

Reading Passages and Skills in Jordanian High School and University EFL Textbooks: A Comparative Analytical Study

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Abstract—The study aimed to examine the appropriateness of the reading content in Action Pack 11 (AP11) which is taught for grade 11, Action Pack 12 (AP12) that is taught for grade 12 at the schools of The Jordanian Ministry of Education and New Headway Plus Pre-intermediate (NHWP) that is taught for Communication Skills (LC 099) at Yarmouk University. The researcher analyzed the types of reading passages and the reading skills taught by the reading exercises in the three textbooks, The content analysis of the reading passages showed no significant differences between the three textbooks and that three textbooks exposed the students more to the descriptive and expository types of passages than to the narrative passages and that the persuasive passages were almost excluded. Furthermore, the analysis of the reading skills showed that “pre-reading activities, skimming, and activities of locating details” were the dominant reading tasks in the secondary stage textbooks whereas “following-up activities that lead to writing, scanning, locating details, and identifying main ideas” were the dominant reading tasks in the university- level textbook (NHWP). The study recommended that a better communication between universities and schools should be established to bridge the reading gap.

Index Terms—reading comprehension, content analysis, reading skills, postsecondary reading

I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Reading is one of the most important skills that are highly appreciated in any community. Levine, Ferenz, and Revez (2000) state that “The ability to read academic texts is considered one of the most important skills that university students of English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) need to acquire”. Without adequate reading comprehension, students pursuing higher education are vulnerable to failure (Giuliano and Sullivan, 2007). Ideally, students who graduate from high school should have the ability to read the postsecondary material. However, this is not often the case. Although secondary school graduates may be able to successfully study the high school course content, a number of them may not be able to handle the kind of textbooks they encounter at the university level.

Reading comprehension is considered a prerequisite for successful learning. If there is a gap in secondary school and university textbook requirements, students will suffer from a deficiency in their performance. If such a gap exists, students of successful secondary school could appear to be unprepared since their reading skills are insufficient for postsecondary texts. Thus, it is essential to ensure that students’ reading be efficient and that all reading material be at an appropriate level of difficulty; that is, it must be neither too difficult for the students nor too easy to provide challenging practice (Leslie and Caldwell, 1997).

Although English in Jordan has received a great emphasis and although reading is the core of Jordan’s EFL curriculum in schools and universities, many university students in Jordan complain about the difficulty of the reading component in EFL courses. In spite of the educational and financial support, there is an observable weakness on the part of students in the reading comprehension skills. Jordanian universities have a series of compulsory courses which all aim to improve the students’ ability in the four main skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. One of these courses is the English Language Course (LC) 099 which is the first introductory EFL course students study at the university in case the student could not pass an EFL proficiency test. A person may know the importance of a course like LC 099 once he notices the huge numbers of freshman students enrolled in the sections of this course. For example, in the first semester of the academic year 2011/2012, 2711 students distributed into 35 sections studied the course.

By teaching LC 099, universities exert an effort on the improvement of reading comprehension. In spite of this emphasis on reading comprehension, many instructors of English in the Jordanian universities complain that there is an observable weakness in reading comprehension skills on the part of the students who fail to deal with the whole text as a unit. This weakness impairs their utilization of texts within and outside the academic context (Al Haddad, 1996).

This deficiency in reading comprehension may be attributed to many factors among which is the reading material and how reading material and reading skills are presented in the textbooks at high school and university. According to

Armbruster and Anderson (1988), reading comprehension is affected by various factors including text structure, vocabulary load, appropriateness of the reading material, and the background knowledge.

Educators are responsible for determining the appropriate reading level for students and monitor how well students comprehend the books they read. Students' success with books, their areas of interest, their backgrounds, their ability to meet academic challenges, and other factors provide the data educators need to guide book selection and make sure that students get the greatest benefit from their reading. One way to evaluate the appropriateness of the reading material to the level of the students is content analysis. Content Analysis is a systematic, objective research method used to evaluate texts in order to analyze words, terms, concepts, themes, phrases, paragraphs, characters, items, concepts, semantics, or sentences within texts for the purpose of identifying the frequency of the subject's presence there (Palmquist, 2005).

Presley (2008) states that one characteristic differentiates content analysis from other types of analyses that is the attempt to meet the standards of the scientific method. The literature in the area of reading textbook analysis is very vast. A large number of studies have been done on textbook analysis in Jordan or elsewhere. Unfortunately, very little research has actually examined the reading material of high school in contrast to those of university to determine if there is a gap between them. This lack of studies in this field has led the researchers to investigate the types of the reading content and the balance of the reading skills in Action Pack 11 (Hereafter AP11) and Action Pack 12 (hereafter AP12), taught for grades eleven and twelve in the schools of The Ministry of Education in Jordan, and in New Headway Plus Pre-Intermediate (hereafter NHWP) that is taught for LC 099 course at Yarmouk University.

A. *Statement of the Problem*

In Jordan many university students suffer from deficiency in their reading skills. Such deficiency in the students' reading can be attributed to different factors including the preparation of the students at school and the gap between the school and the university textbooks. To ascertain whether the gap is purely a performance gap or whether there is also a textual gap requires that reading passages and skills be studied.

This study addressed the following questions:

1. What types of reading passages are presented in Action Pack 11 and Action Pack 12 in Contrast to Those Presented in New Head Way Plus Textbook?
2. What is the relative balance of the reading skills that appear in AP11, AP 12, and NHWP textbooks?

B. *Purpose of the Study*

This study aimed at finding out how the secondary school EFL curriculum in Jordan prepares students for university level reading skills. In other words, the study aimed to analyze the types of the reading content and the balance of the reading skills in Action Pack 11 which is taught for grade 11, Action Pack 12 that is taught for grade 12 at the schools of The Jordanian Ministry of Education and New Head Way Plus that is taught for LC 099 at Yarmouk University.

C. *Significance of the Study*

The findings of this study are significant for those who are concerned with selecting EFL courses and evaluating and developing students' proficiency in reading comprehension in secondary schools and at universities. Moreover, this study came out with results and recommendations for textbook selection and for the teaching of reading comprehension at this critical stage in order to make learners' transition from school to university smoother.

Furthermore, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, no study has been conducted in the Jordanian EFL situation that tackles the relation between the reading material in school textbooks and in university textbooks. No study has tackled whether or not the types of the reading content and the balance of the reading skills in Action Pack 12 prepare students to university reading demands. Therefore, it was a primary purpose of this study to identify the extent to which Action Pack 11 and Action Pack 12 prepare students for the university reading demands. Such a study provided essential data about the alignment between the reading content in Action Pack series and New Head Way Plus.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The current study investigated the types of the reading passages and the balance of the reading skills presented in the Jordanian secondary stage EFL textbooks (Action Pack 11 and Action Pack 12) and in an EFL textbook taught for first year students at Yarmouk University (New Headway Plus Pre-intermediate). This stage involves students who move from secondary school (high school) to postsecondary education and known as "Transition to postsecondary education".

As students progress through grades, increased proficiency in reading skills is needed in order for them to match with the growing demands of the curriculum. The secondary school provides the last opportunity for most students to obtain guidance in reading proficiency. Macklin (1978) indicates that reading instruction at the secondary level might be perceived as helping the reader to acquire information and develop specific techniques needed for handling the reading materials in each discipline. Chall (1983) presents a detailed understanding of the distinction between teaching reading in different academic stages. He believes that high school students need to learn to read for multiple viewpoints, which include critical reading for comprehension of various ideas presented in the text. At this level of reading, basic facts and ideas are presented, then additional facts and ideas from opposing or corresponding views are also given. The high

school reader must connect various facts and ideas to gain complete understanding of the text. According to Chall, students who are not proficient readers because of weak development during the previous stages struggle because they cannot deal with assimilation of print recognition, idea acquisition, layers of facts, various theories, and multiple viewpoints.

Chall (1983) adds that college students, on the other hand, should read to construct and reconstruct ideas, including comprehension through analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information presented by the author. This stage of reading development forces the reader to master selective reading skills. The reader "...knows what not to read, as well as what to read". As students read what authors write, they access previous knowledge, select similar experiences, and construct new knowledge or reconstruct previous knowledge. When readers have broad general knowledge of the text, they read quickly, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating as they speed through the text. However, if the text addresses an unfamiliar topic, the student will read at a slower more deliberate pace. The student determines the pace for reading and quantity of material to read. They determine the quality of reading through the process of "...high level abstraction and generality".

Many studies in the Jordanian context and other contexts used content analysis to analyze EFL textbooks but a few studies were completely devoted to analyzing the reading content of EFL textbooks. Masri (2006) investigated the readability level of the tenth grade EFL textbook (Jordan Opportunities) in reference to the reading abilities of the 10th grade students in Tafila Directorate of Education. The results of the study showed that the readability level of Jordan Opportunities was very low (12.7). It was in the frustration level, which means that the students were not able to understand the passages even with the help of the teacher.

Ababneh (2007) analyzed the content of Jordan opportunities and investigated the teachers' and supervisors' perspectives concerning its content. He found that the tasks, grammar and reading tasks had the highest frequency and percentage among the other elements. Overall, the study found that there was an agreement on the suitability of Jordan Opportunities for the tenth grade Jordanian students.

Ghabashneh (2010) analyzed the content of Action Pack 11 in light of several criteria and interviewed five members of the Jordanian Reviewing and Adaptation Committee to find out what criteria they employed when reviewing Action Pack for the eleventh grade. The findings showed that the activities of grammar, vocabulary, and the four language skills in the student's textbook were well stated, varied and sequenced. The focus was on the productive skills and that speaking was integrated with listening on one hand, and writing was integrated with reading on the other hand. The analysis of the workbook exercises revealed that there was focus on grammar, vocabulary and only reading and writing of the four skills. Teacher's book was found to be presenting guidance which ranged between excellent and good. The listening material was found to be clear, suitable, authentic and realistic to students' lives. Furthermore, the study indicated that the members of the Review and Adaptation Committee followed certain criteria that corresponded with the researcher's criteria when reviewing the textbook.

Regarding the text of reading material, many aspects of the text might make the reading process difficult. Although the language of the text is known to be the major variable, there are other factors like aspects of text content, text type, text organization, and sentence structure. For instance, it is generally assumed that abstract texts will be harder to understand than texts describing real objects. The text will also be more readable if it is more concrete, imaginable and interesting. Certain types of texts are more suitable for specific ages and purposes than other types.

Upon reviewing literature, it was found that the term text type has been used interchangeably with other terms such as genre, text structure, discourse type, and rhetorical structure. Meyer and Freedle (1984) pointed out that different discourse types would affect readers' expectations differently during reading. Commenting on the interaction among types of organizational structure and reader expertise, Meyer and Freedle stated that "their interaction affects the mechanisms of cognitive processing that form a representation in the reader's mind" (P.45). Steen (1999) uses text types in the sense of the traditional four-part rhetorical categories of narrative, exposition, description, and argumentative.

Narrative and expository texts are the most commonly used types of texts in textbooks. Narrative texts are stories written to entertain; the most common element found in narrative texts are characters, event sequences and themes. In contrast, expository texts are materials written to communicate information, to help readers learn something. Examples of expository texts are newspaper and magazine articles and manuals (Gordon, 1990). The National Assessment Governing Board in America NAGB (2008) suggests that expository text presents information, provides explanations and definitions, and compares and contrasts". Argumentative and persuasive text "seeks to influence through appeals and directs readers to specific goals or specific beliefs" (P.10).

Barton (1997) assumes that narrative text is the most common text type in which instruction occurs in the early grades. He indicates that as children progress through the primary grades, they increasingly encounter expository texts and by high school, they spend the majority of their instructional time reading expository texts. Barton (1997) noted that exposition is the primary mode of discourse in academic texts because textbooks in general are aimed to inform their readers.

Empirical evidence indicates that for most students, expository reading poses a greater challenge than does narrative reading. Although many factors contribute to the difficulty students experience with expository reading, Saenz and

Fuchs (2002) indicates that the four most commonly cited difficulties are text structure, conceptual density, vocabulary knowledge and prior knowledge.

Other studies proved that text type affects students' reading achievement. Shin (2002) examined the relative effects of subskills and text types on reader performance simultaneously. The Results showed the effects of having various numbers of text types and subskills on the scores on this reading test.

Regarding reading comprehension skills, they are perceived by Holloway (1999) as essential to the academic achievement of middle and high school students. Revising the related literature of reading comprehension skills shows that there is no consensus among the writers in considering the reading comprehension skill as a global skill or distinct subskills. Abbot and Wingard (1981) pinpointed the following subskills of reading comprehension: anticipating form and content, identifying the main ideas, recognizing and recalling specific details, recognizing the relationship between the main ideas and their expansions, following a sequence, inferring information from the text, drawing conclusions, and recognizing the writer's purpose and attitude.

Many studies have attempted to discover whether reading is composed of subskills that might relate to one another within a taxonomy of skills. There are many taxonomies that have been drawn varying in length from three to four skills to long lists comprising thirty or forty reading subskills. However, there is little consensus in the content of these taxonomies as pointed out by Williams and Moran (1989). An example of such taxonomies is that of Spearitt (1972) who claimed there were four separate subskills in reading: recalling word meaning, drawing inferences from the content, recognizing a writer's purpose, and following the structure of the passage.

Greenall and Swan (1992) suggest another division of reading comprehension skills which includes: extracting main ideas, reading for specific information, understanding text organization, predicting, checking information, inferring, dealing with unfamiliar words, knowing the function of linking words, understanding complex sentences, understanding writer's style, evaluating the text, and writing summaries.

Heinrichs and LaBranche (1986) analyzed the content of 47 textbooks (14 reading skills texts, 6 learning skills texts, 13 combined reading and study skills texts, 6 specialty texts, and 8 resource and supplementary texts) with a reading and learning skills checklist. This checklist consisted of two main categorized content and organization with each category having sub-categories. The content part included vocabulary, main idea and details, speed reading, reading comprehension, critical reading, patterns of organization, note taking, study systems, memory, test taking, content areas, reasoning/ problem solving, and library/ dictionary skills. The organization part of the checklist contained reading passages, instructors' manual, answers, index, glossary, and overall quality. The results showed that vocabulary was included in almost all of the texts, with reading comprehension and critical reading often included. Reading speed was taught about 60% as often as comprehension and critical thinking. A few books covered note-taking. Heinrichs and LaBranche concluded that none of the studied textbooks was right for every person. Besides, reading and studying skills for particular content areas were very high and that few textbooks examined were inclusive.

Liyang (1995) analyzed the textbook "Integrated Reading and Writing" which was taught for a pre-session course at the University of Reading. The analysis included the frequency of reading skills trained through 103 reading tasks designed in the textbook. The analysis categorized the reading skills into main idea, scanning, skimming, structure, follow-up, pre-reading and, vocabulary. The study found that 33% of the tasks in the textbook were designed to train the skills of reading text or parts of the text more slowly and carefully to extract all the relevant information. That was about as many tasks as those designed to train the skills of skimming and scanning. The Skill of understanding unknown words was also practiced in 15% of the tasks. On the other hand, a questionnaire which the researcher administered to the students and the teachers showed that there was a gap between what the book presents and what teachers think in one hand and what students think they need on the other hand, as students rated skimming and selective reading as the most important part of their English for Academic Purposes (EAP) reading.

Other researchers studied the extent school textbooks facilitate the processes of transition to the university reading courses. Sidek (2011) examined how well the Malaysian EFL secondary reading curriculum prepares students for tertiary reading in English. The findings showed an emphasis on reading, types of reading task, and the levels of cognitive demands of reading tasks indicated that the curriculum only partially prepares secondary school students for tertiary reading in EFL. Williamson (2008) examined whether 11th- and 12th-grade students' exposure to high school texts sufficiently prepares them for textual material they might encounter in their postsecondary endeavours. The study demonstrated substantial differences between the materials that high school students are expected to read and the materials they may encounter after high school. High school material reflected a substantially higher text demand from students in the postsecondary lives.

III. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

A. *Instruments of the Study*

The researcher applied the content analysis tool in order to analyze the reading content in AP11, AP12, and NHWP. The analysis included the Student's Book in each of the three textbooks.

B. *Choice of the Textbook Level for Analysis*

For a number of reasons, the reading content in grade 11, grade 12, and LC 099 were chosen as the levels of textbooks to analyze. Grade 11 and 12 make the secondary stage in the Jordanian educational system. On the other hand, LC 099 is the first EFL course that the majority of the university freshmen study if compared to other courses. The period including the secondary stage and university first year represents the transition from school to university. The researchers were interested in this stage when they planned their research as this stage is a crucial one in the students' academic life and it has not been studied as shown by the literature review. Therefore, it is hoped that this study presents an insight into some aspects of this stage by investigating the appropriateness and the difficulty level of the reading content in the textbooks under study.

C. Criteria of Analysis

The criteria of analysis in this research study were:

- 1- the extent of incorporating the text types (narrative, expository, descriptive, and argumentative) in the books.
 - 2- the extent of incorporating different types of reading skills presented in the reading activities of the textbooks.
- After revising the documents related to teaching reading in the secondary stage and in Yarmouk University Language Centre and having revised the previous literature on reading skills in this stage, the researchers adopted Liying's (1995) scheme that classifies the reading skills into (pre-reading, skimming, scanning, vocabulary, details, main idea, passage structure, writer's purpose, follow-up activities, reading aloud).

D. Unit and Category of Analysis

The reading texts and activities served as the units of analysis in the study. The units of analysis were coded precisely as they appeared in the books. The categories of analysis were the text types and skills trained by the reading activities.

E. Validity of the Content Analysis

To establish the validity of content analysis, the researchers defined the concepts operationally, prepared the criteria, units and the categories for analyzing the three books. The researchers consulted some experts in the field of language teaching who had experience in content analysis and there was agreement among the experts on the procedure. The second analyst who assisted the researchers in analyzing the textbooks in order to establish reliability of the content analysis suggested adding "reading aloud" to the categories of analyzing the reading skills which he noticed upon surveying the textbook.

F. Reliability of the Content Analysis

To establish the intra-rater reliability of the content analysis, one of the researchers analyzed the reading content of the textbooks under study according to the categories of the study and he repeated the analysis after two weeks using the same units and categories of analysis. To achieve the inter-rater reliability, Scott coefficient was used to compute the consistency coefficient between the two analyses carried out by the same researcher himself. The reliability coefficient of the whole analysis was 0.94 which is considered high. Table 1 shows the inter-rater reliability coefficient.

To establish the inter-rater Reliability: Another analyst was asked to conduct the analysis using the same categories and units of analysis. The second analyst is a PhD holder in TEFL and used content analysis as a main instrument in his dissertation study. The two analyses were done separately on all the activities, text types, and comprehension questions under study. The inter-rater reliability coefficient was calculated. The results are presented in Table 1. The inter-rater reliability coefficient was 0.93 which is considered high.

TABLE 1:
SCOTT COEFFICIENT FOR THE CONSISTENCY OF THE ANALYSES OF THE READING CONTENT IN AP11, AP12, AND NHWP

Book	Dimension	Intra-rater	Inter-rater
AP 11	Reading Texts	1.00	1.00
	Reading Skills	0.91	0.94
	Comprehension Questions	0.95	0.88
	Total	0.95	0.94
AP 12	Reading Texts	1.00	1.00
	Reading Skills	0.90	0.90
	Comprehension Questions	0.89	0.89
	Total	0.93	0.93
NHWP	Reading Texts	0.95	0.95
	Reading Skills	0.90	0.90
	Comprehension Questions	0.93	0.93
	Total	0.93	0.93
Grand Total		0.94	0.93

G. Data Analysis

To answer the research questions, the researcher applied statistical analysis to the questions.

The answer of the first research question is divided into two parts:

1. To answer the first part, the researcher calculated the frequencies for the types of the texts included in the study (narrative, descriptive, expository, and persuasive). In addition, the statistical method of chi square (χ^2) cross tabulation was used to determine if *AP11*, *AP12*, and *NHWP* differ in the proportions of the four text types.

2. To answer the second part, the frequencies and percentages of the four text types included in the study (narrative, descriptive, expository, and persuasive) in the three textbooks were classified into secondary stage (*AP11* and *AP12*) and university stage (*NHWP*). Chi square (χ^2) cross tabulation was used to determine if the secondary stage textbooks and the university stage textbook differ in the proportions of the four text types.

The answer of the second question:

1. To answer the first part, the researcher calculated the frequencies for the types of the reading skills included in the reading activities of the textbooks under study (Pre-reading, Skimming, Scanning, Vocabulary, Details, Main Idea, Passage structure, Writer's Purpose, Follow-up Activities, and Reading Aloud). In addition, the statistical method of chi square (χ^2) cross tabulation was used to determine if *AP11*, *AP12*, and *NHWP* differ in the proportions of the reading skills.

2. To answer the second part, the frequencies and percentages of the reading skills included in the study (Pre-reading, Skimming, Scanning, Vocabulary, Details, Main Idea, Passage structure, Writer's Purpose, Follow-up Activities, and Reading Aloud) in the three textbooks were classified into secondary stage (*AP11* and *AP12*) and university stage (*NHWP*). Chi Square (χ^2) cross tabulation was used to determine if the secondary stage textbooks and the university stage textbook differ in the proportions of the reading skills. It is worth mentioning here that in all applications of the Chi Square (χ^2), the 0.05 level of significance was established.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Results Related to the First Question

The first research question was “**What types of reading passages are reflected in Action Pack 11 and Action Pack 12 in contrast to those reflected in New Headway Plus Pre-intermediate?**” The results of this question are presented in two parts, the textbook level and the stage level.

First: textbook level

To answer this question, one of the researchers analyzed the reading content of the Student's book of *Action Pack 11*, *Action Pack 12*, and *New Headway Plus* in light of the types of reading texts and the percentage of these texts each of the textbook includes. In this analysis, the unit of analysis was the text and the text type (narrative, descriptive, expository, and persuasive) was the category of analysis. The three textbooks contained varied numbers of reading texts as follows: *AP11* included 10 reading passages. *AP12* included 11 reading passages, and *NHWP* included 22 reading passages. The total of 43 reading passages was obtained from the three textbooks.

Frequencies of the texts were calculated according to their types in addition to calculating the percentages of these texts in each of the textbooks. Chi Square was used to determine if there was a relation between the three textbooks and the occurrence of the four text types among them. These data are reported in Table 2.

TABLE 2:
FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF THE TEXT TYPES IN THE AP11, AP12 AND NHWP AND RESULTS OF X2 TEST OF INDEPENDENCE REGARDING TEXTBOOK

Text Book	Statistic	Text Type				Total
		Narrative	Descriptive	Expository	Persuasive	
<i>AP11</i>	Count	2	5	3	0	10
	% within Text Book	20.0	50.0	30.0	0.0	100.0
<i>AP12</i>	Count	1	5	5	0	11
	% within Text Book	9	45.5	45.5	0.0	100.0
<i>NHWP</i>	Count	5	9	7	1	22
	% within Text Book	22.7	40.9	31.8	4.5	100.0
Total	Count	8	19	15	1	43
	% within Text Book	18.6	44.2	34.9	2.3	100.0
χ^2		N of Cases		Df	Sig.	
2.315		43		6	0.889	

Table 2 shows that there is no relation between the three textbooks and the type of reading text which indicates that the distribution of the noticed frequencies corresponds with the expected frequencies. It can be noticed that the individual percentages of the text types across the three textbooks were very close except with very slight differences.

Table 2 also shows that reading text types were presented in the following order according to their inclusion (Descriptive, expository, narrative, and persuasive), descriptive and expository texts were dominant in the three textbooks, descriptive texts had the highest occurrence across the three textbooks, and that persuasive texts were not incorporated in *AP11* and *AP12* and appeared only once in *NHWP*.

Second: Stage level

Frequencies of the texts were calculated according to their types in addition to calculating the percentages of these texts in each of the stages (university, secondary). Chi Square was used to determine if there was a relation between the two stages and the occurrence of the four text types among them. . These data are reported in Table 3.

TABLE 3:
FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF THE TEXT TYPES IN THE SECONDARY AND UNIVERSITY STAGE TEXTBOOKS AND RESULTS OF X2 TEST OF INDEPENDENCE REGARDING STAGE

Stage	Statistic	Text Type				Total
		Narrative	Descriptive	Expository	Persuasive	
Secondary	Count	3	10	8	0	21
	% within stage	14.3	47.6	38.1	0.0	100.0
University	Count	5	9	7	1	22
	% within stage	22.7	40.9	31.8	4.5	100.0
Total	Count	8	19	15	1	43
	% within stage	18.6	44.2	34.9	2.3	100.0
χ^2		N of Cases		Df	Sig.	
1.597		43		3	0.660	

Table 3 shows the frequencies and percentages of the four text types across the two stages produced insignificant Chi Square Value that does not indicate the existence of a relation in the appearance and distribution of the four text types across the two stages. Table 3 also indicates that the reading text types in the two stages were presented in the following order according to their inclusion (Descriptive, expository, narrative, and persuasive). The persuasive reading text type was not incorporated in the secondary stage textbooks and appeared only once in the university textbook.

B. Discussion of the Results of the First Question

The first question asks about the types of reading passages in “Action Pack 11”, “Action Pack 12”, and “New Headway Plus Pre-intermediate”.

The results of this question showed that there were no significant differences between the three textbooks in light of the types of reading texts exposed in each textbook. The results also showed that the reading text types were presented in the following order according to their inclusion (Descriptive, expository, narrative, and persuasive), descriptive and expository texts were dominant in the three textbooks, descriptive texts had the highest occurrence across the three textbooks, and that persuasive texts were not incorporated in AP11 and AP12 and appeared only once in NHWP.

Stage wise, the results of this question indicated that reading text types in the two stages (secondary stage and university level) were presented in the same order according to their inclusion, and that the persuasive reading text type was not incorporated in the secondary stage textbooks and appeared only once in the university textbook. Therefore, at later stages, students might face difficulty processing persuasive or argumentative texts.

This result indicates that the reading content in the EFL secondary stage textbooks and in university first year communication skills textbook expose students significantly more to the descriptive and expository types of passages than to the narrative and persuasive passages. Except for the fact that persuasive text type was almost excluded from the three textbooks, such result seems to agree with the assumptions of adult reading. Barton (1997) indicates that exposition is the primary mode of discourse at the academic texts as textbooks in general are aimed to inform their readers, and that narrative text is the most common text type that occurs in the early grades. Barton indicates that as children progress through the primary grades, they increasingly encounter expository texts and by high school, they spend the majority of their instructional time reading expository texts.

Regarding text type, and contrary to the studies that found the reading content in the studied textbooks appropriate and suitable for its students’ grade levels (Ababneh, 2007; Ghabashneh, 2010), the current study showed that the reading content is not properly tailored for the level of the students. This result is clear when a person takes into consideration that the persuasive text type is almost excluded from the textbooks at a level where the students need this type most.

C. Results Related to the Second Question

The second research question was “What is the relative balance of the reading skills that appear in Action Pack 11, Action Pack 12, and New Headway Plus Pre- Intermediate textbooks?”

The three textbooks under study contained varied numbers of reading activities as follows: AP11 included 101 activities, AP 12 included 49 activities, and NHWP included 63 activities. Two hundred and thirteen activities were obtained from the three textbooks.

To answer this question, frequencies of the reading activities included in the three textbooks under study were calculated according to the type of the reading skill (pre-reading [prediction, anticipation, and surveying], skimming, scanning, vocabulary, details, identifying main ideas, identifying Passage Structure, identifying writer’s purpose, Follow-up activities that lead to writing, and reading aloud). The percentages of the activities among these skills in each textbook were calculated in addition to calculating the adjusted residual where needed in light of Chi Square Test for Independence. The data are presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4:
FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF THE TYPES OF THE READING ACTIVITIES IN AP11, AP12, AND NHWP AND RESULTS OF X2 TEST OF INDEPENDENCE REGARDING TEXTBOOK

Task	Statistic	Text Book			Total
		AP11	AP12	NHWP	
Pre-reading ¹	Count	18	8	7	33
	% within Text Book	17.8	16.3	11.1	15.5
	Adjusted Residual	0.892	0.184	-1.145	
Skimming	Count	17	3	6	26
	% within Text Book	16.8	6.1	9.5	12.2
	Adjusted Residual	1.958	-1.483	-0.775	
Scanning	Count	7	7	10	24
	% within Text Book	6.9	14.3	15.9	11.3
	Adjusted Residual	-1.901	0.761	1.378	
Vocabulary	Count	5	9	6	20
	% within Text Book	5.0	18.4	9.5	9.4
	Adjusted Residual	-2.109	2.455	0.043	
Details	Count	22	11	8	41
	% within Text Book	21.8	22.4	12.7	19.2
	Adjusted Residual	0.891	0.648	-1.571	
Main idea	Count	11	4	8	23
	% within Text Book	10.9	8.2	12.7	10.8
	Adjusted Residual	0.042	-0.677	0.579	
Passage Structure	Count	1	4	5	10
	% within Text Book	1.0	8.2	7.9	4.7
	Adjusted Residual	-2.427	1.308	1.449	
Writer's purpose	Count	0	0	2	2
	% within Text Book	0.0	0.0	3.2	0.9
	Adjusted Residual	-1.349	-0.777	2.192	
Follow-up activities ²	Count	15	3	11	29
	% within Text Book	14.9	6.1	17.5	13.6
	Adjusted Residual	0.500	-1.743	1.061	
Reading aloud	Count	5	0	0	5
	% within Text Book	5.0	0.0	0.0	2.3
	Adjusted Residual	2.383	-1.237	-1.466	
Total	Count	101	49	63	213
	% within Text Book	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
χ^2	N of Cases		df	Sig.	
35.650	213		18	0.008	

¹Pre-reading activities include prediction, anticipation and surveying. ²Follow-up activities lead to writing

Table 4 shows that there is a significant relation between textbook and the type of reading activities. This relation is clear when moving from AP11 to AP12 and then to NHWP. The difference is very clear when moving from AP11 to AP12, there is a noticed increase in the percentage of vocabulary activities, and when moving from AP12 to NHWP, there is a noticed increase in the percentage of writer's purpose activities.

The frequencies and percentages in Table 4 show that three reading skills in each textbook were presented in about 50% of all the tasks in the textbook. In AP11, for example, the categories related to the skills of pre-reading, skimming, and locating details were presented in 56.4% of all the tasks in the textbook. In AP12, pre-reading, vocabulary activities, and locating details were represented in 57.1% of all the tasks in the textbook whereas 58.5% of the reading activities in NHWP were designated for follow-up activities that lead to writing, scanning activities, and locating details and identifying main ideas sharing the same percentage.

Furthermore, Table 4 shows the differences in the inclusion of these activities among the three textbooks. In AP11 the activities were presented in the following order: locating details, pre-reading, skimming, follow-up activities that lead to writing, identifying the main idea, scanning, reading aloud and vocabulary activities equally, and understanding passage structure. In AP12, the activities were presented in the following order: locating details, vocabulary activities, pre-reading, scanning, identifying main ideas and understanding passage structure equally, follow-up and skimming exercises equally. In NHWP, the activities were presented in the following order: follow-up, scanning, pre-reading, identifying main ideas and locating details equally, skimming and vocabulary exercises equally, understanding passage structure, and identifying writer's purpose.

It can also be noticed from Table 4 that some reading skills disappeared in each textbook. In AP11, no activities were found that represented the skills of identifying writer's purpose. In AP12, there were no activities that train the skills of identifying the writer's purpose and reading aloud. In NHWP, the skill of reading aloud was not represented.

At the stage level, frequencies of the reading activities included in the two stages under study (secondary stage and university level) were calculated according to the type of the reading skill (pre-reading [prediction, anticipation, and surveying], skimming, scanning, vocabulary, details, identifying main ideas, identifying passage structure, identifying writer's purpose, follow-up activities that lead to writing, and reading aloud). The percentages of the activities among

these skills in each stage were calculated in addition to calculating the adjusted residual where needed in light of Chi Square Test for Independence. The data are presented in Table 5.

TABLE 5:
FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF THE TYPES OF THE READING ACTIVITIES IN THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL AND SECONDARY STAGE TEXTBOOKS AND RESULTS OF X2 TEST OF INDEPENDENCE REGARDING STAGE

Task	Statistic	Stage		Total
		Secondary	University	
Pre-reading ¹	Count	26	7	33
	% within stage	17.3	11.1	15.5
Skimming	Count	20	6	26
	% within stage	13.3	9.5	12.2
Scanning	Count	14	10	24
	% within stage	9.3	15.9	11.3
Vocabulary	Count	14	6	20
	% within stage	9.3	9.5	9.4
Details	Count	33	8	41
	% within stage	22.0	12.7	19.2
Main idea	Count	15	8	23
	% within stage	10.0	12.7	10.8
Passage Structure	Count	5	5	10
	% within stage	3.3	7.9	4.7
Writer's purpose	Count	0	2	2
	% within stage	0.0	3.2	0.9
Follow-up activities ²	Count	18	11	29
	% within stage	12.0	17.5	13.6
Reading aloud	Count	5	0	5
	% within stage	3.3	0.0	2.3
Total	Count	150	63	213
	% within stage	100.0	100.0	100.0
χ^2	N of Cases		df	Sig.
15.451	213		9	0.079

¹Pre-reading activities include prediction, anticipation and surveying. ²Follow-up activities lead to writing

Table 5 shows that there is no significant relation between the reading skills as shown in the percentages of the activities and the stage (secondary stage and university level). Yet, the table shows some differences in the occurrence of the activities among the specified skills. The table shows that a number of reading skills are dominant in the secondary stage in contrast to the dominant ones at the university level. In the secondary stage textbooks together, pre-reading activities, skimming activities, and activities of locating details altogether were presented in about 42.6% of all the tasks in the textbooks of the stage whereas follow-up activities, scanning activities, locating details and identifying main ideas altogether were presented in about 58.8% of all the activities appearing in the textbook.

Table 5 also shows the differences in the occurrence and inclusion of these activities among the two academic stages. In the secondary stage, the activities appeared in the following order: locating details, pre-reading activities, skimming, follow-up activities that lead to writing, identifying main ideas and vocabulary exercises equally, and identifying passage structure and reading aloud equally. On the other hand, the reading activities appeared in the university level textbook in the following order: follow-up activities that lead to writing, scanning activities, locating details and identifying main ideas equally, pre-reading activities, skimming and vocabulary activities equally, and identifying passage structure. It is worth mentioning, however, that some skills disappeared in each of the two stages. In the secondary stage textbooks, there were no activities that presented the skill of identifying the writer's purpose whereas the university textbook did not include any activity that presents the skill of reading aloud.

D. Discussion of the Results of the Second Question

It was expected that the same pattern of reading task emphasis would emerge in the three textbooks. On the contrary, the frequencies and percentages of the reading skills show that the three textbooks had different patterns of emphasis on the reading skills. The results show significant differences between the three textbooks in light of the focus on the reading skills. Moreover, the results show some differences in the inclusion of these activities among the three textbooks.

Stage wise, the results show that there is no significant relation between the reading skills as shown in the percentages of the activities and the stage (secondary stage and university level). Yet, the results show some differences in the occurrence of the activities among the specified skills. The results show that a number of reading skills are dominant in the secondary stage in contrast to the dominant ones in the university level.

For better discussion of the results of this question, the discussion was divided into two categories; in the first one, the researchers discuss the findings related to the types of reading skills in each textbook individually, and in the second one, the researchers discuss the findings of this question collectively.

Action Pack 11

In comparison with the other two textbooks, AP11 emphasises significantly the skill of “reading aloud”. The results show some dominating reading skills in AP11. The categories related to the skills of “pre-reading, skimming, and locating details” were trained in 56.4% of all the tasks in the textbook. Moreover, the results show that the skill of “identifying the writer’s purpose” is not included in AP11. The reading activities in AP11 were presented in the following order according to their inclusion: locating details, pre-reading, skimming, follow-up activities that lead to writing, identifying the main idea, scanning, reading aloud and vocabulary activities (understanding unknown words) equally, and understanding passage structure.

Action Pack 12

In comparison with the other two textbooks, AP12 emphasizes significantly the reading skill of “understanding unknown words in the text”. In AP12, “pre-reading, vocabulary activities (understanding unknown words), and locating details” were represented in 57.1% of all the reading tasks in the textbook. The reading activities in AP12 were presented in the following order: locating details, vocabulary activities, pre-reading, scanning, identifying main idea and understanding passage structure equally, follow-up and scanning exercises equally. It is worth mentioning that the reading skills of “reading aloud and identifying the writer’s purpose” are not included in AP12.

New Headway Plus Pre-intermediate

In comparison with the other two textbooks, NHWP emphasises significantly the reading skill of “Identifying the writer’s purpose”. In NHWP, “follow-up activities that lead to writing, scanning activities, and locating details and identifying main ideas” were represented in 58.5 of the reading activities in the textbook. The reading activities in NHWP were presented in the following order according to their inclusion: follow-up, scanning, pre-reading, identifying main ideas and locating details equally, skimming and vocabulary exercises equally, understanding passage structure, and identifying writer’s purpose. It is worth mentioning that the no reading-aloud activities appeared in NHWP.

All Textbooks

The results show some differences in the occurrence of the activities among the specified skills in the three textbooks. A number of reading skills are dominant in the secondary stage in contrast to the dominant ones in the university level. In the secondary stage textbooks, pre-reading activities, skimming activities, and activities of locating details altogether were included in about 42.6% of all the tasks in the textbooks of the stage whereas follow-up activities, scanning activities, locating details and identifying main ideas altogether were included in about 58.8% of all the activities appearing in the university level textbook.

The results also show some differences in the occurrence and inclusion of these activities among the two academic stages. In the secondary stage, the activities appeared in the following order: locating details, pre-reading activities, skimming, follow-up activities that lead to writing, identifying main ideas and vocabulary exercises equally, and identifying passage structure and reading aloud equally. On the other hand, the reading activities appeared in the university level textbook in the following order: follow-up activities that lead to writing, scanning activities, locating details and identifying main ideas equally, pre-reading activities, skimming and vocabulary activities equally, and identifying passage structure.

In terms of the types of reading tasks, the reading content of the three textbooks within the two stages, in general, incorporates primary reading skills such as skimming, scanning, identifying main ideas, locating details, and identifying passage structure, tasks that are important for effective reading comprehension. In addition to the primary reading tasks, the three textbooks also reflect the use of reading subskills such as pre-reading activities, vocabulary, and follow up activities that lead to writing. The incorporation of these primary and secondary reading skills can be considered strength for the reading content in the three textbooks because an effective reading curriculum should include the only major skills of reading, but also subordinate skills (Burmeister, 1978; Hill, 1979).

However, the results of this study concerning types of reading skills in the reading content of the three textbooks understudy show that there was a misalignment between the secondary stage EFL textbooks and the university communication skills EFL textbooks in terms of the distribution of types of the reading tasks related to the skills of reading aloud and identifying the writer’s purpose. Reading aloud was one of the reading skills included in the secondary stage textbooks and was not included in the university textbook which is reasonable as reading aloud is considered one of the skills in the primary stage. Furthermore, “identifying the writer’s purpose” was not included as a skill in the secondary stage EFL textbooks though it is considered one of the high- cognitive reading tasks that belongs to this academic stage (Mutch, 2005), and this skill is given a special attention in the Guidelines of Jordanian English Language Curriculum (MOE, 2006). One of the specific expected outcomes of teaching reading in the secondary stage is to “agree or disagree with author’s point of view” (MOE, 2006, P.56). Thus, the design and balance of the reading tasks in the secondary stage EFL textbooks should be in better alignment with the design and balance proposed in the EFL General Guidelines and Specific Outcomes document.

In light of the results of this study, the researchers feel that it is necessary to submit the following recommendations:

1. The Ministry of Education and universities should solicit teachers’ and instructors’ opinions before, during, and after preparing or adopting a textbook.
2. It is recommended that there should be communication between secondary schools and universities to bridge the reading gap between schools and universities and to enable schools prepare the students for the expected reading

demands at the university level. This articulation mainly includes the expected reading level, the desired reading skills, and the suitable materials to achieve these purposes.

3. It is recommended that other research studies be conducted on larger samples and in other areas in addition to reading. More research studies are needed in the area of transition from school to university in all fields of study.

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