DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSFER IN READING ABILITY:
A STUDY OF ZAIREAN EFL LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

In general, educational practices in Zairean secondary schools point to a positivistic orientation to literacy, in spite of the fact that one of the stated aims of secondary education is to encourage independent thinking in students.

For this reason, one of the aims of the present study was to promote greater independence in students by presenting a humanistic-interpretive approach to reading, as demonstrated by the practice of sustained silent reading. For this purpose, some of the students involved in the study (the experimental subjects) were presented with graded readers in English, in a 20h (1h/week) experimental reading programme. Moreover, in keeping with the view of reading as a unitary process, transferable across languages, a second aim of the study was to explore the possibility of transfer in reading ability between French as a L2 and English as a FL.

Data were supplied by experimental and control subjects from questionnaires and cloze passages in French, and in English, that were administered before and after the reading programme. These data failed to provide unequivocal evidence for the expected transfer and improvement, and reasons are offered for this outcome.

Nonetheless, the experimental subjects performed as well as the control subjects at the second administration of the measurement instruments. In other terms, one hour of sustained silent reading in English, along with 4 hours of traditional EFL teaching, appeared to be as educationally beneficial as the usual 5 hours/week orally driven, teacher-directed EFL classroom practice.

in memoriam mortuorum et vivarum

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CALP	: cognitive/ academic language proficiency
CG 1/2	: control group 1/2
df	: degree of freedom
EFL	: English as a foreign language
EG 1/2	: experimental group 1/2
ELT	: English language teaching
ELSIP	: English language self-instruction package
En	: English
ESL	: English as a second language
FL	: foreign language
fn	: footnote
Fr	: French
Frust	: frustration reading level
Indep	: independent reading level
Inst	: instruction reading level
Lar	: less avid readers
L1/2/n	: first/ second/ nth language
Mar	: more avid readers
N	: number
n.s.	: non significant
O.D.A.	: Overseas Development Agency
r	: correlation coefficient
p	: probability (NB: unless otherwise specified, the significance level in this study is .05).
SD	: standard deviation
V.O.A.	: Voice of America
U.S.I.A.	: United States Information Agency

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INTRODUCTION

Research interest in a given domain can derive from the experiences of life in which the would-be researcher may have found himself, which engage his curiosity and force him to try to understand the phenomena in his environment. My interest in enquiring into aspects of reading started from my interrupted experience as a student of Spanish as a foreign language, and from my experience as a teacher of English as a foreign language.

Six years or so ago, I was taking Spanish lessons at the Spanish Cultural Centre of Kinshasa, Zaire. Formal lessons in the grammar and vocabulary of the language were the usual diet, notwithstanding the principles of communicative language teaching disseminated by scholars like Widdowson (1978). Apart from the formal classes, the Spanish Centre offered among other facilities a reading room, where students could spend some of their time browsing through reading materials in Spanish. My attempts at one of the books in the reading room, with the help of the knowledge of a few Spanish words and grammar rules, revealed to me that I could make sense of some of the texts. I could "read" in Spanish, after only a few months of language tuition at the Centre. I had not been taught to read in Spanish as such. I was being taught the language in the most orthodox audio-lingual tradition by people who knew their language (native speakers), and from whom I expected to draw some knowledge of the language.

The question then arises as to where my ability to make sense of written Spanish texts came from. A person familiar with books, as I am, could only relate the occurrence to his ability to make sense of written texts in other languages. I can read materials in CiLuba[1], my first language, the language in which I was introduced to literacy. I can read materials in French, my second language, without which my thought processes could not have developed as they are today. I can read materials in English, my third language, the study of which I chose to pursue in my post teen years. I can read materials in LiNgala, my children's first language, and of course, materials in some other Zairean languages which I can claim to read just because I can recognise their graphic symbols and render aloud their combinations.

In my Spanish experience, as far as I can recall, no time had been spent for training in the development of reading ability. In my case, this ability had been developed before I came to the formal Spanish classes. To me, it was clear that the knowledge acquired in an earlier learning situation, continually applied in relevant situations of its use, readily transferred to my encounters with Spanish writing. The interest then arose for me, as a

teacher of English, to investigate the possibility of transfer in reading ability between French and English among young Zairean EFL learners.

As far as language learning is concerned, a more important phenomenon that emerged from my Spanish experience was the possibility of new learning taking place from the reading I did in Spanish. That reading helped me to learn more of the Spanish language, and to stabilise the grammar and vocabulary that I was exposed to during the formal classes. If I could read and learn Spanish, then Zairean EFL learners could also read and learn English without explicit instruction, I said to myself.

This anecdotal account summarises the concerns of the present study: transfer and development in reading ability, which concerns are organised in seven chapters. As interest in reading of necessity involves interest in writing, the first chapter of this work starts off with the superordinate notion of literacy, seen as a social practice and as knowledge. It then goes on to look at reading, seen as one way of learning a foreign language, and at the transfer of literacy skills. The second chapter presents the Zairean literacy context, in which English is taught and learnt as a foreign language. The third chapter considers the reading process, and eventually argues for an approach to reading that can in principle foster independence in students' thinking while they engage with reading materials. In the fourth chapter, I present the rationale and conduct of the empirical work during which I collected the data introduced in the fifth chapter. These data will allow me to explore the possibilities of transfer and development in reading ability, as discussed in the sixth chapter. The seventh and final chapter sets out to introduce some implications from the study findings, and to conclude.

Note

1 CiLuba is one of the four inter-ethnic languages of Zaire. The other three are KiSwahili, KiKongo, and LiNgala. These are Bantu languages, in which nouns are roughly made up of a class prefix and a radical. In their reference to language names in writing, Zairean language scholars usually use two capital letters (the first indicating the prefix, and the second indicating the radical). In this way, language names can be distinguished from other nouns in writing.

1 LITERACY, READING TO LEARN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE, AND THE TRANSFER OF LITERACY SKILLS

The superordinate term I am concerned with in this chapter is literacy, which can be understood as the ability to read and write. However, such a definition only states "the nuts-and-bolts part of literacy" (Solomon, 1986), obvious in much of today's world, from the different sorts and uses of written language.

More than the ability to read and write, literacy is seen in the first section of this presentation as a social practice, comprising various literacy events. The term "literacy event" is understood here in the sense proposed by Heath (1983) as any action in which production and/ or comprehension of the written text plays a role. In this study, the term "text" can be understood as referring to any self-contained piece of language that is used or is potentially usable for communication or language teaching/ learning purposes.

Heath's definition of literacy event obviously includes the print-based teaching and learning of languages, as may be encountered in formal education. I am concerned with the teaching and learning of languages in this work, particularly with foreign language learning, as may be achieved through reading. Thus, reading to learn a foreign language is the subject of the second section of this chapter.

There is a distinction between second and foreign languages (L2/FL), worth noting here in reference to French as L2 and English as FL in this work. If we want to distinguish between second and foreign languages, we need to take into account the cultural context in which the learning of an additional language takes place, as proposed by Corson (1989). According to Corson, second language learning "takes place within the culture to which the language relates". For example, Wallace's (1988) learner readers learn English as their L2 (ESL) in England, where the language is also the first language (L1) of many other people. It is understood that foreign language learning occurs within a culture that is different from the culture to which the language relates. So, a Zairean e.g., living in Kinshasa, Zaire, will learn Spanish as a foreign language.

Following Corson's (1989) proposal, it can be said that English is a foreign language (EFL) in Zaire. Foreign in origin, it is also the vehicle of an alien culture in Zaire. I

shall put forward some of the reasons for its maintenance in the Zairean school curriculum, in Chapter 2.

As to French, there are Zairean scholars (see e.g., Mbulamoko 1974, quoted in EDIDEPS, 1986: 336; or Tumba, 1977) who argue that French is a "foreign" language. These scholars capitalise on the foreign origin of the language, and on the fact that its acquisition is generally associated with schooling. Nonetheless, I consider this language as a second language in the sense proposed by Corson (1989): In Zaire, French is the vehicle of some aspects of the Zairean culture, beside other languages. I shall elaborate on the sociolinguistic situation of Zaire in Chapter 2.

French as L2 and English as FL come into contact in the Zairean formal education system. It is possible for the learning of one of these languages to influence the learning of the other. So, I address the issue of the transfer of literacy skills across languages in the third section of the current chapter. This issue is the other basic notion, apart from the notion of reading to learn a foreign language, on which the present study hinges (see research questions in Chapter 4).

1.1 Literacy

In this section, literacy is successively looked at as social practice, and knowledge. It is understood that the two notions are separated for the purposes of analysis.

1.1.1 Literacy as social practice

Historically, literacy begins when language starts to be used as shapes in writing. A relevant observation in this respect was made by Halliday (1973) that the most important thing about written language is that it is language. Halliday's observation can lead to another equally pertinent observation that literacy, the use of written language, is language use.

In Hallidayan functional theory of language (Halliday, 1973), language is used in order to do things for the achievement of certain outcomes. It is an instrument with which the individual can act in the world as a social being as well as he can act on the world as a critical mind. It can be used as an expression of one's experience, as an expression of one's personal identity, a form of social interaction and a means of creating texts (Halliday, 1973). LePage & Keller (1985) also propose a functional view of language use in which the language user is considered as performing "acts of identity" that may reveal his social and ethnic solidarity or difference. These views

align themselves to speech act theory, which can as a matter of course be said to have evolved from the recognition of the fact that people do things with words (see e.g., Austin, 1962). The phrase "literacy event" should likewise be considered primarily as the written counterpart of "speech event", "involving a number of possible moves or acts" (Wallace, 1992: personal communication).

This functional orientation to language underlines the differing demands of everyday language use for particular domains of life, in which people assume roles that they judge appropriate. Language is not used for its own sake, but in order to do things with it. Language use is purposeful.

So is literacy. People use it for such purposes as: getting informed about practical problems, maintaining social relationships, keeping records, etc. (see e.g., Heath, 1983).

Because literacy involves humans as social beings, it is a social practice. To understand the idea of literacy as a social practice, one may want to begin with the notion of practice. This term can be understood as a place (e.g., a surgeon's practice) where certain types of activities are usually undertaken. It can also refer to the recurrent, purposeful activities (e.g., legal practice, religious practice, etc.) in which people engage. It is in this second sense that one can speak of literacy as a social practice:

> ...the carrying out of a goal-directed sequence of activities, using particular technologies and applying particular systems of knowledge.
> (Scribner & Cole, 1978: 457)

Seen as social practice, literacy includes various activities related to the use of the written form of language, by people in their interactions with one another. Some of the activities in which written texts play a role are public (e.g., advertising), and some others are private (e.g., personal letter writing, pleasure reading, etc.).

The various, recurrent contacts that people have with written texts may influence their use of oral language as well. The recognition of this influence is captured in the metaphor about some people who "speak like books". In this respect, Meek (1991: 236) for example recalls how Sir Winston Churchill sounded like a mixture of two English writers (Bunyan, and Milton), as he made his speech style match the contemporary World War II events with the writing styles of those English writers. People may "speak like books" as a result of their continuous interactions with the written word. Such interactions may be direct (e.g., for someone who can read and

write), or indirect (e.g., for an illiterate person who is read to, or a young child born to literate parents and raised to "ways with words" (Heath, 1983) as found in books. These interactions obviously bring benefits to participants in literacy events in terms of width of vocabulary, particular style, etc..

The Churchill example cited above suggests that literacy can influence speaking. It can then be said that literacy covers the whole of language use, as the new language or ways of using language that one may pick up from one's interactions with written texts will be ready for use in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. And, in some communities, the particular ways in which these skills are put to use in particular circumstances may be seen as attributes of a highly regarded section of the community, whose experiences have been shaped by contacts with books.

In this sense, literacy is usually an attribute of the élite, whose behaviour, attitudes, values and beliefs are often adopted and perpetuated as the dominant culture. For instance, literate people may be admired for their use of an elaborated as well as a restricted code (see Bernstein, 1971: 76); they may have control of a high dialect in addition to a low dialect in a situation of diglossia (see Ferguson, 1959); they may be noticed to use a lingua franca in addition to an ethnic language in a multilingual setting, etc.. I can bring in here the example of Zaire, a multilingual setting (see Chapter 2), where "true" literacy is associated with the knowledge of French, a non-native language of wider communication. As an attribute of the Zairean élite, the knowledge of French facilitates communication both outside one's immediate ethnolinguistic community, and with non Zairean French-speaking people.

As an attribute of communities, literacy can be studied within the conceptual framework proposed in Barton & Ivanic (1991). In this framework, literacy is used in various "domains of everyday life" (e.g., school, home, etc.). In their use of literacy, people fulfil different appropriate "roles", that may change with the context of literacy use. For example, in a given household, only the husband may read and fill in official forms, whereas the wife may write out cheques or prepare shopping lists. In addition, in their literacy practices, people may have "networks of helpers" or "literacy brokers" who provide support in dealing with print. For example, a literate child acts as a literacy broker when he writes letters for his non-literate parents. Furthermore, people's literacy practices are sustained by various values that literacy holds for a given community.

According to Barton's (1991) observations, people generally talk about their participation in literacy events in terms of roles. They take on particular roles that are

assumed to be appropriate for themselves in those events. Also, particular circumstances of literacy use may impose particular roles on participants.

If literacy is understood in terms of the appropriateness of roles in different domains of literacy use, then its development and practice relate to imparting and exercising "communicative competence" (see Hymes, 1972). For this reason, we need to remember that literacy is a cover term for many activities, given the multiplicity of roles in which people may adequately use their communicative competence in different social institutions and settings. For example, literacy may involve such various activities as singing from a book (e.g., among the Athabaskans, observed by Scollon & Scollon, 1981), being read to (e.g., the case of the Tuvaluans studied by Vetter, 1991), reciting the Holy Scriptures (e.g., among the Vai literates observed by Scribner & Cole, 1978; or among the Amish as reported by Fishman, 1987), reading aloud (e.g., the Vai literates' experimentation in the pronunciation of concatenated written messages, as reported in Scribner & Cole, 1978), reading silently, learning from books, writing, etc..

At this juncture, I would like to mention some of the literacy practices that may be attested among Zaireans. There have not yet been studies that describe the uses of written language in Zaire. Nonetheless, I rely on my experience as Zairean and on the accounts of literacy practices in other communities (see e.g., Barton & Padmore 1991, Heath 1983, or Klassen 1991), to identify some Zairean literacy practices.

The attempts to identify these practices are made along the lines of the conceptual framework sketched in Barton & Ivanic (1991) in terms of domains, roles, networks, and values of literacy.

The domains of everyday life in which Zaireans encounter literacy fall into the same categories as those identified by Klassen (1991) in the everyday urban life of Latin Americans in North America. These domains are "home, streets, and stores; bureaucracies; places of work; schools; and church." It is understood that the present work is particularly concerned with literacy practices in Zairean schools. However, below, I briefly discuss the literacy practices in Zairean homes, streets, and places of worship, because it is necessary to understand these in order to see how they may impinge on schools.

In the home of an average Zairean family, one can find written language that falls roughly into the following categories: paperwork relating to the management of the

household, correspondence, school work (if the family raises school children), and religious materials.

The literacy events relating to the management of a household ordinarily include reading calendars and making marks on them to remember appointments or important dates (it is not uncommon to find dates or addresses written in charcoal on a house wall), reading water and electricity bills (for urban dwellers), reading medication dosages on pharmaceutical products, etc.. In homes where there are school children, overseeing children's homework is an important literacy event, in which two documents are generally used. These are children's school diary and "cahier de communication" (a special notebook for the exchange of messages related to children's school work between parents and school authorities).

The literacy events identified above require managing French written language. But, as we shall see in Chapter 2, only a minority of Zaireans are competent in French.

Literacy events that involve French print, of necessity exclude women in most households. This differentiation of roles for adult males and females living in the same household is a result of the fact that fewer women than men are formally educated, and consequently competent in French. Because of women's lack of competence in French in most cases, fathers are generally the only people responsible for helping children with their school work at home, and for exchanging notes with school authorities on children's achievement. If the father cannot cope, the network of support in coping with French print includes relatives, neighbours, or other acquaintances as "literacy brokers" [to use Barton & Padmore's (1991) term again].

A literacy broker might be called in to read for example a message in French from school authorities. Before explaining what the message is about, he would be expected to read it aloud. In this way, the person who requested the support would be sure that the support was really given: He would be sure that the literacy broker read and understood the message so as to be able to transmit it verbally. If the literacy broker was called in to write a message, he would also have to read it aloud and eventually translate it for the person who requested the support. The functioning of such networks of support in coping with literacy problems indicates the communal nature of literacy practices in Zairean homes.

Another category of literacy events in Zairean homes is letter reading or writing. Correspondence may be undertaken in French or in a Zairean language depending on the relationship between the addresser and the addressee, and their knowledge of

French or of the Zairean language involved. People engage in letter writing and reading as a way of communicating with relatives and friends who do not live locally.

French and a Zairean language are also involved in the use of written language for religious purposes in Zairean homes. The Bible, or other religious literature, in French may be used by educated adult male members of the household. They may read this literature silently on their own if they have a place in the home and some time to do so. Or they may join fellow believers in places of worship. Less or non formally educated adult males, adult female members of the household and children use the religious literature in Zairean languages, which they may read together. The reason for the differentiation of languages here is the same as that given above concerning the use of print in connection with children's school work.

In churches and other places of worship, people may read from their Bibles, or prayer books. Usually, one person reads aloud while the other members of the congregation follow silently from their own Bibles or prayer books. Singing from books is also an everyday literacy event in these places. To aid their memory, the members of a congregation may write down the verses recommended by the preacher of the day.

Bible reading and preaching also take place on buses or trains, along major streets or near marketplaces. People are entertained at these Bible gatherings by self-styled preachers. There are usually two preachers -the main preacher, and an assistant who may act as a reader, or an interpreter when French and a Zairean language are involved. Reading aloud to the group and translation are involved in this practice of literacy.

Beside these Bible gatherings, the street is a domain of literacy use in its own right, because of the environmental print that one may encounter. Public print in the streets (at least in urban areas) includes street names, numbers and names of buses, billboards, posters, etc.. In Zaire, these are usually in French, which is probably one of the reasons why many people ignore them. Another reason may be the fact that people ordinarily trust information passed on orally. The bus driver or one of the passengers on a given bus would shout out the number and name of the bus to a person in need. A child playing near his home would tell one the name of the street one had taken. One clearly does not need a street map or tourist information leaflet to find one's way around.

A typical literacy practice along the arteries of major towns is that which results in the creation of oral texts from newspapers in French. (There are no newspapers in Zairean

languages.) Newspapermen habitually display the different issues that they have for sale on the ground along the arteries of big towns. People, usually men, come and assemble around them, and start commenting on the different headlines appearing in the newspapers. They may indulge in this for hours, not ready to buy any of the newspapers and go away to read it for themselves. People who assemble around a newspaper in this way can be said to belong to the same network of literacy practice. They are, so to speak, members of the same "reading community" (see Brumfit, 1992: 5; or Wallace, 1992: 19). With their comments in one of the Zairean languages, they support one another in understanding the headlines on the front page of a newspaper in French. This literacy practice supplies the participants with something to talk about. Like Klassen's (1991) informants on the literacy practices of Toronto Latin Americans, they enjoy "talking with others about the major stories in the newspaper." The communal nature of Zairean literacy practices is again evident in this context.

The literacy practices that I have identified above fall into two of the general categories found in other communities (see e.g., Barton & Padmore, 1991; or Klassen, 1991): maintenance and management of the household, and maintenance of communication. Barton & Padmore (1991), and Klassen (1991) identified another category of literacy use, i.e. the use of literacy for personal reasons (e.g., personal enjoyment or leisure). It involves personal silent reading, or writing done on one's own for enjoyment.

This use of literacy is barely noticeable among Zaireans. Observations in this sense were made by Dianzungu (1991) and Mwaka (1992) concerning reading. For Dianzungu, reading is not part of the Zairean culture. This all-embracing observation relies on the facts that in general the Zairean people do not depend on information from books to manage their day-to-day living, and that books sell very poorly in Zaire. For example, the 2000 copy printing of Dianzungu's own book[1], written in KiKongo to disseminate knowledge about the protection of land among Lower Zaire peasants, sold out only after 6 months from its publication. And, as Dianzungu (1991: 106) notes, the publishing house had already published 13 different titles (all in French), "but none of them had even approached such a success."

On his part, Mwaka (1992) acknowledges first of all that one may read for different purposes, and then singles out reading for enjoyment as alien to the Zairean people. I agree with him that reading for enjoyment "has yet to gain ground" (Mwaka, 1992: 177) even among highly educated Zaireans. Rare are such Zaireans who can count up to 2 titles of novels by fellow Zaireans or foreign authors, which they have read for enjoyment in any given month.

It can be demonstrated that Zaireans do not read for enjoyment because of the economic context of their lives. Books are generally imported, and costly. But, it can also be said that Zaireans do not read for enjoyment because the ways in which they are socialised into literacy at school are not geared to this practice.

As a domain of literacy, the school has the role of producing more literate members of society (see Ferdman, 1990). It should enable students to participate in different literacy events, in order to manage their lives, to maintain communication, to learn, and to enjoy themselves. However, the roles played by teachers and students inside the classroom may not adequately prepare the students to use literacy for all these purposes.

In Zairean schools, the role of the teacher requires that he talk to explain to students what to do during class or for homework, to explain what should have been done in homework, to give instructions, to supply a model of pronunciation, to correct mistakes, etc.. Because the teacher knows everything, as it were, the role of the students requires that they listen to the teacher, follow his instructions, take notes, etc.. Here are a few literacy events in which Zairean students may engage during class time: text analysis, reading aloud/ silently from hand-outs, reading aloud/ silently from the blackboard/ a book/ a notebook, memorising texts, copying from the blackboard/ a book/ a notebook, taking notes while listening to the teacher, writing short compositions, repeating sentences read aloud by the teacher, etc.. Learning from the written word appears to be the most favoured literacy activity, done with the support of the teacher as a "literacy broker".

However, I have no recollection of classroom time devoted to the use of literacy for personal enjoyment. And the literacy events that may be attested in Zairean schools do not seem to encourage independent literacy uses (e.g., library work) for learning. I shall come back to these observations in my discussion of constraints on reading development in Chapter 2.

I have associated some of the literacy events cited above with the names of different social groups to reinforce the idea that literacy is a social practice. Then, it can be observed that different social groups may experience and indulge in one type of literacy event rather than another. For Ferdman (1990), this difference in people's orientation to literacy can account for the failures and successes that may be encountered in literacy education. He observes e.g., that texts that readers perceive as affirming their cultural identity engage them more than texts that they perceive as

denying or devaluing aspects of their cultural identity. Extending this thinking to school literacy, Ferdman speculates that a student

> ... who believes that reading books assigned at school is not 'something
> that my people do', will be less likely to complete such assignments.
> (Ferdman, 1990: 196)

Related observations reminding one that mainstream school literacy may be at odds with students' pre-school or out-of-school lived experiences of literacy are found in Heath (1983) or in Fishman (1987). Fishman (1987) noted for example that there were certain school literacy behaviours that young Amish children would not promptly adopt, because these behaviours did not exist in their definition of literacy, as Amish Jews: third-person formal essay writing and original approaches to topics were assumed to be alien forms of literacy, and consequently were never learned.

A slightly different issue relates to the practice of literacy at school, but across classes. Generally, educational practices reflect socially prevailing expectations and attitudes. As we have seen, the practice of silent reading for enjoyment is not common in Zairean schools or society at large. As this practice is an innovation, particularly concerning EFL classes, we need to note the following observation by Widdowson (1990):

> One cannot expect that learners will take readily to modes of behaviour
> in the language class which are at variance with those which are
> promoted in their other lessons.
> (Widdowson, 1990: 128)

I would like to comment, using Barton & Padmore's (1991) terminology, that learners may not readily agree to play "roles" which they assume to be culturally "inappropriate", or at least which they have not understood.

These words of caution will need to be taken into account in the interpretation of the results of the experimental treatment (see Chapters 5 & 6) used in this study, which consisted of silent reading in English by Zairean EFL learners. Wallace's (1992: 20) observation in respect of silent reading would appear to be very pertinent here:

> Indeed the whole idea of reading silently and alone for pleasure may
> be a culturally alien one for many groups- a point that warrants
> consideration when attempting to devise a pedagogy to promote
> extensive reading in a second or foreign language.

Clearly, if people are not keen readers in the first place, just giving them books to read, without any support, may not help. I shall say a word about the support that

learner readers may need during reading instruction, in Sub-section 1.2.2 and in Chapter 3 of this work.

Now, I wish to say a word on literacy as knowledge.

1.1.2 Literacy as knowledge

> ... at its core literacy implies knowledge
> (Lewis & Gagel, 1992).

Knowledge is at the heart of language, which in turn is at the heart of literacy, the use of written language. There thus does not appear to be much of an exaggeration to say that literacy is some kind of knowledge (see e.g., Brumfit, 1992: 3). In the same way as language use implies knowledge of language, I can say that literacy implies knowledge of language, more particularly knowledge of written language.

An examination of what scholars say about knowledge can help one to understand the kind of knowledge that literacy is. According to Anderson (1982), there are two types of communicative knowledge pertaining to language: declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge.

Declarative knowledge in turn comprises two types of knowledge: the language user's knowledge of linguistic rules and elements, and his pragmatic and discourse knowledge in one or more languages (Færch & Kasper (1987), i.e. systemic and schematic knowledge (Widdowson, 1990). According to Widdowson (1990: 163), systemic knowledge is a frame of reference in the mediation of meaning. It is "subservient" to schematic knowledge. The latter type of knowledge accounts for the fact that different "indexical meanings" (meanings of linguistic expressions as used in particular contexts of language use) are possible. Widdowson's notion of "contextual plausibility" in the expression and interpretation of texts relates to this context dependence [that is, domain- and situation-specificity (see e.g., Erickson, 1984 or Scribner & Cole, 1978)] of language use, which is ipso facto also a feature of literacy.

Declarative knowledge ("knowledge that"), including systemic and schematic knowledge, is static in that it is independent of its use for communicative purposes in real time. It cannot be employed immediately, but only through procedures that activate its relevant parts in the reception, production and learning of language. Declarative knowledge is acquired through being told (see Færch & Kasper, 1987; Ringbom, 1992).

The sum of procedures that activate declarative knowledge and allow for language use is referred to as procedural knowledge ("knowledge how"). Procedural knowledge can be acquired through practice (see Fraser, 1991). In language use, it selects and combines rules and elements from the declarative knowledge in order for language users to express and interpret meanings appropriately.

Literacy is, like oral language use, based on the individual's declarative knowledge. Appropriate use of this knowledge for the purposes of communication indicates that procedural knowledge is in action. Thus, literacy includes declarative as well as procedural knowledge.

Because literacy can be conceived of as knowledge, and because current theoretical orientations about the nature of knowledge may exert an influence on people's understanding of literacy and their understanding of its acquisition or development, a word needs to be said on the three major theoretical orientations to knowledge that are recognised nowadays among social scientists: "the positivistic", "the humanistic-interpretive", and "the critical" orientations (see e.g., Roth, 1984; Walsh, 1991).

Positivists conceive of knowledge as separate from the individual and from his actions, experience and social context. In this conception, knowledge is quantifiable and verifiable information. The positivistic conception of knowledge has an implicit theory of learning as well as teaching. Learning appears to be an absorption of decontextualised, general principles that are applicable to all circumstances. These principles can be broken into discrete pieces for instruction purposes. The discrete pieces of knowledge are organised in a hierarchy such that simple pieces are subsumed in complex structures of knowledge (see also my discussion of the subskills approach to reading, in Chapter 3). The theory of teaching controls the selection, gradation, and presentation of the different bits of knowledge for "systematic feeding" (Walsh, 1991). The teacher transmits the different bits objectively and in a principled way, as they are laid down in the textbook. Teacher and student are controlled by the textbook, which they must follow step by step. With regard to participation in literacy events, I can say with Edelsky (1991) that teacher and student are made to play the social role of objects, rather than subjects, as they are not in control. The student, a passive recipient, has the task of absorbing the different bits of knowledge, which he will have to regurgitate when the time comes and if the need arises.

Regurgitation is an appropriate term in this respect concerning for example the teaching and learning of French as a second language in Zaire, or for that matter, the

teaching and learning of English as a foreign language. Zairean children learn and know about the primacy of French over other languages in use among Zaireans even before they start going to school. In their first days at school, they may be heard boasting about their knowledge of French. However, when such children are pressed into speaking French by a person whom they may know as a speaker of the language, there will be heard a stream of words translating like

> Good morning, sir. How are you today? I am well. Today is Monday
> and tomorrow will be Tuesday, etc..

or something along these lines. This stream of words may not at all be related to the context of the particular event, or it may not be appropriately conveying any content.

This regurgitation may be accompanied by the compulsory crossing of the forearms on the chest, as usually required by the teacher. It is a natural instance of second or foreign language learners having constructed a stereotypical model of the target language to mimic. Its result is usually what Balester (1991) refers to as hyperfluency (discourse that is both inappropriate and incompetent in the target audience's estimation).

In Zairean EFL classes, the practice of dialogue memorisation and recitation appears to aim at the development of hyperfluency in the EFL learners.

For the purposes of this presentation, hyperfluency can be seen as an attempt by the learner to regurgitate what had been transmitted, as evidence of knowledge.

From the foregoing it can be said that, in a positivistic pedagogy, little or no connection exists between knowledge and its practical, human purposes (see Roth, 1984), because knowledge is transcendent of culture and history. In other terms, a positivistic pedagogy ignores the differences of roles that people may play, the differences of the domains of literacy use, the cultural specificity of literacy users, etc.. The assumed transcendence of knowledge makes de Castell & Luke (1987) observe that the positivistic view of knowledge strips teachers and students of their identities as language users. And, as de Castell & Luke also observe, it removes language acquisition and use from their real pragmatic context and resituates them

> as empty formalisms in a no-man's land where thought and action are
> detached from authoritative thinking and acting.
> (de Castell & Luke, 1987: 425)

In this no-man's land, the literacy program and instructional technology have the ultimate authority (see also Goodman, 1989; Harste, 1989; or Shannon, 1989). For this reason, the diverse socio-economic, cultural and linguistic realities of students are thought to be extraneous to the task of teaching and to the acquisition of neutral, universal content (Walsh, 1991). These realities do not need to be taken into account at school, for the purposes of standardisation and uniformity in the teaching and learning process.

It has been said elsewhere, however, that some of the individual differences in the acquisition of literacy at school can be traced back to the learners' previous experiences with literacy in other domains of literacy use (see e.g., Ferdman, 1990; or Fishman, 1987). The work of Heath (1983) can be mentioned here again as illustrative of the idea that knowledge never exists independently of the individuals that produce and use it as members of a given community. Furthermore, the children that Ingham (1982: 153) identified as "avid readers" can also be mentioned for having "inherited" the good habit of wanting to read from their parents, who were frequent readers. The social, collaborative nature of literacy as a system of knowledge has equally been underlined by Brumfit (1992) who, referring one to Wells (1985), comments that

> Children read best when they have been read to, when they have seen
> their parents and older brothers and sisters reading, and when they are
> part of a genuine reading community.
> (Brumfit, 1992: 5)

The opening paragraphs of this presentation referred to literacy as a social practice and thus implicitly favoured the notion of literacy as social knowledge. As such, it is acquired through personal involvement, as may be inferred from a humanistic-interpretive point of view, which I turn to next.

According to Roth (1984), or Walsh (1991), the humanistic-interpretive conception considers knowledge as intimately connected to the individual, to his social context, and personal or social needs. In this view, knowledge acquisition takes place as a natural meaning making process, resulting from the interaction between the learners' prior knowledge and experience and the new knowledge constructed in their social environment. Learning tasks are seen as social environments (Erickson, 1984) in which students are active participants, not passive recipients. Teachers facilitate, encourage and position students' acquisition of knowledge through purposeful activities of interest to students, e.g., purposeful message-orientated reading and writing (Roth, 1984; Walsh, 1991). I may add that, acting as "literacy brokers", teachers provide the "scaffolding" (Bruner, 1978; see also Sub-section 1.2.2 below)

necessary for the construction of knowledge by learners. In this theory, texts are not considered as the unique source of knowledge; instead they afford, as Walsh says, a supplement to and an extension of students' own experiences and discovery.

There have been attempts to implement humanistic-interpretive conceptions of knowledge in the practice of education. Some of these attempts resulted for example in learner-centred pedagogies, for which some of the theoretical bases can be taken from the theory and practice of adult teaching and learning. Brundage & MacKeracher (1980) e.g., identified relevant principles, of which three can be mentioned here:

- the learner reacts to all experience as he sees it, not as the teacher presents it. Concerning reading, for example, this principle acknowledges the personal nature of perception, which makes it easy to understand why no two readers may give exactly the same interpretation to any given paragraph as "our perceptions are determined almost exclusively by our experiences" (Dechant & Smith, 1977: 36). But, it also needs to be noted that these experiences may be shared with other members of one's reading community (Wallace, 1992: 19).

- the learner does not learn when over-stimulated or when experiencing extreme stress or anxiety. At the level of methodology, this principle appears to imply that the learner should be drawn "... into an affective engagement with the learning process ..." (Widdowson, 1990: 13). The practice of suggestopedia (see e.g., Bancroft, 1978) and the pedagogical concerns about lowering the learners' affective filter (see Krashen, 1989: 10) may be taken as attempts to implement this principle.

- the learner learns best when the content is personally relevant to past experience or present concerns and the learning process is relevant to life experiences. Personal relevance, as Goodman (1986) argues, makes language learning easy. This principle takes one back to Dewey (1982, a memorial reprint) who insisted that education should be about the real world.

Learner-centredness, as an expression of the humanistic-interpretive orientation to knowledge, culminates in a cluster of approaches to language teaching in which communication features as the ultimate goal of pedagogy. Such a goal amounts to enabling the learner to act in the world.

Communicative language teaching, as these approaches came to be known in ELT contexts in particular, focuses on the development of meaning and recognises the importance of the negotiation of meaning as a stimulus to language development, which is believed to be likely to occur through means other than step-by-step processing (see Nunan, 1988). Negotiation of meaning can be done only by the

learner himself, as an active participant in the acquisition of knowledge. What he needs is a meaningful interaction with whatever it is that he is to learn. Meaningful interaction in language learning is persuasively emphasised by Widdowson (1978) in his suggestions of ways of "teaching language as communication".

However, the humanistic-interpretive conception of knowledge came to be criticised e.g., on the ground that it

> ... does not necessarily consider as essential the social and cultural dynamics, realities, and struggles involved in the interpretation, definition and understanding of [...] experiences.
> (Walsh, 1991: 13)

Because of this, Walsh pleads for the adoption of a critical orientation to knowledge. This is a view of knowledge, people and experience, that is connected to practical human needs, that is, to the individual and structural influences that operate both upon and within society. This theoretical understanding characterises knowledge as socially constructed, historically generated, and ideologically based (Walsh, 1991). It is therefore always partial and bound to change due to the social, cultural and linguistic conditions in which the individual lives.

Critical theorists are aware that the distribution of knowledge depends on the ways in which society is organised (see e.g., Levine, 1986), i.e. there is no equal access to forms of knowledge. Heath's (1983) finding that members of different communities are socialised into literacy differently is also worth noting in this connection. Nonetheless, in a democratic society, knowledge needs to be made available to all.

In pedagogical practice, the critical conception of knowledge is often associated with the work of Paulo Freire (1973). Freire's pedagogical tenets derive from a view of learners as people who bring to the learning situation the contexts and contents of lives lived within communities that are positioned by and situated within a wider social structure (Walsh, 1991: 15). Knowledge acquisition is viewed as equivalent to empowerment and acquisition of the ability to control one's environment. For Freire, literacy is a process of coming to think critically, which is achieved through conscientisation, i.e. making the learner become aware of the conditions of his social life for the purpose of transforming it. The enactment of this process engages students and teachers collaborating in the production and organisation of the conditions for learning.

The three conceptions of knowledge (viz. positivistic, humanistic, and critical) presented above may not necessarily be exclusive of one another in the acquisition and practice of literacy. I am here trying to relate these orientations to the inclusive model of literacy proposed by Wells (1991). In this model, Wells distinguishes four requirements for a full exercise of literacy: control of the written code, awareness of the appropriate register for the occasion, accurate and explicit matching of linguistic form to conceptual structure, and a creative and intentional exploration of alternatives within texts. These he terms respectively as the performative, the functional, the informational, and the epistemic levels of literacy. The relationship of inclusiveness existing between these four levels is explained below.

At the performative level, the emphasis is on the code as code. Becoming literate is simply a matter of acquiring the skills necessary for decoding and encoding messages in writing, according to the conventions of letter formation, spelling and punctuation that are current in one's community (Wells, 1991). Emphasis put at this level on the code as such may relate to the positivistic theoretical orientation to knowledge as independent of individuals, and in need of being transmitted from the source to the learner as its passive recipient. Mechanical aspects of literacy may constitute this type of knowledge. Distinct reading skills, if they are identified and their hierarchy established (see my discussion in Chapter 3), may also constitute this type of knowledge. Then, where the subskills approach to reading is adopted, the emphasis of instructional activities can be said to be on the performative level of literacy.

In Wells' model, the performative ability of the participant in a literacy event forms the basis on which the functional level of literacy is built. According to Wells, functionality refers to the uses that are made of literacy in interpersonal communication (see also Halliday, 1973). One is literate if one can cope with the demands of everyday life that involve written language. There may be particular demands for particular situations: different social roles to play, different types of texts to deal with, etc..

Emphasis on interpersonal communication at the functional level of literacy in Wells' model, may be said to be motivated by the humanistic-interpretive orientation to knowledge, in which as was noticed the active role of the participant is stressed. The humanistic-interpretive conception can also be said to underlie the third level of literacy in Wells' model: this is the informational level, which is inclusive of the functional level.

The informational level relates to the role of literacy in the communication of knowledge. Literacy is a means of acquiring or recording information. One can recognise here the heuristic function of language. Literacy gives access to knowledge. It is for this reason, one can say, that most literate parents expect their children to attain the informational level of literacy. If they were asked why they wanted their children to learn to read and write, they would be most likely to mention acquisition of knowledge from books as the ultimate aim: acquiring literacy for subsequent school achievement.

The functional and the informational levels both emphasise the role of literacy as a mode of communication. In this respect, it may be noted with Meek (1991) or Wallace (1992) that people have repertoires of literacies. The work of Street (1984) with Iranians has shown that people's different repertoires of literacies may be developed in different domains of literacy use. The work of Scribner & Cole (1981) has also shown how functionally specialised literacy can be.

Scribner & Cole report about three different literacy traditions existing among the Vai literates of north-western Liberia: Arabic literacy, English literacy, and Vai literacy. Vai literacy has been used for over a century for personal and village public needs. It is learned in informal contexts without schooling. Arabic literacy is associated with the learning of the Qur'an and is learned through a long process of schooling relying to an important extent on memorisation. English literacy is associated with schooling outside the village. The Vai example shows how different literacies may co-exist to serve different communicative and informational purposes.

The most inclusive of all the levels of literacy in Wells' model is the epistemic level. This level recognises the changes that reading and writing can make in the mental lives of individuals, and societies. Meek's (1991) example about the influence of Bunyan's and Milton's writings in Churchill's speech can be recalled here. It shows that becoming literate refers to the acquisition of particular ways of acting upon and transforming knowledge and experience. Churchill could be said to have transformed knowledge and experience as the writing styles of Bunyan and Milton merged in his speech.

Obviously, the epistemic level of literacy aligns itself to the critical orientation to knowledge, explained earlier. It is at this level that literacy can be considered as a mode of living characterised by a particular relationship between language use and thinking, characterised by attitudes of "creativity, exploration, and critical evaluation." (Wells, 1991: 53). The critical use of literacy or in Wells' terms, the

epistemic level of literacy, should be the ultimate goal of formal education. For example, Article 23 of the 1986 Zairean Education Law mentions the development of a critical mind, intellectual creativity and curiosity as one of the goals of secondary education. This is an ideal, which the current literacy practices do not seem to promote. But if it is attained, the literate person will realise for example that:

> Reading Einstein or Darwin is not just acquiring knowledge; it is sharing an intellectual adventure [...] In this sense, literacy is a kind of love, not an ability or an accomplishment. It is participation, education in the classical sense - being brought up to be part of something, not just to be successful in a career.
> (Solomon, 1986: 42)

In this view, literacy means education. In its widest sense, this meaning of literacy is broader than its current understanding among Zaireans, for whom literacy ordinarily means formal education, as the following anecdote suggests. Political opponents usually say of one another that they are "semi-literate" to remind their audience of their own formal education background.

$$* \qquad * \qquad *$$

Literacy is obviously a difficult notion to grasp: multifarious and multidimensional (see e.g., Levine, 1986); but it is a tool of social practice through language, whose utility in a literate society is unquestionable. The individual can use it to do a number of things, including learning, as the heuristic function of language also extends to literacy in particular. This tool can be acquired in different settings provided that there is some help from knowledgeable persons who are also users of literacy, as suggested in Heath (1986) or Scribner & Cole (1978).

As a tool of social practice and a mode of language use, literacy can be acquired through interactions with other human beings. People can learn to use it by example during those social interactions requiring its use. Seen as a mode of knowing, literacy should involve personal interaction with written messages. For this reason, the learner must be put in a situation where he can use the competence already acquired in order for learning to accrue.

Questions about literacy, of significance to students of education, normally revolve around literacy and learning. My focus (see 1.2 below) is on one aspect of literacy, reading: the personal act in which an individual brings his world to the world of the written text, and takes from it whatever he can that may transform his previous representations of things.

1.2 Reading to learn a foreign language

"Verba volant, scripta manent". This Latin saying captures a feature that writing imposes on language: the permanence of written texts, as opposed to the evanescence of speech. Because of this feature, it can be said, Walsh (1992: 267) expressed the view that literacy requires and facilitates a direct attention to language. This view can be said to have inspired the title of the current section, as the FL text that a learner may have before his eyes can alert him to the features of that language.

The title of this section can also be said to have been inspired by a report like Stevick's (1982: 45) that an effective system of language teaching that was popular in the 1920s and the 1930s was the Reading Method.

From such views and reports, can stem the belief that, although reading in a foreign language is both a reading problem and a language problem (see Alderson, 1984), this double problem can be lessened by practice in actual reading in the foreign language. Actual reading in the foreign language would appear to be some strictly "literate" form of immersion in the foreign language. However, a minimum level of competence in the language is required. Cummins' (1979) notion of the threshold of language competence, discussed in 1.3.3 below, is related to this idea of a minimum level of competence.

In this section, I discuss first of all the notion of second/ foreign language learning, a key issue in a study like this one, of which the subjects are foreign language learners. Secondly, I will present some views on reading, as one means to the end of language learning.

1.2.1 The key issue: language learning

One definition of foreign language learning, supplied by Dodson (1978) in his evaluation of the bilingual education project in Wales, distinguishes between "medium-orientated" and "message-orientated" activities. Medium-orientated activities are directed toward the formal aspects of language: grammatical structure, accuracy of pronunciation, spelling, discourse organisation, etc.. Message-orientated activities are those activities in which the learner concentrates on using the foreign language to transact meanings.

The title of this section would suggest some bias towards message-orientated activities, for reasons deriving from views on literacy expressed in 1.1, some of the corollaries of which will be spelt out as this presentation proceeds.

For Dodson (1978), the most effective language learning involves a constant interaction between medium-orientated and message-orientated activities [See also Widdowson (1990: 15), on the relationship between formal instructional and natural use of language]. Each kind of activity is necessary; neither is sufficient by itself. The language teacher's problem is the creation of conditions that constantly engage the learner in this interaction.

Interaction between medium-orientated and message-orientated activities can be created for example when the language curriculum proposes discrete bits of knowledge (see e.g., 1.1.2 above) for systematic absorption alongside activities of a holistic nature. One may teach the past tense out of context, and then allow the learners to realise how meaning is achieved with this formal unit within the context of a story. Let us note that a whole language teacher would start with the story, and make the learners extrapolate from the context how meaning is achieved with a given formal unit (see e.g., Goodman, 1986: 9).

My own research design (see Chapter 4) can be said to have involved this combination of orientations: My experimental subjects were taught discrete English language forms in their usual EFL classes, and, in addition, they were given books to read on their own. This could be taken as a way of reconciling the positivistic and the humanistic orientations to knowledge. I must recognise nonetheless that it may be difficult to reconcile orientations which are fundamentally opposed, "or at least, will appear to be so to students, if they are not offered explanations as to the principles underlying different activities" (Wallace, 1993: personal communication).

While Dodson distinguishes between two kinds of activities, Krashen (1981) distinguishes between two cognitive levels which he refers to as acquisition and learning. Acquisition, which is sub-conscious, is the most effective and central means of internalising language for adults as well as for children. Learning is conscious, and involves deliberate use of the "monitor" to focus on form and check for correctness. Acquisition generates foreign language, and learning monitors it.

A similar distinction, taking into account the relative degree of consciousness harnessed by the learner, is that proposed by Færch & Kasper (1986). In their analysis of second or foreign language learning, unattended acquisition is separated from

attended learning in which learners control some aspects of the process. Basically, Færch & Kasper's distinction is similar to Krashen's acquisition/ learning distinction. I construe Færch & Kasper as saying that unattended acquisition of the target language may follow from the learner's comprehension of the language input that he receives as communication in or outside the classroom. This type of learning is particularly relevant to the development of communicative competence. It is experiential learning (see e.g., Stern, 1990). In this sense, reading can be considered as a source of language input for communication and learning that is based on linguistically accessible texts.

The terms "acquisition" and "learning" are also used by Stevick (1982) who, unlike Krashen, insists that they should not be seen as two discrete ways of coming to grips with a foreign language and mastering it. Acknowledging that the process of learning a foreign language is complex, Stevick proposes that acquisition and learning be considered as the ends of a continuum which rests on a single process.

Understood in this sense, these two levels of language learning can be shown, historically, to have always had a place in pedagogy (see e.g., Hawkins, 1988; Little et al, 1989; Widdowson, 1990), aiming at the development of the learner's communicative competence. Hawkins (1988) e.g., reminds one that when Latin was the lingua franca of all educated people in Europe, the grammar schools of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance had the business of teaching Latin grammar, and expected the students to use the language for all purposes. As he notes:

> It was recognised that, though the daily 'grammar grind' might be necessary, pupils could not be expected to learn to use Latin without constant practice, motivated by engaging in activities that interested them.
> (Hawkins, 1988: 4)

With particular regard to the learner's use of the target language; what Hawkins says can be taken as meaning that there does not seem to be any need to contrast acquisition and conscious learning, because both are needed. Stevick's acquisition-learning continuum would then appear to be an adequate explanation of what may be going on while the learner's mental representation of L2/FL is taking place. However, the teacher may need to keep acquisition and learning apart in order to strike a balance between them (Dodson, 1978; Stevick, 1982), so as to meet the constraints of classroom language teaching. In this train of thought, it can be said that if one needs to increase acquisition in the foreign language classroom, the "grammar grind" must

be supplemented. One means can be the learner's actual engagement with written texts in the foreign language: reading.

1.2.2 Reading: a means to an end

In the search of reasons for the justification of the adoption of reading as a way of helping students to learn a foreign language, one may posit with the proponents of communicative language teaching that the object of foreign language learning is communication, the "generator" of acquisition. As is well known, communication through language can be oral or written, and in literate communities the visual mode of language use can be as important as the oral/ aural one. If the object of learning is communication, then the valid theoretical orientation to knowledge is the humanistic-interpretive, where literacy as communicative interaction between social beings (e.g., the reader and the writer) is emphasised. My choice of reading exposure as experimental treatment (see Chapters 3 & 4) with Zairean EFL learners purported to privilege this view of literacy as communicative interaction.

It is commonplace to argue that genuine communication in the target language in foreign language classrooms is rare. The teacher needs to take this reality into account by offering students opportunities to use the target language for communication. Reading in the target language can be seen as a way of fostering actual communication through the target language. I am thinking of literacy events in which students use meaningful reading materials to achieve their purposes, not literacy events in which students are made to do exercises that are communicatively purposeless. Goodman (1986: 49) on his part suggests the involvement of students "in authentic literacy events and in a wide range of real comprehensible texts [...]", focusing on meaning.

Meaningful communicative interaction, as I understand it, may require the use of authentic texts [i.e. texts that are not "written for a pedagogic purpose" (Wallace, 1992: 76)]. In this work, I also consider authenticity as a feature of texts that were not normally produced for classroom use, but are brought into the classroom for language teaching/ learning purposes, because of their linguistic accessibility.

I will say a word, afterwards, on authenticity in relation to graded readers, the instruments I used with my experimental subjects. But, first of all, I would like to note that there are writers who consider authenticity differently. For Widdowson (1978: 80), authenticity is a feature of the interaction between the text and its user, i.e. the learner's interpretation of a text, or his response to it. Breen (1985) adds two other

qualifications to the notion of authenticity by relating it to how the learning task is conducive to language learning, and to the social context of the language classroom.

As I said earlier, authentic texts that are communicatively accessible can be brought into the classroom as pedagogic devices. Little et al (1989) advise this type of texts as the chief source of target language input, in order to allow the learner to acquire language in the process of using language. However, as Wallace (1992) warns, authentic texts may be linguistically too complex for foreign language learners especially. We therefore need to "reconcile the requirements of authenticity and high-interest content with those of linguistic accessibility" (Wallace, 1992: 76). This can be done for example by assessing the difficulty of texts, or by selecting texts within a given genre which is familiar to the learners.

Text difficulty can be assessed through readability formulae, e.g., Fry's (1977) criteria of word length and sentence length. According to these criteria,

> the greater the frequency of long words and sentences in a hundred-word sample, taken from the beginning, middle, and end of a text, the harder the text is judged to be.
> (Wallace, 1992: 77)

However, text difficulty may depend on factors that are inherent in learners such as knowledge, and motivation. Then, as Wallace (1992) advises, we may need an approach, like cloze procedure, which forces the learner to make guesses and use context to predict meaning, focusing on the process of reading.

The control of the accessibility of texts, as Widdowson (1978) observes, may result in the production of "simplified texts" or "simple accounts". A simple account is

> the recasting of information abstracted from some source or other to suit a particular kind of reader [it is] designed to meet a communicative purpose, directed at people playing their roles in a social context.
> (Widdowson, 1978: 89)

Examples of oral simple accounts are the V.O.A.'s Special English programme broadcasts that are designed for non-native audiences outside America. Some graded readers can be originally written as simple accounts to suit particular groups of learners, e.g., the original titles of graded readers for lower level ESL/EFL students (see Bamford, 1984: 218).

A simple account then differs from a simplified version which is "a contrivance for teaching language" (Widdowson, 1978). For example, a novel by Dickens (e.g., **David Copperfield**, one of the Collins English graded readers) which has been rewritten following certain lexical and syntactic specifications for a particular group of readers is a simplified version. English graded readers that are simplified and adapted from existing books are usually designed for higher level ESL/EFL students (see Bamford, 1984: 218). A simplified version is therefore not an authentic text in the sense explained earlier. Some graded readers belong to this group of reading materials, of which the difficulty has been controlled. I shall come back to the role of graded readers in the development of reading ability in Chapter 3.

Meanwhile, I would like to say that the control of text difficulty is some kind of "instructional scaffolding" (see Applebee & Langer, 1983). The term "scaffolding" -a construction-related metaphor- was used by Bruner (1978) to qualify the role of adult language input in child language acquisition. In mother child language interactions, "scaffolding" characterises

> what the mother provides on her side of the dyad in one of the regularized formats -- she reduces the degrees of freedom with which the child has to cope, concentrates his attention into a manageable domain, and provides models of the expected dialogue from which he can extract selectively what he needs for filling his role in discourse.
> (Bruner, 1978: 254)

For Little et al (1989), it refers to the constant support that allows the child space to frame and expand his language contributions in a dialogue with his caregiver. For example,

> Child: Car
> Father: Yes, that's a car
> Child: Bu
> Father: It's a blue car
> (Little et al, 1989: 3)

In this example, the adult language user addresses the same topic as the one the child is interested in, and expands on it in ways that the child can cope with. He also indirectly draws the child's attention to the formal aspects of language. The adult language user seems to take into account the interests, preoccupation, cognitive and linguistic abilities of the child (see Little et al 1989), so as to keep communication going. I can then construe "scaffolding" as a series of platforms from which to launch communication and keep it going. As Applebee & Langer (1983: 169) observe, "scaffolding"

allows the novice to carry out new tasks while learning strategies and patterns that will eventually make it possible to carry out similar tasks without external support.

In a reading class, "scaffolding" may refer to pre-reading instructional activities (see Langer, 1982: 47) aiming at building the learners' content-related background knowledge, text-related knowledge, specific vocabulary knowledge, understanding the purpose for reading, etc.. It involves helping the learners to build their confidence as readers, to take risks or to learn to take risks, to develop effective reading strategies, etc. (see Goodman, 1986) using comprehensible texts. In this sense, led by comprehensible texts, the learners will be able to self-correct and eventually "become better predictors" (Goodman, 1986: 52) of meaning.

In their own right, comprehensible texts constitute an instructional "scaffolding" if the classroom tasks in which these texts are involved take into account some aspects of natural language learning. According to Applebee & Langer (1983), there are five aspects of natural language learning that classroom tasks should emphasise: "intentionality, appropriateness, structure, collaboration, and internalization" (p.170).

The criterium of intentionality is drawn from the purposefulness of language/ literacy use, and it suggests that learners should be made to understand the purpose for which they engage with a given text. Their success in the literacy event will be cast in terms of the fulfilment of this purpose. The fulfilment of this purpose also depends on the appropriateness of the classroom task. For Applebee & Langer (1983), the most appropriate tasks pose problems "which students could not successfully complete on their own [and these tasks] involve abilities that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation" (p.170).

As learner readers are proceeding toward effective reading, becoming "better predictors" of meaning is an ability in the process of maturation which only texts that are not frustrating can foster. Therefore, it is advised about graded readers e.g., that

> When learners are studying at a certain level of a syllabus, they ought
> to read readers of a slightly lower level, to encourage fluent and
> dictionary-free reading.
> (Bamford,1984: 226)

In addition, activities leading to the fulfilment of the defined purpose for reading should be structured as "a natural sequence of thought and language" (Applebee & Langer, 1983). I understand that texts that assume the kind of knowledge that learner readers already have, and contain "predictable, fully structured language" (Wallace,

1987: 177) can provide this natural sequence of thought and language. Such texts are supportive in the sense that they prepare the learner readers for what comes next in the sequence of events or facts. These texts are bound to take into account the learners' comprehension efforts. It can be said that they emphasise the aspect of collaboration in language learning (Applebee & Langer, 1983). Finally, the aspect of internalisation suggests a gradual withdrawal of support as the learners internalise the appropriate patterns of behaviour for a successful engagement with texts. Gradual withdrawal of support can mean gradual increase in the difficulty level of the texts that the learners confront, as is in principle the case with graded readers.

The preference for the use of comprehensible texts seems to be in agreement with the following principle of communicative language teaching:

> ... optimal use must be made of those aspects of communicative competence that the learner developed through acquisition and use of the native language and that are common to those communication skills required in the second language.
> (Canale & Swain, 1980: 28)

In the light of this quotation, it would appear that aspects of communicative competence (e.g., knowledge about literacy practices) in the learner's source and target languages should be inventoried, compared, and taken into account in the pedagogy. Such a pursuit would however constitute another study in its own right.

Nonetheless, some generalities can be noted here concerning Zairean students, literate in French, who may be requested to interact with reading materials in English, after only two years of English tuition. The questions to be answered concern the assets such students can bring to the learning situation, and whether it can be assumed that they will read materials in English.

The students in question have as a result of their schooling become literate in French, a language which bears some resemblance to English linguistically and sociolinguistically. As linguistic systems, French and English are closer than either is to the native languages of the Zairean learners. Let us note for example, with Thonis (1970: 138), that about two thousand of the five thousand most commonly used French words may be found in English. This is a great asset indeed, in respect of the notion of potential knowledge of L2 (see Section 1.3, below). Sociolinguistically, the formal setting of the classroom in which there is exposure to French, and then later, to English, makes both languages -known to be languages of wider communication- similarly appear like languages of authority, knowledge, and prestige.

The students concerned can be said to bring to the experience of reading in English at least one spoken language, one written language, together with a stock of different sorts of meanings which can be retrieved for communication purposes. Literate, i.e. able to express and receive messages in writing, they can be assumed to know the necessary associations between print and language, and meaning. Their knowledge and world experiences have certainly been expanded by their spoken and visual linguistic abilities. To relate their development as participants in literacy events to Well's (1991) levels of literacy, they can be assumed to be able to function at the informational level of literacy.

As to reading in particular, it can be affirmed that such students know that reading helps to expand knowledge, i.e. that they can learn through reading, which they normally do in preparation for their different school examinations. In this sense, it may be understood that, apart from creating an opportunity for the learner's social interaction with the writer in the target language, reading provides the learner with an opportunity for psychological interaction.

While social interaction through reading refers to the fact that the text mediates between two human beings, the writer and the reader, psychological interaction denotes

> the psychological processing of the target language input in such a way
> that it interlocks with and modifies the learner's existing knowledge.
> (Little et al, 1989: 5)

Interlocking of target language input with the learner's existing knowledge or modification of the learner's existing knowledge would suggest that comprehension of target language input is taking place, and that learning may ensue.

According to Little et al (1989: 33), psychological interaction gives learners, left on their own, time and space in which to integrate the new material they learn with what they already know.

In as much as reading provides social and psychological interaction in and with the target language, there is justification for the title of this section as "Reading to learn a foreign language", by which it is meant that as one reads one can learn the foreign language, i.e. literacy can be used for foreign language learning. As learning accrues through literacy as a tool, the tool also becomes better through use. What was said in

1.1.2 should be recalled here: as procedural knowledge, literacy is acquired through practice.

Concerning whether Zairean learners of English, literate in French, are equipped to read for meaning in English, the following can be said. Reading, participating in written discourse at the receiving end, involves the use of one's existing knowledge of the world and one's existing linguistic knowledge. It can take place even with just the basic level of linguistic knowledge. As can be observed, engaging in an act of communication actively does not require the acquisition of the totality of one's target language, because

> ... no one person (not even a native speaker) masters every aspect of the language.
> (Nunan, 1988: 22)

In the light of the foregoing, some experience of oral English learning together with French reading ability, can be considered a secure enough basis for the EFL learners in question to engage in reading in English, with some degree of confidence. There is then a need to argue for a pedagogy that takes into account the learners' previous literacy experiences, a pedagogy of the transfer of literacy skills. The following section touches on a few particulars concerning the notion of transfer.

1.3 Transfer of literacy skills

1.3.1 The notion and requirement

Transfer is yet another term in current use in educational studies pertaining to second/ foreign language, of which there are many difficulties in finding one adequate definition. The difficulties involved in trying to define transfer can be indicated by the number of definitions available in the literature. For example, Dechert & Raupach (1979, quoted by Ringbom, 1992) present a count of 17 different definitions. The difficulties involved can be said to derive from the relation of transfer to language; which fact may entail as a prerequisite

> adequate definitions of many other terms, such as strategy, process, and simplification.
> (Odlin, 1989: 28)

Understandably, a fully adequate definition of transfer would presuppose a fully adequate definition of language (Odlin, 1989: 28).

Nonetheless, because transfer is related to language, and hence to knowledge, a psycholinguistic view can be taken, such as Færch & Kasper's (1987), in which transfer is seen as a procedure of knowledge activation by means of which L2 learners activate their L1/Ln knowledge in developing or using their interlanguage (p.112). A learner's interlanguage can also have some influence on his use of his L1/Ln. There is "cross-linguistic influence" (see Kellerman & Sharwood Smith, 1986; or Odlin 1989). This term includes negative and positive effects on language use or development, regarded as resulting not only from a previously acquired language working on a later acquired language, but also reciprocally from the latter working on the former. Putting all these ideas together, one can see transfer as a psycholinguistic process involving activation of knowledge, or knowledge related to the use or learning, of one language in the use or development of another language, of which the effects may positively or negatively influence the use or development of the other language. The operation of transfer then presupposes some already acquired, stable, knowledge on which to draw.

Because the effects of transfer can be noticed in the production and reception of language, in the use as well as in the development of language, Færch & Kasper (1987) construe the process both as a communication procedure, involving production and reception of language, and a learning procedure. As a production procedure, transfer refers to the activation of some previously acquired knowledge in one language in the establishment of plans by means of which one seeks to achieve a communicative goal. As a reception procedure, transfer implies an interpretation of in-coming data in one language on the basis of one's knowledge in another language. As Færch & Kasper note, transfer as a language reception procedure is a case of inferencing based on already existing knowledge. Such inferencing makes it possible to make target language input comprehensible, allowing it to become an in-take, and hence learnable. It is on this account that transfer becomes a learning procedure.

The effects that transfer brings about are not always directly observed; they can also be indirectly inferred. They can be directly observed at the level of language production in such phenomena as borrowing, foreignising, literal translation, etc. (see Færch & Kasper, 1987: 120). At the level of language reception or learning, the effects can be inferred. For example, on observing people's language behaviours, it can be shown that their comprehension of L2/FL texts can be aided by knowledge elements or procedures deriving from their L1 (see e.g., Carson et al, 1990; Ringbom, 1992). Ringbom (1992) e.g., reports that between 1980 and 1989 Swedish L1 learners of English performed consistently better than their Finnish L1 counterparts on the reading comprehension tasks of the Finnish Matriculation Examination in English.

From this fact, he infers that Swedish L1 learners have an advantage over Finnish L1 learners in dealing with English texts, due to their knowledge of Swedish, a Germanic language, which is related to English, another Germanic language. As Ringbom pertinently observes, the presence of a large number of cognate terms (those having similar or identical forms in L1 and L2) in Swedish greatly facilitates the understanding of English texts by Swedish L1 learners of English. The existence of such an advantage can also be postulated in relation to communication among Bantu language speakers who do not share the same linguistic code but can manage an exchange, relying on their interlocutors' approximation of the message content on the basis of cognates.

In such cases where L1 and L2 are related, a pedagogy that counts on transfer as a learning procedure should be understood as acknowledging the fact that although cognates may be deceptive, they may provide a basis for inferencing, i.e. an approximate comprehension, and consequently learning, of L2 texts. If cognates are understood in senses that are different from their real meanings, the context of their use may keep the learner from misunderstanding. And the learner will be given the opportunity to discover that meaning is partially dependent on context. In addition, there is a possibility of exploring meaning alternatives within the constraints of the text, i.e. checking for "contextual plausibility" (see Widdowson, 1990), or in other terms, there is a possibility of exercising one's "epistemic level of literacy" (see Wells, 1991), i.e. critically "checking out" different possibilities..

Cognates clearly constitute already acquired knowledge likely to help the learners in their L2 use or development. Knowledge likely to help in this way, i.e. transferable, has been referred to as "potential knowledge of L2". Ringbom (1992) uses this term following the lead of Russian psychologists, and construes it as denoting the knowledge of words or grammatical constructions that the learner has, without having actually ever come across them in his L2 interactions. Potential knowledge need not be understood as comprising only declarative knowledge (such as the knowledge of cognate terms); it may also include L1/Ln-based procedural knowledge. In relation to literacy, potential knowledge would include the knowledge that print carries potential for meaning (no matter what the script-specific or language-specific features are), the knowledge of scanning procedures, the knowledge of graphic signs, and so on. What is important is the presence of some already existing knowledge to draw on in one's interactions using input or output in the other language, because transfer of knowledge or ability from L1 to L2 can only occur if the individual has already acquired this potential knowledge or ability in L1.

1.3.2 The generating principle: CALP

A universal knowledge principle which may account for the transfer of literacy-related knowledge and abilities from language to language, even when the scripts used obey different principles, was posited by Cummins (1979, 1981). According to him, there is a cognitive/academic language proficiency (or CALP) that is common to all languages. This is an advanced type of proficiency, which takes long to develop and is needed for success in spheres such as the school where literacy is an important tool. The development of this proficiency appears to be associated with educational level (see Carson & Kuehn, 1992), so much so that it can be said that the higher the educational level, the more stable the CALP. Because CALP is a common underlying principle, it allows for the transfer of literacy skills. So, the more stable an individual's CALP, the more readily transferable his literacy skills are (see Carson & Kuehn, 1992).

CALP could be what Brumfit (1992: 3) refers to as "a general capacity [...] capable of developing in a number of different directions", as the functions of literacy change with the needs of society.

As a theoretical construct, CALP derives from the developmental interdependence hypothesis, which states that the level of L2 competence which a bilingual child attains is partially a function of the type of competence the child has developed in L1 at the time when intensive exposure to L2 begins (Cummins, 1979: 233). According to this interdependence hypothesis:

> ... to the extent that instruction in Lx is effective in promoting proficiency in Lx, transfer of this proficiency to Ly will occur provided there is adequate exposure to Ly (either in school or environment) and adequate motivation to learn Ly.
> (Cummins, 1981: 29)

The development of literacy in one language may thus be affected by the literacy capabilities developed in another language.

In spite of the fact that the hypothesis of the linguistic interdependence is difficult to test (see e.g., Romaine, 1989: 239); empirical evidence has been reported supporting its claims concerning unrelated as well as related languages, concerning languages that use the same, similar, or different scripts, concerning production as well as reception of language. Most of these studies are quantitative in design, and they

operationalise CALP as the strength of the relationship between scores at different literacy tasks involving different languages. For example, Mace-Matluck et al (1983), quoted in Carson et al (1990), studied literacy among students of Cantonese language background, and found a strong correlation between literacy acquired in English and the literacy level achieved in Cantonese prior to English instruction. On their part, Carson et al (1990) asked Chinese and Japanese students to write an essay and to complete a cloze passage in both their first and second languages; and found evidence for the transfer of skills across languages in reading as well as in writing. Carrell (1991) reports investigations on the reading comprehension of adult native speakers of Spanish and English, who were foreign or second language learners of the other language at different proficiency levels. The results of the study showed that second language reading was partially a function of first language reading ability. I shall refer to Carrell's study again in Chapter 3 in relation to the quality of the target language input in reading development, and also in Chapter 4 in relation to this study's hypotheses.

There have also been qualitative studies which provide evidence for the cross-linguistic transfer of literacy skills. For example, Edelsky's (1982) study of elementary school Spanish-English bilingual children's writing offers strong evidence of transfer of literacy skills across languages. It verified the hypothesis that L1/L2 writing relationship can be viewed as application of L1 to L2 writing ability. To the question "What is it that is applied?", Edelsky (1982) replied: "potentially anything-from directionality of print to spelling hypotheses to general principles and processes" (p. 225). According to her, this application may be influenced by such factors as the nature of the written systems of the two languages, the writer's proficiency in the L2 (echoing the threshold hypothesis; see 1.3.3 below), the nature of the literacy experience, sociolinguistic constraints, and the nature of the writing process itself.

One more qualitative study giving evidence for the transfer of literacy skills is Vetter's (1991), on personal letters written by Tuvaluans (natives of the former British colony of the Ellice Islands). The analysis of the letter corpuses provided descriptive evidence that biliterates transfer discourse features (e.g., the high incidence of affect-denoting linguistic features) of their native literacy to literacy in English, their second language.

All the studies reported here claim evidence for transfer from L1 to L2. But, the work of Levine & Reves (1985) with Hebrew L1 learners of English supports the idea that transfer can also work from L2 to L1. Their experiment involved Hebrew L1 university students, who were foreign learners of English. The experimental students

were taught reading strategies in their EFL reading course for a period of 10 weeks. The measurements of reading ability were taken in Hebrew before and after this instructional period, for the experimental as well as for the control students. Levine & Reves noticed that there was a significant qualitative and quantitative improvement in the experimental students' Hebrew reading. This finding suggested that L1 reading can be improved by systematic reading instruction in the foreign language. It can then also be hypothesised that systematic reading instruction in EFL can result in improvement in French reading among Zairean EFL learners.

1.3.3 The threshold hypothesis

The cross-linguistic interdependence hypothesis, from which the construct of CALP derives, seems to include a constraint on the application of this construct, in its reference to adequate exposure to L2 as one of the conditions for transfer to occur. This constraint is clearly stated in the threshold hypothesis, according to which there is a threshold of linguistic competence which must be attained in each language for bilinguals to avoid deficits and benefit cognitively from their bilingualism (Cummins, 1979: 229).

According to Cummins (1979), the available data suggest that there are two thresholds of bilingual competence: a lower and a higher. Below the lower threshold, the bilingual child's competence in his L2 may be so weak as to result in negative cognitive and academic effects. In contrast, attainment of the higher threshold would be sufficient to avoid any negative effects. Evidence of the lower level of competence is provided by the academic failure of minority language children using L2 as a medium of instruction, and the low proficiency levels of some bilinguals in both L1 and L2 (Cummins, 1979: 231).

I would like to note here some doubts that the idea that some bilingual children may have low levels of proficiency in both their languages raise. According to Martin-Jones & Romaine (1986), this idea relies on an assessment procedure (discrete-point tests) that supports the view that language is divisible into isolated components. It also neglects the fact that bilingual children are language users whose competence involves a process of interaction between their languages. This competence cannot be adequately tested "by measuring their control over categories of the monolingual code, some of which do not exist" (Martin-Jones & Romaine, 1986: 34), i.e. are not attested in the repertoire of linguistic choices available to the bilingual child.

I agree with the two writers that the assessment of the competence of bilingual children should take into account the sociolinguistic factors of the coexistence of their two languages, and the different roles that the children in question may play in differing instances of language use. Nonetheless, I agree with Cummins that there is some threshold level of competence at which the bilingual child is most likely to be able "to reap the cognitive benefits of [his] bilingualism" (Cummins, 1979: 231). One of these benefits is certainly the application of CALP.

According to Cummins, these benefits occur when the higher threshold level of competence has been attained. Evidence of the existence of this level may be suggested by the high levels of L2 skills (as attested by high scores) in the performance of children in immersion programmes (Cummins, 1979). For example, in a longitudinal study of Anglophone pupils enrolled in a French immersion programme (that is, subjects moving towards bilingualism), Barik & Swain (1976) found that high scorers in French showed "greater cognitive growth, as measured by the test of mental ability employed" than low scorers in French. The results established a relationship between the level of L2 skills and the cognitive development of bilingual children. But, as Barik & Swain observed, there was no evidence that the low achievers in French were experiencing cognitive disadvantages.

Further evidence for the threshold hypothesis can be gathered from Clarke's (1979, 1980) reports about the reading behaviours of proficient adult Spanish-speaking readers reading in Spanish and in English. In both languages, and in both cloze tasks and oral readings, the subjects seemed to utilise the same basic behaviours (hypothesising, testing, confirming or rejecting the hypotheses tested as reading goes on). The results showed that although good readers (those ranking high) performed better than poor readers (those ranking low) in both languages, limited control over the second language tended to "short-circuit" the good readers' system, causing the good readers to revert to poor reader strategies (e.g., concentration on word-level semantic cues, intolerance for inexactness, unwillingness to take risks, unwillingness to make mistakes in one's guesses, etc.).

Other studies that show that stable literacy skills in L1 transfer to L2 when language proficiency in L2 has reached a threshold level are Carrell's (1991), Cziko's (1980), and Perkins et al's (1989).

1.4 A concluding note

In this chapter, I have considered literacy as a social practice, and literacy as knowledge, with a particular emphasis on the active role of the participants in literacy events, seen as instances of communication involving writing and reading activities.

Focus on the social nature of knowledge suggests a humanistic-interpretive perspective on literacy development. In this perspective, the development of literacy as part of an individual's language competence depends on, and is shaped by the uses of literacy in a given social setting. For illustration purposes, a mention was made of some of the literacy practices of the Zaireans. But the Zairean school, as a domain of literacy use in its own right, may adopt literacy practices that are at variance with those of the community at large. I have in mind the practice of reading for enjoyment which I adopted on an experimental basis for Zairean EFL learners (see Chapter 4). This practice allows one to read for meaning, and can create conditions that are conducive to the transfer of literacy skills, evidence for which is offered by several studies. As transfer can be a learning procedure, these conditions would allow for increased learning.

In Section 1.2 above, I reviewed three current theoretical orientations to knowledge: the positivistic, the humanistic-interpretative, and the critical orientations. I also noted that one of the stated goals of Zairean secondary education (see also Chapter 2) is the development of reflective and critical minds. In other terms, Zairean educational practices should aim to enable students to exercise their "epistemic level of literacy" (Wells, 1991), which as I said, aligns itself to the critical orientation to knowledge. The question can be asked whether my preference for the humanistic-interpretive orientation in the present study contributes to the attainment of this goal of Zairean secondary education. Explicitly, it does not. But, I can say that the practice of sustained silent reading (see Chapter 3) e.g., a way of moving students away from their usual dependence on the teacher as fostered by the positivistic orientation implicit in Zairean school literacy practices, can require a level of engagement with texts similar to that aimed for in a critically-orientated pedagogy. A humanistic-interpretive perspective, as through the practice of sustained silent reading, allows students to engage affectively with written texts. It might be a first step towards a critical perspective, which more fully develops what Wells (1991) termed the "epistemic level of literacy".

In the following chapter, I wish to focus on the literacy context of Zaire, and the particular case of the teaching and learning of EFL.

Note

1 Dianzungu B 1987 **Nsi yankatu ngongo eto** (= We want no desert here).

2 THE LITERACY CONTEXT OF ZAIRE, AND THE TEACHING/ LEARNING OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

The importance of the context of literacy education is summarised by what Robinson (1988: 243) says about teaching:

> We teach something to somebody some place at some particular time in some particular society.

An interpretation suggesting itself from this quotation is that what one teaches can be influenced by the various circumstances surrounding one's efforts. One should then try to understand the circumstances in which those efforts take place and then act accordingly. Part of this context of literacy which one has to understand is made up of institutions, concepts and values in which the practice of literacy is rooted.

In Section 1 of Chapter 1, I made an attempt to understand the context of literacy in Zaire by enumerating some of the literacy practices of Zaireans. In this chapter, I make further attempts to understand some particular aspects of the context in which literacy is developed and maintained in Zaire.

The development and maintenance of literacy accompanies the development and maintenance of spoken language. In a multilingual community, the question may arise as to which language or languages should be developed and maintained. With this question in mind, a description of the sociolinguistic situation of Zaire is put forward in the first section of this chapter. The situation depicted is one in which people easily become bilingual or trilingual. These people may become literate in at least one of their languages if they have gone through the Zairean formal education system, which is one of the social institutions that favour bilingualism or trilingualism in the country. Zaire's formal education system, presented in the second section of the present chapter, can be looked at as a literacy agency because becoming literate entails having gone through this system.

The third section of the present chapter considers a particular school activity: the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Zaire. EFL teaching/ learning in Zaire is essentially based on the written word (e.g., the source of teaching and learning materials is written), even if efforts are directed

toward the aural/ oral mode of language use. As the teaching and learning of English in Zaire is based on the written word, I regard it as a literacy event, in the sense of this term proposed by Heath (1983). For this reason, EFL teaching/ learning should be considered as an aspect of literacy development and maintenance.

The thrust of the argument here is for a pedagogy that favours reading (a literacy event which should be common among students). In the Zairean sociolinguistic situation where students are presumably willing to learn languages, such a pedagogy may facilitate language learning, as it is geared to comprehension and is rich in language input. In addition, it may contribute to the educational purpose of making students develop and maintain their literacy skills. In this way, a favourable attitude toward literacy may be attained at school, and may hopefully be maintained beyond the school years.

In the fourth and last section of this chapter, I will present some of the constraints on reading development in EFL in Zairean secondary schools.

2.1 Multilingualism and language policies

2.1.1 Zaire's large language repertoire

Zaire encompasses different linguistic communities and thus qualifies as a multilingual country. The phenomenon of multilingualism in Zaire does not necessarily originate from the 1884-85 Berlin Conference, where the international borders of the then Independent State of the Congo were recognised. Multilingualism predates the European colonisation of the country (see e.g., Bokamba, 1977: 182).

The exact number of languages in Zaire's repertoire is not known. Guesses range from 250 to 750 (see e.g., Goyvaerts et al, 1983; or Malu & Kazadi, 1989). Nevertheless, the degree of Zaire's multilingualism can be inferred from studies investigating linguistic behaviour within the country. One such study is Goyvaerts et al's (1983) on the town of Bukavu in the eastern part of Zaire. The study features a small scale language inventory of Bukavu. It showed that this small town of 209000 inhabitants had an immense linguistic diversity: 53393 investigated people were found to use 44 different languages. The apparent chaos within such a mosaic was reduced by the different extents to which individuals were multilingual. There were people who spoke only two languages as well as

people who found themselves at ease with five or six different tongues. This is a relatively common finding in Zairean urban areas. For this reason, I would suggest that Zaireans do not find the acquisition of other languages an achievement: it is a natural occurrence, conditional upon the circumstances of life.

Nevertheless, the multilingual nature of the country does not help to solve the problems of running modern government services, in matters pertaining to language communication. The concern had been felt during the colonial era about ways in which political and administrative decisions would be conveyed to the masses. The colonial authorities had three courses of action open to them: imposing the language of the administrator (French or Flemish); using trade languages, which the Zaireans had been using satisfactorily up until the colonial era; or, using each ethnic group's native tongue.

I can say that the three solutions were each used to some extent in the Zairean context. French, and Flemish to a lesser extent, were imposed in contacts between the administrator and the administered. Only French has survived up to the present. The colonial authorities also imposed as linguae francae four of the indigenous languages (CiLuba, KiKongo, KiSwahili, and LiNgala) to non-native-speaking populations living in areas adjacent to those where the four languages were originally used.

Zaire entered independence (June 30, 1960) with a language situation, persistent even today, which can rightly be described as doubly diglossic, as regards the functional use of different languages by individuals. The diglossic relationship works between French and the four inter-ethnic languages in the sense that high social functions are associated with the use of French and low ones with the use of the four linguae francae. French is functionally a "superior" language, as Nyunda (1986) observes. In social settings where the linguae francae and the other ethnic languages can be used, diglossia also determines the functional use in favour of the linguae francae at the high functions end.

For individuals, the language situation has institutionalised bilingualism, not only for those settling away from their native areas, but also for those attending schools or joining the army. Social mobility in Zaire is accompanied by, and necessarily depends on the learning of languages other than one's L1.

At independence, steps were taken to raise French to the constitutional status of official language. The four linguae francae continued to be in use as de facto

official languages, after French, in their respective administrative regions. In 1973, they were declared national languages.

The term "national language" should be understood here, in the sense expressed by Tadadjeu (1980: 1, fn), as denoting any indigenous language which has been officially promulgated by a government as a means of national communication and/or a medium of expression and transmission of national culture.

2.1.2 A three-layer structure of languages

The official steps taken to promulgate official and national languages confirmed the double diglossia explained earlier, and consecrated a three-layer structure of languages in Zaire (see Fig. 2.1): the top layer, where French is the official language; the intermediate layer, consisting of the four national languages; and the bottom layer, which comprises all the other ethnic languages. At the national level, the top layer is socially the most prestigious whereas the bottom layer is the least prestigious.
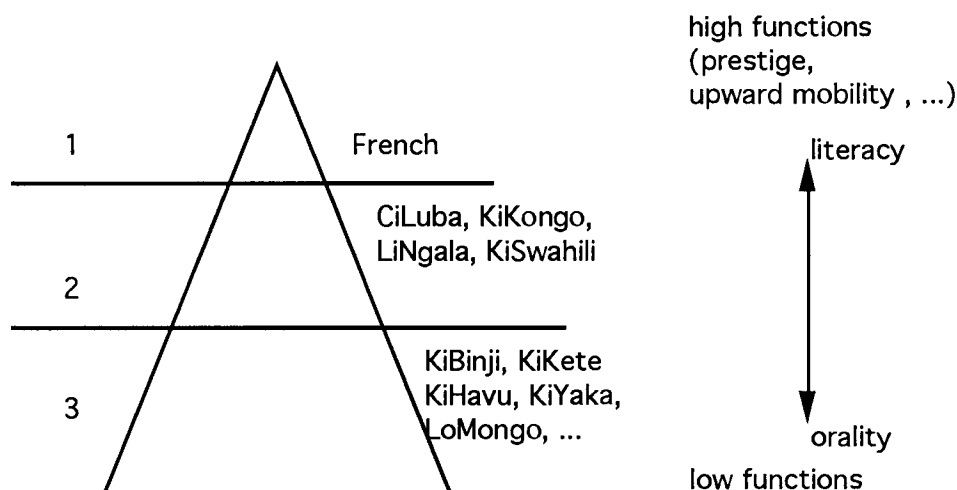
Fig. 2.1: The three-layer structure of languages in Zaire:
(1) top layer
(2) intermediate layer
(3) bottom layer.

The image of a triangle divided into three parts (see Fig. 2.1), which may be used to visualise the three-layer structure of languages in Zaire, is loaded with symbolism regarding school education, literacy and social expectations or achievements. With regard to education and literacy e.g., the ability to perform at the top-layer level (visualised as the top of the triangle), is the attribute of few people (the élite), who have survived the different selection hurdles of the school

system. The more highly educated one is, the more ably one can perform at the top-layer level.

Given the selective nature of the education system and the fact that proficiency in French covaries with a person's school career, Bokamba (1976: 128) estimated that fewer than 10% of the Zairean population speak French adequately, in spite of the claim that Zaire is the second French-speaking country in the world, after France (see e.g., Champion, 1978: 115). Because of the speculative nature of Bokamba's estimation, it is perhaps more secure to say that the majority of Zaire's population control only the intermediate- and the bottom-layer languages, and thus evolve at the base of the triangle, where most of the people are illiterate.

2.1.3 Orality vs. literacy

A major dimension of language use in the Zairean context, worth noting in respect of literacy studies, relates to the distinction between orality (aural/ oral mode of language use) and literacy (written mode of language use, as a result or consequence of formal education). The bottom layer of the Zairean sociolinguistic structure is typically associated with orality, whereas the intermediate and the top layers are associated with school education and thus with literacy in almost all cases. A simple example about myself is the fact that my friends and I correspond in French (written mode of language use), but resort to Zairean languages in our face-to-face interactions (aural/ oral mode of language use).

The orality/ literacy dimension operates in Zairean politics and administration, and determines which languages are or are not used in given circumstances. In politics e.g., formal and non-formal meetings differ to the extent that they are associated with orality and literacy. At formal meetings, although sessions use the aural/ oral mode of transmission, they are typically associated with literacy and thus with the languages found at the intermediate and top layers. The more formal the occasion, the more literate the use of language and the more participants would stick to French, the top-layer language.

The orality/ literacy dimension of language use is also attested in the judicial context. The official language of Zaire being French, all the laws are written and promulgated in this language. Their administration is also undertaken through it. Nonetheless, current practice in judicial institutions reckons with the existence of other languages. Where for example there is doubt as to which language would best guarantee the rights of the parties to a legal case, the said parties are

requested to say in which language they would like to be heard. Often, the choice involves two Zairean languages, one of which is the national language of the area where the case is being heard. If the judge, trained in French, is not competent in the language chosen by one of the parties, he will resort to the services of an interpreter. The legal documents for the case in question will be elaborated in French (written mode of language use) although the hearings will have resorted to another language and to the services of an interpreter (aural/ oral mode of language use).

In the mid-1970s, President Mobutu publicly announced that any of the national languages (that is, the four linguae francae) could be used during official ceremonies, in addition to French. It can be noted that in the Zaire of the 1970s and 1980s, presidential announcements like this one had the force of laws. Despite the announcement, no one has ever been heard using one of the linguae francae in parliament, for example. Those members of parliament who judge their French to be doubtful just would not talk.

The foregoing examples show that French is the typical language of literacy in the Zairean context. Therefore, in the foreseeable future no Zairean language will equal French in prestige. Everybody in society at large considers French to be the only language of upward mobility. It is the language which conditions success in formal education as well as access to the modern world and to white collar wage-earning jobs that all long for but very few can get. He who has the best turns of phrase in French is thought to be the wisest and the most knowledgeable. Such reasons probably explain why French is given the most prominent place in the mass media, in spite of the fact that few people are fluent in it.

As a matter of fact, the use of languages in the mass media also reflects the three-layer structure evoked earlier. Bottom-layer languages are ignored in print as well as on the radio and television. Only the intermediate- and top-layer languages are represented, but not necessarily equally. Two thirds of the national radio and television programme outputs use the French language (Bokonga, 1980: 23), in spite of the fact that few Zaireans understand the French language. The remaining third of radio and television programme output goes to the intermediate-layer national languages. Radio and television devote some time to these Zairean languages probably because these two media rely on the aural/ oral mode of communication.

However, the use of Zairean languages in the printed media is practically non-existent. The national languages are in general given a very low profile in the printed press. The few dailies and weeklies that are in circulation in Kinshasa and in regional capital towns rather vie with one another to show how well they can use French. Mutaboba (1988: Appendix 4) e.g., gives a list of 46 dailies and specialised journals or reviews. None of these caters for the non-French-using Zairean, and all of them are edited in urban centres for the minority of "literate-in-French" urban dwellers.

When the Zairean languages are used in the printed press, they have a very small readership, for a number of reasons. One is the fact that those who can read prefer to read what is written in French. This unvoiced distinction between the top-layer language of literacy, and the intermediate- and bottom-layer languages of orality is one of the outcomes of formal education as it is still organised in Zaire today in respect of languages. True literacy and intellectual prestige are thought to be borne only by the French language rather than by some indigenous language, an idea which is fostered by the educational system. I touch on language in education in 2.1.4 below.

2.1.4 Language in formal education

Before independence, most primary schools partially offered education in some of the indigenous languages, particularly at the earlier stage of primary education, and then switched to French. Two years after independence, Presidential Order No. 174 of 17 October 1962 imposed French as the medium of instruction at all levels of formal education, contrary to previous practice. In the context of that time, the political leadership perceived this extension of the use of French in formal education as a way of offering equal educational opportunities to all. The universal use of French in education was also thought to be a way of quickly expanding the number of "évolués" (the civilised ones, the élite; in the colonial terminology) and thus a way of ensuring development.

Nonetheless, very soon after the implementation of the presidential order, the educational authorities started complaining about the fall in educational standards. It is now known that the shortage of staff had forced the authorities to hire primary school teachers who were not fluent in French and to require that they teach in French. Obviously, the performance of miracles could not be expected of these teachers.

Calls were thus made for the use of Zairean languages at least during the first two years of primary education, as had been the case hitherto. The appeals came to be heeded only a decade later when in 1974, a newly constituted society of language scholars passed a resolution making a strong case for the use of local languages during the first two years of formal education. Then was the heyday of the cultural authenticity (i.e. vindication of genuine Zairean cultural heritage) policies preached by President Mobutu and his government. They passed the word on to school authorities.

An even stronger case for the use of Zairean languages was put when the 1986 Education Law endorsed the 1974 scholarly stance. Its Article 120 stipulates that the national language or the language of the child's social environment, and French, shall be the media of instruction. In compliance with this article, the current official programme provides for the teaching of French as a subject during the first two years of primary education, its partial use as the medium of instruction in the following two years, and its use as the only medium of instruction from the fifth year of primary education onwards, except for national language tuition. Local Zairean languages are supposed to be the primary languages of school literacy. I shall soon say a word about what happens in practice.

In areas (e.g., rural areas) where these provisions are complied with, students may start their schooling using their L1 and then have to switch to L2 (one of the national languages) and then switch to French, as L3. Where the student's L1 is also the dominant national language, French will be learnt as L2. Some other students may start school using their L1 (where L1 is more prominent than the national language of the area) and then switch directly to French, as L2.

These provisions for the media of instruction do not however seem to be abided by. In practice, French is the language of instruction in all the structures of the educational system (see e.g, Tshibengabo, 1992: 80). For most parents, the early formal exposure of their child to French guarantees the child's chances of success through the educational system, and is consequently thought to guarantee the prospects of a better life. However, the early introduction of French as the language of instruction may have adverse consequences on the cognitive development of children. I shall comment on this in 2.1.5 below.

Secondary school students complete their language education with English as a subject (more detail on EFL is given in a later section). Cases in which the switch

may operate from French as L1 to English are practically non-existent because very few Zaireans, if any at all, can claim to have French as their L1. In fact, there are very few families in which children learn French as their home language. This is probably the case of some urban children only. They may start school in French, but they will have informally acquired the national language of their area of residence before they receive English tuition at the secondary level. So, English is usually learnt as L3 or L4.

There are provisions for the teaching of the four national languages at the universities, institutes of higher learning, and secondary schools. Students are urged to take one of the national languages that are not the dominant languages in their areas of residence, as a subject. The only snag is that there is no specialised training offered anywhere in the country for the teaching of Zairean languages. In practice, then, the national languages are not taught. This perpetuates their status as languages of orality, as I noted earlier.

2.1.5 The language situation and the development of CALP

The exposure to Zaire's linguistic diversity should positively predispose one to more language learning. The school goer should in this way normally take a positive attitude to foreign language learning, seen in these circumstances as a natural occurrence rather than a specific achievement.

The school goer then ought to be strongly motivated to learn a foreign language. The terrain ought to be most favourable for English. Its origin and the learning context make it share the prestige of French. Like French, it is considered as a top-layer language in the Zairean sociolinguistic structure. Therefore, English teaching should find willing minds at the receiving end. In such circumstances, one might expect efforts to enhance English learning to be welcome, especially in the light of findings like Lubasa's (1986: 283) that "the great majority of Zairean learners of English would want and value English.".

The context in which efforts to enhance English learning are made may not however be favourable to the development and practice of literacy. In Sub-section 2.1.3, I referred to Zairean languages (bottom- and intermediate-layer languages in the Zairean sociolinguistic structure) as languages of orality. This reference may be taken, in relation to literacy development and maintenance, as implying that the cognitive/academic language proficiency (CALP) -a literacy-related, school-derived type of proficiency- is not developed in these languages.

The Zairean languages are practically not taught at school. Where children are introduced to school literacy in these languages, the experience is very short-lived. It can then be said that in their first contacts with French at school, Zairean students do not have CALP developed in L1 to rely on, for they have no L1 literacy skills that can be transferred to French. The development of CALP apparently starts with French language development.

As can be argued, a child who is orally proficient in his L1 only or has a limited knowledge of L2 at the onset of schooling may not have developed in L1 the type of abstract reasoning that school tasks require. Such a child faces the double burden of acquiring the primary communicative skills in L2 simultaneously with literacy skills (see Hamers & Blanc, 1989: 196). Learning the unknown (i.e. literacy) through the unknown (i.e. the French language), as would be the case in these circumstances, may slow down the development of CALP.

In relation to the development of CALP among Zairean students, voices have been heard doubting the reading or writing abilities of Zairean primary and secondary school graduates in both French and the Zairean languages (see e.g., Abedi, 1992: 1). I am aware that studies comparing e.g., Zairean students' reading ability in Zairean languages and French have not yet been undertaken so as to prove the presence or degree of CALP among Zairean students. But I consider observations by experienced language educationists like Abedi (1992) or Detienne (1978) as pointers to a slow development of CALP among Zairean students.

The apparent slow development of CALP among Zairean students may be due to the fact that the educational pursuits at school lack reinforcement in the normal life of students. This lack of reinforcement can be due to the difference between school language and home language, to the fact that school literacy education is not backed up by favourable attitudes to literacy or favourable literacy practices out of school, etc.. In connection with the observations made by Heath (1983), or Ferdman (1990) on literacy as a social practice (see Chapter 1), I wish to say that the development of CALP can be speeded up if the domains of life in which children are participants in literacy events complement each other.

Moreover, the knowledge that CALP takes a long time to develop (see e.g., Carson et al, 1990) may signal that its development may not yet be stable when English as a foreign language comes into play. When English tuition begins, students may not have already developed literacy skills in French, that can be

transferred to English. Such a situation, in which interlingual transfer of literacy skills is not likely to occur, may indicate that CALP is not stable yet, and needs stabilising. Students may be helped towards the stabilisation of CALP with the development of literacy skills in English, as competence in the language is being developed. This is possible if in their experience of English in school literacy events, students are given opportunities to develop these literacy skills, especially where opportunities have been denied them in French. It is in this sense that I consider my study's experimental reading programme in English (see Chapter 4) to have been a way of contributing to the educational goal of developing and maintaining literacy among secondary school students.

In section 2.2 below, I present the formal context in which literacy is developed in Zaire: the Zairean education system.

2.2 Some aspects of the educational system

The discussion of the present-day educational system of Zaire in this work concerns general formal education as provided in public educational institutions. Evidently, most of what will be said may also apply to private educational institutions that are run according to the provisions of the 1986 Education Law.

As the 1986 Education Law stipulates; the national education system aims at harmoniously training the Zairean children so as to enable them to live, later, as responsible citizens, useful to themselves and to society, capable of promoting the development of the country and of the national culture.

For the fulfilment of these tasks, there are four educational structures: the pre-primary, the primary, the secondary, and the tertiary levels.

Literacy (as the reading and writing of a language) is not involved at the pre-primary level, as far as educational work with children is concerned. Therefore, there does not seem to be any purpose in discussing this level, which is after all optional, and chiefly an urban phenomenon. Primary and secondary education levels will be presented in some detail. Tertiary education level will also be discussed, mainly because of its involvement in aspects of teacher training for secondary education.

2.2.1 Primary education, and introduction to literacy

There is a single 6-year structure for all primary schools; and children enrol for the first year at the minimum age of 6, or at the maximum age of 9. The school year lasts between 200 and 220 days.

The primary education structure is divided into 3 two-year "degrees": the elementary, the middle and the terminal. In principle (see *Loi-Cadre 86-005*), the medium of instruction at the elementary degree is a Zairean language. And, the switch to French as a second language is expected to operate gradually from the middle degree, and to be total at the terminal degree. However, as was noted in Section 2.1, the practice favours French, so much so that most schools are known to offer instruction in French at the onset of primary education.

Theoretically, primary education aims to prepare children for life, by providing them with the necessary intellectual, moral, physical, and social training and instruction. As the 1986 Education Law reads, it purports to help children to integrate themselves usefully in society; and to prepare those among them having the required intellectual abilities and skills to pursue formal education at the secondary level. The system does not expect everybody to proceed to secondary education.

One should not then be surprised at the numbers of drop-outs to be found in spite of the legal obligation that parents have, to keep their children at school until they are 15 years of age. Children start formal education in millions, e.g., 3.5 millions during the 1973-1974 school year (Youdi, 1981: 9), but fewer than 2% ever reach the final year of secondary education 12 years later. A number of factors combine to force students out of the system: the high demand for school education, the selection standards of the schools, the difficult economic circumstances of life, and so on.

Concerning literacy, one can say that one of the essential tasks of primary education consists in making students acquire the mechanisms of reading and writing. It is even expected that by the end of the six-year cycle primary school students should have acquired the taste for discovering human experiences through reading on their own (see e.g., *Loi-Cadre 86-005*). They are expected to function as literate people.

However, it is doubtful whether Zairean primary school graduates are able to read and write at all (see e.g., Abedi, 1992: 1; or Detienne, 1978: 3-5). This view may be justified by the confusion concerning the language on which to base primary

literacy (a Zairean language, which one? or French) and the small amount of time allocated to literacy-related activities in any of the languages involved at school. It should also be noted that the literacy events that are generally offered in Zairean primary schools do not encourage reflection in learners' engagement with texts: recognition of letters and the sounds for which they stand, production of these sounds in isolation or in combination, spelling or copying exercises, dictation, accurate reading aloud of passages, and so on. The focus is, I would say, on the "performative level of literacy" (Wells, 1991).

At the beginning of this chapter, I said that the Zairean education system is one of the institutions that favour bilingualism in the country, as it makes students start using another language apart from their L1. So, in principle, literacy tuition is offered as indicated in Table 2.1 (an adaptation of the data supplied in EDIDEPS, 1986: 312-314) concerning French and the relevant Zairean language. On looking at Table 2.1, which gives a few details as to the amount of time allocated to literacy-related activities in L1/Ln (a Zairean language) and L2 (French), it clearly emerges that the system favours some form of transitional bilingualism. As far as literacy skills are concerned, the children are in principle offered some literacy tuition in L1, presumably in order to ensure a less unsettling transition to literacy in French exclusively.

Table 2.1: Time allocation (in hours per week) for L1/French literacy tuition in Zairean primary schools

"Degree"

		Elementary		Middle		Terminal	
		Yr. 1	Yr. 2	Yr. 3	Yr. 4	Yr. 5	Yr. 6
Writing	L 1	2h	2h	-	-	-	-
	French	-	-	2h	2h	2h	2h
Reading	L 1	3h	2h30	-	-	-	-
	French	2h	2h30	1h	1h	1h	1h

Literacy tuition in L1 is supposed to occur during the first two years of primary education. But it does not occur, as I argued earlier. French literacy activities are also offered for almost the same amount of time. After the first two years, as Table 2.1 clearly indicates, no specific literacy-related activities are undertaken in the students' L1.

Such a situation is detrimental to the development of the cognitive/academic language proficiency (CALP). In spite of the fact that children are "officially" exposed to literacy in L1, the experience is short-lived and seems to be rudimentary, not so sufficiently grounded as to facilitate the expected transition to literacy in French. In addition, the home environment of most children does not provide them with cognitive and academic support in L1 or in French. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the development of CALP in French starts when its minimal level in L1 has not been attained yet. Such a situation is bound to have negative cognitive effects (see Cummins, 1979). As has been acknowledged, the situation is such that most students who start secondary education have but a fragmentary knowledge of French (EDIDEPS, 1986: 318) and can hardly read in French by themselves with any understanding (see e.g., Detienne, 1978).

What can be said about Zairean students' mastery of French as L2 here is similar to the observations that Elley (1984) makes about Fijian learners of English as L2 in Fiji: insufficient competence in English as L2 after six years of primary education, serious problems with the language throughout high school, etc..

Zairean students also have problems in the French-medium secondary education structure. I consider this structure now, together with the kind of literacy practice it offers.

2.2.2 Secondary education, and the practice of literacy

Admission into secondary education is subject to two conditions: the candidate must obtain a primary education certificate, and he must be under 16 years of age at the beginning of the school year. Although some schools are adamant about the latter condition, in most cases it may be waived because of the social pressures for school education.

A reading of the first paragraph of Article 23 of the 1986 Education Law shows that secondary education aims to make students acquire the abilities, skills and knowledge of a general and specific nature, which will enable them to understand the elements of human cultural heritage. The following paragraph of the same article goes on to state that secondary education equally purports to develop in the students a critical mind, intellectual creativity and curiosity; and to train them for the exercise of a craft or a trade, or in order to pursue higher or university studies. I wish to note that critical mindedness, intellectual creativity and curiosity relate

to Wells' (1991) "epistemic level of literacy" (see Chapter 1), involving the use of written language as an instrument of thought.

Secondary education entering students have a choice between:
- crafts and trades schools, in which training lasts 3 years;
- 5-year vocational schools;
- normal 4- and 6-year primary teacher training schools;
- and, 6-year general and technical humanities sections.

Officially, all the types of secondary education are equal in status. This, however, does not mean that they give equal access to desirable professions, nor that they have an equal course content. All use French as the medium of instruction, and include such subjects as civic and moral education, drawing, English, French, geography, history, mathematics, physical education, sciences, and sociology; but with varying time allocation from type to type. They may also include specialised subjects.

In terms of specialisation, there are ten humanities (general secondary education) sections: agricultural, arts, commercial-administrative, industrial-technical, literary, pedagogical, scientific, social, veterinary, and women's crafts. The literary and pedagogical sections are by far the most numerous across the country. This may be due to the fact that they are not too demanding in specialised, technical equipment.

Concerning the practice of literacy in secondary education, it will be remembered that a number of general considerations were put forward in 1.2, which tended to assert the ability of Zairean secondary school students to read and write. Those considerations derived from my belief that a number of years normally spent by children in formal education can only result in their acquiring literacy skills. Those considerations did not however take into account actual facts and circumstances that may make up the context in which literacy is developed. A few such facts and circumstances have been mentioned in respect of the students' introduction to literacy in primary education: e.g., the confusion concerning languages at the onset of literacy and its possible negative effects on the development of literacy among Zairean children; the little time allocated to literacy tuition in primary education, especially in L1.

As a context for the practice of literacy, secondary education offers a number of activities related to the teaching and learning of French. For the purposes of

illustration, here is the timetable for French teaching in some secondary education streams, as adapted from EDIDEPS (1986: 335):

Table 2.2: Timetable for general secondary education French teaching (number of teaching periods per week)

Section	Year 1	2	3	4	5	6
commercial-administrative	10	8	6	6	6	6
literary	10	8	5	5	5	5
pedagogical	10	8	6	6	5	5
scientific	10	8	5	5	5	5

The issue of whether this time allocation is enough has never been raised. What appears to be important is what the teacher does with students during this time, as recommended in official instructions (see e.g., EDIDEPS, 1986: 314-335). Concerning reading e.g., teachers are advised to set apart two teaching periods per week for work on texts with students. A typical reading class would include the following literacy events:

- reading aloud by the teacher ("lecture expressive", a term which I shall return to in 2.4.1.1 below);

- overall comprehension questions, orally answered by students. At this stage, activities may include the determination of the text type and the study of the structure of a text (text analysis). These activities aim at making the students reach one interpretation of the text, the teacher's, i.e. the only one correct answer.

- detailed questions on the contents of the selected text, orally answered by students;

- an oral reconstruction or summarising of the text by students.

The question can be raised whether the literacy events involving reading in French in which secondary school students engage prepare them for the exercise of their thought processes. "No" can be the answer, based on the following anecdote: the worst teacher in a Zairean secondary school, as far as students are concerned, is one who sets them questions that require reflection. He will be known among students as "one who enquires about things that he did not teach." In general, students expect teachers to want them to "regurgitate" what he had transmitted.

As is obvious from the foregoing account of activities in the reading class, personal silent reading is not covered. This made Detienne (1978) write that Zairean secondary school students are not at all given the opportunity to read in

class. Somebody (the teacher) reads out to and for them, explains the difficult words and the structure of the text, etc., and the text is deemed read and understood. The overall outcome was summarised in an anonymous article published in **Parcours** (1990: 12):

> Beaucoup d'élèves du secondaire ne lisent pas et aussi certains ne savent pas lire à tel point qu'ils tombent dans le marasme de l'analphabétisme à retour.

(Many secondary school students do not read, and some do not know how to, so much so that they fall back into illiteracy.)

What is said in the official instructions about the reading to be done by students on their own may be noted here. During the first and second two years of secondary education, students are expected to read on their own texts of about 10 pages in length, as they may be occasionally instructed to do so by the teacher. During the last two years, personal reading would include newspaper and other periodicals and, 5 to 6 books are required each year (EDIDEPS, 1986: 335).

The small number of books required for personal silent reading may be a consequence of the knowledge that books are a rare commodity in Zairean schools. The difficulties that Zairean secondary school students may face while trying to exercise their reading ability, can be illustrated by the known ratio of books and students in Kinshasa. In a report about the provisions of reading materials to secondary school students in one administrative division of Kinshasa, Beya (1991) revealed that there were 6000 volumes for 34000 students (attending 40 different secondary schools). With the best of luck, 34 students could be expected to share 6 books during the school year. Thus, if any personal reading is done at all by these students, it is very little indeed.

The context clearly does not supply students with opportunities to read, it does not offer them the tools for the practice of literacy. This may make one wonder how the students concerned get to master the mechanisms of reading, and to acquire a taste for reading on their own. This was the context in which my experimental reading programme in English took place.

A word can now be said about the tertiary education level. As was indicated at the beginning of the present section, the purpose of touching on this level is only to highlight some aspects of the training of the secondary school teacher.

2.2.3 Tertiary education, and teacher training

Admission into tertiary education is open to candidates who obtain the State Diploma. These selected few are generally fewer than 2% of any cohort that started formal education 12 years previously (see e.g., Youdi, 1981).

Tertiary education divides into higher (i.e. technical and pedagogical) and university education. This distinction between higher and university education is maintained by virtue of the goals that each type of tertiary education is assumed to pursue. The training of EFL teachers e.g., is provided in higher pedagogical institutes and universities.

The educational endeavours in higher pedagogical institutes aim to:
- provide the country with highly trained general and specialised teaching personnel;
- promote among serving teachers an awareness of their role as educators, and of the noble quality of their vocation;
- find out the best ways of improving the standards of primary and secondary education through the conduct of educational research; the findings of which will be publicised through textbook writing and distribution, or in relevant scientific journals. In the light of this statement, one can understand one aspect of the present study. As it is undertaken by a member of the teaching staff of a higher pedagogical institute, and as it involves secondary school students as subjects, the present study can be seen as addressing ways of improving the standards of secondary education, particularly concerning English language teaching and learning. Pedagogical recommendations that may come out of it will have to be made available to students training to become teachers of English, as well as to serving teachers of English as a foreign language in Zaire.

On its part, university education aims to:
- secure the education of top level cadres for all the sectors of national life, and
- organise basic and applied research.

The training of EFL teachers at the university or in a higher pedagogical institute includes a quasi permanent contact with the school and its milieu. During each year of training, the would-be EFL teacher receives a theoretical pedagogic input. This is complemented by some "trial" teaching, and a "block" teaching practice (15 weeks, for the "graduat" student; and 8 weeks, for the "licence" student).

While the university trained student may go into teaching at the end of the "licence" cycle (5 years' training) only, the institute trained student may, on graduation after the "graduat" cycle (3 years' training), go into teaching and lawfully settle as a teacher at the lower secondary level (the first four years of secondary education). Such a person may, after three years of actual teaching in a public school, take the "licence" cycle qualifying examination in order to continue his studies. Completion of the "licence" cycle of training gives the successful candidate full licence to teach his subject of specialisation at all levels of formal education, where it is on the curriculum.

2.3 English as a foreign language (EFL) in Zaire

2.3.1 Social importance of English

The inclusion of a subject in the school curriculum in an educational system often reflects the importance of the said subject for the society in which it is taught. Such is the case of English in Zaire. And, many factors can be put forward to justify the introduction and maintenance of this language in the Zairean educational system.

One such factor relates to the historical situation of Zaire's formal education. As education through schools was introduced in the country by the Belgian Christian missionaries and colonial authorities, some of the policies that they implemented reflected the educational trends in force in Belgium. In this respect, the introduction of English in the Zairean education system in 1956 was only an extension, to Zaire, of a curricular decision that was relevant to Belgium. The world importance of the language as an instrument of knowledge and personal development must have played a role in favour of such a decision as far as Belgium was concerned. All the same, the language has remained on the Zairean secondary school curriculum ever since.

Its maintenance nowadays should not however be taken as a simple continuation of colonial educational policies. If this were the case, it would smack of conservatism in an educational system. On the contrary, there have been reforms to adapt the educational system to the needs of the country. For example, since Zaire achieved independence, three curriculum changes have been implemented (**Programme National d'Anglais**, 1988: 3). None of these changes has questioned the place of English in the curriculum in respect of societal needs. That

is why I say that post-independence educational policies and efforts point to some political dedication to the promotion of English.

For example, of the 14 higher pedagogical institutes, most of which were set up after 1960, nine each have an English department catering for the training of future teachers of English at the secondary level (Commission Permanente des Etudes, 1986: 33-38). There is in addition the English department of the University of Lubumbashi Faculty of Letters. It is evident that once teachers are available, the language will be taught. And, to ensure the continuity of teacher availability and quality, agreements are in force between the government of Zaire and the governments of such countries as the U.S. and the U.K., for the training of academics and other educational staff involved in English language teaching in the country. Clearly, the Zairean political authorities are dedicated to the development of competence in English.

And, the Zairean people in general also seem to be interested in English learning (see e.g., Lubasa, 1986: 283). There is a growing demand e.g., among tertiary level students, for a place in an English department either at the university or in a higher pedagogical institute. Compared to the demand for French, History, or Philosophy, the demand for English has grown steadily since 1971 (Nyunda, 1986: 282).

All this would testify to the importance perceived of the English language in Zaire nowadays. It should thus not come as a surprise to learn that most educated people in Zaire believe that lack of competence in English may prevent one from keeping abreast of the most up-to-date developments in their field of knowledge. As is common knowledge today, one of the features that make English a world language, is in fact its instrumentality as a key to the knowledge that is disseminated through written materials. One would therefore guess, rightly, that the felt needs of the Zairean educated people for English concern their reading competence, as it is written sources that they would be very likely to want to tap. In fact, as Yaba (1980) found in his assessment of the foreign language needs of Zaireans, "documentation and reading" are the first literacy events involving English in which most educated Zaireans participate.

The growing demand for English observed at higher and university education, also points to the belief, among students, that English is an asset either for future higher education in an English-speaking country, or for a future well-paid job. A readily observed instance in respect of job perspectives is the case of female

students who graduate in English. On completion of their studies, many take secretarial courses, after which they set out to seek employment as bilingual French-English secretaries.

Also testifying to the importance of English, this time especially in urban agglomerations, is the existence of English language teaching centres and English-speaking clubs. There is a mushroom growth of privately owned English language teaching centres in urban areas, which, more often than not, divert qualified teachers away from mainstream educational settings. Individuals began to create their own English language centres following the examples that were set by the British and American embassies which, as part of their respective cultural activity policies, (used to)[1] run English language centres.

In other circumstances, individuals set up English-speaking clubs. These may be considered as self-reliance English language learning centres, because the club members help one another in the development of competence in English. As far as such individuals are concerned, English club membership carries some mystique. It is an expression of their wish to belong to some sort of exotic community. This is the community of the few Zaireans who can arouse the curiosity of many and force admiration; because they can speak a language rarely heard in society at large, and certainly acquired in a prestigious place of learning: the school setting. These people would appear like English-speaking "évolués". The setting-up of such English-speaking clubs, was in fact recommended by Mbaya (1983: 31), as a means to improving English language learning in Zaire.

Another factor, which can justify the maintenance of English on the Zairean secondary curriculum, is the geographical situation of Zaire. Zaire shares its borders with 4 partially English-speaking countries (Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania, and Zambia). And, contacts along the common borders may be facilitated if people share a means of communication. Naturally, ordinary daily contacts may be undertaken through the native tongues of the people who live along the common borders. But official relations may require a command of the official languages of the countries concerned. As a matter of fact, the National Syllabus for English alludes to the contacts between Zaire and African English-speaking countries, in order to account for the place of and the need for English in the national education system (see **Programme National d'Anglais**, 1988: 6).

On another plane, the inscriptions in English found on manufactured goods in Zaire may also be said to plead for the maintenance of English as an important

subject on the secondary school curriculum. They are written pointers to the role that English-speaking countries, with the U.S. and the U.K. in the lead, have played and continue to play at the level of world economic and commercial exchanges. It is at present an established fact that the fortuitous association of English with industrial and technological developments (see e.g., White, 1988: 8), has helped a great deal to increase the prestige of the language in the world.

Awareness of such facts and of the political influence of English-speaking countries in international forums, exerts a powerful public relations pressure on people, for the choice of English as a foreign language in formal education. On these grounds, many countries would like to offer, and some, like Zaire, do offer English courses in their educational systems.

2.3.2 Aims of secondary school EFL teaching/ learning

The stated aims of EFL teaching in Zaire fall into two of the categories of aims generally recognised for foreign language study (see e.g., Byram, 1989: 12; Closset, 1955; Garner, 1981: 24-25; or Hornsey, 1983: 16) namely: the acquisition of foreign language communication skill, and cultural awareness. According to the National Syllabus for English, the teaching of English aims first of all to enable the students to understand, speak, read and write the language correctly; and then to sensitise them to the culture and civilisation of English-speaking countries (**Programme National d'Anglais**, 1988: 6). I would like to note here that the Zairean syllabus for English is orally driven, and that its two goals of foreign language study emphasise as a national priority, the need to cope with contacts with people who speak English.

Like all goals, these two are ideals which actual practice does not necessarily reflect. To achieve these stated goals, Zairean schools give importance to aural/ oral skills, due to the audio-lingual tradition of language teaching in force in Zaire. For example, the National Syllabus for English suggests the following order for the four traditional language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Of the four years of English tuition at the secondary level, the National Syllabus for English suggests that the first two years be mostly devoted to the acquisition and practice of aural/ oral skills. Table 2.3 gives an idea of the time slice advised in the **Programme National d'Anglais** (1988: 6) for EFL classes for the different language skills, in general secondary education streams.

The provision of the time to be devoted to EFL reading classes in Zairean general secondary education, as shown in Table 2.3, shows that reading in EFL is not a matter of priority.

Table 2.3: Time allocation for different EFL skills

	Listening & Speaking	Reading	Writing
3rd year (= 1st year of English)	80%	15%	5%
4th year (= 2nd year of English)	70%	20%	10%
5th year (= 3rd year of English)	60%	25%	15%
6th year (= 4th year of English)	50%	25%	25%

Normally, students in their first year of English at the secondary school spend about one semester on 15 units of the first book of the **English for Africa** series. (More on this textbook series comes under 2.4.1.5 below.) These fifteen units are known as "oral sections": these are teaching units on which no writing can be undertaken either by the teacher or by the students. All is listening and speaking practice, using pictures, gestures, and occasional translation from English to French or vice versa, to convey meaning. Students listen to and repeat what the teacher says, the teacher asks questions, gives model answers which students repeat or imitate substituting language elements if necessary. Students may also ask questions of one another, following the teacher's model. After this oral stage, some reading aloud and copying of the sentences encountered during oral work can be undertaken. The syllabus enumerates the language structures that may be dealt with in any particular year; but the presentation of these in the textbook is situational in the sense that it is about given contexts of life, e.g., at the bank.

With such a practice, it may be difficult to acquire a communication skill, understood here as the ability to understand, speak, read and write the English language correctly. It cannot reasonably be assumed that such an aim will be achieved after four years (Zaire's case) of formal English tuition in a foreign language context. The official provisions, e.g., in the general education streams (see infra, Table 2.4), allocate five teaching hours per week to English; which would amount to 5 hours times 30 weeks times 4 years, that is 600 hours of exposure on the whole.

This limited kind of exposure to English pleads for a "more realistic" statement of aims, e.g., on the operational models proposed by Dubin & Olshtain (1986) or Page (1989). A student finishing his 4-year secondary school programme of EFL will be able to "read materials in English for pleasure or professional needs" (Dubin & Olshtain, 1986: 24) or to operate as an interpreter for a foreign national (Page, 1989: 75), for example. The advantage of such operational statements is that they try to specify the participants and may circumscribe the topics and contexts of target language use.

However, even though operationally stated, the aim of enabling students to acquire the four language skills in a formal language learning context -after 600 hours, or less of exposure- would still seem to be too ambitious and unlikely to be achieved, on any scale. Increasing the time of exposure would not be educationally beneficial, because that would require the abandonment of some other educational endeavours. There are also problems of skill maintenance. A skill which is not put to use readily dies away.

Therefore, as the ultimate goal of language teaching is communication, it would appear realistic to say with Davies & Widdowson (1974: 162) that

> There is a strong case for the teaching of communicative competence through written language since, generally speaking, in second language teaching it is only through the written mode that the way language functions as communication can be demonstrated.

It is common knowledge that most of the contacts with English in the Zairean education system take place through the written word. Furthermore, even if the National Syllabus for English could guarantee the acquisition of all the language skills after the four years of EFL tuition, it would certainly not be in a position to secure the maintenance of each skill. Reading offers better educational perspectives. It can be maintained long after the end of formal education, and its cultivation allows foreign language study to be really educational, i.e. in the sense of teaching people "to broaden their horizons " (Cook, 1983: 230).

The broadening of horizons is naturally provided for in the statement of the aims of EFL in Zaire: Students are to be sensitised to the culture and civilisation of English-speaking countries. This will eventually be done through the study of the works of literature listed in the syllabus. I shall mention some of the authors listed in the syllabus in 2.4, where I shall also discuss what I consider to be constraints on reading development in Zairean schools.

2.3.3 Timetable for secondary school EFL teaching/ learning

Table 2.4 reproduces the time allocation for the teaching of English in four Zairean humanities sections, from the first to the last year of secondary education:

Table 2.4: Timetable for general secondary education EFL teaching (number of teaching periods per week)

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6
Humanities Section						
commercial-administrative			5	5	5	5*
literary			5	5	5	5
pedagogical 1			5	5	5	5
2			5	5	2	2
scientific			5	5	5	5

- pedagogical 1 = general pedagogy
                2 = physical education
- * 1 period (teaching hour) = 50'

As can be seen in Table 2.4, all these secondary streams offer English instruction. Students attending these streams will have had, on graduation, a minimum total exposure time of 5 hours times 30 weeks times 4 years = 600 hours.

Secondary school graduates who opt to pursue English studies at the tertiary level, generally originate from these 600-hour streams. A major assumption at the beginning of their training at the tertiary level is that such students have some competence in English, eventually acquired during the four years of English tuition. These students' confidence in their competence is that which in the first place explains and justifies their choice of English at the tertiary level. Then, it may be posited that if the level of English is high among secondary school graduates following the 5h/week streams, they will start tertiary level studies in English from a high baseline. This will improve the quality of English teaching and learning not only at the tertiary level but also at the secondary level, as after graduation at the tertiary level some of these students will become teachers of English at the secondary school level.

In the following section, I discuss some of the factors that may interfere with the development of reading in the Zairean education system.

2.4 Constraints on the development of reading in Zairean schools

The responsibility for the development of reading ability in formal education, for the student's first or second literacy, is normally shared among a number of individuals and institutions, such as educational authorities, schools, teachers, parents, and so on. These people and institutions contribute to the development of reading in learners in different degrees, and in different ways. Parents may encourage children, set examples and act as children's adult models. Educational authorities design and provide the necessary environment and working conditions. They decide what the curriculum should look like. They determine the professional qualifications of people to be responsible for the implementation of the curriculum. They indicate the type of learners for whom the curriculum is meant, and so forth. Schools allow learners and teachers to meet.

It must be acknowledged, nonetheless, that the teacher's part in this business is a lion's share. His professional expertise is very much involved for the organisation of propitious learning experiences, which should be geared toward the acquisition of selective and reflective reading from the beginning of reading instruction.

But, the teacher's work will be affected if certain prerequisites are not met on the part of the learner: language abilities, motivation, and so forth. In fact, finally it is only the learner himself who can effect the desired improvement in the development of his reading ability. As Walker (1974: 13) notes, reading development is a personal problem. For that matter, the learner can be likened to an apprentice learning a trade in a workshop. Motivated and persevering, he will one day become a master.

The preceding remarks on the shared responsibility for the development of reading in formal settings point to the multiplicity of constraints that may stand in the way of the development of reading ability in general. Some of these constraints are discussed below, with particular reference to reading in EFL in the Zairean context. The factors to be considered naturally relate to teachers and learners, and to the institutions that bring them face to face (these three factors echo the notion of the triangle of the promotion of learning that I shall introduce in 3.2). The institutional constraints are considered first, then the teacher constraints, and finally the learner constraints.

2.4.1 Institutional constraints

Constraints on reading development may be caused by the decisions, or activities undertaken in application of the decisions, taken by educational institutions. The

definition of institutions, in this particular case, extends to places where students and teachers meet as well as to people in charge of these places, at different levels of responsibility, culminating in the ministry.

As possible institutional constraints on reading development, I shall consider the organisation and conduct of reading classes, and the provision of reading resources.

2.4.1.1 Organisation and conduct of reading classes

A typical reading class in Zaire generally begins with the teacher reading a text aloud to his students ("lecture expressive"). As the teacher reads aloud, the students are expected to read along, silently. The teacher's reading aloud is meant to provide the students with a model of pronunciation for their own reading aloud during class time. After the teacher has read the text aloud, he gives a summary of the text's main ideas, orally. The activities identified here are similar to some of the literacy practices of Zaireans that I enumerated in Chapter 1: reading aloud, being read to, creating a related oral text from a written text.

After the teacher has orally summarised the text's main ideas, there follows a detailed analysis of these ideas, involving a question-and-answer comprehension check. Finally, students are asked to read aloud in chorus, and if possible, individually. When there are new grammar or vocabulary items in the reading passage, these are dealt with during the grammar or vocabulary lessons that usually precede reading classes in the weekly sequence of lessons.

I recall my experience as a student during these "expressive" reading classes. Students would compete in order to be as expressive as possible, trying hard to match the teacher's model, or for fun, any other model heard out of class. During these classes, there was no place for strictly personal, silent reading. The old habits are resilient, and reading receives a similar treatment in present-day classes.

The general pattern of reading lessons is the same at the primary as at the secondary level. It has also been observed to be the same for French as for English reading lessons at the secondary education level (see e.g., Lubasa, 1986: 238). The similarity between French and English classes in general secondary education, as from the 3rd year, involves the number and the nature of lessons that are offered each week: 5/6 hours per week of listening and speaking skill work, text study and vocabulary, grammar lessons, writing, and reading (see e.g., Tables 2.3 & 2.4). I

shall express my view on the similarity of the conduct of French and English reading classes in 2.4.2.1 below.

The organisation and conduct of reading classes, as summarised above, constrain the development of reading ability in a number of ways. Firstly, in class, students read with the teacher, and the latter makes sure that they do not come across unknown words or grammar items. This practice prevents the students from engaging in the "search for meaning" (see Knapp, 1980) involving hypothesising about those unknown words or grammar items. Also, it does not encourage students to do their best to create meanings from texts, even if some details are not understood.

It should be noted with Knapp (1980) that the practice of introducing new words or phrases and then dealing with comprehension questions only helps the students to learn and retain the information that is contained in a particular text. It does not help them to learn to read effectively. Secondly, in or out of class, the students are made to believe that reading is done for the teacher, who will determine their levels of understanding through comprehension questions. If reading is done for the teacher, then it need not be done for one's own pleasure. In addition to the scarcity of reading materials, the current practice of reading instruction does not encourage independence in reading, and reading for enjoyment. It is thus rare to find students reading material that is not directly related to school credit work.

In a context like this, graded readers may be a novel concept for the learners, and their use an alien literacy practice.

2.4.1.2 Provision of resources

Resources for educational activities are normally of two kinds: human, and material. Human resources will be dealt with in the paragraphs devoted to teachers. Here, I am dealing with material resources only.

For reading classes, these resources are: books, periodicals, magazines, newspapers, etc.. They constitute sources of a variety of reading materials. Dunbar (1987) insists on the utility of having such a variety of sources of reading materials, so as to allow students to acquire different reading purposes and styles. He even suggests the use of newspapers and magazines in class, where they can be afforded locally. A favourable setting for such a suggestion would be a second

language environment, which is permeated by L2 culture. In most foreign language settings, it is not easy to afford such a varied source of reading materials.

One problem for the development of reading in Zairean schools thus lies with the availability of reading resources. It is one thing to list authors to select from, or types of newspaper articles that could be selected, as is done in the Zairean syllabus for English. The syllabus suggests for example, as to the content of a reading programme in English, selections from the works of, among others, such authors as:
-English: Brontë, Dickens, Kipling, Greene, Huxley, Wells, etc.
-American: Baldwin, Buck, Hemmingway, Melville, Miller, Twain, etc.
-African: Abrahams, Achebe, Conton, Ekwensi, Kumalo, Ngugi, etc.

However, it is difficult to make the resources for the suggested selection available to the teacher within the educational system.

In addition, as the Zairean education system no longer provides educational resources freely, parents have to provide their children with what is declared necessary for their education. The willingness of most Zairean parents to comply with this chore of parenthood cannot be questioned; only the means will betray them. In the best of circumstances, parents who may have the expertise in the choice of reading materials for children will have to consider all the aspects of the availability of reading materials.

According to Marland (1978: 378), one aspect of the availability of reading materials is their suitability. Suitability is particularly important as far as textbooks are concerned, i.e. they should be up-to-date, and adapted to the level of students.

At this point, I would like to consider the suitability of the textbook series currently in use in Zairean secondary schools for the teaching of English.

2.4.1.3 The textbook

The textbook series which has been in use in Zaire, for more than 10 years now, is **English for Africa**: a series of four books, covering all the four years of English tuition at the secondary school. To the extent that some names of people used in these textbooks are Zairean names, the series is usually claimed to be an adaptation, to the Zairean situation, of the David Mills et al's **English for French-**

Speaking Africa series, which was in use in French-speaking West Africa during the 1960s and the 1970s.

The **English for Africa** series presents language materials mostly in the form of written dialogue texts. This may be regarded as a response to the aims of English language teaching in Zaire: to devote most of the time to the acquisition and practice of aural/ oral skills. In fact, the series was devised against an audio-lingual background.

Following the audio-lingual tradition, students are asked to learn the dialogues by heart, and to recite them in class. Usually, the dialogues cover a whole page (between 150 and 200 words). These dialogue texts are also used as reading materials. Continuous prose passages appear in the series as well, but mostly in the last two books of the series, which are used during the last two years of secondary education. This is arguably a long delay in the introduction of the learners to continuous prose passages in EFL.

The standard presentation of language materials in the series clearly indicates that the textbooks were not designed with a view to developing reading ability. It is obvious that dialogue texts are not typical manifestations of written discourse.

As to subject matter, the themes exploited in the different texts of the series may be said to relate to African life and cultural content, as enlivened by African characters. Typical is the choice of lexis that is related to African traditional farming life: cassava, hoe, market, naming ceremony, yam, etc..

Such a choice of lexis indicates a cultural bias towards African traditional life. It is an expression of the pedagogical principle which commands that students should be led from what they know to what they do not know. This is supposed to increase their motivation, comprehension, and learning. Thus, the Zairean students using the **English for Africa** series would learn English (what they do not know) to express or receive ideas about their African cultural experiences (what they know). One is trying to build Zairean learners' EFL competence onto their Zairean "cultural competence" (see Wallace, 1988).

Nonetheless, most of my former students did not seem to like this bias towards African traditional life in the choice of vocabulary in the **English for Africa** series. They would say for example that they did not come to school to learn about African villages.

This reaction reflects a general tendency in the Zairean tradition of formal foreign language teaching and learning. Zairean EFL learners do not accept a standard culturally associated with any other place than the U.K. or the U.S..These two countries are thought to be the repositories of the English language, in the same manner as France is thought to be the repository of the French language. If they were given a choice, Zairean learners would prefer a British or American cultural context to an African one, for EFL reading materials. Zairean learners would thus expect English to be about far off Britain and America.

Also, the themes exploited in the **English for Africa** series, testify to the fact that the series is not compatible with the syllabus, in terms of reading selection. One would have expected the international character of English to show up in text themes, as taken from a representative sample of English, American, and African writers listed in the syllabus (see 2.4.1.2 above).

At the end of each text presented in the series, there is a number of structural and lexical exercises. With regard to the development of reading, comprehension questions are always appended to texts. Students have to scan a text each time they are trying to answer the comprehension questions appended to it. The texts and exercises of the **English for Africa** series can be thought to lend themselves to intensive reading activities, about which a word will be said below, under teachers' classroom practices.

2.4.2 Teacher constraints

With respect to the implementation of a reading curriculum, the importance of the reading teacher needs to be stressed, be it for the first or for the foreign language. As a result of the teacher's expertise, some of the institutional constraints mentioned above can be removed or modified.

For example, where the textbook imposed by the educational authorities presents mostly dialogue texts, as the **English for Africa** series does, the teacher can, as Cunningsworth (1984: 66-67) seems to suggest, transform them into open dialogues (ones in which one speaker's parts have been deleted) and use them as cloze passages. As the teacher helps the students to skip up and down the page, in search of clues necessary for the reconstruction of the missing parts, he will also be teaching his students to read effectively. The students will be given opportunities to create meaning.

It is likely that Zairean teachers do not allow their students to engage in this kind of supervised trial and error for two reasons. Firstly, they themselves were not taught in this way, so as to be able to perpetuate their own learning experiences. Secondly, they are not shown the merits of such a procedure in pre-service or in-service training (see also 2.4.2.1 below). In this connection, I shall refer in 2.4.2.3 below to the case of some Zairean EFL teachers, who successfully experimented a "new" methodology of reading instruction.

The point I am trying to make at this stage is that the teacher himself may place constraints on reading development. His own experience as a learner, or as a teacher trainee, his classroom practices, and his ability to provide reading experiences may be the possible constraining factors. These factors are discussed below.

2.4.2.1 Teacher training

Relevant sorrowful voices have been heard, expressing their concerns about poor L1 as well as L2 reading. For example, Robinson (1978: 387) regrets the little help that teachers-in-training receive on how to teach reading and writing. Abe (1983: 30), for his part, cites the scant attention devoted to the teaching of reading in teacher preparation, as one of the factors contributing to the decline of interest in reading, in Nigerian schools. My own experience would tend to confirm these observations with respect to the Zairean situation, particularly in the training of EFL teachers in higher pedagogical institutes.

In the pre-service training of Zairean teachers of English, there is no particular provision for work concerned with ways of handling the reading material proposed by the textbook for reading instruction. As a consequence, Zairean teachers of English are heavily dependent on the textbook. Such a situation ought to call for the organisation of in-service training sessions, so as to make up for the shortcomings of pre-service training.

However, as observed by Tshibengabo (1992), in-service training for EFL is rare in Zaire, and yet to be conceptualised. And, when it is organised, it is dependent on external funding supplied by the U.S.I.A. or the O.D.A.. External organisations such as these two do not necessarily know what the needs of Zairean participants are for in-service training. For this reason, they may pursue objectives that are at

variance with the immediate needs of the participants in in-service training sessions.

The O.D.A. for example, sponsored some 22 seminars between 1987 and 1990, for some 243 teachers and inspectors of English -a very small number, indeed- (see Tshibengabo, 1992). These seminars supplied information about general principles of communicative language teaching rather than classroom practices concerned e.g., with reading, which may have interested the participants more. This opinion is suggested by the enthusiastic reactions of the Zairean EFL teachers involved in Mwaka's (1992) research into classroom reading practices (see 2.4.2.3 below).

In short, systematically organised exposure to ideas on reading, during pre-service and in-service training, is missing. An aspect of this lack of exposure to views on reading and reading instruction can be the similarity between the conduct of reading classes in French and the conduct of EFL reading classes. To my knowledge, this similarity is not motivated by informed principles on the similarity of the reading process across different languages. It is only a natural consequence of the culture of "limited knowledge" in which the Zairean teacher is bred at college. In the meantime, trained under "the politics of ignorance" (Smith, 1978a: 47), and thrown onto the job without any conceptual framework about reading, the Zairean EFL teacher tends to perform in the way he saw his own teachers perform during his student years.

It is reasonable to suppose that a good reading programme depends on an individual teacher's ideas on what good reading is. These ideas will help him determine the different modes of pedagogical intervention likely to enhance the skill. Such efficient pedagogical intervention would presuppose the teacher's exposure to, and evaluation of, different views of the nature of reading.

A well trained language teacher should e.g., be able to make the textbook or the syllabus do things the way he wants them done, for the benefit of his particular class of students. He may for example adapt reading selections to the reading level of his students, in terms of linguistic access or avoidance of potential cultural misunderstanding.

I can take for example the case of a teacher with high expectations of his students' work, who strongly adheres to the idea of introducing authentic materials (i.e. materials not specifically designed for classroom use) for reading. The Zairean

syllabus for English would allow him to introduce a piece of writing by, say, Dickens. Evidently, introducing authentic materials is a way of initiating learners to real reading activities in society at large. Authentic materials would, as Dunbar (1987: 18) notes, introduce students to various types of reading materials, and enable them to cope with different styles, and to learn that materials need to be read for different purposes.

Nonetheless, if the selection presented material that was way beyond the learners' language and world knowledge; it would be the teacher's responsibility to make it meet their capacity. Some "scaffolding" (Bruner, 1978; Applebee & Langer, 1983) would be needed. The teacher can for example produce simplified materials for his particular students, or he can adapt it to the culture of his students, or he can introduce various kinds of pre-reading activities. As instructional support, pre-reading activities "might focus on the vocabulary and conceptual knowledge appropriate for a specific task" (Langer,1982: 46).

The teacher would not succeed in organising these different activities if his training did not provide him with the necessary intellectual tools.

2.4.2.3 Classroom practice

The teaching methodology used in the classroom may similarly act negatively on reading development. The current practice of reading aloud, for instance, may allow itself to be transferred indiscriminately to other reading tasks. That is, once the students have acquired the habit, they may be tempted to sub-vocalise at any reading task. This is known to slow the pace of reading, and should not be encouraged.

Usually, students are asked to take turns at reading the same text aloud, and the teacher can intervene at any moment to correct pronunciation. The teacher's expected interference does not at all prepare students to read for meaning, and it may also be a source of frustration. Students, especially teenagers, do not like being interrupted while they are making a story audible. This is usually the time to try and impress a classmate or the teacher.

Reading aloud may still have a place in foreign language teaching, as an exercise in pronunciation. Moreover, as miscue analysts' work (see e.g., Wallace, 1988) has shown, reading aloud can reveal some of the ways in which students construct meaning, and how they learn. The Zairean teacher of English is not however

trained for this kind of work. Students' reading aloud is then usually done mechanically.

Texts that are read aloud from the **English for Africa** series are normally followed by structural and lexical exercises, together with comprehension questions. Work that is done with text, exercises and comprehension questions in this way, can be said to encourage intensive reading, i.e. this work can be said to aim at "a detailed analysis of the general ideas of the text" (**Programme National d'Anglais**, 1988: 30).

According to Hill (1977), the objective of this kind of reading

> is to understand as fully as possible the logical argument and the rhetorical structure of the text, its symbolic, emotional and social overtones, the attitudes and purposes of the author and the linguistic means that he employs to achieve those ends. (p. 6)

The objective of intensive reading as put forward by Hill (1977) involves different dimensions of reading: speed, understanding of the literal meaning, understanding of the significance of texts, evaluation of the content and form of texts, etc.. The achievement of this objective certainly depends on the type of exercises and comprehension questions accompanying a text. What I know of the **English for Africa** series makes me say that the comprehension questions found in the series do not attempt to help students achieve deeper levels of understanding. They concentrate on the manipulation of structural and lexical items (i.e. understanding of the literal meaning of a text).

Attempts to apprehend the literal meaning of a text in the classroom are usually done meticulously, through a slow style of reading. The study of one page of text in Zairean EFL classes will take 3 to 4 teaching periods of 50' each (see **Programme National d'Anglais**, 1988: 30), with the help of a dictionary if it is available.

These intensive reading activities are traditionally favoured in foreign language classes, for the help they may bring the proficiency-building students in the apprehension of word meanings. But if by some chance, the slow style involved in these reading events comes to be assumed as the sole way of reading, and then transferred to each and every reading task, then, it will constrain the development of other good reading habits.

It can then be hypothesised that Zairean students will tend to read slowly, trying to understand all the words of a text, because this is the way in which they are taught to read. Rather, as will be argued later in Chapter 3, reading efficiency presupposes flexibility in the use of reading strategies, as may be required by a particular type of material or purpose.

The teacher's job is clearly to help the learner on his way to the achievement of this efficiency. To do this, the teacher may need to have the necessary information about alternative ways of doing things, about the variety of activities that are conducive to an adequate development of reading ability. Zairean teachers generally lack this information about alternative classroom practices. This was clearly revealed by the few Zairean teachers of English that Mwaka (1992) worked with in his research.

Mwaka (1992) initiated the teachers in question to holistic reading instruction in such activities as the use of diagrams and brainstorming to aid reading comprehension, activities of which those experienced teachers of English had never heard before. All the same, they were eager to learn new techniques. They eventually learned the new methodology, and applied it for 8 weeks on an experimental basis, working with their 5th form secondary school students. The teachers happily observed their students making progress. At the posttest, the students in question turned out to be better at reading comprehension than a matched group of students with whom the traditional methodology suggested in the **English for Africa** series was used. In their evaluation of the experiment, as Mwaka reports, those Zairean teachers were so enthusiastic as to declare that they had found "the way" to English reading and language development, and to promise to go on using the new methodology. They had discovered a different type of activity, which helped them to do their work more effectively.

Apart from the different types of activities that the teacher can set up for the purpose of developing effective reading in his students, he can also act as their model, a person whom they may want to identify with.

2.4.2.4 Model

According to Brumfit (1979, quoted in Bamford 1984), one of the necessary requirements for reading development is the enthusiasm and commitment to reading shown by the teachers. Such enthusiasm and commitment can be understood as noticeable only when teachers themselves are seen as readers by

students. As young learners can learn by example, they will readily copy the model set up by the teachers. Their desire to read will be stimulated, and they will want to read more. As they read more, they will catch the habit, and reading improvement and accretion to language proficiency will be secured. It is in this order of thought (the teacher as a model), that Nuttall (1982: 192) compares reading to an infectious disease: " ... it is caught not taught". If teachers fail to provide a model, most students will fail to acquire positive attitudes to reading, and their reading habits will not improve.

The literacy context in which the Zairean teacher works cannot allow him to appear as a reader, reading for his own enjoyment and information, and thus a model for his students. It involves money to buy something to read, a place, and some time to read, for someone to appear as a reader. As I observed earlier in this chapter, libraries, usually including obsolete material, are rare institutions, found only in very few Zairean schools. How often and how effectively the Zairean teacher uses the library can be an interesting study of literacy practices in Zaire. In addition, the teacher's generally low pay does not allow him to buy for example a newspaper regularly, let alone to set up a personal library.

In Sub-section 2.4.3 below, I present constraints on reading development that may originate from the students.

2.4.3 Student constraints

It is axiomatic that the learner is an agent in the development of his own reading ability. As an individual, he effects the development of reading through practice, and continuous use of his reading ability. There may thus, understandably, be affective and cognitive factors inherent in the learner, that may prevent a smooth development of reading. The factors examined below are: motivation, perception of the use of reading in English, and world experience and level of competence.

2.4.3.1 Motivation

In general, FL teaching/ learning situations are such that there is no practical interest, and literally no motivation on the part of the learners unless the teacher intervenes. As Corson (1989: 324) notes, the responsibility for motivating the learners in such circumstances, almost exclusively lies with the teacher. Yet, to extrapolate Bloom's (1972: 77) ideas on educational objectives, the development of reading requires an attentive and well-motivated learner. Where there is no

motivation, very little or nothing can be learned. An unmotivated learner will not be able to effect improvement in his reading performance.

Because of this crucial importance of motivation, there have been a number of suggestions on how to reckon with it, while designing or implementing reading programmes. Walker (1987) and Horner (1988), for example, suggest that students should be involved in the choice of their reading materials, or at least in the sequencing of these materials. It is indeed in reference to this type of action that Merritt (1977) speaks of the "negotiated curriculum". Negotiating a curriculum would presuppose the availability of a variety of materials, and a certain maturity in the learners. It is quite achievable where the instructional objectives are not too ambitious, but realistic and specific as to content.

The Zairean EFL context is a general language course context, and may not qualify as realistic and specific. It offers an EFL course, not a reading course in EFL. In addition, varieties of reading materials are not easily found, and the teacher may not have the freedom or opportunity to design a reading programme: the textbook is imposed by the educational authorities, and the inspector of English will seek to make sure that everything is done in accordance with the instructions laid down in the textbook.

This being the case, one would at least expect the texts presented in the set textbook, to be interesting, appealing, i.e. containing what the learner wants to learn about, containing factual information about real people and relevant topics (see e.g., Cunningsworth, 1984). With this type of texts, it can be expected that students' motivation will be increased, for, as Cripwell & Foley (1984) write, "interest in the content of the material can sometimes overcome even the most difficult of language."

Furthermore, as I noted earlier, English is a compulsory subject in the Zairean secondary school curriculum. Therefore, students' reasons for wanting or not wanting to learn English are never taken into consideration. It can be said, however, that the ultimate goal for all the students is to succeed and to be promoted to a higher class. Then, concerning Zairean students' motivation, work with reading materials would need to be associated with the prospect of promotion to a higher class, i.e. improvement in reading performance can be expected if this performance is among the factors conditioning students' promotion from one class to another. It is also with reference to the prospect of this promotion that Zairean

secondary school students may perceive the use of reading in English. Reading for pleasure in English may then not have a place in this context.

2.4.3.2 Perception of the use of reading in English

FL teaching/ learning contexts differ in the uses to which English is put. In some countries, the immediate uses to which the language can be put are instantly perceived, e.g., when there is local press coverage of events in English or when foreign news media in the target language are available in the country. In such cases, reading in English would be judged worthwhile, and the utility of a reading programme in English could be understood by the students. They consequently would respond to it positively.

But situations where the classroom is the unique setting for exposure to English, often present problems. It is difficult to make students perceive the use of reading in English. And this difficulty may affect EFL reading performance. In Zaire e.g., secondary school students may not easily perceive the immediate or ultimate importance of reading in English apart from the credit contributing to their promotion in their student career.

2.4.3.3 World experience and level of competence

One's level of competence in the foreign language and world experience play a role in the understanding of written messages in that language. Learners who read for meaning need to be somehow competent in the FL and to be familiar with the material they are reading. They can go on reading if they understand what they are reading. In this way, they will join Nuttall's (1982) "virtuous circle" of good readers.

In order to interact properly with texts and hence develop reading, linguistic competence is "unquestionably a prime determinant" (Cowan & Sarmed, 1976: 97). Reading ability is so closely bound up with language proficiency (see Devine, 1987; Elley, 1984) that some scholars believe FL reading problems to be mostly problems of proficiency in the FL (see e.g., Alderson, 1984). According to Williams (1986: 43) e.g., growth in language ability plays an essential part in the development of reading ability. For this reason, it can be argued, the development of reading needs to be accompanied by an expansion of general language proficiency. Bloor (1985) refers to this approach as the linguistic approach to reading development.

It is such an approach which seems to be assumed in the provision for reading in EFL in Zairean secondary schools. As was shown in Table 2.3, the provision for reading in EFL goes from 15% of the total tuition time in the first year of English learning to 25% of the total tuition time in the last year of English learning. An ad hoc justification of the little time set apart for EFL reading classes in Zaire would be based on the idea that there is no point allotting more time to reading activities, while students' general language proficiency is still low. To this, one can react, along the lines of Elley's (1984) suggestion, that general language proficiency and reading development are complementary: written material serves as a source of linguistic data which promotes the growth of general language competence; increased language competence in turn enhances reading ability (see Fig.2.2 below). As Wallace (1988: 88) comments about ESL learner readers, "In this way, language and reading proficiency develop side by side."
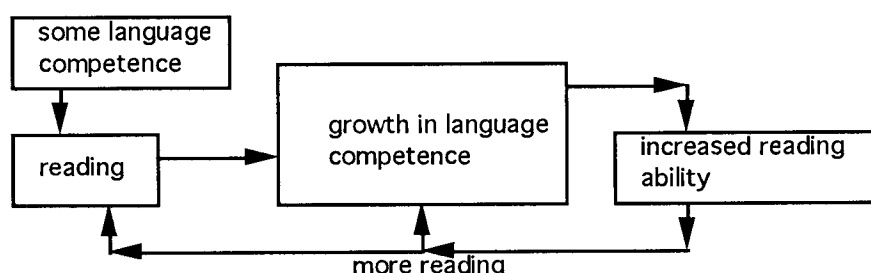
Fig.2.2: Ideal relationship between reading and language competence

It should be noted however that this ideal relationship between reading development and growth in general language competence depends on a number of other factors such as the learners' motivation to read and interest, the content of the reading material, the difficulty level of the reading material, and so on.

The relationship of complementarity can also be said to obtain between reading development and the learner's world experience. The more one reads the more one may get information about the world. The more information one has about the world the more easily one may read.

The importance of the learner's world experience in his comprehension of written messages must then be stressed. There are anecdotes telling of native speakers, who fail to understand some texts because of their unfamiliarity with the sub-culture represented by the said texts (see e.g., Widdowson, 1992). So, the learners' familiarity with a particular culture or way of living, or their knowledge of text types, etc. may play a role in their understanding of the reading materials, if that

familiarity or knowledge is assumed by the writer. As "What we get out of a text depends partly on what we bring to it" (Wallace, 1988: 33), this familiarity or knowledge may be crucial in relation to the choices of topics that students make when they are given a variety of reading materials.

Thus, where the learner shares cultural traits with the target language speakers, he will acquire the target language faster (Coady, 1979). If the learner has the necessary background knowledge, the act of reading may reduce to a simple confirmation of predictions, based on that knowledge. Obviously, Zairean learners of English may have problems to understand unedited materials in English because of their low level of proficiency in English, and because of cultural differences.

In conclusion to this section on constraints, the following can be said. Knowing that there is an obstacle in one's way to the achievement of a goal can prepare one to think of possible ways of overcoming the obstacle. It is in this sense that one should look at the enumeration of the constraints, as done in this section: it is an attempt to gain some knowledge of the obstacle. This knowledge of the obstacle can also help to determine the strengths and weaknesses of possible courses of action that one may intend to pursue. For the concerns of the present study, it can be said that the use of graded readers for the development of reading ability can help to overcome some of the constraints deriving from the institutions and from the teachers. With graded readers, students are given the opportunity to read books in EFL, that contain communicatively rich language input. They are allowed to read for meaning. They can set themselves a purpose for reading a book of their choice, they can set themselves their own reading pace, etc..

2.5 In conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to present the context of my study of the development and transfer of reading ability, through reading in English. This is a multilingual context, where people are thought to be willing to learn languages. English is imposed on secondary school students as a subject. Nonetheless, the terrain ought to be favourable for English language learning as this language appears to be considered as a "top-layer" language in the collective consciousness of Zaireans. Such a consideration explains e.g., why English has been a compulsory subject on the secondary school curriculum for more than three decades now. Some dedication to the promotion of this language can be shown through some of the provisions for teacher training in the country.

I also tried to indicate that some doubts may be raised concerning the stability of reading ability among students as they are exposed to French, the medium of instruction, before the common underlying proficiency (see Cummins, 1984) related to literacy skills is stabilised in their L1. In addition, the exercise of this ability is not made easy by the scarcity of reading materials, and the type of reading pedagogy in force in the school system.

Emphasis in Zairean classrooms is on the learning of individual words and structures, and their correct pronunciation, a pedagogy that assumes that we learn words and structures in order to read. The Zairean pedagogy of reading assumes that the acquisition of effective reading follows from the development of the knowledge of discrete language elements. Such a pedagogy may not have prepared students for the requirements of cloze reading and independent silent reading of graded readers.

In Chapter 3, I consider the notions of reading and reading development.

Note

1 I cannot confirm whether the British and American language schools are still open, owing to the civil unrest prevailing in Zaire, these last days.

3 READING AND READING DEVELOPMENT

This chapter is concerned with the nature of reading and reading development. It attempts first of all to put forward a definition of reading, and then it addresses the issue of the unitary or componential nature of reading. Eventually, a choice is made in favour of the unitary view of reading. One approach to reading development based on this view favours the use of graded readers. One section of this chapter thus discusses how graded readers can help to develop reading ability in EFL learners. After the section dealing with graded readers and the development of reading ability in EFL, I will finally treat of the similarities and differences involved in reading in different languages, as to the use of reading strategies and comprehension of reading materials.

3.1 A definition of reading

It is not easy to answer the seemingly straightforward question of what reading is. Nuttall (1982) for example asks the question "What is reading ?", but opts not to go further than set her reader the task of making up his mind and settling on his own definition. It is probably true that each individual reader has his own definition of reading, which might include, as Nuttall acknowledges, one or more of the following terms:

understand	interpret	meaning	sense	etc.
decode	decipher	identify	etc.	
articulate	speak	pronounce	etc.	

(Nuttall, 1982: 2).

In fact, one definition provided by Williams (1984) includes one of these terms. It states that reading "is a process whereby one looks at and understands what has been written" (p.2).

Smith (1985), on his part, does not give a definition of reading as such. However, he provides his reader with elements relevant to the construction of a definition, spread over a number of paragraphs. From these elements, it is possible to understand that reading is the action of extracting information from a written text.

If one is not happy with such a definition, a further search may take one to Alderson & Urquhart (1984). They, like Nuttall, opt not to define reading; but they advise their reader on the difficulties to be found in working out a definition of reading. For

example, there is a need to distinguish the process of understanding from comprehension (the product of reading). The process of reading is so intricately linked with its product, that people often fail to distinguish them. It would appear that, process or product, reading is so private and personal as not to allow itself to be looked into. At least, Alderson & Urquhart expressly point to the elements that are involved in reading: the reader, the text, and the writer. Each of these elements apparently contributes to comprehension, the product of reading, which is a prerequisite to learning, as was noted in Chapter 1.

The reader who is the focus of the present study is a learner of English as a foreign language. To this reader, short texts may be presented, usually of the narrative prose or dialogue types, as opposed to long narrative prose, expository or poem types. I wish to repeat here my understanding of the term "text". In Chapter 1, I defined it as any self-contained piece of language that is used or is potentially usable for communication or language teaching/ learning purposes. It is the text which in reality signals the writer's presence to its reader. Then, what is important in reading is the interaction between the reader and the text. The importance of this interaction is captured in Rigg's (1988: 216) observation that "Reading is what the student does, alone with the text". The reader-text tandem is in fact capitalised on in interactive perspectives on reading (see e.g., Carrell et al, 1988), which see reading as a process whereby the reader's own background knowledge contributes to his understanding of the reading material.

As a language teacher, one may need a definition of reading that can help one take informed decisions, for the conduct of reading classes and the enhancement of reading ability. I have opted for the strategy of looking into the following aspects of reading behaviour: decoding, receiving communication, searching for meaning, and answering questions. They will hopefully help to formulate an acceptable working definition.

3.1.1 Reading as decoding

One interpretation of the word "reading" opposes "reading aloud" to "reading silently" (Hill, 1977). Hill (1977: 4) takes this interpretation into account, and represents the reading process as in the following diagram:

A ⟶ C ⟶ B

Fig. 3.1: Relationship between reading aloud and silent reading, as adapted from Hill (1977)

in which A represents the text (the physical substance) before the reader's eyes, and the arrow stands for what is taking place between the reader and the text. In this diagram, the arrows do not signal the interactive nature of reading. But, they help to establish the point that for an external observer the literacy event that is going on can be seen as reading silently (C) or as reading aloud (B). It appears to me that this model of reading works from the view that reading aloud is normally mediated by silent reading.

In both reading aloud and reading silently, someone who is reading for meaning has to recognise the textual substance before his eyes as part of a system. It is this recognition of the textual substance as part of the graphic system of a given language that I consider as decoding. Knowledge of the written code is involved. Without it, reading and therefore "comprehension of text simply cannot take place" (Haynes & Carr, 1990: 377).

Decoding is the starting point in reading. The decoding of written texts starts with people's ability to see. With their eyes open on a piece of paper, or some other writing material, they can look at the squiggles or print, and try to recognise the different shapes.

All reading starts as this visual task of recognising graphic symbols, and discriminating among them. According to Smith (1985: 104-111), this recognition is possible because readers have learnt that graphic symbols have distinctive features that make them differ from one another. These distinctive features help the reader to discriminate among graphemes, in spite of the infinity of ways in which they can actually be realised. Smith (op. cit.: 127) considers this ability to realise that shapes used in texts are distinctive, to herald reading readiness in human beings.

Smith's theory of the distinctive features of graphic symbols is analogous to the way in which listeners recognise the phonemes of the particular language of which they are competent users. The phonemes are also recognised on the basis of their distinctive features, despite their various phonetic realisations. One may conclude that the same principle is at work in reading; given that reading and listening are similar in the sense that they allow one to receive linguistic communication.

In the process of reading, decoding, as recognition of physical shapes, is instantaneous and normally intervenes during what is known as fixations: short pauses after the rapid jumping movements (saccades and regressions) of the eyes (see

Carroll, 1978: 97). However, decoding may also involve the ability to give names to written symbols. Smith (1985) expressed a view that I find relevant concerning this ability. According to him, as we recognise a face before we put a name to it, it should not be surprising that we comprehend a written word's meaning before we put a name to the word. In other terms, meaning comes first and aids recognition more than the simple naming of written symbols.

In a similar vein, Wallace (1988: 49) observed that one can orally "reproduce" a text and yet have "a very imperfect idea of what is going on". Oral reproduction of a text, i.e. the simple naming of written symbols, which is unrelated to meaning, would be represented, following Hill (1977) as

A———————▶B

Fig.3.2: Unmediated reading aloud, as adapted from Hill (1977)

direct reading aloud (B) from text (A), which is not mediated by silent reading (C), as shown in the earlier diagram (Fig.3.1). Such reading aloud is "mechanical decoding", the result of which may be referred to as "barking at print" (Hill, 1977). As Hill notes,

> It is perfectly easy to learn to read an exotic language in this sense. One can learn to make the right noises to correspond with the squiggles on the page without having the slightest understanding of what the sense of it is. (p.4)

The generation of Zaireans who were baptised in the Roman Catholic Church in the 1950s, used to "bark" at Latin print, e.g., in their reading of the "Pater Noster" (the Lord's Prayer) during Mass. I can "read" Latin in this sense. In today's Zairean primary schools, "mechanical decoding" of French texts is commonly practised. And, it is not rare for EFL texts to be also mechanically decoded by students in Zairean secondary schools. This type of "mechanical decoding" is not reading for meaning, which should be the ultimate goal of EFL reading classes.

Having said that, I would like to touch briefly on the outcomes of "non mechanical" reading aloud, known in the literature as "oral miscues" (see e.g., Goodman, 1969). According to Wallace (1988: 48), a miscue is "any replacement, omission or addition the reader makes to the text." It is therefore a response that results "from the interaction of the reader with the graphic display" (Goodman, 1969). As Goodman notes, there are three cueing systems that the reader uses in this interaction. He needs graphic and phonetic information about the spelling and the pronunciation of the language (graphophonic cueing system), information about the order of the formal

units of the language (syntactic cueing system), and his experiential conceptual background (semantic cueing system). Like errors that language learners make in their evolving "interlanguage" (see Corder, 1981), miscues are systematic and relate to the three levels of language that Goodman identified. In reading, they result from the linguistic competence of the reader (Goodman, 1969). Goodman also observed that readers may or may not be aware of their miscues. Readers are particularly aware of their miscues when the sense of what they are reading is affected. They may thus self-correct as they reread. And, the attempts to self-correct may or may not be successful.

Because miscues are systematic results of reading and reflections of the reader's linguistic competence, their analysis can be very useful to the language teacher in his assessment of the ways in which his learner readers attend to meaning. The teacher needs to look at the patterns in which the miscues occur to gain insight into the development of reading ability. Wallace (1988) e.g., analysed the graphophonic miscues made by her ESL learner readers. She noticed that effective learner readers usually self-corrected, while less effective learner readers did not self-correct. This ability to recover from miscues is, according to Coady (1979), one of the key differences between proficient and less proficient readers. So, once less proficient readers have been identified on the basis of their miscues, an instructional strategy can be designed to teach them how to read for meaning, avoiding any "barking at print".

The basic importance of decoding in reading (see e.g., Goodman, 1969) has made some scholars develop models of reading behaviour known as bottom-up models, which "emphasize the priority of the text as input ..." (Williams & Moran, 1989: 217), during the process of reading. (Bottom-up models of reading are theoretically opposed to top-down models of reading, about which a word will be said in 3.1.4 and 3.2.3 below.) However, decoding is not all and everything that reading involves. Further, saying that all reading starts as decoding is not the same as equating reading with decoding.

Reading need not be oversimplified as decoding. Certainly, readers differ in their ability to rely on visual information: some are heavily reliant on it; others are known to make a lot of guesses (see Goodman, 1976b), prompted by little visual information. Smith (1985: passim) even affirms that the more non visual information the reader brings to the task, the less visual information he will need from the text. As he writes:

> The fluent readers in all aspects of reading are those who pay attention only to that information in the print that is most relevant to their purposes.
> (Smith, 1985: 103)

Smith's assertion, emphasising the selective nature of reading, tends to reduce the importance of decoding in reading, and suggests that beyond it and above all, reading is a continuous "search for meaning" (Knapp, 1980: 347), which takes place as an act of communication.

3.1.2 Reading as communication

It is an established fact that one of the purposes for which human beings use language, is the sharing of some of their experiences, i.e. the purpose of communication. Chapman (1987: 17) rightfully alludes to the fact that language evolved from the start for this purpose. For the purpose of communication, human beings diverted some of their bodily organs from their primary functions: tongue, hands, eyes, ears, etc. started to be used and are still being used for this purpose. It can be observed that hands and eyes, for example, are used in producing and receiving written texts. The hands and the eyes are prompted into the activity of producing and receiving texts by the brain.

Because of this involvement of the brain, Hochberg & Brooks (1976) consider reading, i.e. perception of written texts and reader's response to them, as an intentional behaviour. People read then, not because their eyes are open, even though they must be open for them to read; but because in the first place, they have a purpose for doing so. This purpose is most of the time their thirst for information. Purposes sustain and underlie all acts of communication, and therefore the performance of these acts is intentional. Williams' (1984) definition of reading e.g., which I quoted earlier, contains the verb "look at" which signals the intentionality and purposefulness of reading.

If only because of this purposefulness of the act, reading can be said to be an act of communication through language. Texts that are read instantiate language (i.e. an instrument of communication) in use. Language users assume that the texts before their eyes convey something, which they want to know. They assume that the writer has a message, which he wants them to understand [see Nuttall (1982: 10), for this adaptation of Paul Grice's "co-operative principle", to reading].

Saying that reading is an act of communication does not, however, indicate how reading functions as communication. According to Widdowson, communication through natural human language is imprecise (1979b: 177), and therefore calls for negotiation (1984: 84). This is quite clear in face-to-face instances of communication, where the interlocutors may request rephrasing, explanation, elaboration, and so on. In reading, the reader engages in the activity aware, as it were, that the interlocutor's presence is only signalled by the text. He tries to discover both "the propositional content and the illocutionary intent" (Widdowson, 1984) conveyed by the writer.

Propositional content and illocutionary intent are not discovered in the same manner as one may discover pebbles on a river bed. They are constructed / reconstructed by the reader from texts (Anderson et al, as quoted in Chapman, 1987: 32; see also Hedge, 1985: 32). The fluent reader confronts a text knowing that, like all language users, he will have to make what is imprecise precise; to freeze, so to speak, "meaning from potential for meaning" (Widdowson, 1979b).

It may be noted here that one of the questionnaire items I used in fieldwork aimed at finding out whether learner readers were aware of their role as constructors of meaning in reading events, rather than mere discoverers of meaning laid down in a text.

3.1.3 Reading as search for meaning

> people read for meaning...
> (Smith, 1985: 117)

Normal reading involves a "search for meaning" (Knapp, 1980: 347), prompted by the written text. This search for meaning is guided by the reader's purpose for reading, and aided, as said in 3.1.4 below, by the reader's previous knowledge. Search for meaning was suggested in the allusion I made earlier to Smith's (1985) definition of the process of reading. It will be recalled that his definition of reading does not appear in one single paragraph. Possible elements, relevant to this definition, are spread over a number of paragraphs. Only through attempts at constructing his own definition of the process, can the interested reader come out with something to hang on to. In my case, the salient phrase to show up in the reconstructed definition, was "extraction of information from written text".

Perhaps my own understanding of the "extraction of information" metaphor may need to be spelled out here. A given text, the physical substance before one's eyes, contains different sorts of information which one extracts to construct meaning.

The analogy of extraction in this context can be carried over, to a setting where the term seems to be more appropriate: e.g., a gold mine. After prospectors have been, the miner goes to the mine with the knowledge, and probably also some assurance, that something tangible, gold, will be found there. Such a situation may not obtain in the case of reading, especially where and when meaning is concerned.

At this point, I wish to repeat Widdowson's (1979b) observation that communication through language is imprecise. This is due to the fact that language forms only have potential for meaning, which causes language to be indeterminate (Widdowson, 1984). As a matter of fact, communication takes place because of, and in order to reduce, this meaning indefiniteness. Meaning, a creation of the reader's on the basis of textual clues (Widdowson, idem), "comes into being as a result of the interaction between text and language user ..." (Jonz, 1987: 410). It is this interaction which helps to reduce meaning indefiniteness, and so helps the communicators' experiential and conceptual worlds to converge (Widdowson, 1979b: 173), or to diverge (see Wallace, 1992: 45; on submissive and resistant readers).

On the road to achieving this convergence or divergence, the reader may want to identify his needs, and thus set himself a purpose for reading. The reader has to ask himself questions. He has questions to ask of the text, and expects it to answer relevantly, so as to help him find "something which sustains or extends his conceptual world ..." (Widdowson, 1979b: 180). Extension of the reader's world clearly suggests that one can learn from reading, as was argued in Chapter 1.

3.1.4 Reading as asking questions

> reading is asking questions of printed text.
> (Smith, 1985: 103)

The literature on discourse processing has it that language users appeal to their previously acquired knowledge, in order to process in-coming texts. Previously acquired knowledge that is relevant to the processing of in-coming texts has been dubbed as background knowledge. This background knowledge is of two types, according to schema-theorists: there are formal schemata, and content schemata (see e.g., Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983: 559). Formal schemata are language users' knowledge of formal rhetorical and organisational structures of different types of texts; whereas content schemata are the background knowledge of the content area (part of the reader's world knowledge). In reference to the types of knowledge that I

used in Chapter 1, I can say that background knowledge includes systemic and schematic knowledge that can be activated during a reading event.

The reader relies on this background knowledge in his search for meaning. He continuously sets the text that he is reading against his background knowledge. If one adopts the same line of thought as Goodman (1976a, b), one will claim that the reader is asking himself whether what he is reading makes sense, as far as his background knowledge is concerned. Text meaning is created with reference to background knowledge, which is activated by the information from the text.

In fact, top-down models of reading are based on the reasoning that the activation of schemata allows the reader to make conceptual predictions (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983), that are going to have an influence on how he processes the text. This is done in a top down manner, i.e. it is concept-driven. Clearly then, the reader does not come to the interaction with the text, as a "tabula rasa".

It is probably in reference to the notion of background knowledge, and the way in which it helps in predicting part of the meaning of a text, that Smith (1985) states that "To read one must ask questions ..." (p.104), about meaning. The said questions are implicit, he says, and vary with the material one reads, and with one's purpose for reading. One of these questions may be Goodman's "Does what I am reading make sense ?". It is on the basis of such implicit questions that, as Goodman (1976b) puts it, the reader builds expectations that will help him sample the text at different fixations, develop hypotheses from this sampling, and test them as reading goes on.

Indeed, the ability to ask oneself questions about what one is reading is an aspect of reflective reading, as shown by Lunzer & Gardner (1979: 32). And, as is indicated in Chapter 5, my fieldwork sought to establish students' awareness of this self-questioning activity during their reading in French and in English.

At this juncture, it can be said in broad terms that reading for understanding, i.e. silent, personal reading, consists of an intentional, selective decoding of written texts, by the reader aided by his background knowledge. It is a communication process, in which one person (the reader) selectively decodes linguistic symbols encoded in graphic form by another person (the writer), in order to construct the meaning necessary to answer questions that are in his mind. This definition includes some of the terms identified by Nuttall (1982). It also points to the three elements to the reading process (viz. the reader, the text, and the writer) noted by Alderson & Urquhart (1984).

In the foregoing account, different aspects of reading have been singled out in terms of what the reader does during the event: he decodes, he enters into communication, he searches for meaning (e.g., making guesses), he asks himself questions, etc.. In relation to the development of reading ability, the classroom-oriented mind may need to decide whether these aspects of reading behaviour should be dealt with separately or together. A decision on how to develop reading ability actually relates to the question of whether reading should be seen as a unitary process or a component subskill process. This question is dealt with in the following section, against the background of a belief in the necessity of meaningful reading as its own reinforcement. For, as observed by Holdaway (1980: 8):

> No system of instruction can replace the act of reading itself
> -independent, satisfying, joyful reading - as the fundamental means of
> learning to be literate.

3.2 Reading ability: a skill or a compendium of skills.

There is an apparently indiscriminate use of the terms "skill" and "skills" in reference to reading, which often confuses the neophyte in the area of reading research. Here, one scholar would speak about reading being one of the four traditional language skills (viz. listening, speaking, reading, and writing); whereas there, another scholar would proclaim his dedication to the development of reading skills. For example, Grellet's (1981) book: **Developing Reading Skills**, of which the title speaks for itself, proposes different types of questions and exercises in order to develop particular "reading skills". The question is whether reading is, at one and the same time, a skill and a compendium of skills.

A simple explanation might rely on the grammar of English. Here, realities can be expressed as countable or uncountable entities. The same grammar of English is so flexible as to allow uncountable expressions to become countable, without the observable formal change affecting their meaning, as to the essence of the referent: e.g., sugar - sugars; hence, skill - skills. However, the relation between "sugar" and "sugars" does not seem to be similar to the one holding between "skill" and "skills". To understand the use of the terms "skill" and "skills" in reference to reading, one may need to scan the literature on behaviour, if only because reading is hyponymous to behaviour.

According to psychologists Downing & Leong (1982: 9), a skill is a set of operations that are invariant when performed across different objects and events. These

operations form the structural basis of activities, and require training and practice in order to be performed adequately. For example, in order to drive a car, ride a horse or a bicycle, adequately; one needs to acquire a set of motor operations, to be trained and to have practice in the co-ordination of the said operations. Further performances of the same set of operations will help the skill to look after itself. According to Downing & Leong (1982: 13) reading, an intellectual rather than a physical activity, shares the general features of driving and riding.

Like any other skill then, reading displays inter alia the following characteristics:
- smooth pattern of behaviour: the saccades and regressions in eye movement are combined without faltering;
- integration of cues and strategies ;
- readiness for future actions and expectations of consequences of previous actions.

The three characteristics above are among the 21 listed by Downing & Leong (1982: 15-18) as features of a skill. Their 20th feature is that "a skill may be analysed into smaller units of behaviour". These smaller units of behaviour, which they call "sub-skills" or "sub-routines", are in a hierarchy. The mastery of some at a higher level in the hierarchy, depends on the mastery of lower level ones.

The reference to reading as a "divisible" behaviour may have stemmed from this kind of analysis of a skill, into component subskills. Lists of reading skills (i.e. subskills) as delineated here, run from four to tens, depending on authors. Subskill theorists generally recognise that "there is no firmly established set of required subskills for reading" (e.g. Brown & Haynes, 1985: 22). However, according to Brown & Haynes (1985), there are six skill components, which can be addressed usefully: (1) the use of graphotactic regularities in the visual perception of graphemic features, (2) the ability to apply orthographic rules in spelling-to-sound translation, (3) vocabulary knowledge, (4) the use of semantic and syntactic context, (5) the ability to encode and maintain information in short-term memory, and (6) the co-ordination of general world knowledge with textual information.

Downing & Leong (1982: 24) take a step further and explain the indiscriminate use of the terms "skill" and "skills", especially among students of education, as due to the fact that :

> The term 'skill' in curriculum and instruction courses usually refers to mental or motor activities that should be taught as part of the curriculum.

To my understanding, educationists use two senses of the term "skill", in reference to reading. One sense is psychological, and designates the ability; hence, the reading skill. The other sense is pedagogical, and refers to the different mental or motor activities (subskills) putatively involved in reading; hence, the reading skills.

3.2.1 The debate

The use of the terms "skill" and "skills" in reference to reading, however, seems to relate to an important issue, of relevance to reading instruction. It is the issue of whether reading is a single, holistic process or whether it consists of a number of discrete component skills (Harrison & Dolan, 1979: 14; Hewitt, 1979: 25; LaBerge & Samuels, 1976; Vacca, 1980; Williams & Moran, 1989: 223). This issue is not a simple debate on terminology. For example, "One major point of debate is whether specific subskills need to be developed prior to 'actual' reading as engagement with text" (Wallace, 1992: personal communication).

The debate on the unitary or subskill nature of reading is not an entirely new problem in educational circles. It can be traced back as long as more than a century ago (Samuels, 1976: 162). According to Samuels (1976), this issue is not a simple either/or dichotomy; it is a question of focus, emphasis and sequence in scholars' views about the nature of reading and reading instruction.

This debate is compounded by the investigators' limited ability to study reading as an on-going process. As Cairney (1990: 14) notes, one is trying to describe a process that cannot be seen - that occurs in the head. The data usually available for this purpose represents the product of reading, not the process. It may thus be argued that it is the product which is being studied (see Farr & Carey, 1986: 28), rather than the process itself. Some caution is thus usually advised in drawing conclusions from such endeavours. This caution may be thought to resound in Goodman's (1988: 13) observation that whatever the reader does is a product of reading. Then, even oral miscues, which have been extensively analysed as a window on the reading process, are the product of reading. We need to be also cautious in drawing conclusions from miscue analysis.

It is interesting to note at this juncture that the process/ product dichotomy about reading echoes Chomsky's competence/ performance dichotomy concerning language. As is well known, performance may not equally match competence. Similarly, the product of reading may not totally represent the process of reading. The analogy need not be pressed too hard, in spite of the temptation to equate reading with language, as

both are systems of communication at the disposal of human beings. We should only note in relation to the process/product distinction what Farr (1969: 7) said about performance at reading tests: it is

> only a sample of an individual's behaviour in one given situation under a given set of conditions.

Although the evidence on the issue of the component versus the holistic nature of reading is based on the product rather than on the process of reading, an attempt is made in the following presentation to show that the unitary, holistic view is more appealing than the pluralistic, subskill view of reading. It would seem necessary, first of all, to present some of the evidence available for each of these views.

3.2.2 The subskill view of reading, and some evidence for it

There is a body of research evidence, which supports the view that "Reading is not a single skill ..." (Mackay & Mountford, 1979: 113), that it has "... many different components" (Perfetti, 1985: 119).

For researchers following this line of thought, the number of the component skills of reading is finite, and the said components are theoretically distinct and empirically separable (see e.g., Brown & Haynes, 1985: 2; Carr, 1985: 99). But the exact number of the components is yet to be researched into, just as their names are yet to be agreed on.

One of the frequently quoted studies on the pluralistic view of reading is Davis' (1968). Davis assumed the reality of distinct subskills at the beginning of his study. So, after considering some experimental studies on the analysis of comprehension, he selected eight of the so-called skills of comprehension and undertook to find evidence for their existence as separate reading skills. The eight skills that he selected were: recalling word meanings, inferring word meanings from context, understanding content stated explicitly, weaving ideas together in the content, making inferences about the content, recognising the author's tone, mood and purpose, identifying the author's literary techniques, and following the structure of the content. For each of these skills, he constructed forty multiple-choice items, each based on a separate passage. After a differential item analysis, he devised two parallel tests of twelve items each, to measure each subskill. The tests were administered to 988 twelfth-grade students. The results of uniqueness analyses and cross-validations performed on the data revealed large percentages of unique non chance variance, especially for word meaning recall and drawing inferences from context. Davis (idem) thus concluded that

Comprehension among mature readers is not a unitary mental skill or operation. (p. 542)

Another report supporting the pluralistic view of the nature of reading is Frederiksen's (1981). Frederiksen studied the reaction times of experimental subjects at four reading tasks: letter matching, bigram identification, pseudoword decoding, and word naming. The chronometric approach, which Frederiksen adopted, is sustained by the idea that performance differences in reading take the form of high or low processing time, depending on whether the reader is fluent or poor. Poor readers, unlike fluent readers, are known to spend much time on thinking about the words rather than automatically recognising them (see e.g., Mitchell, 1982).

The evidence that Frederiksen collected supported a component process model for reading, distinguishing at least five component skills: efficiency in perceptual decoding of individual graphemes; efficiency in decoding orthographically regular, multigrapheme units; efficiency in parsing an encoded grapheme array and in letter-sound correspondence rules; automaticity in deriving a speech representation; and the process of lexical retrieval. Not only did Frederiksen find that the component skills were related to measures of reading proficiency, but he also found that there were patterns of intercorrelation among them. In Frederiksen's view, the intercorrelation among the subskills, observed particularly in skilled readers, results from the successful, "integrated and mutually facilitative operation" of highly automatic component processes (Frederiksen, 1981: 361).

According to the scholars of the multiple component persuasion, it is probably this high degree of interrelatedness of the subskills during the performance of reading which makes it difficult prima facie to determine the said components. Guthrie (1973) for example, found empirical evidence that subskills are highly intercorrelated in normal readers. With such a finding, one can argue that there are no distinct subskills. However, Guthrie's study is generally presented as lending support to the subskill view of reading, because the intercorrelation of subskills (some of which will be named below) in disabled readers was low. It can be observed however that such a low intercorrelation may have resulted from teaching factors.

Nevertheless, one of the merits of Guthrie's study was this involvement of normal and disabled readers; a way, as it were, to provide an appropriate answer to one of the questions raised by Samuels & Kamil (1988) in their discussion of theoretical models of reading, viz. "Does this model adequately describe fluent and beginning reading?".

Guthrie (1973) purported to test two models of reading: the assembly model and the system model. In the assembly model, the components of reading are independent since they "may exist in high or low degree of strength for a given individual." The system model, on the other hand, views reading as a system of associated components that are not identical in function or strength but that are interdependent (Guthrie, 1973: 10).

The evaluation of the two models was as follows. If the subskills in normal readers exhibited low intercorrelations, the assembly model would be confirmed. Then, the disabled readers would be expected to be normal on a large majority of subskills and deficient on a minority of subskills. If on the contrary the subskills in normal readers were highly correlated, the system analysis would be confirmed. Then, the disabled readers would be found to be deficient in a large majority of subskills.

The intercorrelations were computed on the scores of 19 normal readers and 19 disabled readers among eight subskills of reading: nonsense-word production, long-vowel production, short-vowel production, consonant-cluster production, single-letter production, nonsense-word recognition, consonant-cluster recognition, and initial-letter recognition. These subskills were found to bear a relationship to sight vocabulary such that nonsense-word reading for example is more strongly associated with sight vocabulary than letter-sound production. The intercorrelations among the subskills were found to be significantly high in normal readers, lending support to the system model. But, they were significantly low in disabled readers, "particularly in the area of production." This outcome provided support for the assembly model of the development of reading. Taken together, the two major findings of the study validated the system as well as the assembly models. But, Guthrie concluded that

> the independence and uniqueness of the skills are evident. It is likely
> that the skills are distinct components that are highly integrated in
> normal children.
> (Guthrie, 1973: 17)

Some doubts may be raised about the extent to which the subskills selected in this type of study (nonsense words and letters in isolation) reflect the reading of meaningful language. Indeed, as Smith (1985) observes, reading directly for meaning is not a consequence of reading words and letters in isolation:

> Normally we need to comprehend meaning in order to identify words
> and normally we need to identify words in order to identify letters.
> (Smith, 1985: 105)

Furthermore, the evidence for the independent existence of subskills is inferred from the performance of disabled readers. It can be argued that, because these readers have not yet reached reading efficiency, their performance is poor. In other terms, they need to learn the kind of things that fluent readers do. Once they have learned these things, it can be argued, their performance will show the interrelatedness of the putative subskills of reading.

The interrelatedness of the subskills at least among good readers should remind us of the fact that, during the process of reading, we simultaneously use graphophonic, syntactic and semantic cues (see Goodman, 1967) to construct meaning. Such a view is consistent with a unitary approach to reading, which I address in 3.2.3.

3.2.3 The unitary view of reading, and some evidence for it

Reading is a unitary process, which is not divisible into component subprocesses. This is the contention of theories known as single-factor theories of reading, which explain reading as focused on a single factor.

According to Carr (1981), there are four major classes of single-factor theories: visual discrimination theories (1), phonological and semantic recoding theories (2), short-term memory theories (3), and knowledge-based theories (4). The first three classes of theories are data-driven/text-based/bottom-up models; as opposed to the last class of theories, which are conceptually driven/top-down.

Carr (idem) presents the features of these theories as follows. Visual discrimination theories explain reading achievement by the characteristics of visual discrimination, i.e. spatial location, spatial order and temporal resolution. Phonological and semantic recoding theories explain reading achievement as due to the ability to translate from spelling patterns to pronunciation to meaning. Short-term memory theories relate reading achievement to the ability to maintain the identities of a series of language items, and their order; or the ability to encode new items into short-term memory. Finally, knowledge-based theories relate reading achievement to top-down processes, i.e. to the ability to make use of one's world knowledge, linguistic knowledge, and knowledge of reading.

The psycholinguistic theories of reading propounded by Goodman (1969) and Smith (1978b) belong to this last class of single-factor theories. But, a rider needs to be inserted here concerning the term "top-down processes" that I have used above in reference to their theories. It may be observed that Goodman and Smith themselves

do not use this term (Wallace, 1992: personal communication). I wish it simply to stand as a metaphor associated with the importance that their theories attach to the reader's knowledge. I also acknowledge the importance of one's prior knowledge in reading. But, as was said in 3.1.1, reading starts with the reader's ability to see and extract information from what he sees: this is a bottom-up process. And, the information extracted is processed with reference to what the reader knows, which is a top-down process. It is from this interaction of knowledge and graphic input that meaning is created from the text, in convergence with or divergence from the writer.

The interactive nature of reading is observable in Goodman's theoretical positions, which maintain for example that, because reading is a language process, it is a holistic activity; it is not merely the sum of various decoding and comprehension skills (see e.g., Vacca, 1980).

For Goodman (1969), reading is a form of information processing. This processing occurs when an individual, drawing on his knowledge of the world, on his knowledge of the language, and on his knowledge of reading, selects and chooses from the information available in his interaction with the graphic input, in an attempt to understand the graphic messages. This interaction between reader and text takes place through a sequence of optical, perceptual, syntactic, and semantic cycles. Moreover, Goodman (1988: 15-16) notes that as the readers move through these sequential cycles, they employ five processes: recognition-initiation, prediction, confirmation, correction, and termination. The cycles, he adds, cannot be considered parts of the reading process itself, nor can the processes be fragmented (Goodman, 1969: 15).

Smith also considers reading to be unitary, and argues against its being broken down into component skills. This

> makes learning to read more difficult because it makes nonsense out of
> what should be sense.
> (Smith, 1978b: 5)

Single-factor theories such as these view all levels of reading as a whole, a "diversity within [the] unity" (Goodman, 1984) of meaning construction. They may thus be taken to assume that reading may function more or less similarly in any reading task. Consistent with this view is Rigg's (1988: 206) suggestion that reading is "...the same for all subjects [...]", no matter what their reading level is or even the language in which they read.

My own comparisons of students' responses to the different questionnaire items about their reading in French and in English used in fieldwork (see Chapters 5 & 6), were intended to determine their awareness of the similarity of reading across the two languages.

There is research evidence on which the validity of holistic theories of reading is based. For illustration purposes, three reports will be briefly mentioned here: Lunzer & Gardner (1979), Harrison & Dolan (1979), and Rosenshine (1980).

Lunzer & Gardner (1979) report on a study in which they administered four separate tests to 257 English primary school children (aged 10-11), with a view inter alia to establishing whether reading comprehension is a composite of distinct subskills. The factor analyses which they performed on their data failed to help to support the hypothesis that reading comprehension can be broken into a number of distinct skills. On this evidence, the two scholars concluded that individual differences in reading comprehension

> reflect only one general aptitude: this being the pupil's ability and willingness to reflect on whatever it is he is reading.
> (Lunzer & Gardner, 1979: 64)

On their part, Harrison & Dolan (1979) hypothesised that

> If there are distinct subskills and if these are constantly in demand throughout the process of reading passages of connected discourse, it should be possible to formulate appropriate questions bearing on an extended piece of text such that each of the subskills is tapped by several questions. (pp. 15-16)

They thus devised some thirty questions for each of the eight 600-word passages they had selected, in order to cover eight putative reading skills: word meaning in isolation, word meaning in context, literal comprehension, simple string inference, multiple string inference, metaphor, salients [i.e. "the key words of the passage" (Harrison & Dolan, 1979: 16)], and evaluation. The two researchers had taken, as they say, these eight subskills only as representative of many taxonomies suggested by reading experts. Harrison & Dolan report that after several attempts to arrive at a satisfactory factor analysis of the data collected, they did not see any pattern emerge. They were thus not convinced that there were separate subskills, and they concluded their report with a word of caution in the use of classifications and taxonomies of comprehension skills.

Similarly inconclusive on the component nature of reading was Rosenshine's (1980) report. This researcher reviewed authoritative lists of comprehension skills, and factor analysis studies on the interrelatedness of reading skills. He also reviewed textbooks

and other instructional materials. One of the purposes of the review was the exploration of the issue of the distinctness of reading comprehension skills. The inquiry only lent support to the conclusion that

> It is difficult to confidently put forth any set of discrete comprehension skills.
> (Rosenshine, 1980: 552)

The question investigated in the three studies just mentioned begged for an either/or type of answer. As the evidence collected failed to support the hypothesis of component subskills, the only conclusion left was to validate the hypothesis of the unitary nature of reading.

3.2.4 The two approaches in action

If the debate on the unitary or componential nature of reading was a football match, it would end in a draw given that either side has evidence to put forward. Nonetheless, the theoretical views one adopts concerning the component or holistic nature of reading may commit one to different courses of action with regard to reading instruction. At the practical level of classroom instruction, the holistic and subskill approaches normally give rise to two ways of seeing reading instruction, two pedagogical undertakings to which Vacca (1980) refers as holistic instruction and subskill instruction.

Vacca (1980) defines holistic instruction as

> instruction centered around strategies designed to engage students actively in reading through a constant interaction with print. (p. 514)

Holistic instruction is thus based on the development of strategies [i.e. procedures carried out in order to solve a reading problem (see e.g., Olshavsky, 1977; see also Mohamed, 1992)]. And, it relies on the interaction between the learner reader and the text. Vacca (1980) adds that the main objectives of the teacher in this type of instruction are: to involve students in reading as an entity in itself and to emphasise the students' results of reading through discussion and/or writing activities. It can be noted that the pursuit of these two objectives commits the teacher to the observation of the process of reading (involving students in reading) and to the consideration of the product of reading (emphasising the results of reading).

Examples of reading activities that may be classified as holistic are sustained silent reading (see e.g., Ingham, 1982; Hafiz & Tudor, 1989; Hunt, 1980; Mc Cracken, 1971) in which students devote some of their class time to free reading, or teachers'

reading out loud selections to students. Krashen (1989: 89) refers to such holistic activities as reading exposure.

Apart from the development of strategies through reading exposure, strategies can also be developed explicitly. One model of explicit strategy development is presented by Hosenfeld et al (1981). In this model, students are first of all made aware of the strategies that they use, and then they are made to evaluate these strategies in class discussion or through questioning. Wallace (1987) refers to the questions that can be used in this instance as strategy questions, i.e. those

> which invite readers to reflect on their own typical reading behaviour or their use of particular strategies [...]. (p. 173)

The teacher's objective at this stage is to help students to recognise that some reading strategies are effective, and that some other reading strategies are not effective. Once this recognition is established, the teacher provides instruction and practice for specific reading strategies.

Holistic instruction aims to develop the strategies of reading through actual engagement with texts, at any level.

Subskill instruction, on the other hand, is

> instruction centered around a set of comprehension skills arranged in a logical sequence and taught in a prescribed manner.
> (Vacca, 1980: 514)

The skills are taught in isolation, prior to engagement with texts.

According to Vacca (idem), the teacher's main objectives in this type of instruction are: to identify the appropriate needs of students through informal diagnosis, to teach the relevant subskills [automatised, autonomous operations (see e.g., Williams & Moran, 1989)], to provide practice in those subskills and to provide for application of those subskills.

3.2.5 A choice, for the promotion of learning

I now attempt to account for the recourse to the holistic approach in the conduct of the present study.

In 3.1 above, Alderson & Urquhart were noted to have expressly pointed to the three elements involved in the reading process as the reader, the text, and the writer. It was

then observed that, as an interlocutor in the act of communication through reading, the writer is only signalled by the text. Rigg's (1988) observation in this connection that "Reading is what the student does, alone with the text" was cited to emphasise the interaction between reader and text.

Rigg's observation also allows one to distinguish the reading process from the reading instruction process. The latter may be defined as "... what the teacher does with the students to help them when they read" (Rigg, 1988: 216). A third variable, i.e. the teacher, becomes involved. Then, reading instruction breaks the tandem reader (learner) - text (reading material), and transforms it into a triangle of variables (as pointed out by Dakin, 1969: 100; see Fig.3.3 below). This may be referred to as the triangle of the promotion of learning.

Promotion of learning is indeed the prime principle that must guide educationists in their choice of approaches to instruction. However, when one thinks about what makes for success and what causes failure in school reading, a very long list of variables can be drawn up (Dakin, 1969). (Some of these variables were discussed as constraints on reading development in 2.4 above.) According to Dakin; the learner, the teacher, and the materials are the three essential variables (see Fig.3.3, below). Each of these variables has its own identity and its own kind and rate of development (Dakin, 1969: 100). But they are united in a relationship in which each reciprocally (see the arrows in Fig.3.3) interacts with the other two, making for success or causing failure in reading.

LEARNER

TEACHER   MATERIALS
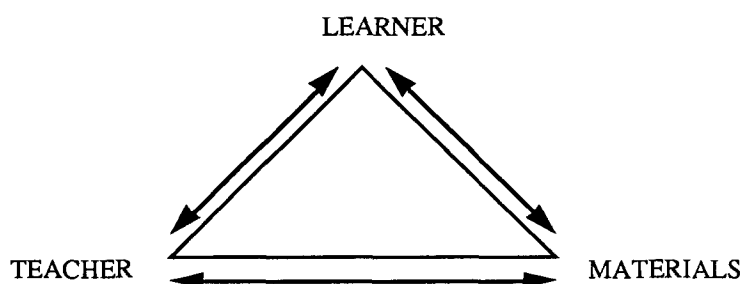
Fig.3.3: Relationship between essential variables in reading instruction, as adapted from Dakin (1969: 100)

Wallace (1987) also suggests such a three way interaction in the reading classroom, by which she means a learning context in which

> the learner uses the teacher as a resource where necessary; the teacher mediates in the reader's interaction with the text, and the text becomes the occasion for an interaction between learner and teacher. (p. 177)

Wallace's suggestion stemmed from her observation that "both text and teacher are frequently working against the learner in her acquisition of L2 reading." She then proposes a few ways of dealing with text- and teacher-induced variability in L2 learners' reading behaviour. Concerning texts for example, she recommends the use of texts containing "predictable, fully structured language", in which there is "greater redundancy", and where cohesive ties are spelled out. This proposal is tantamount to making a case for the use of such materials as graded readers. But, as Wallace (1987) acknowledges, the use of redundant texts

> may result at times in some sacrifice of 'naturalness' but will ease the L2 reader into the new medium. (p. 177)

Regarding the scaffolding which teachers can offer, Wallace (1987) suggests among other things the use of strategy questions, as noted in 3.2.4. The use of strategy questions during students' interactions with texts is also suggested by Hosenfeld et al (1981) as a way of making students become aware of the strategies that they use, as well as making them become aware of the effectiveness or not of these strategies.

The holistic and the subskill approaches to reading instruction delineated in 3.2.4 can be said to be ways of regulating the relationships between the three essential variables identified by Dakin (1969), or Wallace (1987) as involved in reading instruction. When the two approaches to reading instruction are seen as such regulators of relationships in the promotion of learning, it is difficult to choose one to the exclusion of the other, on the evidence of success or failure in reading observed among learners, as a result of one or the other approach. It has been observed for example (see Davies & Widdowson, 1974: 158) that a great majority of children (85%) learn to read whatever the teaching method, the materials, or the link between these two. Nonetheless, "as professionals, our expectation is that we can substantially aid in the process" (Knapp, 1980: 348) of learning to read. Furthermore, comparisons of the effects of the holistic and subskill approaches on students' reading achievement fail to show significant differences between the two approaches (see e.g., Vacca, 1980). Clearly, the choice of the holistic approach, as is indeed the case in the present study, may be dictated by reasons other than unequivocally attested superiority of this approach.

Firstly, with a definition of reading which emphasises the interaction between the reader and the text, the question that can be asked is which of the two approaches privileges this interaction. The holistic approach takes the upper hand as it tends to

minimise the teacher's interference with the interaction, and is basically message-oriented.

Secondly, once one posits that there is a cognitive/academic language proficiency (CALP) (see Cummins, 1979; and also Chapter 1 in this work), it follows that one should see reading as similar across languages and proficiency levels. In this way, one naturally sides with scholars for whom reading is a unitary language-based process of communication.

Thirdly, the holistic approach aligns itself to humanistic approaches to knowledge which I favoured, as shown in Chapter 1. These approaches have the advantage of taking into account what the learners already know, and they try to build on it. In this way, they allow for the "interlocking" (see Little et al, 1988) of previous knowledge and new knowledge. This is done through the learners' personal involvement and experimenting with the new knowledge, rather than through them being told. Learners' personal involvement and experimenting with new knowledge suggest that one should focus more on facilitating learning processes than on teaching specific skills (see e.g., Wallace, 1992). One facilitates the processes of learning to read by letting the learners read. Naturally, learners may need some "scaffolding" (see e.g., Bruner, 1978; Applebee & Langer, 1983), as suggested in Chapter 1.

One example of this facilitation of the processes of learning to read is, according to Wallace (1992), the approach found in the **Breakthrough to Literacy** material; which was developed for the Schools Council project on early literacy in England. Some of the activities (e.g., the use of word cards for sentence making) in this material, allow the learner

> to experiment with sentence building and the teacher is at hand to guide and adjust this exploration.
> (Wallace, 1992: 57)

Another approach, involving some pre-reading activities, is that proposed by Roe (1992) for reading strategy instruction. In this approach, the teacher selects and names a particular strategy as the topic of the lesson: e.g., we are going to learn how to make inferences during reading. Then, he tells the students how making inferences is important when unknown words are encountered in a text. Next, he provides information about the usual context clues that writers build in texts to help readers infer meaning e.g., definitions, examples, synonyms, etc.. After supplying examples from a reading selection, he asks the students to try the strategy, using their own self-

selected reading material. To ensure collaboration, the teacher finally asks the students to discuss their use of the reading strategy with their classmates.

Fourthly, the holistic approach assumes the similarity between early and advanced reading: in both instances, effective reading means selective and flexible reading (see Lunzer & Gardner, 1979; or Wallace, 1992). An approach which alerts learners to the selectiveness and flexibility of reading would appear to be better than an explicit teaching of skills prior to the learners' actual engagement with texts.

Furthermore, if skills are autonomous, as subskill theorists claim, there is the problem of identifying them all, and determining how they operate as "significant blocks" (see Calfee, 1985: 192) in the acquisition of reading ability. A hierarchy needs to be established among clearly identified skills. The day is yet to come when such a hierarchy will be established, through which one progresses to become an effective reader.

Finally, as no hierarchy has been established yet, there is the danger of focusing during reading instruction on a skill that is only marginally relevant to the activity of reading. Research has tended to show for example that even the skills (e.g., word identification, vocabulary drills) that are usually associated with reading performance, sometimes fail to correlate positively with improvement in reading achievement. Devine (1987) e.g., reports on research that aimed to study the relationship between general language proficiency and reading performance among ESL students. The study included measures of language proficiency such as grammar, vocabulary, and cloze tests, as well as oral miscues, taken longitudinally. The study reaffirmed the relationship between general language proficiency and reading proficiency. But, it clearly found that gains on word identification, vocabulary drills, and so on (i.e. discretely identified skills per se) negatively correlated with increasing reading proficiency. This obviously implies that instruction should be holistic rather than skills oriented. And, Devine (1987) therefore advises that the teacher

> should provide students with texts which allow them to encounter complete, self-contained stories and articles. (p. 84)

Indeed, Elley's (1984) suggestion in this respect is that written material serves as a source of linguistic data which promotes the growth of general language competence; and that increased language competence in turn enhances reading ability. This is the type of indirect, holistic instruction that was earlier referred to as reading exposure.

For the development of the symbiotic relationship between reading ability and general language competence that Elley seems to advise, Devine (1987, 1988) insists on the use of reading materials, which even low proficiency readers could follow. In the case of the present study, such materials that were available were the **Collins** English graded readers.

3.3 Graded readers and the development of reading ability

Acts of reading, like all literacy practices, are cultural artifacts that are learned within given social contexts (see Chapter 1). That is, one learns to read within a community that is literate. Within such a community, individuals may be or may have been observed to become readers, on their own. Holistic reading proponents have capitalised on this observation to advise for example that reading should not be taught at all (see e.g., Smith, 1978b). One implication of the observation has been that once learners are surrounded with written materials, they will be able to become readers by themselves. Let them read, they will learn to read; this seems to be the motto. It is a way of engaging the students' responsibility for learning by doing.

The materials that have been widely used in this way with non-native learners of English are graded readers. Graded readers are very widely used, and their popularity and value are very widely attested (Davies & Widdowson, 1974: 176). As their name implies, these materials have been originally written, or re-written from existing books, to careful language specifications in order to suit particular levels of learners (Hedge, 1985). The materials are made accessible to the level of competence of these hypothesised groups of learners through the process of simplification, which involves control of the language in terms of lexis, structure and flow of information (see Bamford, 1984).

In Chapter 1, I regarded this control of text difficulty as some kind of instructional "scaffolding" involving platforms from which learners can launch communication, and keep it going. The levels at which graded readers are written can be considered as the different platforms from which communication through reading can be initiated. As Bamford (1984: 218) observes

> The grading ostensibly ensures that learners can read with relative fluency without being overwhelmed by unfamiliar structure and vocabulary.

The **Collins English Library** e.g., uses six levels from 1 to 6 at 300, 600, 1000, 1500, 2000, and 2500 headwords; and less than 20 items of outside vocabulary within any given level.

The inclusion of graded readers in the present study was however exploratory. Graded readers are not commonly used teaching / learning materials in Zaire, even for the development of French, the medium of instruction and official language of the country. Nonetheless, it can be said here that the inclusion of English graded readers as materials in the present study was justified by their known purpose, viz. to practise and develop reading comprehension (see e.g., Davies & Widdowson, 1974) while reading for enjoyment.

The development of graded readers, as pedagogical devices, is associated with the name of Michael West, who wrote, almost half a century ago now, that

> Few things are more encouraging to a child who knows some (say) 1,500 words of English than to pick up a book written within that vocabulary and find that he is actually able to read it and enjoy a story which is (at least) an enthralling approximation of the original.
> (West, 1950: 48)

According to Hedge (1985), this encouraging experience helps to develop reading ability in foreign language learners in four different ways: through the development of the learners' knowledge of the language, the development of their knowledge of language use, the development of their reading strategies, and the development of their attitude to reading.

3.3.1 Development of language knowledge

Graded readers contribute, it is argued, to the development of the learners' systemic knowledge at the levels of vocabulary, structure, and textual organisation. Concerning the knowledge of vocabulary, students need to master a progressively expanding vocabulary as their exposure to the language increases. Graded readers aim to widen this exposure beyond the classroom textbook. In this respect, one advantage of the graded readers can be gathered from the observation made by West (1950) that the graded reader

> gives extra practice in reading; it reviews and fixes the vocabulary already learned, it 'stretches' that vocabulary so the learner is enabled to give a greater width of meaning to the words already learned, [...]
> (p. 48)

Reinforcement of vocabulary learning, as this observation suggests, is done thanks to the frequent use of already introduced vocabulary items, in different contexts. For the purpose of attending to this reinforcement of vocabulary learning, the introduction of new words tends to be controlled in graded readers. The **Collins English Library** e.g., rarely has as many as 12 new words at any level. And, these are introduced in contexts that make their meanings as clear as possible, at a frequency of only one new word in every 10 pages or so.

Through this control of vocabulary, graded readers try to provide students with an enjoyable reading experience, that is not hampered by a constant need to stop for unfamiliar words. Consolidation of the learning of structures is also likely to be achieved thanks to the same principles of frequency of use in different textual contexts and gradual introduction of anything new.

In addition to the development of the knowledge of vocabulary and structure, graded readers give students the opportunity to learn how words and sentences combine to form paragraphs, and how these in turn follow one another to develop into a story, a biography, or a technical description (Hedge, 1985: 25). The different possibilities of text development are better experienced through a variety of text types, likely to be provided as graded readers. In this way, for example, students can gradually build up an understanding of how linking words are used to develop ideas, give examples, express cause and effect, add information, qualify a statement, contrast things, and so on (Hedge, 1985: 25).

3.3.2 Development of knowledge of language use

Grammar and vocabulary are usually presented, during language classes, as discrete elements of language, examples of what Widdowson (1978) refers to as instances of language usage. However, it is common knowledge that writers do not use words and sentences to illustrate usage. They use words and sentences, as Hedge (1985) notes, to express ideas, opinions, and information; they use language to communicate facts and feelings.

As graded readers present self-contained texts, they can help students to see how grammar and vocabulary actually work in communication. They may show for example how written communication differs from oral communication: in written communication, a separate sentence may be used as an emphasising device, where oral communication uses stress and intonation. Familiarity with such devices is gained through exposure to and interaction with reading materials.

In addition, as Hedge (1985) observes, graded readers help to practise dialogues and drills of the course book as structures contextualised in a functional framework. Hedge gives the example of "going to", which is traditionally presented as a kind of future tense, probably contrasted with "will". "Going to" can however be used to express different functions: stating an intention, making a promise, protesting, giving information, insisting. Graded readers can show contextualised instances of the use of "going to" in the expression of these different functions. Thus, students encountering language structures in a variety of contexts of use will not only reinforce their knowledge of language structure, but they will also gain a growing understanding of language use (Hedge, 1985: 31).

3.3.3 Development of reading strategies

Most foreign language learners can already read in one or more other languages that they know. For example, the school history of the students in the present study suggests that they could read in French. In this connection, Cummins' (1979) interdependence hypothesis suggests that foreign language learners can apply the strategies acquired in previous literacy events involving reading, while reading in English. So, as Hedge (1985: 33) says,

> The teacher's task is to help students to transfer reading ability from one language to another by encouraging good reading strategies for successful reading.

This can be done through encouraging students to read in the target language. Allowing students to use target language graded readers implies that the teacher recognises the fact that they can read, and that he will let them read without interfering. In this way, as Rigg (1988) observes, the students will develop and use reading strategies, which can be developed only through reading itself. And, as Hedge (1985) says, in addition to teaching students specific ways of dealing with different written materials, actual reading of different types of materials in the target language will activate the transfer of reading strategies from one language to another.

Moreover, graded readers present an experience from which the foreign language learner can build confidence and independence in reading. For example, the careful introduction of words, the control of structure difficulty, and flow of information can allow the learners to develop the strategies of guessing word meanings from contexts, as graded readers try to increase the learners' confidence by rewarding their attempts

to understand. As their attempts to understand are rewarded, the learners may develop lifelong favourable attitudes to reading.

3.3.4 Development of attitude to reading

The general development of school children includes their understanding of the role and value of books in human life. People generally read for pleasure or for information. As a curricular activity, the use of graded readers can in principle contribute to making students understand the importance of books, as it allows the students to acquire information or to experience pleasure from books. But, the extent of this contribution will depend on the quality of the text: ideally, the text should not make too many demands on the students; it should be within the framework of their existing knowledge (see e.g, Cook, 1989: 73). As they use the graded readers, the students will hopefully develop attitudes that will prove to be worthwhile in dealing with the requirements of higher education or life in general.

Indeed, in this connection, my conviction is like that expressed by Mwaka (1992), who also studied the development of reading ability in EFL among Zairean secondary school students. Zairean general secondary education streams, as was said in Chapter 2, prepare students for entry into higher education. And in all first years of higher education, students have English classes during which they are usually expected to deal with written materials. So, in order for these students to perform satisfactorily in English at higher education level, training must start at secondary education level. Mwaka (1992) experimented such a training with brainstorming techniques and the use of diagrams. The present study relied on reading exposure through the use of graded readers.

There are other studies in which graded readers have been used as experimental tools for the development of reading ability. In 3.3.5 below, I present some illustrations of the success of graded readers as pedagogical devices.

3.3.5 Some exemplars

> The reading situation must be turned into a search of ideas. The search should be done silently.
> (Hunt, 1970: 150)

The present study relied on reading exposure as an approach to reading development. Indeed, reading exposure is thought to have a great importance in language acquisition in general, as Elley (1984) or Krashen (1989: 90) suggest. The aspect of

reading exposure experimented in this study, as is pointed out in Chapter 4, is that known in the literature as sustained silent reading.

In his outline of the practice of sustained silent reading, Mc Cracken (1971) states six rules that the participants in the event (i.e. teacher and students) must abide by. The first rule stipulates that each student must read silently. This implies that the teacher recognises that each student can read. Therefore, as a second rule, the teacher supplies a wide range of reading materials for students to choose from. Each student selects his own reading material. If necessary, the teacher can help students in their choices. The third rule of the practice of sustained silent reading requires that the teacher should set the example of an adult seen to read a book. The teacher must then also read silently; he should not allow his reading to be interrupted. The fourth rule of sustained silent reading requires the use of a timer to monitor the sustaining power of students e.g., 10' of sustained silent reading on the first day of the implementation of the programme, 20' on the following day, and so on. The fifth rule reads: "There are absolutely no reports or records of any kind." However, Mc Cracken (1971) suggests that such activities as book discussion, written reports, and record keeping can be introduced later, when sustained silent reading has become a habit among students. As a last rule, Mc Cracken suggests that one should start the practice of sustained silent reading with "whole classes or larger groups of students heterogeneously grouped." Students should not be grouped according to their reading proficiency levels or on the basis of the titles of the books that they are going to read.

As a literacy event, the practice of sustained silent reading privileges the interaction between each individual reader and his particular reading material. This individualisation of experiences in the classroom is an application of the basic principle of humanistic approaches to knowledge that I discussed in Chapter 1. Apart from this basic principle, there may be variations in the application of some of the rules stated by Mc Cracken (1971). For example, pre-reading activities can be introduced before the actual period of sustained silent reading. Here are some illustrative studies.

Elley & Mangubhai (1983) conducted a study with a sample of 380 Fijian pupils, to examine the effects of story reading in ESL learning. The pupils were "flooded" with high-interest story books, which they read individually. Posttest results, after eight months of 20-30' sessions of reading every day, showed that the pupils had made progress in reading and listening comprehension, at twice the normal rate. For the investigators, these results confirmed "the hypothesis that high-interest story reading has an important role to play in second language learning".

More recently, Hafiz & Tudor (1989) completed a three-month extensive reading programme, involving some 36 ESL learners in the U.K.. The programme, inspired by Krashen's input hypothesis as the two researchers affirm, was designed to investigate whether extensive reading for pleasure could effect an improvement in language skills, with particular reference to reading and writing. The subjects were provided with a selection of graded readers, and were allowed to choose any reader they wanted to read during the daily hour of treatment. The results showed a marked improvement in the performance of the experimental subjects, especially in terms of the writing skills. The two writers reported the success of yet another similar study conducted in Pakistan (Hafiz & Tudor, 1990).

In Pakistan, Hafiz & Tudor experimented an extensive reading programme, using graded readers with a group of 25 ESL learners. This experimental group received six 40' sessions of extensive reading each week in 23 weeks. The subjects were allowed to take the books home if they wished. They were also provided with a number of dictionaries during the reading sessions. In terms of language development, no other work was required of the subjects apart from the narration of the story of the book that they had read. The results of the study showed significant post-treatment gains for the experimental subjects in "writing readiness, vocabulary base and accuracy of expression". These results were not discussed in terms of the development of reading per se. But the improvement noticed by the two researchers, e.g., an expanded vocabulary base, suggests that there was an improvement in reading as well.

I would like to observe here that as a literacy event, the narration of the story that one has read as practised in Hafiz & Tudor (1990) bears some resemblance to the practice of creating related oral texts from newspaper headlines by Zaireans, that I mentioned in Chapter 1. And both are literacy practices of a communal nature. There is a similar practice in Zairean schools, which I mentioned in 2.4 above.

Although inspired by Elley & Manghubai (1983), and the two Hafiz & Tudor (1989, 1990) studies, my own study reported here was not an exact copy of these studies. Like the Elley & Mangubhai study, or the Hafiz & Tudor (1990) study, the present study took place within the subjects' schools, during normal class time. Unlike the two Hafiz & Tudor studies, the present study did not offer 5/6 sessions of sustained silent reading per week; it offered only one class hour session per week. Concerning the frequency of the practice of sustained silent reading, my own study was restricted by the official time allocation for reading in EFL: it could not exceed 25% of the total EFL tuition time (see Chapter 2).

My study also differed from the three studies just mentioned in that it took place in the least input-rich environment as to exposure to English; and involved, as indicated in Chapter 4, older subjects (aged 15-21) than theirs (aged 10-15).

It may be noted here that the difference of input in the learning environment is a relevant factor to the development of reading ability in one's target language. This is one of the interpretations that Carrell (1991) gives of the findings of her study of L1 and L2/FL reading comprehension. In that study, Carrell's subjects were adult native speakers of Spanish and English, who were FL or L2 learners of the other language. The Spanish L1 subjects were L2 learners of English in the U.S. (an input-rich environment); wheras the English L1 learners were FL learners of Spanish in the U.S. (a relatively input-poor environment). The subjects were at different proficiency levels in their L2/FL. The results of the study showed that both L2/FL proficiency and L1 reading ability are statistically significant factors contributing to L2/FL reading ability. In relation to the quality of the learning environment, Carrell (1991) observes that the Spanish L1 subjects (who were in an input-rich L2 environment) performed better on the English L2 texts than the English L1 subjects (who were in a relatively input-poor FL environment) performed on the Spanish FL texts. Carrell then suggests that the difference between the environments of the two groups of learners may account for the difference in the relative importance of L2/FL proficiency in the subjects' performance.

I now wish to put forward a few words of caution concerning the adoption of the holistic approach to reading instruction.

3.4 A few words of caution

The adoption of the holistic approach to reading translates a commitment to the idea that reading is an act of communication. One may need to recognise that as such, reading is a complex whole, which may not be adequately dealt with in its entirety inside the classroom at any given time. A holistic instruction programme may then not be easy to design and implement.

It may also need to be stressed that instructional reading, i.e. reading as school work, is not real-life reading. It is not a natural phenomenon in the sense that it is not an activity in which human beings engage as part of their lives. It is a construct, i.e. a measure of skill attainment. As different constructs may adequately represent reading ability at different levels, the real thing may never be reached in the artificial conditions of the classroom.

Supposing for example that sustained silent reading, a holistic instruction strategy, may be expected to be successful with a given class of students, there is a number of factors likely to constrain reading development that should be taken into account. First of all, because of the absence of focus, everything seems to be left to chance. Students are given reading materials, and those among them who will want to read will read. Given the least possible intervention expected of the teacher, those students who will not want to read will not read. Limited by his possibility of intervention, the teacher will find himself in a dilemma as to how to respond to the various ways in which the learners may differ. He may not be able to make sure for example whether Student A whose book is open at page x is really reading for comprehension or just pretending to read.

Secondly, if students are left to their own devices, the removal of anxiety, necessary in order to boost learning, may not occur for those who are still at lower levels of reading proficiency. Such an event may lead to what Johnston & Winograd (1985) refer to as "passive failure". There is passive failure when the learner fails to be an active participant in his learning, he fails "to use efficient and organized strategies to perform school tasks" (Johnston & Winograd, 1985: 281). He becomes helpless and stops seeing himself as an active participant in classroom reading activities.

This is the type of occurrence likely to be observed among EFL learners who, as a class, are given extensive texts to read silently on their own. Once some among them notice that they cannot respond to the challenge of the reading materials, because of their limited experience with EFL, they may passively accept their failure and stop learning.

The foregoing remarks also point to a discriminatory feature of the holistic approach, as it may be seen at work in indirect forms of reading instruction. Given for example the reciprocal relationship that exists between vocabulary growth and volume of reading experience, it may be noticed that a person who is well versed in reading will gain more from more reading than another person who is not so well versed in reading. Naturally, everything will depend on the text and the context of reading. But, in general, it can be said that the holistic approach tends to "discriminate" against poor readers. As Stanovich (1986: 381) relevantly observes,

> The very children who are reading well and have good vocabularies will read more, learn more meanings, and hence read even better. Children with inadequate vocabularies [...] read less and as a result have slower development of vocabulary knowledge, which inhibits further growth in reading ability.

These discriminatory effects have been dubbed by Walberg (quoted in Stanovich, 1986) as "Matthew effects" after the Gospel according to Matthew:

> For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.(XXV: 29) (cited in Stanovich: idem).

Such "Matthew effects" may also be inferred from Evans' (1985) findings on comparing the L1 reading achievements of some primary-level language-based and skill-based classrooms, which similarly encouraged reading for meaning. It should be noted that this Evans study was not primarily designed to prove or disprove the superiority of either method of reading instruction. It purported to examine among other things whether the different methods contributed to different patterns of cognitive skills and if so, why. What is interesting concerning the issue of the development of reading ability is what Evans found on the correlation between independent silent reading and reading scores. Independent silent reading was found to be generally uncorrelated or even negatively correlated with achievement, except in the most advanced language-based classrooms.

Concerning second or foreign language learners, such observations are reminiscent of Clarke's (1980) "short circuit" hypothesis, or Cummins' (1979) threshold hypothesis. Clearly, practice or application in reading, e.g., as sustained silent reading, may tend to profit those students who have already developed the ability more than those who have not.

The crucial thing then seems to be the identification of the threshold from which the students may start. Researchers who have tried to identify this threshold (see e.g., Perkins et al, 1989) suggest that it is "the highest proficiency level" in one's target language. (There is some similarity with Evans' (1985) "most advanced language-based classrooms".) But, as we have seen in 3.2.5, Devine (1987) and Elley (1984) encourage the L2/FL teacher to allow even the low proficiency learners to engage with written target language material. The role of the teacher is crucial in this case for the provision of the necessary "instructional scaffolding" (Applebee & Langer, 1983) involving e.g., strategy instruction (see e.g., Roe, 1992) or appropriate vocabulary and conceptual background knowledge (see e.g., Langer, 1982).

3.5 Reading in L1 and reading in FL: strategy use and knowledge, and comprehension

Effective reading involves selectivity and ability (or willingness) to reflect on what one is reading (see e.g., Lunzer & Gardner, 1979; Wallace, 1992). The reader undertakes certain actions during his interaction with written materials, actions which

are determined by his purpose for reading, the type of text involved, and the context of reading. Actions employed in this way for the purpose of constructing meaning from texts have been referred to as reading strategies (see e.g., Hosenfeld et al, 1981; Kletzien, 1991). These are procedures which, according to Olshavsky (1977), are carried out in order to solve reading problems, as noted earlier in 3.2.4.

The problem-solving, reflective dimension of reading is illustrated in Hosenfeld et al's (1981) example of how one may go about finding the sum (55) of the first ten numbers of the decimal system: 1 to 10. One approach, which "is very inefficient", is to add all the terms in a row: $1+2+3+4+5+6+7+8+9+10$. Another approach is to look at the context of the problem. The first 10 counting numbers presented in a row bear relationships to each other such that one can "have 11 five times or $5\times11=55$", a way of getting "the answer efficiently without calculating at all" (Hosenfeld et al, 1981: 415).

So it is for reading: some of the strategies that readers can use are efficient, some are not. The teacher needs to know what strategies are efficient so as to encourage them in his students' reading behaviour, and to know what strategies are not efficient in order to discourage their use.

The following accounts attempt to answer a number of questions concerning strategy use, and comprehension in relation to reading in different languages: What are the strategies that readers use? Are they different across languages? Are there patterns of strategy use associated with the fact that the reader is a L1 reader or a FL reader? Are there different comprehension levels resulting from this status? etc..

3.5.1 Strategy use and knowledge

On the evidence that human beings are made of the same materials, one would expect the process of reading (a mode of language use) to be essentially the same across different languages. To my understanding, uses of different languages are in fact idiosyncratic manifestations of the same human capacity for language. For the purposes of this work, mastery of one's L1 and groping towards the mastery of one's additional target language are also manifestations of the same human capacity for language. If this is accepted, the universality of the reading process can be assumed, with Goodman (1973) e.g., when he says that there are basic strategies that all readers will use, no matter how the writing system used is related to the ideas and concepts expressed in a text.

The assumption of the universality of the reading process, upheld by Goodman, is contradicted by subskill theorists' views. For Brown & Haynes (1985) or Carr & Levy (1990) e.g., there are language-specific abilities involved in reading. According to Brown & Haynes (1985), the second language reader's L1 literacy background may influence reading in the L2. That is, specific things tend to be done by people with different writing system backgrounds in their acquisition of L2 literacy: e.g., the Vai literates tend to recode from symbol to pronunciation (Scribner & Cole, 1981), Japanese learners of English have some superiority over Spanish and Arabic learners of English at holistic visual processing (Brown & Haynes, 1985), etc.. As Haynes & Carr (1990: 378) comment

> comparisons of readers from different writing system backgrounds suggest that practice with a given writing system develops distinct sorts of skills.

There may in fact be cases e.g., resulting from the use of different graphological principles, which apparently contradict Goodman's (1973) hypothesis of the universality of reading strategies. Fortunately, in his elaboration of the hypothesis, Goodman (idem: 27) provides room for cases of language specificity:

> Some special reading strategies may result from particular characteristics of the grammatical system.

In general however, readers draw on a similar repertoire of strategies, which Goodman enumerates as: sampling, predicting, testing and confirming hypotheses, and anticipations on the basis of the text.

Researchers sometimes refer to the same phenomena using different names. Concerning reading in L1 for example, Kletzien's (1991) work with English L1 readers, who were given reading passages adapted to their proficiency levels, revealed that L1 readers may focus on key vocabulary, reread, make inferences, use previous experiences in constructing responses, rely on sentence and passage structure, etc.. In respect of the similarity of strategies used by readers, Kletzien's study identified for example the following strategies: rereading preceding text, reading subsequent text, recognising structure, using prior knowledge, using main idea, making inferences, and focusing on vocabulary; and showed that readers do not differ in the knowledge of strategies that can be used.

I would like to note here the disticntion that reading strategy researchers (e.g., Barnett, 1988; Block, 1986; Carrell, 1989; Kletzien, 1991; etc.) establish between strategy knowledge, strategy use, and perceived strategy use.

Kletzien (1991) e.g., defines strategy knowledge as

> knowledge about reading and reading strategies [which] does not change according to the situation. (p. 69)

The idea that strategy knowledge does not change according to reading situations is relevant to my concerns about transfer in reading ability. It relates to the stability and transferability of CALP, as suggested in Carson & Kuehn (1992).

Nonetheless, strategy knowledge differs from strategy use (Kletzien, 1991: 70), i.e. the actual use of given reading strategies in a specific reading situation with particular texts. The specificity of reading situations, it can be said, may impose particular uses of strategies, as in cases that Goodman (1973, cited above) acknowledged.

Perceived strategy use (Barnett, 1988) refers to the reader's verbalisation of his use of reading strategies (see also Carrell, 1989). Some of the questionnaire items that I used in this study on the use of reading strategies can in fact be said to enquire into the students' perceived strategy use.

These three notions (viz. strategy knowledge, strategy use, and perceived strategy use) are different, but they bear some relationships. Mohamed (1992: 196-197) e.g., notes four possible outcomes in the interaction between strategy knowledge and strategy use: the reader showing explicit knowledge of a given reading strategy and using it, the reader not showing explicit knowledge of a given strategy and not using it either, the reader not showing explicit knowledge of a strategy but using it, and the reader showing explicit knowledge of a given strategy but not using it. Two of these outcomes are about a reader who is unable to describe his strategy use, i.e. a reader who fails to show evidence of perceived strategy use.

Moreover, there seems to be an interaction between perceived strategy use and actual strategy use such that an increase in the former correlates with an increase in the latter (see Barnett, 1988; Carrell, 1989). Barnett (1988) e.g., has this to say concerning the use of context in reading:

> students who think they use those strategies considered most productive actually do read through context better and understand more than those who do not think they use such strategies.
> (Barnett, 1988: 156)

Even if people may have a similar knowledge of which strategies to use and the situations in which to use them, it has been established that they differ as readers in the regulation and use of these strategies: there are thus good and less skilled (or poor) readers on this dimension, as usually distinguished by high or low reading proficiency scores.

In effect, research reports in this sense show that there are things that all good readers do, just as there are things that all poor readers do. Coady (1979: 6), for instance, notes that all good readers tend to recover quickly from miscues, to rely strongly on the redundant features of the text by using their background knowledge, to approach texts with expectancies that will be revised or confirmed during the process of reading, etc.. Less skilled readers, on the other hand, either recover very slowly or do not recover at all. In addition, as they do not use their background knowledge, they tend to read word by word, heavily relying on direct visual input. Wallace's (1988) work has shown that L2 readers especially rely on direct visual input in this way. Similarly, it can be hypothesised that when it comes to reading in English the Zairean learners of English will take several steps down the skill ladder, because they lack the necessary background knowledge of English, and also because of the effect of usual classroom methods discussed earlier.

Hosenfeld's work is also relevant here. Hosenfeld (et al, 1981; 1984) tried to determine the strategies that successful readers use to solve problems of understanding foreign language texts, using thinking aloud and introspective/ retrospective techniques. Students were asked to perform reading tasks and to verbalise their thought processes, or to reflect upon their mental operations as they performed reading tasks or after they had completed them.

Hosenfeld (1984) found that successful readers (i.e. high scorers on a test of reading proficiency) tended to:

> keep the meaning of the passage in mind, read in broad phrases, skip inessential words, guess from context the meaning of unknown words, and have a good self-concept as readers. By contrast, low scorers (called unsuccessful readers) tended to: lose the meaning of sentences as soon as they decoded them, read word-by-word or in short phrases, rarely skip words, turn to the glossary for the meaning of new words, and have a poor self-concept as readers. (p.233)

Successful readers also tended to:

> identify the grammatical category of words; demonstrate sensitivity to a different word order in the foreign language; examine illustrations;

read the title and make inferences from it; use the glossary as a last resort; continue if unsuccessful at decoding a word or a phrase; use their knowledge of the world; [...] (idem).

In Chapter 5, I shall refer to some of the actions that may be associated with successful, effective reading as positive reading strategies, that would be contrasted with negative reading strategies resorted to by less skilled readers.

Differences between good and poor reading as may be inferred from the foregoing accounts might better be represented, as a matter of degree along a continuum in the use of reading strategies. The performances of subjects using their L1, would be in this way slotted in different positions along a continuum (see e.g., MacLean & Chapman, 1989).

One would similarly expect a subject using his additional target language proficiently, to occupy a relatively similar position on the continuum, that is, for example the case that a good L1 reader of English would also be a good L2/FL reader of French. Such a stand assumes the similarity of the reading process across different languages (see Goodman, 1973). This assumption lay behind the reported belief of Latin American teachers that their students could not read adequately in English, because they could not read adequately in their native language in the first place (Alderson, 1984: 2).

> If only, [English L2/FL students] learned to read 'properly' in their first language, the problems of reading in English would be vastly reduced. (Alderson, 1984: 2)

The Latin American teachers mentioned by Alderson expected their good L1 readers to be also good L2/FL learner readers. Now, if good L1 readers are also good L2/FL readers, and poor L1 readers are also poor L2/FL readers [as indeed Perkins et al's (1989) study showed], then the problem only lies with reading. The reading performance of good L1 readers who are also good L2/FL readers would tend to give evidence that there is no difference between reading in L1 and reading in L2/FL. Everything in this case, seems to be a matter of acquisition and transfer of reading ability. Once the strategies have been acquired, they can be used on reading material in the other language; or at least, it can be assumed that an effective reader will be aware of strategies that can be used.

In Chapter 1, evidence was presented in support of the principle of transfer, enunciated by Cummins (1979, 1984), a principle which is apparently based on the assumption that

one does not relearn to read every time a new language is learned.
(Cummins & Swain, 1986: 103)

If one accepts that reading ability can transfer from language to language, one presupposes the similarity of reading in L1 and reading in L2/FL. The question that can be asked now is whether learner readers of a foreign language know that the strategies they use for reading in their first language are similar to the strategies that they may need to use while reading in their target language. One of the concerns of the present study was to find an answer to this question concerning Zairean learners of English as a foreign language. Relevant elements of response on this issue are put forward in Chapters 5 & 6 of this work.

I now turn to the comprehension of reading materials.

3.5.2 Comprehension

The level of reading comprehension is perhaps the only level, at which L1 readers and L2/FL readers drastically differ. As Alderson (1984: 1) observes:

> Very frequently students reading in a foreign language seem to read
> with less understanding than one might expect them to have, ...

There is first the problem of linguistic access. It is more crucial at the level of comprehension, if only because comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading as an act of communication. Usual FL reading classes serve the purposes of language teaching and learning. Thus, as the learners are still building their competence, they cannot justifiably be expected to understand reading material, of which the language is particularly remote from their aural/oral competence (see e.g., Wallace, 1988: 87). They cannot be expected to bring a literally non existing asset (that is, their developing "interlanguage"), to bear upon reading tasks in the L2/FL. An attempt to solve this problem of linguistic access in general language course settings has been the development of graded readers. It may be recalled that the purpose of graded readers is to practice reading comprehension and develop reading fluency, by offering linguistically accessible material.

Even where foreign language competence has developed adequately, there is still another level likely to be a source of difference, between L1 reading and L2/FL reading as to comprehension. This concerns the cultural schemata to be activated, as background knowledge, during the process of reading. In spite of language competence, failure to activate a proper schema may result in the misunderstanding of

a passage. Even highly proficient L2/FL users may find it difficult to read some L2/FL texts. Intrigued by this fact, Steffenson et al conducted a cross-cultural study among American and Indian subjects. They found that reading comprehension is a function of cultural background knowledge, and concluded:

> If readers possess the schemata assumed by the writer, they understand what is stated and effortlessly make the inferences intended. If they do not, they distort meaning as they attempt to accommodate even explicitly stated propositions to their own pre-existing knowledge structures.
> (Steffenson & Joag-Dev, 1984)

As Wallace (1988: 33) suggests, readers need to share with writers "a knowledge of behaviours and attitudes [...] a cultural competence." This also relates to what Saville-Troike (1979) calls sociocultural meaning, which is commonly a source of comprehension differences between L1 and FL reading. Some linguistic expressions e.g., - the patience of Job, Achilles' heel, to kick the bucket, to keep tabs on, etc.-, that are culture-specific, may not be easy for EFL readers to interpret. Hedge (1985) also makes this point about the difficulties in the interpretation of particular sociocultural meanings.

In the current section, I purported to show that there is no difference between L1 and L2/FL reading, as to the effective readers' knowledge (or at least, the awareness) of the strategies that can be used. The reading process is basically the same across languages, despite the minor variations one may notice here and there, in relation to adaptation to new script or to language-specific features. Should these variations be considered as differences, they are differences in degree rather than in kind. Actual use of reading strategies in reading situations may possibly not match one's knowledge of usable reading strategies. However, there may be real differences between reading in L1 and reading in L2/FL at the level of text comprehension. Among the factors that will certainly influence comprehension, linguistic access and cultural background knowledge need to be stressed.

3.6 A final word

The definition of reading that is put forward in this chapter stresses the interaction between the learner reader and the text. It views the reader as doing a number of things, i.e. as using reading strategies in his search for meaning. This view requires that the teacher take on a role that is different from the role of transmitter of knowledge in literacy events involving students' reading. It requires that students be allowed to develop reading strategies in their actual encounters with reading materials

(e.g., graded readers). Such a form of pedagogical intervention can activate the transfer of reading strategies from one language to the other, as well as help to reduce constraints on reading development.

At this juncture, it can be observed that the approach adopted in the present study for the development of reading (i.e. the use of graded readers for independent silent reading) as well as for the measurement of reading [cloze, (see Chapter 4)] is inconsistent with the model of reading which can be assumed to be enforced in Zairean classrooms.

The question that can be raised now concerns whether the kind of reading that I have argued for can be successful with Zairean EFL learners. Chapter 4 sets out to explain how data were collected in fieldwork, that would help to explore the ideas expressed so far on the transfer and development of reading ability.

4 RATIONALE AND CONDUCT OF THE EMPIRICAL WORK

This chapter presents first of all the problem and hypotheses that the present study sought to address. Then, the subjects on whom the empirical work was conducted will be presented, together with the context in which the study took place. The study instruments, of which there were two types (measurement, and treatment instruments), will be the object of the third section of this chapter. This will be followed by the fourth section, introducing the measurement and treatment procedures that were used during the empirical work. Finally, the design synopsis will be put forward.

4.1 Problem and hypotheses

The present study relates to questions of the promotion of reading ability, and the transfer of this ability from language to language. The languages involved are French and English, as encountered in the Zairean education system.

I noted in Chapter 2 that in Zairean secondary schools there is a curricular provision for reading in EFL to be dealt with. However, circumstances (e.g., the lack of reading materials) do not usually positively contribute to the materialisation of wishes.

Supposing that reading materials were available, the fact that reading in EFL is neglected can be explained along the following lines, if the Zairean educational system assumes the similarity of reading across languages. Given the age at which Zairean EFL learners start taking EFL tuition, they may have already acquired the intellectual tools necessary for dealing with reading passages within their language resources, and comprehending them. With such an assumption, classes geared toward a direct development of reading strategies in EFL would be judged unnecessary. In support of such a stance, one can invoke Cummins' (1984) "common underlying proficiency", or CALP (Cummins, 1979) which I discussed in Chapter 1. This proficiency was hypothesised among others to make possible the transfer of cognitive/academic or literacy skills (e.g., reading strategies) across languages.

Commonplace occurrences can be found which justify this hypothesis. For example, in the Zairean context, reading is normally developed at school in French, which is the learners' second or third language in most cases, and can also be considered their language of literacy. It is a language of literacy in contrast to Zairean languages.

These are usually given a low profile at school, as was indicated in Chapter 2. On account of their "limited" functional utility as far as communication through writing is concerned, these languages were referred to as languages of orality. But, it may be noticed that the ability to read developed in French, can also be used for reading in one or the other of these languages of orality by competent readers of French, who had not been introduced to literacy in the Zairean languages, or who do not usually participate in literacy events involving Zairean languages. That is, proficiency in L1 combines with reading competence in L2 to enable the language user to read L1 materials.

This impressionistic judgement, readily pointing in the direction of the transfer of reading ability from L2 to L1, is to some degree supported by research findings, e.g., cases of like transfer from L2 to L1 are reported in the literature by Levine & Reves (1985). Similarly, cases of transfer from L1 to L2 are documented (e.g., Carrell, 1991; Field, 1985; Perkins et al, 1989; Rosier & Farella, 1976; etc.).

The tendency can be generalised: A skill learnt at school can be properly used in school or out-of-school tasks to which that skill is relevant. Then, if it is the case that L1 proficiency can combine with L2 reading competence to yield L1 reading competence; it may also be possible that L2 reading competence combine with EFL proficiency to yield EFL reading competence. A situation similar to this one was examined in Carrell's (1991) study, the data of which tended to show that FL or L2 reading is a function of both L1 reading ability and FL or L2 proficiency.

In the Zairean situation, it may then be possible for EFL reading competence to combine with L1 or L2 proficiency to yield L1 or L2 reading competence. Evidently, the languages concerned use similar principles of sound symbolisation, and share most of their graphic signs.

In any case, the reading ability acquired needs to be put to use; otherwise it can atrophy. But, putting one's reading ability to use may not be easy in countries of recently established literacy tradition, like Zaire, where there is a scarcity of reading materials. Learners may not be able to find anything to read in the languages that they know or are learning. Such a situation may cause one to lose one's good reading habits or it may cause one to fail to learn any good reading habits. This implies that learners should be given opportunities to read, which action may help to sustain the learners' reading habits or enable them to acquire efficient reading ability.

As is commonly accepted, one of the tasks of an educational system is to ensure that learners acquire efficient reading ability, be it in their first language or in any subsequently acquired language, so long as that language is perceived to be important. In this way, the educational system serves one of its educational purposes, viz. to equip learners to become able to live as independent individuals at the intellectual level, capable of learning by themselves in literacy events. The educational system needs to ensure that the learners' reading ability is properly exercised, e.g., by giving them opportunities to read on their own. Independent use of one's reading ability is, I believe, a way of using language as an instrument of thought, i.e. a way of exercising one's "epistemic level of literacy" (see Wells, 1991). The reading programme which I experimented in my empirical work contributed to this educational aim: a few Zairean secondary school students were provided with opportunities to read EFL materials, unaided by their teachers of English.

The empirical work as such aimed to help to find answers to questions pertaining to students' perception of the similarity or not between reading in French and reading in English, to the transfer of reading strategies, and to the development of reading ability through reading in EFL. The exact formulation of the relevant research questions takes into account some of the views held in the literature about reading, that were alluded to in Chapters 1 and 3. It also takes into account the possibility that English may share the same characteristics with French in the collective consciousness of Zaireans as it is, like French, introduced at school, and through books (see Chapter 2, on my reference to French as a language of literacy, and the prevailing language teaching methodology in Zaire).

It may then be said that, given the sociolinguistic situation of Zaire and the literacy tradition within which Zairean secondary school learners are exposed to EFL, they may tend to have similar perceptions about reading in English and reading in French; thus giving indications that reading strategies developed in French are also used when dealing with written materials in English. If this is true, then such students will tend to perform equally well or equally badly at comparable reading tasks in French, and in English. In addition, given that reading strategies can be transferred from English to French, improved reading performance in EFL for such students, as may be achieved through the literacy practice of sustained silent reading, will tend to be associated with improved reading performance in French. The following research questions, which the present study sought to address, derived from the foregoing ideas:

- Do Zairean 5th form students have similar perceptions about reading in English and reading in French?

- How does their reading performance in French correlate with their reading performance in English?

- Can such students, who are given opportunities of reading EFL materials and who actually read for enjoyment for at least 1 class hour each week under supervision, in addition to 4 hours of normal EFL classroom teaching, perform better at reading tasks in English and in French than those students who follow the normal 5 hours per week EFL programme?

- Does the improvement in the students' reading performance, as may be noticed at the end of the EFL reading programme, cause them to hold different perceptions about the use of reading strategies in French, and in English?

The last two questions identify the major purpose of the empirical work, which was, to examine the extent to which a personal silent reading programme in EFL (1 class hour each week), inserted in the normal school practice for 20 weeks (henceforth, the treatment), could benefit 5th form students as to their reading performance and awareness about the use of reading strategies in English, as well as in French.

In relation to the research questions identified above, it was hypothesised that:

- before the treatment, significantly many students involved in the study (at least two thirds, or 66%, of the sample) would tend to perceive reading in French and reading in English as similar on any of the reading-related variables under investigation (see questionnaires in Appendices D & E).

- there would be a positive correlation between the students' scores at comparable French and English reading tasks (see cloze passages in Appendices A & B).

- after the treatment, the experimental subjects would show significantly greater improvement in their EFL as well as in their French reading ability, than the control subjects. Improvement in reading ability would be measured using a pretest-posttest comparison of the students' scores at French, and at English reading tasks.

- as an aspect of the greater improvement of the experimental subjects, the distribution of their responses among the different categories on each questionnaire item about the use of reading strategies would be significantly different from that of the control subjects' responses.

- after the treatment, if there was no significant difference in reading performance and awareness about the use of reading strategies between the experimental subjects and the control subjects, the cause might be the neglect of reading by the experimental

subjects. The amount of books reportedly read may indicate whether students took to the practice of reading in EFL or not, during the treatment.

The foregoing predictions were made on the subjects and context of study which the following section presents.

4.2 Subjects and context

The target population for this study was constituted by Zairean secondary school students who had had a minimum of two school years of exposure to English during class time (about 300 teaching hours)[1]. These were general secondary 5th form students. According to the **Programme National d'Anglais** (1988: 6), such students could be thought to have acquired an active English vocabulary of 1000 words. Therefore, they were expected to know enough of English as a foreign language to be able to derive meaning from texts within their level of comprehension. With such subjects, it was hoped that the hypothesis of L2 reading competence combining with EFL proficiency to yield EFL reading competence could be verified or falsified.

It can be observed nevertheless that a two school years' formal exposure to English is little time for EFL students to engage in the practice of sustained silent reading. I would like to point out that my choice was constrained by practical reasons as well as it was prompted by some theoretical leanings. As I said in Chapter 3, I wanted to experiment with secondary school students. If we want our students to be able to cope with written materials in English at tertiary level, relevant work must be started at secondary level. I could then experiment with any of the secondary classes, except the 6th forms. No school could have allowed me to work with their 6th form students lest they be distracted from their preparation for the State Examinations. I then chose the 5th forms on the ground that their theoretical active vocabulary of 1000 words could be the basic knowledge from which they could start to learn more as they engaged with written material in English. From comprehensible reading materials, as I noted in Chapter 1, more learning can ensue.

From this target population of secondary 5th form students, a sample from two public schools[2] of Kinshasa, Zaire, was involved in the study. These were two Catholic schools. I shall henceforth identify them as School 1 and School 2. They were chosen on my behalf by the director general of the "ISP-Gombe"[3], apparently for no better reason than their proximity to the latter institution. Nonetheless, they are two of the best secondary schools of Kinshasa. Located in the pre-independence European residential area of Kinshasa, they cater for a selected student population of office-

working parents' background. This implied that the students I was going to work with could be accustomed to literacy events, in particular those involving personal silent reading in French at home, or even at school during the "personal study" hours.

School 1 (22 classes) is run by the Roman Catholic Congregation of Jesuits, but it is mostly staffed by laymen. This all-boys' school is renowned in Kinshasa because of its high percentage of success at the yearly State Examinations. Classes are relatively small here. The average class has about 30 students, less than the average class of about 40 students in School 2. School 2 (26 classes, attended by girls exclusively) is also mostly staffed by laymen. It always strives to be on a par with School 1 at the State Examinations. Unlike School 1, School 2 is not headed by a member of the Clergy.

I initiated contacts with both schools during the third week of October 1990, through their respective principals[4]. It was then a question of explaining to them what the empirical work consisted in: administering questionnaires and cloze tests to 5th form students, submitting some of these students to an English reading programme. The 1h/week programme was then planned to extend over 24 weeks.

As soon as the principals gave their consent, I requested to confer with the schools' teachers[5] responsible for English tuition in the 5th forms that were designated for being involved in the study. In School 1, two different teachers taught English in the two 5th forms concerned. Both were 5-year "ISP"-trained teachers, with respectively 4 and 5 years' teaching experience. They agreed to the study being conducted in their classes[6], and determined which class would be considered as the experimental group (EG 1), and which class would be considered as the control group (CG 1). These were scientific section classes. So were the relevant 5th forms in School 2. Here, only one teacher was responsible for English lessons in the two 5th forms concerned. He too was a 5-year "ISP"-trained teacher. His six years' teaching experience was relied upon for the decision on which class would be considered as the experimental group (EG 2), and which class would be considered as the control group (CG 2). The labels EG 1/2 and CG 1/2 really came into force and thus referred to actual classes of students only during the experimental reading programme, that is, after the pre-treatment administration of the measurement instruments (see Section 4.4 below).

The classes were involved in the study as intact groups of non-randomly selected subjects, i.e. I worked with normal classes of secondary school students, supposed of comparable ability. There were thus 129 students at the pre-administration of the measurement instruments, and the same number appeared at the post-administration.

However, some of the students who were present at the pre-administration failed to attend the post-administration. Similarly, some of the students who had been absent at the pre-administration appeared at the post-administration. For such cases, I decided that any student who had missed one of the administrations should be counted out, so that the definite number of students included in the study and reported on here fell to 105, breaking down as shown in Table 4.1:

Table 4.1: Number of subjects per group per school

	School 1	School 2	Total
Groups			
CG	25	24	49
EG	24	32	56
Total	49	56	105

Table 4.2 presents these students according to their age at the beginning of the field study (October 1990):

Table 4.2: Number of subjects per age in October 1990 + average age per group

	School 1		School 2		EG Total	CG Total	Total
Age	EG 1	CG 1	EG 2	CG 2			
15 yrs		1				1	1
16 yrs	11	13	7	4	18	17	35
17 yrs	11	8	10	4	21	12	33
18 yrs	1	2	10	9	11	11	22
19 yrs	1	1	5	4	6	5	11
20 yrs				2		2	2
21 yrs						1	1
Mean age[7]	17	16	17	18	17	17	17

About two-thirds (68%) of the students involved were aged 17 years or less. The minimum legal age for primary school entrance being 6 years and the maximum being 9 years, only students aged between 16 and 19 years could have been expected in this sample. In fact, almost all the subjects (96%) belonged to this age group. There were however cases of early primary school entrance, and class repetition (one student, aged 15; and three aged 20-21 years).

Class repetition is another variable on which these subjects could differ with regard to their experience with English. It can be shown in this respect that one group included about half of the subjects, who had had the minimum exposure time required in this study (i.e. 2X ± 150 class hours). The second group comprised students who had had more time with English at school. This second group normally includes students who

had repeated their third or fourth year, or those who were repeating their fifth year of secondary education. Also counted among this group are four students who, before joining either of the two schools concerned in this study, had started their secondary education in a private school where English was offered as from the first year. Table 4.3 presents the two groupings together with the appropriate figures:

Table 4.3: Number of subjects as by their experience with English

| | School 1 | | School 2 | | |
	EG 1	CG 1	EG 2	CG 2	Total
2 years	13	18	13	9	53
> 2 years	11	7	19	15	52

This distribution was tested for the significance of the difference in the proportions of students in the two groups: there was no statistically significant difference, that is, the two groups were similar when experience with English is concerned. In other terms, the students were not grouped on the basis of their experience with English as repeaters or non repeaters. Nonetheless, in Chapter 6, I shall examine whether this distinction made a difference concerning the performance of some of these students on the cloze passages that I used as measures of their reading ability. I discuss these measurement instruments in 4.3.1 and 4.4.1 below.

It may finally be noted concerning the subjects that the compulsory English tuition could only help to add another linguistic variety to their repertoires, where LiNgala and French were the common languages.

4.3 Study instruments

Two types of instruments were involved in this study: treatment instruments and measurement instruments.

4.3.1 Measurement instruments

The complexity of reading as a behaviour makes it difficult to measure, and thus compounds the researcher's task. There is for example the process/product distinction in the study of reading, about which a word was said in Chapter 3. One may want to look at the on-going process, which normally results in understanding; but the process is so personal, and therefore not easily observable. Or, one may want to examine the product of reading, as represented by a reader's understanding of a text; but this may not validly inform one about the actual process. In view of this, I aimed for what was

accessible in the circumstances of normal school practice. For this reason, the measurement of reading in this study sought to establish the levels of the subjects' understanding of ordinary prose texts, and their views on some facts about reading. Two kinds of measurement instruments were thus prepared: cloze passages and questionnaires in English and in French (see Appendices A & B, D & E).

A word of caution may be needed here for my reader not to consider the cloze passages and the questionnaires used in this study as corresponding to the product/process orientations to reading. The product/process orientations could be claimed if for example the questionnaires required the subjects to describe what was going on in their minds while they were trying to fill in the blanks in the cloze passages, an instance which is similar to the use of think-aloud techniques. As will be clear from the explanations supplied below, the two types of instruments were independent of each other, and both tended to elicit the product aspect of reading.

4.3.1.1 Questionnaires

I designed the questionnaires in English, and in French. Each questionnaire had two parts. The first part comprised 20 four-point scale statements, numbered 1 to 20. Each statement was followed by the numbers 1   2   3   4   in this order. These numbers represented the frequencies of occurrence of some reading behaviour, or fact. The subjects had to identify the number point which corresponded to their personal opinions. They were instructed to circle the numbers so identified. These numbers were explained in the instructions as meaning:

> 1 = very often (almost every day)
> 2 = sometimes (once a week or once every two weeks)
> 3 = rarely (once a month or less)
> 4 = never .

In the elaboration of these twenty statements, it was assumed for example that, after having been in a formal education system for a minimum of 10 school years, the study subjects:

- had developed reading ability in French, of course to differing degrees, which ability they could rely on not only when they had reading tasks in French, but also when they were presented with appropriate reading tasks in English;

- had a tacit knowledge of what skilled reading is and what it is not;

- could, if requested to do so, verbalise (in the best approximation possible) what they knew about reading behaviour;

- knew that skilled reading is flexible (that is, they knew that different materials may be read in different ways).

These assumptions seemed to be justified for two related reasons. The Zairean education system, as I noted in Chapter 2, expects students to become skilled at reading with the passage of time: the longer students stay in school, the better at reading they will become. In addition, I was going to deal with students in their penultimate year of secondary education, most of whom expected to proceed to tertiary education level. Such people with high expectations of themselves for intellectual work involving reading could naturally be thought to be skilled at reading in French.

The foregoing assumptions were also taken into account in the design of the second part of the questionnaires, which differed from the first part in the form of the questionnaire items. Unlike the first part which comprised statements, the second part included 10 open questions, numbered 21 to 30. These were meant as a further source of information on the subjects' reading habits, environment, perception of themselves as readers, and their interests as readers. For these questions, the subjects were requested to answer as fully as they could.

A word needs to be said now about the two versions of the questionnaires that the subjects were presented with. As the questionnaires were meant to enquire about the same or similar realities, an effort was made to make the English and French versions correspond. Thus, questionnaire item 1 in the English version corresponded to questionnaire item 1 in the French version, and so did the other questionnaire items. For example, questionnaire item 29 read as follows in the English version and in the French version:

> "What, for you, is the use of the title of a text that you are going to read?"

> "Quelle est, pour vous, l'utilité du titre d'un texte que vous allez lire?"[8]

However, where either language needed to be specifically named (for example, cases where opportunities of reading in either language differed), that language was overtly mentioned. It may finally be noted that the fitness of the two versions was reviewed by a native speaker of English, who was also fluent in French[9].

One more question has remained unanswered so far. It concerns the raison-d'être of an English and a French version of the questionnaires. The idea behind this is simply

that one may associate a particular reading habit with one language rather than another: e.g., reading French stories slowly vs. reading English stories quickly. That is, in spite of the similarity of reading materials, the knowledge that they are written in two different languages may by itself prompt a difference in reading behaviour. This is a case which may prevent one from saying that the transfer of reading strategies is likely to occur.

4.3.1.2 Cloze passages

As a measure of reading ability, cloze determines a personal response to linguistic variables, and therefore measures the interaction between the reader and the text (Rye, 1982). It reflects an individual's overall comprehension of a text (Oller, 1979), and as Elley (1984) notes, it is a valid measure of reading comprehension with FL students. Because cloze is a holistic measure of reading, its choice in this study was consistent with the holistic approach to the development of reading for which I argued in Chapter 3. Cloze involves the processes of sampling, forming and checking hypotheses (Rye, 1982) for the construction of meaning, which processes are also involved in the literacy practice of sustained silent reading.

I used cloze passages in both English and French. Each of the passages was about 250 words long, and used the 7th-word deletion ratio after a lead-in that arbitrarily varied from 23 to 58 words. After the 20th deletion, each passage was allowed to run on to some length between 16 and 69 words. The passages were presented without any title, to neutralise, as it were, the activation of the students' background knowledge of the world prior to the reading event proper.

The English cloze passages, presented in pairs (1a, 1b; 2a, 2b; etc.), were originally designed as placement tests for the English Language Self Instruction Package (ELSIP)[10]. The two tests in each pair included 40 deletions in all. According to the original designer of the ELSIP materials, the second test in each pair was more difficult than the first. The ten passages of the set, except one, were written in the narrative style. They included topics related to hobbies, sports, occurrences of everyday life, and science (non technical).

The ELSIP tests were designed in order to appropriately assign EFL students graded readers, suitable to their reading level. The students' reading level can be determined by converting their raw scores on a pair of tests to a percentage score, and matching the percentage score with the acknowledged reading levels as explained in the following lines.

It has been put forward that there are three reading levels: frustration, instruction, and independent levels (see e.g., Holdaway, 1980: 25; Rye, 1982: 19). Rye (1982) presents these levels as attempts made to relate cloze scores to certain criteria of understanding. Thus, a score below 40% places the student at the frustration level, which means that the language used in the cloze passage is too difficult for him to cope with. At the instruction level, i.e. with a score between 40% and 60%, the student is able to cope with the language of the cloze passage to some extent; but he needs some assistance. Finally, a score of more than 60% places the student at the independent level. Here, the student can understand and cope with the language of the cloze passage on his own. At this last level, the student can be left alone to exercise his "epistemic level of literacy" (Wells, 1991), without interference.

Now, for example, if a student was administered two different cloze passages that were derived from a given graded reader, his score would help to determine his level of understanding of that book. This score would also give an idea about the degree of "scaffolding" that the student concerned would need in order to deal with that book: total assistance (frustration level), some assistance (instruction level), or total independence (independent level) in reading the book.

The 5 pairs of the ELSIP tests that I used were derived from level 1 graded readers. I must say however that I did not use these tests as related to graded readers (see treatment instruments, in 4.3.2, below), in the sense explained above. I used them as independent (i.e. unrelated to the difficulty level of graded readers) pre-treatment and post-treatment measures of reading ability.

All the same, in Chapters 5 and 6, I shall use the terms "frustration", "instruction", and "independent levels" as classificatory terms to refer to the levels at which each of the students involved read their cloze passages.

On the model of the ELSIP tests, and following the advice found in the literature (e.g., Rye, 1982), I derived the French cloze tests from two passages found in **La 4ème en Français** (IPAM, 1989: 88-90, the passage referred to hereafter as Text 1) and **La 5ème en Français** (IPAM, 1987: 218-219, the passage referred to hereafter as Text 2)[11].

The two texts were written in the narrative style, and covered topics related to occurrences of everyday life on the banks of the Zaire river, and the protection of wild life in some African game reserve. These texts were each divided into parts a, b, c that

were to be presented as different passages during the administration of the measurement instruments. Each subject was to receive a section of Text 1 and a section of Text 2. Nine different combinations of Texts 1a/b/c and 2a/b/c were to be used. Two such passages included 40 deletions in all, like the English passages.

As the two French textbooks were designed for lower secondary levels than the 5th form, and as the two texts were about topics that were putatively familiar to Zairean students, it could be expected that their scores on the French cloze passages would be significantly higher than their scores on the English cloze passages. I shall need to be aware of this possibility in the comparisons that I intend to make in later chapters between French and English cloze scores.

Concerning the texts in each of the two languages, the question of the comparability of the subjects' scores can still be raised given that different texts, thus different deletion items, were involved. To address this question, I followed the lead of Jonz (1990), for an analysis of the frequencies of the deletion items, using the chi-square statistic. With a view to resolving the controversy over the comparability of cloze tests, Jonz (1990) analysed the deletion item categories of eight passages that had been used in cloze research over the past 15 years. In his analysis, he took into account the processing conditions required for cloze completion, and tried 3, 4, and 5 categories. In the three instances, the computations of the frequencies of the deletion items and their cross-tabulations among the eight passages, yielded chi-square statistics that were smaller than the tabled value at his liberally chosen confidence level of .10. From this, he drew inter alia the conclusion that the eight cloze passages were similar and that they required the same kinds of knowledge for the closure of deletion items.

A similar, post facto, analysis was performed for the cloze passages included in this study. The deletion items were sorted out in five categories (see Appendix C), as in Jonz (1990), i.e. within-clause (syntax) items, within-clause (lexis) items, across-clause (within-sentence) items, across-sentence (within-text) items, and extratextual items. The analysis yielded good fits among the cloze passages [chi-square (36, N = 200) = 30.554, smaller than the tabled value at .10, among the English passages; and chi-square (20, N =120) = 14.11, also smaller than the tabled value at .10, among the French passages]. But, as the cross-tabulation of categories and texts revealed that more than 20% of the common cells had an expected frequency lower than 5 cases, the five-category analysis was discarded.

Therefore, on the basis of the advice given for such cases (e.g., Hays, 1988: 781; Hodge & Seed, 1972: 202), the five categories of deletion items were collapsed into two categories: Category 1 [within-clause (syntax), and within-clause (lexis) items], and Category 2 [across-clause (within-sentence), across-sentence (within-text), and extratextual items]. Incidentally, this categorisation evokes the "openness/closedness" dimension of cloze deletion items, hypothesised by Lee (1985) to account for the finding that the deletion items in a given cloze passage are split into two groups depending on the "openness or closedness" of their relationship to the grammar/structure or lexis systems of the language.

The analysis of the deletion items based on these two categories yielded a fit of chi-square (9, N = 200) = 9.428, smaller than the tabled value (14.684) at .10, among the English passages. It was thus estimated that there was no statistically significant difference among the ten English texts when the deletion-item categories are considered.

A similar analysis undertaken for the French cloze passages yielded a fit of chi-square (5, N =120) = 0.566. This was also smaller than the tabled value (9.236) at .10, and similarly gave rise to the conclusion that there was no statistically significant difference among the French passages when the deletion-item categories are considered. As there was no statistically significant difference between the cloze passages on the distribution of the cloze deletion items, they could presumably be said to require similar types of knowledge for the completion of the blanks.

4.3.2 Treatment instruments

The experimental reading programme (or, in other terms, the treatment) started after the pre-administration of the measurement instruments, that is, during the first week of November 1990. It went on until the third week of May 1991. Because of a teachers' strike, from January 28 to February 28, the treatment extended over 20 weeks, four weeks shorter than initially planned.

During the programme, EG students were supplied with the following treatment instruments: monolingual English **COLLINS GEM** pocket dictionaries (1 per student), and COLLINS graded readers (see list in Appendix F). As the readers had been ordered as a Collins English Library collection, I had no say in the choice of titles. There were 90 readers (55 different titles) per EG class, graded in six levels of difficulty.

In their advertisement of the readers, the Collins editors say that Level 1 has a basic vocabulary of 300 words and appropriate structures; level 2, 600 words; level 3, 1000 words; level 4, 1500 words; level 5, 2000 words; and level 6, 2500 words. Each EG library thus consisted of:

16 (2X 8 titles) level 1 readers,
14 (2X 7 titles) level 2 readers,
20 (2X 10 titles) level 3 readers,
20 (2X 10 titles) level 4 readers,
11 (1X 11 titles) level 5 readers,
 9 (1X 9 titles) level 6 readers.

The topics of the readers in each EG library belonged to the following content domains, as shown in the **Collins Library Catalogue 1987/8**: classic, thriller/ spy/ adventure, crime/ detection, romance, mystery/ horror/ ghost, short stories, biography, science/ nature, and non-fiction/ information (see Appendix F).

I would like to consider here whether and how this collection of graded readers corresponded to the Zairean National Syllabus for English and to the Zairean learners' cultural expectations. The Collins readers were not especially written for Zairean learners of English, and thus may not directly relate to the Zairean syllabus for English. In principle, the Collins graded readers and the Zairean National Syllabus can be said to operate according to different grading systems.

However, I can make the following observations. As materials for EFL learners, the Collins graded readers contain the same basic lexical items and structures as those specified in the Zairean National Syllabus. For example, levels 1 and 2 readers contain grammatical structures that are, according to the Zairean **Programme National d'Anglais** (1988), covered in the first two years of English in Zairean secondary schools:
- present simple, future simple, past simple, present perfect;
- can, must, be, is, am, are, was, were, has, have;
- comparison and degree of adjectives, etc..

The other four levels contain structures that are covered in the first two years of English in Zairean secondary schools, together with new structures, e.g.,
- should/ought to, present perfect: introduced in the 4th form,
- past perfect continuous, must (in the sense of certainty or inference), impersonal forms, etc.: new structures.

Now, if the expectation that Zairean secondary 5th form students have acquired an active vocabulary of 1000 words was true, then it could be put forward that they would be able to read levels 1 and 2 readers on their own with understanding, level 3 readers with some difficulty, and the rest (levels 4, 5, and 6) with greater difficulty. In Chapter 5, I shall say a word on the levels of readers that the experimental students preferred to read during the treatment.

Concerning the cultural expectations of Zairean learners, I said in Chapter 2 that if they were given a choice, Zairean EFL learners would prefer to read about the U.K. or the U.S.. In the collection of readers that I presented them with, there were few titles that could directly be related to the U.S. or to the U.K., e.g., **Fastline UK** (level 1), **The Story of Scotland Yard** (level 2), **An American Tragedy** (level 3), **Campbell's Kingdom** (level 4), **Harry's Game** (level 6). The success of some of these titles among foreign learners of English has been established. For example, Bamford (1984) observed among Japanese EFL learners that such titles as **Inspector Holt and the Fur Van** (level 1), **The Charlie Chaplin Story** (level 2), were "enjoyed by many" or "extremely popular".

Those were the materials that the EG students were to use during the treatment. The CG students were ignored in the study design as far as the treatment was concerned, and therefore were not supplied with anything. This group was "left alone, under the same conditions (except for the manipulation of the independent variable) as the experimental group" (Kamil et al, 1985: 97). That is, the control subjects received their normal 5h/week sessions of English, whereas the experimental subjects received 4h/week such sessions plus 1h/week session devoted to the practice of sustained silent reading in English.

4.4 Procedures

4.4.1 Administration of measurement instruments

The procedures for the administration of the measures were trialed on 42 Zairean secondary school students. These were 5th form students of both sexes, whose age ranged from 15 to 19 years, and who were attending a public school[12]. It was thought that the performance of such people and their ability to speak about their difficulties would help in order to adjust the measurement instruments to the sample selected for the study.

This trial administration helped to determine an estimate of the time that the subjects would be allowed to take for the questionnaires and the cloze tests. It was found that 2 class hours (100') would be enough at each session. Also, some of the difficulties that the subjects would encounter revealed themselves. They pointed for example to the necessity of letting the subjects use dictionaries, if they so wished, during the administration of the instruments, to the necessity of making them understand the principles underlying cloze before requesting them to fill in the blanks in the texts, to the usefulness of starting the administration with the instruments in French, and to the necessity of explaining the terminology in the instructions (e.g., phrase, expression, etc.).

I wish to note three things in connection with these difficulties:

- the observation I made in Chapter 2 that the use of the dictionary as a reading strategy is encouraged in Zairean secondary schools, which could account for the students' need of a dictionary;

- the fact that questionnaire answering and, to a greater extent, cloze reading were new literacy events for the students involved in this study; and therefore

- my belief that starting with the instruments in French could provide a transition to an improved work with the instruments in English.

The trial administration also indicated that some of the items in the questionnaires needed reformulating. An instance was questionnaire item 26:

> "How many pages of a story book do you read in English/French in 10 minutes ?"

For this questionnaire item, what was to be taken as the "page of a story book" had to be explained at length (possible size, number of words, etc.). The subjects were advised to think in terms of a page containing about 300 words. Moreover, where the term "text" appeared in the questionnaires, the subjects were told to think of narratives (i.e. the kind of texts that were familiar to them in their French classes), to the exclusion of other kinds of texts. In spite of such occurrences, major problems were not revealed, that would have called for a reconsideration of the questionnaires.

For the cloze passages, the students who participated in the trial administration claimed that the passages were difficult to deal with. I had instructed these students to find the exact words or phrases that were missing from the passages, as they resorted to their previous knowledge or as they were reading and re-reading the passages. Basically, the students made me notice that it was difficult for them to make sense of

the passages as some of the words were missing. Some students even refused to try. Eventually, some others managed to fill in some of the blanks.

To mark their papers, I counted the number of correct words or phrases that were restored. Their scores, representing the sum of correct restorations, ranged from 2 to 31 points out of 40 for the texts in French (mean = 16/40; standard deviation = 7). At cloze reading in English, their performance was a little lower. The scores ranged from 1 to 21 points out of 40 (mean = 11/40; standard deviation = 5).

I am aware that the scores could have been different if the participants had been given credit for supplying acceptable alternatives. Determining these alternatives implied using my subjective judgement about what the responses should be. This process could have rendered the marking procedure difficult, and possibly unreliable. For ease of correction and objectivity, I stuck to the exact word restoration procedure. Although this is "too stringent a requirement" (Oller, 1979: 367), it should be noted that it correlates strongly with other cloze scoring methods in such a way that "there is little change in the relative rank order of scores" (idem), i.e. high scorers will remain high scorers and low scorers will remain low scorers in any of the cloze scoring methods.

It is on the basis of the scores presented above that I estimated that the cloze passages used as measurement instruments in this study would not be too difficult for the actual subjects.

The actual pre-treatment administration of the measurement instruments, conducted by myself, took place during the last week of October 1990, on different days, for each of the classes concerned (i.e. EG 1, EG 2, CG 1, and CG 2), in their usual classrooms as shown below:

Table 4.4: Timetable for the administration of measurement instruments

Day	Groups	Instruments
1	EG 1 & 2	French questionnaires & cloze tests
2	CG 1 & 2	French questionnaires & cloze tests
3	EG 1 & 2	English questionnaires & cloze tests
4	CG 1 & 2	English questionnaires & cloze tests

Here are the numbers of subjects who were involved:

Day 1 - EG 1 : 24 students out of 24; EG 2 : 43 students out of 46
Day 2 - CG 1 : 30 students out of 33; CG 2 : 32 students out of 32
Day 3 - EG 1 : 24 students out of 24; EG 2 : 37 students out of 46

Day 4 - CG 1 : 29 students out of 33; CG 2 : 26 students out of 32.

Each session consisted of the subjects answering the questionnaires first, and then filling in the cloze passages. The subjects were distributed the first part of the questionnaires, and were allowed to see and deal with the second part only after they had finished and handed back the first part. After both parts of the questionnaires were dealt with, then the subjects were each randomly distributed a pair of cloze passages. As there were 5 pairs of such passages in English, no five subjects sitting one next to the other received the same pair. Similarly, the 9 different combinations of the three parts of the two French texts prevented any nine subjects sitting one next to the other from having the same pair of cloze passages. In this way, group cloze completion could be avoided, and individual work could be maximised.

For personal identification purposes, the subjects were requested to write their names on each of the study documents (questionnaires and cloze passages) they had received, and which they had to surrender at the end of the session.

These procedures were also abided by during the post-treatment administration of the measurement instruments in May 1991: the French instruments before the English ones, questionnaires before cloze tasks, 2 class hours for each administration, and each class of students involved at their own time in their usual classroom. For the cloze tasks, I made sure that the subjects received exactly the same texts as the ones they had worked on at the pre-treatment administration. In this way, problems related to differences in measurement instruments would be avoided. It was also expected that memory effects would not interfere, as some time had elapsed between the pre-administration and the post-administration. Nonetheless, we may still have to reckon with the effects of the students' pre-treatment experience with the testing procedure at the second administration of the measurement instruments.

Here are the numbers of subjects who participated in the May 1991 administration :

Day 1 - EG 1 : 24 students out of 24; EG 2 : 44 students out of 46
Day 2 - CG 1 : 32 students out of 33; CG 2 : 29 students out of 32
Day 3 - EG 1 : 24 students out of 24; EG 2 : 39 students out of 46
Day 4 - CG 1 : 28 students out of 33; CG 2 : 28 students out of 32.

4.4.2 Administration of the treatment

The treatment for this study depended on:

- the supply of appropriate reading materials to experimental subjects,

- these subjects' personal involvement in the choice of the materials they wanted to read,

- their personal motivation for reading and interest in reading their selected materials, and

- their actual silent reading, with the least interference possible.

As I observed in Chapter 3, the practice of sustained silent reading in this study differed in terms of the frequency of sessions from that in the Hafiz & Tudor (1989, 1990) studies, or that in the Elley & Mangubhai (1983) study: once a week vs. daily. I was constrained by the official provision for reading in EFL, as I said earlier. I introduced another modification. In Chapter 3, I noted in my discussion of the outline of the practice of sustained silent reading proposed by Mc Cracken (1971) that students should be gradually timed until sustained silent reading becomes established as a habit. I did not time the experimental students' reading, counting on their personal involvement and motivation as factors in the practice of sustained silent reading in EFL.

The reading programme involved my personal contact with the subjects once a week, as the experimental schools' teachers of English were unwilling to supervise an activity which they considered somehow peculiar, with regard to their usual role as teachers. As far as they were concerned, it was not usual practice for a teacher to sit silent before a class of students required to read silently. I am unable to say whether this unwillingness was an expression of their lack of commitment to reading or not. It is possible that they simply did not want to get personally involved in the research I was doing, or that my presence had given them the opportunity of reducing their teaching time by 1 hour each week. Nonetheless, they introduced me to the experimental subjects as a member of their school's English language teaching staff, in charge of reading.

The reading classes were thus held each Wednesday from 9.10 a.m. to 10.00 a.m. for EG 2, and each Friday from 8.20 a.m. to 9.10 a.m. for EG 1, under my supervision.

The actual routine of the treatment consisted of me bringing into the classroom the reading materials, i.e. readers and dictionaries; and laying the readers on the teacher's desk in such a way that their titles were visible. Then, the subjects were asked to come to the teacher's desk in 2s or 3s at a time, to each select a reader they wanted to read, to pick up a dictionary, to resume their seats, and start reading silently. The first

session experienced some waste of time as the subjects tended to take too long for the selection of readers; but, the routine became quicker with the passage of time.

During this reading time, I encouraged the subjects to ask questions related to their reading. They were also allowed to borrow readers (not more than two) and take them home for further reading at their personal convenience. If a subject had not finished reading his selected reader, he had the latitude of going on reading it during the following reading class. Also, if one found a reader too difficult, he could take another one immediately. The relative degree of freedom in the choice of reading materials could be considered as a way of allowing students to find manageable platforms from which to launch communication, keep it going at will, and to learn from comprehensible materials.

The records of the titles that students selected and reportedly read were kept on appropriate cards (one card per subject), which I allowed them to use only when they wanted to borrow new readers.

4.5 Design synopsis

The design of the current study was a non equivalent control group design, in which non randomly selected subjects (four intact classes of students: EG 1 & 2, CG 1 & 2) were pre-tested. Then a number of these subjects (2 of the classes, i.e. EG 1 & 2) followed a treatment (the reading programme), after which all the four groups were post-tested. Table 4.5 presents a synoptical view of the design:

Table 4.5: A synoptical view of the design

	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
Groups	EG 1 & 2 CG 1 & 2	EG 1 & 2	EG 1 & 2 CG 1 & 2
No. of subjects	105	56	105
Instruments	Questionnaires & cloze tests	Readers & dictionaries	Questionnaires & cloze tests
Duration	2h (100') per session, 2 sessions per group	1h (50') per week, 20 weeks per group	2h (100') per session, 2 sessions per group

This design involves comparisons of the subjects' responses to the questionnaires, and scores on the cloze passages. These comparisons will be made in the next two chapters as part of the presentation of the data, or as part of the discussion of the study hypotheses in the light of the data that were collected.

Notes

1 The school year has 30 weeks. In general (non vocational) secondary schools, students are offered 5 weekly sessions of English, starting from the third year of secondary education.

2 The two schools were:
- School 1: Institut Boboto, B.P. 3165, Kinshasa-Gombe, Zaïre;
- School 2: Lycée Bosangani, B.P. 3789, Kinshasa-Gombe, Zaïre.

3 I am a member of the English Department staff of the "I.S.P.- Gombe" (Institut Supérieur Pédagogique de la Gombe, B.P. 3580, Kinshasa-Gombe, Zaïre). This is one of the 14 Zairean institutions of higher learning, entrusted with the training of secondary school graduates who would like to become secondary school teachers. "I.S.P.-Gombe" is open to female students exclusively. The initial training lasts 3 years. Successful candidates may add another 2 years to become "licenciés".

4 The officials contacted were: Révérend Père A Cnokaert ("Directeur des Etudes") for School 1, and Mme Kokolo ("Préfet") for School 2.

5 The teachers of English concerned were: Mr Pululu and Mr Tshibasu for School 1, and Mr Badeka for School 2.

6 The teachers had the latitude of agreeing or refusing that their classes be involved in the present study.

7 The mean ages reported have been rounded.

8 The English version of the questionnaires will be used for illustration purposes throughout this work.

9 I thankfully acknowledge Peter Hill's help with the revision and acceptable wording and ordering of the questionnaire items.

10 ELSIP: English Language Self Instruction Package, a reading scheme designed by the late Ken Cripwell.

11 La 4ème en Français and La 5ème en Français are used as textbooks for the teaching of French in some private schools (e.g., Complexe Scolaire Kabasele,

Kingabwa) of Kinshasa, Zaire, at lower levels (3rd and 2nd years respectively) than the level of the subjects investigated in this study.

12 The school in question was: Complexe Scolaire Cardinal Malula.

5 THE DATA

In this chapter, I present the data on which the discussion of the study hypotheses in Chapter 6 will be based. There are basically two bodies of data: questionnaire responses and cloze results, involving English and French. These data were collected at two different periods during my field study, i.e. before and after the treatment. I shall therefore speak of pre-treatment data and post-treatment data. Nonetheless, I will also need to say a word about what went on during the treatment, as this information may be needed for the interpretation of the questionnaire and cloze data.

There are thus four sections in this chapter. In the first section, I deal with questionnaire responses under two titles: the subjects' reading environment and opportunities (recorded as pre-treatment data), and their perception of their use of the reading strategies specified in some of the questionnaire items (pre-treatment as well as post-treatment data). For the responses to the questionnaires, I shall give the percentages representing the proportions of subjects in each group involved in the study. The second section is about the subjects' cloze reading performance. In addition to the descriptive statistics, the cloze reading results will be given in terms of the different reading levels (frustration, instruction, and independent levels) that I briefly discussed in Chapter 4. In the third section, I will try to relate some of the subjects' cloze reading performance to their questionnaire responses. In the fourth and last section, I will be concerned with the number, content domain, and levels of the graded readers that the experimental subjects selected for the practice of sustained silent reading.

5.1 Questionnaire responses

5.1.1 Students' perception of their reading environment and opportunities

The frequency of reading in a person's environment may cause that person to have a favourable attitude toward reading. That is to say for example that children and adolescents may model their reading behaviour on the reading habits of people in their immediate environment. This observation relates to the notion of literacy as a social practice, which I addressed in Chapter 1. Concerning reading in particular, a documented instance, showing the influence of adults on the behaviour of young people in a given domain of literacy use, can be taken from Ingham's (1982) report on the Bradford Book Flood experiment. Some of the data on that experiment showed that

most of the parents of the avid readers were themselves keen readers,
whereas most of the parents of the infrequent readers were not.
(Ingham, 1982: 177-178).

In the current study, I thought that if relatives and teachers were frequent readers, and
perceived as such by the subjects, the latter might want to take the former as their
models, and possibly try to behave like them. Some questionnaire items thus
addressed the issue of the frequency of reading among the subjects' parents and
teachers.

Questionnaire item 1
        "My parents read books, magazines, etc."
        (very often/sometimes/rarely/never)

It can be noticed for instance, from Table 5.1 below presenting the responses to this
questionnaire item, that for more than a quarter of the subjects in the sample as a
whole, parents never read in English; whereas reading in French appears never to be
done by the parents of only 1% of the subjects.

Table 5.1: Proportions of subjects by their estimation of the frequency of reading in French (Fr), and in English (En) among their parents

	EG 1		EG 2		CG 1		CG 2		EG		CG		School 1		School 2		All	
N	24		32		25		24		56		49		49		56		105	
	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En
very often	71%	25%	69%	47%	60%	20%	58%	38%	70%	38%	59%	29%	65%	22%	64%	43%	65%	33%
sometimes	13%	8%	25%	16%	32%	4%	29%	46%	20%	12%	31%	24%	22%	6%	29%	25%	25%	18%
rarely	12%	17%	6%	19%	8%	28%	9%	18%	10%	18%	10%	23%	10%	23%	8%	18%	9%	20%
never	4%	50%		18%		48%		16%	1%	32%	1%	24%	3%	49%		10%	1%	29%

If only the first two categories (very often/sometimes) which express a great frequency are taken into account, it can be said that in general the subjects tended to perceive their parents as frequent readers. At least 50% of the subjects claimed that their parents very often/sometimes read books or magazines in French or in English. This may be taken to reflect reality on the grounds that the two schools involved in the study, being two of the best urban schools in Zaire, may have in their selection of the student population enrolled mostly students with a literate home background. Such a situation may not be easily encountered when a rural school is considered.

It may also be observed that the subjects tended to think of their parents as more frequent readers (i.e. on average, the subjects thought that their parents very often read) in French; but less frequent readers (i.e. on average, the subjects thought that their parents sometimes read) in English. This general observation is supported for example by the disparity between the numbers of subjects in the sample as a whole who said that their parents very often read books and magazines in French (65%) and in English (33%).

However, School 1 students differed from School 2 students concerning what they said about their parents' reading in English. School 1 students tended to consider their parents as less frequent readers in English, which is a realistic perception of the situation given that English is a foreign language in Zaire. In contrast, School 2 students tended to consider their parents as frequent readers in English, as Table 5.1 indicates. It is difficult for me to say whether this difference in the perception of one aspect of their reading environment is a gender difference given that School 2 was an all-girls' school and that School 1 was an all-boys' school.

All the same, what mattered in this enquiry about parents' reading was not so much the actual fact, but how the subjects perceived its frequency. The fact that the majority of responses indicate the perception of some frequency of reading among parents, could suggest that the experimental subjects would be willing to read in English when the time came.

The subjects' estimation of the frequency of reading among their teachers was also considered. Concerning reading in French, the subjects' estimations of the frequency of reading among their teachers, in response to questionnaire item 2, were similar to their estimations of the frequency of reading among their parents.

Questionnaire item 2
        "My teachers read books, magazines, etc."
        (very often/sometimes/rarely/never)

Table 5.2: Proportions of subjects by their estimation of the frequency of reading in French (Fr), and in English (En) among their teachers

	EG 1		EG 2		CG 1		CG 2		EG		CG		School 1		School 2		All	
	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En
N	24		32		25		24		56		49		49		56		105	
very often	75%	29%	59%	32%	64%	28%	58%	42%	66%	36%	61%	37%	69%	31%	59%	41%	64%	36%
sometimes	17%	33%	16%	28%	32%	29%	25%	16%	16%	30%	33%	26%	27%	31%	21%	27%	24%	29%
rarely	4%	25%	6%	3%	16%	4%	5%	13%	5%	13%	10%	20%	2%	20%	4%	4%	3%	11%
never	4%	13%	19%	28%	24%	13%	29%	13%	13%	21%	27%	2%	18%	16%	28%	9%	24%	24%

As can be seen from Table 5.2 above, the majority (at least 60%) of the subjects saw their teachers as frequent readers in French. The majority also saw their teachers as frequent readers in English.

The figures representing the numbers of subjects expressing their perception of the frequency of reading among teachers, just like those on the frequency of reading among parents, may not be revealing the actual truth about individual parents or individual teachers. However, they may be taken to indicate that reading was perceived favourably in the environment of many of the subjects.

The patterning of the subjects' responses on the frequency of parents' and teachers' reading allows me to say that some similarity had been perceived between reading in French and reading in English. Parents and teachers were seen as frequent readers by at least 1 in every two of the respondents, as the foregoing tables show. Parents and teachers could therefore constitute models whose example the subjects could follow.

In order for the subjects to reveal to what extent they followed the example set in their environment, they were asked to say who their model reader was.

Questionnaire item 30
      "Who is your model reader? Why"

Regardless of the language the subjects were confronted with, they showed, in a large majority (6 to 7 in every ten subjects), that they had somebody to look up to as a model reader. The subjects' responses appear in Table 5.3:

Table 5.3: Proportions of subjects by their perceived model reader in French (Fr), and in English (En)

	EG1		EG2		CG1		CG2		EG		CG		School 1		School 2		All	
	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En
N	24		32		25		24		56		49		49		56		105	
1- relative	21%	12%	44%	38%	12%	54%	46%	27%	34%	27%	29%	26%	12%	48%	41%	38%	28%	21%
2- teacher	21%	6%	6%	16%	8%	36%	8%	25%	12%	12%	8%	31%	19%	29%	7%	14%	12%	16%
3- other than 1/2	8%	12%	25%	25%	21%	16%	12%	25%	18%	20%	18%	12%	18%	24%	18%	25%	18%	16%
4- none	12%	38%	9%	12%	40%	12%	4%	4%	23%	11%	20%	39%	12%	14%	7%	13%	10%	22%
5- don't know	38%	17%	16%	19%	19%	24%	13%	4%	18%	19%	8%	14%	7%	14%	22%	13%	13%	13%

For the sample as a whole, Table 5.3 shows that, be it for reading in French or for reading in English, more subjects found their model readers in their relatives than in any other person in their environment. This may reveal how influential adult relatives are in school children's education in that part of the world.

At the level of individual groups however, School 1 classes differed from School 2 classes, as the former seemed to reveal that teachers were more influential than relatives concerning reading in English. School 1 students then appeared to show their awareness that exposure to English, in particular through reading in English, was typically a classroom occurrence.

Two major reasons were usually put forward by the subjects to explain why they mentioned one person or another as their model reader: he reads a lot, he has a very good pronunciation. The second reason in particular signals the influence of an orientation to reading that is common in Zairean schools, as noted in Chapter 2. Reading means reading aloud with a good intonation and expression, as usually done by teachers of French or teachers of English in the classroom, or also in out-of-school literacy domains, by one's parents, siblings or friends, by radio or T.V. newscasters, by priests, etc..

The figures given in the foregoing tables can be taken to indicate that in general the subjects perceived their environment as conducive to reading. However, this environment could not be judged appropriate unless it also offered reading opportunities. The subjects were thus asked to rate the frequency of their opportunities of reading books, magazines, and so on.

Questionnaire item 3
        "I have opportunities of reading books, magazines, etc."
        (very often/sometimes/rarely/never)

And, the responses were as follows:

Table 5.4: Proportions of subjects by their estimation of the frequency of their opportunities of reading in French (Fr), and in English (En)

	EG 1		EG 2		CG 1		CG 2		EG		CG		School 1		School 2		All	
N	24		32		25		24		56		49		49		56		105	
	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En
very often	33%	21%	56%	22%	32%	4%	42%	42%	46%	22%	37%	22%	33%	12%	50%	30%	42%	22%
sometimes	54%	29%	41%	31%	52%	36%	46%	42%	49%	30%	49%	39%	53%	33%	43%	36%	48%	34%
rarely	13%	38%	3%	41%	16%	48%	12%	7%	14%	39%	14%	31%	14%	43%	7%	29%	10%	35%
never	12%	12%		6%		12%		4%		9%		8%		12%		5%		9%

On the subjects' opportunities of reading, the fall of percentages in the categories showing frequent opportunities needs to be noted, as far as reading in English is concerned. The curious exception is CG 2, where the subjects seemed to say that they had opportunities of reading materials in English almost equal to their opportunities of reading materials in French. Nonetheless, the general dearth of reading opportunities in English in comparison to reading opportunities in French, as can be seen from the table above, may be related to the status of the English language in the educational system, and society at large. It is normal that reading materials in English, a foreign language, be rare in Zaire.

A better index of one's reading opportunities could be the possession of a few books at home, through which to browse from time to time. For this reason, the subjects were asked to say whether they had any books at home, and to mention some topics which they used to read about, other than for school requirements.

Questionnaire item 24
       "Do you have any books at home, that you read?"

Table 5.5: Porportions of subjects by their declared possession of books in French (Fr), and in English (En)

	EG 1		EG 2		CG 1		CG 2		EG		CG		School 1		School 2		All	
N	24		32		25		24		56		49		49		56		105	
	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En
yes	92%	54%	97%	50%	92%	36%	96%	50%	95%	52%	94%	43%	92%	45%	96%	50%	94%	48%
no	8%	46%	3%	50%	8%	64%	4%	50%	5%	48%	6%	57%	8%	55%	4%	50%	6%	52%

Nearly everybody in the sample (94% of the respondents) said that they had books in French, of which they could even mention up to three titles. When it came to books in English, 1 in every 2 subjects (52%) in the whole sample said that they did not have any books. About two-thirds of CG 1 subjects were bold enough to say that they did not have any books in English. The lack of books in English is almost bound to the decrease in the subjects' opportunities of reading in English, as enquired about in questionnaire item 3 above, and should also be taken to be a reflection of the foreign language status of English in Zaire.

The difference perceived between reading in French and reading in English showing up in the subjects' estimations of their opportunities of reading and in their possession of books to read, in each of the two languages, also appears in the subjects' identification of their preferred reading topics, as enquired about in questionnaire item 25.

Questionnaire item 25:
>"Are there any topics that you read about in English/ French, other than those you read about in school? Yes   No
>If yes, what topics? For example: sports, music, fashion, etc."

The subjects mentioned various topics, as can be seen from Table 5.6:

Table 5.6: Proportions of subjects by their preferred reading topics in French (Fr), and in English (En)

	EG 1		EG 2		CG 1		CG 2		EG		CG		School 1		School 2		All	
	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En
N	24		32		25		24		56		49		49		56		105	
1- sports, fashion, music	38%	21%	41%	38%	50%	24%	58%	30%	39%	37%	43%	31%	45%	24%	46%	38%	38%	36%
2- economics, politics, history	4%	6%	6%	32%	4%	4%			5%	18%	2%	2%	5%			18%	5%	11%
3- industry, technology, science	8%			6%		8%		4%	4%	4%	4%	2%		8%	4%	4%	4%	3%
4- education, work, human life	33%	12%	44%	6%	28%	4%	38%		39%	9%	33%	2%	31%	8%	41%	4%	36%	6%
5- none	17%	67%	9%	50%	8%	60%	8%	42%	13%	57%	8%	51%	12%	64%	9%	46%	11%	54%

What can be noticed here is the quasi equal proportions of subjects in the sample as a whole who chose sports, fashion, and music as their preferred topics for reading in French (38% of the subjects) and for reading in English (36% of the subjects). This is the favourite choice for CG 2 subjects particularly. But, more interesting on this issue of preferred topics, is the case of over a half of the subjects (54%) in the whole sample who did not seem to have an opinion as far as reading in English was concerned. In EG 1 for example, two-thirds of the subjects did not mention any topic at all, concerning reading in English. This last figure may be more telling about the respondents' reading opportunities in English: a great number among them did not have the opportunities of reading materials in English on their own.

This being the case, there was some justification for the treatment adopted for the current study: having books in English to read was a new experience for more than half of the subjects, including those subjects who gave a factual response without any legitimate reason. We need to be wary with some of the responses, which could have been induced by my presence during the administration of the questionnaires. Some of the students (e.g., in School 2) might have liked to show me that they were interested in English learning.

Nonetheless, I understand from the data on questionnaire items 1, 2, and 30, that in general the subjects perceived their environment as favourable to reading. It would appear that the environment was perceived as more favourable to reading in French than to reading in English, because of the status of the latter language in the community. From this status, were predictable the general patterns of responses that emerge on questionnaire items 3, 24, and 25. It can be concluded from the responses to these three questionnaire items that there were frequent opportunities of reading in French but infrequent opportunities of reading in English.

The favourable environment in which one may find oneself and the opportunities of reading that this environment offers may shape one's attitude to reading. They may also influence the way in which one perceives oneself as a reader. Therefore, I understand from what the majority of the subjects in this study said that they could be thought to be likely to take a favourable attitude to reading, at least for reading in French.

In the following sub-section, I consider what the subjects said about their use of certain reading strategies, which will also help to determine how they perceived themselves as readers.

5.1.2 Students' perception of their use of reading strategies

I used the subjects' responses to some of the questionnaire items to identify them according to seven categories, which I shall define shortly. To understand what these categories mean and how I shall relate them to the subjects' cloze reading performance, it is necessary to remember the distinction that L2/FL reading strategy researchers (e.g., Barnett, 1988; Block, 1986; Carrell, 1989; Kletzien, 1991; etc.) establish between strategy knowledge, strategy use, and perceived strategy use. In Chapter 3, we saw that these three notions are different, but that they bear some relationships. I noted in particular the positive correlation between perceived strategy use and actual strategy use (see Barnett, 1988; Carrell, 1989).

The responses to the questionnaire items I am concerned with here were meant to make the subjects show evidence of perceived strategy use. Reservations will naturally be in order concerning the findings discussed in this section, and in all of the following presentation given that the subjects may not have been able to perceive their strategy use adequately, or the questionnaire items may have induced non realistic responses.

Nonetheless, I shall be assuming an interaction between perceived strategy use and strategy use such that an increase in the former correlates with an increase in the latter (see e.g., Barnett, 1988; Carrell, 1989). Such a correlation may indicate a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for effective reading.

To my understanding of the use of reading strategies by successful and unsuccessful readers, as explained for example in Hosenfeld (1984) or Kletzien (1991), success at reading may depend on how often the reader uses reading strategies. For this reason, I presented the subjects in this study with a number of statements relating to strategy use, and wanted them to say how frequently they thought that they used those strategies. The subjects' responses can provide us with an image of themselves as readers.

At this juncture, I need to define the categories that I shall use in the subsequent discussions to refer to the subjects on the basis of their responses.

5.1.2.1 Definition of categories

I propose to refer to the subjects as self-questioners, ideas seekers, selective re-readers, predictors, knowledge appealers, word skippers, and word guessers. The

terms used in reference to these categories relate to the ideas expressed on reading for example by Goodman (1969, 1976) on reading as a guessing game or on readers' prediction of meaning during the process of reading, Hosenfeld (1984) on the tendency of successful readers to skip inessential words, Kletzien (1991) on readers' hypothesising or re-reading, Knapp (1980) on reading as search for meaning, Smith (1978b, 1985) on reading as asking oneself questions and on the importance of prior knowledge in reading, etc.. Some of these ideas were discussed in Chapter 3.

I will also use as a superordinate term the phrase "positive reading strategy claimers" to refer to each or all of these seven categories together. I understand that these categories are not necessarily exclusive of one another. In my opinion, effective readers fall into each of these categories, because in their flexibility while interacting with written materials, they select from a repertoire of strategies. These strategies would include self-questioning, selective re-reading, reflecting upon ideas carried by a text, predicting text content, appealing to one's previous knowledge, word skipping, guessing the meaning of unknown words, etc..

Self-questioners

Questionnaire item 9
"I read with questions in my mind, relating to the text I am reading."
(very often/sometimes/rarely/never)

Self-questioners are those subjects who said that they very often/ sometimes read with questions in their minds, relating to the text being read.

Ideas seekers

Questionnaire item 11
"While I am reading, I may stop in order to think over a difficult idea."
(very often/sometimes/rarely/never)

Ideas seekers are those subjects who said that they very often/ sometimes stopped their reading in order to think over difficult ideas.

Selective re-readers

Questionnaire item 13
"I re-read before carrying on reading."
(very often/sometimes/rarely/never)

Selective re-readers are those subjects who said that they sometimes re-read before carrying on reading. I am assuming that these positive reading strategy claimers would want to re-read only that which is likely to enhance their comprehension of the texts they are interacting with.

Predictors

Questionnaire item 14
"I mentally link what I have just read to what comes next in the text."
(very often/sometimes/rarely/never)

Predictors are those subjects who said that they very often/ sometimes mentally linked what they had read to what would come next in the text.

Knowledge appealers

Questionnaire item 16
"I mentally relate what I read to what I know."
(very often/sometimes/rarely/never)

Knowledge appealers are those subjects who said that they very often/ sometimes mentally related what they read to what they know.

Word skippers

Questionnaire item 17
"While I am reading, I skip words or phrases without losing the general idea of the text."
(very often/sometimes/rarely/never)

Word skippers are those subjects who said that they very often/ sometimes skipped words or phrases without losing the general idea of the text.

Word guessers

Questionnaire item 18
"When there is a difficult word, I guess its meaning and carry on reading."
(very often/sometimes/rarely/never)

Word guessers are those subjects who said that they very often/ sometimes guessed word meanings while reading.

In 5.1.2.2 below, I present the proportions of subjects who were identified as belonging to each of these categories, at the pre-treatment administration of the questionnaires, and at the post-treatment administration of the questionnaires. This presentation takes into account Hosenfeld's (1984) finding that successful readers tended to have a good self-concept of themselves as readers, or Barnett's (1988) finding on the correlation between perceived strategy use and strategy use. From these findings, I wish to draw, as a working hypothesis, that a group of students can be considered as constituted by potentially successful learner readers on the basis of the proportion of its positive reading strategy claimers.

5.1.2.2 Proportions of positive reading strategy claimers

Table 5.7 below gives the proportions of positive reading strategy claimers concerning reading in French. It can be noticed from this table that, except for the strategies of selective re-reading and word skipping, the majority of the subjects in each group tended to say that they frequently used the positive reading strategies that were revealed to them in the questionnaires. The overall image that can be gained for the whole sample as well as for each group at the pre-treatment and at the post-treatment administrations of the questionnaires, is that of potentially efficient or good readers in French.

It can also be observed from Table 5.7 that in general the proportions of positive reading strategy claimers tended to increase at the post-treatment administration of the questionnaires. These proportions generally increased in CG 1, in CG 2, and in EG 2. This tendency is particularly noticeable in CG 2, where the proportions of subjects increased in all the categories, except in the categories of ideas seekers and knowledge appealers. In contrast, in EG 1, the proportions of positive reading strategy claimers in French generally tended to decrease.

Table 5.7: Proportions of positive reading strategy claimers in French before (Pre) and after (Post) the treatment

	EG 1		EG 2		CG 1		CG 2		EG		CG		School 1		School 2		All	
N	24		32		25		24		56		49		49		56		105	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
self-questioners	71%	62%	72%	78%	67%	80%	71%	79%	69%	71%	71%	80%	70%	78%	70%	75%	70%	73%
ideas seekers	62%	71%	84%	78%	83%	79%	79%	75%	86%	75%	75%	71%	84%	78%	80%	78%	80%	73%
selective re-readers	38%	25%	31%	41%	32%	44%	34%	17%	34%	34%	35%	31%	23%	30%	28%	32%	28%	32%
predictors	88%	58%	81%	75%	79%	80%	84%	83%	82%	64%	84%	82%	80%	69%	78%	78%	81%	82%
knowledge appealers	71%	67%	88%	69%	88%	84%	83%	83%	80%	68%	84%	84%	86%	76%	80%	75%	83%	75%
word skippers	29%	33%	34%	41%	28%	44%	38%	46%	32%	38%	33%	45%	28%	39%	36%	43%	32%	41%
word guessers	79%	67%	56%	66%	72%	64%	69%	71%	67%	66%	67%	67%	76%	65%	61%	68%	68%	67%

Judging from the proportions of positive reading strategy claimers in each group, i.e. if the claims correlated with achievement, EG 1 students could be predicted to be able to perform better than any other group at reading in French, before the treatment. However, after the treatment, they would lose their advantage to the benefit of CG 2 students.

The proportions of positive reading strategy claimers in English in each group are indicated in Table 5.8 below. Here, for the sample as a whole, there were large minorities of selective re-readers and word skippers, in proportions that were higher than for reading in French. Except for these two categories, the subjects' claims tended to indicate that the different groups had a positive self-concept of themselves as readers. At the post-treatment administration of the questionnaires, the proportions of positive reading strategy claimers in each category generally tended to decrease. In CG 2 for example, the proportions of these positive reading strategy claimers decreased in all the categories except in the categories of ideas seekers, knowledge appealers, and word guessers.

Table 5.8: Proportions of positive reading strategy claimers in English before (Pre) and after (Post) the treatment

	EG 1		EG 2		CG 1		CG 2		EG		CG		School 1		School 2		All	
N	24		32		25		24		56		49		49		56		105	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
self-questioners	75%	67%	53%	53%	56%	72%	83%	71%	59%	71%	65%	69%	66%	61%	66%	61%	62%	65%
ideas seekers	67%	62%	62%	47%	60%	60%	58%	71%	64%	54%	59%	69%	63%	61%	62%	61%	62%	61%
selective re-readers	17%	38%	50%	41%	40%	32%	50%	46%	36%	39%	45%	39%	28%	35%	50%	43%	40%	39%
predictors	62%	58%	31%	53%	56%	66%	75%	58%	62%	59%	65%	71%	59%	61%	50%	55%	54%	63%
knowledge appealers	75%	62%	62%	62%	64%	72%	58%	83%	68%	62%	61%	78%	69%	67%	61%	71%	65%	70%
word skippers	33%	42%	50%	50%	40%	36%	62%	50%	43%	46%	51%	43%	37%	39%	55%	50%	47%	45%
word guessers	46%	46%	50%	38%	52%	52%	62%	67%	48%	41%	57%	59%	49%	49%	55%	50%	52%	50%

From the proportions of positive reading strategy claimers found in each group, as shown in Table 5.8, it could be predicted that CG 2 would perform better than any of the other groups in English reading, before as well as after the treatment.

Tables 5.7 and 5.8 above provide the general impression that the majority of the subjects tended to have a good self-concept of themselves concerning reading in French and reading in English, considered separately. However, some difference in the students' perception of the two activities is particularly signalled by the evolution of the proportions of positive reading strategy claimers before and after the period of treatment. These proportions generally tended to increase for reading in French except in EG 1, while they generally tended to decrease for reading in English except in CG 1, at the post-treatment administration of the questionnaires. This might give indications that reading in French and reading in English were not perceived as similar activities. I shall return to this point in Chapter 6.

Two other indications of the difference between reading in English and reading in French are the findings that

- in general, the proportions of positive reading strategy claimers tended to be lower for reading in English than for reading in French. It could be predicted from this finding that the sample would quite naturally perform better in French than in English. An examination of the subjects' cloze reading performance will help to verify or falsify this prediction.

- there were generally more selective re-readers, and more word skippers concerning reading in English than concerning reading in French.

At the pre-treatment administration of the questionnaires for example, the only group in which there were fewer selective re-readers in English than in French was EG 1. And, at the post-treatment administration, only CG 1 had fewer word skippers in English than in French. I would opine that the difference perceived concerning selective re-reading may be related to the students' levels of proficiency in the two languages, and the familiarity with written materials in these languages. A higher level of proficiency in French and the familiarity of written materials in French would require less selective re-reading than it would be the case for materials in English. I am also tempted to say that there were fewer selective re-readers in French because the texts that the subjects usually interacted with did not require them to reflect upon their reading. This, in my opinion, signals that the majority of the subjects did not exercise their "epistemic level of literacy", or that they had not developed it.

Concerning word skipping, I must admit that I had difficuly trying to figure out why there were more word skippers in English than in French. If the questionnaire item on word skipping had been administered to the students after observing that they usually skipped words while reading English texts, it could be said that they used this strategy out of desperation. I had not observed them reading, and while they were responding to the questionnaires they were not reporting on any recent reading in English that they might have done. Nonetheless, I can put forward that the subjects in this study thought only of the usual classroom texts in English, which were familiar to them, i.e. materials which they were not confronting for the very first time. With this type of material, they could skip words, as they claimed, without losing the general idea of a text.

Apart from the cases examined above in which I tried to discuss reading in French and reading in English separately, I was particularly interested in those subjects who could be said to have considered reading in English and reading in French as two similar activities. These are the subjects who could be identified for example as self-questioners, selective re-readers, word guessers, etc. for both reading in French and reading in English. As I explained in Chapter 4, I consider this perception of the similarity between reading in French and reading in English as an aspect of the transfer of reading ability from one language to the other. I understand that reading strategies develop as part of CALP (Cummins, 1979). Then, it is from the performance of subjects identified as self-questioners, ideas seekers, etc. in both reading in English and reading in French, that the likelihood of the transfer of reading ability (which I shall discuss in Chapter 6) can be established. Table 5.9 presents the proportions of these subjects in each group, as recorded at the pre-treatment and post-treatment administrations of the questionnaires.

Table 5.9: Proportions of positive reading strategy claimers in both French and English before (Pre) and after (Post) the treatment

	EG 1		EG 2		CG 1		CG 2		EG		CG		School 1		School 2		All	
N	24		32		25		24		56		49		49		56		105	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
self-questioners	50%	54%	44%	44%	48%	60%	58%	67%	46%	48%	53%	63%	49%	57%	50%	54%	50%	55%
ideas seekers	46%	50%	50%	38%	54%	48%	54%	71%	48%	43%	55%	59%	51%	49%	52%	52%	51%	50%
selective re-readers	4%	21%	25%	12%	12%	20%	8%	12%	16%	16%	10%	16%	8%	20%	12%	12%	13%	16%
predictors	58%	42%	28%	44%	44%	72%	71%	54%	41%	43%	57%	63%	51%	57%	46%	48%	48%	52%
knowledge appealers	58%	54%	56%	47%	64%	68%	50%	75%	57%	50%	57%	71%	61%	61%	54%	59%	57%	60%
word skippers	17%	25%	19%	34%	16%	16%	29%	29%	22%	30%	22%	22%	16%	20%	23%	32%	20%	27%
word guessers	38%	33%	34%	31%	36%	44%	46%	54%	39%	32%	41%	49%	37%	37%	39%	41%	40%	40%

A successful reader would tend to apply what he knows to be a positive reading strategy with written materials in French to written materials in English, and vice versa. Table 5.9 provides a picture from which reservations may be in order concerning how the subjects perceived themselves as readers in both French and English. It is difficult to say that the majority of the subjects had a good self-concept of themselves as readers in both English and French. In general, there were few selective re-readers, few word skippers, and few word guessers, at the pre-treatment as well as the post-treatment administrations of the questionnaires. About half or over half of the subjects could be found in each of the other categories.

However, as can be seen from Table 5.9, the control groups included more positive reading strategy claimers than the experimental groups. Then, if what one says about oneself as a reader reflects the level of one's reading performance, it could be predicted that the control groups would be better at reading in French and at reading in English than the experimental groups. It could also be predicted that EG 2 would be the worst of the four classes (the best being CG 2), before as well as after the treatment. In this connection, in the following section, I shall say a word on the cloze reading performance of the subjects identified in Table 5.9 above as positive reading strategy claimers in both French and English.

5.2 Performance on the cloze passages

This section presents the scores that the subjects obtained on the French, and English cloze passages before, and after the treatment. Descriptive statistics were calculated for each group of subjects (EG 1, EG 2, CG 1, CG 2), for each school, for the two experimental groups together, for the two control groups together, as well as for the sample as a whole. In order to determine the levels at which the subjects read, I converted their raw scores to percentages, as suggested in Rye (1982: 19), and as earlier explained in Chapter 4: frustration level (0% - 40%), instruction level (40% - 60%), independent level (60% - 100%). The distribution of the subjects among the three reading levels will be presented.

It will be remembered that the choice of comparable reading tasks in French and in English was dictated by the idea that the subjects' scores at such tasks in the two languages would positively correlate. Such a positive correlation would give support to the transfer of reading ability, especially concerning the performance of subjects who scored high in both English and French. Furthermore, the scores obtained before the treatment would serve as a baseline on which to measure the impact of the treatment on the subjects' performance after the treatment. The different comparisons

of the results, as required by the study design, will be undertaken in the following chapter.

5.2.1 Pre-treatment results

Here, the presentation of the subjects' performance on cloze reading only tries to show how the subjects performed and to determine whether the groups were equivalent at French, and at English, before the treatment began.

The raw scores at French cloze reading for the sample as a whole ranged from 1 to 28 out of 40, with a mean of 12 and a standard deviation (SD) of 6. The means scored by the different groups do not significantly differ from the sample's mean: they are similarly low. Compared to EG 2 for example, EG 1 seems to have been less diversified: it had the lower range (15), and the lower standard deviation (5).The descriptive statistics for all the four groups of subjects are presented in Table 5.10:

Table 5.10: Descriptive statistics on pre-treatment cloze reading in French

	EG 1	EG 2	CG 1	CG 2	EG	CG	School 1	School 2	All
N	24	32	25	24	56	49	49	56	105
Mean	12	12	13	10	12	12	13	11	12
SD	5	8	5	5	7	5	5	7	6
Low	5	2	3	1	2	1	2	1	1
High	19	28	24	20	28	24	24	28	28

The apparent differences between the mean scores of the different groups, as noticeable in Table 5.10, are not statistically significant. In order to compare EG 1 and EG 2, EG 2 and CG 2, EG 1 and CG 1, CG 1 and CG 2, EG and CG, School 1 and School 2, I calculated their t values, according to the formula used for small groups when the marks are unrelated (see McIntosh, 1967: 115-118). These t values were smaller than their corresponding tabled values, at the relevant degrees of freedom.

On converting the French raw scores to percentages, I found that most of the subjects (83%) had read at the frustration level, that few (12%) had read at the instruction level, and that a handful of the subjects (about 5%) had read at the independent level. This distribution of the subjects has a highly significant chi-square (2, N = 105) = 116.78. Table 5.11 below presents the subjects' distribution among the three reading levels by groups.

One may want to know whether, before the treatment began, there were significant differences between the groups as to the distribution of the subjects among the three reading levels.

Table 5.11: Proportions of subjects by reading levels, based on pre-treatment cloze reading in French

	EG 1	EG 2	CG 1	CG 2	EG	CG	School 1	School 2	All
N	24	32	25	24	56	49	49	56	105
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Frust	20	24	21	22	44	43	41	46	87
	83%	75%	84%	92%	79%	88%	84%	82%	83%
Inst	4	3	4	2	7	6	8	5	13
	17%	9%	16%	8%	12%	12%	16%	9%	12%
Indep		5			5			5	5
		16%			9%			9%	5%

For this purpose, chi-square analyses were performed on the subjects' distribution among the reading levels between the two schools, as well as between the experimental and control groups. To do this, it was necessary to collapse the independent and the instruction levels in order to abide by the frequency assumption on the legitimate use of the chi-square.

The analysis for the two schools yielded a chi-square (1, N = 105) = 0.002, smaller than the tabled value (3.841) at .05. Such a chi-square suggests that there was no statistically significant difference between the two schools when reading levels are considered. On the experimental and control group dimension, the analysis also gave a chi-square (1, N = 105) = 0.972, smaller than the tabled value (3.841) at .05. This similarly shows that there was no statistically significant difference between the experimental and the control groups when reading levels are considered. This is consistent with the conclusion drawn on the basis of the absence of significant differences between group means, as was noted earlier. It can then be said that before the treatment no group of the subjects involved in the current study was better or worse than another, on the basis of the French cloze passages used as measurement instruments in this study.

Concerning English, the results presented in Table 5.12 below were recorded. For the sample as a whole, the scores ranged from 0 to 26 out of 40, with a mean of 10 and a standard deviation of 6. The details of the descriptive statistics were as follows:

Table 5.12: Descriptive statistics on pre-treatment cloze reading in English

	EG 1	EG 2	CG 1	CG 2	EG	CG	School 1	School 2	All
N	24	32	25	24	56	49	49	56	105
Mean	13	6	13	13	9	11	13	7	10
SD	7	5	5	5	7	5	6	5	6
Low	4	0	2	2	0	1	2	0	0
High	26	18	20	20	26	22	26	26	26

The t values calculated in order to test the significance of the differences between the means of the different groups, were smaller than the tabled values, except when School 1 and School 2 are compared as groups. The t value obtained in this case, 5.534, is slightly larger than 4.12, the tabled value at 103 degrees of freedom. The difference between School 1 and School 2 may then not be a chance phenomenon. This difference will be touched on again shortly, when the distribution of the subjects between the different reading levels is considered.

I converted the raw scores at cloze reading in English to percentages, and found that the whole sample divided into the three reading levels as follows: about 85% of the subjects had read at the frustration level, 12% of the subjects had read at the instruction level, and only 3% had read at the independent level, as shown in Table 5.13 below.

Table 5.13: Proportions of subjects by reading levels, based on pre-treatment cloze reading in English

	EG 1	EG 2	CG 1	CG 2	EG	CG	School 1	School 2	All
N	24	32	25	24	56	49	49	56	105
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Frust	17	31	19	22	48	41	36	53	89
	71%	97%	76%	92%	86%	84%	73%	95%	85%
Inst	4	1	6	2	5	8	10	3	13
	17%	3%	24%	8%	9%	16%	21%	5%	12%
Indep	3				3		3		3
	12%				5%		6%		3%

The chi-square (2, N = 105) = 126.38, highly significant, supports the conclusion that this distribution was not a chance phenomenon.

The frequency data recorded on the English cloze passages also helped to establish whether prior to the treatment there were significant differences between the two schools, or between the experimental and the control groups, in respect of the subjects' reading levels. Chi-squares were calculated, as was the case for the subjects' distribution on French reading, after collapsing the instruction and the independent levels.

The analysis for the two schools yielded a fit of chi-square (1, N = 105) = 7.505, larger than the tabled value (6.635) at .01. In contrast to the case of the subjects' performance on the French cloze passages, this chi-square lends support to the conclusion that there was a statistically significant difference between the two schools when reading levels are considered. This tends to confirm what was observed about the significance of the differences between the mean scores of School 1 and School 2 as entities. School 1 (with 73% of its students having read at the frustration level, 21% at the instruction level, and 6% at the independent level) would appear to be slightly better than School 2 (where almost everyone, 95% of the students, had read at the frustration level, only 5% at the instruction level, and no one at the independent level).

This conclusion tends to be corroborated by the other statistics recorded. The lowest score at English cloze reading was obtained by a student from School 2, and the mean scores for the two School 2 groups (EG 2 mean = 6 out of 40; CG 2 mean = 8) are lower than the mean scores for the two School 1 groups (EG 1 mean = 13 out of 40; CG 1 mean = 13); as well as they are lower than the mean score calculated for the sample as a whole (10).

The question that can be raised at this juncture is whether the relative superiority of School 1 over School 2 at English relates to the qualitative difference (boys vs. girls) in the students' responses to some of the questionnaire items, observed in 5.1.1 above. In their responses, School 2 students (girls) generally tended to show greater interest in English than School 1 students (boys). That interest does not seem to be supported by the girls' performance in English. On the contrary, School 1 students' seemed to show greater awareness that English was a foreign language as in general their declared model reader was the teacher of English. This awareness seems to be supported by a better performance in comparison to School 2 students. If this is the

case, then it can be said that the more an EFL learner is aware that English is a foreign language, the more successful he will be at EFL learning.

I wish to explain the difference between School 1 and School 2 in terms of foreign language awareness rather than as due to some gender factor, because of my experience as a teacher of English in an all girls' college. Each year the numbers of girls enrolling in the English department increase, thus indicating that English is important to them as it is to boys generally. It would then be difficult for me to maintain for example that there was a gender factor whereby the perceived importance of English was greater to boys than to girls, which would explain why School 2's performance was worse than School 1's.

Nonetheless, these performance differences are, as it were, neutralised when the students are grouped across the two schools as experimental groups and conrol groups. I obtained e.g., a fit of chi-square (1, N = 105) = 0 concerning the experimental and the control groups on cloze reading in English. This chi-square is smaller than the tabled value (3.841) at .05, and gives rise to the conclusion that there was no statistically significant difference between the experimental and the control groups when reading levels are considered. It is then understood that prior to the treatment the groups of students that came to be referred to as experimental groups were not in general worse or better than those that came to be referred to as control groups, on the basis of their performance on the English cloze reading passages used in this study.

The results recorded before the treatment are, as it were, the starting point, the yardstick to which the subjects' performance after the treatment will be compared in order to see whether there are differences in the improvement of scores, and to assess the effects of the treatment.

Before I present the post-treatment cloze reading results, I would like to note
- that significantly many subjects had read at the frustration level in French as well as in English,
- that there was no significant difference at cloze reading in French between the groups,
- that School 1 appears to have been slightly better than School 2 at cloze reading in English,
- that no significant difference was noticed at cloze reading in French or in English when control groups are compared to experimental groups across the two schools.

The foregoing observations contradict the predictions that I made earlier in my presentation of the questionnaire data. Then, taking into account the proportions of positive reading strategy claimers in the different groups, I put forward that EG 1 would perform better in French than any other individual group, that CG 2 would perform better in English than any other individual group, and that the control groups together would perform better than the experimental groups taken together. The data on cloze reading before the treatment do not however support these predictions, i.e. the cloze reading data do not in general tie up with the claims recorded on the questionnaires.

As a final observation on the pre-treatment cloze reading scores, I wish to signal that in Chapter 6, I shall address the correlation between French and English scores, as part of my discussion of the hypotheses on the transfer of reading ability from one language to the other.

Now, I turn to the post-treatment cloze reading scores.

5.2.2 Post-treatment results

I shall present the French cloze reading scores first, and then the English cloze reading scores, following the same pattern as in 5.2.1 above.

The raw scores on the French cloze passages after the treatment ranged from 2 to 30 out of 40 for the sample as a whole, with a mean of 16 and a standard deviation (SD) of 6. Except for the mean of CG 2, which was 14, the means obtained by the other groups do not seem to differ much from that of the sample, as may be seen in Table 5.14 below, which gives the descriptive statistics for each of the groups.

Table 5.14: Descriptive statistics on post-treatment cloze reading in French

	EG 1	EG 2	CG 1	CG 2	EG	CG	School 1	School 2	All
N	24	32	25	24	56	49	49	56	105
Mean	17	17	17	14	17	15	17	16	16
SD	5	6	5	7	6	6	5	7	6
Low	9	7	7	2	7	2	7	2	2
High	26	30	26	24	30	27	26	30	30

When the two schools are considered, School 1 seems to have performed better than School 2. It has a higher mean, a smaller standard deviation, and a smaller range; and thus may be said to be less diversified than School 2. When the sample is looked at as experimental and control groups, the presence of low-scoring subjects from School 2

can be easily noticed, as the mean of the control groups (CG) is lower than that of the experimental groups (EG).

The mean scores obtained by the different groups were examined for significance. The t values calculated were in all instances smaller than the tabled values, so that it can be concluded that no group was worse or better than another at the second administration of the French cloze passages.

The conversion of the raw scores to percentages and the grouping of the subjects according to reading levels reveal that nearly half of the subjects had read at the frustration level, that a large minority (39% of the sample) had read at the instruction level, and that few subjects (11% of the sample) had read at the independent level. This distribution has a chi-square of (2, N = 105) = 24.399, significant at .05. It gives particular evidence that few subjects had read at the independent level. The details are as shown in Table 5.15 below.

Table 5.15: Proportions of subjects by reading levels, based on post-treatment cloze reading in French

	EG 1	EG 2	CG 1	CG 2	EG	CG	School 1	School 2	All
N	24	32	25	24	56	49	49	56	105
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Frust	11	15	11	15	26	26	22	30	52
	46%	47%	44%	62%	46%	53%	45%	54%	50%
Inst	10	11	13	7	21	20	23	18	41
	42%	34%	52%	29%	38%	41%	47%	32%	39%
Indep	3	6	1	2	9	3	4	8	12
	12%	19%	4%	9%	16%	6%	8%	14%	11%

Only half of the subjects in the sample as a whole had read at the frustration level, a much better performance in French than at the pre-treatment administration. I shall come back to this apparent improvement in Chapter 6.

Nonetheless, when the subjects' distribution among the different reading levels is considered in association with the distinction between the two schools or between the experimental and the control groups, there does not seem to be any statistically significant difference. The chi-squares calculated, after collapsing the instruction and the independent levels, for the two schools (0.786) and for the experimental and the

control groups (0.459) are smaller than the tabled value at .05, with 1 degree of freedom.

Concerning English, the results recorded show that the sample reached the mean of 12 out of 40, and a standard deviation (SD) of 7. The scores ranged from 0 to 29. EG 1 appears to have been the best of the four groups: it realised the highest mean and had the smallest variability as can be noticed from its standard deviation. The descriptive statistics for all the groups are as follows:

Table 5.16: Descriptive statistics on post-treatment cloze reading in English

	EG 1	EG 2	CG 1	CG 2	EG	CG	School 1	School 2	All
N	24	32	25	24	56	49	49	56	105
Mean	18	10	15	8	13	12	16	9	13
SD	5	6	6	6	7	6	5	6	7
Low	10	0	5	2	0	2	5	0	0
High	29	23	23	22	29	23	29	23	29

A comparison of the descriptive statistics for the schools tends to show that School 1, with its higher mean, lower standard deviation and smaller range, was better than School 2. The experimental groups also appear to be slightly better than the control groups; even if their range is wider, as can be seen from Table 5.16 above.

The apparent differences between the groups as to their English cloze scores are confirmed to be statistically significant in only three instances: when the mean scores obtained by EG 1 and EG 2 are compared (t = 5.201, with 54 degrees of freedom); when the mean scores obtained by EG 1 and CG 2 are compared (t = 6.140, with 46 degrees of freedom); and when the mean scores calculated for School 1 and for School 2 are compared (t = 6.379, with 103 degrees of freedom). These values provide support for the conclusion that EG 1 was better than EG 2, and than CG 2. The presence of EG 1 in School 1 makes School 1 appear better than School 2. There was no significant difference between CG 1 and each of the other groups.

The advantage of EG 1 over the other groups is, as it were, neutralised when EG 1 and EG 2 combined as experimental groups are compared to CG 1 and CG 2 combined as control groups. In this way, the experimental groups together do not come out worse or better than the control groups together, at the second administration of the English cloze passages.

When the subjects' raw scores are converted to percentages for them to be grouped into reading levels, the frequency count shows that a little more than two thirds (68%)

of the sample had read at the frustration level, that a minority (28% of the sample) had read at the instruction level, and that very few subjects (4% of the sample) had read at the independent level. As in the case of the subjects' performance in French, their post-treatment performance in English is comparatively better than their pre-treatment performance in English, for the sample as a whole.

The chi-square calculated for the distribution among reading levels, as given in Table 5.17, is (2, N = 105) = 65.199, significant at .05. It lends support to the conclusion that significantly many subjects had read at the frustration level, and that significantly few subjects had read at the independent level.

Table 5.17: Proportions of subjects by reading levels, based on post-treatment cloze reading in English

	EG 1	EG 2	CG 1	CG 2	EG	CG	School 1	School 2	All
N	24	32	25	24	56	49	49	56	105
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Frust	8	29	13	21	37	34	21	50	71
	33%	91%	52%	88%	66%	69%	43%	89%	68%
Inst	12	3	12	3	15	15	24	6	30
	50%	9%	48%	12%	27%	31%	49%	11%	28%
Indep	4				4		4		4
	17%				7%		8%		4%

When this distribution is examined in association with the distinction between the two schools, it may be noticed that the difference between the two schools is statistically significant. The chi-square obtained, (1, N = 105) = 25.728, is larger than the tabled value at .05. In fact, as may be seen from Table 5.17 above, significantly many School 2 students (89% of School 2 subjects) had read at the frustration level. Apparently, School 1 maintained its superiority over School 2 at English cloze reading, after the treatment.

The association of the reading levels with the experimental and control groups has a chi-square (1, N = 105) = 0.1312, smaller than the tabled value at .05, which shows that there was no statistically significant difference in English between the experimental and the control groups taken together.

The post-treatment cloze reading scores in French, and in English show some improvement on the subjects' pre-treatment performance. I shall dwell on how the post- and pre-treatment scores compare in Chapter 6, in connection with the hypothesis on the greater improvement of the experimental subjects over the control subjects.

Meanwhile I would like to note two findings that contradict my earlier predictions, based on the proportions of positive reading strategy claimers, as indicated by the questionnaires, in each group. I put forward that CG 2 would perform better in French as well as in English, than any other group of students involved in this study, after the treatment. This is contradicted by the following findings: the absence of statistically significant differences between the groups on their post-treatment performance in French, and the comparatively outstanding post-treatment performance of EG 1 in English.

However, the data do not contradict another prediction on the relationship of the proportion of positive reading strategy claimers in a group to the success of that group at reading in French or in English. It was put forward that EG 2 would be the worst of the four groups. In spite of the absence of statistically significant differences, EG 2 emerged as the worst of the four groups, except once, i.e. in their post-treatment performance in French.

It would appear that there are two issues here. In one instance, the good self-image of a group of learner readers (i.e. CG 2) did not warrant their success at reading. In the other instance, by contrast, the relatively poor self-image that could be sketched about another group of learner readers (i.e. EG 2) reveals itself to be an index of their lack of success at cloze reading.

In section 5.3 below, I try to relate some of the questionnaire responses to the cloze reading performance in a further exploration of the extent to which the number of positive reading strategy claimers in a group does or does not warrant that group's success at cloze reading. I shall be particularly concerned with those positive reading strategy claimers in both English and French (see Table 5.9 above) who were identified as having read at the instruction or at the independent levels.

5.3 Relating questionnaire data to cloze reading performance

The relatively poor performance of the majority of the subjects at the pre-treatment and post-treatment cloze reading in both English and French shows that in general the

subjects were inclined to overstate their reading ability in their responses to the questionnaires on their use of reading strategies. I noted a similar type of overstatement in some of the subjects' perception of their reading environment, in 5.1.1 above. Nevertheless, concerning what the subjects said about their use of reading strategies, some relationship can be shown to exist between one's cloze reading performance and self-concept as a reader.

This relationship can be established in the performance of the subjects who were identified as positive reading strategy claimers in both English and French (see Table 5.9 above) who had read at the instruction or independent levels.

There were 18 subjects (17% of the sample) who had read at the instruction or independent levels in French at the pre-treatment administration of the cloze passages (see Table 5.11 above). All of these subjects, except one, were identified as positive reading strategy claimers. For reading in English at the pre-treatment administration, there were 16 subjects (15% of the sample, see Table 5.13 above), all of whom were identified as positive reading strategy claimers. There was clearly a minority of subjects in the sample whose performance shows that one's good self-concept as a reader is an index of success at reading.

It can be noted however that, among these positive reading strategy claimers in both English and French, only 5 learner readers maintained their high scores on cloze in French as well as in English: these were 3 EG 1 students, 1 CG 1 student, and 1 CG 2 student, that is 4 School 1 students against 1 School 2 student. This proportion shows that School 1 was better than School 2, which is consistent with some of the statistics recorded in 5.2 above. The reading strategies that these 5 learner readers showed awareness of were: predicting text content, appealing to one's previous knowledge, word skipping and word guessing. As no one of these successful learner readers were identified as a selective re-reader, a self-questioner, or an ideas seeker, it can be said that some strategies are more linked to success at cloze reading than others.

The post-treatment results also tended to confirm that one's good self-concept as a reader, as realistically estimated by a minority of learner readers involved in this study, was an index of success at cloze reading. Of the 53 subjects (50% of the sample, see Table 5.15 above) who had read at instruction or independent levels in French, only 10 were not identified as positive reading strategy claimers. For reading in English (see Table 5.17 above), there were 34 subjects (22% of the sample) who had read at instruction or independent levels. All, but 5, of these learner readers were identified as positive reading strategy claimers.

There were 20 learner readers in the sample who maintained themselves at instruction or independent reading levels in both French and English at the post-treatment administration. Seventeen of these subjects (16% of the sample) were among the positive reading strategy claimers at the post-treatment administration. Here, there were representatives from each of the four groups involved: 7 EG 1 students, 3 EG 2 students, 7 CG 1 students, and 1 CG 2 student. The advantage of School 1 over School 2 can be seen here again in its higher proportion of positive reading strategy claimers. Each of these 17 learner readers seemed to have been aware of at least one of the reading strategies that were revealed to the sample in the questionnaires.

I would finally like to note that success at cloze reading in both English and French, at the pre-treatment as well as at the post-treatment administration, involved only 3 students in the whole sample (2 EG 1 students, 1 CG 2 student) who were identified as positive reading strategy claimers at the two instances of the administration of the questionnaires. These 3 students particularly showed awareness of the strategies of ideas seeking, predicting text content, word skipping, and word guessing. I am tempted to say that these are the four reading strategies that helped to distinguish between the mass of unsuccessful learner readers and the extremely small minority of successful learner readers, on cloze reading in French and in English. However, as we shall see in Chapter 6, the number of the strategies that seemed to be important for successful cloze reading in both French and English will decrease.

In the following section, I am concerned with what went on during the treatment.

5.4 The experimental subjects and the graded readers

The information presented in this section relates to what was recorded as the treatment was going on, and thus concerns only the experimental groups (EG 1 and EG 2).

I had hypothesised that neglect of reading among the experimental subjects might result in an absence of significant difference in reading performance and awareness about the use of reading strategies between the experimental subjects and the control subjects. Such a neglect of reading may be determined by the amount of reading done, and may have been occasioned by among other things the type of reading materials that the subjects were presented with during the treatment. Therefore, an attempt is made in this section to provide answers to the following questions: How much reading did the experimental students do during the treatment? What were the

levels of the graded readers that the subjects preferred to read? What topics did they want to read about? The information relevant to these questions was gathered from the reading record cards that the subjects were supplied with.

5.4.1 Quantity of reading

For the purposes of the current study, the quantity of reading done during the treatment is equated with the number of graded readers (although some of these were more voluminous than others) that the experimental subjects claimed to have read. It was expected that the experimental subjects would be able to start and finish one reader (especially the smaller ones) within a week, so that by the end of the programme they could have read at least 20 readers each. The data appearing in Table 5.18 below suggest that things did not work according to my expectations.

Table 5.18: Descriptive statistics on the number of books putatively read

	EG 1	EG 2	All EG
N	24	32	56
Mean	12	8	10
SD	5	4	5
Low	5	4	4
High	26	21	26

It may be observed that for the two experimental groups together, the number of books read ranged from 4 to 26, with a mean of 10 books read and a standard deviation (SD) of 5.

Thirty (that is, 9 in EG 1 and 21 in EG 2) of the experimental students (i.e. 54% of the subjects targeted in the reading programme) had read under the average number of 10 books (Table 5.19 below). This average number was almost half of the expected minimum of 20 books to be read over the 20 weeks of the treatment. But, it was higher than the 5 or 6 books usually expected to be read in French during the whole year by general secondary education 5th form students (see EDIDEPS, 1986). Only five students (9% of the experimental subjects) had read 20 books or more: four of these subjects were EG 1 students, and only 1 was an EG 2 student; which can be taken as another qualitative difference between School 1 and School 2.

In EG 1, the subjects had read between 5 and 26 books, with a mean of 12 books, and a standard deviation of 5. Comparatively lower were the average number of books read (8) in EG 2, its standard deviation (4), and its range (from 4 to 21 books). These figures give the impression that as a group EG 1 students read significantly more than

EG 2 students. But, a statistical comparison of the means of the two groups did not reveal the differences between them to be significant. [The calculated t value was 3.264, smaller than the tabled value (4.79) at 54 degrees of freedom. This value was calculated according to the formula supplied in McIntosh, 1967: 115-118].

This absence of significant difference between EG 1 and EG 2 as to the number of books read during the treatment is corroborated by a chi-square (1, N = 56) = 3.304, non significant, calculated on the distribution of the experimental subjects (as shown in Table 5. 19 below) depending on whether they had read less than the average number of 10 books, or up to or more than 10 books.

Table 5.19: Distribution of the experimental subjects by group according to the number of books reportedly read

	Number of students		
No of books read	EG 1	EG 2	Total
< 10 books	9	21	30
≥ 10 books	15	11	26
Total	24	32	56

The experimental subjects' willingness to read in English, as can be determined by the number of books that these subjects claimed to have read, seemed to be related to their cloze reading performance in English. So, I found that 6 of the eight experimental subjects who, before the treatment, performed at the instruction or at the independent reading levels on the cloze passages in English, were the only subjects who happened to read more books than the average number of 10 during the treatment. At the post-treatment administration of the measures, 14 of the 16 experimental subjects who performed at the instruction or at the independent reading levels in English had also read above the average of 10 books. In connection with this association between the number of books read and the experimental subjects' performance on the cloze passages in English, I shall discuss, in Chapter 6, whether the number of books that the subjects claimed to have read mattered as far as their improvement was concerned.

Tables 5.18 and 5.19 have shown how the experimental subjects' achievement as learner readers contradicted my expectation that an average of 20 books would be read over the 20 weeks of treatment. My efforts to understand why this was so directed me to the subjects' slow reading speed as one possible factor. One of the questionnaire items that the subjects had dealt with before the treatment concerned in fact their reading speed. In Table 5.20 below, I present only the experimental subjects' responses.

Questionnaire item 26
"How many pages of a story book do you read in English/ French in 10 minutes?"

Table 5.20: Proportions of subjects by their estimated number of pages of a story book in French (Fr)/English (En) likely to be read in 10 minutes

	EG 1		EG 2		All EG	
	24		32		56	
	Fr	En	Fr	En	Fr	En
4 to 5 pages	12%	42%	25%	44%	20%	43%
1 to 3 pages	50%	38%	28%	22%	37%	28%
less than 1 page	17%	4%	31%	16%	25%	10%
don't know	21%	16%	16%	18%	18%	19%

The majority of these students estimated that they would read from less than a page to three pages. But, the experimental students' overestimation of their ability can be noticed here concerning reading in English. Almost three quarters of these subjects estimated that they could read between 4 and 5 pages in 10 minutes.

Nonetheless, a calculation from these data, of the average number of pages that the subjects in the current study could read in 10 minutes, gives 4 pages for reading in English and 5 pages for reading in French. In both instances, the data indicate that the majority of the subjects read under 200 words per minute. Yet, as may be noted with Baker (1989: 8): "If you are reading under 200 words per minute, the chances are that you are a word-by-word reader."

One may want to know how these figures match up with the subjects' actual achievement. Their actual reading speed must have been even lower, as from their performance at cloze reading: on average, it took the subjects about 50' to fill in the blanks in two cloze passages of about 250 words each.

To come back to the graded readers, I would like to reason as follows concerning the subjects' reading speed. Supposing that each book contained only 1000 words, an average of 10 books read as had occurred during the treatment reflects the average of 200 words or less likely to be read in 10', as may be calculated from the responses recorded in Table 5.20 above. Then, the subjects must have read at their normal speed, with a dictionary by their side.

I noted in an earlier chapter that the use of a dictionary is a reading strategy that is encouraged in Zairean schools. Some of the experimental subjects used to bring bilingual French/English dictionaries to classes. And, although knowing that the use

of a dictionary ought to be "a last resort" (see e.g., Hosenfeld, 1984) in effective reading, I had supplied the experimental subjects with copies of the monolingual English **Collins Gem** pocket dictionary, to use along with the graded readers. The **Collins Gem** was there, in the classroom, whenever a reading class was going on. But few experimental subjects used it, as for the majority, monolingual English dictionary explanations were difficult to understand.

It is nonetheless interesting to note that the experimental subjects could be noticed sharing the few bilingual French/English dictionaries, and sometimes also the monolingual French dictionaries, that were available in the classroom. The students' comprehension of English texts then seemed to be achieved thanks to the bilingual French/English, and the monolingual French dictionaries. The observed recourse to the monolingual French dictionary as a strategy for comprehending English texts suggests that the students were using their knowledge of French as "potential knowledge" of English (see Ringbom, 1992; and also Chapter 1 in this work). As far as they were concerned, an English word that appeared like some French word automatically evoked that French word, and prompted the use of the monolingual French dictionary. With such a strategy, fluent reading for meaning could have been remote.

I would now like to say a word on the graded readers that the subjects preferred to read.

5.4.2 Preferred levels and topics of graded readers

There were 6 levels of graded readers, in ascending order (1 to 6) of difficulty in terms of grammatical structures and number of words. To determine the number of times each of the 6 reader levels was selected by the subjects, it was necessary to identify the readers that the subjects selected and their levels, and to count the number of times of selection. The frequencies and percentages of selection times per group are presented in Table 5.21:

Table 5.21: Proportions of reader level selection times in each group

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Total
EG 1	73 25%	72 25%	60 21%	43 15%	23 8%	18 6%	289 100%
EG 2	77 28%	54 20%	68 25%	41 15%	17 6%	16 6%	273 100%
All EG	150 27%	126 22%	128 23%	84 15%	40 7%	34 6%	562 100%

The total number of the times of reader level selection seems to be similar for the two groups: about 14 times per week (562 times in 20 weeks), that is, at least 14 students selected a new reader each week. This represents 60% of the minimum number of selection times that could have been expected for EG 1 (24 students x 20 weeks), but only 43% of the minimum number of selection times for EG 2 (32 students x 20 weeks) if each experimental subject had borrowed a new book each week.

The levels of the graded readers that appear to have been popular were levels 1, 2, and 3. One of these three levels was likely to be selected 7 in every 10 times that the subjects required a new book to read. But, a great number of subjects tended to select level 1 books more frequently. I wish to repeat here that the popular level 1 was the level of the graded readers from which the cloze passages used as measurement instruments in this study were derived. But, as we have seen, in general the students involved in this study performed at the frustration reading level on those English cloze passages.

In contrast to levels 1, 2, and 3; levels 4, 5, and 6 books had at least 70% of chances of being rejected. On the whole, significantly more subjects chose levels 1, 2, and 3 books; whereas significantly fewer subjects chose levels 5 and 6 books. Level 4 books were so to speak on the borderline between the more preferred levels 1, 2, and 3; and the less preferred levels 5 and 6.

The foregoing figures suggest that there could have been more reading for enjoyment among the experimental subjects if there had been more levels 1, 2, and 3 readers than what the experimental subjects were supplied with. In fact, in each EG library, 56% of the books were levels 1, 2, and 3 readers; and the remaining 44% of the books comprised levels 4, 5, and 6 readers.

As to the topics, the experimental subjects preferred to read within the thriller/spy/adventure content domain more than in any other content domain. The non-fiction/information and the science/ nature content domains for example attracted very few subjects. Yet, the experimental subjects could have been expected to want to read more in the latter two domains because these content domains may be thought to relate to their own stream of secondary education (i.e. the scientific section).

Nonetheless, the popular titles from levels 1, 2, and 3, in my records tend to show, as I had expected, that the Zairean students would prefer to read materials in English that are culturally alien to them. These titles are in order of preference: **Inspector Holt and the Fur Van** (level 1), **The Charlie Chaplin Story** (level 2), **An American**

Tragedy (level 3), and **The Story of Scotland Yard** (level 2), of which the first two were also found to be popular among Japanese EFL learners by Bamford (1984).

A conclusion similar to that reached on the subjects' preferred levels of readers can be drawn here concerning the subjects' preferred topics. There were relatively few readers within the thriller/spy/adventure content domain in each EG library. Yet, it would appear that it is within this content domain that the experimental subjects wanted to read most. And there were few titles that were culturally biased towards the U.K. or the U.S..

5.5 A concluding note on the data

From the responses on the subjects' reading environment and opportunities, it can be said that in general reading was favourably perceived in School 1 and in School 2. This favourable perception even appeared to be overstated, particularly concerning reading in English, by School 2 students.

On the basis of the subjects' responses on their use of reading strategies, I identified some of them as positive reading strategy claimers in French, and in English. Table 5.7 and Table 5.8 gave the general impression that there were large proportions of positive reading strategy claimers in each of the four classes of students involved, concerning reading in French and reading in English, taken separately. Table 5.9 however, which put French and English together, showed that the proportions of positive reading strategy claimers decreased in each of the four classes. I noted particularly that overall there were few students who were identified as selective re-readers, word skippers, or word guessers in both French and English. Similar patterns were recorded at the pre-treatment and at the post-treatment administrations of the questionnaires.

The subjects' reading levels in both French and English were determined on the basis of their scores on the cloze passages in French and in English, also recorded before and after the treatment. A great majority of the subjects had read at the frustration level. Such results, as recorded before the treatment, could have warned for example that the experimental subjects should not be made to engage in the practice of sustained silent reading without "scaffolding". They did, and School 1 students seemed to be more involved than School 2. In my discussion of the study hypotheses in Chapter 6, I shall try to see whether this reading resulted in conspicuous differences between the experimental and the control subjects, after the treatment.

6 A DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY HYPOTHESES IN THE LIGHT OF THE DATA

Much of the discussion in this chapter involves putting French and English together. I therefore wish to recall one of Carrell's (1991) findings about reading in L1 and reading in L2/FL: L1 reading ability is a significant factor in the development of L2/FL reading ability. Carrell's (1991) study design was prompted by, inter alia, Cummins' (1979) "developmental interdependence hypothesis", which proposes that the development of competence in a second language is partially a function of the type of competence already developed in the first language at the time when intensive exposure to the second language begins. This hypothesis can be adapted in order to account for the development of reading competence in EFL, in relation to the development of reading ability in French among Zairean students, as follows: The development of reading competence in EFL is partially a function of the type of reading competence already developed in French at the time when EFL tuition begins.

Drawing from Carrell's finding, one could predict for the students involved in this study that their reading ability in French would be a significant factor in the development of their reading ability in English. However, the question may naturally arise as to what extent the students concerned were aware that their reading ability in French would enable them to develop their reading ability in English. It would seem normal, as an expression of that awareness, for such students to hold similar views about reading in French and reading in English.

For example, it may be shown for a given student using a given reading strategy while reading in French for a given purpose, that he acquired the said strategy consequent upon French reading instruction of some kind, or upon his untutored contacts with written materials in French. If the same student claims that he uses that strategy while reading in English for a purpose similar to that for which he normally uses the said strategy while reading in French, then it may be affirmed that the student in question perceives reading in French and reading in English as similar. Or, a student may have similar conceptions about reading in French and reading in English. Such a perception of the similarity of reading in the two languages can be considered as an aspect of the transfer of reading ability from French to English. And, it can be used as a basis on which the development of EFL reading ability can be built, for example, when EFL learners are given reading tasks in EFL that are similar to the reading tasks in French that they are accustomed to.

Another aspect of the transfer of reading ability from language to language has been shown in the literature to be a correlation between students' scores at comparable reading tasks in two languages (see e.g., Cummins, 1991). With positively correlated scores at reading tasks in two languages, students can be said to have transferred strategies from one language to another.

Two of the research questions that prompted the current study aimed at finding out whether such a transfer could be assumed for Zairean secondary school 5th form students (i.e. students normally in their third year of English language learning). The questions were as follows:
- Do Zairean secondary school 5th form students hold similar views about reading in French and reading in English ?
- How does their reading performance in French correlate with their reading performance in English ?

The first hypothesis was that significantly many students (i.e. at least two thirds of the sample) involved in this study would have similar views about reading in French and reading in English on each of the questionnaire items used as measurement instruments. This hypothesis can be said to derive from an observation of the characteristics that English shares with French in the collective consciousness of Zaireans. Both languages can be seen as languages of literacy because of their association with school learning, in contrast to Zairean languages which I referred to as languages of orality. And at school, similar methodologies are used for the development of reading in these two languages, as I tried to show in Chapter 2. Above all, the foregoing hypothesis relates to the view held by holistic theorists, as indicated in Chapter 3, that reading is the same across languages.

The second hypothesis was that there would be a positive correlation in the students' reading performance at comparable French and English reading tasks. The verification of this hypothesis would be taken as pointing to the transfer of reading ability only if the subjects involved had scored high in both French and English.

I said earlier that a perception of the similarity between reading in French and reading in English can be used as a basis for the development of reading ability in English. This idea underlay the choice of the experimental treatment for the current study. Assuming that Zairean secondary school 5th form students can read novels and similar types of fiction materials in French, I thought that those among them involved in this study as experimental subjects would benefit from opportunities of reading

similar materials in English. Therefore, as explained in Chapter 4, the practice of sustained silent reading, aligning itself to holistic approaches to reading, was adopted concerning the EFL reading materials that the experimental subjects were presented with.

In respect of this treatment, the third research question aimed at finding out whether the experimental subjects would benefit from reading for enjoyment in English, particularly in terms of their reading ability. As I noted in Chapter 1, reading for enjoyment is not a common literacy practice in Zairean schools, or even in Zairean society at large. However, prompted by some of the studies on the development of reading reviewed in Chapter 3, I hypothesised that the experimental subjects would show significantly greater improvement in their EFL reading ability than the control subjects, as a result of their sustained silent reading in EFL. I also expected the effects of the treatment to be noticeable in the experimental subjects' French reading ability, given the possibilities of transfer as may be inferred from the "interdependence" hypothesis.

The final research question also related to the treatment and enquired into whether the expected improvement in the experimental subjects' reading ability would be accompanied by perceptions about reading in French and reading in English different from the ones that the subjects held before the treatment.

On the evidence of salient data, I am trying here to answer the preceding research questions and to verify or falsify the hypotheses that ensued from them. This chapter is then divided into five sections. The first section examines the hypothesis on the similarity between reading in French and reading in English. The second section addresses the relationship between the subjects' cloze reading performance in French and in English. The discussion in these two sections is based on the data that were collected before the treatment. The third section, dealing with the cloze reading scores before as well as after the treatment, considers the expected greater improvement of the experimental subjects in comparison to the control subjects. The fourth section considers the distributions of the experimental and control subjects on some of the questionnaire variables, after the treatment. And finally, the fifth section deals with a few cases of students from the sample who seemed to have made significant progress in their cloze reading, after the treatment.

6.1 On the similarity between reading in French and reading in English

That significantly many subjects would have similar views about reading in French and reading in English.

The patterns of the subjects' responses to corresponding questionnaire items in French and in English were examined so as to establish whether it was the case that significantly many of the subjects had similar perceptions about reading in French and reading in English. I counted the number of subjects whose responses to corresponding questionnaire items in French and in English were alike. From this procedure emerged e.g., the seven categories of positive reading strategy claimers in both French and English, presented in Chapter 5. This procedure is relevant to the notion of transfer and the interdependence of CALP as I am concerned with whether a given student said the same thing about reading in French and reading in English.

The perception of the similarity between reading in French and reading in English presupposes some consistency in the subjects' reading behaviour or conception of reading across the two languages. It is on the expectation of such a consistency that I predicted that significantly many subjects would have similar views about the two activities. That is, on comparing the proportions of subjects on any given questionnaire item, I would expect the proportions of subjects who responded in like manner (echoing the interdependence of CALP) for reading in French and for reading in English to be significantly greater than the proportions of subjects who responded differently.

On examining the proportions of subjects who responded in like manner and the proportions of subjects who responded differently concerning reading in French and reading in English, on each questionnaire item, I noticed that the questionnaire items divide into three groups:
- those on which significantly many subjects held similar views about reading in French and reading in English, thus helping to verify the hypothesis on the similarity;
- those on which significantly many subjects held differing views about reading in French and reading in English, helping to falsify the hypothesis on the similarity; and
- those on which the proportions of subjects holding either similar or differing views about reading in French and about reading in English, are not significant.

Another observation worth noting is the following: there is no single questionnaire item on which the subjects as a group totally failed to show an expression of some similarity or some difference about reading in the two languages. For this reason, it

can be argued that for the sample concerned, reading in French and reading in English were not seen as totally different or totally similar activities. They were more or less similar, more or less different on one variable or another. It can be said that they were less similar activities on questionnaire items to which significantly few subjects responded in like manner, and that they were more similar activities on questionnaire items to which significantly many subjects responded in like manner.

Two of the questionnaire items, which I omitted to discuss in Chapter 5, illustrate the reading-related variables on which significantly many subjects responded in like manner concerning reading in French and reading in English. These are questionnaire items 27 and 29, the responses to which are given in Tables 6.1 and 6.2 below in percentages of the sample (N = 105).

Questionnaire item 27:
"What is the order of words on the page of a dictionary?"

The responses to this questionnaire item were coded in three categories: alphabetic, else, no idea, as follows:

Table 6.1: Proportions of subjects by their identification of the order of words on the page of a dictionary

	French	English	Similar view
1- alphabetic	97%	92%	91%
2- else (other than 1)		2%	
3- no idea	3%	6%	1%
Total	100%	100%	92%

Almost everyone (91% of the sample) said that the order of words on the page of a French or an English dictionary is alphabetic. This was easy to say and the significance of the proportion of the subjects giving this response could only be expected. This verifies the hypothesis on the similarity.

Questionnaire item 29:
"What, for you, is the use of the title of a text that you are going to read ?"

The responses to questionnaire item 29 were coded in four categories as follows: (1)-the title as useful in terms of its relationship to the theme or content of the text, (2)-the title as a curiosity-arousing device, (3)- the title seen as of no use, and (4)- no idea.

The following responses were recorded:

Table 6.2: Proportions of subjects as to their awareness of the usefulness of the title of a text

	French	English	Similar view
1- useful	76%	74%	66%
2- curiosity device	12%	5%	2%
3- no use	2%	3%	1%
4- no idea	10%	18%	7%
Total	100%	100%	92%

On the usefulness, or not, of the title of a text that one is going to read, more than three quarters (76%) of the subjects held similar views about reading in French and reading in English. Among these, there are two thirds (66%) of the sample, i.e. significantly many subjects, who had the similar view concerning reading in French and reading in English that the title of a text is useful in terms of its relationship to the theme or content of that text. This number bears out the hypothesis on the similarity.

There were two other questionnaire items to which the subjects responded in a way that tended to show that the great majority perceived reading in French and reading in English as similar activities. As the responses to these questionnaire items appeared to less informative, I am not going to discuss them.

Nonetheless, I would like to indicate that these questionnaire items appeared to have one thing in common. I wish to relate this to my discussion of literacy as comprising "declarative" and "procedural knowledge" (see Chapter 1) as follows. The questionnaire items to which significantly many subjects responded in like manner about reading in French and reading in English enquired about "declarative knowledge": knowledge of the order of words on the page of a dictionary, knowledge of the usefulness of the title of a text, perception about oneself as a reader, etc.. These questionnaire items did not enquire about what the subjects would claim to be able to do while as readers they engaged with texts in French and in English. I consider this type of claim to be related to the subjects' "procedural knowledge". It is at this level that reading in French and reading in English seemed to be perceived as different activities. I am saying this on the basis e.g., of the proportions of positive reading strategy claimers presented in Table 5.9 (see Chapter 5). Table 6.3 below indicates these proportions as recorded before the treatment.

For all the sample, there was no variable represented in the table below on which significantly many subjects held a similar view about reading in English and reading in French. This is a falsification of my hypothesis on the similarity between the two activities.

**Table 6.3: Proportions of positive reading strategy claimers
in both English and French before the treatment**

	EG 1	EG 2	CG 1	CG 2	EG	CG	School 1	School 2	All
N	24	32	25	24	56	49	49	56	105
self-questioners	50%	44%	48%	58%	46%	53%	49%	50%	50%
ideas seekers	46%	50%	56%	54%	48%	55%	51%	52%	51%
selective re-readers	4%	25%	12%	8%	16%	10%	8%	18%	13%
predictors	58%	28%	44%	71%	41%	57%	51%	46%	48%
knowledge appealers	58%	56%	64%	50%	57%	57%	61%	54%	57%
word skippers	17%	19%	16%	29%	18%	22%	16%	23%	20%
word guessers	38%	34%	36%	46%	39%	41%	37%	39%	40%

It can then be said that reading in French and reading in English were generally perceived as two different activities. As this general observation mostly concerns what I referred to as reading strategies, it can be affirmed that it is on the use of reading strategies that reading in French and reading in English were perceived as different activities. And consequently, it can also be suggested that reading strategies acquired with reading materials in French would not be readily transferred to reading materials in English. Two particular strategies can be named from the data in Table 6.3: selective re-reading, and word skipping about which significantly few subjects (13% and 20% of the sample respectively) responded in like manner concerning reading in French and reading in English.

I shall reason as follows concerning the cases of the subjects presented in Table 6.3, in my consideration of the correlation between the subjects' cloze reading performance in English and their cloze reading performance in French: if a high score in French provided sufficient evidence for a sufficiently developed reading ability in

French, the absence of the transfer of this ability to English could be affirmed for all the subjects who scored high in French but scored low in English. There would be a negative correlation between French scores and English scores in this case.

The general impression from Table 6.3 data is that not many subjects were aware of the similarity of the use of reading strategies across languages. It is then possible that the students' CALP was not yet stable enough to allow for the transfer of reading strategies to occur.

However, from Table 6.3 again, it can be observed that the proportion of CG 2 predictors meets my specification on the verification of the hypothesis on the similarity between reading in French and reading in English. There were more than two-thirds (71%) of CG 2 students (the predictors) who tended to consider reading in French and reading in English as similar activities, when it came to linking what they read to what would come next in the text. It can be said that CG 2 students generally showed awareness that a particular strategy could be used while reading in French and while reading in English. Whether this strategy had been in fact transferred cannot be established unless these students' performance in French is correlated with their performance in English. I shall undertake this task in Section 6.2 below. In the same section, I shall also consider the case of CG 1 knowledge appealers, whose proportion (64%) was only 2% smaller than my specification on the verification of the hypothesis on the similarity between reading in French and reading in English.

The following section deals with the hypothesis put forward on the positive correlation between cloze reading performance in French and cloze reading performance in English.

6.2 On the correlation between French and English cloze reading

That there would be a positive correlation between the subjects' scores on the French cloze passages and their scores on the English cloze passages.

The above hypothesis is discussed on the basis of the pre-treatment scores obtained by the subjects at cloze reading in French and in English. It would follow from this hypothesis that all things being equal, a student who scored high at French cloze reading would also score high at English cloze reading; and that a student who scored low at French cloze reading would also score low at English cloze reading and vice versa (see Alderson, 1984: 4, for a more cogent wording of this hypothesis).

Underlying this hypothesis, in relation to the perception of the similarity between reading in French and reading in English, was the idea that the subjects would tend to adopt the same type of behaviour when performing on similar tasks (in this case, the cloze passages) in the two languages.

Table 6.4 presents the different Pearson correlation coefficients that were computed on the subjects' pre-treatment cloze scores:

Table 6.4: Correlation between pre-treatment French and English cloze reading

	EG 1	EG 2	CG 1	CG 2	EG	CG	School 1	School 2	All
N	24	32	25	24	56	49	49	56	105
df	22	30	23	22	54	47	47	54	103
r	0.64	0.19	0.44	0.53	0.26	0.53	0.52	0.25	0.35
p <	.001	n.s.	.05	.01	n.s.	.001	.001	n.s.	.001

As can be read from this table, there appears to be some relationship between the subjects' French and English cloze reading scores that were recorded at the pre-treatment administration. Most of the correlation coefficients displayed in Table 6.4 above are comprised between 0.35 and 0.65, a range within which, as Cohen & Manion (1985: 164) observe, only crude group predictions may be possible.

The relationship between French and English cloze reading scores is low in the performance of EG 2, of School 2, and of EG; whereas it is moderate in the performance of EG 1, of CG 1, of CG 2, of School 1, of CG, and of the sample as a whole. In spite of the fact that this relationship is low or moderate for each group involved, it indicates that the scores positively covary, i.e. there is a tendency for the English cloze scores to increase or decrease whenever the French cloze scores increase or decrease, and vice versa. This finding provides support for the hypothesis put forward concerning the subjects' reading performance in French and English. As it is somehow consistent with the findings of other correlational studies on the transfer of reading strategies (see e.g., Carrell, 1991; Perkins et al, 1989), it can also lend support to the conclusion that some transfer of reading ability has occurred. I shall examine the extent to which this conclusion is valid through the performance of high scorers. My focus on high scorers in this instance follows the lead of previous writers (e.g., Perkins et al, 1989) who have tended to affirm that the application of CALP may only occur when the language learner has reached a high level of competence in the target language, provided also that he has reached a high level of literacy in the source language.

Moreover, it can be noticed from Table 6.4 above that the relationship between the French and English cloze reading scores tends to be stronger in the performance of School 1 subjects than in the performance of School 2 subjects, especially when EG 2 is considered. Whenever EG 2 is involved, the relationship between the two sets of scores tends to weaken: the correlation coefficient is weak, and it is not significant. With the exception of the correlation coefficient computed for the whole sample, the three coefficients that are not significant involve EG 2 subjects. In this connection, it will be remembered that the performance of EG 2 as a group was noticed (see Chapter 5) to be weak in comparison to the performance of EG 1, CG 1, or CG 2, despite the absence of any statistical significance.

In addition, where the correlation coefficients are significant, i.e. likely to indicate some actual relationship, the proportions of common variance between reading in French and reading in English are so small as to suggest that many other variables may have influenced the subjects' performance. For this reason, the relationship in the subjects' French and English cloze reading scores needs to be studied for smaller groups on the basis of such criteria as the observed level of performance on the French and on the English cloze passages, or the presence or absence of some of the features that were considered on the similarity between reading in French and reading in English.

6.2.1 Level of performance

In the computation of the correlation coefficients presented above (Table 6.4), high scorers as a group are not distinguished from low scorers as a group. Yet, as the abilities are mixed, a high scorer in French may not necessarily be also a high scorer in English, and vice versa; which may have weakened the correlation. The data then need to be sorted out in such a way as to distinguish high scorers as a group from low scorers as a group, concerning the subjects' performance in each of the two languages.

The high scorers would normally be the subjects who had read at the independent level in French (5% of the sample), or in English (3% of the sample); and the low scorers would normally be the subjects who had read at the frustration level in French (83% of the sample), or in English (85% of the sample).(The details of the distribution of the subjects among the different reading levels are presented in Chapter 5.) However, the former are so few that examining only their behaviour may not be informative (as in some of the groups no subject had read at the independent level); and the latter are so many that examining their behaviour would appear like an attempt to re-assert the findings already presented concerning the whole sample.

Therefore, the notions of high scorers and low scorers are to be understood here as including, in the first case, subjects who had read at the independent level and/or subjects who had read at the instruction level; and in the second case, subjects who had read at the frustration level only, as may happen for each individual group of subjects. Concretely, the following considerations are based on the subjects' raw scores ranked in such a way as to distinguish the top 25% of the subjects (high scorers) and the bottom 25% of the subjects (low scorers) from the middle 50% of the subjects.

It will be obvious in the following presentation that there are cases of positive correlation as well as cases of negative correlation. There are cases of

- positive correlation (1) when students are high scorers in French as well as in English. This case is potentially informative concerning the type of behaviour to encourage among students. I shall therefore try to find out whether the students involved here were identified as positive reading strategy claimers. Or (2) when students are low scorers in French as well as in English. The students involved here will hopefully supply information as to what type of behaviour should be discouraged, especially if they were not identified as positive reading strategy claimers.

- negative correlation (1) when students are low scorers in French, but high scorers in English. I shall speak of the possibility of the development of reading ability in English independently of its development in French, particularly if the students involved here were identified as positive reading strategy claimers. Or (2) when students are high scorers in French but low scorers in English. This case will be accounted for by Clarke's (1980) "short circuit" hypothesis or Cummins' (1979) "threshold" hypothesis, especially if the students involved were identified as positive reading strategy claimers. In other terms, it is a case in which the learner reader's English is not good enough to allow transfer to occur.

6.2.1.1 Performance of high scorers in French

Table 6.5: Correlation between pre-treatment French and English cloze reading by high scorers in French

	EG 1	EG 2	CG 1	CG 2	EG	CG	School 1	School 2	All
N	6	8	6	6	14	12	12	14	26
df	4	6	4	4	12	10	10	12	24
r	0.42	-0.61	0.60	0.71	-0.62	0.50	0.17	-0.44	-0.43
p <	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	.02	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	.05

Table 6.5 above shows that the strength of the correlation differs from individual group to individual group. It can be noticed here that the correlation coefficients are slightly stronger for School 2 groups than for School 1 groups. In addition, the correlation coefficient computed for CG 2 is above the low-to-moderate range observed earlier. It is within the 0.65 - 0.85 range in which, according to Cohen & Manion (1985: 164), group predictions can be made very accurately.

As the correlation coefficient on the performance of the CG 2 students concerned here is in the range where group predictions can be made accurately, I wanted to know whether these CG 2 students were identified as positive reading strategy claimers in both French and English from their responses to the questionnaires. All of the 6 students involved were identified as positive reading strategy claimers in at least one category. They were self-questioners (4), ideas seekers (3), predictors (5), or word skippers (4). The only selective re-reader in this group was not identified as a positive reading strategy claimer in any other category. By contrast, the only word guesser in the group was also identified as a positive reading strategy claimer in some of the other categories.

The strength of CG 2 correlation in Table 6.5 gives me an opportunity of saying that there is a relationship between one's good self-concept as a reader and one's performance. These particular students were identified as positive reading strategy claimers in both English and French, and they were high scorers on cloze in both English and French. This finding relates to Barnett's (1988) or Carrell's (1989) observation noted in Chapter 5 that an increase in perceived strategy use correlates with an increase in strategy use.

I would also like to add that the CG 2 students concerned here can be said to have managed to transfer their positive reading strategies. This is a case that allows me to re-assert my belief that learner readers' awareness of the similarity between reading in French and reading in English is a positive factor in the development of their reading ability and their reading performance in each of the two languages.

Moreover, concerning reading strategy development, the case of the CG 2 students concerned here suggests that one should emphasise work on the strategies of selective re-reading, and word guessing, as these are the ones that the students in question did not generally show awareness of.

Table 6.5 above also shows that the tendency for the scores in French and in English to correlate positively is not a performance characteristic of all the groups of subjects

involved in the current study. EG 2 high scorers in French for example distinguish themselves here for displaying a negative relationship between their performance in French and their performance in English. A moderate negative correlation coefficient is obtained for EG 2 high scorers: -0.61. For all the other groups, a high score in French is accompanied by a high score in English, thus giving support to the conclusion that the high scorers in French have been able to transfer their French reading strategies to English cloze reading. For EG 2 high scorers in French however, a high score in French is accompanied by a low score in English. The inversion of the relationship between their performance in French and their performance in English is so strong that it has influenced the correlation coefficients (-0.62, and -0.43) respectively computed for the EG and the sample's high scorers in French.

As the performance of EG 2 high scorers in French appear to have had this great influence, a closer look needs to be taken at their characteristics. It can be noted for example that all the eight EG 2 high scorers in French were identified as positive reading strategy claimers in at least one category. For example, all of them except one, were identified as knowledge appealers. On the basis of this finding, one can reason as follows: If these 8 subjects' French scores lend some support to their claim that they very often/ sometimes appealed to their previous knowledge, then their English scores are saying that these subjects failed to activate their relevant previous knowledge of English, or that they did not have the relevant knowledge to activate.

In my opinion, it was not the lack of relevant previous knowledge for the following reasons: All the students involved in this study came in contact with EFL at school using the same **English for Africa** series about which a word was said in earlier chapters. Moreover, EG 2 and CG 2 subjects had the same teacher of English. In addition, as I found from the school records, over half of all EG high scorers in French (58%, N = 14) had repeated at least one year as from their first contact with English at school. These repeaters can be said to have had more experience with both French and English at school than 42% of the 14 EG high scorers in French. Five (62%, N = 8) of the EG 2 high scorers in French are among these repeaters.

On examining the performance of all the EG high scorers who were also repeaters, I found that the correlation between their performance in French and their performance in English is negative. The correlation coefficient computed in this case, -0.39, though not significant, points to the tendency for their scores in English to decrease whenever their scores in French increase. (A negative correlation in the performance of high scorers also obtains when high scorers in French who were repeaters are collapsed

with high scorers in English who were repeaters: -0.28, N = 20, but this coefficient is not significant.)

The combination of the fact that there is a tendency for the English scores of the repeaters among the high scorers in French to decrease whenever their French scores increase, and the fact that the majority of EG 2 high scorers in French are repeaters may then be invoked to account for the negative correlation noted between the French and English cloze reading performance of EG 2 high scorers in French.

This finding suggests that French reading ability may not necessarily be transferred to reading in English even if the reading tasks are comparable. In addition, it can be said that the number of years of English tuition added on as a consequence of class repetition may not be a significant factor in the development of proficiency in English. It can be noted for example that some of these repeaters had taken English classes for 4 years.

If the two provisos presented above are true, then there is some evidence for Clarke's (1980) "short circuit" hypothesis, or Cummins' (1979) "threshold level" hypothesis on the transfer of reading ability from language to language. There must be some minimum level of proficiency in the target language for the transfer of the ability developed in the source language to operate. I touched on this matter in Chapter 1, and noted that researchers (e.g., Perkins et al, 1989) tended to associate this minimum level with high scores in reading. It can be said that the EG 2 students discussed here had not yet reached the minimum level in English required for the application of CALP.

As positive reading strategy claimers, in response to the questionnaires, the EG 2 high scorers in French who were also repeaters were identified as ideas seekers. They tended to affirm that they very often/ sometimes stopped their reading in order to think over a difficult idea conveyed by the text, concerning reading in French as well as concerning reading in English. If a high score can in this instance be considered as evidence that they were able to do that at French cloze reading, their performance on the English cloze passages tends to show that they had not been able to transfer that strategy. Although they were aware that they could use the same strategy while reading in English, they had not yet attained a sufficient level of English proficiency to achieve it.

Apart from the fact that the majority of EG 2 high scorers in French were repeaters, another important characteristic can be said to describe them all: as positive reading

strategy claimers, no one of them was identified as a word skipper. Then, another possible explanation of the negative correlation in their performance would be that because of their low level of English the English cloze passages might have required them to be able to skip words without losing the general idea of a text, more than the French cloze passages (possibly, because of the familiarity with French).

6.2.1.2 Performance of high scorers in English

The examination of the French and English scores of the high scorers in English corroborates the tendencies already observed in the relationship between the subjects' performance at French cloze reading and their performance at English cloze reading. As can be gathered from Table 6.6 below, there is a general tendency for positive covariation: whenever the French scores increase or decrease, the English scores also increase or decrease, and vice versa, even if the range of the correlation varies only from low to moderate. Particularly giving support to this general tendency is the correlation coefficient computed for CG high scorers in English ($r = 0.61$, $p < .05$, N = 12).

Table 6.6: Correlation between French and English cloze reading by high scorers in English

	EG 1	EG 2	CG 1	CG 2	EG	CG	School 1	School 2	All
N	6	8	6	6	14	12	12	14	26
df	4	6	4	4	12	10	10	12	24
r	0.38	-0.38	0.47	0.61	0.28	0.61	0.25	0.34	0.20
p <	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	.05	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.

Apart from the general tendency for positive correlation, one case of negative correlation can be noticed from the foregoing table. Incidentally, it also features EG 2 students, as in the preceding case (see 6.2.1.1). The correlation coefficient between the performance of EG 2 high scorers in English and their performance in French is -0.38. It is not significant, but all the same it shows that their high English scores are accompanied by low French scores.

I assumed that a high score in French is a manifestation of a sufficiently developed reading ability in French, which could be transferred to English given some minimum level of proficiency in English. The case of these EG 2 high scorers in English reveals that these particular subjects had a low score in French and thus had not sufficiently developed their French reading ability so as to bring it to bear upon reading in English. Yet, it is the case that they scored high in English in comparison to their classmates. This being so, it may be conjectured that reading ability in English can be

developed independently of reading ability in French, which may explain why these particular EG 2 students are among high scorers in English but among low scorers in French.

Such an account does not seem to contradict certain facts that can be observed about ordinary language use. For example, immigrant parents' school children living in the second language country, or second language school children in places like Zaire (whose first language is not the language of formal education) are among second language users who may as yet have to develop reading ability in their first languages.

The suggestion that for the EG 2 students concerned here EFL reading ability developed independently of their French reading ability seems to be a very remote possibility. But, it is worth exploring as the notion of the independence of the development of EFL reading ability can account for what I may call a reverse form of Cummins' (1979) "interdependence hypothesis" on reading in one's source and target languages. In this case, it is understood that rather than developing in the source language and transferring from the source language to the target language, reading strategies can develop in the target language and transfer from the target language to the source language (see e.g., Levine & Reves, 1985).

There is therefore a possibility for cases in which transfer from source to target language may trigger some development in the target language, which will spring back to the source language. Or, if the starting point of the transfer is the target language, the development that this transfer may occasion in the source language will spring back to the target language. The only proviso will of course be that the individual learner readers concerned engage in literacy events involving reading in each of these languages.

All this would add up to something resembling Nuttall's (1982: 168) "virtuous circle of the good reader" where it is shown that reading nurtures reading. Along the lines of the cross-linguistic interdependence, the "virtuous circle" (see Fig. 6.1) can be interpreted as meaning that reading in French may nurture reading done in English, which in its turn nurtures reading done in French; or, starting from an independent development of reading ability in English, that reading done in English may nurture reading done in French which in its turn nurtures reading done in English.

Source language

Target language
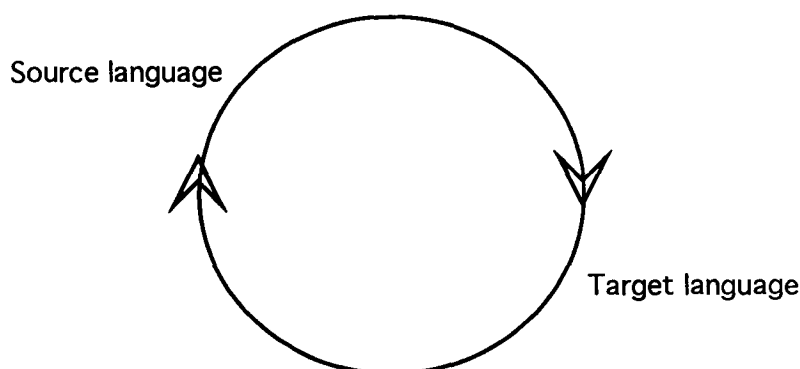
Fig.6.1: The virtuous circle of the transfer of reading ability

I now turn to the performance of low scorers.

6.2.1.3 Performance of low scorers in French

Some of the cases in this group echo what has just been noted concerning EG 2 high scorers in English. As can be seen from Table 6.7 below, there are negative correlation coefficients in the performance of EG 1, EG 2, CG 1, and School 2 low scorers in French; which suggest that low scores in French are accompanied by high scores in English. The account supplied above for the performance of EG 2 high scorers in English will also apply here, viz. the possible independence of the development of reading ability in English from the development of reading ability in French. If this is true, and if it is also the case that reading strategies can be transferred from target language to source language, then low scorers in French could profit from a treatment meant to develop reading ability in EFL. Such a possibility will be examined in 6.3 below where the effects of the experimental reading programme, i.e. the current study's treatment, are assessed.

Table 6.7: Correlation between French and English cloze reading by low scorers in French

	EG 1	EG 2	CG 1	CG 2	EG	CG	School 1	School 2	All
N	6	8	6	6	14	12	12	14	26
df	4	6	4	4	12	10	10	12	24
r	-0.45	-0.17	0.51	0.95	0.15	0.62	0.35	-0.49	0.40
p <	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	.01	n.s.	.05	n.s.	n.s.	.05

Apart from the three negative correlation coefficients, one can notice from Table 6.7 above the general tendency observed so far for there to be a positive correlation between performance at French cloze reading and performance at English cloze reading. Here, some of the correlation coefficients are significant. There is for example the case of all low scorers in French for whom the correlation is 0.40,

significant at .05; or the case of CG low scorers in French for whom the correlation is 0.62, also significant at .05. Above all, there is the case of CG 2 low scorers in French for whom the correlation is highly significant and has such a strong magnitude as to signal near perfect relationship between performance at French cloze reading and performance at English cloze reading ($r = 0.95$, $p < .01$, $N = 6$).

The strength of this correlation should allow one to make accurate predictions (see Cohen & Manion, 1985). It is therefore necessary to examine the characteristics of these CG 2 students. They were low scorers in French as well as in English. Then, if one is a low scorer in French, one is very likely to be also a low scorer in English. One may not have sufficiently developed one's reading ability in French to the extent of being in a position to bring it to bear upon reading tasks in English.

I tried to find out to what extent the CG 2 students concerned here differed from the different sub-groups of high scorers examined in 6.2.1.1 and 6.2.1.2. The tendency to overstate one's ability, which I noted in Chapter 5 concerning the sample as a whole, can also be evidenced for the CG 2 low scorers in French: these six students were identified as positive reading strategy claimers in at least one category. Nonetheless, as positive reading strategy claimers, they share the following characteristics: not a single one of them was identified as a selective re-reader, or as a word skipper.

This finding lends support to the assertion of the importance of selective re-reading and word skipping as the reading strategies which might not have been adequately developed in the students who participated in this study. I noted earlier in 6.1 that these were the strategies that involved significantly few subjects. And here, their absence is associated with poor performance in both English and French.

Apart from their common characteristics related to their perception of their use of reading strategies, all the CG 2 low scorers in French were repeaters, a case that is related to that of EG 2 repeaters discussed in 6.2.1.1 above. The conclusion I drew in 6.2.1.1 appears to be also relevant here: class repetition may not be a significant factor in the development of proficiency in English, in the Zairean context.

6.2.1.4 Performance of low scorers in English

There are two interesting cases here, as can be seen from Table 6.8 below. One quarter of the subjects in EG 2, who scored low in English also scored low in French; as can be noticed from the strong, positive, and highly significant correlation coefficient obtained: 0.93 ($p < .001$, $N = 8$). The case of these EG 2 subjects helps to

confirm that there were subjects for whom French reading strategies were not developed enough to be used for reading in English. All except one of the eight students concerned here were identified as positive reading strategy claimers in at least one category. There were for example 3 selective re-readers, and 1 word skipper. These are to be considered as cases of subjects who tended to overstate their ability, as was generally observed concerning the whole sample.

Table 6.8: Correlation between French and English cloze reading by low scorers in English

	EG 1	EG 2	CG 1	CG 2	EG	CG	School 1	School 2	All
N	6	8	6	6	14	12	12	14	26
df	4	6	4	4	12	10	10	12	24
r	-0.75	0.93	-0.04	0.19	-0.02	0.21	-0.80	0.08	-0.05
p <	n.s.	.001	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	.01	n.s.	n.s.

Some of the low scorers in English nonetheless tended to have high scores in French. This is why there are negative correlation coefficients in the foregoing table. The high significance of this inverse relationship particularly comes to the foreground with the correlation obtained for School 1: -0.80 (p < .01, N = 12), which may be said to lend strong support to Clarke's (1980) "short circuit" hypothesis. EFL reading performance may fail to distinguish good from poor readers as the difficulties of reading in the target language may impose poor reading strategies on usually good readers in French.

However, from the findings I discussed in the previous sub-sections, I tended to infer that selective re-reading and word skipping were the strategies that could account for success at cloze reading for the subjects in my sample. No one among the 12 School 1 subjects involved here was identified as a selective re-reader or as a word skipper. It would be normal for them to be among low scorers in both French and English, which implies that the correlation coefficient on their performance should be positive. I need to explain why the correlation in the case in point here is negative, so as to maintain that the School 1 students concerned were good readers in French and that their good reading strategies had been "short circuited".

A re-examination of the characteristics of this sub-group shows that 3 of these students were not at all identified as positive reading strategy claimers in any of the categories. The data on high scorers that I examined in 5.3 tended to suggest that high scorers on cloze were generally positive reading strategy claimers. I then opine that these three students could not succeed at both French and English cloze reading. It is then exceptional that they scored high in French. But, the remaining 9 of these School

1 students were identified as positive reading strategy claimers. I wish to put forward concerning these 9 students that their awareness of one or more of the other positive reading strategies compensated (see e.g., Stanovich, 1980, for the notion of compensation) for the absence of selective re-reading and word skipping. They thus scored high in French. Then, their proficiency in English "short circuited" the transfer of this awareness to cloze reading in English, which would account for their low scores in English and the negative correlation that Table 6.8 supplied.

In Sub-section 6.2.2 below, I try to look at the issue of the correlation in the subjects' cloze reading performance in French and English, from the different categories of positive reading strategy claimers in which the subjects were identified, before the treatment.

6.2.2 Features on the similarity between reading in French and reading in English

The cloze reading performance of subjects who were identified as positive reading strategy claimers in both English and French may have been influenced by their awareness that reading in English and reading in French are similar. Especially if the subjects concerned here were high scorers in both French and English, it can be affirmed that they had developed CALP stable enough for the transfer of reading strategies to occur, or to have occurred.

I examined the correlation coefficients on the performance of positive reading strategy claimers identified in each of the seven categories, for each of the four groups of subjects. In general, there was positive correlation. However, there were differences in the strength of the correlation for individual categories. Strong correlation coefficients were noticed particularly in three of the four classes of students:
- in EG 1, in the performance of predictors (r = 0.78, p < .001, N = 14), knowledge appealers (r = 0.69, p < .01, N = 14), word skippers (r = 0.89, n.s., N = 4), and word guessers (r = 0.75, p < .02, N = 9);
- in CG 1, in the performance of selective re-readers only (r = 0.92, n.s., N = 3); and finally,
- in CG 2, in the performance of word skippers (r = 0.69, n.s, N = 7), and word guessers (r = 0.72, p < .02, N = 11).

EG 2 students' performance was not particularly noticeable. Also, the interesting cases of CG 2 predictors and CG 1 knowledge appealers, which I noted in 6.1 above, did not produce a strong correlation.

All the same, it would be difficult for me to sustain the idea that the strength of the correlation indicates that transfer occurred in the performance of the different subjects singled out above. I have taken the view expressed e.g., by Perkins et al (1989) that transfer occurs at a high level of performance in each of the languages involved. In the instances above, the proportions of high scorers in both French and English among these positive reading strategy claimers varied between 10 and 22%: there were few high scorers in both English and French. It is then necessary to examine the correlation in the performance of those positive reading strategy claimers who were also high scorers in both French and English.

A consideration of only these positive reading strategy claimers in both French and English who were also high scorers in French and in English reveals negative correlation coefficients in all but one of the seven cases:
- self-questioners ($r = -0.82$, $p < .05$, $N = 6$),
- ideas seekers ($r = -0.73$, n.s., $N = 5$),
- selective re-readers ($r = -1$, $N = 2$),
- predictors ($r = -0.49$, n.s., $N = 11$),
- knowledge appealers ($r = -0.52$, n.s., $N = 8$),
- word skippers ($r = 0.59$, n.s., $N = 5$),
- and word guessers ($r = -0.63$, n.s., $N = 5$).

Only in the case of the 5 subjects who were identified as word skippers, can I say that performance in French positively covaried with performance in English ($r = 0.59$), although the correlation is not significant. It can be signalled that no subject from EG 2 or CG 1 was involved here.

In Chapter 5, and in some of the preceding presentation in this chapter, I observed that there were significantly few subjects in the sample who were identified as selective re-readers, or word skippers in both French and English. I was tempted to relate this fact to the generally low performance of the subjects in my sample. Now, the finding about the correlation in the performance of the high-scoring positive reading strategy claimers shows the possibility of transfer only in the performance of word skippers. This correlation is not strong, it is not significant either, and concerns the performance of only 5 students. Nonetheless, because this is an interesting tendency, it would appear logical to conclude
- that word skipping is the only strategy of which the awareness could have been transferred from French to English: the performance of the few word skippers who

were identified in the sample appears to provide evidence for the interdependence of CALP, and the transfer of reading ability, only for the strategy of word skipping; and - that word skipping is the only strategy that distinguished high scorers from low scorers at cloze reading in both French and English. So, as there were few word skippers in the sample, it should not be surprising that many subjects scored low in French as well as in English.

Word skipping seems to have had a great importance in the cloze reading performance of my subjects.

I would now like to consider the issue of the expected greater improvement of the experimental subjects.

6.3 On the expected greater improvement of the experimental subjects

That after the treatment, the experimental (EG) subjects would show significantly greater improvement in their EFL as well as their French reading ability, than the control (CG) subjects.

Improvement in reading ability is to be determined, in this section, using a pretest-posttest comparison of the subjects' scores at the French and at the English cloze passages that were used as measuring instruments. In this connection, three questions need to be dealt with: (1) whether there had been any improvement at all in the subjects' performance (I shall consider all the sample; but any particularly interesting case will be discussed as the presentation proceeds), (2) whether the EG subjects showed significantly greater improvement than the CG subjects, and (3) whether the improvement likely to show up in the EG subjects' performance is a result of the practice of sustained silent reading (the experimental treatment).

6.3.1 Ascertaining the improvement

To ascertain the improvement in the subjects' reading ability, one may want to look at how the subjects distributed themselves, as from their scores, among the frustration (1), instruction (2), or independent (3) levels at which they read the English and the French cloze passages, at the pre-treatment administration and at the post-treatment administration.

As can be seen from the chart below (Fig. 6.2) concerning the whole sample (N = 105), the proportion of the subjects having read at the frustration level in English decreased from 85% at the pretest to 68% at the posttest, and the proportion of the subjects having read at the instruction level increased from 12% at the pretest to 28% at the posttest. The change at the independent level is not as perceptible as the change at the frustration and the instruction levels: from 3% at the pretest to 4% at the posttest.
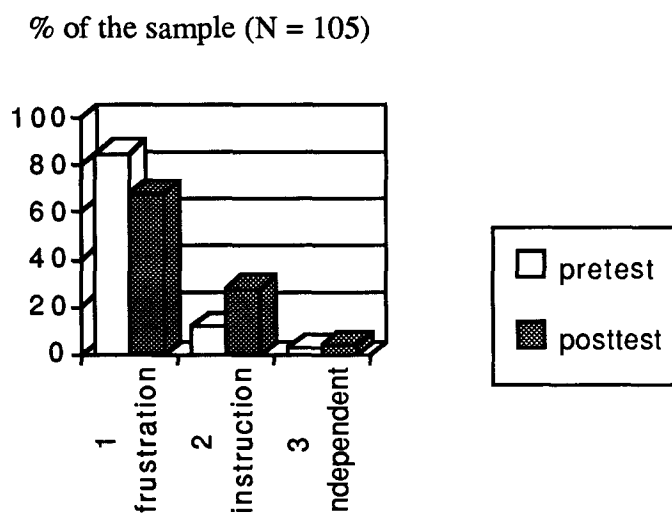
% of the sample (N = 105)

Fig. 6.2: Proportions of the sample by reading levels in English at the pretest and at the posttest

The performance in French (see Fig. 6.3 below) shows that the proportions of the subjects having read at the frustration level decreased from 83% at the pretest to 50% at the posttest, and that the proportion of the subjects having read at the instruction level increased from 12% at the pretest to 39% at the posttest. Here, contrary to what has been noticed on the subjects' performance in English, the proportion of the subjects having read at the independent level at the posttest (11%) slightly reached beyond the double of the proportion of the subjects having read at this level at the pretest (5%).
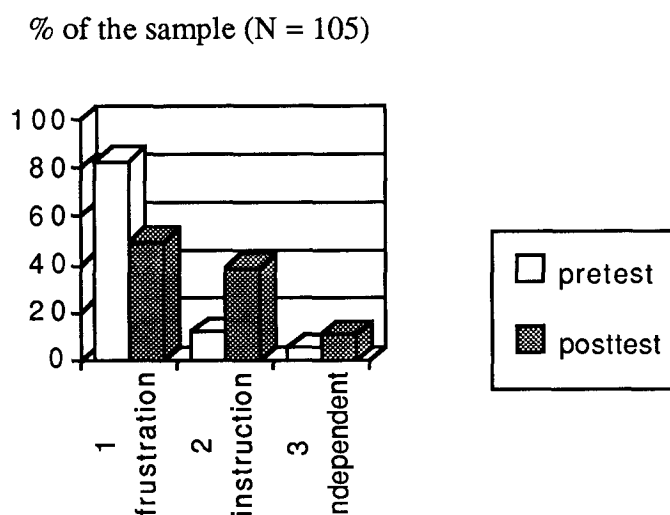
% of the sample (N = 105)

Fig. 6.3: Proportions of the sample by reading levels in French at the pretest and at the posttest

The figures presented above, particularly those indicating the increase in the number of subjects at the instruction level in comparison to the decrease in the number of subjects at the frustration level, suggest that some more subjects had overcome some of their previous reading difficulties. There had been some improvement in their reading ability, more at cloze reading in French than at cloze reading in English. The general picture of improvement when the whole sample is considered suggests that there had been some improvement at the level of individual groups as well, as will be seen from the t values presented below (Tables 6.9 and 6.10), for some of the groups involved.

That there had been some improvement in the performance of the sample as a whole is also corroborated by a comparison of the differences between the mean scores achieved at the pretest and at the posttest, at cloze reading in French as well as at cloze reading in English.

The examination of differences between means yields t values. If on examining the differences between the scores achieved by the same groups of subjects at the pretest and at the posttest, the calculated t value is equal to or greater than the tabled value, at a given significance level, then the calculated t value is significant at that level (see e.g., McIntosh, 1967: 117-118). In such a case, it suggests that there has been some improvement in the subjects' performance at the posttest.

The statistical significance of the t value calculated for the whole sample (3.345, p < .01, N = 105), as shown in Table 6.9 below, suggests that there had been some

improvement in the subjects' performance on the English cloze passages. However, not all the four groups seem to have improved equally. At the level of the individual groups, statistical significance, and thus probability of actual improvement, are attained by EG 1 (t = 2.882, p < .01, N = 24) and EG 2 (t = 2.982, p < .01, N = 32). The t values calculated for CG 1 (1.297, N = 25) and for CG 2 (0, N = 24) are not significant.

Table 6.9: Comparison of pretest (1) and posttest (2) means at English cloze reading

	EG 1	EG 2	CG 1	CG 2	EG	CG	School 1	School 2	All
N	24	32	25	24	56	49	49	56	105
Mean^1	13	6	13	8	9	11	13	7	10
Mean^2	18	10	15	8	13	12	16	9	13
SD^1	7	5	5	5	7	5	6	5	6
SD^2	5	6	6	6	7	6	5	6	7
r$^{1-2}$	0.62	0.78	0.68	0.60	0.79	0.72	0.60	0.65	0.72
t	2.882	2.932	1.297	0	3.045	0.849	2.705	1.927	3.345
p <	.01	.01	n.s.	n.s.	.01	n.s.	.01	n.s.	.01

The t values for the experimental groups (3.045, p < .01, N = 49) and for the control groups (0.849, N = 49) taken together have only shown that in general there had been improvement at cloze reading in English. It will be shown in 6.3.2 below whether the experimental groups' improvement was greater or not, when the correlation coefficients on the pretest and the posttest are compared.

Beforehand, I wish to present the t values calculated on the differences between the mean scores at cloze reading in French (see Table 6.10):

Table 6.10: Comparison of pretest (1) and posttest (2) means at French cloze reading

	EG 1	EG 2	CG 1	CG 2	EG	CG	School 1	School 2	All
N	24	32	25	24	56	49	49	56	105
Mean^1	12	12	13	10	12	12	13	11	12
Mean^2	17	17	17	14	17	15	17	16	16
SD^1	5	8	5	5	7	5	5	7	6
SD^2	5	6	5	7	6	6	5	7	6
r$^{1-2}$	0.49	0.84	0.50	0.61	0.73	0.58	0.48	0.74	0.66
t	3.5	2.864	2.857	2.806	4.084	2.704	3.979	3.804	4.845
p <	.001	.01	.01	.05	.001	.01	.001	.001	.001

Improvement at French is suggested for all the subjects by the highly significant t value obtained for the sample as a whole (4.845, p < .001, N = 105). Within each

school, each group seems to have improved as from their significant t values (EG 1 t = 3.5, p < .001, N = 24; CG 1 t = 2.857, p < .01, N = 25; EG 2 t = 2.864, p < .01, N = 32; and CG 2 t = 2.806, p < .05, N = 24). Across the two schools, the experimental and control groups' performances have yielded significant t values. And, the observation that there seems to have been more improvement at French than at English can find support in the t values presented above: no group performed at French so badly as to yield a non significant t value, whereas at English the control groups did.

That all the groups showed some improvement can only signal that what went on between the two administrations of the measuring instruments was effective. Educational endeavours are meant to bring about some change in students' performance. The experimental treatment of sustained silent reading and the usual EFL tuition both seem to have brought about positive change in the subjects' performance. However, noticing that these pedagogical endeavours bore some fruit does not say anything in relation to the verification or the falsification of the hypothesis on the greater improvement in reading ability among the experimental subjects in comparison to the improvement in reading ability among the control subjects. This relates to the second question raised in the introduction to the current section, which question I turn to in 6.3.2 below.

6.3.2 Ascertaining the greater improvement of the experimental subjects

This calls for a statistical test of the differences between the correlation coefficients obtaining between performance at the pretest and performance at the posttest setting, within each school and across the two schools involved in the study, the experimental groups against the control groups. If the z score calculated on the difference between two correlation coefficients is more than 1.96, it will be concluded that the difference is significant at .05 (see e.g., Downie & Heath, 1974: 228). And then, the raw scores will have to be examined in a bid to determine which group had performed significantly better than the other. If in contrast the z score calculated on the difference between two correlation coefficients is less than 1.96, it will be concluded that the difference is not significant, and that no group was better or worse than another.

Performance at cloze reading in English will be considered first. The z scores calculated for the three instances in which the experimental groups can be set against the control groups are presented in Table 6.11:

The z scores calculated on the performance of the experimental and the control groups at the English pretest and posttest are smaller than 1.96, and thus not significant (School 1 z = 0.34, School 2 z = 1.228, all sample z = 0.808).

Table 6.11: Comparison of groups' pretest and posttest correlation coefficients for English cloze reading

	School 1		School 2		All	
	EG 1	CG 1	EG 2	CG 2	EG	CG
N	24	25	32	24	56	49
r	0.62	0.68	0.78	0.60	0.79	0.72
z	0.34 (n.s.)		1.228 (n.s.)		0.808 (n.s.)	

This gives evidence that the experimental subjects did not show greater improvement in their EFL reading ability, as was expected.

The z scores obtained on the subjects' performance at the French pretest and posttest (see Table 6.12 below) are also smaller than 1.96 and fail to show that the experimental groups improved more greatly than the control groups (School 1 z = 0.042, School 2 z = 1.786, all sample z = 1.324).

Table 6.12: Comparison of groups' pretest and postest correlation coefficients for French cloze reading

	School 1		School 2		All	
	EG 1	CG 1	EG 2	CG 2	EG	CG
N	24	25	32	24	56	49
r	0.49	0.50	0.84	0.61	0.73	0.58
z	0.042 (n.s.)		1.786 (n.s.)		1.324 (n.s.)	

The non significant z scores on both these counts suggest a negative answer to the second question raised at the beginning of the current section. They lend support to the falsification of the hypothesis put forward on the greater improvement in the EFL as well as the French reading ability of the experimental subjects in comparison to the control subjects'.

I had a minor hypothesis, also laid down in Chapter 4, to account for the absence of significant difference between the experimental groups and the control groups: after the treatment, any absence of a significant difference between the experimental subjects' performance and the control subjects' performance might be due to the neglect of reading among the experimental subjects, as may be determined by the amount of reading done during the treatment. Tentatively, I would like to equate the amount of reading with the number of books that the experimental subjects claimed to

have read. Then, the question is whether the number of books that the experimental subjects claimed to have read mattered. I consider this question in 6.3.3 below.

6.3.3 The treatment and the improvement in the EG subjects' performance

I said on the evidence of the preceding results that there had been some improvement in the performance of all the subjects on the cloze tasks, after the twenty weeks that separated the pre-treatment and the post-treatment administrations of the measuring instruments. Because the improvement is noticed in the performance of all the subjects (experimental as well as control subjects), it can be said that the two types of pedagogical intervention (i.e. 4 hours of normal English tuition plus 1 hour of sustained silent reading in English vs. 5 hours of traditional English tuition) had some positive effects on the performance of the subjects. As the improvement has been noticed for all the subjects and as the results have falsified my hypothesis on the greater improvement in the performance of the experimental subjects, some doubt may be warranted as to the real pedagogical value of the experimental treatment of sustained silent reading in English. This raises the question of whether the improvement in the experimental subjects' performance is really a result of the treatment.

In order to try and answer this question, account may be taken of the premise that the more one reads the better one gets at reading (see Stanovich, 1986; on Walberg's "Matthew effects"). It would follow from this premise that the experimental subjects who read more during the treatment should show greater improvement in their reading ability than the experimental subjects who read less. If the experimental subjects who read more show greater improvement than the experimental subjects who read less, then the former should also show greater improvement than the control subjects.

To verify the foregoing premise, the experimental subjects can be divided into three sub-groups on the basis of the number of books that they read during the treatment (see Chapter 5, Section 5.4). The low number of books read was 4 and the high number of books read was 26, which gives a range of 23 books; that is, an interval of about 8 books read from sub-group to sub-group. I wish to borrow the term "avid readers" from Ingham (1982) to refer to the particular subjects that I am concerned with here. They were more or less avid readers. I then assume that the experimental subjects who read only up to 11 books were "less avid readers" (or "Lar" in Table 6.13 below) than the "more avid readers" (or "Mar" in Table 6.13 below) i.e. the

experimental subjects who covered at least 20 books. There were five "more avid readers" (9%, N = 56), as opposed to thirty-eight "less avid readers" (68%, N = 56).

My purpose at this stage is to determine whether the more avid readers showed a greater improvement in their reading ability than the less avid readers. This calls for a test of the differences between the correlation coefficients calculated on their scores at the pretest and at the posttest, at French as well as at English.

Table 6.13 gives the details:

Table 6.13: Comparison of some experimental subjects' pretest and posttest correlation coefficients for English, and French cloze reading

	English		French	
	Mar	Lar	Mar	Lar
N	5	38	5	38
r	0.78	0.67	-0.35	0.81
z	0.321 (n.s)		1.048 (n.s.)	

The z scores calculated on the performance at English cloze reading (0.321) and on the performance at French cloze reading (1.048), as shown in Table 6.13, are smaller than 1.96. They are not significant and thus suggest that there was no statistically significant difference in the performance of these two sub-groups of experimental subjects. In other terms, the number of books that the experimental subjects claimed to have read did not matter.

In Sub-section 6.2.1 above, it was hinted that given the possibility of the independence of the development of reading ability in English, low scorers in French who were also low scorers in English could profit from the experimental reading programme. The expectation was that they would score high in English and in French at the posttest, as a consequence of their improvement due to the reading done in English. That is, their performance at the pretest would negatively correlate with their performance at the posttest. It has been shown in 6.3.1 that the improvement involved all the subjects, including the low scorers at both the French and English pretests.

At this stage, I am particularly interested in the experimental subjects who were low scorers in both French and English at the pre-treatment administration, expecting to find a negative correlation between their pre-treatment and their post-treatment performance. The findings are summarised in Table 6.14 concerning their performance at the pretest (1), and at the posttest (2), as well as how the two correlate:

Table 6.14: Comparison of pretest (1) and posttest (2) means at French, and at English cloze reading by low scorers

	French	English
N	8	8
Mean[1]	5	4
Mean[2]	12	8
SD[1]	3	3
SD[2]	2	5
r[1-2]	-0.19	0.71
t	5.432	0.51
p <	.001	n.s.

There is a low, negative correlation on their performance at French cloze reading. It signals that the posttest scores increased, that there had been some improvement: the subjects in question scored low at the pretest, but they scored higher at the posttest, as suggested by their t value (5.432, p < .001, N = 8). On the contrary, the positive correlation on their performance at English cloze reading indicates that the posttest scores were as low as the pretest scores, that there had not been any improvement: the subjects in question scored low at the pretest as well as at the posttest. And, the difference in their performance at the English pretest and posttest is not significant (t = 0.51, n.s., N = 8).

The low scorers involved here include 4 experimental subjects who have been earlier identified as "less avid readers". The case of these 4 "less avid readers" was examined in comparison to that of "more avid readers", and it was found that the difference in their results was not significant. But, if these experimental subjects who were low scorers in both French and English performed significantly better than their counterparts in the control groups, they would supply evidence for the greater improvement in the experimental subjects' reading ability.

Concretely, I want to compare the low scorers in both French and English at the pretest among themselves on the basis of the fact that they belonged either to the experimental groups or to the control groups, in yet another attempt to see whether the experimental subjects showed significantly greater improvement in their reading ability than the control subjects. There are two subjects per each group (4 x 2 = 8). Table 6.15 presents the z scores obtained on their performance at the two administrations of the French and the English cloze passages:

Table 6.15: Comparison of some low scorers' pretest and posttest correlation coefficients for French, and for English cloze reading

	French		English	
	EG	CG	EG	CG
N	4	4	4	4
r	-0.89	0	0.96	0.75
z	0.688 (n.s.)		1.005 (n.s.)	

The z scores calculated on their performance in English (1.005) and on their performance in French (0.688) are not significant, and suggest that no group was better than the other.

Clearly, in comparison to the performance of the control subjects, the quantity of books reportedly read during the experimental treatment does not seem to have made any difference in the performance of the experimental subjects at cloze reading in English. Consequently, as a result of the absence of transfer in reading ability from English to French, no significant difference has been noticed in their French performance either.

Reflecting on all this, I would like to say the following: if quantity of reading naturally results in significant improvement at reading, then the experimental subjects' declared quantity of reading (especially for those experimental subjects identified as "more avid readers") is somehow an untruth. It shows that declaring that one has read a given book or a certain number of books may not mean that in actual fact one has read that book or those books.

However, to be on the experimental subjects' side, I can reason as follows. They took to the practice of sustained silent reading, and enjoyed reading the books that they were presented with. In addition, sustained silent reading in English triggered some independent thinking in them, allowing them to use their "epistemic level of literacy". Therefore, a significantly greater improvement in their reading ability might have been noticed; but the measuring instruments (i.e. the cloze passages) that were used were not so sensitive as to discriminate among the subjects.

Then perhaps, the patterns of the distributions of the subjects among the different categories in their responses to the questionnaire items, as they were administered after the treatment, may be more insightful about the effects of the treatment. The following section dwells on this matter.

6.4 Re-visiting the subjects' perceptions about reading in French and reading in
English

That perceptions about reading in French and reading in English would be different
from the ones that the subjects held before the treatment.

The following considerations are founded on the premises that:

- the passage of time between the pre-treatment and the post-treatment administrations
of the measuring instruments helped the subjects to learn something positive about
reading in French and reading in English, of necessity, out of the different types of
French and English language tuition that went on meanwhile. The overall relative
improvement ascertained in the subjects' posttest cloze reading could be taken as
evidence to that.

- the transfer of reading ability from language to language is a continuous process
operating from source language to target language and vice versa as long as some
reading is done in each of the two languages.

Taken together, these premises suggest that, at the post-treatment administration of
the measuring instruments, there should have been more positive reading strategy
claimers in both French and English in each of the seven categories than at the pre-
treatment administration of the questionnaires. In respect of my hypothesis on the
greater improvement of the experimental subjects, I would have expected the
proportions of positive reading strategy claimers among the experimental subjects to
be significantly different from the proportions of positive reading strategy claimers
among the control subjects. The details are given in Table 6.16:

**Table 6.16: Proportions of experimental and control groups' positive reading
strategy claimers in both English and French before and after the treatment**

	Pre-treatment		Post-treatment	
	EG	CG	EG	CG
N	56	49	56	49
self-questioners	46%	53%	48%	63%
ideas seekers	48%	55%	43%	59%
selective re-readers	16%	10%	16%	16%
predictors	41%	57%	43%	63%
knowledge appealers	57%	57%	50%	71%
word skippers	18%	22%	30%	22%
word guessers	39%	41%	32%	49%

When the sample is considered as a whole, the general tendency, as can be seen from Table 6.16 above, is for the proportions of positive reading strategy claimers to increase from the pre-treatment to the post-treatment administration of the questionnaires. This could be taken to support the idea that, for many subjects, views about reading in English and reading in French tended to converge with the passage of time and as experiences with both languages increased. This could mean that the subjects were moving in the right direction of perceiving the two activities as similar.

However, the pattern of increase seems to have involved the control subjects more than the experimental subjects. The proportions of control subjects increased from pre-treatment to post-treatment in 6 of the 7 categories of positive reading strategy claimers in both English and French, whereas the proportions of experimental subjects increased in 3 categories only.

The first pattern of difference then is the tendency for there to be more positive reading strategy claimers in both English and French among the control subjects than among the experimental subjects. There are other patterns of difference involving individual categories. For example, while the proportions of experimental subjects who were identified as ideas seekers, knowledge appealers, or word guessers decreased; the proportions of control subjects who were identified in these categories increased. To remain consistent with the interpretation of the proportions of positive reading strategy claimers in any given group of students that I worked with in Chapter 5, I can say that the experimental groups were deteriorating as readers; whereas the control groups were improving.

Some other findings from Table 6.16 tend to support this interpretation: while the proportion of experimental subjects identified as selective re-readers remained constant, the proportion of control subjects in this category increased. And finally, the proportion of experimental subjects who were identified as word skippers increased, but the proportion of control subjects in this category remained constant.

Perhaps, these patterns of difference between the experimental groups and the control groups can be better understood from a consideration of the experimental and control subjects identified as positive reading strategy claimers in both French and English who changed or maintained their views about the similarity between reading in French and reading in English, at the second administration of the questionnaires. The proportions of subjects given in Table 6.17 can be interpreted as representing the proportions of subjects who showed some stability in their awareness about the similarity between reading in French and reading in English.

Table 6.17: Proportions of positive reading strategy claimers in both English and French who maintained their views, after the treatment

	EG 1	EG 2	CG 1	CG 2	EG	CG	School 1	School 2
self-questioners	75%	57%	83%	86%	61%	85%	79%	83%
ideas seekers	50%	40%	64%	77%	46%	70%	60%	57%
selective re-readers	0%	0%	0%	50%	0%	20%	0%	10%
predictors	57%	67%	100%	59%	61%	75%	76%	72%
knowledge appealers	57%	50%	94%	67%	53%	82%	77%	57%
word skippers	50%	50%	50%	43%	50%	45%	50%	47%
word guessers	22%	82%	67%	64%	30%	65%	44%	50%

Some subjects maintained the views that they held about reading in French and reading in English. Some other subjects changed their views, at the second administration of the questionnaires. Systematically, there were fewer EG students who maintained their views about the similarity between reading in French and reading in English than CG students, except in the category of word skippers. The difference in this category where there are more EG students (50%) than CG students (45%) does not appear to be significant. Because more EG students failed to maintain their views about themselves as positive reading strategy claimers, it can then be said that they deteriorated rather than they improved in the sense of seeing reading in French and reading in English as more similar activities. However, this interpretation is not supported by the students' post-treatment cloze results in French or in English (see Chapter 5), as there was no statistically significant difference between the experimental groups and the control groups.

There is an alternative explanation on the decrease or increase in the proportions of positive reading strategy claimers in EG and CG groups, which appears to tie in with what I said earlier about the importance of word skipping in cloze reading in both French and English in this study.

In 6.2.1.4, I observed that there was a positive correlation only in the performance of high scorers in both English and French who were identified as word skippers. I then insisted on the apparent importance of word skipping in both French and English cloze reading performance of my sample. In 6.2.1.1, it could be noticed that the worst of the groups of students involved in this study (EG 2) was one in which there was no

word skipper among the high scorers in French. Also, not a single one of the CG 2 low scorers in both French and English (r = 0.95, p < .01, N = 6), as shown earlier, was a word skipper. Bearing the combination of these fortuitous facts in mind, I can also note from Table 6.17 above that the proportions of word skippers in the EG groups and in the CG groups were not significantly different: there were similar proportions of EG and CG students who tended to maintain their views, and were thus identified as word skippers at the second administration of the measurement instruments. This then may account for the absence of significant difference in their post-treatment cloze results. If this interpretation, which suggests that word skipping is the most important strategy, is correct, then the EG groups did not deteriorate, as suggested by Table 6.17.

I am therefore saying that the decrease or increase in the proportions of positive reading strategy claimers in the other categories as observed in Table 6.17 did not have an impact on the cloze results. To go further in my reasoning, I would like to suggest, as I did in 6.2.1.4, that the other positive reading strategies that helped to categorise my subjects only compensate for word skipping.

The importance of word skipping as a reading strategy in the performance of my subjects appeared again at the post-treatment administration. It was the only strategy that distinguished low scorers from high scorers at cloze reading in both French and English: While there was no word skipper among the nine subjects who scored low in both French and English, there were 5 out of nine high scorers in both French and English who were identified as word skippers. The correlation in their performance was positive, but very low and not significant (r = 0.17, N = 5).

6.5 A few notable cases

I would like to signal here that there were some students in the sample who could be considered as having made some particularly significant progress at cloze reading. I have singled out those students who performed at a higher reading level at the post-treatment administration than at the pre-treatment administration.

There were 23 subjects (22% of the sample) whose performance in English improved from frustration to instruction or independent reading levels, or from instruction to independent reading level. Their distribution was as follows (the proportions are given in percentages of the sample, N = 105):

Table 6.18: Distribution of the subjects who improved at English cloze reading

	EG 1	EG 2	CG 1	CG 2	Total
from frustration to instruction	10%	2%	8%	1%	21%
from frustration to independent					
from instruction to independent	1%				1%
Total	11%	2%	8%	1%	22%

The performance of almost all these subjects (21% of the sample) improved from frustration to instruction reading level. This implies that they were ready for some "instructional scaffolding", which would prepare them to deal with the reading materials from which the cloze passages were derived, i.e. the level 1 graded readers. From Table 6.18, it can also be noticed that more than half of these subjects (13% of the sample) were experimental subjects. I would say that this is not a significant proportion in comparison to the proportion of the control subjects (9% of the sample) who also improved significantly in English. It is however important to note that the great majority of these subjects who improved significantly in English (19% of the sample) were School 1 students.

The performance at French cloze reading significantly improved from the pre-treatment administration to the post-treatment administration particularly for 30 subjects (28% of the sample). Here is their distribution (in percentages of the sample, N = 105):

Table 6.19: Distribution of the subjects who improved at French cloze reading

	EG 1	EG 2	CG 1	CG 2	Total
from frustration to instruction	8%	3%	7%	5%	23%
from frustration to independent	2%		1%	1%	4%
from instruction to independent	1%		1%		2%
Total	11%	3%	9%	6%	28%

The pattern of improvement at French cloze reading appears to be similar to that observed at English cloze reading. It can be noticed that the improvement in French involved more subjects than the improvement in English, but not significantly. The performance of the great majority of the subjects concerned (23% of the sample) improved from the frustration to the instruction level. Almost half of these (14% of the sample) were experimental subjects. As in the case of the improvement in English, there does not seem to be a significant difference here between experimental and

control subjects. Moreover, more than two thirds of the subjects who improved significantly at French cloze reading (20% of the sample) were School 1 students.

The two cases of improvement that I have considered here seem to point to one and the same thing that I occasionally observed concerning the two schools I worked with. There appeared to be systematic differences between the two schools in the students' responses to some of the questionnaires. These differences need to be related to the patterns of improvement that have been observed here. I wish to repeat what I observed in Chapter 5: what appeared to be a greater awareness among School 1 students that English is a foreign language is an asset in the learning of the language. The more aware one is the more successful he will be at learning.

The better quality of School 1 students appears again concerning the subjects' improvement in both French and English. There were only 7 students in the whole sample who significantly improved at both English and French cloze reading: they performed at a higher reading level at the post-treatment than at the pre-treatment administration of the cloze passages.

They included 4 experimental subjects, all of whom were School 1 students. One of these students was a repeater. Between themselves, these 4 students had read respectively 6, 8, 11, 14, and 20 books during the treatment, in all 33 out of 55 titles comprising at least 1 title per each of the six levels of the graded readers. With these four students, it is clear once again that the improvement in reading ability was not a function of the number of books that the students claimed to have read.

In addition to these four experimental subjects, significant improvement in both English and French cloze reading occurred for 3 control subjects: 1 from School 1, and 2 (including 1 repeater) from School 2.

From their responses to the questionnaires, all of these subjects were identified as positive reading strategy claimers. And, they were among the subjects who tended to maintain the views that they had about the similarity between reading in French and reading in English at the two administrations of the questionnaires. Then, one of the factors contributing to the improvement in the subjects' reading ability in both French and English would appear to be the awareness of the similarity between the two activities.

6.6 Conclusion

A natural conclusion to this chapter would appear to be a straight statement of the answers to the research questions that prompted the present study. Concerning the similarity between reading in French and reading in English, it seemed that for the subjects in this study reading in French and reading in English were more or less similar activities. They were particularly noticed to be less similar activities in the subjects' perception of their use of reading strategies. This can be understood as meaning that most of the subjects would tend to use different reading strategies while reading in French or while reading in English. One important strategy seemed to be the strategy of word skipping on which significantly few subjects held a similar view for both English and French. Word skipping appeared to be the strategy that could help to distinguish between high scorers and low scorers at cloze reading in both French and English.

Concerning the relationship between French and English cloze reading, the data generally show a positive correlation to exist between performance in French and performance in English. But the strength of the correlation made me assume transfer in reading ability in only one case: on word skipping. It is in the performance of learner readers identified as word skippers and high scorers in both French and English that the awareness of word skipping as a reading strategy appeared to be transferred.

As to the significantly greater improvement expected in the reading ability of the experimental subjects in comparison to the reading ability of the control subjects, overall the data suggest that there had been some improvement on cloze reading at the post-treatment administration in comparison to the pre-treatment administration; and more at French than at English. Nevertheless, the subjects' cloze reading performance does not suggest that there had been a significantly greater improvement in the reading ability of the experimental subjects overall than in the reading ability of the control subjects. Also lending support to the negation of a greater improvement for the experimental subjects are the patterns of the distribution of the responses to the questionnaire items, as recorded after the treatment.

But, the subjects tended to hold different views about reading in French and reading in English at the second administration of the questionnaires. Here, a significant difference could be noticed in the distribution of the experimental subjects and the control subjects in most of the categories of positive reading strategy claimers in both French and English, except in the category of word skippers.

7 IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I intend to summarise the major findings of the current study, to put forward some reflections on the problems I encountered in my enquiry into the development and transfer of reading ability, as well as to suggest some way forward.

7.1 Summary of findings

It was my intention to be able to say at the end of this study that the consistency of students' responses to similar questionnaire items, and the correlation of their cloze reading scores in French and English indicated how transfer and development in reading ability occurs across languages. However, the data I collected do not seem to give clear indications concerning transfer and development.

For example, my hypothesis that significantly many subjects (at least 2 thirds of the sample) would respond to the questionnaires in a way that showed that they perceived reading in English and reading in French as similar activities involving similar strategies was not borne out by the data. We saw in Table 5.9 (Chapter 5), concerning the sample as a whole, that not a single category of positive reading strategy claimers included enough subjects for the verification of the hypothesis on the similarity of reading across the two languages. I therefore could not assume the possibility of transfer on the basis of the subjects' responses to the questionnaires. From those responses, it can be said that there was a general need for a strategy-based reading instruction, alerting students to the similarity of reading across languages. Such an instruction would particularly be geared to the development of the strategies of selective re-reading, word skipping, and word guessing, because of one salient finding emerging from Table 5.9: less than one half of the subjects in the sample as a whole showed awareness of the similarity between reading in English and reading in French on the strategies of selective re-reading, word skipping, and word guessing.

The general need for a strategy-based reading instruction (of which some detail will be given in 7.6 below) can also be inferred from the subjects' performance on the cloze passages in English and in French. I ran into difficulties trying to find evidence for transfer on the basis of the scores that the students obtained. The scores were in general positively correlated. But it is from the performance of high scorers only in both English and French that transfer could be verified. High scorers in both English

and French were so few in the sample as to suggest that effective reading strategies had not been acquired by most of the subjects.

Concerning the expected greater improvement of the experimental subjects, the results at the second administration of the cloze passages were generally as low as at the first administration of the cloze passages. They suggested that the greater improvement of the experimental subjects in comparison to the control subjects had not occurred as expected, after the reading programme in English.

On the whole, I can say that the data provided only tendencies supported by a very restricted basis. These tendencies are:

7.1.1 On the involvement of strategies in successful cloze reading

I found that the majority of the subjects who performed on the cloze passages at the instruction and at the independent reading levels were identified as positive reading strategy claimers. That is, high scorers in both French and English cloze reading tended, to a greater degree than low scorers, to be identified as positive reading strategy claimers. I noted for example the strong positive correlation in English and French cloze reading by CG 2 high scorers in French: all the six students involved were identified as positive reading strategy claimers. With these students, I can say that successful cloze reading involved one or more of the following positive reading strategies that were revealed to them in the questionnaires: ideas seeking, self-questioning, knowledge appealing, predicting text content, word skipping, word guessing, and selective re-reading.

My own understanding of how these strategies would interact when the learner reader is reading for meaning, is shown in Fig. 7.1: the use of one of the strategies may lead to the use of another until the reader creates the meaning of the text he is interacting with. He tries out samples of strategies leading to a satisfactory meaning for his purposes. It is this understanding which made me say in Chapter 6 that the strategies that the learner reader has already developed may compensate for the strategies that are not yet developed.
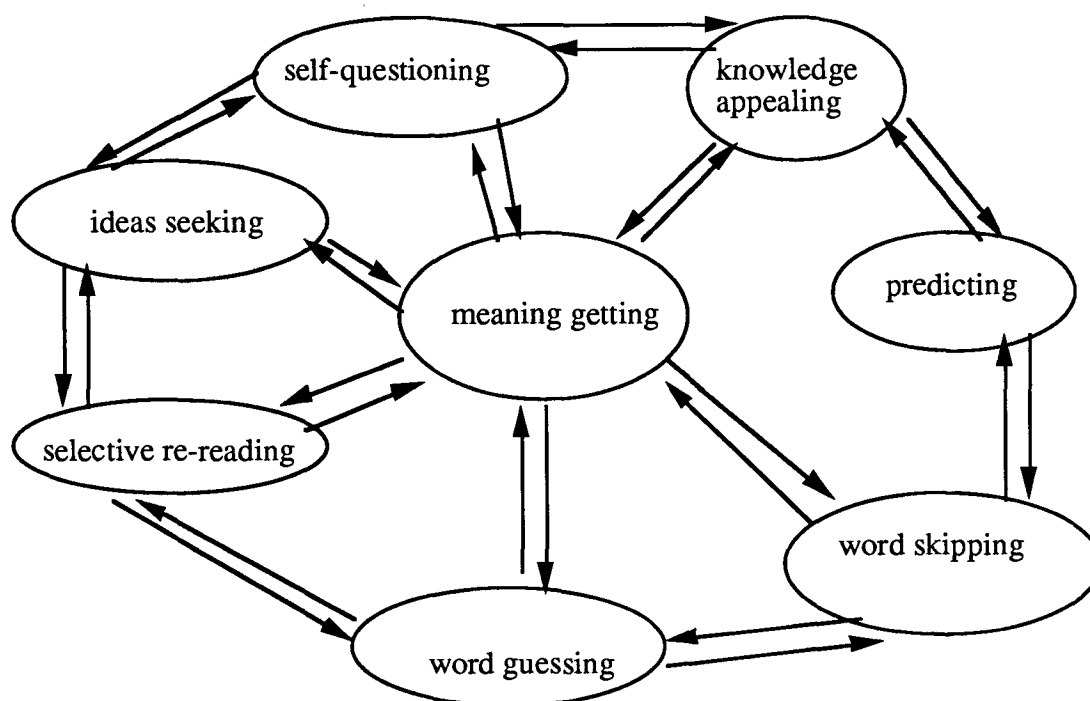
Fig. 7.1: Involvement of strategies in successful cloze reading

7.1.2 On the importance of some of the strategies in cloze reading

My comparison of the claims of low scorers and those made by high scorers in both English and French helped to show that some strategies were more important than others in cloze reading. The low scorers generally tended not to be identified as positive reading strategy claimers. Nevertheless, the few low scorers who were identified as positive reading strategy claimers were not identified as selective re-readers or word skippers. For example, there was a strong positive correlation between the English and French cloze reading performance of CG 2 low scorers in French and in English, not one of whom was identified as a selective re-reader or as a word skipper. In short, the reading strategies that appeared to have the potential for distinguishing between low and high scorers in cloze reading were selective re-reading and word skipping. This finding may need to be explored further.

7.1.3 On the transfer of one reading strategy: word skipping

Another finding worth exploring further is the importance of word skipping in cloze reading across languages. In addition to the potential for distinguishing between low and high scorers in both English and French, word skipping seemed to be the only positive reading strategy of which the awareness could be said to have been transferred across the two languages. This conclusion is based on the positive

correlation obtaining between the French and English cloze reading of the high scorers in both languages who were also identified as word skippers.

7.1.4 On the overall tendency to improve on cloze reading

As the comparison of the cloze reading results in Chapter 6 showed, there was an overall tendency for the results at the post-treatment administration to be better than at the pre-treatment administration. I had hoped, as I said in Chapter 4, that the 20 weeks' time span between the first and the second administrations of the measurement instruments would help to avoid the effects of memory on the subjects' work with the instruments. However, we may need to take into account the fact that the subjects might not have felt the same anxiety with the instruments at the second administration as at the first administration, i.e. the factor of the familiarity with the testing procedure might have played a role in the apparent overall improvement.

7.1.5 On the experimental students' engagement with graded readers

During the implementation of the reading programme in English, I was worried that Zairean literacy practices might impinge on the experimental subjects' engagement with the graded readers in English. I was concerned that the experimental subjects might not like the idea of borrowing books in English and settling down to read them. However, judging from the case of the 4 experimental subjects that I presented in 6.5 (Chapter 6) as having made significant progress in their cloze reading in English, I can say that at least there was an affective engagement with the graded readers in English. Between themselves, those 4 EG 1 students reported having read 33 out of the 55 titles that were available in class. I can say that these experimental subjects at least were on the right track because an affective engagement with written materials is an important step towards the development of critical aspects of literacy.

7.2 Reflections on the use of questionnaires

My first research question relating to the perception of the similarity of reading across languages grew out of my personal participation in literacy events involving reading in languages other than my first. Moreover, the literature on the reading process and on its similarity across languages (see e.g., Goodman, 1973; Rigg, 1988; etc.), and on the transfer of literacy skills (see e.g., Carrell, 1991; Cummins, 1979; Edelsky, 1982; etc.) encouraged me to want to know whether learner readers also had that perception (i.e. awareness) of the similarity of reading across languages. The perception of this

similarity, as I still believe, could be built on for English language teaching and learning, as a first stage towards helping learners to become effective readers in EFL.

To find out about my subjects, I designed and administered questionnaires. I chose to present the subjects with similar questionnaires in English and in French, without them knowing that I was enquiring into their perception of the similarity of reading across the two languages. The responses that I received may then have been influenced by the fact that the subjects did not know what I was looking for.

Knowing the response to give relates to the general problem of the students' lack of familiarity with questionnaire answering, which may have been a confounding factor. Another confounding factor may have been the students' interpretation of specific questionnaire items. A dilemma persisted with the use of questionnaires: whether the students had a clue or not as to the kind of response that I was looking for, the outcome might have been distorted either way.

Supposing that the presentation of the questionnaires in English and in French confounded the subjects, to ensure that they clearly understood what I wanted to know, I could have asked for example in French only a straight question, translating as:

Do you think reading in French and reading in English are similar?

With such a question, I could be sure to collect even 100% positive, or 100% negative responses. However, these responses would not have informed me much about particular things that the subjects thought they did as they engaged in reading in French and in English. Although questions asked of the subjects in French could have been more understandable, there might still be problems with a question translating as:

Do you sometimes skip words when you read stories in French? What about when you read stories in English?

If for example a student had responded that he never read stories in English, I would not have gained any information about his reading behaviour in English.

Problems related to the subjects' interpretation of specific questions are particularly illustrated by the questionnaire items on the basis of which I identified some of the subjects as positive reading strategy claimers. The responses to these questionnaire items were limited to four choices, about the frequency of certain actions related to

reading. As the subjects were just required to circle a number on each questionnaire item, they could have done this mechanically, without thinking.

Let us consider for example Questionnaire item 13

> I re-read before carrying on reading.
> (very often/sometimes/rarely/never)

My own assumption was that all readers re-read the texts that they interact with. But only unsuccessful readers tend to re-read all the time, not selecting the portion of the text that will enhance comprehension. For this reason, it is possible that most of the subjects in this study might not have been able, i.e. if they had thought about it, to capture the subtlety in the difference between "I very often re-read", and "I sometimes re-read". However, I do not think that any good reader would say that he very often re-read without mentioning what would make him re-read a given portion of text, or why he would re-read. Doing that would be tantamount to doing undifferentiated re-reading, a strategy frequently used by unsuccessful readers. At least, successful readers would be unlikely to say that they never re-read. What they need is a context in which re-reading can be resorted to.

Also, the actual words in some of the questionnaire items might have influenced the responses. Questionnaire item 20 for example,

> When there is a difficult word or a phrase, I skip it and carry on reading.
> (very often/sometimes/rarely/never)

might have prompted negative responses because of the word "skip". During the administration of the questionnaires, the subjects asked me what the word "skip" meant. "Sauter", I said. This was the equivalent of "skip" in the French version of the questionnaire. It carried the implication of avoidance of difficulty and risk. I think that this implication made word skipping tend to be considered negatively. No Zairean secondary school student would admit to skipping words while reading without being accused of carelessness in reading, or without himself feeling that he revealed his carelessness. As I said in an earlier chapter, the Zairean practice of reading instruction is generally word-focused. Skipping words while reading may then have been equated with carelessness, and thus most of the students were reluctant to indicate that they were word skippers in any sense of this term.

With hindsight, I now think that each of the questionnaire items that were presented as statements could have been improved with the insertion of related open questions.

For example, I could have inserted such questionnaire items as the following, related to Questionnaire item 20

> Why would you/ would you not skip a difficult word while reading?
> Do you do this in French only? Do you do it in English as well?

or related to Questionnaire item 13

> What kind of text do you re-read? Why would you re-read?

This kind of related questions could have provided me with qualitative information on the subjects' perception of the strategies of word skipping, and re-reading, or any other reading strategy which the questionnaire items were about.

There was also the problem of specialised terminology. As I signalled in Chapter 4, terms like "phrase, expression, key word, text, etc." brought about problems of understanding that were initially pointed out to me by the Zairean students on whom I trialled the measurement instruments. I did not feel that it was necessary to re-design the questionnaires. At least, however, the trial administration made me see the importance of providing a gloss for some of the terms that were used in the questionnaires.

Finally, a case of how the fact that the subjects had a clue as to what the response to a questionnaire item might be may distort the outcome of research based on questionnaires was supplied by School 2 students. Some of the responses on the subjects' reading environment and opportunities (see Chapter 5) indicated that School 2 students were more interested in English learning than School 1 students. I can recall that School 2 students had been informed about the purpose of my presence in their school. Their knowledge that books in English were going to be circulated with the implementation of the reading programme might have prompted them to show me that they were keen on learning English.

7.3 Reflections on the use of cloze passages

Judging from the floor effect that I recorded at the two administrations of the cloze passages, I now think that the students should have been taught how to handle these instruments. I did supply them with the visual support of an incomplete picture (i.e. two faces looking at each other) to get the idea of cloze completion across. Nonetheless, there was some evidence of uncertainty, even at the trial administration, as many of the students left the blanks uncompleted. Ideally, a longer period of preparation based on work with cloze texts might have been more beneficial.

This absence of adequate preparation for cloze work can also explain why the subjects did not perform significantly better in French than in English. A significantly better performance in French than in English should have been possible given for example that as far as French (medium of instruction) was concerned, the language input environment (L2 context) was richer than for English; or, that there were generally more students identified as positive reading strategy claimers in French than in English.

A significantly better performance in French than in English could have given me the opportunity of saying that the inadequacy of exposure to English in Zaire prevents transfer in reading ability to occur. Now, I can only say that exposure to a language is an important factor in the development of one's reading ability, but its influence in this study had been blurred by the nature of the cloze task that the subjects confronted.

The subjects' difficulty with the task of cloze completion can also explain why the richer language input supplied by the graded readers did not result in the expected greater improvement of the experimental subjects in comparison to the control subjects. Some other measures of reading ability could have been introduced and the outcome compared to the cloze outcome.

Nonetheless, in spite of the difficulty with the cloze, I wish to observe concerning the English cloze passages in particular, that my subjects do not seem to compare too badly at the international level, in comparison for example to Norwegian EFL learners who had been administered similar instruments (see Cripwell & Foley 1984), derived from the Collins English Library of graded readers.

The Norwegian students reported on in the Cripwell & Foley study were introduced to English through the audio-lingual method, like my Zairean subjects. But, unlike the latter, the Norwegian students were in their sixth and seventh year of English language learning. Despite the advantage of their longer classroom exposure to EFL, they generally performed at the instructional level on the cloze passages derived from level 1 readers of the Collins English Library. It is therefore not surprising perhaps that the Zairean students, many of whom were only starting their third year of English learning, had a hard time even to perform at the frustration level, as most of them did.

7.4 On the practice of sustained silent reading

First of all, I would like to signal one feature of the sample taken from the responses to Questionnaire item 4 at the first administration of the questionnaires, which could have been relevant to the implementation of the reading programme in English:

> I read books, magazines, etc.
> (very often/sometimes/rarely/never)

There were 30% of the subjects in the sample who responded that they very often/ sometimes read books, magazines, etc. in both French and English. For argument's sake, I wish to identify these subjects as frequent readers. If they were frequent readers, then the figure suggests that there were few frequent readers in the sample before the experimental programme began. This could suggest that few of the students involved in this study as experimental subjects could be expected to take readily to the practice of sustained silent reading.

The practice of sustained silent reading in English was a methodological innovation. In Chapter 4, I pointed out that even the teachers of English in Schools 1 and 2 perceived the idea of sitting down and watching students read silently as strange. As far as the experimental subjects were concerned, I would like to recall Widdowson's (1990) cautionary observation about methodological innovations in language teaching:

> One cannot expect that learners will take readily to modes of behaviour
> in the language class which are at variance with those which are
> prompted in their other lessons.
> (Widdowson, 1990: 128)

Furthermore, in Chapter 1, I alluded to the fact that my research design involved taking into account a combination of different orientations to literacy: the generally positivistic, current in Zairean schools; and the humanistic-interpretive, as demonstrated by the practice of independent sustained silent reading in English. In that chapter, I also signalled that it may be difficult to reconcile different orientations.

The practice of sustained silent reading in English provoked a change in the experimental subjects' usual role in Zairean EFL pedagogic practice. Used to listening, repeating, and occasionally taking notes from dictation, or copying from the blackboard, the experimental subjects were, without prior preparation, forced into the new experience of "dialoguing" with written, self-contained EFL texts inside the classroom. And their "literacy broker" (in this case, me, not their usual teacher) also

assumed a role which they could not recognise. Their normal teacher, a knowledge transmitter, would be seen standing and talking; I sat down, and read silently.

The outcome of this study then, especially concerning the expected greater improvement of the experimental subjects, tends to justify the view that changes in teaching methods negatively affect reading performance. We need to remember however that this outcome does not unequivocally confirm the view that the humanistic-interpretive orientation to literacy failed to be integrated within the positivistic educational setting of Zairean schools.

On the basis of the cloze results recorded for example, the experimental subjects as a group performed neither better nor worse than the control subjects as a group. It is important to note simply that some of the students involved had learned something (if only the familiarity with the cloze procedure). And, I believe, the relative success of the few who seemed to have learnt something (see e.g., the notable cases in 6.5; see also 7.1.5 above or 7.4 below) should be built on: they reportedly engaged with the graded readers in English, and performed better at the post-treatment than at the pre-treatment administration of the English cloze passages.

I now wish to say a word on the significance of the students' pre-treatment results in relation to the use of the graded readers that were available in class. In Chapter 4, I signalled that the ELSIP tests were designed as placement tests related to the Collins graded readers. A given score on these tests was to be interpreted with regard to the learner reader's level of understanding of the book or of the grading level from which the cloze passages were derived. I mentioned the three levels of understanding as frustration, instruction, and independent levels. These levels of understanding could be thought of as suggesting that the teacher should assist the learner reader totally (frustration), partially (instruction), or that the learner reader could be left to his own device (independent).

In my presentation of the cloze results in Chapter 5, I showed that before the treatment the great majority of the subjects (85% of the sample) had performed at the frustration level on the cloze passages that were derived from level 1 readers. This implied that they could be allowed to engage with level 1 readers, or any other reader level in the series, only with as much assistance as possible from the teacher.

As it was, most of the experimental subjects had been denied the "instructional scaffolding" that their performance required: total assistance. With hindsight, I can say that a non-interventionist reading programme was not adequate for most of the

students who were involved in this study. This absence of scaffolding can also account for the floor effect that I noticed at the second administration of the English cloze passages, and consequently for the fact that the experimental subjects did not show greater improvement in their reading ability than the control subjects. Just putting students and books together was not enough for them to interact efficiently. My reflections on what could be done in future research will be put forward shortly.

Meanwhile, I would like to note that this absence of overt scaffolding may have greatly contributed to the decrease in the motivation to read of the already frustrated experimental subjects.

There was no way in which the experimental subjects could have been coerced into doing silent reading if they did not want to. And, coercing them would have meant denying them the independence that the treatment was meant to promote in them as participants in literacy events involving reading in English. They knew for example that the experiment would not be sanctioned by any credit, as would any other class work that they were accustomed to. The experiment seemed to be a test of their perseverance as motivated, independent learners of English.

Finally, I would like to refer to a relevant finding, which I noted in Chapter 3, on the relationship between independent silent reading and tested reading performance, which can make one look differently at the floor effect in the experimental subjects' performance, in particular. Evans (1985) found, in her study of primary-level students, that independent silent reading was generally uncorrelated or even negatively correlated with achievement, except in the most-advanced language-based classrooms. These were advanced classes, in which language instruction was holistic.

For argument's sake, these advanced level classes can be compared to the students who were high scorers in English in this study. Then, Evans' finding could be taken to imply for the present study for example, that only high scorers in English would benefit from the practice of sustained silent reading in English. This is what happened. I noted for example that 18 (62%) of the 29 experimental subjects who read up to 10 books or more during the treatment were also among the students who had scored higher than the sample mean score (14/40) at the pre-treatment administration of the English cloze passages. And, there was a strong positive correlation between their pretest and posttest English scores ($r = 0.84$, $p < .001$, $N = 18$).

Fourteen of these subjects were EG 1 students. EG 1 seemed to be a better class of EFL learners than EG 2. It thus seemed to have gained more than EG 2 from the practice of sustained silent reading in English. As I pointed out in 6.5 for example, the 7 notable cases of improvement at cloze reading in both English and French did not involve any EG 2 student (see also 7.5 below). The rich got richer, or in other terms, there were "Matthew effects".

7.5 The winning team

I would like to restrict the argument in this section to the 7 students that I considered in 6.5 as having made some relatively significant progress at cloze reading in both French and English, at the second administration of the measurement instruments. In this way, I can show my conviction that the reading programme had its merits, in spite of the absence of statistically significant differences in the post-treatment cloze results, taken overall.

First of all, the case of these seven students is informative concerning the perception of the similarity between reading in French and reading in English, which I considered as an aspect of the transfer of reading ability. They were among the students who were identified as positive reading strategy claimers in both French and English, who maintained their views about the two activities at the second administration of the questionnaires.

The progress in the performance of these few subjects can be associated with their perception of the similarity of reading in French and reading in English. It is this association which makes me say that progress in reading in English among Zairean EFL learners can be built on the students' alertness to the similarity of reading across languages. I would then recommend that reading be approached in similar ways in French and EFL classes.

Secondly, concerning the expected greater improvement of the experimental subjects, the title of this section may have suggested that I wished to borrow from the language of sport to make my point. My imaginary situation is as follows. There were two soccer teams: E and C. Team E had been forecast to win the match by a significant margin of 4 goals to nil, given that they had been coached in the best of circumstances. The four goals should have been scored by four different Team E players. On the day of the match, Team E scored their four goals. However, by some unfortunate combination of circumstances, Team C players managed to score 3 goals. The spectators were delighted, as they had attended one of the rare matches in which

7 goals could be scored, involving players in both teams. Although Team E had won the match, this outcome disappointed me, in my capacity as their coach. During my investigations, I came to realise that Team C had lined up 2 good, though not well known, players, who scored two of their goals. If those two players had not been present, I said to myself, Team E could have won the match by 4 goals to 1, which is a significant margin. Therefore, I had not wasted my time, as a coach.

The foregoing imaginary situation of the two soccer teams relates to my experimental and control subjects in a way that covers the fact that two schools were involved in this study, which, as I occasionally observed in Chapters 5 and 6, presented some systematic differences. I am therefore saying that it may have been better for me to consider the two schools separately.

If the two schools are considered as separate entities, we need to remember that despite the general absence of statistically significant differences in the cloze reading scores, School 1 students tended to be better than School 2 students in both French and English. And, if School 1 only is considered in the case of the 7 students that I am discussing in this section, it will appear that significantly more EG 1 than CG 1 students had made progress. Among the 7 students, there were 4 EG 1 students, 1 CG 1 student, and 2 CG 2 students. Four experimental subjects, but only 1 control subject in School 1 had made significant progress at the post-treatment cloze reading in both French and English. This would appear to be a significant margin within School 1.

By contrast, the case of School 2 students tends to mesh with Evans' (1985) finding, mentioned earlier, on the relationship between independent silent reading and reading achievement. Independent silent reading correlated with achievement only in the performance of advanced students. Then, given that EG 2 students were the poorest of the four groups in the sample, they could not possibly gain from sustained silent reading without instructional support, my missing link, to which I turn in the following section.

7.6 The missing link

What I have to say in this section basically relates to the greater improvement that I had expected in the experimental subjects' performance in English, given that they had a relatively richer language input supplied by the graded readers.

During the reading programme, there was no overt "instructional scaffolding" whatsoever. Some covert scaffolding lay in the grading of the books that the experimental subjects were presented with, but my design did not take it into account.

Clearly, in the design, I had removed one important element of the triad of the reading instruction process. As Chapters 5 and 6 have tended to show, in spite of this missing link, overall the experimental subjects were no worse than the control subjects. This outcome obviously implies that their time had not been wasted. But it also implies that they could have performed better if I had abided by Rigg's (1988) observation earlier noted in Chapter 3: the reading instruction process is

> ... what the teacher does with the students to help them when they read.

My research design was deliberately non-interventionist. But the cloze data suggest that I should have done something to help the experimental subjects with their reading in English. The question now is how that could have been done.

I consider my attempts to answer this question as a number of recommendations on the insertion of a sustained silent reading programme in English in Zairean secondary schools: 25% of the EFL tuition time devoted to reading in EFL as provided for in the current syllabus, work geared to the development of reading strategies particularly the strategies of word skipping and word guessing, work alerting students to the similarity of reading across languages. I give some detail below.

Concerning the proportion of tuition time, I would devote 25% of the total EFL tuition time to reading as at present provided by the National Syllabus for English. As the present study has tended to show, it is not so much the amount of time, but how the time one has is used, that counts. Thus, 5 hours/week general secondary education streams would devote 1h/week to reading in EFL.

The adequacy of the use of this time would presuppose some intervention on the part of the EFL teacher. I would divide my reading tuition time into two parts: a direct strategy instruction time, and a sustained silent reading time. The direct strategy instruction time will decrease gradually from 25' each session to naught as soon as the practice of sustained silent reading is established (see e.g., Mc Cracken, 1971). I would still not link the outcome of sustained silent reading in English to any credit work, to encourage independence in the students' use of their reading ability.

But, as a way of showing them my interest as a teacher in what they were doing as students, I would encourage them to narrate the stories that they read, at will, to talk about what they liked or disliked in the stories that they read. In short, I would encourage them to want to share their reading experiences, which is a way of creating new texts. This resembles the literacy practice of creating new texts from newspaper headlines that I noted in Chapter 1 as common along the arteries of major Zairean towns. Such a practice may help to create discussion and dialogue on given topics in the classroom. It is, as Commeyras (1993) observes, a way to promote critical thinking in students who are not proficient readers.

As to the strategies that should be taught, the questionnaire responses have shown that much is to be done. But, I would concentrate on those strategies, viz. selective re-reading and word skipping, which the present study has shown to be important as they had the potential for distinguishing high scorers from low scorers, i.e. few students had developed these strategies. I would also add word guessing as it generally tended to be considered negatively by the subjects in this study. This unpopularity of word guessing in this study is consistent with Mohamed's (1992) finding that word guessing is an unpopular strategy among EFL learners. In that study, only 6% of the subjects used word guessing as a strategy for meaning creation in cloze tasks.

Now I would like to say a few words concerning the conduct of work on the strategies selected for being specifically developed.

Concerning word skipping, I can say that from the formulation of Questionnaire item 17

> While I am reading, I skip words or phrases without losing the general idea of the text.

I intended word skipping to mean that one can skip words if one has some idea of what the text is about, that one has been reading for meaning. This implies that students could be helped to read better if they were made to have some idea of what the text is about, before engaging with it. The technique of brainstorming has been found successful as a pre-reading instructional activity with Zairean students (see Mwaka, 1992). I would use it, in combination with the cloze procedure, for strategy development.

The deletion procedure that would appear to be more helpful in the use of cloze as a teaching procedure is, as suggested in Clarke (1979), the rational deletion procedure which deletes

discourse markers, "content" words (nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs) and words with specific referents earlier or later in the text. (Clarke, 1979: 124)

This procedure requires reading and comprehending an entire passage before filling in the blanks.

It is this type of requirement that would for example force the learner readers to re-read given parts of the text. Therefore, selective re-reading does not need to be taught as a separate strategy in the same way as one would teach for example the making of inferences (see e.g., Roe,1992). It is a requirement of the interaction between the learner reader and the text. Being able to re-read selectively, as I understand it, suggests that one is reading for meaning, that one has taken something from the text which directs one's further search for meaning. It can help one to predict what comes next in the text adequately as well as it can allow one to guess or skip words and still be reading effectively.

Ideas on how learner readers ought to be alerted to the similarity of reading across languages can be borrowed from Hosenfeld et al (1981), concerning word guessing. In Hosenfeld et al's (1981) approach to direct reading strategy instruction, learner readers need first of all to be taught to self-report while reading. Secondly, they are given texts in their L1 containing nonsense words, and are asked to guess the meanings of these nonsense words. Thirdly, those learner readers who are successful in this identification of meaning are asked to indicate how they constructed those meanings. This third stage points to the collaborative nature of instructional scaffolding, as noted for example by Applebee & Langer (1983). The successful learner readers are given the opportunity of explaining to their classmates how a reading strategy has been successfully used, with their L1 texts. Fourthly, all the learner readers are presented with texts in the foreign language, containing unknown words, with which they are instructed to use the strategies that they have been discussing. Only then will the learners be asked to concentrate each on their selected graded reader for sustained silent reading.

There is one interesting thing to note in the Hosenfeld et al's (1981) approach. As the learner readers discuss the different ways in which they guess the meanings of the nonsense or unknown words, they will show that they identify the meanings using different cues. This will help them to learn or teach one another at the same time that reading for meaning involves the ability to use different cues, which information may predispose them to see reading for meaning as involving flexibility and reflection. It

is this flexibility and reflection, which, I think, can show that learners have reached the "epistemic level of literacy" (see Wells, 1991), referred to in Chapter 1.

Finally, if future research can be done on the merits of sustained silent reading in EFL, I see it comparing the outcomes of what I may call "unscaffolded" sustained silent reading, as experimented in the present study, to the outcomes of sustained silent reading "scaffolded", as it were, by a direct instruction in the reading strategies of word skipping and word guessing, in particular. It is my conviction that, with EFL learners with an educational background similar to that of the subjects in this study, reading needs to be scaffolded through strategy awareness and development before it becomes independent.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CLOZE PASSAGES IN ENGLISH

[NB: These cloze passages in English were derived from level 1 readers of the Collins English Library as placement tests for the ELSIP (English Language Self-Instruction Package) scheme.]

Instructions: In each of the following passages, some words or phrases have been deleted and replaced by blanks. Please read through each of the passages to see what it is about. Then try to fill each blank with the words or phrases of the original passage.

1a

The fellow sat down on the seat beside me and watched the cars go past. I looked at him out of the corner of my eye.

He had a little book and _____ pencil. And when a motor car _____ by, he wrote something in the _____. He didn't take any notice of _____ or lorries - only cars. Of course, _____ was none of my business; but _____ wondered what he was writing. I _____ very interested in the strange jobs _____ some people have.

So after a _____ minutes I said, "You're very interested _____ the cars. May I ask what you're _____ in your book?"

He replied, "I'm _____ down the numbers on the _____."

"Oh, I see. Is that your _____ , or are you just doing it _____ fun? When I was younger, I _____ train numbers."

He laughed. "I have _____ better reason than that," he said. "_____ see - every car has its own _____ . I discovered the fact five years _____ , but it isn't widely known. Well, I'm thinking of buying a car myself - and my number must be different from all the others." He smiled then and quickly wrote down the number of a passing car. It was 54823.

1b

I got home one night and found my front door open. I'd had a burglar! It's easy for a heavy man to force the door of a house: he throws his weight against it until the lock breaks.

You get a terrible feeling when _____ find you've had a burglar. It isn't _____ anger you feel against the thief and at _____ loss. It's much more. Your _____ and all your things feel unclean, _____ as if they've been poisoned against _____ . For months after my burglar came, _____ hated my house. Is that stupid? _____ it is, but that's how I _____ . I knew it wasn't my house's _____ - any more than Jack Larsen's loss _____ the fault of his house. Poor _____ suffered more: he lived only a _____ after his burglars came, so they _____ , in a way, his murderers.

Jack _____ I lived opposite each other on _____ edge of a village. He was _____ by birth, and he'd built a Norwegian _____ house for himself. Now it _____ happened that, last July, I had _____ go into hospital for a week. At the same time, Jack heard from Norway that his sister

had died. So we were both away from our properties for about a week. He was due back the day I was.

2a

"Captain Price's house?" the woman said. "Yes, it's the end one on this side. You can't miss it. He's a funny bird that Captain Price. Lives in a funny house too. Good luck to you!

Perhaps he was a funny bird, _____ thought. But he was always a _____ friend to me when we were _____ sea. I found the house easily, _____ knew it was his. It was _____ 'Porthole'. The door was not at _____ front, so I began to walk _____ the house.

The windows were small _____ round, like a ship's portholes. I noticed a _____ bell on one wall. Round the _____ again, and this time I looked _____ a door. There wasn't one.

I _____ back and called out: "Captain Price! _____ you there?" And added to myself, "_____ you are, tell me how you _____ it."

An upper porthole opened inwards, _____ a man's face appeared. "My name _____ Price," he said. "What do -" Then _____ recognised me. "Oh, it's Mike. Well, well, come on the bridge."

"Thanks, but how? Where's the door and the stairs?"

"Ah, this is a sea-going ship, boy. You must come on board in a sea-man's way. Go round the stern, and I'll throw you a line."

2b

When Jack returned, his house was gone. Walls, roof, floors, windows, furniture and everything else were gone. All that remained was the hard _____ on which the house had stood.

_____ went to the police, of course, _____ the slow, legal enquiries began. When _____ returned, he came to stay with _____ . We soon found out from various _____ what had happened. On the third _____ of our absence, some 'workmen' in _____ lorry arrived at Jack's house. They _____ there, they said, 'on the orders _____ the court'. The house was an _____ building. It had to be removed _____ the owner returned. The police knew _____ about the case.

"They did a _____ and careful job," the village postman _____ us. "They had a man in _____ controlling traffic. It was all over _____ less than two days. They told me _____ deliver Mr Larsen's letters to the _____ .

Jack went out of his mind. _____ I said, he didn't live long. It is January now, and so far the police haven't found the house or anything else.

3a

Peter took his girlfriend to a restaurant for supper. The head waiter brought them two menus and waited for their order. Judith chose soup, chicken with vegetables, cheese with biscuits ... Peter ordered soup, fish and chips, then chocolate ice-cream.

Peter felt rather afraid _____ that waiter in his fine black _____ . The man knew a lot about _____; and he corrected Peter's order. "You'll _____ fish, sir," he said, "with French _____ ."

"Eh - yes," said Peter, "yes, that's _____ ." Perhaps that was the _____ name for chips, but Peter wasn't _____ .

The supper was very nice. Judith _____ all hers, but Peter couldn't quite _____ his. The French fries were in _____ just potato chips. The head waiter _____ the bill.

Peter knew at once _____ something was wrong. There was a _____ in the bill. On the menu _____ and vegetables cost only sixty pence. _____ on the bill it was 1:60. _____ bill ought to be 2:00 altogether, _____ 3:00. What was going to _____? Ought he to tell the waiter? _____ say nothing and just pay?

He continued to talk to Judith, but he was feeling uncomfortable. The head waiter was looking hard at him, and Peter's face grew hot.

3b

The last day of the war will always be remembered in our village, though we were far from the fighting. When news of the peace came out of the radio in the café, the old men called us. They raised their glasses of tea _____ nodded their heads wisely. It was _____ they had expected: a just end, _____ God on the winning side, as _____ always was. Yet when they looked _____ the sky, they weren't so sure _____ Him.

It was a brown sky - _____ getting browner. They said they had _____ seen a sky like that; and _____ wondered whether God had second thoughts _____ the peace. The radio was making _____ strange noises.

There was a flash _____ lightning and a clap of thunder. _____ boys ran and hid from it; _____ the old men were shaken. Only _____ could remember when this had happened _____. "It's God's flashing eye," he said. "I've _____ it before." "If so," I thought, "it's _____ late. The war is over." Perhaps _____ no longer had a strong grip _____ our troubles. The café filled with wondering men.

Then the rain began and brought fear to us all. It came in round drops at first, like the pictures in the school books, then in long drops like sticks of glass.

4a

It is three minutes to two on a warm, windless day in June. There are bright colours all around - red, blue, green and yellow. Seventy-four sidecar 'outfits' are waiting quietly behind the starting line. Everything is ready for the start of the 180-kilometre race.

No sound comes from the engines. _____ racing outfits wait in two long _____: thirty-seven machines in each line. Numbers 1 _____ 2 are side by side _____ front; they are the two fastest _____. 3 and 4 are just behind _____, then 5 and 6. At the _____ we can just see Numbers 73 _____ 74.

It is one minute to _____. All eyes are _____ the starter's flag. The drivers hold _____ handlebars. They and their passengers get _____ to push. The starter begins to _____: "Ten seconds, nine, eight .... three, two, _____ - OFF!" and down goes the flag.

_____ first two teams push their outfits forward at once. The two engines roar into life. The men jump on quickly, and the machines race away down the road.

4b

We heard cries from our huts. The women had stopped what they were doing. Some of them stood crying in their doorways, holding up their little children. The rain seemed to be in _____ now, flat sheets that fell sideways. _____ paths of our village were turned _____ little rivers of mud. We heard _____ near by and the calls of _____ animals. Then all our sheep and _____, many hundreds, poured into the village, _____ over our gardens and pressing up _____ the walls of the huts.

"Keep _____ out! Drive them away!" men shouted. _____ was work for dogs, but _____ were frightened too; they ran about _____ for a safe place to hide _____ the rain and the noise of _____.

But no place was safe. Then _____ saw a strange and frightening thing. _____ walls of our huts seemed to _____ into the water. Slowly at first _____ melted from the bottom upwards and _____ away in rivers of mud. Everybody _____ to save his things, and soon the roofs of our homes were floating about the village.

5a

The pits at the race track were busy. Drivers and engineers were working hard on their powerful racing cars. Each racing team had its own pit: there was fuel and oil for the cars, a workshop, spare parts. The drivers were all young men, except one. That one was Lella Lombardi.

Miss Lombardi is a young Italian _____. She is small but strong; and _____ is a good racing driver. She _____ the only woman whom you might _____ at the wheel of a modern _____ car.

"I've been in love with _____ cars all my life," she says. "_____ always wanted to be a racing _____."

She used to work for her _____ in his meat business. Sometimes she _____ one of his meat lorries. At _____ time she saved as much money _____ possible. Then, in 1965, she bought _____ first racing car. It was a _____ car that cost about 500 pounds. She _____ it in two races, and her _____ did not know. She won her third _____ - and after that everyone knew _____ name.

Since then Lella Lombardi has _____ several racing cars. Each car has _____ bigger and faster than the one before. At first men drivers did not like to race against a woman. But they have had to change their minds. Miss Lombardi now drives some of the fastest cars in the world.

5b

Bright comets are a rare and beautiful sight. Though we think of them as members of the Sun's family, many comets range far beyond the orbits of the planets. As a rule they return once _____ a while to travel around the _____. That is when we see them: _____ come comparatively close to Earth _____ a month or two. Then away _____ go again in their orbits that _____ take a hundred or a thousand _____ ten thousand years. No one who _____ West's Comet in 1976 will ever _____ it again. If you didn't, don't _____: there'll be another fine one soon.

_____ comet seems to be composed of _____, dust and ice. There is a _____ deal of solid, frozen material. As _____ mass approaches the Sun, the outer _____ parts begin to melt, and more _____ form. The pressure of the Sun's _____ drives the dust and gases outwards _____ a long, streaming 'tail', perhaps several _____. For this reason the tail always

_____ away from the Sun. And as the comet moves farther from the radiation, the tails gets smaller and at last disappears.

APPENDIX B

CLOZE PASSAGES IN FRENCH

[These cloze passages in French were derived from IPAM 1989 **La 4ème en Français** (Texts 1a/b/c) and IPAM 1987 **La 5ème en Français** (Texts 2a/b/c).]

Instructions: Dans chacun des textes ci-dessous, certains mots ou expressions ont été omis et remplacés par des traits. Lisez attentivement chacun des textes pour comprendre de quoi il traite. Essayez ensuite de remplacer les traits par les mots ou expressions du texte d'origine.

1a

Le groupe de Tié a quand même fini par partir, le surlendemain, vers la frontière Nord d'où il redescendra par un circuit Nord-Ouest pour faire sa jonction au milieu de l'immense parc avec les deux autres remontant respectivement du Sud-Est et du Sud-Ouest. Tié est dans la troisième jeep _____ convoi, juste après celle du sergent M'Boka (_____ d'Indochine, d'Algérie, du Congo, assez sympathique _____ il n'a pas bu), qui est _____ liaison permanente avec le quartier général _____ l'opération d'où lui sont communiqués régulièrement _____ résultats des missions de reconnaissance par _____ (immenses papillons métalliques qui essayent, dans _____ jungle touffue, de repérer les braconniers _____ de suivre leurs mouvements).
    D'après les _____, chaque année, des bandes armées venant _____ l'étranger pénètrent dans le Parc National (_____ les bêtes sauvages sont protégées) et _____ commettent de graves forfaits: éléphants, rhinocéros _____ et délestés de leurs ivoires; panthères, _____, lions piégés et dépecés; antilopes et _____ massacrés pour leur viande (qui fumée _____ séchée, rapporte gros chez les tribus _____ Nord). Ces prédateurs humains, assoiffés de _____, n'hésitent d'ailleurs plus à tirer sur _____ essaye de s'opposer à leurs sombres desseins; c'est pouquoi l'opération antibraconniers est loin d'être une promenade de santé dans ce paradis pour touristes-Toubabs. Ces derniers continuent tranquillement à parcourir les pistes du Parc selon un circuit soigneusement préparé, sans danger et protégé par les gardes-faune. Allant d'un point d'eau à un campement-restaurant, d'un poste d'observation à une case-relax, l'oeil toujours collé à un objectif japonais, ...

1b

D'après les autorités, chaque année, des bandes armées venant de l'étranger pénètrent dans le Parc National (où les bêtes sauvages sont protégées) et y commettent de graves forfaits: éléphants, rhinocéros abattus et délestés de leurs ivoires; panthères, léopards, lions piégés et dépecés; antilopes et bufles massacrés pour leur viande (qui _____ et séchée, rapporte gros chez les _____ nomades du Nord). Ces prédateurs humains, _____ de gains, n'hésitent d'ailleurs plus à _____ sur quiconque essaye de s'opposer à _____ sombres desseins; c'est pouquoi l'opération antibraconniers _____ loin d'être une promenade de santé _____ ce paradis pour touristes-Toubabs. Ces derniers _____ tranquillement à parcourir les pistes du _____ selon un circuit soigneusement préparé, sans _____ et protégé par les gardes-faune. Allant _____ point d'eau à un campement-restaurant, d'un _____ d'observation à une case-relax, l'oeil toujours _____ à un objectif japonais, les chasseurs _____ d'images

et de bruits engloutissent pellicule _____ pellicule, cassette sur cassette, émerveillement sur _____ .

Comme on roule très vite, Tié, _____ vient pour la première fois dans _____ région, n'a que des visions rapides _____ la nature autour de lui; visions _____ mais merveilleuses: végétations denses et luxuriantes, arbres gigantesques d'une étonnante présence physique; hordes de lions puissants dont le calme seul semble arrêter le convoi qui les laisse traverser les étroites pistes couleur de leur robe; bandes de singes jacassants qui du haut des branches accompagnent la troupe qui passe; groupes d'antilopes de toutes sortes bondissant si rapidement qu'ils ne sont plus qu'illusion d'optique; ...

1c

Ces prédateurs humains, assoiffés de gains, n'hésitent d'ailleurs plus à tirer sur quiconque essaye de s'opposer à leurs sombres desseins; c'est pouquoi l'opération antibraconniers est loin d'être une promenade de santé dans ce paradis pour touristes-Toubabs. Ces derniers continuent tranquillement à parcourir les pistes du Parc selon un circuit soigneusement préparé, sans _____ et protégé par les gardes-faune. Allant _____ point d'eau à un campement-restaurant, d'un _____ d'observation à une case-relax, l'oeil toujours _____ à un objectif japonais, les chasseurs _____ d'images et de bruits engloutissent pellicule _____ pellicule, cassette sur cassette, émerveillement sur _____ .

Comme on roule très vite, Tié, _____ vient pour la première fois dans _____ région, n'a que des visions rapides _____ la nature autour de lui; visions _____ mais merveilleuses: végétations denses et _____, arbres gigantesques d'une étonnante présence physique; _____ de lions puissants dont le calme _____ semble arrêter le convoi qui _____ laisse traverser les étroites pistes couleur de _____ robe; bandes de singes jacassants qui _____ haut des branches accompagnent la troupe _____ passe; groupes d'antilopes de toutes sortes _____ si rapidement qu'ils ne sont plus _____ d'optique; et partout, dans le ciel clair et chaud, des nuées d'oiseaux de toutes couleurs, de toutes formes, de toutes tailles, qui semblent toujours passer et ne jamais se poser.

Au deuxième jour de l'opération, cependant, le charme est rompu pour Tié le citadin, car en plus de la fatigue qui commence à se lire sur chaque visage, le danger rôde.

2a

C'est un spectacle curieux que celui du Beach; de nombreux jeunes gens quittent leur domicile de bon matin comme s'ils allaient au travail; ils s'y retrouvent par petits groupes et y restent toute la journée, jusqu'au départ du drenier bâteau pour Kinshasa. Il y a du mystère dans leur vie.

_____ mal habillés, ils présentent pourtant des _____ bourrées de liasses des deux rives. _____ qu'un taxi dépose quelqu'un, ils se _____ pour proposer leurs services. Ils vont _____ de voiture en voiture, à la _____ de leurs clients. D'autres, qui semblent _____ soucieux de faire des affaires, s'installent _____ la terrasse du bar de l'hôtel, _____ des femmes qui arrivent du Zaïre, _____ se livrent à des coq-à-l'âne pendant _____ heures. On ne les voit ni _____ ni manger; pourtant les traits restent _____ et leurs rires vont jusqu'aux éclats. _____ temps à autre, quelques-uns se lèvent, _____ jusqu'au débarcadère, sans doute pour évaluer _____ flot des passagers ou s'assurer de _____ venue d'une relation;

parfois ils disparaissent _____ derrière la terrasse pour un mystérieux _____.

Des chômeurs fatigués d'arpenter les rues _____ là prendre quelque répit; ils restent pendant longtemps appuyés contre le tronc d'un manguier ou s'assoient sur le rebord de la chaussée. Ils suivent les va-et-vient des voyageurs et changeurs, se retournent aux coups de klaxon, aux appels des petits marchands de sandwiches, d'arachides et de bananes.

2b

On ne les voit ni boire ni manger; pourtant les traits restent détendus et leurs rires vont jusqu'aux éclats. De temps à autre, quelques-uns se lèvent, vont jusqu'au débarcadère, sans doute pour évaluer le flot des passagers ou s'assurer de la venue d'une relation; parfois ils disparaissent ensemble derrière la terrasse pour un _____ conciliabule.

Des chômeurs fatigués d'arpenter les _____ viennent là prendre quelque répit; ils _____ pendant longtemps appuyés contre le tronc _____ manguier ou s'assoient sur le rebord _____ la chaussée. Ils suivent les va-et-vient _____ voyageurs et changeurs, se retournent aux _____ de klaxon, aux appels des petits _____ de sandwiches, d'arachides et de bananes.

_____ Beach est le royaume des gamins _____ ont échappé au système scolaire; ils _____ entre les passants, entre les voitures, _____ les étalages des marchands. Ils retrouvent _____ un air de liberté qui ne _____ nulle part ailleurs dans la ville. _____ milieu de l'aéroport est trop guindé _____ eux. La gare reste souvent déserte. _____ atmosphère perpétuelle d'arrivée et de départ, _____ circulation intense de véhicules et de _____, cette eau qui coule, ces herbes _____ passent, ces vapeurs qui descendent ou remontent le fleuve, ce bruit de féraille du côté des péniches qui tanguent, tout cela distrait en permanence le regard mobile des enfants.

Des femmes arrivent, puis disparaissent derrière le portail dérobant à la vue le petit poste de police frontière. D'autres sortent du débarcadère, chargées de touques d'huile, de cartons de savon, ...

2c

Des chômeurs fatigués d'arpenter les rues viennent là prendre quelque répit; ils restent pendant longtemps appuyés contre le tronc d'un manguier ou s'assoient sur le rebord de la chaussée. Ils suivent les va-et-vient des voyageurs et changeurs, se retournent aux coups de klaxon, aux appels des petits marchands de _____, d'arachides et de bananes.

Le Beach _____ le royaume des gamins qui ont _____ au système scolaire; ils glissent entre_____ les passants, entre les voitures, entre les _____ des marchands. Ils retrouvent là un _____ de liberté qui ne souffle nulle _____ ailleurs dans la ville. Le milieu _____ l'aéroport est trop guindé pour eux. _____ gare reste souvent déserte. Cette atmosphère _____ d'arrivée et de départ, cette circulation _____ de véhicules et de personnes, cette _____ qui coule, ces herbes qui passent, _____ vapeurs qui descendent ou remontent le _____, ce bruit de féraille du côté _____ péniches qui tanguent, tout cela distrait _____ permanence le regard mobile des enfants.

_____ femmes arrivent, puis disparaissent derrière le _____ dérobant à la vue le petit _____ de police frontière. D'autres sortent du _____, chargées de touques d'huile, de cartons de savon, de sachets de riz ou de poulets froids, marchandises qu'on estime moins chères à Kinshasa. Au bureau de

contrôle, c'est le même scénario: ordres des douaniers, déballages des articles, gestes durs ou regards complices, plaintes ou sourires. Les voyageurs se plantent là, attirés par la grande variété des toilettes féminines: pagnes multicolores, tresses longues ou courtes, perruques, chignons postiches, maquillages voilents.

APPENDIX C

CLOZE DELETION ITEMS BY THEIR ANALYTICAL CATEGORIES
BASED ON JONS' (1990) 5-CATEGORY MODEL

The items deleted from the cloze texts used in this study are presented below by text, and by analytical category following the 5-category model hypothesised by Jons (1990). Each deletion item is followed by its place number in the relevant text.

1 English Cloze Texts

1.1 Within-clause (syntax) items

Text 1a	Text 1b	Text 2a
a (item 1)	was (item 11)	the (item 6)
it (item 5)	were (item 14)	and (item 8)
am (item 7)	and (item 15)	are (item 15)
that (item 8)	the (item 16)	is (item 19)
a (item 17)		

Text 2b	Text 3a	Text 3b
a (item 8)	that (item 13)	what (item 2)
were (item 9)	not (item 18)	never (item 8)
		of (item 12)

Text 4a	Text 4b	Text 5a
and (item 3)	the (item 2)	is (item 3)
and (item 8)	the (item 16)	as (item 12)
		been (item 20)

Text 5b

may (item 6)
or (item 7)
a (item 11)

1.2 Within-clause (lexis) items

Text 1a	Text 1b	Text 2a
buses (item 4)	so (item 19)	at (item 3)
few (item 9)	to (item 20)	called (item 5)
in (item 10)		round (item 7)
for (item 15)		up (item 10)
ago (item 20)		for (item 13)

Text 2b	Text 3a	Text 3b
base (item 1)	of (item 1)	with (item 3)
me (item 5)	suit (item 2)	at (item 5)
day (item 7)	fries (item 5)	about (item 6)

of (item 10)	fact (item 11)	they (item 9)
all (item 13)		about (item 10)
uniform (item 16)		very (item 11)
in (item 17)		last (item 16)
to (item 18)		to (item 18)
		on (item 20)

Text 4a	Text 4b	Text 5a
in (item 4)	sheets (item 1)	drove (item 10)
on (item 15)	into (item 3)	that (item 13)
their (item 16)	to (item 8)	
one (item 19)	from (item 13)	

Text 5b

in (item 1)
for (item 4)
good (item 13)
in (item 18)
tails (item 19)

1.3 Across-clause (within-sentence) items

Text 1a	Text 1b	Text 2a
I (item 6)	you (item 1)	and (item 4)
cars (item 13)	your (item 3)	if (item 16)
		and (item 18)

Text 2b	Text 3a	Text 3b
and (item 3)	have (item 4)	and (item 1)
before (item 12)	right (item 6)	he (item 4)
as (item 20)	finish (item 10)	and (item 7)
		even (item 14)

Text 4a	Text 4b	Text 5a
the (item 1)	the (item 11)	she (item 2)
		her (item 18)

Text 5b

they (item 3)
see (item 9)
the (item 14)

1.4 Across-sentence (within-text) items

Text 1a	Text 1b	Text 2a
book (item 3)	house (item 4)	house (item 12)
writing (item 11)	you (item 6)	he (item 20)

writing (item 12)
job (item 14)
number (item 19)

I (item 7)
felt (item 9)
Jack (item 12)

Text 2b	Text 3a	Text 3b
he (item 2) I (item 4)	food (item 3) at (item 9) chicken (item 15) but (item 16) the (item 17) or (item 20)	we (item 13) seen (item 17) God (item 19)

Text 4a	Text 4b	Text 5a
outfits (item 5) them (item 6) two (item 9) they (item 10) the (item 11) passenger (item 13) the (item 20)	then (item 9) this (item 10) we (item 15) they (item 18)	racing (item 5) I (item 7) driver (item 8) that (item 11) drove (item 15) race (item 17)

Text 5b

sun (item 2)
they (item 5)
saw (item 8)
frozen (item 15)

1.5 Extra-textual items

Text 1a	Text 1b	Text 2a
passed (item 2) collected (item 16) you (item 18)	only (item 2) evil (item 5) maybe (item 8) fault (item 10) month (item 13) Norwegian (item 17) wooden (item 18)	I (item 1) good (item 2) counted (item 9) ship's (item 11) stood (item 14) managed (item 17)

Text 2b	Text 3a	Text 3b
people (item 6) illegal (item 11) clean (item 14) told (item 15) police (item 19)	modern (item 7) sure (item 8) brought (item 12) mistake (item 14) do (item 19)	one (item 15)

Text 4a	Text 4b	Text 5a
lines (item 2) back (item 7)	shouts (item 4) frightened (item 5)	woman (item 1) see (item 4)

leather (item 12)   goats (item 6)   fast (item 6)
seconds (item 14)   running (item 7)   father (item 9)
ready (item 17)   looking (item 12)   small (item 14)
count (item 18)   thunder (item 14)   parents (item 16)
     sink (item 17)   owned (item 19)
     ran (item 19)
     ran (item 20)

Text 5b

worry (item 10)
gas (item 12)
gases (item 16)
radiation (item 17)
points (item 20)

2 French Cloze Texts

2.1 Within-clause (syntax) items

Text 1a	Text 1b	Text 1c
les (item 6)	est (item 6)	qui (item 8)
la (item 8)	la (item 18)	la (item 9)
et (item 9)		
et (item 17)		
quiconque (item 20)		

Text 2a	Text 2b	Text 2c
le (item 16)	manguier (item 4)	est (item 2)
la (item 17)	le (item 9)	les (item 4)
	le (item 15)	la (item 9)
		en (item 16)

2.2 Within-clause (lexis) items

Text 1a	Text 1b	Text 1c
du (item 1)	fumee (item 1)	danger (item 1)
en (item 4)	dans (item 7)	d'un (item 2)
de (item 5)	danger (item 10)	sur (item 6)
de (item 11)	d'un (item 11)	émerveillement (item 7)
du (item 18)	pellicule (item 15)	de (item 10)
	émerveillement (item 16)	du (item 17)
	de (item 19)	gains (item 19)
		qu'illusion (item 20)

Text 2a	Text 2b	Text 2c
des (item 3)	pendant (item 3)	étalages (item 5)
ainsi (item 5)	coups (item 7)	au (item 6)
moins (item 7)	marchands (item 8)	de (item 8)

a (item 8)	entre (item 12)	intense (item 11)
des (item 11)	souffle (item 14)	fleuve (item 14)
boire (item 12)	pour (item 16)	des (item 15)
de (item 14)		portail (item 18)
ensemble (item 18)		

2.3 Across-clause (within-sentence) items

Text 1a	Text 1b	Text 1c
quand (item 3)	qui (item 17)	leur (item 16)
ou (item 12)		qui (item 18)
y (item 13)		

Text 2a	Text 2b	Text 2c
	qui (item 10)	eau (item 12)
	cette (item 17)	ces (item 13)
	cette (item 18)	
	qui (item 20)	

2.4 Across-sentence (within-text) items

Text 1a	Text 1b	Text 1c
bufles (item 16)	assoiffés (item 3)	
gains (item 19)	leurs (item 5)	
	parc (item 9)	

Text 2a	Text 2b	Text 2c
ou (item 10)	la (item 13)	poste (item 19)
	souffle (item 19)	débarcadère (item 20)

2.5 Extra-textual items

Text 1a	Text 1b	Text 1c
ancien (item 2)	tribus (item 2)	poste (item 3)
hélicoptère (item 7)	tirer (item 4)	collé (item 4)
autorités (item 10)	continuent (item 8)	affamés (item 5)
abattus (item 14)	poste (item 12)	furtives (item 11)
léopards (item 15)	collé (item 13)	luxuriantes (item 12)
	affamés (item 14)	hordes (item 13)
	furtives (item 20)	seul (item 14)
		laisse (item 15)

Text 2a	Text 2b	Text 2c
souvent (item 1)	mystérieux (item 1)	sandwiches (item 1)

poches (item 2)
précipitent (item 4)
recherche (item 6)
entreprennent (item 9)
détendus (item 13)
vont (item 15)
conciliabule (item 19)
viennent (item 20)

viennent (item 2)
la (item 5)
voyageurs (item 6)
glissent (item 11)

échappé (item 3)
part (item 7)
perpétuelle (item10)
des (item 17)

APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE IN ENGLISH

Dear respondent

We would like to know more about the reading problems of Zairean students. Please read each of the following statements (20); and show how each fits you, for reading in English, by putting a circle around one of the numbers 1, 2, 3, or 4.

NB: 1 means very often (almost every day),
      2 means sometimes (once a week or once every two weeks),
      3 means rarely (once a month or less),
      4 means never.

Thank you very much for collaborating sincerely.

1) My parents read books, magazines, ...	1	2	3	4
2) My teachers read books, magazines, ...	1	2	3	4
3) I have the opportunity of reading books, magazines, ...	1	2	3	4
4) I read books, magazines, ...	1	2	3	4
5) What a word or a phrase means is found in the dictionary, e.g., Larousse/Micro-Robert.	1	2	3	4
6) What a word or a phrase means is found in the text in which the word or phrase is used.	1	2	3	4
7) While somebody is reading he may ask himself questions about the ideas of the text.	1	2	3	4
8) While somebody is reading he may ask himself questions about the words or phrases used in the text.	1	2	3	4
9) I read with questions in my mind, relating to the text I am reading.	1	2	3	4
10) While I am reading I may stop in order to think over a difficult word or phrase.	1	2	3	4
11) While I am reading I may stop in order to think over a difficult idea.	1	2	3	4
12) I memorise the key words of the text I am reading in order to carry on reading well.	1	2	3	4
13) I re-read before carrying on reading.	1	2	3	4

14) I mentally link what I have just read to what comes next in the text.	1	2	3	4
15) I mentally summarise what I have just read in order to carry on reading effectively.	1	2	3	4
16) I mentally relate what I read to what I know.	1	2	3	4
17)While I am reading I skip words or phrases without losing the general idea of the text.	1	2	3	4
18)When there is a difficult word or phrase in a text, I guess its meaning and carry on reading.	1	2	3	4
19)When there is a difficult word or phrase, I look it up in a dictionary or consult someone.	1	2	3	4
20)When there is a difficult word, I skip it and carry on reading.	1	2	3	4

Please answer each of the following 10 questions as fully as you can!

21)What are the twenty statements that you have just read about?

22)What kind of reader do you think you are? (Put a circle around your choice(s), and add if necessary.)
enthusiastic, slow, interested, poor, careful, good, quick, uninterested, careless, casual, confident, critical, usual, sustained, efficient, ...

23)What do you find most difficult when you read in English?

24)Do you have any books at home, that you read? Yes   No
If yes, give up to three titles.

25)Are there any topics that you read about in English, other than those you read in school? Yes   No
If yes, what topics? For example: sports, music, fashion, etc.

26)How many pages of a story book do you read in English in 10 minutes?

27)What is the order of words on the page of a dictionary?

28)Are the explanations of words in a dictionary easy to understand? Why?

29)What, for you, is the use of the title of a text that you are going to read?

30)Who is your reader model? Why?

APPENDIX E

QUESTIONNAIRE IN FRENCH

Cher(e) répondant(e),

Nous nous intéressons aux problèmes de lecture dans les écoles zaïroises et vous saurions gré de bien vouloir lire chacune des déclarations suivantes (20). Vous voudrez bien indiquer comment chacune d'elles vous convient, concernant la lecture en français, en encerclant l'un des chiffres 1, 2, 3, ou 4.

NB: 1 veut dire très souvent (presque chaque jour),
2 veut dire parfois (une fois par semaine ou une fois toutes les deux semaines),
3 veut dire rarement (une fois par mois ou moins),
4 veut dire jamais.

1) Il arrive à mes parents de lire des livres, des magazines, ...	1	2	3	4
2) Il arrive à mes professeurs de lire des livres, des magazines, ...	1	2	3	4
3) J'ai l'occasion de lire des livres, des magazines, ...	1	2	3	4
4) Il m'arrive de lire des livres, des magazines, ...	1	2	3	4
5) Ce qu'un mot ou une expression veut dire se trouve dans le dictionnaire, p.ex., Larousse/Micro-Robert.	1	2	3	4
6) Ce qu'un mot ou une expression veut dire se trouve dans le texte où il/elle est utilisé(e).	1	2	3	4
7) Les questions que l'on peut se poser pendant la lecture portent sur les idées du texte qu'on lit.	1	2	3	4
8) Les questions que l'on peut se poser pendant la lecture portent sur les mots ou oles expressions du texte qu'on lit.	1	2	3	4
9) Je lis avec des questions relatives au texte dans mon esprit.	1	2	3	4
10) Je m'arrête pendant la lecture pour réflechir sur un mot ou une expression difficile.	1	2	3	4
11)Je m'arrête pendant la lecture pour réflechir sur une idée difficile.	1	2	3	4
12)Je mémorise les mots clefs du texte que je lis pour bien continuer à lire.	1	2	3	4
13)Je relis avant de poursuivre la lecture.	1	2	3	4

14)Je rapproche mentalement ce que je viens de lire à ce qui va siuvre dans le texte.

    1   2   3   4

15)Je résume mentalement ce que je viens de lire pour poursuivre la lecture efficacement.

    1   2   3   4

16)Je rapproche mentalement ce que je lis à ce que je sais.

    1   2   3   4

17)Quand je lis, je saute des mots ou des expressions sans perdre l'idée générale.

    1   2   3   4

18)Quand je rencontre un mot ou une expression difficile, j'en devine le sens et poursuis la lecture.

    1   2   3   4

19)Quand je rencontre un mot ou une expression difficile, je recours au dictionnaire ou à quelqu'un.

    1   2   3   4

20)Quand je rencontre un mot ou une expression difficile, je le/la saute et poursuis la lecture.

    1   2   3   4

Veuillez répondre à chacune des 10 questions suivantes. Soyez aussi complet(e)s que possible.

21)De quoi traitent les vingt déclarations que vous venez de lire?

22)Quel genre de lecteur (-trice) pensez-vous être? Encerclez votre(vos) choix, et ajoutez s'il le faut.)
        enthousiaste, lent(e), intéressé(e), bon(ne), rapide, occasionnel(le), confiant(e),
        efficace, mauvais(e), habituel(le), désintéré(e), peu soigné(e), crititque,
        soutenu(e), soigné(e), ...

23)Que trouvez-vous plus difficile quand vous lisez en français?

24)Avez-vous des livres à la maison, que vous lisez? Oui   Non
Si oui, citez jusqu'à trois titres.

25)Y a-t-il des thèmes sur lesquels vous lisez en français, autres que ceux sur lesquels vous lisez à l'école? Oui   Non
Si oui, quels thèmes? Par exemple: le sport, la musique, la mode, etc.

26)Combien de pages de livres (par exemple: roman, récit) en français lisez-vous en 10 minutes?

27)Quel est l'ordre des mots sur une page de dictionnaire?

28)Est-ce que les explications des dans un dictionnaire sont faciles à comprendre? Pourquoi?

29)Quelle est, pour vous, l'utilité du titre d'un texte que vous allez lire?

30)Qui est votre modèle de lecteur (-trice)? Pourquoi?

APPENDIX F

LIST OF GRADED READERS

The readers listed below, which the experimental students were to read during the treatment, were a collection from the Collins English Library graded series for learners of English. The series comprises six grading levels. The treatment supply included 55 titles, one or two copies per title; all amounting to 90 readers per experimental group, as shown below:

Reader levels	1	2	3	4	5	6
No of titles	8	7	10	10	11	9

No of copies/title	2	2	2	2	1	1

Total No of Readers per experimental group   90

Here follows a list of the reader titles, along with the names of their authors or editors, and their content domains as specified in the **Collins English Library Catalogue 1987/88.**

Title	Author/Editor	Content Domain
LEVEL 1		
- **Inspector Holt and the Fur Van**	J Tully	Crime/ Detection
- **Fast Money**	K R Cripwell	Thriller/Spy/ Adventure
- **Taxi !**	J Homeshaw	Thriller/Spy/ Adventure
- **Dead in the Morning**	J Homeshaw	Mystery/ Horror/Ghost
- **Three Folk Tales**	M Naudi	Short stories
- **Fastline UK**	J Homeshaw	Crime/ Detection
- **The Man with Three Fingers**	J Tully	Thriller/Spy/ Adventure
- **The Grey Rider**	S Rabbley	Mystery/ Horror/Ghost
LEVEL 2		
- **Inspector Holt:The Bridge**	J Tully	Thriller/Spy/ Adventure
- **The Magic Garden**	K R Cripwell	Crime/ Detection
- **The Wrestler**	K R Cripwell	Thriller/Spy/ Adventure Romance
- **The Titanic Is Sinking**	K R Cripwell	Thriller/Spy/ Adventure

- The Story of Scotland Yard	L Jones	Non-fiction/ Information
- The Charlie Chaplin Story	J Homeshaw	Biography - Non-fiction/ Information
- Chariots of Fire	W J Weatherby	Thriller/Spy/ Adventure - Biography

LEVEL 3

- Five Ghost Stories	V Huggins	Mystery/ Horror/Ghost Short stories
- Climb a Lonely Hill	L Norman	Thriller/Spy/ Adventure
- Born Free	J Adamson	Biography - Science/ Nature
- An American Tragedy	T Dreiser	Classic - Romanc
- Six American Stories	N Wymer	Classic - Short stories
- Maimunah	D Hill	Thriller/Spy/ Adventure
- Bruce Springsteen	T Murphy	Biography
- The Picture of Dorian Gray	O Wilde	Classic - Mystery/ Horror/ Ghost
- Is That It ?	B Geldof	Biography
- A Room with a View	E M Forster	Classic - Romance

LEVEL 4

- The Lovely Lady and Other Stories	D H Lawrence	Short stories
- King Solomon's Mines	H R Haggard	Thriller/Spy/ Adventure
- A Christmas Carol	C Dickens	Classic - Mystery/ Horror/ Ghost
- Jane Eyre	C Bronte	Classic - Romance
- Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde	R L Stevenson	Classic - Mystery/ Horror/ Ghost
- Huckleberry Finn	M Twain	Classic - Thriller/ Spy/ Adventure
- Airport International	B Moynahan	Non-fiction/ Information
- The Secret Sharer and Other Sea Stories	J Conrad	Short stories
- Hostage Tower	A McLean	Thriller/Spy/ Adventure
- Campbell's Kingdom	H Innes	Thriller/Spy/

Adventure

LEVEL 5

- The Guns of Navarone	A McLean	Thriller/Spy/ Adventure
- Where Eagles Dare	A McLean	Thriller/Spy/ Adventure
- I Know My Love	C Gaskin	Romance
- Geordie	D Walker	Romance
- Among the Elephants	I & O Douglas-Hamilton	Science/ Nature
- The Wreck of the Mary Deare	H Innes	Mystery/ Horror/ Ghost
- The Eagle Has Landed	J Higgins	Thriller/Spy/ Adventure - Crime/ Detection
- The Mayor of Casterbridge	T Hardy	Classic - Romance
- Wuthering Heights	E Bronte	Classic - Romance
- Sense and Sensibility	J Austen	Classic - Romance
- Experiences of Terror	R John	Thriller/Spy/ Adventure - Mystery/ Horror/ Ghost

LEVEL 6

- Doctor Zhivago	B Pasternak	Classic - Thriller/Spy/ Adventure - Romance
- In the Shadow of Man	J Goodall	Science/ Nature - Non-fiction/ Information
- The Glory Boys	G Seymour	Thriller/Spy/ Adventure
- Inspector Ghote Breaks an Egg	H R F Keating	Thriller/Spy/ Adventure
- Harry's Game	G Seymour	Thriller/Spy/ Adventure - Crime/ Detection
- Hard Times	C Dickens	Classic
- Sons and Lovers	D H Lawrence	Classic
- The House of a Thousand Lanterns	V Holt	Romance
- The Dark Frontier	E Ambler	Thriller/Spy/ Adventure - Crime/ Detection