "informant rather than facilitator".

When teaching or presenting those vocabulary items which might seriously impede comprehension of a narrative text, several communicative methods are suggested by the literature.

2.7.1.2 Teaching vocabulary through narrative text

Carrell (1988:245-252) suggests several activities for teaching vocabulary items from narrative texts, including discussion of the text, text previewing, discussion of key vocabulary, key-word association games and word maps. He suggests that word maps be used to teach synonyms, antonyms, homophones, superordinates, subordinates and even attributes, definitions and reverses. He does, however, stress that such pre-reading activities should have two aims: building new knowledge, but also tapping into existing background knowledge so as to facilitate the actual reading of the narrative text.

One danger when teaching vocabulary through narrative is the over use of dictionaries. Instead of such over-dependence, learners should be taught skills with which to approach unknown words in texts. After learning which words can be ignored without compromising comprehension, other unknown words can be made more accessible through the study of phonics, structural clues and morphology (affixes) (Nuttal 1982:67-75; Marckwardt 1978:53). These are all skills that need to be honed prior to actual reading, which is why they are discussed under vocabulary building. Learners should, however, know how to skilfully and effectively use their dictionaries. Marckwardt (ibid.) warns against the use of condensed bilingual dictionaries as they might be misleading and instead recommends the use of dictionaries that supply the meaning of English words in English.

When using narrative text as input, certain words are identified as possibly causing difficulty to learners of ESL and might have to be taught more explicitly. Nuttal (1982:76-77) mentions idioms, metaphors and words with more than one possible meaning. “Subtechnical vocabulary” such as “average, approximate, effect, combination” and so forth need to be conceptually clarified. Superordinates where general and specific terms refer to the same thing might cause confusion. An example here is “building” as superordinate to the hyponyms of “house”, “school”, “factory” or

"cinema". Nuttal (ibid.:78) suggests that instead of simply studying synonyms and antonyms, learners should be taught to focus on "distinctions between words" as much as on similarities. Learners should be taught to ask why the author chose a specific word in a certain context rather than any suitable synonym. Lastly, irony is mentioned as a device with which ESL readers might need help.

Bull and Wittrock (1973:292) found that learners who produced their own images when learning noun definitions, showed better long term retention of meaning than those who were given images, who in turn did better than those who had only aural exposure to the words. Vocabulary items in narrative texts carry meaning and hold images by virtue of the context in which they are placed, and are thus more likely to be remembered. This is an aspect of teaching vocabulary through narrative text which merits further discussion here as learners can be helped to realize how the new words they learn can have an immediate effect on their interaction with the narrative and the language.

2.7.1.3 Vocabulary in use

Carrell (1988:243) links knowledge of vocabulary with the knowledge of schemata, word networks and any other words or concepts associated with it. In this regard, Widdowson (1983:32) says that when vocabulary is pre-taught, the reader's forward projection in the text and making of meaning from the text (because of a lack of outside reference) will cause those structures and vocabulary to be used in the process and they will not remain loose standing structures and vocabulary items. Readers are thus immediately relating what they know of the language at systemic level with their ability to use the language as a way to create meaning. Since a constant search for meaning is the aim of a literary text, Widdowson (ibid.) believes that if resources are provided to a reader and the reader is informed that those resources will be required to unlock a literary passage then provided to the reader, requiring him to apply maximum linguistic resources, he is "much more likely to consolidate them in his mind, not only as items of systemic knowledge, but also as having a 'meaning potential' and as a resource for making sense at the procedural level".

It becomes obvious from this discussion that the teaching of vocabulary cannot be separated from the teaching of reading.

2.7.2 Reading

Before discussing what the literature suggests with regard to teaching literature, it is necessary to touch on the different objectives for introducing narrative text in ESL classes, and the different expectations learners might have when setting out to read narrative texts.

2.7.2.1 Objectives of reading narrative texts

Setting clear objectives and ensuring that learners and teachers agree on those objectives will influence the manner in which the reading of a narrative text is approached. Maley (1987:103) refers to how the reading of literature and reading programmes are perceived differently in China from the way they are perceived in the West. Books are considered to be the "embodiment of knowledge, wisdom and truth" by many Chinese people. This leads to ESL reading courses which consist of leading learners through texts on a "word by word, phrase by phrase basis, explaining points of vocabulary, syntax, style and content along the way. Basically texts, including narrative texts, are used in order to examine the language" it contains. ESL teachers who plan to follow a communicative approach with development of communicative competence, reading for enjoyment and increased interest in reading as objectives, will first have to negotiate a common objective with learners. A balance needs to be established between reading for enjoyment and reading for language only.

Greany and Hegarty (1987:13) link reading for enjoyment and stimulation with reading achievement and verbal ability. While narrative can be very effectively applied to that purpose, it is important not to let the focus of reading shift too often to pure language teaching. Adeyanju (1978:136), Marckwardt (1978:69) and McKay (1986:196) also plead against using a novel or poem simply as "basis" for language learning.

Carrell (1988:272) and Devine (1987:75) say for language instruction to have a positive impact on reading performance, the different components of language should not be isolated. For an increase in reading performance, instruction should be integrative or holistic in nature, rather than skills-oriented or discrete-point. Petrosky (1982:20) feels that "in order to help students understand the texts they read and their response, we need to ask them to write about the texts they read". Literature is not used to teach writing, nor writing to teach literature, but in an integrated manner the teaching of the one includes the teaching of the other.

Nuttal (1982:146) suggests certain objectives that a reading programme should have. These apply directly to what the objectives of ESL lessons built around narrative text should be. Learners should be able to: make use of skimming to ensure relevancy and to aid comprehension; make use of non-textual information such as diagrams as supplement to the text and to aid comprehension; read differently according to the purpose of the reading and the type of text; realize that it is not necessary to understand every word in a text; recognize that words are carefully selected by the author to carry specific meanings; make use of discourse markers to decode difficult passages; know that one sentence may have different meanings in different contexts; make use of the rhetorical organization of the text; be able to use inference where required; be aware that interpretation differs based on the expectations of the reader; realize where incomprehension took place and be able to identify the misunderstanding; respond to the text in whatever way is required.

A wider objective of a literature course is to foster the "point of view" approach (Oster 1989:88). Gajdusek (1988:230, 233) states that approaching literature in this manner will aid in learners not only learning how to read in a new way, but also how to write in a new way.

Apart from clarifying the objective of reading lessons, it is necessary for teachers to know how reading ties in with schema theory and how this affects the practical application of reading narrative in the classroom.

2.7.2.2 Reading and schema theory

From the schema-theoretic viewpoint, if schemata are repeatedly accessed, they may be expanded and refined which will result in increased comprehension (Carrell & Eisterhold 1983:567).

Clarke and Silberstein (1977:136) say reading skill depends on "efficient interaction" between knowledge of the world (schemata) and linguistic knowledge. Eskey (1988:97) supports this view and argues that teaching reading isn't simply a matter of providing the applicable background knowledge for decoding, but that language is actually a "major problem" in L2 reading. Also supporting the above, Brumfit and Carter (1986:29) state that below a certain level of cultural and linguistic competence there is no point in trying to get a reader response to literature. It is important to keep in mind that some researchers are very much against learning language through reading (Elley & Mangubhai 1983:56).

Nuttal (1982:17) says that readers make sense of texts through coherence, cohesion, discourse markers as well as skills of interpretation. Carrel (1988:239) and also Eskey and Grabe (1988:227) propose the joint development of top-down and bottom-up skills and strategies when reading literature. Other researchers supporting the interactive use of reading strategies are Rumelhart (1977), Sanford and Garrod (1981) and Van Dijk and Kintsch (1983). Stevens (1982:382) sees a reading teacher not only as a teacher of relevant information, but also as a teacher of reading skills.

In introducing, presenting and teaching narrative texts, much has been written as to the methodology teachers can choose to apply. It has to be kept in mind throughout that much of what is written with regard to the communicative teaching of reading by means of narrative text is also applicable to the teaching of the other language skills.

2.7.2.3 Methodology suggested for teaching reading through narrative texts

When applying the principles of communicative language teaching, reading of literature, or in the case of ESL textbooks, narrative, ought to be considered central as

"the most obvious source of authentic FL language input and of contexts for discussion, interaction, and writing exercises", yet it is often avoided in favour of pair work with the emphasis on grammar, vocabulary and other functional interactions (Aski 2000:495).

Where literature is indeed integrated as part of an ESL course, it is often taught in a very teacher-centred manner with the role of learners mostly limited to translation. Marckwardt (1978:38) advocates instead the use of the Socratic method with as much learner involvement as possible. The aim is for learners to learn "how to be moved" by the narrative they read and this cannot be "taught" through lecture-type lessons or tedious translation activities (ibid.:67-68). The teacher is the facilitator who aids learners in weighing their arguments in terms of validity and weaknesses by constantly referring discussion back to the text (Gajdusek 1988:241). The teacher should enjoy teaching the text and the teacher's enthusiasm should be strong enough to lead learners to an enjoyment of the text (Povey 1979: 164).

For Gajdusek (1988:254) the main aim of teaching literature is to lead learners to discovery. Within the framework of communicative language teaching, learner involvement and learner discovery of significant points make careful planning very important. The teacher acts as facilitator, who introduces a very well-structured sequence of activities, questions and issues, giving guidance as learners draw inference about the narrative text and negotiate the worth of those inferences by constantly referring to the text. Gajdusek (ibid.) says that good planning and systematic procedure will allow work with literary texts to culminate in classes which are truly communicative and which will increase learner involvement and development.

In keeping with communicative language teaching, the teacher should create an atmosphere where learners feel safe to learn, explore and express themselves. Oster (1989:86) argues that literature provides the "ideal vehicle" for teaching the art of "seeing from different perspectives" since "fictional conflicts, complexities, and points of view" are outside of the learner's reality so learners can understand and explore them "at no great personal risk". When asking learners to take another's point of view or to express their opinions on narrative text, the teacher must keep in mind that point of

view is influenced by cultural suppositions and in many cultures, having and expressing a strong opinion is not necessarily acceptable (ibid.:87). Taking a different point of view from the teacher, having open class discussions, debates or freedom to question are things not necessarily "encouraged in all countries or in all educational systems" (Oster 1985:67) and the teacher should be aware of this. In the same manner "self-disclosure" as expected by some response to narrative activities can also been seen as a threat by ESL learners from different cultures (Barnlund 1987:163-164). The teacher should keep in mind that cultural background may have a significant influence on how learners react not only to the course material, but also to the teaching method (Oster 1985:67).

Where the mode of presentation of narrative text is more teacher-centred, the advantages of a whole class presentation are that it enables a teacher to detect problems, to involve learners who are holding back, to draw attention to "clues" in the text and in general to help learners gain comprehension (Nuttal 1982:162).

It is very important that the traditional classroom approach to literature doesn't "kill the joy" (Blishen 1977:378). Much has been said in the literature about the interference of dictionaries with reading literature for joy, as will be discussed in the following section.

2.7.2.4 The use of dictionaries and cloze exercises in reading narrative text

Povey (1979:172) says that lack of impact during the initial reading of a narrative text may force learners to over consult their dictionaries. He stresses the importance of learners being convinced and "encouraged ... to have the confidence to read doggedly through patches of miscomprehension waiting for the eventual support of overall revelation that comes as the sequence of the story provides its own momentum".

Instead of dictionary use, Nuttal (1982:70) suggests extensive reading and teaching learners to infer meaning from context. This skill would greatly aid learners in comprehension as well as lead to an increase in their reading speed. Aski (2000:499) supports this view and believes top down processing should be encouraged at earlier levels so that learners can move away from word level. She suggests that learners can gain independence from their dictionaries through activities that use cognate identifiers, guessing meaning from context and interpreting morphological information from the text.

Some (Eskey & Grabe 1988:235; Nuttal 1982:69; Vincent 1986:209) plead against the use of dictionaries when reading narrative texts, grouping dictionary use together with the use of cloze exercises and saying that both interfere with the reading process. Carter (1986:112-113) advocates the use of the cloze procedure as a type of prediction activity with its focus on separate words and sequences of words rather than on longer stretches of text. He says that for a prediction activity to be both reasonable and supportable, learners have to be aware of not only the story as a whole, but also of the "immediate verbal context" in which separate words occur. In cloze activities, learners may benefit from a list of possible answers to fill the gaps, but then it is better to ask learners to account for their choices (ibid.:113). Cloze as a way to teach reading is also mentioned by Boyle (1986:201) in his article on language testing. While his focus is mainly on testing, his suggestions are equally applicable to teaching.

The teaching of specific reading strategies has also been suggested as a way in which to avoid dependence on dictionaries.

2.7.2.5 Teaching reading strategies

Eskey and Grabe (1988:229) recommend the explicit teaching of reading and pre-reading strategies to aid learners in progressing from a word by word approach to reading to where they can read more meaningful "chunks". Strategies to improve both top-down and bottom-up skills should be used by the teacher to help learners acquire new reading habits for dealing with narrative texts. Such classroom strategies can, however, only be used to raise learner consciousness – any true increase in reading speed and ability can only result from extensive reading over a period of time (ibid.: 233-234).

Content prediction is suggested as a reading strategy. Asking learners to predict what will happen next after bit by bit exposure of a narrative text, providing first and last sentences of paragraphs and asking learners to complete omitted parts, re-ordering scrambled sentences or paragraphs, unscrambling mixed texts or cloze exercises can all be used for text prediction (Carter 1986:111; Eskey & Grabe 1988:249-250; Nuttal 1982:150). Others (Carter 1986:111; Long 1986:47) add titling sections of text,

completing imaginary conversations as a text extension activity, predicting the ending of a story and group discussions to text prediction. Prediction is good for pair or group work and is a good stimulator of oral work and discussion activities. It does need to be carefully planned and is best suited to narrative texts with a well developed plot (Carter 1986:112).

Yorio (1971:108) warns that learners' ability to predict might be impeded by an inadequate knowledge of the language, with which Carrell (1988:250) agrees, suggesting the use of accessible texts for such prediction exercises. Many other studies support the view that syntactic knowledge and level of language achievement enhance L2 reading ability while the lack of it may impede reading (Berman 1984; Cooper 1984; Eskey & Grabe 1988). Littlewood (1986:181) calls it "fruitless" to expect learners who are not linguistically prepared for it to appreciate literary works. Many others share the concern (Brumfit 1986:188; Povey 1987:56).

The result of these studies is the use of narrative texts that are simplified on the syntactical level. Some researchers, notably Blau (1981) and Shook (1977) take issue with the use of syntactically oversimplified text, positing that such simplification can actually hinder beginning level ESL readers in comprehension. Teaching syntactic guesses as a strategy for increased reading speed is recommended instead. Povey (1987:58) believes that it is far harder to uncover "cultural misapprehension" than to uncover syntactic ignorance, which he suggests can be rectified by the use of a dictionary.

Pre-reading activities that are carefully planned can anticipate linguistic as well as cultural problems and can, according to Gajdusek (1988:234) allow even intermediate level learners genuine involvement with literary texts. These activities should under no circumstances "prescribe reactions", but should stimulate interaction in the classroom, promote "word-attack skills" and encourage vocabulary growth (ibid.). This is where cultural difficulties and assumptions should be introduced in the same manner as new vocabulary is introduced prior to the initial reading (Povey 1979:173).

Much has been said on the actual introduction of narrative texts in ESL classrooms. This important phase of text interaction will be discussed next.

2.7.2.6 Introducing and presenting narrative texts

The introduction of a narrative text is important as this will set the tone for the whole exercise. In accordance with the principles of communicative language teaching, introductions should never take the form of a lecture by the teacher. The introduction should not include any information that can be derived from the narrative. Nuttal (1982:154) says that while an introduction could be used to introduce new words, it is more suited to involve learners, relating the text to their own interests and experiences through interest-arousing questions such as “Have you ever ...?” or “What would you do if ...?” questions. Summaries of action or statement of theme do not belong in the introduction (Gajdusek 1988:235).

Povey (1979:172) argues that the way a text is first presented should be planned in such a way as to eliminate possible problems in advance, thereby making possible some measure of impact during the initial reading.

For EFL learners, longer narratives should preferably be broken into shorter parts. Nuttal (1982:156) suggests sections of about 250 words or 20 lines. Understanding each section and how it contributes to the whole aids learners’ comprehension of the completed text. Such breakdown of the text also aids in the development of anticipation skills and prediction skills. Length is, however, a very relative factor, related to the level of L2 proficiency of a specific class as well as to other factors such as their age and their “perseverance in reading” (Hafiz & Tudor 1989:10).

There are several ways in which narrative texts can be presented. Long (1986:47–54) mentions silent reading, choral reading and the use of pre-recorded readings, but also mentions that different parts of the text and different questions should be presented in different modes in order to hold interest. He refers to lecture-style presentation as a “uni-directional” process and suggests that it be replaced by a “multi-directional” presentation mode.

Some writers (Gajdusek 1988:238) suggest learners should begin working with narrative texts at home before in-class presentation, but Povey (1979:173) says learners should not be expected to pre-read at home since this might lead to over dependency on dictionaries and learners might well be discouraged by discovering “the extent of their own incomprehension of the tale”.

Several strategies are suggested for application after learners have completed reading a narrative text.

2.7.2.7 Teaching post-reading strategies

Post-reading strategies are thought useful for integrating new knowledge gained from narrative text with existing schemata. Specific activities suggested are dramatization of key scenes (Gajdusek 1988:252), text discussions, writing activities and review of hypotheses (Carrell 1988:248). Post-reading text-mapping, where learners represent information from the text in any type of visual display to clarify relationships among key concepts (ibid.:248-249) as well as timelines to clarify actions and relationships between events are also recommended (Gajdusek 1988:244).

Carter (1986:113-114) discusses the use of summary as an activity to focus attention on the general meaning of a story. Through limiting the word count and thus forcing learners to select what is significant, good linguistic exercise in “syntactic-restructuring, deletion, and lexical re-shaping” takes place. He suggests that summary be used as a device to enable learners in the process of interpretation and text engagement, seeing summary as an example of the integrated use of language and literature.

The use of debate and discussion of opposite viewpoints, using texts which are relatively open and inexplicit in order to stimulate oral work, is suggested by Carter (1986:115) and Gajdusek (1988:252). Such activities combine syntactical knowledge with textual evidence to support or refute any given argument and are yet more examples of the integrative use of language and literature. The importance of point of view should be brought to learners’ attention, especially in classes aimed at developing writing skills (ibid.:239).

The use of "guided re-writing" as suggested by Carter (1986:115-116) is useful in aiding learners in recognizing the broader patterns of discourse in texts, as well as which styles are appropriate to them. Texts can be re-written with completely different communicative values, such as changing instructions into descriptions, or poetic language into formal lecture style.

Nuttal (1982:164) suggests the following activities take place once reading of a narrative text has been completed:

- eliciting a personal response from the learner (agreement/disagreement; likes/dislikes)
- linking the content of the text with the learners' own experiences
- considering the significance of the text extract to the complete work from which it was taken
- establishing the connection between the text and other works in the same field
- suggesting practical applications for the theories or principles found in the text
- working out the implications of the ideas and facts from the text
- drawing comparisons or contrasts between the text and other texts
- recognizing cause and effect in the text
- being aware of the chronological sequence of the text
- being able to trace the development of thoughts or arguments in the text
- distinguishing fact from opinion
- weighing the evidence, and recognizing possible bias or difference of opinion in the text
- discussing or evaluating characters, incidents, ideas and arguments
- speculating about what had happened before or would happen after the text or speculating with regard to motive, feelings and so on where these are not expressed in the text.

Gajdusek (1988:245) adds to this by suggesting learners analyze the text they have read in order of structure, theme and style. Articulation of a story's theme simultaneously checks comprehension and focuses "on the underlying act of communication between the writer and reader" as learners try to clarify what the writer has expressed in the text.

In the same manner, the exploration of style deepens learners' awareness of the communication act (ibid.:247-248).

In the above discussion, researchers often refer to the use of questions in some form or other. The use of questions is an aspect of teaching reading that should be addressed separately as it can potentially impact on comprehension, among other things.

2.7.2.8 The use of questions

Pre-reading questions for teaching narrative are only suggested as a comprehension aid in so far as they don't lead to "selective attention strategy" whereby learners only read in order to find answers (James 1987:184). All questions, whether pre- or post-reading questions, should be in line with learners' cognitive level.

Long (1986:47) makes several suggestions as to the most beneficial use of questions. He makes use of pre-reading questions, but only to create a receptive mental attitude with learners, stimulating a "willingness to respond" to the narrative text.

Using comprehension questions as a test for the teaching of literary texts is recommended by Boyle (1986:201) while Nuttal (1982:158) advocates the use of "signpost questions", the purpose of which is to guide learners and to direct their focus to areas of importance in the text – not to test them. Particularly useful in silent reading, signpost questions should only be answerable after having read most of the story. They provide a specific purpose for reading and do not simply require answers but "conscious consideration of the meaning of the text" (ibid.).

Gajdusek (1988:238) feels factual in-class work should address who, what, where and when and should include questions on point of view (who the narrative is related by), character (who the narrative is about), the setting (the where and when in which the narrative takes place), and finally action (what it is that happens). The answering of these questions will not only establish certain facts, but will engender an interactive and communicative lesson based on the text (ibid.:239). This agrees with Povey (1979:177) when he suggests that progression should take place moving from factual questions to

interpretative questions but that the "final concern" of the teacher at all times should be "to elicit the student response to the entire presentation".

One way in which a response can be elicited from learners is through composition, which, as mentioned before, is very closely linked to literature.

2.7.2.9 Reading and composition

Petrosky (1982:19) believes that text comprehension (of literary as well as non-literary texts) is more an "act of composition – for understanding is composing – than of information retrieval, and that the best possible representation of our understandings of texts begins with certain kinds of compositions, not multiple-choice tests". He further says that reading, responding and composing are all parts of comprehension and attempting to account for them "outside of their interactions with each other" might lead to the building of "reductive models of human understanding". Scott (1980:5) is also in favour of teaching literature and composition together, but says care should be taken not to steer learners towards becoming better literary critics instead of better writers. He suggests that this can be avoided only through a "deliberate integration of the two areas of study" (ibid.).

2.7.3 Writing

It becomes clear that there is a very close link between the teaching of literature and the teaching of writing. Spack (1985:709) goes so far as to call the separation of the two activities "artificial" while Moran (1981:29) refers to the teaching of literature in writing classes as a "reintegration" or "recombination" of elements that should never have been separated.

2.7.3.1 Composition and reading

From the point of view of schema theory, reading stories helps make learners aware that when writing, they should take the point of view of their readers into consideration.

Spack (1985:706) says:

> An active exploration of this writer/reader interaction can lead students to realize and internalize the idea that what they write becomes another person's reading and must therefore anticipate a reader's need and meet a reader's expectations.

The resulting anticipation of a reading audience's needs and expectations and the influence thereof on a learner's writing, motivates the teaching of literature side by side with composition. This is in line with literature courses taught by Moran (1981:21) where he treated both the authors that were read and the learners he was teaching as writers.

A study by Elley and Mangubhai (1983) found that learners showed an improvement in both written and spoken English after being exposed to comprehensible input in the form of extensive reading of literature. Hafiz and Tudor (1989:8) ascribe this improvement to two possible reasons: either the exposure to features of the language found in the input armed learners with new resources which they then expressed actively in their writing, or else learners may have derived such pleasure from extensive reading that they underwent an attitude change toward the L2 which in turn brought about a willingness to become involved with and experiment with their writing. Research shows that extensive reading for interest and enjoyment in which the focus is on the message of the text, combined with the engagement and reading of complex texts, contribute to an increase in writing ability and an ability to manipulate syntactic structures (Krashen 1984; Lao & Krashen 2000:261; Salvatori 1983:659).

In more academically oriented ESL courses, the "culminating activity" for work with literary texts is often a writing-based task (Gajdusek 1988:253). Writing as language skill can benefit greatly from the use of story as input.

2.7.3.2 Story as topic for writing

Writing based on narrative text provides good subject matter which learners relate to. Scott (1980:7) found that learners wrote better when they were "writing about a real subject they had struggled to understand" than when they were "cooking up an essay" on a topic which is not related to their subject and into which they have very little insight.

McKay (1986) suggests that story as topic will stimulate creativity in learners. Harris and Mahon (1997:25) say:

> It is a natural part of enjoying stories that we enter into the imaginative world of the story; we take sides; we share vicariously the pleasures and pains of the participants; we empathize with their circumstances and predicament; we are impelled onwards to discover the outcome of events. All this is a natural, even inevitable, part of the experience of being immersed in stories. It follows, then, that there is a range of writing activities that can arise naturally from the experience of the story itself.

Some writing activities that could be done based on narrative input are creating posters, recommending the book to friends, developing board games based on texts and drawing up comparison charts comparing characters in terms of appearances, attitudes and preferences (Harris & Mahon 1997:25).

For composition topics, Boyle (1986:203) suggests free response to audio, film or written text. Preston (1982:489) suggests the writing of poetry as a "direct and active" manner in which ESL learners can experience literature rather than just analyze or critique it.

Several forms of writing, apart from pure composition, can be derived from using narrative as input. Free writing and literary journals are two of the writing types that will be discussed here in more detail.

2.7.3.3 Free writing based on narrative input

While Spack (1985:711) does prepare learners for difficult vocabulary or for specific details which might severely impede text comprehension, she doesn't teach much about a specific text before learners read it. Instead she suggests asking learners to write freely about an idea or an event from the story they are about to read without making any reference to the text, which allows learners to write from their own experiences.

In accordance with a communicative literature course taught by Moran (1981:21-24), Spack suggests free writing in class with no attention to the technicalities of writing in order to give priority to the development of learners' ideas. An example of this

technique provided by Moran (ibid.:24) is asking learners to describe a childhood incident through the mind of an adult as an exercise in point of view before reading Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthous*e. Spack (1985:711-712) provides further examples, such as having learners write about daydreaming prior to reading *The Secret life of Walter Mitty* by James Thurber or about learning lessons out of school prior to reading *Zen and the Art of Burglary* from *The Sayings of Goso Hoyen* by Wu-tsu Fa-yen. Learners are then asked to discuss their writings prior to reading the text. According to Carrell and Eisterhold (1983:557) this technique can, in accordance with schema theory, contribute to the development of reading ability, since "efficient comprehension requires the ability to relate the textual material to one's own knowledge".

A more structured written response to narrative would be to teach or review a specific grammar point and create a writing exercise where learners would apply that structure. Gajdusek (1988:253) gives the example of reviewing contrary-to-fact conditional tenses and then asking learners to write in response to a statement like "How would ... *story's name*... have been different if ... *character* ... had not been ... *definitive characteristic* ...?". She argues that learners need to access the relevant grammar form in order to address a very relevant question with regard to the text and their understanding of it (ibid.).

2.7.3.4 Literary journals

The keeping of literary journals in which learners write plot summaries or character analyses, discuss ideas from stories, the reaction of certain settings on characters or explain what they understand the implications of a story's end to be is also suggested by Spack (1985:718) as a useful technique for responding to narrative text. In the same manner as the writing-before-reading exercises, these journals enable learners to "risk expressing their ideas" without worrying about grades and also to trust their instincts about their understanding of the text (ibid.).

For intermediate level classes such literary analysis provides a good context in which to practise and present grammar at sentence level (Gajdusek 1988:253). While lower level learners may not be able to "explore subtleties of structure or figurative language"

journaling can guide them to a clear understanding of "characters, situation, and issues" in the narrative text and can provide a context in which sentence-level grammar can be taught to the "maximum sense of its communicative function" (ibid.).

A way in which to elicit response to literary texts which is not a form of writing as such, but which can lead to writing, is Bleich's response heuristic.

2.7.3.5 Bleich's response heuristic

Bleich's (1980) response heuristic allows readers to read without having to memorize, to express their thoughts about what they had read and then to substantiate their opinions and interpretations with evidence from the text as well as from their own experiences.

All types of writing activity, including composition, can be taught from narrative input. There are several ways in which such writing can be responded to and when dealing with response to particular writing products or deciding who the reading audience of particular writing products will be, the teacher needs to take certain things into consideration.

2.7.3.6 Response to written work that is based on narrative input

One of the reasons literature is used as language teaching tool is for its power to elicit emotive reaction from learners. As some writing assignments based on narrative might therefore be of a personal nature, they could be presented as "private writing" not to be shared in class, perhaps not even to be collected by the teacher (Spack 1985:715). If not, Spack (ibid.:717) suggests collecting free writing, responding to it and returning it to learners, reading some samples to the class in order to generate further discussion and to help learners become aware of different interpretations of the story on which the writing is based. Petrosky (1982:20) believes that written responses should be shared, read and commented on by other learners if learners are to gain insight into themselves as readers and as writers and, of equal importance, if they are to gain insight into the deeper aspects of literary texts that they read.

Attention will now be given to the practical application of narrative text in the development of the speaking and listening skills of ESL learners. As is the case with writing, much of the methodology discussed for reading narrative text in the ESL classroom can also be applied to speaking and listening exercises based on narrative input. Even if the specific methodology is not referred to again under speaking and listening, it certainly applies.

2.7.4 Speaking

Boyle (1986:206) uses conversation and discussion generated by literary texts to develop oral skills. Asking learners to read sections of narrative aloud while imbibing the text with suitable emotion and feeling, is another suggestion he makes for teaching speaking as a language skill (ibid.:203).

2.7.5 Listening

Most of the suggestions made for teaching written narrative pertain to the presentation, introduction and teaching of audio texts. Audio recordings of text, listening to story and eliciting global response by retellings, choosing titles and so forth are further suggested by Boyle (1986:206).

Along with vocabulary building and developing the four main language skills, attaining communicative competence is one of the main goals of communicative ESL classes.

2.8 Teaching communicative competence through literature

In addition to the four main categories of communicative competence as discussed in Chapter 1, Kim and Hall (2002:332) also mention the importance of pragmatic competence, and how an interactive book reading programme can contribute to its development. Apart from this article, a thorough search for reliable sources on the use of literature in the development of the four main aspects of communicative competence, and how to practically attain such development in ESL classes, yielded nothing. This is

in sharp contrast to the interactions I expected to find, as narrative lends itself to research on its contribution to advancing communicative competence.

In the ESL arena, teachers are usually dependent on existing course materials, mostly in the form of mainstream ESL course books such as *New Headway*, to teach both language skills and communicative competence. Here follows a brief look at current views in the research with regard to ESL course books.

2.9 ESL course books

Franchises such as AEON and EF English First use custom-written textbooks developed for their specific demographic and which are not commercially available. Smaller language schools normally make use of commercial ESL courses which are widely available and of which there is a great variety. Most small schools choose textbooks based on the recommendation of their native speaking teachers.

Some of the most reputable publishers of ESL course books are MacMillan, Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press. Well-known courses include *Interchange*, *Cutting Edge*, *FCE* and *New Headway*. There are courses available that focus on any of the different aspects of ESL, some specializing in English for Young Learners, Conversation English, Business English, and English for Specific Purposes (including English for Academic Purposes).

Not one of these pedagogically sound, well-researched courses, including *New Headway* as "representative course" contains a literature component based on one extensive text. Before the advent of communicative language teaching and its focus on authentic materials, authors of ESL course books tended to "create" texts (written or spoken) to serve as input.

Nuttal (1982:19-20) mentions certain characteristics of this type of artificial text. Most of her comments reflect negatively on ESL course books and the texts they contain. Notably all these negative aspects can be avoided by using shorter narrative texts as input, as this study hypothesizes current ESL course books do not do.

The texts Nuttal (1982:19-20) criticizes tend to be over-explicit, providing too much detail with no room for inference and thus depriving learners of the opportunity to practise the skill of inference. Also these artificially created texts are often so intent on the inclusion of certain aspects of the language in the input provided that the need to include a message is lost. Nuttal (ibid.:20) refers to this as the writer "playing with words rather than trying to convey messages".

Widdowson (1982:205-212) launches a scathing attack on text book writers who tend to "create" their own form of literature. According to him, textbook "literature" does resemble literature in that texts do dissociate language from social context, hold relevance only within their own context, use simple language and deal with every day events. However, unlike true literature, these texts are not "intended to provoke natural language reactions; they force the learner into compliant participation and they are not meant to engage the learner at the level of language use. The discourse potential is suppressed". Learners are not expected to interpret these texts and very little is expected of learners in terms of text engagement. While the resemblance to literature should open up possibilities for creativity, the "pedagogic presentation" does not exploit "the human capacity for making sense, for negotiating meaning, for finding expression for new experience in metaphor, for refashioning reality in the image of new ideas and new ideals" (ibid.:211-212).

Widdowson (1983:32) argues that readers are aware that passages from text books pose no problem, and are simply for practising language items. They are not interested in reading further since the world which the passage creates holds no interest as it is overly familiar in most cases. He agrees with proponents of schema theory that it is important to provide an element of familiarity but argues that textbook writers erroneously "pre-suppose that things that are commonplace are the only things that people are familiar with" (ibid.:32).

Clarke (1988:114-115) found that while intermediate and advanced textbooks do contain a wide variety of good reading texts, the exercises tend to focus on vocabulary and grammar, which fits in with Eskey's view (1988:115) that intermediate and advanced ESL teaching over-emphasizes teaching language through reading, instead of

teaching reading for its own sake. Should this be the case, the benefits that could potentially be gained from using narrative as text input, will be lost.

Cunningsworth (1995:15-17) provides four guidelines according to which teachers and material selectors can evaluate course books. These are that course books should:

- correspond to the needs of learners while matching the aims and objectives of the specific language learning course
- equip learners to use language effectively for their specific purposes
- facilitate the process of learning without dogmatical imposition of rigid methods
- support learning and mediate between learners and the target language.

A closer look will now be taken at two ESL language courses, the John Povey Centre's original *Connect* series as an example of a course structured around an ongoing narrative core in the African context and the *New Headway* series as an example of a mainstream ESL course most probably not explicitly aimed at exploiting narrative.

2.9.1 The John Povey Centre's original *Connect* series

At the University of South Africa (Unisa), ESL training is done at the Povey Centre. The aim of the ESL course designed by lecturers at the Povey centre is to arm learners from varied African backgrounds with the tools necessary to function in academic English, using course materials built around a central narrative core (Benyon & Southey 2005; Southey & Govender 2004).

The course consists of five levels, namely: Elementary, Pre-intermediate, Intermediate, Upper Intermediate and Advanced, each with a Student's Book, a Workbook and a Teacher's Guide.

The course differs significantly from other ESL courses in two respects. Firstly, it is contextualized in Africa, designed for learners in Africa, providing materials which will meet the specific needs of African learners and accommodate the view they have of the world. Other commercially available ESL courses, such as *New Headway*, *Inside Out* and *FCE* are mostly Eurocentric and pose barriers in terms of background knowledge and text selection.

The most important difference between the *Connect* course and other ESL courses is the fact that the course is based on an intra-African narrative core. Each unit begins with the next episode in an ongoing narrative that continues through all five levels involving characters from several African as well as international countries, enabling learners from different African backgrounds to identify with characters and become involved with the plot (Benyon & Southey 2005; Southey & Govender 2004).

The authors of the *Connect* series believe that the story and the activities that are linked to it enable learners to become powerfully engaged with many principles of communicative language teaching. Specific benefits they envision are: for learners to become involved in the "cliff-hangers" in the narrative plot; for discussion to follow naturally from the story reading since issues are reflected in the plot in a natural manner; for vocabulary to be repeated and recycled creatively through the plot and through parallel reading; and for grammar structures to be worked into the plot line, for example choices by characters leading to a natural occurrence of the conditional tenses (Southey & Govender 2004).

2.9.2 The *New Headway* series

Surprisingly little is available about a series that is so prevalent in ESL. The authors have written quite extensively with the aim of promoting the series, but very little research has been directed at *New Headway* or at users of *New Headway*.

Jim Ranalli (2002) made a detailed evaluation of *New Headway Upper Intermediate* as an assignment toward his MA in TESOL at the University of Birmingham. Ranalli has 15 years of experience as an ELT instructor, teacher trainer and programme coordinator and is currently a PhD student in the Applied Linguistics and Technology Programme at Iowa State University (Ranalli 2007). In certain respects, such as aims, objectives, methodology and basic curriculum design, there are bound to be similarities between the Upper Intermediate Level and the three levels analysed for this study, which makes Ranalli's analysis relevant and worthy of inclusion here.

Considering the aims and objectives as set out by the authors, Ranalli (2002:4) finds that *New Headway Upper Intermediate* leans strongly on a combination of traditional approaches and the communicative approach. Based on the layout of the table of contents, which places the topic for each unit first, Ranalli (ibid.:5) infers that meaning is put in the foreground, followed by form, which is made prominent by the placement of grammar points in the second column of the content pages. There seems to be an adequate number of listening and reading texts. Listening texts, which often include false starts and interruptions, seem to be "truly authentic" in many cases (ibid.:10). These aspects touched on by Ranalli do create room for the possibility that the authors of *New Headway* may make use of narrative text as input, which is contrary to current expectations.

2.9.2.1 The dominance of *New Headway* in the field of ESL

Not only in South Africa, but all over the world people want and need to learn English. Strevens (1974:3-4) argues that learning English can no longer be seen only as part of an education in humanities, but as a "communication skill needed by some of the newly independent countries in order to further their futures and to have a window on world culture, a window on science, a window on the transnational industries of the arts, entertainment, science and so on".

English teachers, but also owners of language schools, curriculum developers and compilers of textbooks play a role in the global quest for learning English.

In the Far East there are international franchises providing EFL classes. Large companies such as AEON and Westgate Corporation provide native speaking North American and Canadian teachers to centres in most cities in Japan. EF English First is a large franchise specializing in developing countries with branches in more than 40 countries and companies such as International House and Berlitz are common names in the ESL community. In the Middle-East and North Africa, AmidEast, an American-based non profit organization with offices in more than 12 countries is a major provider of English language training while there are also British Council operations in most North African countries.

CELTA, the Certificate in English Language Teaching is considered the best known qualification in TESOL/TEFL. It is most widely asked for by employers (Sperling 2008) and is thus the most widely taken qualification in the field. CELTA is awarded by Cambridge ESOL, the English Language Teaching and Exams centre of the University of Cambridge. This certificate is completed by more than 10 000 prospective teachers every year and is accredited by the British Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (University of Cambridge n.d.). As part of the CELTA curriculum, prospective ESL teachers are familiarized with *New Headway* as example of a mainstream ESL course. The subscription of such a reputable organization contributes greatly to the dominance of *New Headway* in the ESL field and to the credibility of *New Headway* as a well-researched course book. Viewing *New Headway* from such a perspective makes the probable absence of narrative text seem all the more patent.

2.10 Conclusion

The available literature provides very convincing motivation for the inclusion of literature in language teaching, and for the inclusion of literature in the form of narrative or story in ESL text books. It set standards for the quality of ESL course books, for the deliberate presence of narrative in such course books and for the manner in which the narrative is exploited in order to most effectively teach vocabulary, the four main language skills and the main components of communicative competence in an integrated manner.

None of the studies deals explicitly with the application of narrative text in existing ESL course books, a void which this study can hopefully address.

In the following chapters, the content of *New Headway* course books will be analysed in order to determine whether it, as the most representative of ESL course books, adheres to the standards set in the literature. Also to be determined is whether the texts included in *New Headway* meet the suggestions made in the literature on text selection and whether the manner in which *New Headway* teaches those texts reflects current views on the best practice for teaching the four language skills and the main components of communicative competence.

CHAPTER 3
METHOD

3.1 Introduction

The main hypothesis of this study is that, in spite of the research that has gone into *New Headway* course books and the predominance of *New Headway* in the ESL arena, it can be expected that the use of narrative text as prescribed by the current literature will mostly be excluded from *New Headway.*

A secondary hypothesis, based on the assumption that narrative is easier to understand than expository prose, is that narrative will be more prevalent in beginning level course books, and then gradually be phased out as learners progress to higher levels.

The main aim of this study is to ascertain to which extent narrative text is used in the *New Headway* series and further to see whether the narrative text in *New Headway* is applied according to what is suggested in the literature in terms of teaching vocabulary, the four main language skills and the main aspects of communicative competence.

In this chapter, the research design that was chosen to achieve these aims will be discussed after which the methodology will be explained.

3.2 Research design

This study is a case study of three levels of the *New Headway* ESL course.

There is a wide range of definitions for the case study, many of which involve social phenomena (Nunan 1992:76; Yin 1984:23) and multiple data sources (Merriam 1988:16). These are not applicable here as the aspect of case study which applies to this dissertation is the selection of a single instance from a larger class of phenomena and objects and that instance then being investigated to see how it functions in context.

According to Richards and Schmidt (2002:65):

> [t]he case study method provides an opportunity to collect detailed information that may not be observable using other research techniques ... and may or may not be based on the assumption that the information gathered on a particular individual, group, community, etc., will also be true of the other individuals, groups or communities.

Case study as a research design is often criticized for being biased, for providing little basis for generalization and for resulting in unwieldy, hard to read documents. Yin (1984:21) takes issue with these criticisms by stating that the mentioned shortfalls may be found in any badly planned research design, including experimental research and historical surveys. With regard to generalization, Yin (ibid.) posits that case study, as any other form of research, makes use of analytic generalization and not statistical generalization.

Case studies are often criticized for being pre-experimental ground clearance for further, serious research, but Nunan (1992:74) argues that this is not the case. Insofar as the perception that case study is but a limited form of ethnography, Nunan (ibid.:75) defends case study as research design, saying that while case study does seem similar to ethnography with regard to philosophy, method and focus on the study of an instance in context, it is usual for case study to be of more limited scope, with a focus not necessarily on cultural context and interpretations and that case study can also apply both qualitative and quantitative data and statistical methods.

Different kinds of case study exist, such as the explanatory case study and the descriptive case study (Nunan 1992:78). The current study is an evaluative case study, carried out to evaluate both contents and practice of *New Headway* according to guidelines found in the current research.

Some, for example McDonough and McDonough (1997:203), are in favour of case study, but do not believe it to be a research method in itself “nor the equivalent of one” but simply a combination of methods and techniques applied in investigating an interesting object.

To gather specific data with regard to scientific examination of the hypotheses made in this study, a content analysis was employed, which is in line with what McDonough and McDonough (1997:208) suggest might happen with case study data.

According to Richards and Schmidt (2002:114) content analysis in research is "a method used for analyzing and tabulating the frequency of occurrence of topics, ideas, opinions and other aspects of the content of written and spoken communication".

Hofstee (2006:124) says the end goal of a content analysis is to discover meaning that is not obvious in the record being analyzed. The method can be either qualitative or quantitative or a combination of the two, as is the case in this dissertation. At first a quantitative approach is taken to determine the data, but the analysis of the data is then qualitative in nature.

In this dissertation, case study is applied as a framework for a content analysis and the two cannot be separated – a content analysis is done as a case study of *New Headway*.

3.3 Methodology

Several issues are discussed in this section. A discussion of ways to determine suitable course books for ESL classes is followed by a detailed description of the *New Headway* series. The research instrument is then presented and discussed, followed by procedures used for the content analysis. Focus is placed on the guidelines used for the inclusion of text in the count, on the guidelines used for the counting itself and on the guidelines used for the allocation of time.

3.3.1 Determining a suitable course book to use as subject

In the ESL field, there are several well-established course books, such as *Interchange*, *Cutting Edge*, *FCE* and *New Headway*. Based on thorough research and sound didactical principles applied in all of these course books, they tend to follow the same pattern with regard to content and procedure. For the purposes of this study, one such course book had to be identified as the most dominant.

A strong case for the dominance of *New Headway* is made in the review of the literature. *New Headway*, previously known as *Headway*, has been in use in the ESL arena for more than 20 years (Soars & Soars 1987) and has been regularly updated in terms of content as well as methodology over the years. It is used in CELTA training and by language schools and language departments of universities all over the world (Oxford University Press 2008; Ranalli 2006). *New Headway* was used at every language school I have ever taught at.

Sales figures provided as personal correspondence by the Marketing Manager of Oxford University Press Cape Town, also show *New Headway* to stand out as being the most widely used, best recognized ESL course available on the South African ESL market, and therefore the most suitable choice for this study.

While the sales figures provided by Oxford University Press show the three entry levels to be the top selling levels of *New Headway* in South Africa, using only the lower levels would not provide a thorough overview of *New Headway* as a series. In order to be inclusive, the Elementary Level, Intermediate Level and Advanced Level were chosen for this study.

3.3.2 Description of the *New Headway* series

New Headway is available in five levels, namely: Elementary, Pre-intermediate, Intermediate, Upper-intermediate and Advanced, although this study includes only the Elementary Level, Intermediate Level and Advanced Level.

The Elementary Level has fourteen units, while the Intermediate and Advanced Levels each have twelve units. Each level consists of a Student's Book, a Teacher's Book, a Teacher's Resource Book, a Workbook (with key), a set of class CDs and a set of Workbook CDs.

3.3.2.1 The Student's Book

There are small differences between the levels, but basically the books follow the same layout. The following description pertains to the *Elementary Level Student's Book*.

The content pages of the Student's Book provide a chapter by chapter breakdown of the contents (see Appendix A). The name of the chapter (usually encompassing the theme) is given, followed by two broad categories, namely "Language input" and "Skills development". Under "Language input", "Grammar", "Vocabulary" and "Everyday English" are headings under which key items from the unit are listed. Under "Skills development", a breakdown is given of "Reading", "Speaking", "Listening" and "Writing" and the exercises and page numbers which pertain to those skills are provided.

After Unit 14, there are six additional sections. Firstly, there is a section with writing activities for each unit (excepting Unit 1 and 2 in the Elementary Level). These follow the same theme as the unit and mostly allow learners to consolidate language from the unit in extensive written assignments. The next section provides the written text for all the audio tape scripts from the Class CD. Then follows a complete grammar reference, organized by unit and providing additional exercises for each grammar point. This is followed by pair work activities from different units, printed so that student A and student B can turn to different pages in the book. After the pair work, a word list is provided with new words from each unit as well as pronunciation in phonetic symbols. The last two pages consist of three tables; one with irregular verbs, one with verb patterns and the last with phonetic symbols.

3.3.2.2 The Teacher's Book

The Teacher's Book enables teachers to plan the presentation of the units in the Student's Book. The table of contents provides a very brief overview of the main language points and topics per unit. After the table of contents there is an introduction written by the authors, explaining briefly what the Teacher's Book contains and which materials should be used in addition to the Teacher's Book (for example the Student's Book).

At the back of the book there are three main additional sections. Firstly, Photocopiable material, which is presented for Units 1-4 followed by Extra ideas and Revision for those four units. The same then follows for Units 5-8, 9-12 and 13-14. Then there are four Stop and Check sections, one for each of the unit groupings mentioned before. After Stop and Check, there are three progress tests: one for Units 1–5, one for Units 6-10, and one for Units 11-14. Lastly an answer key to exercises from the Extra ideas and Revision sections, the Stop and Check section and the progress tests is provided. Answers to exercises from the Student's Book are provided in the units of the Teacher's Book at the appropriate places, so the teacher has easy access to those answers. Answers to the grammar reference exercises are provided at the end of the answer key in the back of the Teacher's Book.

3.3.2.3 The Student's Workbook

The Student's Workbook provides additional exercises for learners to do in order to practise and consolidate language from the Student's Book. The Workbook starts with a detailed table of contents for each unit, including the main grammar points, language points and vocabulary of each unit.

At the back of the book, there are four additional sections. The first is a revision section with exercises on all the tenses and verb forms in the book, not organized by unit, but by grammar point. Next are transcripts of all the audio tapescripts from the Workbook CD. The third section is the key with answers to all the exercises in the Workbook. On the inside of the back cover there are tables with verb patterns and irregular verb forms.

3.3.2.4 The Teacher's Resource Book

The Teacher's Resource Book starts with an introduction which states that the book has been written with two aims in mind: to provide teachers with additional material to revise and extend the work from the Student's Book, and to provide as much speaking practice for learners as possible (Krantz, Castle, Soars & Soars 2006).

The table of contents provides a unit by unit breakdown of the photocopiable worksheets, a short description of each worksheet, as well as the language covered in each.

3.3.2.5 Class and Work Book CDs

The course provides both a Class CD and a Workbook CD, each to go along with the respective book. The audio CDs contain all the tapescripts for listening exercises, pronunciation and audio input from the books. The tapescripts cover various accents with a balance between British and American English.

A flyleaf provides a unit by unit index of the tapescripts and the corresponding track numbers.

3.3.3 Research instrument

The practical aspect of the study consists of an analysis of the input in the *New Headway* course books. A word-count will be made of all input and presented as the number of individual words. A separate word-count will then be made of all general listening and reading texts that were included with the intention of providing input as a basis for language learning activities. All narrative input will then be counted as individual words and presented as a percentage of the amount of general text input. The narrative input will then be further analyzed to see how much time is likely to be spent on exercises derived from the narrative aimed at teaching each of the four main language skills. This time will be presented as a percentage of the total lesson time. Exercises derived from narrative aimed at improving aspects of communicative competence will also be presented as a percentage of the total lesson time.

An instrument will be applied according to which the contents of each unit of the course books on the three chosen levels will be analyzed. The following figures will be obtained for each unit:

3.3.3.1 Input

- The total number of words, including extended texts, instructions, explanations and exercises.
- The total number of words contained in the texts themselves, referred to as general text input.
- The total number of words contained in narrative texts, measured as percentage of general text input.
- The total number of new vocabulary items.
- The total number of new vocabulary items that are derived from narrative texts.

3.3.3.2 Language skills

- The estimated amount of time spent on activities derived from narrative texts. This is then allocated according to the four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading or writing and presented as a percentage of the total time spent on each unit.

3.3.3.3 Communicative competence

- The estimated amount of time spent on activities derived from narrative texts, allocated according to the four communicative competencies: grammatical, discourse, strategic or sociolinguistic and presented as a percentage of the total time spent on each unit.

It is necessary to clarify which parts of the text I considered as input to be counted, how I went about counting that input, and how I decided on the amount of time to allocate to which skills during the further breakdown of the narrative input.

3.3.4 Procedure

I first counted the Elementary Level books, then the Intermediate Level books and finally the Advanced Level books. Counting for each level started at the first unit and ended with the last.

When starting with a new unit, I first drew up a counting framework for that unit. This framework consists of all the pages in the unit, and for each page, all the exercises numbered on that page. (An example of a completed counting framework is included in Appendix B).

I then proceeded to count all the words of each exercise, following the guidelines as set out in 3.3.6. In longer texts, in order to ensure accuracy, I counted in sections, starting with the number of words in the heading and subheadings and then counting the body of the text according to paragraphs. All sections were counted twice for accuracy. In the body of each text I counted up to one hundred words, made a mark of that count and then counted the same selection of words again, working backward from the mark to confirm the count. At the end of the text, I added the number of 100-word marks to find the correct number of words per text which I then noted on the unit framework next to the number of the specific exercise.

At the end of a unit, I added the number of words from every exercise to find a total number of words for that unit. This addition was always done once from the bottom of the column and again from the top to ensure accuracy.

While counting, I marked the input which qualified as general text input and also input which qualified as narrative according to the guidelines set out in 3.3.5. After determining the total number of words, I counted the number of words of general text and the number of words of narrative text for the unit. General text was then calculated as a percentage of the total number of words in the unit, while narrative text was calculated as a percentage of general text.

I then counted the number of vocabulary items per unit, and indicated how many of those are from narrative texts, also indicating the vocabulary from narrative as a percentage of the total number of vocabulary items for that unit.

For units that have no narrative text, I proceeded directly to counting additional narrative text from the Teacher’s Book, Teacher’s Resource Book and Student

Workbook for that unit. Where a unit does have narrative text, I first attended to the breakdown of narrative text.

For each unit, I drew up an empty framework with the page numbers and the numbers of exercises derived from each piece of narrative. On the framework I allowed space horizontally for the four learning skills and the four categories of communicative competence.

Following the detailed instructions from the Teacher's Book, I then worked out a mini lesson plan to teach each piece of narrative with all the exercises derived from it. While following this plan, I assigned time to each exercise, allocating the time to whichever of the skills or competencies are explicitly involved. For this allocation of time, I followed the guidelines as per 3.3.7.

At the end of each unit, I added the number of minutes spent on reading, writing, speaking and listening in each unit. This number was then calculated as a percentage of the total unit time, which is 180 minutes. Where learners have conversations, time is added to both listening and speaking. Should an exercise take five minutes, during which time one learner is constantly speaking and the other listening, five minutes are added to speaking and five minutes are added to listening. Since the two activities take place simultaneously, this does not translate to ten minutes of lesson time. At the end of a unit, all the minutes for each skill and competence type were added twice for accuracy and then carried over to a data spreadsheet.

Data from these frameworks are represented on a final spreadsheet containing the following columns: unit number, unit time (the 180 minutes allocated to each unit), total number of words input per unit, total number of words general text input per unit, total number of words of narrative per unit, narrative as percentage of the total number of words of general text input, total number of vocabulary items per unit, total number of vocabulary items per unit derived from narrative input and vocabulary from narrative as percentage of total vocabulary. For each of the four learning skills and for each of the four main categories of communicative competence, there are two columns on the spreadsheet. The first column shows the number of minutes spent on each skill or competence in exercises derived from narrative input, and the second column represents the percentage which that time is of the total lesson time of 180 minutes.

3.3.5 Guidelines for inclusion

During the content analysis, certain texts were included and others not. This section discusses that selection based on what text can be considered input, what the criterial attributes of narrative and narrative biographies are and what the role of narrative structure in "literature" is.

3.3.5.1 Input

Input, in language learning, is defined by Richards and Schmidt (2002:261) as "language which a learner hears or receives and from which he or she can learn". Input can therefore be taken to mean *any* language to which a learner is exposed. Brown (2002:295) includes teacher talk, textbook language, other materials, other students, nonverbal factors and self as sources of input in language learning. Based on this view of input, all the language in the *New Headway* course books, including instructions and language exercises was duly counted as such.

However, for the purposes of contrast and comparison, a separate count was made, confining input to texts that were selected by the authors with the intention of providing input and which are used as the basis for language learning activities. In this manner a clear comparison can be made between narrative texts and non-narrative texts. Comparing words of narrative with total words of input unrealistically diminishes the presence of narrative.

With the textual input counted, guidelines had to be put in place to ascertain which input would be considered narrative input.

3.3.5.2 Criterial attributes of narrative

When deciding what input to count as narrative, I based the selection mainly on whether texts conform to "story grammar" as defined by Richards and Schmidt (2002:515) in Chapter 1. These are texts that pivot around a central character and the tension created by a problem, a pivotal moment of crisis and finally a resolution of the problem (Randell 1999:3). Narrative texts tell a story according to a certain scheme. The intention of such texts is the telling of the story, not describing or informing.

3.3.5.3 Criterial attributes of narrative biography

Biography is mainly counted as narrative, since it narrates the story of a life. For the purposes of this study, three main types of biography were identified. The first of these is classical biography. Examples can be found in the *Elementary Level Student's Book* on p. 57 where the biographies of Amelia Earhart and Yuri Gagarin are provided, on p. 26 of the *Intermediate Level Student's Book* in the biographies of Picasso and Hemingway and in the *Advanced Level Student's Book* in the biographical detail about Oscar Wilde on p. 22. In the *Intermediate Level Student's Book* (p. 51) the text on Pizza is counted as narrative based on it being the story of the life of Pizza!

A second type of biographical narrative is biography which might be considered doubtful, but which does, under closer scrutiny, conform to the necessary selection criteria. Biography need not necessarily be limited to events of a life. Because it is narrative in nature, it can tell stories imbedded in biographical format. Examples of such narratives are the stories of Tudor Bowen-Jones and Josie Dew on p. 111 of the *Elementary Level Student's Book*. These are rather biographical narratives of their hobbies than the biographies of themselves, but they tell stories and are therefore counted as narrative. On p. 94 and p. 95 of the *Elementary Level Student's Book* the stories of Tanya Streeter and David Belle are used to tell the stories of the unusual sports they do. They are stories in the form of biography, and therefore counted.

The third type of biographical text is specious in nature, initially seeming to be biographical but, on closer scrutiny, proving not to be. The main criteria throughout is whether the texts form unified narratives which tap into story grammar. Where texts do conform to biographical style but serve only to inform, clarify or explain they are not narrative. Where discreet information from texts can be timelined, creating the impression of biography and therefore narrative, but the texts nevertheless do not form unified narratives, they are not counted. Similarly, texts which start out as biography but end up providing unrelated miscellaneous facts about the topic are not counted as narrative.

Examples of biographies that were discounted for these reasons are found on each of the three levels of *New Headway* that were taken into consideration for this study. In the *Elementary Level Student's Book* the text describing the year 1984 on p. 54 and the three texts on p. 78-79 discussing the history and culture of Buenos Aires, Havana and Seville respectively, do not conform to narrative guidelines.

In the *Intermediate Level Student's Book* the three job interviews on p. 58-59, the two texts discussing a father-daughter relationship on p. 74-75 as well as the descriptive character study on Dennis Woodruff on p. 83 are discounted. Even though narrative style information is included, the intention of the texts is explanatory. The telegraph style biography on Alfred Nobel on p. 117 and the text about Greenland on p. 101 are discounted for the same reasons.

In the *Advanced Level Student's Book* the text on Sunderland on p. 106, the notes on the life of Isabel Allende on p. 131 and the semi biographical personal profile provided on p. 128 are discounted. While there is some element of narrative in all of these texts, the main purpose of the texts is not to narrate a story.

3.3.5.4 Narrative structure in "literature"

Not all texts which are classified as literature are necessarily classified as narrative. The WH Auden poem *Funeral Blues* on p. 99 of the *Intermediate Level Student's Boo*k, Frank Sinatra's *My Way* on p. 100 of the same book and the Lewis Carroll poem *You are old, Father William* on p. 69 of the *Advanced Level Student's Book* are all examples of non-narrative literature. These texts do not form unified narratives and they do not conform to story grammar. They are not counted as narrative input.

3.3.6 Guidelines for counting

One of the main requirements of a successful research project is the possible replication of such a study. In order for this study to be replicable, carefully set guidelines had to be followed during the counting process. The same guidelines were used for counting all three categories of input. In order to facilitate reading, guidelines are grouped under the following headings: General; Quizzes and gapped exercises; Pair work; Narrative and; Not counted. Page numbers and explanations are provided where necessary:

3.3.6.1 General

- Contractions, hyphenated words, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses are counted as one word.
- Words that make up instructions are counted (Grammar spots, etc.).
- References to specific pages and numbers are counted (*Elementary Level Student's Book* Grammar spot p. 13).
- Where the tapescript provides a more complete version of an exercise than the Student's Book, the tapescripted version is counted (*Intermediate Level Student's Book* Tapescript 1.2 and *Advanced Level Student's Book* p. 80 no. 3).
- Words input which are provided twice in the same exercise are not counted twice (*Elementary Level Student's Book* p. 15 no. 2) but where they are used in a different form in a following exercise, they are counted twice (*Elementary Level Student's Book* p. 12 no. 1 and 2).
- Foreign words are counted where they occur as part of an English sentence, contributing to the meaning. Where they stand alone they are not counted (*Elementary Level Student's Book* p. 8).
- Input from the Teacher's Book is only counted where specifically referred to in the Student's Book (*Elementary Level Student's Book* p. 32).
- Where words are presented in parts, only the completed words are counted (*Intermediate Level Student's Book* p. 13 no. 4).

3.3.6.2 Quizzes and gapped exercises

- The number of words from the questions and the number of words from all multiple choice answers are counted. Some answers are not provided in the book, but solely on the tapescript. Only those answers are added to the word count of the complete quiz (*Elementary Level Student's Book* p. 98 no. 2 Tapescript 13.1 Answers to questions 2, 5, 7 and 9 are added to word count).
- Where the tapescript provides the completed version of gapped exercises, the tapescripted version is counted (*Elementary Level Student's Book* Tapescript 1.2).
- Where answers are not provided to gapped exercises, gaps are not counted as words input (*Intermediate Level Student's Book* p. 25 no. 8).

- Where words input are provided for use in a following gapped exercise, only the completed exercise is counted (*Elementary Level Student's Book* p. 16 no. 1 and 2 counted together as Tapescript 2.5).
- Where information in the tapescript provides answers to a gapped exercise yet is in quite different form to the exercise, all the tapescript words plus the words actually provided in the gapped exercise are counted (*Elementary Level Student's Book* p. 54 no. 3 (Tapescript 7.9).

3.3.6.3 Pair work

- In activities with information gaps (*Intermediate Level Student's Book* p. 151 and p. 152) the number of words of the completed version is counted.
- Where learners are referred to different pages for gapped pair work activities, information common to both partners is only counted once (*Elementary Level Student's Book* p. 37 no. 1 and p. 48/50).
- Where an exercise from the Listen and check section provides the same information as given in another exercise, but in a different order, the tapescript is counted separately (*Elementary Level Student's Book* p. 91 no. 2 Tapescripts 12.3 and 12.4).

3.3.6.4 Not counted

- Incidental writing in photographs is not counted. Only where learners are specifically directed to read those words, or where those words carry clues necessary to interpreting the photograph are such words counted.
- All references to pages at the back of the book are counted but only when the reference is to writing will the actual writing also be counted as input. References to the Grammar review will be counted, but the Grammar review itself will not be counted.
- Phonetically written words are counted as input (*Elementary Level Student's Book* p. 46 Grammar spot) but phonetic symbols on their own are not counted (*Elementary Level Student's Book* p. 54 Grammar spot).
- Where an exercise from the Listen and check section is simply a repetition of a previous exercise, providing identical information to the previous exercise, the tapescript is not counted again (*Elementary Level Student's Book* p. 90 no. 3 Tapescript 12.2).

3.3.6.5 Narrative

- Picture narrative such as comic strips without captions or speech bubbles is not counted as narrative text since it elicits the words but doesn't provide them (*Elementary Level Teacher's Resource Book* p. 47 no. 8.2).
- Where narrative is elicited, not provided, it is not counted as words narrative (*Elementary Level Student's Book* p. 54 no. 3).
- Where words provided in a box complete a narrative text, the words in the box are counted as words narrative (*Elementary Level Student's Book* p. 102 and *Elementary Level Workbook* p. 63 no. 5).
- Where answers to a gapped narrative are provided on the page or in the tapescript, they are counted as words narrative. If they are only provided as answers in the back of the book they are not counted (*Elementary Level Workbook* p. 37 no. 1 and *Elementary Level Workbook* p. 40 no. 9).
- Where a narrative is being discussed, only the part pertaining to the narrative is counted, not opinions regarding the narrative (*Advanced Level Workbook* p. 13 Tapescript 2.1 from "And it's about ..." to "... social responsibility").
- News stories are only counted as narrative when they conform to story grammar (*Advanced Level Workbook* Tapescript 6.1 third news story).
- Additional narrative input from the Teacher's Resource book and Workbook is counted but not given as a percentage of unit time.
- Extra input from the Teacher's Book is not counted unless it is narrative input (*Intermediate Level Student's Book* p. 61 no. 2).
- Extra narrative input from the Teacher's Book is not counted when it is provided only as a check on answers which students generate themselves (*Advanced Level Teacher's Book* p. 7 Background notes).

3.3.6.6 Vocabulary items

- Only items taken from vocabulary exercises listed as vocabulary in the Contents tables on p. 2 and p. 4 of the Student's Book are counted as vocabulary.
- Where p. 2-4 mentions a page for vocabulary but specific vocabulary items are not mentioned on the page (*Elementary Level Student's Book* p. 71), the Teacher's Book is

consulted for vocabulary to be pre-taught on that page. If there is no indication in the Teacher's Book, only those items mentioned on pp. 2 and 4 of the Student's Book are counted.

3.3.7 Guidelines for time allocation

It is usual at most language schools to assign three hours to each unit of *New Headway*. This is based on the practice of using two classes of two 50-minute academic hours each per week per unit. It is standard to give a 10 minute break between academic hours, which leaves 180 minutes teaching time.

Three hours is generally not enough time in which to teach a complete unit. In the Elementary Level the units are shorter, but because learners are new to the language, more time is spent on explaining, on making sure they understand and on practising the new language. At Advanced Level, the units are very long with long, complicated listening and reading exercises and it becomes impossible to fit all the exercises into three hours. How the three hours is spent is up to each individual teacher, based on the specific circumstances and on the needs of the individual students in the class. Teachers use professional discretion to determine which parts of every unit are to be taught, and how much time is to be spent on teaching each of them.

The Teacher's Book includes many extra activities and specific ways in which to present certain exercises, which leads to more time being allocated to those exercises than might be assumed when looking at the Student's Book. For the purposes of this study, time spent on narrative and on exercises derived from narrative is calculated following the more inclusive presentation instructions from the Teacher's Book.

It cannot be expected of any two classes to complete the same exercise in the same amount of time. Time spent on specific exercises would depend on many factors, including the size of the class, the level of the learners, their knowledge of the language structure being presented, their background knowledge of the theme being presented, their level of comfort with each other and with the teacher and the teacher's manner of presentation, even the attitude of both teacher and learners on a specific day.

Time allocation in this study is based on a class of six adult students who are all at the appropriate level for the course and who are all comfortable with each other, with pair work and with the teacher's communicative style of teaching.

Decisions regarding time allocation are further informed by my experience as an ESL teacher, planning and teaching lessons from *New Headway* course books at various language schools to various levels of students.

3.3.7.1 Language skills

Time was allocated to the four main language skills, namely reading, writing, speaking and listening based on the following guidelines.

3.3.7.1.1 Reading

Reading the questions on a narrative text is not assigned to reading time, but where questions necessitate skimming or scanning of the narrative text for answers, time is added to reading. Time is thus only added to reading where exercises are specifically aimed at developing reading skills.

3.3.7.1.2 Writing

Time is added to writing when an exercise is specifically aimed at developing writing skills. Where learners have to jot down notes in order to be able to answer a question, that exercise is not aimed at developing the skill of writing and time is not added.

3.3.7.1.3 Speaking and listening

The *New Headway* books are designed according to the principles of communicative language teaching. Exercises in all the course books are designed to complement a communicative teaching style and the Teacher's Book is written in such a way that even teachers who have never used communicative language teaching before can teach communicatively simply by following the instructions.

The heavy focus on group work and pair work which creates a large amount of talking time for learners is a distinctive feature of communicative language teaching. The time allocated to listening and speaking at every phase of the lesson, even when checking answers to grammar exercises, is not incidental. It is intentional and part of the pedagogical design of the course.

Where the teacher gives instructions for exercises derived from narrative, time is added to listening.

Where exercises derived from narrative input involve learners asking each other questions and answering those questions to each other, time is added to speaking as well as to listening.

Where exercises derived from narrative are checked by simply reading set answers aloud, no time is added for speaking or listening.

3.3.7.2 Communicative competence

Time is added where an exercise derived from narrative is specifically aimed at developing a certain aspect of communicative competence. Where an aspect of communicative competence might be incidentally improved through completing an exercise, time is not added.

It can be argued that listening to English and speaking it enhances grammatical competence simply through learners' exposure to the input and that learners use and therefore practise and improve their grammatical competence in this manner. When they read and write, speak and listen, when they make meaning, learners access their grammatical competence. This study, however, is not aimed at incidental learning. The purpose is to establish the intention behind the inclusion of certain exercises in the course books and as long as the development of an aspect of communicative competence is not central to an exercise, time is not added.

3.4 Conclusion

This discussion of methodology shows which methods were applied and why they were considered to be the best choice of method for the optimum execution of this study, while the detail provided contributes toward the validity of this study in ensuring the study to be replicable.

The focus of the following chapter will be on the results obtained by applying the methods discussed here.

CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the findings of the content analysis are presented and discussed. The introductory overview is followed by tables presenting percentage-specific data relating to the amount of narrative input and the amount of time spent on the development of the main language skills and communicative competencies through narrative input. Finally a description, organized by level, is provided of all narrative texts and the exercises derived from them.

After the presentation of the data, the findings are discussed in more detail.

4.2 Overview

A brief overview is given of the data found in the Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced Levels.

4.2.1 Elementary Level

The Elementary Level assumes a total teaching time of 42 hours according to the language school practice of two 90-minute lessons per week, covering one unit per week.

In this level, 6 out of the 14 units contain narrative. Forty percent of all input is general text, of which 28% is narrative text. The narrative can then be sub-divided as follows according to the percentage of unit time spent on the different skills that are focused on in activities derived from narrative text:

Reading:	7%
Writing:	3%
Speaking:	11%
Listening:	13%
Grammatical competence:	3%

Three percent of new vocabulary is taught from narrative text and no time is spent to explicitly develop discourse competence, strategic competence or sociolinguistic competence.

4.2.2 Intermediate Level

The Intermediate Level assumes a total classroom time of 36 hours spread over 12 weeks, based on language school practice of spending a total of 3 hours per week for each unit.

Similar to the Elementary Level, 6 of the 12 units in the Intermediate Level provide narrative input. Of the total words input, 52% is general text input and of this, 13% is narrative input.

The narrative input is then subdivided as follows according to the percentage of unit time spent on the different skills that are taught from narrative text:

Reading:	4%
Writing:	6%
Speaking:	13%
Listening:	14%
Grammatical competence:	9%

Of all new vocabulary items introduced in the course book, no items are derived from narrative and no time is spent on explicitly developing discourse competence, strategic competence or sociolinguistic competence.

4.2.3 Advanced Level

The Advanced Level, similar to the Intermediate Level, assumes a total teaching time of 36 hours according to the language school practice of assigning two 90-minute lessons per week to each unit.

In this level there is a significant increase in narrative input as 10 out of the 12 units contain narrative. Fifty-six percent of all the input in this level is text input. Of the text input, 45% is narrative input which can then be subdivided as follows according to the percentage of unit time spent on the different skills that are focused on in activities derived from narrative text:

Reading:	10%
Writing:	4%
Speaking:	21%
Listening:	26%
Grammatical competence:	9%
Discourse competence:	1%

No new vocabulary items in the course book are derived from narrative input and no time is spent in this level to explicitly develop strategic competence and sociolinguistic competence.

4.3 Content analysis data

The following tables present the data from the content analysis study. The first table provides a brief summary of the findings after which the data from each level are provided in detail. Some issues regarding the interpretation of the tables need to be addressed before presenting the tables.

It is imperative to keep in mind the stipulation made in the research design that time allotted to listening and speaking, as well as time spent on developing grammatical

competence, often run concurrently. It is incorrect to conclude from the tables that the percentages of time allocated to different skills and competencies can be added to find which percentage of the total unit time was devoted to exercises derived from narrative input.

Based on the fact that all speaking requires an audience, there is a case for the combination of speaking and listening to avoid a seeming exaggeration of the time allocated to oral skills. I have, however, decided against a combination of the two skills as there are many instances of extensive listening exercises where no speaking is required.

While taking the highest percentage of time allocated to either listening or speaking and making that the overall percentage of time allocated to oral skills in the unit might be the most straight forward interpretation, it would definitely not be the most accurate.

In the same manner, in some exercises which are aimed at the development of grammatical competence, skills overlap. Where learners do a grammar exercise based on narrative input for which they need to speak and listen to each other, a combined allocation of time might seem logical. It can, however, not be implemented here either, as many grammatical competence exercises require no listening or speaking at all.

4.3.1 Summary table

	Elementary	Intermediate	Advanced
Narrative	28%	13%	45%

	Elementary	Intermediate	Advanced
Vocabulary *	3%	0	0
Reading	7%	4%	10%
Writing	3%	6%	4%
Speaking	11%	13%	21%
Listening	13%	14%	26%
Grammatical competence	3%	9%	9%
Discourse competence	0	0	1%
Strategic competence	0	0	0
Sociolinguistic competence	0	0	0

* Vocabulary is presented as a percentage of the total vocabulary that is derived from narrative.

4.3.2 Elementary Level Table

4.3.3 Intermediate Level Table

4.3.4 Advanced Level Table

4.4 Findings

This section comprises a description of the narrative texts provided in *New Headway*. The discussion is broken down into Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced Levels, and further into the units in which the narrative texts appear.

After providing a short summary of all the narrative input in each unit, an overview will be given of the introduction and presentation of each text and of the exercises derived from the texts.

Discussions of the narrative input in the Advanced Level are significantly longer than those in the Intermediate or Elementary Level since, other than expected, significantly more narrative is included in the Advanced Level and the narrative texts increase in length and complexity from one level to the next.

4.4.1 Elementary Level

Narrative found in the Elementary Level will be discussed by unit.

4.4.1.1 Unit 6

Thirty-six percent of text input in this unit is narrative. The narrative on p. 49 is in the form of two biographies, *The Soul Singer* on Joss Stone, a teenage singing sensation, and *The Fantasy Writer* on Christopher Paolini, the teenage author of bestselling *Eragon*.

The text is introduced by pre-reading questions such as “Do you like singing?” and “Can you sing well?”. Learners are asked to look at the full colour photographs of Joss and Christopher and to predict what they do well.

The texts are presented as group work. The class is divided into two groups which each reads only one of the two texts. Groups answer very easy comprehension questions about their respective texts. Learners then use their answers to explain the content of

their text to a member of the group who studied the other text, and vice versa. Members of different groups are then paired together where they have to compare similarities and differences between Joss and Christopher. Finally, pairs are asked to use the comprehension questions asked earlier as guidelines for a roleplay in which one partner plays a journalist and the other plays either Joss or Christopher.

An additional 196 words of narrative input are provided on p. 37 of the Teacher's Resource Book.

4.4.1.2 Unit 7

In this unit, 61% of text input is narrative. On pp. 52-53, there is a narrative biography, *Shirley Temple Black* and on p. 56 there are two biographies, one on Amelia Earhart, the other on Yuri Gagarin, both with the topic "famous firsts". In the writing section at the back of the book, on p. 118, a gapped narrative, *My exciting holiday* tells the story of Daniella's holiday.

The Shirley Temple Black biography is introduced by referring learners to a collage of photos from Shirley Temple's life, and then asking if they know anything about her.

The text itself is divided into three parts, A, B and C. Text A is presented as a read and listen cloze exercise where learners have to fill in missing verbs. Text B is presented as a straightforward listen and read exercise, followed by a Grammar spot briefly explaining the past simple form of the verb before referring learners to the Grammar reference in the back of the book. Text C is another listen and read cloze where learners are required to complete simple past verbs that were left out.

A Grammar spot which introduces simple past question forms is followed by an exercise where learners have to complete past simple questions about the life of Shirley Black Temple which they then practise asking to partners.

The next narrative texts in the unit, the two famous first biographies on p. 56, are preceded by a list of 14 words from the text which learners have to translate into their first language. The texts are introduced by asking learners to look at the photos, headings and subheadings of the text in order to complete a title sentence for each text.

The texts are presented as group work with each group choosing one of the texts to read. Learners then answer a series of true/false comprehension questions about their chosen text. Working with partners from the other group, learners compare Earhart and Gagarin to each other, using their answers from the comprehension exercise.

Learners are then provided with incomplete questions which they are asked to complete in the simple past form and then put to their partner.

As a post-reading activity, learners are involved in a class discussion about other famous people in history, and their achievements.

The last narrative text of the unit, on p. 118, is introduced by a table providing bullet-style summaries of Robert's and Danielle's different holidays. Learners are asked to complete such a list about their own holiday.

Learners then have to complete questions in the past simple tense to go with the answers provided in the bullet-style summary, for example "Where did he go?", "When did he go?" and "What did he do?" before asking each other those questions about Robert's holiday. In writing, they do the same for Daniella's holiday. The actual narrative text is presented as a gapped exercise where learners have to change verbs provided in the present simple tense into the past simple to create the descriptive narrative of Daniella's holiday.

After completing the narrative, learners are involved in a pair work discussion about their previous holiday and are then asked to write about it.

An additional 342 words of narrative input are provided in the Workbook on p. 34 and p. 35.

4.4.1.3 Unit 8

Sixty-nine percent of text input in this unit is narrative. On p. 62 there are three short narrative histories of the invention of the photograph, the windscreen wiper and the bicycle respectively. On p. 63 there is an audio text where two couples tell the stories of how they first met and got together. The rest of the narrative from this unit is in the writing section at the back of the book on p. 119 in the form of a gapped narrative telling the story of a friendship between two women.

Background knowledge for the text on the three inventions on p. 62 is built up by the whole previous page dealing in general terms with famous inventions such as television, blue jeans and hotdogs.

The text is presented in three parts, each dealing with one invention. Learners are asked to look at the photos and to name the three inventions.

While reading the texts, learners also listen to the audio text. The information in the audio text is different from that in the written text and learners are asked to use the negative form of the simple past tense to correct the mistakes. To further practise the negative, learners are provided with several false statements from the texts which they first have to deny using the negative form of the past simple tense and then correct, using the past simple tense. For example: “Daguerre invented the bicycle” to which learners respond: “He didn’t invent the bicycle. He invented the photograph”. The answers are provided on the CD and learners use them to practise the correct stress and intonation of the sentences.

Learners are asked to make more incorrect sentences about the narrative text, which has to be corrected by their pair work partners.

The famous inventions narrative is followed by the two narratives on p. 63 on how two different couples got together. Pre-reading work is in the form of a non-chronological list of the usual steps a relationship would take from first meeting through dating,

marriage, children and divorce. Learners are asked to order these steps in a logical chronological order.

The text is introduced by providing a photo and a short teaser about each story. Learners are directed to those and asked to predict what they think happens next.

The texts are presented in audio form only. Learners listen to the CD and are asked whether their pre-listening predictions were correct. Learners then answer some content-based comprehension questions on both texts.

As a post-listening exercise, learners are provided with several quotes from the listenings and are asked which of the four characters are speaking. Learners are then asked to imagine themselves to be one of the four characters and to tell the group how they met their partner.

To allow learners to relate the narratives to their own reality, they are led into pair discussions about their own relationships and also those of their parents and grandparents.

The final narrative text in this unit is the account of friendship on p. 119. Before reading the narrative, learners are asked to do some free writing about their oldest friends. They are provided with prompts asking how they met their friend, how long they have been friends, how often they meet now and what they do when they meet. In pairs learners discuss these notes.

The narrative text is presented in the form of a cloze exercise which learners have to complete with conjunctions such as “but”, “and” and “because” which are provided in a box.

As a post-reading activity learners are asked to write about their own friend, using their free writing notes as well as the narrative text as guidelines.

On p. 143 of the Teacher's Book an additional 308 words and on p. 156 another 115 words of narrative input are provided. The Workbook has 181 additional words of narrative input on p. 37 and another 463 words on p. 40.

4.4.1.4 Unit 12

Narrative makes up 49% of text input for this unit. Two biographical narratives are presented on p. 94, one on Tanya Streeter and her involvement with and accomplishments in free-diving, the other on David Belle and how he developed a new sport called free-running, or *Le Parkour*.

Schemata are built up prior to reading the narrative text through asking learners to order six activities, including skiing, golf and mountain climbing, according to what they think to be the most dangerous. Answers are discussed in pairs as well as in class context.

Pre-reading clarification of terms is done by matching up verbs with nouns or phrases from the narrative text.

The texts are introduced through directing learners to the photos of Tanya Streeter and David Belle and to the headings of the two texts, after which they are asked if they know the two sports.

The narrative texts are presented as a group work activity with each group being assigned one of the texts. Learners are then asked to answer comprehension questions about their text. Using their answers, learners pair up with a member of the other group and compare Tanya and David and their sports to each other.

As a post-reading activity, learners are again divided into groups and each group has to write some wh-questions about the person in the text that they did not read. They are given prompts such as "What/do next?" to help them. Finally, learners interview members of the group who had read the other text, using the questions which they wrote.

There are 393 words of additional narrative input provided in the Teacher's Book on p. 148.

4.4.1.5 Unit 13

The title of this unit, *Storytime*, raises expectations of finding significant amounts of narrative input and indeed 81% of text input is narrative. The narrative is found on p. 100 in an audio text where a man tells what happened when he heard noises in the night; on p. 102 where the story of Della and James, a newly-wed couple with no money for Christmas presents, is told and in the writing section at the back of the book on p. 124, where learners complete a gapped version of *The Emperor's New Clothes*.

The narrative text on p. 100 is used to raise interest in narrative which occurs further on in the unit, but also to teach adverbs. Pre-listening schemata and interest are built by asking learners to complete sentences which end suddenly on a suspenseful note, for example: "I saw a man with a gun outside the bank. Immediately ....".

The narrative text is then presented as an audio text. Eight adverbs are provided and while learners listen to the narrative, they are required to number the adverbs in the order in which they are used.

As a post-listening activity, learners retell the story to each other, using the order of the adverbs as prompts.

For the next narrative text, the short story about Christmas presents on p. 102, a pre-reading discussion about Christmas presents in general is used to raise interest and to activate existing schemata. Learners are asked about their own gift-giving habits around Christmas time, and to talk about the best or worst gifts they have ever given or received.

The narrative text is introduced when learners are referred to the pictures, from which they are asked to infer when the story takes place and who it is about.

The text is presented in three parts. Learners listen to part one while reading it. They then answer comprehension questions, but the questions are no longer only content-related as in previous units. Learners have to make inferences and answer “Why do you think ... ” questions, and choose from a list of adjectives which will best describe the characters.

Part two of the short story is also read and listened to at the same time after which learners answer the same level of comprehension questions as for part one.

Before part three is presented, learners are asked to make predictions as to the end of the story, and to discuss these predictions with the class. Part three is then presented as a reading so that learners can check their predictions.

After having read it once, learners read part three again while listening to the audio reading at the same time. The post-reading questions they are asked to answer are again not only related to comprehension, but to a deeper level of involvement with the text. The final question requires learners to choose a suitable moral for the story from three options provided.

As post-reading language work, learners list adjectives and adverbs from the story. They are then also required to write questions about the story using question words provided in a box. These questions are then asked and answered across the class, involving all learners.

This short story leads learners to p. 124, where the next narrative text appears. Interest is raised and the narrative text introduced by learners discussing what they know about the tale, *The Emperor’s New Clothes*.

The story is presented as a cloze exercise where learners complete the gaps from a list of adjectives and adverbs provided.

A post-reading class discussion is held on learners’ favourite stories before learners are asked to write down their favourite story using adjectives and adverbs.

On p. 63 of the Workbook an additional 170 words of narrative input are provided.

4.4.1.6 Unit 14

Thirty-eight percent of text input in this unit is narrative. On p. 110 the unusual stories are told of 90-year-old Tudor Bowen-Jones, who still hitchhikes through the world, and Josie Dew, who had cycled through more than 40 countries. On p. 112, the song *All Around the World* provides narrative input, telling the story of a lost love.

Before introducing the narrative texts on Tudor and Josie on p. 110, learners ask and answer a series of "Have you ever ...?" questions in pairs. These involve various modes of transport and serve to raise interest as well as to activate schemata. Further pre-reading preparation is done through learners translating four words from the texts which might impede comprehension, into their first language.

The texts themselves are introduced by directing learners to the photos and the introductory sentences and asking them what neither of the two people had ever learnt to do (the answer is driving).

The texts are presented as group work activity, each group only reading one of the two texts. Learners are then asked to answer comprehension questions about their text. Using their answers, learners pair up with a member of the other group to compare Josie to Tudor.

Post-reading questions lead learners to further involvement with the text, asking whether learners would like to travel in the same manner as Josie and Tudor, whether cycling and hitchhiking are popular in learners' countries and what learners' favourite way to travel is. These questions are all followed by "Why/Why not?" questions, which allow for extended discussion and debate.

Before listening to the next narrative text, the song *All around the World* on p. 112, learners are provided with some pre-listening questions to guide their listening. The song is then played once, with books closed. After that, some terms are clarified where learners match words with meanings.

The narrative text is then presented again, in the form of a cloze exercise which learners first have to try and complete on their own before listening to the audio text again to fill in the gaps.

As a post-listening exercise, learners are asked to list their favourite English songs and to compare and discuss that list with a partner.

In the Teacher's Book, an additional 410 words of narrative input are provided while the Workbook provides an additional 171 words of narrative input on p. 66.

4.4.2 Intermediate Level

As with the Elementary Level, narrative found here will be presented by unit.

4.4.2.1 Unit 3

Telling tales, the title of this unit, gives an indication that stories will be used as input and accordingly 60% of text input is narrative. On p. 22 the tale of Gluskap, an Algonquian warrior who meets his nemesis in a little baby, is told. On p. 25 the story of an amazing holiday coincidence is told. The biographies of Pablo Picasso and Ernest Hemingway provide narrative input on pp. 26-27. At the back of the book on pp. 106-107 in the writing section, two traditional folk tales are presented as narrative input.

The title of this unit already serves to raise interest and activate existing schemata. The tale of Gluskap on p. 12 is introduced by asking learners to look at the pictures, telling them that the story is about a warrior and then asking them what they see in the pictures and what they think the story will be about.

The story is presented as a cloze exercise. Learners read the story and complete the gaps with provided phrases in the past tense and past perfect tense. Learners then listen to the audio text to check their answers.

As a post-reading exercise, a Grammar spot is presented explaining the past tenses. A short pronunciation exercise for words from the narrative with -ed endings is then provided.

The next narrative text, the amazing holiday story on p. 25, has no pre-reading activities. The text is presented as a pair work information gap exercise. Pairs are directed to two different pages of the book where they have access to different sets of information. They have to ask each other questions in order to combine their information and complete the text.

Learners are then asked to rewrite the story in conversation form. An audio recording of a sample conversation is provided.

Pre-reading questions to raise interest and activate background knowledge for the next narrative text, the biographies of Picasso and Hemingway on p. 26, ask learners about famous writers and painters from their own countries.

The text is introduced through asking learners to brainstorm Picasso and Hemingway. Some pre-reading questions, asking learners to discuss why Picasso and Hemingway are famous, what nationality they were, when they lived, names of their works and any other facts about them that learners might know, are provided as prompts. Six facts are then given to learners prior to reading and they have to predict which texts the facts are from.

The narratives are presented as a group work activity with each group reading only one of the two texts.

Comprehension questions are set, some requiring a degree of inference from learners. Pairs from opposite groups then discuss similarities and differences between the two men.

A post-reading Grammar spot deals with past tense passives before referring learners to the Grammar reference section.

The last narrative texts from this unit, on pp. 106 and 107, are traditional tales used as a foundation for a writing task. No pre-reading activities are given and the first text, *The Farmer and his sons* is immediately presented in the form of a cloze exercise. Learners complete the cloze with linking clauses that are provided to them.

As a post-reading activity, learners are asked to complete the moral of the story.

The next traditional tale, *The Emperor and his daughters*, is also presented as a cloze exercise, but the narrative is presented sentence by sentence without any adjectives or adverbs. Linking words are provided for learners to complete the gaps. Learners then rewrite the sentences into narrative style, linking different sentences and adding adjectives and adverbs.

As a post-reading activity, learners write a folk tale for which they also have to supply the moral.

There are 263 words of additional narrative input in the Teacher's Resource Book on p. 19, while the Workbook provides an additional 111 words on p. 18; 145 words on p. 19; 174 words on p. 20; 162 words on p. 21 and 323 words on p. 22.

4.4.2.2 Unit 6

Of the total text input in this unit, 13% is narrative found on p. 50 in the form of a biographical history of pizza.

Before the reading, interest is raised and schemata activated by asking learners to discuss typical dishes from a number of countries. Learners discuss which foods might be popular in all the countries that were discussed.

Pre-reading vocabulary is presented as a list of foods from the text which learners have to mark as seafood or not seafood. They are also given the opportunity to practise pronouncing the words.

The text is introduced as a skimming exercise, requiring learners to skim the text and find the foods listed in the previous exercise. After that learners read the text slowly in order to answer comprehension questions. Learners then write their own questions about the text which they ask and answer in groups.

The post-reading activity is a discussion where learners answer questions that require inference and not only content comprehension, such as “Which facts ... do you find interesting? Why?”, “Why do different countries prefer such different toppings?” and “What are the most interesting places to eat in your country? Why?”.

Learners then have to find the following grammatical constructions in the narrative text: *like* used as either verb or preposition, verb + -ing, verb + infinitive and adjective + infinitive.

An additional 251 words of narrative input are provided on p. 142 of the Teacher’s Book.

4.4.2.3 Unit 8

Narrative comprises 14% of text input. The narrative is found in the writing section on pp. 114 and 115 in the form of a holiday horror story.

A pre-reading free writing activity asks learners to write notes about their worst holiday and to then discuss it with a partner. This raises interest and activates schemata.

The narrative text is presented in three parts. Learners read the first part, selecting adverbs from a list for insertion in suitable places in the text.

Learners then use the pictures and a series of prompts to write their own version of the second part. Stories are read to the class and ideas are compared before learners read the third part of the text, again placing listed adverbs correctly into the text.

As a post-reading activity, learners write about their worst holiday. They are given prompts such as “When was it?”, “Where was it?” and “Why was it bad?”.

4.4.2.4 Unit 10

Fifteen percent of text input is narrative. The narrative input is found on p. 78 in the form of a newspaper article reporting the story of a teenager who had added up a £450 phone bill in one month, and on p. 117 in the writing section as the biography of world famous cellist Astrid Johnsson.

For the newspaper article on p. 78, there is no pre-reading preparation and the narrative is immediately presented as a straightforward reading exercise after which learners answer comprehension questions.

Learners are then provided with answers from the text to which they have to write questions, before a Grammar spot dealing with present perfect tense and question forms refers them to the Grammar reference section. Further practice of these forms is provided, but it no longer applies to the narrative.

The next narrative text in this unit is the biography on the famous cellist on p. 117. A lot of pre-reading activity takes place earlier in the unit. On p. 80 Astrid Johnsson is introduced as topic and a chart is provided describing her life achievements according to her age. Comprehension questions on the chart and a cloze exercise with time expressions also help prepare learners for the reading on p. 117.

The narrative biography of Johnsson is presented as an alternative to a list of her biographical details. Learners first read the list, and then the biography, after which they have to compare the two while underlining words that occur in the biography but that don’t occur in the list. These are mostly time expressions.

As a post-reading consolidation, learners research any famous person they admire and write a short profile on that person.

There are 151 words of additional narrative input on p. 97 of the Teacher’s Book, and another 450 words on p. 133.

4.4.2.5 Unit 11

Of text input in this unit, 7% is narrative. On pp. 155-156 Madonna's biography is presented as narrative input. The biography is introduced on p. 87 by brainstorming Madonna before learners write several "I wonder ...?" and "Does anybody know ...?" questions about her life, following prompts provided for them.

The narrative text is presented in the form of an information gap activity where learners work in pairs, each with a different version of the biography. After each gap a question word is provided with which learners have to write a question to ask their partners in order to complete the narrative.

Additional narrative input from the Teacher's Resource Book consists of 435 words on p. 73.

4.4.2.6 Unit 12

In this unit, 42% of text input is narrative. On p. 96, learners are presented with a newspaper article telling of the tempestuous marriage of the Brady couple and of their neighbours' complaints about their loud fighting. On p. 97 narrative input is provided as audio text in the form of police statements made by Mrs. Brady and also by her neighbour. The rest of the narrative in the unit is an audio text on p. 98, where a woman tells of the birth of her sister's baby one stormy night on a lifeboat off the Isle of Mull.

While no pre-reading exercises or interesting introduction is done for the newspaper article, the article itself contributes toward raising interest and activating schemata for the listening narratives that are to follow.

Learners are directed to read the newspaper article on the dueling Brady couple and to name the people in the photographs. Several quotes from the article are then provided and learners have to indicate who said the sentences by rewriting them into reported speech. A Grammar spot explains reported speech and refers learners to the Grammar reference section before two more reported speech exercises are done.

The audio narrative is introduced by placing learners in the role of a police officer who is taking statements from Mrs. Brady and Mrs. West respectively.

The listening is presented as a group work activity with each group only listening to one of the interviews. Learners then pair up with members of the opposite group to report their witness's statement and to compare differences between what the two women said.

As a post-reading activity, learners write the reports for police records using reported speech and verbs provided in a box.

On p. 98 the last narrative text in this unit tells of the birth of Jane Banner's daughter. Before reading, small groups discuss questions such as what they know about the day they were born and who had told them about it. Interesting stories are shared with the class.

The text is introduced by telling learners that Jane Banner, who lives on the Isle of Mull, had recently had a baby and that they are going to listen to her sister telling the story of the birth. Learners look at the photograph and try to identify the people.

The narrative is presented as a listening exercise and comprehension is tested by multiple choice questions.

As a post-listening activity, learners do a roleplay with one learner being a member of the lifeboat crew telling the story of the birth while the other learner reacts to the narrative and asks questions.

4.4.3 Advanced Level

This section comprises a unit by unit presentation of the narrative found in the Advanced Level.

4.4.3.1 Unit 1

Sixty-four percent of text input in this unit is narrative. On p. 8 historical background information on Ellis Island is provided. On p. 9 a descriptive narrative by H.G. Wells, telling the story of the immigrant arrivals, adds to the information already supplied. On pp. 10-11 the tales of three individual immigrants are told. On p. 14 a very long listening text on the Patel brothers, successful immigrants to the United Kingdom, is presented.

The narrative texts on Ellis Island are presented as a unit and the beginning texts serve to introduce later texts and to present background knowledge. Learners are first referred to an aerial photograph of Ellis Island with the Statue of Liberty and the New York skyline in the background. They have to identify and discuss the significance of what they see. This serves to activate existing background knowledge, as well as to raise interest.

The introductory narrative on p. 8 is presented as a multiple choice cloze exercise. After checking the answers, several discussion questions such as which numbers learners found surprising and from which countries they think the immigrants mostly came, are presented.

The H.G. Wells narrative on p. 9 is presented next. Learners read his text, *Tales from Ellis Island*, and answer questions on the text. These are not straightforward comprehension questions, but demand a deep level of inference from learners. They are, for example, asked to answer Wells's rhetorical question about the immigration issue: "What in a century will it all amount to?".

The three main narrative texts on pp. 10-11 are presented as a group activity. Each group chooses one of the three stories to read. One tale is of a young Russian girl who arrived in America only to be jilted by her prospective husband, one is of a young German boy who hoodwinked inspectors into believing that his mother could read and the third tells of the problems of assigning American citizenship to a baby born on one of the immigrant ships.

Learners answer comprehension questions which range from text content to inference level and as a post-reading activity they find partners from the other two groups and compare the three stories using their answers to the comprehension questions.

For post-reading language work, learners find words or phrases in their text similar to phrases provided to them. They then explain the phrases to their partners from the other groups.

Learners are given the opportunity to engage with the narrative on a deeper level through a discussion which requires them to link their own experiences and opinions to the texts. They are, among other things, asked how people generally react to immigrants, and why they react like that. They discuss the difference between refugees, immigrants and illegal immigrants, talk about immigration in their own countries and lastly discuss causes of emigration, countries they might like to emigrate to and why.

On p. 14 the narrative text on the Patel brothers is also about immigrants, and although it is a completely separate exercise, all the previous narratives in the unit contribute toward activating the necessary schemata.

The text is introduced by providing a newspaper extract reporting the brothers' winning the "Entrepreneur of the year" award. Learners discuss who the brothers might be and why a newspaper story was written about them.

As a pre-listening activity, the interview questions from the first part of the interview are given to learners who try to predict the answers.

The listening text is presented as a three-part interview and covers everything from the brothers' recipe for business success, to reminiscing about their childhood in Kenya and the hard times they first had adjusting to life in England. While listening to part one, learners are referred to the audio transcripts at the back of the book to read the interview while listening to it. Learners then compare the Patel brothers' answers to the interview questions to their own pre-listening predictions.

Part two is presented only as a listening exercise, after which some true/false comprehension questions are asked. Part three is also listening only during which learners have to complete a cloze exercise.

The post-listening activity is in the form of a class discussion, again allowing for a wider response to the text. Among other things, learners are asked if they agree with the advice the brothers offer to young people, and whether the brothers can be considered good role models. Asian immigration to Britain is discussed, also with reference to Indian accents. Finally learners are led to link the narrative to their own lives by talking about the influence of family background and how their family has influenced their lives.

In the Teacher's Book, an additional 410 words of narrative input are provided while the Workbook provides an additional 171 words of narrative input on p. 66.

4.4.3.2 Unit 2

Ninety percent of text input in this unit is narrative text. On p. 17 several short extracts from books and on pp. 18-20 a biography of and then an interview with the author, Iris Murdoch, are presented. A short biography of Oscar Wilde with an extract from *The Importance of Being Earnest* is provided on p. 22 followed by an extract from *Fair Game* by Elizabeth Young on p. 25. On p. 118 the opening paragraphs of three different stories and then the rest of one of the stories are provided as narrative input.

On p. 16 learners are presented with the front covers of six books, and a short extract from each of the books. Learners have to match extracts to covers. While some might be unknown, some books and/or authors should be familiar to learners as the selection includes Hamlet, Lord of the Rings and John Grisham's *A time to kill*.

As a post-reading activity, learners discuss their favourite types of book, books they have recently read, why they have read those books and whether they have read any books in English. A wider discussion of reasons for reading in English then takes place. This activity and the discussion that follows serves to raise interest and activate schemata for narrative input further in the unit.

On p. 18 an information gap biography of Irish Murdoch is presented as background information. On pp. 19-20 an extensive interview with the author and her husband is presented in such a manner that even learners not familiar with Murdoch will be able to identify with the tragedy of Alzheimer's disease and genius gone past. The text is introduced by providing the following sub-headings from the interview: "Wild piles of books and papers", "Just a bit of writer's block?" and "Utterly at ease with each other" and by asking learners which impressions this creates of Iris's house and the people who live there. The term "writer's block" is also discussed.

The narrative text is provided as three parts. Learners read part one and answer some questions. While the questions do test comprehension, they are not related to factual content but are aimed at inference, asking learners about their impressions of various things in the text as well as justification for those impressions. Learners are allowed to use their dictionaries to clarify some of the words they have to discuss.

Learners read part two and answer some questions which start off as straightforward comprehension, but move to inference. Learners then read the third part of the interview. The post-reading questions again range from factual comprehension to inference and opinion.

Post-reading inference questions which apply to all three parts of the interview are then discussed. The post-reading vocabulary work is a matching of words and definitions from the narrative texts.

The post-reading discussion section *What do you think?* asks further inference questions such as how John's role in Iris's life would have differed before and after the onset of her illness, and a discussion of Alzheimer's disease as a tragedy, particularly in the case of Iris Murdoch.

Pre-reading work for the short biography of Oscar Wilde on p. 22 involves learners reading a number of Wilde's more controversial quotes and then discussing their opinion of Wilde based on his sayings.

As introduction to the biography, learners are given several statements about Wilde. In pairs they discuss the truth value of the statements before reading the biography. Learners then compare their predictions to the biodata before answering some easy comprehension questions.

The biodata provides background knowledge and serves as introduction to the lengthy audio text excerpt from the play *The Importance of Being Earnest* on p. 23. Before listening, learners are told who the characters in the excerpt are.

The audio text involving Lady Bracknell's horrified reaction to finding out that Jack Worthing, a suitor to her daughter, had been found in a basket as a baby, is presented. After listening, learners answer comprehension questions which are mainly factual, but also require learners to choose from a list of adjectives which ones best describe Lady Bracknell.

The text is then handed out to learners in type. They listen to the audio text again while reading. The questions which follow the second reading are on the level of inference, asking for justification from the text for the adjectives learners chose previously to describe Lady Bracknell. Learners are asked to discuss what they learn from the narrative about upper class England in the 19th century and about people's attitudes toward property, work and money.

Post-reading vocabulary work requires learners to find words from the scene similar to those provided in italics. The post-reading *What do you think?* section asks learners to discuss what they think might have led up to the conversation in the text, and how they think the situation might resolve itself. These ideas are first discussed in pairs and then in the whole class before the teacher tells learners the real story (as provided in the Teacher's Book on p. 121).

As a consolidating activity, learners act the scene out in front of the class with the emphasis on the comedic element in the text.

The narrative input provided on p. 25 in the form of an audio extract from *Fair Game* by Elizabeth Young has no pre-listening work. The text is simply introduced by learners being told that the speaker is Harriet Gray, a young woman who lives in London.

The narrative text is then presented as a listening exercise. The main character tells of accidentally “pinching” her friend Nina’s “bloke”. Learners are asked about Harriet’s problems and what they learn about her ”friend” Nina from the text.

In a follow-up exercise, learners are provided with the same extract in the form of a cloze exercise. Learners change the verbs into the correct tense. The audio text is presented again for learners to check their work.

As a post-listening exercise, learners are asked to discuss that they think might happen next in the story.

The last narrative in the unit is at the back of the book, on p. 118 where three opening paragraphs from different stories are provided for analysis by learners. There is no pre-reading work or introduction and learners are immediately asked to read the three stories. The first extract describes Christmas through the eyes of a lady who has grown old and lonely, the second tells of a young woman who had had an argument with her traveling partner and the last tells of a boy having second thoughts while exploring the “archetypal haunted house” with his friend.

Learners analyse the style and content of the paragraphs according to questions provided to them. They discuss, for example, how opening sentences attract attention and create atmosphere, which tenses are used in the stories, what effect the use of direct speech has in the stories, who the main characters are and what their relationships to each other are. Learners are then asked to brainstorm possible development of the stories according to a series of prompts provided to them. These prompts lead learners

to think of the person in each story who is facing a choice. They discuss the choice and the option they believe each person will take, the consequences of such a decision, the effect of the decision on the other characters, and how they think the stories will end.

On p. 119 learners are provided with the rest of the Christmas story, which they are asked to improve on by adding suitable adjectives into the gaps provided. Learners compare their predicted outcomes to the real ending and discuss which version they prefer.

As a post-reading exercise, learners choose one of the two other extracts and are asked to complete the story, using the brainstorming ideas they used previously. Learners are provided with guidelines such as checking their grammar and using linking words to order their events.

On p. 120 of the Teacher's Book, 10 words of additional narrative input are provided. In the Teacher's Resource Book on p. 15, 338 words of narrative input are provided. In the Workbook an additional 358 words are provided on p. 11, 312 words on p. 12 and 452 words on p. 13.

4.4.3.3 Unit 4

Sixteen percent of text input is narrative. On p. 42 a listening text is provided of a lady very excitedly telling of her experience at a movie premiere.

Learners are given no background information on the text, but are asked to deduct what the occasion under discussion is. They also answer several straightforward comprehension questions.

The same text is then listened to again, but with discourse markers added. While listening, learners complete a gapped version of the extended text.

4.4.3.4 Unit 5

In this unit narrative comprises 80% of text input. On pp. 48-50 two articles provide narrative input. Article A tells the story of 28-year-old Tina, who met 21-year-old Andrew through a random text message, and married him one year later while Article B tells the story of Emma Allen, who cycled into a complete stranger and married him two years later. The story of Jaap and Martine and how they met is presented as audio text on p. 48. On p. 53 learners are provided with an interview with 102-year-old Olive Hodges, who is having a sad Valentine's day after her husband of 77 years died.

For the two articles and the audio text on pp. 48-50, pre-reading work requires learners to discuss how their parents met. This raises interest and also activates existing schemata.

The first two narrative texts are presented as group work with each group choosing one of the texts to read. After reading the text, learners answer questions ranging from factual comprehension to opinion and a discussion on fate. Learners from opposite groups pair up to compare their stories and to decide which meeting was most dependent on fate.

As post-reading vocabulary work, learners are given phrases from their group texts to try to work out the meaning from the context. They are allowed a dictionary, but only where contextual clues fail them. They are further provided with a list of words from the texts and asked to match the synonyms.

The story of Jaap and Martine, who met in the South of France, is presented as a listening text. All the preceding narrative texts in this unit also serve as introduction and schema building for this narrative listening exercise. After listening, learners are asked to retell the story in their own words.

The *What do you think?* section leads learners in a discussion involving all three romance narratives. They are asked to voice their opinion and to support it with textual evidence. The learners are then led to relate the narrative to their own experiences by discussing their belief in fate and how fate plays a part in their lives.

For the next narrative on p. 53, about Olive Hodges and her love of more than 70 years, pre-text interest is raised by discussing what Valentine's Day is and how it is celebrated in learners' countries.

The narrative is introduced by telling learners who will be interviewed. The text is presented as a listening exercise after which learners answer comprehension questions. Lines from the text are quoted and specific questions asked about them.

Some further, more inference-based post-reading questions are then asked and in the *What do you think?* section, learners are asked to respond to Olive's story. They discuss their own reaction, how common the story is and whether they know of any other couples who shared such a relationship.

On p. 37 of the Teacher's Resource Book, 179 words of additional narrative input are provided.

4.4.3.5 Unit 6

Forty-three percent of the text input in this unit is narrative. A newspaper article from *The Independent On Sunday* on p. 58 tells the story of Prince Harry being sent to rehab for drinking and using drugs and on p. 59 an audio text of a news broadcast is used as dictation.

Pre-reading work for the newspaper article on Prince Harry on p. 56 comes in the form of comparing the article to an article on the same topic from a different newspaper. The front covers of *The Sun* and *The Independent* newspapers, carrying the same story, are provided and learners are lead to find differences between tabloid newspapers and broadsheets based on things such as headline size, headline content, photos and page layout.

Learners then read the two texts, of which only the second one is deemed narrative based on it adhering to the principles of story grammar and narrative structure, and compare them to each other in terms of factual content, sensationalism and language choice.

As a post-reading task, learners are provided with the broad structure of the article from *The Sun* and asked to draw up the same type of structure for the narrative article from *The Independent*. Learners are also asked some factual recall questions from both texts.

Post-reading language work consists of learners reading answers provided to them, and writing questions for those answers using words in brackets to guide them. Learners also work on language analysis by finding informal words in the text from *The Sun* which have the same meaning as a list of formal words provided to them, and finding formal words from *The Independent* with the same meaning as a list of informal words. Learners are not asked to respond to the text on a deeper level.

On p. 59, pre-listening work for the news report is in the form of a Grammar spot teaching passive constructions and referring learners to the Grammar reference section.

Other narrative input in the unit has already activated existing schemata. To raise interest for this specific exercise, learners are provided with some interesting newspaper headlines for which they are asked to write short articles.

The narrative text is presented as an audio recording of a news broadcast. Learners are asked to listen to the broadcast and to use it as a dictation. One learner is elected to write on the board while the rest of the class assists.

An additional 377 words of narrative input are provided on p. 39 of the Teacher's Resource Book, while in the Workbook, 106 words of additional narrative input are provided on p. 37, 92 words on p. 38, 232 words on p. 39 and 95 words on p. 40.

4.4.3.6 Unit 7

Narrative makes up 48% of general text input. Narrative input is provided on pp. 64-65 in the form of a very touching letter to his newborn son by Fergal Keane, a BBC foreign correspondent. On p. 126 in the writing section, learners are provided with two versions of the first paragraph from a personal account.

The Keane text is introduced before the pre-reading questions are given. A photo of Fergal Keane and a short description of the letter to his newborn son and the public reaction to the broadcast of the letter are given. A letter that could jam the BBC switchboard and move hundreds of listeners to tears is sure to raise interest.

As a pre-reading activity, learners are provided with lines from the narrative and led to discuss Fergal's possible feelings for his newborn son, the Chinese calendar and Fergal's job as correspondent. Learners are also encouraged to predict what they think the letter will be about.

The letter is presented in three parts. Learners read the first part while simultaneously listening to an audio recording of the broadcast. The post-reading comprehension questions move from factual content to inference.

The second part of the text is presented only as listening text. After listening, learners are provided with true/false comprehension questions and asked to correct the statements that are false.

The third part of the letter is again read and listened to at the same time. Post-reading comprehension questions are presented in the form of a matching exercise where learners match people from the text with places from the text and say who the people are and how they are connected to the places. Further comprehension questions are aimed more at inference, discussing Fergal's attitude to his father's drinking problems.

Learners listen again to all three parts of the letter, and summarize each part in one or two lines. Post-listening vocabulary work is done on pronouns from the text and learners are also asked to clarify some terms using a dictionary if necessary.

The *What do you think*? section asks questions for which learners need to infer the meaning from the narrative. Learners discuss how Fergal's relationship with his new son might differ from the one he had with his own father, why he wrote this letter to his new son and which parts of the letter touched the BBC listeners so deeply.

Finally, learners are led to relate the narrative to their own lives, discussing which lessons they learned from their upbringing that they would wish to pass on to their own children.

The next narrative, the personal account on p. 126, has no pre-reading work and no introduction as such. The text is immediately presented by asking learners to read two different versions of the opening paragraph of the account. The first version is a very concise and factual rendition of how a man could not get a place to sleep in a small village late at night, while the second is written in a narrative style filled with atmosphere and emphasis.

After reading, learners are asked to compare the two versions with regard to description of emotions, factual content, vocabulary variety, sentence variation and impact. Learners also choose a suitable title for the text.

Learners are then provided with the rest of the account, describing in narrative style how the author was offered food and shelter by a complete stranger. Post-reading comprehension questions are mainly fact-based.

An example sentence from the narrative is provided to show learners how emphasis can be created by changing the word order of a sentence. Learners are asked to rewrite some sentences in a more emphatic way, starting with words provided in brackets.

The culmination of this narrative-based activity is a writing exercise allowing learners to relate to the narrative on a personal level. Learners are asked to write about a great kindness that happened in their own life. A paragraph plan is provided as guidance.

On p. 47 of the Teacher's Resource Book, an additional 183 words of narrative input are provided. Additional narrative input from the Workbook is 402 words on p. 46 and 530 words on p. 85.

4.4.3.7 Unit 8

Fifty-eight percent of text input here is narrative. On p. 72, learners are provided with a short biographical piece on the painter Joe Downing Ménerbes. An extensive interview with the painter is then presented as audio text. On pp. 76-77 a revealing biographical article on the life of Walt Disney provides further narrative input.

To raise interest in the narrative on Joe Ménerbes, learners are first directed to a photograph of the artist sitting with some of his works. Learners are asked to describe his style of painting and sculpting, and also to discuss their opinion of his works.

Narrative text in itself, a short biography of Joe is provided to build the necessary background knowledge for text comprehension. It is likely that many learners will be unfamiliar with the artist and the biodata ensures that this will not impede comprehension. After reading the biodata, learners work in pairs to write down any questions that they might like to ask the artist if they ever met him.

The narrative text is presented as an audio text divided into three parts to cover the artist's childhood, his evolving into a painter and his life in the South of France. Learners listen to part one and correct a series of false statements while they listen. They are encouraged to use their dictionaries for unknown vocabulary items.

As a pre-listening activity to the second part of the narrative, learners make sure they understand words in italics from the comprehension questions they will answer after the listening. This vocabulary work clarifies any terms that might impede comprehension, but also serves to direct the manner in which learners listen to the text. The post-listening questions serve as pre-listening questions. The questions are mostly content based.

Learners listen to the third part of the text and answer comprehension questions. The *What do you think?* section asks learners if the questions they wrote to the artist after reading the biodata have been answered. In a group discussion learners talk about how Joe's life was influenced by fate, how it could have turned out differently, which overall impression they got of Joe from the narrative and whether his lifestyle would appeal to them.

Learners relate to the narrative on a personal level when they discuss their own favourite works of art and make notes about it to share with the class.

Interest for the next narrative, the biographical article on Walt Disney on pp. 76-77 is raised by learners discussing Disney movies they have seen. Learners are asked if any of them have ever visited a Disney theme park, and they have a general discussion of the theme parks.

Pre-reading vocabulary work is done when learners are provided with a box of words and expressions, and asked which of those they relate to the dream world of Disney.

The biographical narrative is introduced by learners reading the heading and the opening lines of the article, in which 8-year-old Walt is busy delivering papers at 3:30 in the morning. Learners are asked what impression they get of Disney's childhood from that paragraph.

The text is presented as an article dealing with Disney's childhood, his married life and his last years. Learners read the whole text and are asked to page back to the pre-reading vocabulary words to see which words from the box would apply to the life of Walt Disney, the man.

Several false statements are then provided, to which learners have to supply the correct information from the text. This necessitates skimming as reading strategy.

For post-reading language work learners are provided with a series of direct speech statements, which they have to ascribe to one of the people discussed in the text. They talk about the contraction *'d* in those statements and differentiate between *would* and *had*. Learners also discuss the meaning of several words highlighted through the narrative text.

In the *What do you think?* section learners are asked to infer meaning from the text to answer questions about successful people who often have unhappy childhoods and possible features that all creative geniuses have in common. Finally, learners relate the life of Walt Disney to that of Joe Ménerbes.

4.4.3.8 Unit 9

In this unit, narrative makes up 81% of text input. On pp. 82-85 narrative is provided as eye witness accounts of historical events. Another eyewitness account is provided as audio text on p. 85 where Justin Baines tells how the events around 9/11 unfolded in front of his eyes. On p. 87 an audio extract from the musical *Oh, what a lovely war* is given along with an audio interview with two British soldiers who were on sentry duty the night that the so-called Christmas Truce of World War I started between German and Allied soldiers along the Western Front.

Interest for the eyewitness narratives on pp. 83-85 is raised on p. 81 where learners are provided with pictures and a list of significant historical events such as the first Olympic Games, the outbreak of World War I, the use of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the demolition of the Berlin Wall. Learners order the events on a timeline, add and delete events from the list and compare and justify their choices in groups. A class discussion is held on which recent news events learners believe will go down in history. This not only raises interest but provides background information and activates existing schemata.

To introduce the texts, learners are provided with a list of the events that will be discussed as eye-witness narratives. In the five texts, Pliny the Younger tells of the eruption of Vesuvius, Marconi tells of the first radio signal to cross the Atlantic, Louis Blério relates his ground-breaking flight across the British Channel, a Mrs. Bishop gives her account of the sinking of the Titanic and Armstrong and Aldrin relate their moon landing. Learners order these events chronologically onto their timelines.

One extract from each narrative is provided and learners choose from which narrative each extract was taken. They then scan the texts to check, which practises scanning as reading strategy.

The eyewitness accounts are presented as a group work activity. Each group chooses two or three of the accounts which interest them. They then read only those texts and answer content-related comprehension questions. The last question requires inference in

asking why the event was important and which repercussions it has had in history. Information on all the events are then shared in class context according to the answers to the comprehension questions.

A post-reading vocabulary activity provides a list of words which learners have to divide into nouns, verbs and adjectives. They may use dictionaries and then explain the words from their texts to the group. Learners are also asked which of the words are technical words.

For the audio version of the next eyewitness account, learners are given pre-listening questions about which event the account is of, where the witness was at the start of the event and from where he saw the event unfold.

Learners listen to the eyewitness account that Justin Baines gives of the events of 9/11. They are asked to describe what he saw in their own words.

As a post-listening exercise, learners respond to the text on a personal level by discussing where they were on 9/11, how they heard about the event and what the repercussions of the event were for them.

A further level of interaction with the narrative takes place when learners are asked to select an important event from their own lives and to write brief notes on the event before sharing its significance with the group. Learners are encouraged to ask and answer questions about each other's events.

These eyewitness accounts also serve as interest raiser and schema activator for the narrative texts on p. 87. To focus interest and introduce the topic, learners are told that many historical events are related to war. Learners discuss major wars of the last hundred years and also conflicts which are currently in the news.

An audio extract from the musical *Oh, what a lovely war* is presented after which learners ask factual comprehension questions. Learners are informed about the Christmas Truce on which the musical is based, and are asked to predict what will

happen next. While this musical extract is narrative text in itself, it serves here mainly to introduce an interview with two soldiers who were personally part of the Christmas Truce.

The interview on p. 87 is presented as an audio text to which learners listen while completing a cloze exercise.

Learners are asked to compare the eyewitness account with the extract from the play they listened to earlier before they answer comprehension questions. In the *What do you think?* section learners are asked to respond to the narrative on a personal level by discussing how the text made them feel and why it made them feel that way. Learners discuss the possibility of enemies becoming friends in the midst of war and also discuss if such an incident could happen in modern warfare, again justifying their answers.

There are 161 words of additional narrative input on p. 147 of the Teacher's Book, 281 words of additional narrative input on p. 56 and 200 words on p. 57 of the Workbook.

4.4.3.9 Unit 11

Twenty-five percent of text input in this unit is narrative. On p. 105 Simon Winchester, a foreign correspondent, tells an interesting story of traveling by train in a very remote part of China, and meeting an English-speaking Chinese lady at a stop in the middle of the desert. On p. 130, narrative input is provided in the form of extracts from a travel journal.

For Simon Winchester's desert story, interest is raised by a class discussion on far-flung spots and travel to remote destinations. The narrative is introduced by referring learners to illustrations which tell Simon's story. In pairs learners try to predict what will happen in the story.

The text is presented as an audio text in three parts. Learners listen to the first part. True/false comprehension questions are asked and learners correct the false statements before again trying to predict what will follow.

The second part of the audio text is presented and learners check their predictions before answering fact-based comprehension questions. Learners are again referred to the illustrations to try to predict the rest of the story. After listening to the third part of the text, learners again check their predictions. Learners are given factual true/false statements to correct.

As a post-listening activity, learners work in pairs to retell the story in their own words, using the illustrations as prompts.

The narrative input on p. 130 is directly presented as three extracts from a travel journal which learners are asked to read. Learners answer fact-based comprehension questions about the extracts.

A fourth extract is provided and learners have to add adjectives in order to make it more interesting. Learners are then asked to find adjectives from the first three extracts which describe things like beaches, towns, cities, people and mountains.

Post-reading work involves learners matching sentence halves to describe different journeys. The culminating activity requires learners to relate the narrative to their own experiences by writing a description of a memorable trip they have taken. They are given a paragraph plan with questions to guide the writing.

Additional narrative input is provided in the Teacher's Resource Book as 228 words on p. 71 and 179 words on p. 72. In the Workbook 640 words of additional narrative input are provided on p. 72 and another 227 words on p. 73.

4.4.3.10 Unit 12

Narrative is 30% of general text input in this unit. The biography of Salvador Dali is given on p. 113 and on p. 131 the biography of war photographer, Robert Capa, is given.

To build up grammar for the Dali biography on p. 113, learners are given a Grammar spot on linking devices and a non-narrative text from which they choose the correct linking word from the options provided. A writing exercise and a structured grammar exercise also focus on linking words.

The text is presented in nine parts consisting of a few separate sentences each. Learners have to rewrite each of the nine parts by using linking words to change it into a single sentence. An audio example is then played for learners to check their work. Learners are not asked to respond to the text.

On p. 131 the same type of exercise is used to introduce the narrative biography of Robert Capa. The first part of his biography is presented in four parts consisting of three or four separate sentences each. Learners are asked to rewrite each part into a single sentence by making use of linking words.

The narrative text, consisting of the rest of Capa's biography, is then presented as a text with four numbered paragraphs and four subheadings, which learners match after reading the text.

Learners then reread the whole biography and answer comprehension questions which require making inferences from the text and stating opinions. Learners discuss what they think Capa's intention with his work was and how he felt about it, which aspects of his biography surprised them and which interested them the most. Learners are asked about the author's use of direct quotes and how those quotes affect the text. Finally learners are asked whether they think Robert Capa was a brave man and if they would describe him as a hero.

The culminating activity based on the narrative text requires learners to relate the text to their own lives by writing their own biography.

On p. 153 of the Teacher's Book, 200 words of additional narrative input are provided and on p. 75 of the Workbook, 75 words of narrative input are provided.

The above descriptions from the Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced levels are of interest as they shed a light on which narrative texts were selected for inclusion in *New Headway* and on exactly how those narrative texts are exploited by the authors toward the teaching of different language skills and communicative competencies. A more detailed analysis of the findings will subsequently be provided.

4.5 Analysis of findings

In this section not only the data from the tables, but also further findings, are discussed and analysed. As findings will be discussed according to expectations raised in the literature review, subheadings will, where applicable, follow those used in the discussion of the practical application of narrative in the literature review.

The three levels, Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced will not be separated in this section, but discussed together.

4.5.1 Amount of narrative text

The overall percentage of narrative input in *New Headway* course books far exceeds what was expected. Twenty-eight percent of textual input provided on Elementary Level, 13% on Intermediate Level and 45% on the Advanced Level is narrative. This is in sharp contrast with what was expected and may even be an indication that the inclusion of narrative text in *New Headway* is not simply incidental, but premeditated based on sound pedagogical principles applied by the authors.

What is also surprising is that instead of the percentage for the Advanced Level being lower than the percentages of the two earlier levels, it is the highest of all three levels. Based on the second hypothesis of this study, the opposite was expected. It is interesting to note that *New Headway*'s Advanced Level was the last of the three levels to be written, and that it was only written after the second edition of the Intermediate Level course was already published (Case 2005). As the most recently written course contains by far the most narrative, this is a very strong indication of the importance the authors attach to current research regarding the inclusion of narrative in ESL courses.

Not only the quantity, but also the quality of narrative text included in *New Headway* is of relevance. The manner in which the authors of *New Headway* went about selecting the specific narratives texts will subsequently be discussed according to suggestions made in the literature review.

4.5.2 Text selection

In text selection, interest and relevance are crucial. *New Headway* has to anticipate both interest and relevance for all learners of all ages with all interests in all countries where the books are used. No course book can be all inclusive and the selection of texts and themes in *New Headway* addresses as wide an audience as possible without losing sight of course aims and objectives. Within these constraints the narrative texts selected at all three levels of *New Headway* can be considered in line with what is recommended in the literature.

No use is made of simplifications or abridgements and the extracts taken from books follow the guidelines suggested below by Cook (1986:164).

4.5.2.1 Text extracts

In Unit 2 of the *Advanced Level Student's Book* (pp. 23-25), two extracts are selected which are both "continuing" extracts, not introductory extracts as suggested by Cook (1986:164). Both texts were, however, chosen with care to not create "false texture" and the texts (one a listening extract from *The Importance of Being Earnest*, the other a written extract from *Fair Game*) both carry self-contained meaning and context in spite of being extracts. While both extracts do allude to information provided in preceding text, it is possible to make the necessary inferences from the extracts to make meaning without access to the complete text from which they had been taken. In the introduction to Unit 2 on p. 17 of the *Advanced Level Student's Book*, six very short extracts are provided. These were not selected with the aim to teach reading. These extracts are taken out of context and presented only as "teasers" to stimulate learner interest and to illustrate different book types and writing styles, which is exactly what they do.

Another aspect of text selection that carries much weight in the literature review is that of culture.

4.5.2.2 Cultural considerations in text selection

It is widely agreed in the literature that L2 students have a better understanding of texts based on their own culture than of texts based on other cultures (Burt & Dulay 1978:188; Carrell & Eisterhold 1983; Evans 1992:43; Hudson 1982; Paulston & Bruder 1976:160; Steffensen & Joag-Dev 1984:60). *New Headway*, however, is used in so many countries by learners of so many different cultures that it is not practical to try to incorporate narrative texts written from the view point of every possible learner culture. The shared cultural assumptions between writer and reader and the knowledge of social systems and ritual which allows a higher level of reader interaction with a text as suggested by Steffensen and Colker (1982) and Steffensen, Joag-Dev and Anderson (1979) are not possible in the arena of international ESL course books. For such course books to try to incorporate all cultures is more than can be reasonably expected.

Possibly due to the wide target field of *New Headway* the narrative input in the Elementary Level doesn't involve non-Western cultures at all and in the *Intermediate Level Student's Book*, only one narrative text in Unit 3, which tells the tale of the Emperor of China and his daughters, involves a non-Western context.

The *Advanced Level Student's Book* is more inclusive than the other two levels in this regard. Unit 1 has several narrative texts dealing with people from non-Western cultures immigrating to America and also to the United Kingdom. Unit 11 (p. 105) has a narrative text set in China, but the story is told from the point of view of a Western correspondent. It is interesting to note that all narrative texts in the *Advanced Level Student's Book* which deal with minority cultures pivot around the involvement and incorporation of those minority cultures into the target culture. This could be interpreted as the "cultural imperialism" warned against by Nguga wa Thiong'o (1986:225) but, as the authors of *New Headway* didn't select and include those texts with the express objective of teaching "culture", they are most likely not guilty of such transgression.

As suggested by Ranalli (2002:16) the authors seem to be clearly aware of the importance of culture in the selection of narrative texts for ESL course books. The texts

are mostly contemporary and characters are shown in contexts which are accurate reflections of the English-speaking culture, as suggested by Ghosn (2002:177).

All narrative texts on all three levels of *New Headway* used in this study were chosen in such a manner that they are not likely to give cultural offense, or to contain insurmountable cultural obstacles that might impede comprehension.

4.5.2.3 Difficulty level of selected texts

The authors seem to support Coady's (1979:12) suggestions in the literature review of this study that interesting enough subject matter should be provided together with strong semantic input and the necessary background knowledge. This does not imply an assumption on their part that background knowledge will enable understanding in spite of a lack of syntactic ability (Eskey 1988:96).

Narrative input steadily progresses in length and difficulty from the Elementary Level to the Advanced.

The first narrative input in the *Elementary Level Student's Book* is in the form of very simple biographies, on which learners are only expected to answer easy comprehension and comparison questions. By the time learners are asked to interact with the more difficult biographies in Unit 7, not only the earlier biographies, but also pages of grammar and vocabulary preparation make such interaction possible.

The same principle is applied throughout the Intermediate and Advanced Levels. In Unit 11 of the *Advanced Level Student's Book* (p. 105) a quite complicated listening text is presented in three parts. However, before learners are asked to interact with that text, the unit deals with the necessary geographical expressions, weather words, grammar points and schemata-building to prepare them adequately. At no stage are learners asked to interact with a narrative text too far beyond their level of ability. Not only are learners provided with the necessary background information to activate schemata, but they are also progressively led into and prepared for the language that appears in the narrative texts.

4.5.3 Language skills

The application of narrative input in teaching the four main language skills conforms to what is recommended in the literature and will subsequently be discussed skill by skill.

As in the rest of the study, vocabulary will be discussed under the same heading as the language skills.

It is also necessary to keep in mind that similar to many suggestions from the literature, findings discussed here under reading and writing also pertain to listening and speaking even if they are not repeated again under those headings.

4.5.3.1 Vocabulary

Narrative seems to be a little-used source of new vocabulary in *New Headway*. Three percent of new vocabulary items in the *Elementary Level Student's Book* and 0% in the *Intermediate Level* and *Advanced Level Student's Books* are derived from narrative input. This is in agreement with the input hypothesis and "incidental learning" of vocabulary as advocated by Krashen (1989:442), Miller (1941:665-666) and Spack (1985:721).

In many instances, narrative texts are preceded by the teaching of some unknown words from the reading or listening exercises, but those words are taught only to aid comprehension of the text, and are not listed as unit vocabulary in the table of contents of each level. This clarification of terms is consistent with what is suggested by Elley (1989:184), Gajdusek (1988:235), Nuttal (1982:76-77) and Povey (1979:167).

Overall, it seems that the intention of the authors was not to use narrative text as a vocabulary teaching tool.

With regard to the other language skills, there seems to be no formula for the allocation of time the authors devote to particular activities although all three levels allocate the most time to listening, followed by speaking, then reading followed by writing, or in the case of the Intermediate Level, writing followed by reading.

4.5.3.2 Reading

Reading narrative texts occupies 7%, 4% and 10% of lesson time in the *Elementary*, *Intermediate* and *Advanced Level Student's Books* respectively.

The objectives of a good reading programme suggested by Nuttal (1982:146) are met in the manner *New Headway* applies narrative text. Learners are taught skimming and scanning techniques; non-textual information is provided to aid comprehension; reading varies according to the purpose of the reading; readers are not caught up in word by word understanding of narrative texts and learn to skip words; learners are taught the use of discourse markers; learners are often asked to use inference in interacting with narrative texts; and learners are lead to respond to narrative text in a variety of ways.

As suggested by Aski (2000:495) narrative is used in *New Headway* as a source of authentic input and as a context for interaction, discussion and writing exercises.

In line with the integrated, communicative teaching of literature suggested in the current research (Marckwardt 1978), no lengthy translations or lecture style lessons are used for teaching reading in *New Headway*. The readings based on narrative are definitely not teacher-centred and allow learners to interact with the text on more than one level. The lesson plans provided in the Teacher's Books of each level are communicatively oriented and place the teacher in a facilitating role as suggested by Gajdusek (1988:241).

The good planning and systematic procedure which Gajdusek (1988:254) advocates to attain learner involvement and discovery by learners in reading narrative texts are amply provided in the step-by-step lessons provided in the Teacher's Book.

4.5.3.2.1 Dictionary use

The presentation of narrative reading texts in *New Headway* does from time to time refer learners to their dictionaries, but the "over-consultation" of dictionaries warned against by Povey (1979:172) and Nuttal (1982:70) is avoided. Dictionaries are used

prior to reading to clarify certain key vocabulary items that might impede comprehension. Through discouraging constant access to dictionaries during the reading, learners are aided in developing the ability to infer and the reading skills necessary to deal with unknown words.

4.5.3.2.2 Cloze exercises

New Headway often combines the teaching of narrative text with written and aural cloze exercises, focusing on shorter stretches of text as suggested by Carter (1986:112-113). This makes learners aware of the story as a whole, but also of the "immediate verbal context" referred to by Carter (ibid.). Cloze has value as a strategy to allow learners to guess meaning from context which further leads to improved grammatical awareness and control.

4.5.3.2.3 Reading strategies

As suggested by the literature Eskey and Grabe (1988:229) *New Headway* finds a balance between the teaching of bottom-up and top-down reading strategies.

All the content prediction strategies suggested in the literature (Carter 1986:111; Eskey & Grabe 1988:249-250; Long 1986:47 and Nuttal 1982:150) are applied in the teaching of narrative texts throughout all three levels of *New Headway*. Providing omitted parts of a narrative text, re-ordering scrambled narrative, cloze exercise, titling sections of narrative and completing conversations based on narrative are all used in conjunction with group discussion. The use of narrative texts with clear plot lines together with the step-by-step instructions and well-planned presentations provided in the Teacher's Books ensure the successful outcome of such exercises in line with what is advocated by Carter (1986:112).

The pre-reading activities applied with narrative readings in *New Headway* anticipate both linguistic and cultural problems, thus allowing learners genuine involvement with the narrative texts. In line with Povey's assertions (1979:173), *New Headway* uses pre-reading activities to introduce cultural difficulties and assumptions which otherwise

might impede comprehension during the reading of the narrative text. As suggested by Gajdusek (1988:234), the narrative pre-reading activities in *New Headway* don't "prescribe reactions" but rather stimulate classroom interaction, promote "word-attack skills" and encourage vocabulary growth.

4.5.3.2.4 Introducing narrative texts

New Headway never makes use of lecture-style introductions to narrative texts, and care is taken not to provide information in the introduction that should be derived from the narrative. The authors of *New Headway* follow Nuttal's (1982:154) guidelines by sometimes using the introduction to introduce new words, but mostly by using it to involve learners, relating the narrative to learners' interests and experiences through "Have you ever...?" type questions.

The longer narrative texts in *New Headway* are mostly broken into shorter parts, as proposed by Nuttal (1982:156). *New Headway* applies this breakdown of narrative texts not only to aid comprehension, but also to aid in the development of prediction skills.

The authors of *New Headway* make use of different methods to present narrative text, as suggested by Long (1986:47-54). This includes silent reading and pre-recorded reading. Also suggested by Long (ibid.) and applied in *New Headway* is using different presentation modes for separate parts of the narrative text and for different questions in order to hold learner interest.

As asserted by Povey (1979:173), *New Headway* never expects learners to pre-read narrative texts outside of the classroom. All reading is done in class time, which avoids over dependency on dictionaries, learner anxiety at possible comprehension problems, and also non-compliance – a lesson cannot be successful if half the learners are well prepared and the other half are not prepared at all.

4.5.3.2.5 Post-reading strategies

Most post-reading strategies endorsed in the research are employed by *New Headway*. Such post-reading strategies are thought valuable for integrating new knowledge gained from the narrative text with already existing schemata. Strategies used in *New Headway* include dramatization (Gajdusek (1988:252), discussions, writing activities and review of pre-reading predictions (Carrell 1988:248). Timelines are used by the authors as a strategy to clarify relationships between narrative events as recommended (Gajdusek 1988:244) and summary is used to facilitate interpretation and text engagement (Carter 1986:113-114). As suggested by Carter (ibid.:115) and Gajdusek (1988:252), *New Headway* makes use of debate and discussion of opposite viewpoints using narrative texts.

Learners are asked to do "guided re-writing" as suggested by Carter (1986:115-116), which is useful in aiding learners in recognizing the broader patterns of discourse in narrative texts as well as which styles are appropriate to them.

Of the suggestions made by Nuttal (1982:164) with regard to activities which should follow the reading of a narrative text, the following are applied by *New Headway*: personal responses are elicited from learners; the narrative content is linked to learners' own experiences; where extracts are used they are linked to the complete narrative work from which they were taken; learners are led to recognize cause and effect in narrative texts; learners are made aware of the chronological sequence of the text; learners are led to trace the development of thoughts or arguments through the narrative; a distinction is made between fact and opinion; learners are led to weigh textual evidence, and to recognize bias or differences of opinion in narrative texts; opportunity is created for discussing characters, incidents, ideas and arguments; learners are encouraged to speculate about what has happened before or will happen after the text or with regard to feelings and motive where these are not explicitly addressed in the text.

Those suggestions made by Nuttal (1982:164) which are not incorporated into *New Headway* are applicable to longer works of literature such as novels or complete plays are not suitable for the type of narrative text used in the course books. The same can be said for Gajdusek's (1988:245) proposed analysis of theme, style and structure.

4.5.3.2.6 The use of questions with narrative texts

As discussed by James (1987:184) the pre-reading questions applied in *New Headway* for teaching narrative are used as an aide to comprehension. Following the lesson plans provided in the Teacher's Book will keep learners from reading only in order to find answers. *New Headway* also uses pre-reading questions to create learner response to the narrative text which will be read (Long 1986:47).

In longer texts, the authors of *New Headway* make use of "signpost questions" as advocated by Nuttal (1982:158) to guide learners and to direct their focus to areas of importance in the text – not to test comprehension.

New Headway applies the suggestions by Gajdusek (1988:238) and Povey (1979:177) with regard to progression from factual questions to interpretative questions leading to eliciting learner response to the entire narrative text.

4.5.3.3 Writing

Within the practical confines of a course book, the authors of *New Headway* do seem to be aware of the close link proposed by the research between the teaching of literature and the teaching of writing (Moran 1981:29; Spack 1985:709). Writing exercises based on narrative texts occupy 3%, 6% and 4% of lesson time in the *Elementary*, *Intermediate* and *Advanced Level Student's Books* respectively. In the *Elementary Level Student's Book*, narrative is used to teach writing in three of the six units where narrative input is provided. In the Intermediate Level, four of six units and in the Advanced Level four of ten units where narrative input is used, engender writing. On average, more than half the units where narrative input is provided make use of that narrative input to teach writing.

Narrative based writing tasks in *New Headway* constantly ask learners to write for real readers in that feedback and sharing with the class are always present and exercises are aimed at the culmination of the writing process in learners' work being read by others. In this way the schema theoretic view of teaching learner writers to take their reading

audience into consideration, which is supported by many researchers (Moran 1981:21; Spack 1985:706), is incorporated into *New Headway*'s teaching of writing through narrative text.

New Headway's use of narrative to provide topics for writing tasks is in line with current research. It not only allows learners to write about a topic they have been personally involved in (Scott 1980:7), but stimulates creativity in learners (Harris & Mahon 1997:25; McKay 1982).

New Headway uses more structured exercises for narrative-based writing than the free response suggested by Boyle (1986:203), Preston (1982:489) and Spack (1985:711-712), but while not totally free writing, narrative-based writing in *New Headway* is not as structured as that suggested by Gajdusek (1988:253). The authors of *New Headway* balance the two approaches.

The use of literary journals as suggested by Spack (1985:718) is not really suitable for the shorter type of narrative texts used in *New Headway*.

4.5.3.4 Speaking

As mentioned earlier, the authors of *New Headway* do not seem to be following a set formula for the allocation of time devoted to particular activities, with oral activities derived from narrative ranging between 19% and 34% of time allocated in the Elementary Level, between 11% and 48% in the Intermediate Level and between 7% and 58% in the Advanced Level.

New Headway, being a communicatively based course, incorporates speaking in almost all narrative-based exercises, constantly aiming at creating opportunities for speaking. This approach is supported by Boyle (1986:206) who proposes the use of conversation and discussion generated by literary texts to develop oral skills.

4.5.3.5 Listening

In the Elementary Level, listening exercises based on narrative input range from 19% to 41% of the total unit time. In the Intermediate Level, it ranges from 11% to 52%, and in the Advanced Level from 8% to 65%.

New Headway follows suggestions by Boyle (1986:206) with regard to the use of listening texts, audio recordings, listening to story and eliciting similar responses to those elicited from written narratives.

4.5.4 Communicative competence

One of the main goals of communicative ESL classes is for learners to attain communicative competence, and the approach taken by *New Headway* is very much communicative.

The time allocated to language focus and the explicit development of grammatical competence ranges from 3% of total unit time to 43% of total unit time. There is, however, consistency in that Unit 6 of of the Elementary Level is the only unit where narrative input is provided with no time allocated to the development of grammatical competence.

While grammatical competence is the only aspect of communicative competence that is explicitly taught apart from the one exception in Unit 4 of the Advanced Level where 11% of unit time is allocated for the development of discourse competence, it has to be kept in mind that the communicative curriculum and the constant involvement of learners through speaking and listening, implicitly develops discourse competence, strategic competence and sociolinguistic competence.

4.6 Conclusion

Contrary to what was expected, *New Headway* does include literature in the form of narrative or story in accordance with suggestions made in the review of the current research in all three levels analysed. *New Headway* adheres to the standards set in Chapter 2 for the quality of ESL textbooks, for the presence of narrative in such textbooks and for the manner in which the narrative is exploited in order to most effectively teach vocabulary, the four main language skills and the main components of communicative competence in an integrated manner.

While authors might have done more with regard to the explicit development of the communicative competencies, learners are likely to show progressive improvement in those areas after completing each level of *New Headway*. This is an area that holds definite possibilities for further research.

Narrative texts in *New Headway* meet the suggestions made in the literature on narrative text selection and the way in which *New Headway* teaches those texts follows guidelines as to how best to teach the four language skills and the main components of communicative competence based on narrative input.

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

Before presenting the final conclusions, a short summary of the findings, an overview of the chapters and a review of the objectives of the study will be briefly discussed. A summary of the contributions made by this study and a discussion of the implications for further research generated by this study conclude the dissertation.

5.2 Summary of findings

An unexpectedly high percentage of narrative input was found on all three levels. Twenty-eight percent of general text input in the *Elementary Level Student's Book*, 13% of general text input in the *Intermediate Level Student's Book* and 45% of general text input in the *Advanced Level Student's Book* is narrative input. This narrative input was found to be selected and applied in accordance with what is suggested in the literature review.

Certain conclusions were made from the findings and at this stage the conclusions that were reached during the course of the dissertation will be reviewed.

5.3 Conclusions

This section consists of a review of the chapters of the dissertation, a review of the objectives that the study set out to achieve and of the hypotheses that were examined.

5.3.1 Overview

This study germinated from a desire to apply *Harry Potter* as core material in an ESL course, based on the possible advantages that literature could have in the ESL classroom. The subsequent difficulties in executing such a course focused attention on

the lack of a literature component in commercial ESL courses. It was hypothesized that mainstream ESL courses would probably not make up the deficit through the inclusion of literature in the form of narrative. The aim of this study was to expose a perceived shortcoming in commercial ESL courses.

Based on the above hypothesis, this study chose *New Headway* as the most prominent ESL course book commercially available, and set out to find how much narrative text is used in *New Headway* and how that narrative is applied.

In Chapter 2 the review of the current research focuses on the benefits of literature in ESL and highlights the similarities between literature, story and narrative, thus providing very convincing motivation for the use of literature in ESL teaching and for the inclusion of literature in the form of narrative or story in ESL textbooks. The chapter also provides guidelines for the most suitable narrative texts to use and for the communicative exploitation of narrative toward effectively teaching vocabulary, the four main language skills and the main components of communicative competence.

Chapter 3 is an in-depth discussion of methodology and of why case study and content analysis were chosen as the most suitable methods to execute this study. The research methodology, research instrument and procedures are discussed in great detail to provide evidence of the accuracy of the work and to enable other researchers to duplicate the study.

The input in *New Headway* course books was analyzed to determine whether it adheres to the standards set in the literature for the inclusion, selection and teaching of narrative texts. First all input was counted, after which general text input and narrative input were identified, and narrative input was established as a percentage of general text input. The narrative text was then further broken down into the main language skills and the main aspects of communicative competence to see how much time of the total unit time is spent on each in exercises derived from narrative input.

Chapter 4, which presented, discussed and analyzed the findings, determined that *New Headway* includes an exceptionally high level of narrative or story in all the levels analyzed in accordance with suggestions made in Chapter 2.

It was also found that the narrative texts included in *New Headway* continuously meet the suggestions made in the literature on the selection of narrative texts that are suitable for ESL teaching and that the manner in which *New Headway* teaches those texts consistently adheres to guidelines in the literature as to how best to teach the four language skills and the main components of communicative competence based on narrative input.

5.3.2 Objectives and hypotheses

This study has achieved its objective of ascertaining to what extent narrative text is incorporated in the *New Headway* series.

This study has also achieved its objective to see whether the narrative text in *New Headway* is applied according to what is suggested in the literature in terms of teaching vocabulary, the four main language skills and the main aspects of communicative competence.

The main hypothesis made at the beginning of this study is that there would be no correlation between theory as presented in the current literature, and practice in the incorporation of and application of narrative in ESL course books. This hypothesis, in the case of *New Headway* course books, was proven to be completely incorrect. Not only does *New Headway* include a high percentage of narrative text, but it also exploits the narrative text that is present to the full according to guidelines set in the current research.

The second hypothesis made at the onset of this study is that narrative will be used more in beginning level course books, and gradually be phased out as learners progress to higher levels. While it is true that the Elementary Level contains more narrative than the Intermediate Level, the hypothesis was proven false by the way in which the use of

narrative input progressed from 13% in the Intermediate Level to 45% in the Advanced Level. A possible reason for this hypothesis not proving true is that the Advanced Level was written far later than the Elementary and Intermediate Levels.

5.4 Summary of contributions

This study has shed light on the manner and the significant extent to which mainstream ESL course books incorporate and apply narrative text in accordance with current research findings.

While there are no outstanding theoretical implications, the findings of this study do hold practical implications with regard to text selection, classroom practice and curriculum design.

5.4.1 Text selection

The results of this study can guide teachers in making a more informed selection when choosing an ESL textbook. They show the inclusion and application of narrative text in accordance with the current research to be a major contributor to successful language learning. While *New Headway* is already an ESL market leader, this study will hopefully cause teachers who select *New Headway* to base their decision not simply on familiarity with the series through TEFL training and availability, but on the actual suitability of the series for ESL learners and the benefits that might be derived from the incorporation of a high percentage of narrative texts as input.

5.4.2 Teaching practice

Teachers in the field will benefit from these findings when designing lesson plans and when teaching. The results of this study are a good indication of how *New Headway* materials can either be augmented or adapted for learners to benefit optimally from the narrative elements in the course.

5.4.3 Curriculum development

The fact that the level of *New Headway* that was most recently written contains the highest percentage of narrative text points to the authors of *New Headway* already incorporating narrative text as widely as possible. This study will hopefully consolidate this inclination toward narrative with those authors who already apply it. Other and newer curriculum designers might also be steered toward making the most of the narrative texts that are included in their course books, and also to consider the inclusion of even more narrative texts in order to derive as much benefit as possible from the inherent story grammar in such texts.

The findings of this study might even lead curriculum developers to consider incorporating a continuous narrative in their courses, such as that found in the course presented by the Povey Centre at Unisa.

5.5 Limitations

The limitations of this study lie mainly in it being a case study, meaning that while one instance, namely three levels of *New Headway*, is chosen and examined, all other instances of the same class, thus all other levels of *New Headway* and all other EFL text books, might or might not show different results from those found in this study.

As discussed earlier, most current major ESL course books follow the same broad pattern with regard to content and methodology, but while similar results can most likely be expected from other course books, it remains generalization.

This study does not attempt to prove the effectiveness of *New Headway*, but simply to investigate the adherence of *New Headway* to guidelines set by current research. Measuring the improvement of learners, and thus the effectiveness of the course book, might prove very interesting, but that is not the aim of this study.

The *New Headway* series has a widely developed Internet resource bank available for lesson by lesson use with the *New Headway* books. This study does not take Internet

resources into account as it is likely that many learners do not have access to electricity, computers or the Internet. While it is possible that additional narrative materials may be presented on the Internet pages, they are not taken into account here.

The bibliography contains many sources that may be considered dated. However, there are not many very recent sources that add significant new insights to the topic of using literature and/or narrative to teach ESL. While some more recent sources are readily available, they were not used in this study as they contribute very little to what has been established in the more dated sources cited in the bibliography and in the review of the literature in Chapter 2. It would seem that authors and researchers in the field have moved on to different focus points.

5.6 Implications for further research

While it would be interesting to see whether the other levels of *New Headway* which were not used in this study conform to the findings, a more useful and enlightening study would be to compare the findings of this study to similar analyses of other leading ESL course books to determine which make the most effective use of narrative input.

Another study worthy of consideration by field researchers would be to measure learners' progress in each of the skill areas, as well as in the main aspects of communicative competence after completion of each of the levels of *New Headway*.

5.7 Conclusion

The results of this study are surprising and are sure to influence the manner in which I approach the teaching of narrative in future. My confidence in *New Headway* as a pedagogically sound ESL course which subscribes to the suggestions made in the current research was resoundingly restored.

Weighing the evidence as presented in Chapter 2 of this study, it is clear that incorporating the reading of literature into EFL/ESL courses is not only desirable, but necessary. At the onset of this study, the benefits of a full literature component in ESL,

even full integration of literature into existing language courses, was my ideal. My investigation into a perceived lack of narrative text in ESL course books was meant to draw attention to a major weakness in those courses.

Contrary to my predictions, the authors of *New Headway* (and by implication other mainstream ESL course books) do lean heavily on the inclusion of carefully selected narrative texts. These narrative texts, when presented according to pedagogically sound principles as they are in *New Headway*, offer the same type of benefits that the teaching of literature can, but under conditions optimally suited for ESL users. Not only does *New Headway* use narrative texts to a far greater extent than even a user of the course like myself was aware of, but it does so with a very clear understanding of the heterogeneity of its end-users.

With the amount of research, planning and revision that goes into ESL course books such as *New Headway*, authors of ESL courses are shown by this study to be very aware of the research regarding the use of literature in ESL classes. The authors of *New Headway* address the literature scarcity through widely incorporating narrative texts which carry the same story grammar as literature and are therefore likely to convey the same benefits as literature, but are more suited to the constraints and learner needs unique to the ESL arena.

To return to my original aim of using *Harry Potter*, the data and considerations yielded by this study compel me to continue in my attempts to teach novels in an integrative manner together with ESL courses such as *New Headway*. Teaching at a language school in a specific country to specific learners frees me from the constraints the authors of *New Headway* work under. I only have to take the learners in my class, and their particular culture and background into consideration. Selecting a novel that is suitable and planning lessons to teach that novel in an integrated manner with an existing ESL course, become very plausible under the circumstances. While the probable economical and logistical causes for the resistance to such use of literature in ESL language schools remain relevant, I hope that the case for literature built by this study may contribute toward breaking down the barriers.

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APPENDIX A

TABLES OF CONTENTS FOR ELEMENTARY, INTERMEDIATE AND ADVANCED LEVEL STUDENT'S BOOKS

ELEMENTARY LEVEL STUDENT'S BOOK
TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL STUDENT'S BOOK
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ADVANCED LEVEL STUDENT'S BOOK
TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPENDIX B

EXAMPLE OF COMPLETED COUNTING SHEET: ADVANCED LEVEL STUDENT'S BOOK - UNIT 12

ADVANCED LEVEL

Unit 12

Total amount of time: 3 hours (4 academic hours)

Input	black
General text input	**blue**
Narrative input	**pink**

Number of words general input:

p. 109	nr 1	24 words
	nr 2	18 words
	nr 3 (T12.1)	72 words (30 + **242**)
	nr 4	21 words
p. 110	nr 1	43 words
	nr 2	28 words
	nr 3	17 words
	nr 4	917 words (22 + **52** + **277** + **239**+ **88** + **121** + **118**)
	nr 5	118 words
p. 111	WdyT	130 words (96 + **34**)
p. 112	LF	118 words
	nr 1	353 words (8 + **345**)
	nr 2	13 words
p. 113	nr 3	173 words
	nr 4 (T12.3)	476 words (22 + **235** + **219**)
p. 114	nr 1	29 words
	nr 2	15 words
	nr 3	39 words
	nr 4 (T12.4)	1090 words (37 + **271** + **224** + **389** + **169**)
	nr 5	105 words
	WdyT	50 words
p. 115	nr 1	196 words
	nr 2	49 words
	nr 3	26 words
p. 116	nr 1	41 words
	nr 2	225 words (63 + **162**)
	nr 3	51 words
	nr 4	8 words
	Writing	8 words

p. 131	nr 1	128 words (24+104)
	nr 2	297 words (33 + 264)
	nr 3	82 words
	nr 4	167 words (28 + 139)

TOTAL 5327 words

Number of words general text input:

p. 109	nr 3 (T12.1)	242 words
p. 110	nr 4	895 words
p. 111	WdyT(T12.2)	34 words
p. 112	nr 1	345 words
p. 113	nr 4 (T12.3)	454 words
p. 114	nr 4 (T12.4)	1053 words
p. 116	nr 2	162 words
p. 131	nr 1	104 words
	nr 2	264 words
	nr 4	139 words

TOTAL 3692 words
(69% of total input)

Number of words narrative input:

p. 113	nr 4	454 words (235 + 219)
p. 131	nr 2	264 words

TOTAL 1107 words
(30% of general text input)

Number of vocabulary items from general input:

p. 115	nr 2	24 items
	nr 3	12 items

TOTAL 36 items

Number of vocabulary items from narrative input:

p. 109 - 116 0 items **(0% of unit vocabulary)**

Breakdown of applications of narrative input

Language Skills

Reading exercises

p. 113	nr 4	5 minutes
p. 131	nr 2	5 minutes
	nr 3	5 minutes

TOTAL 15 minutes
(8% of unit time)

Writing exercises

p. 113	nr 4	10 minutes
p. 131	nr 1	5 minutes
	nr 4	20 minutes

TOTAL 35 minutes
(19% of unit time)

Speaking exercises

p. 113	nr 4	5 minutes
p. 131	nr 1	5 minutes
	nr 2	2 minutes
	nr 3	2 minutes

TOTAL 14 minutes
(8% of unit time)

Listening exercises

p. 113	nr 4	5 minutes
p. 131	nr 1	5 minutes
	nr 2	2 minutes
	nr 3	2 minutes

TOTAL 14 minutes
(8% of unit time)

Communicative Competencies

Development of grammatical competence

p. 113 nr 4 5 minutes **TOTAL 15 minutes (8% of unit time)**

Development of discourse competence

p. 109 - 116 0 minutes (0% of unit time)

Development of strategical competence

p. 109 - 116 0 minutes (0% of unit time)

Development of sociolinguistical competence

p. 109 - 116 0 minutes (0% of unit time)

Narrative input from additional sources

Additional narrative input from Teacher's Book

p. 106 - 111 0 words
p. 153 200 words

Additional narrative input from Teacher's Resource Book

p. 74 - 79 0 words

Additional narrative input from Workbook

p. 75 317 words (149 + 168)