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STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE USE OF FORMS AND AUTHENTIC TEXT IN AN EFL CONTEXT

by

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled **STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE USE OF FORMS AND AUTHENTIC TEXT IN AN EFL CONTEXT** submitted by Yvonne Marie Ellis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

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Abstract

Research suggests that the use of authentic text can provide reading experiences that encourage students to reap all the benefits of being literate. However, the definitions of authentic text do not address the role that the "form" of the authentic text might play in this process.

This study explores: 1) how forms that EFL students read in L1 influence the forms they read in L2; 2) how the forms students are exposed to in L2 in class influence what they choose to read in L2 outside of class; 3) students' awareness of their own purposes for reading; and 4) selection strategies students use to select what forms they will read .

A questionnaire (n=85) and think-aloud interview (n=9) revealed that: 1) many of the forms that students read in L2 are the same as the forms they read in L1; 2) the forms students choose to read in L2 out of class are the same as the ones they read in EFL classes; 3) respondents identified 7 purposes for reading in L2; and 4) participants utilized 14 selection strategies to help them choose a form to read.

From this study come 7 recommendations and implications: 1) students need to be exposed to a greater variety of written forms; 2) teachers could benefit from using Bilash's four quadrants (1998) as a tool for selecting a greater variety of authentic forms in order to develop a more balanced reading program; 3) students and teachers need to become more aware of how the form of a text relates to a student's purpose for reading it; 4) the notion of form needs to be built into the definition of authentic text; 5) teachers need to be more conscious of the role that forms play in the EFL reading classroom; 6) students need to learn more critical text selection skills and teachers need to more

consciously teach about the influence that form has in that process; and 7) EFL educators must be conscious about ways to avoid the phenomenon of aliteracy in their students.

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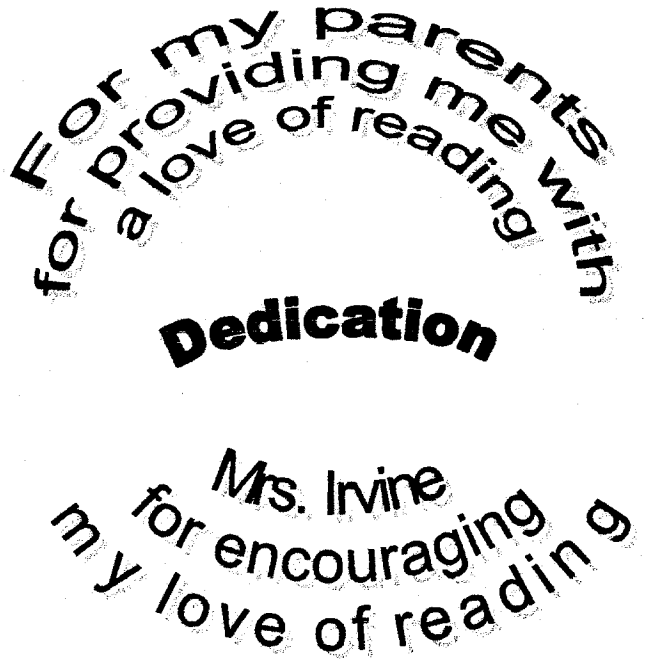
For my parents
for providing me with
a love of reading
Dedication
Mrs. Irvine
for encouraging
my love of reading

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Chapter 1: Ripples

> Ripple: to form small waves or undulations on the surface, as water when agitated by a gentle breeze or by running over a rocky bottom (Barnhart, Stein, 1967, p.1047)

"Another class, another professor, another handout", I think as I stuff yet another photocopy of another article into a folder of similar articles and stick it into my bag.

"You are so lucky that English is your first language, it is so easy for you to read these handouts" says a fellow graduate student, who is from Korea.

"Ha, I wish! This is difficult for me too." I reply.

As he turned to walk away, I felt the need to understand why he thought it wouldn't be difficult for me. I follow him out of class and ask him,

"Hey, why do you think it's difficult?" I really want to know. From my point of view, I see him reading all the time and he reads texts that I feel are beyond my comprehension.

He replies factually, "Reading in English is difficult because it is not my mother tongue."

I must have clearly looked unsatisfied by this answer because he informed me that other international students he has talked to express the same sentiment about reading in English.

When I ask him why they perceive reading in English as difficult, he says, "no one knows, it just is".

This moment reminds me that for some time I have wondered what it is like to read in another language, especially when immersed in it. Did

international students ever casually flip through a magazine, recommend good books to each other, or chuckle at some of the narratives and anecdotes found in academic literature? What do they read? Do they feel like they have a choice about what they read? Is it limited to academic texts and textbooks, required reading, and reading to gain knowledge in their subject area? What are the differences between the literacy worlds of an English as a second language (ESL) student and mine as a native speaker of English? Outside of coursework or even homework do ESL students take advantage of or even benefit from their ability to read English?

As someone who is learning Japanese, I am aware of my literacy successes and how they are a measure of the development of my functional language ability; unfortunately I have not yet attained a level of proficiency in my second language to be able to engage in reading for pleasure. Sometimes, perhaps because I strive to be able to read for pleasure in Japanese, I wonder what my actual ability is - perhaps I do have the ability to read in Japanese, but have not yet found the reading material that matches that ability and my purpose for reading.

Across the seemingly still waters, our brief encounter has cast a stone into the vast sea of my reading experiences and memories, both of which create a series of ripples. As I ponder these questions I reflect on my identity as a reader, as well as my own practice as an ESL instructor. This leads me to examine my definitions of relevance, aesthetic reading and meaningful

experiences. What are the differences between a person like me who enjoys reading and someone who does not?

What becomes increasingly evident to me is that my questions about reading are not only questions about literacy development in the second language classroom, but also about students developing reading skills in the classroom that they do not use outside the classroom, and the role educators play in this phenomenon. In fact, my questions are about what I, as a foreign language teacher in Asia, never asked: What reading materials do teachers expose students to? In what form and for what purpose? Outside of "teaching reading" and all of its benefits such as increasing vocabulary, other language skills, and general knowledge, do any of the experiences my students have reading in class in any way effect, or maybe even encourage, reading outside of class? My curiosity about how the classroom experience influences lifelong reading has led me to explore what reading materials students are being exposed to in class, how they are exposed to them, and how their exposure influences their decisions about reading outside of class.

Benefits of reading

Reading provides students with the opportunity to increase overall language skills, social skills and develop lifelong attitudes towards reading and learning (Graves,1991; Krashen, 1993, 1995; Liaw, 2001; Davis, 1995; Renandya, Sundara Rajan, Jacobs, 1999; Smith, 1994), as well as to improve their reading skills and reading speed through reading. In fact, this positive sense of self-efficacy increases the likelihood of these skills being utilized. As

Bandura (1989) notes, "(s)kills are a generative rather than a fixed capability and perceived efficacy plays a critical role in whether they are used well, poorly, or extraordinarily "(p.197). This concern for developing the practice of lifelong literacy is dealt with in the literature concerning reading in both mother tongue (L1) (Graves, 1991; Smith, 1994) and second languages (L2) (Krashen, 1993; Renandya, Sundara Rajan, Jacobs,1999).

Reading, whether in L1 or L2, is a complex process (Graves, 1991; Smith, 1994; Krashen, 1995, Davis, 1995; Liaw, 2001). In the L2 context, it is a way to maintain and improve second language skills, while allowing students to develop and practice learning strategies that enhance overall learning and positive attitudes towards learning. The reading referred to here is out of class reading - reading on one's own time. L2 readers, just like L1 readers need to experience the pleasure of reading on one's own time and in order to choose to read on their own time, they need to know what materials are available to them for this purpose. Exposure to a variety of written materials will also help them to be able to interpret the literate world around them (Graves, 1991; Swaffer, Arens, Byrnes, 1991; Smith, 1994; Krashen, 1993, 1995; Davis, 1995; Renandya, Sundara Rajan, Jacobs,1999; Liaw, 2001). When L1 children grow up in a majority language milieu they are exposed to a great variety of written materials on a daily basis. Unfortunately, such a sometimes "taken-for-granted"

literacy rich environment is not available to L2 learners, especially those living in a foreign language (FL)[1] setting.

Increase overall language skills

Despite the difficulties of finding a variety of print materials, the benefits of reading go beyond increasing reading ability to other language areas as well. Through reading students can increase their vocabulary, and read extended discourse that influences their speaking ability. Further, as Swaffer, Arens, and Byrnes (1991) point out, vocabulary gained through reading increases polyseme recognition, that is "the ability to recognize multiple definitions for a single word depending on the context (p.45)."

Additionally, the research supports that reading also benefits writing (Graves, 1991). Unlike reading, which is learned through reading, more writing alone will not improve writing. It is, in fact, reading that provides students with models of writing. Through reading students begin to understand the different perspectives and interpretations of a written text, in addition to identifying characteristics of written style that they might like to incorporate into their own.

Social skills

Reading also helps to develop interpersonal and intrapersonal skills and provides a means for students to engage in autonomous learning. Too often the communicative value of reading is underrated. From a social perspective, students share an experience when they read the same piece of literature.

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1 In a foreign language setting (FL) learners hear the target language predominantly in the classroom while in a second language setting (SL) they hear the 'new' language both in the classroom and in the society at large. Language acquisition is much more rapid in a SL setting where learners have opportunities to use the target language for real purposes of communication frequently outside of the classroom.

Discussing the story, novel, poem or article gives students reasons to connect with each other and the world around them. From the perspective of developing autonomy, reading has also been shown to encourage risk taking by providing students with vicarious experiences which inform them of possible outcomes of actions (Graves, 1991). Furthermore, a student who perceives him/herself as a good reader is more likely to take risks in other language areas than a student who considers him/herself a poor reader (Beers, 1996a).

Lifelong attitudes towards reading and learning

Reading is not only about gaining literacy skills but also about developing skills over language structure, problem solving and hypothesis testing. Through reading students gain information about events beyond their immediate frame of reference and can connect literacy to their own life and learning (Chamot, O'Malley, 1994; Graves, 1991). While lifelong learning is a benefit of L1 and L2 literacy, reading is also a way to continue and maintain a language that may not frequently be used in oral settings. However, to reap all the benefits of reading, individuals must develop reading habits that lead to reading for one's own purposes outside the classroom.

Increasing reading ability

There is a range of skills that are needed in order to become a reader and, as has already been mentioned, researchers agree that reading is learned through reading (Graves, 1991; Grellet, 1981; Ommagio, 1986). Integrated, interactive, transactional approaches to reading build in both top-down and bottom-up processing (Carrell, Devine, Eskey,1995), and help the reader to

fluctuate between interpretation and internalization of the text (Carrell, Devine, Eskey, 1995; Rosenblatt, 1978; Swaffer, Aren, Burns, 1991). Moreover, students need to read different materials in different ways for different purposes. The more students read and are read to, the more they become familiar with a range of forms and the more reading skills such as prediction and fluency are improved (Graves, 1991; Krashen, 1995; Smith, 1994; Swaffer, Byrnes, Arens, 1991). Not only does the reader have to focus on decoding and recoding text, but s/he must also be aware of how what is on the page interacts with his/her background knowledge, experience, and context to create meaning (Swaffer, Aren, Burns, 1991; Carrell, Devine, Eskey,1995; Rosenblatt, 1978).

In Rosenblatt's (1978) transactional view of reading the reader's purpose for reading any given text fluctuates between efferent and aesthetic orientations to reading. Efferent reading refers to reading for information, usually for the purpose of completing a task. For example, reading directions, a recipe, or a prescription triggers a course of action to complete some desired or required task. Aesthetic reading, on the other hand, refers to reading for pleasure, which focuses on the relationship and communication between the text and the reader. This type of engagement with the text occurs when one is lost in the world of a novel, or reads a poem that is deeply moving. The fact that we read in different ways points out that the ability to make meaning and identify purposes for reading are skills that readers both need to develop and can improve by further reading. That said, it is important to be aware that although these two aspects of reading represent different purposes for reading, they are defined *by the reader*,

not the text. Knutson (1997), Krashen (1995), Liaw (2001), and Vallete (1997) have clearly shown that incorporating aesthetic purposes for reading in the classroom make reading more meaningful to the students.

Many studies point not only to the positive influences of reading outside the classroom on the development and maintenance of overall reading skills (Chamot, O' Malley, 1994; Cummins, 1996; Decker, 1986; Graves, 1991; Pickard, 1996; Thimmesch, 1984), but also to three types of literacy: *literacy, illiteracy, and aliteracy.*

Due to a variety of opinions about the purposes for being literate, defining literacy is not an easy task. Decker (1986) and Thimmesch (1984) use the term *functional literacy* to describe the reading ability needed by a person in order to function in society. In their mind functional literacy is approximately equivalent to a fourth grade reading ability. At the other end of the spectrum Freire (1987) and Cummins (1996) describe *critical literacy*, which "enables us to read between the lines, to look skeptically at apparently benign and plausible surface structures, to analyze claims in relation to empirical data, and to question whose interests are served by particular forms of communication" (Cummins, 1996 p.219). For the purposes of this thesis, literacy will be defined as an ability to meet daily reading and writing needs in society (functional) and the ability to use these skills to achieve personal goals (critical) (Graves,1991; Smith, 1994).

Illiteracy, on the other hand, is the opposite of being literate, and as such, carries with it both an inability to read at least at a grade four reading level and an inability to achieve critical reading. This includes the number of marginal

illiterates whose reading ability is so limited that they have difficulty with basic literacy functions such as filling out forms and reading signs (Kozol, 1985). In general, although the number of people who are completely unable to read and write is declining, our expectations of what constitutes being literate are increasing (Krashen, 1993).

In the literature about literacy in mother tongue (L1) there has been a constant concern about students and teachers being *aliterate*, that is, having the ability to read, but not exercising it (Beers,1996a; Decker, 1986, Frager, 1987; Thimmesch, 1984). Aliteracy differs from illiteracy in that someone who is illiterate is considered to have insufficient reading skills to function in a literate world, while an aliterate has the reading skills, but for a variety of reasons does not exercise or learn from/with/through them.

Aliteracy

Aliterates express different reasons for choosing not to read. In addition to their attitudes about reading, and their perception of themselves as readers (Beers, 1996a; Burdick, 1998; Decker, 1986; Thimmesch,1994), aliterates are also influenced by their previous reading experiences, what they have observed about the value and purpose for reading, and their perceived reading ability (Burdick, 1998; Beersa,1996; Decker, 1986).

According to Beers (1996b), aliterates can be categorized according to their attitudes towards reading and experience as a reader. There are three categories of aliterates: *dormant, uncommitted*, and *unmotivated. Dormant* readers have had positive experiences with reading and value reading, but do

not make the time to do it. In other words, they have had opportunities to experience reading for aesthetic purposes, but do not consider it a current priority. The *uncommitted* reader dislikes reading, but concedes that it is necessary, and has developed an appreciation of the pleasure that others have found in reading. Thus, the uncommitted reader is open to considering the possibility of reading in the future. This type of reader's experience with literature tends to be related to the development of reading for efferent purposes such as the explicit development of reading comprehension skills. The *unmotivated* reader has developed such a dislike for reading and readers that s/he is unlikely to take up reading again. The unmotivated reader has concluded that students read because it is the teacher's job to make students read, sees all reading as efferent, and questions whether any one can really read for enjoyment.

Accordingly, Beers (1996b) mentions three approaches that can provide meaningful experiences for different kinds of aliterates. First, she states that all categories of aliterate readers need to be welcomed into a community of readers where they feel that their opinions about books are validated by peers, teachers, and librarians. Second, she notes not only the value of read-alouds, but how they must be done differently with different types of aliterates. Dormant, and uncommitted readers like to have entire literary texts read aloud to them, while unmotivated readers like to hear a portion of the text and then prefer to finish reading the text on their own. Third, Beers (1998b) argues that since the link between imagery and written words seems to be connected to students' ability to internalize reading purposes (Beers, 1998b, Thimmesch, 1984), aliterate

readers require more visual support than avid readers to create personal visual imagery while they read.

Burdick (1998) argues that in addition to aliteracy with regard to literature, there is also *information aliteracy*, which focuses on the reluctant reader who has to conduct research on a topic. Burdick (1998) points out that students who display information aliteracy need to learn to identify when they need more information, find the information, and evaluate what they have found. By developing the ability to connect and commit to a topic, these students can learn and experience an aesthetic value of seeking information.

Fostering a sense of value from informative reading is reiterated in Frager's (1987) article about teacher aliteracy. Although he notes a general concern about teachers' lack of engagement in recreational reading, the focus of his study is to encourage pre-service teachers to read educational "trade books". He argues that in order to decrease aliteracy teachers must be role models for developing life-long reading habits. In turn, teacher education programs need to emphasize, nurture and also model the abilities to select and connect with literature about the teaching profession for future educators.

Decreasing Aliteracy

Although aliteracy occurs in different contexts, researchers agree that aliteracy in L1 can be decreased by: 1) increasing students' exposure to a variety of written forms, 2) providing students with time to read and seek information, 3) providing students with opportunities to discern personal purposes for reading in order to become conscious of the social and personal

benefits of reading, and 4) teaching students selection skills by providing them with guided selection tasks (Burdick, 1998; Beers,1996a, 1996b; Decker, 1986; Frager, 1987; Thimmesch, 1984). Clearly, the latter two goals can only be achieved if a greater variety of forms are integrated into classroom activities (Burdick, 1998; Beers,1996a,1996b; Decker, 1986; Thimmesch, 1984).

Increasing students' exposure to a variety of written forms

Pickard's (1996) study on out-of-class language learning strategies indicates that students will read a variety of forms to maintain their L2, studies dealing with in class reading programs consider variety as supplying students with an abundance of the same form (Cho, Krashen, 2001; Davis, 1995; Lao, Krashen, 2000; Renandya, Rajan, Jacobs, 1999). For example, Cho and Krashen's (2001) study provided Korean elementary school teachers in a EFL teacher training course with the opportunity to select and read children's books in order to show that a single positive reading experience can lead to positive attitudes about reading that, in turn, lead to more reading. Although Cho and Krashen (2001) asked the research participants about previous reading habits no data was collected on the reading of particular forms, and the only form used for the study was children's books.

Providing students with time to read and seek information

The benefits of giving students in class time to select and read the material they have chosen is noted in studies concerning the implementation of reading programs (Cho, Krashen, 2001; Davis, 1995; Lao, Krashen, 2000; Renandya, Rajan, Jacobs, 1999). Studies on extensive reading programs

(ERPs) (Davis, 1995; Renandya, Rajan, Jacobs, 1999), free voluntary reading (FVR), and sustained silent reading (SSR) (Cho, Krashen 2001; Lao, Krashen, 2000) indicate that students' positive attitudes towards reading increase after being able to select what they read. However, in these same studies, the process of selection usually focuses on providing an opportunity for self-selection of text to increase the aesthetic value of the reading experience, rather than on the development of selection skills.

Discerning personal purposes for reading

Other studies that explore using authentic text in the classroom involve how the processes used in reading authentic text influence students' purposes for reading, students' attitudes towards reading, and students' awareness of how and why they read (Auerbach, Paxton, 1997; Hadaway, Mundy, 1999; Liaw, 2001; Wong, Kwok, Choi, 1995). One of the findings of these studies was that when authentic text was read for both efferent and aesthetic purposes, students' enjoyment of reading increased. Hadaway and Mundy (1999) argue that using children's informational picture books to study weather is more enjoyable than using a textbook. Wong, Kwok and Choi (1995) point out that authentic text, such as a magazine article can link language skills to the real world. Similarly, Liaw's (2001) exploration of students' responses to short stories showed how authentic text could be used to gain cultural understanding of the L2. Although these studies highlight how authentic text is used to enhance positive attitudes towards reading, and thus aesthetic purposes for reading, it is unclear how much students were influenced by authentic tasks related to the reading or if

reading for their own purposes was a skill that was developed. Furthermore, all materials were pre-selected for students to guarantee that they were appropriate for the tasks that the researchers wanted to investigate.

Teaching selection skills

Grellet (1981) argues that students have to be exposed to a variety of forms in order to be able to distinguish between facts and opinion, assess the communicative value of a text, and gain an understanding of the writer's intention, including his/her possible bias. Similarly, Burdick (1998) and Decker (1986) agree that students need to be exposed to more than one source of information in order to develop logical patterns for decision making about what material to read in the future.

Evidence for the benefits of reading coupled with concerns about aliteracy are still at the surface of my quest to understand how EFL students begin to internalize literacy, make choices of their own, and my role in helping them gain a sense of purpose for literacy. Beyond the ripples of my experience and knowledge are the undercurrents of practice and theory that I now immerse myself in.

Chapter 2: Undercurrents

Undercurrent: 1. a current below the upper currents or below the surface.2. an underlying tendency (Barnhart, Stein, 1967, p. 1320)

After teaching abroad, returning to the comfortable learning atmosphere of my university is a welcome change. I could not imagine studying abroad where I could not have easy access to a familiar organization system that allows me to locate any books or journals I need. Overseas I was constantly scrounging for reading material, and as a reader, found myself reading material that I normally would not have chosen to read, even if I knew it existed. For example, in Japan and Korea I read with intensity the financial section of the newspaper; in Canada I normally skimmed over or totally skipped this section. At home my dilemma is quite the opposite, I am faced with too many choices, and have to be selective about what I read. I carefully peruse tables of contents and read abstracts to select academic articles so that I will still have enough time to read the multitude of novels and magazines that I love to read for pleasure.

As usual, Friday afternoon is my day to look at journal articles because the weekend is the only time I can borrow journals from the library. I am finished signing out this week's find when I see a familiar face.

"Auntie Helen?"

Auntie Helen is no blood relation, but she is Auntie Helen just the same.

She seems a little dejected as she walks towards me. She too has a book in her hands.

" I want to sign out this book, but I am not a University student."

As we are talking about her dilemma the story unravels about how she received a photocopied short story in her ESL class and would like to read more short stories. The teacher gave her the information about the book, but neglected to tell her that she would be unable to take it out because she is not a university student. I empathize with her, knowing that feeling when anticipation turns to disappointment because one cannot find or access something one really wants to read. I experience it frequently when a book I'm using goes onto the reserve section of the library. I understand how reading at the library is not the same as reading at home, so I offer to take it out for her. In her eyes I can see both the gratitude and promise to return the book on time.

Her experience in class reminds me of my first term as a "reading teacher" in Seoul and how differently my students and I approached the short story. In those days the main concern of my students was to improve their English so that they could study abroad. To this end they were very concerned about reading faster, so at the beginning of every class I gave the students a photocopy of a reading from a textbook designed to help students increase their reading speed and comprehension. All of the readings were "authentic", as will be described in this chapter, because they were all excerpts from novels or short stories.

We used photocopies from this book all term and the benefits of using short stories and selecting stories were apparent. Not only did they make connections between the stories and their lives, but they also became aware

that they were making connections and their reasons for making them. For example, a story about a boy's fascination with yo-yo tricks did not engage them as much as Pearl Buck's excerpt from The Good Earth. Although having a yo-yo was mandatory in Seoul, knowing what to do with it was not. As such students had a hard time comprehending and visualizing the tricks explained in the story. However, the words in Buck's excerpt came to life as students connected them to their own memories and experiences. I felt badly about making students read the Yo-yo story, but was grateful that since we had read a variety of short stories, we were able to move past this less inspiring reading experience to a more positive one. In fact, we consciously and collaboratively developed a personal set of criteria for selecting short stories based on aesthetic purposes for reading.

One highlight of this experience was the fact that their reaction to these two stories revealed to them that reading in English was not inherently difficult. In fact, we consciously and collaboratively discussed the differences between efferent and aesthetic reading and that purpose is linked to previous experience. Through our discussions of both stories students found that stories that appealed to their interests and reflected elements of their lives were engaging, and even enjoyable. This insight into the purpose of reading also made students aware of their personal choices and how to voice them. Even though, according to Breen (1986), Buck's authentic text was used in an inauthentic way, students were inspired to read more because they realized that reading was beneficial to their language and personal development.

This process was beneficial for both my students and myself, as their teacher. Through becoming conscious of their purposes for reading the students were able to start developing a sense of themselves as members of an EFL literacy community. I also became more aware of the need to engage in collaborative decision making. Although I could select material that suited the students reading abilities, I was now aware of how my selection had to incorporate not only the needs of the students, but what they had told me about their previous life experience. However, coming to realizations about reading purposes does not stop and start in the classroom.

This chapter explores the undercurrents of my interests in what reading materials EFL students are being exposed to in class, how they are exposed to them, and how their exposure influences their decisions about reading outside of class. Reflecting on the connections between these questions, I try to identify what makes my use of reading material in the classroom successful. I am drawn to the concepts of authenticity and authentic texts, genre and form.

Authenticity

Although aliteracy is not formally discussed in the literature about literacy development in a second language, the challenges of exposing students to a variety of forms and helping them to develop their own purposes for reading outside of class are consistent themes in the work of Chamot, O'Malley (1994), Knutson (1997), Krashen (1995), and Lao, Krashen (2000). However, and unfortunately, this research largely ignores the need for explicit instruction in selection skills. Could this be due in part to a focus on using authentic text,

rather than acknowledging how the form that texts are presented in influence readers' decisions? What is an authentic text and what benefits does it offer teachers and readers?

Definitions of authentic text

While there is widespread agreement about the value of authentic texts in the second language classroom, the literature that advances its use does not share a common definition of what it is advancing. A definition is either not present (Vallette, 1997,Knutson, 1997), simplistic in its treatment of what is within the realm of authentic reading and who is an authentic reader (Richards and Rodgers, 2001, Taylor, 1994, and Wong, Kwok, Choi, 1995), or left purposely undefined (Breen 1985, Widdowson, 1990). Breen's (1985) recognition of four types of authenticity - text, learner, task and context - was published 17 years ago and is still only a starting point for understanding authenticity. In fact, his work presents text authenticity as a function of factors such as context, perception and task, rather than characteristics of the text. These holes in the theoretical debate about authenticity can also be seen in practical applications where there is an emphasis on the authenticity of tasks rather than texts (Vallette, 1997).

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), Taylor (1994), and Wong, Kwok, Choi (1995) authentic text is defined as *a text that is written for native speakers without the purpose of language learning*. Swaffer, Arens, Byrnes (1991), Lee (1995), and Young (1993) exclude the language learning aspect and refer to authentic text as *text written by native speakers for native speakers*. The

obvious limitation of the first definition is that it communicates that language learning is not something that native speakers do outside of classrooms and the limitation of both definitions is that they revolve around the "native speaker" reading population.

Benefits of using authentic text

The support of communicative and whole language approaches to language learning is partially rooted in the fact that use of authentic texts in second language classrooms provides authentic language and increases students' language skills, interest, and confidence in a variety of situations (Lee, 1995; Richard, Rodgers, 2001; Swaffer, Arens. Byrnes,1991; Widdowson, 1990). Furthermore, when students are presented with authentic text, the nature of their reading goes beyond that of language learning and concentration on bottom-up or top-down processing to interacting with the text (Swaffer, Arens, Byrnes, 1991; Young, 1993). Consequently, exposing students to authentic text is no longer considered optional, but a vital part of second language acquisition.

While it was previously thought that authentic texts were more difficult for students to comprehend than materials specifically designed for language learning, studies have now confirmed that the elements of authentic text that make it authentic increase comprehension (Omaggio, 1986; Swaffer, Arens, Byrnes, 1991; Young, 1993; Wong, Kwok, Choi, 1995). There are six additional benefits of providing authentic texts for students. Through authentic texts students: 1) are exposed to more contextual clues such as idioms; 2) gain more cultural knowledge, making the text more interesting and memorable; 3)

experience a more realistic representation of the literate world of the second language (Omaggio, 1986; Young, 1993; Wong, Kwok, Choi, 1995); 4) can see what real world skills they have acquired, such as understanding advertising, labels, menus, cartoons and letters (Omaggio, 1986; Swaffer, Arens, Byrnes, 1991; Young, 1993); 5) can gain an increase in other language skills such as writing; and 6) can apply models of language to their own speech (Omaggio, 1986; Widdowson, 1991; Bilash, 1998).

According to the theoretical debates about authentic text, coming to a clear definition of authentic text is like looking for the eye of a hurricane: in context it is not clearly seen, but without the context it is nothing. In general, researchers agree that providing experiences for students that are meaningful, and thus authentic, require different degrees and definitions of authenticity when planning for instruction (Lee, 1995; Taylor, 1994; Widdowson, 1991). Breen (1985) identifies four aspects of authenticity that provide a basis for assessing classroom practice:

1. Authenticity of the texts which teachers use as input data for our learners.
2. Authenticity of the learners' own interpretations of such texts.
3. Authenticity of tasks conducive to language learning.
4. Authenticity of the actual social situation of the language classroom

(Breen, 1985, p. 61).

Initially, this definition seems to be concise and acknowledges the complex relationship between the learner and the text. However, upon further probing we see an unclear presentation of the interrelationship between these four factors.

Swaffer, Arens, Byrnes, (1991), Taylor, (1994), and Lee, (1995) remind us that students' interpretation of what an authentic text is, as previously defined, is related to the tasks that they are asked to do with the text. In other words, successful use of authentic text is thought to be inherently connected to the task. In selecting a text, the teacher must consider the background knowledge, interests, and ability of the learners, as well as the authentic tasks that will be developed to accompany the text (Omaggio, 1986; Swaffer, Arens, Byrnes, 1991; Young, 1993; Lee, 1995; Bilash, 1998). Although Breen's (1985) first factor of authenticity considers the authenticity of the text, the learner's authentic interpretation of the text is in fact the deciding factor as to whether a text is considered authentic. As such the consistent element of all definitions and applications is the focus on *task authenticity*, which does not help a teacher actually select a text for students to use.

Genre theory

The opening anecdotes to this chapter illustrate how the presentation or lack of presentation of an authentic text influences how students see it and whether or not they consider it something that could be sought or found outside of class for their own personal reading. In the first story, a photocopy inspires a student to find the original book of short stories. In the second story, students start to become aware of their own purposes for reading, though they are not yet moved to find the original form (novel) from which the excerpt was taken. In both instances the teacher presented students with authentic text, but in different forms. The focus on forms is dealt with in genre theory.

Genre theory advances the communicative purposes of text as a key element in classification. Yet, in the area of genre identification, Swales and Askehave (2001) recognize the challenge of initially classifying genres of text according to their communicative purposes:

> However, communicative purpose cannot by itself help analysts to quickly, smoothly and incontrovertibly decide which of texts A, B, C, and D belong to genre X and which to genre Y because those analysts are unlikely to know at the outset what the communicative purposes of texts A, B, C, and D actually are. Rather, what is immediately manifest to the genre analyst is not purpose but form and content (Swales, Ashehave, 2001,p. 200).

Form

Although the research about authentic text illuminates its benefits in developing a variety of reading skills and the challenges of providing authentic tasks to accompany the text, it does not capture the various nuances of text authenticity. Text is delivered in a written context that constitutes a *form*. In the literature the term 'form' is used to describe text characteristics such as headings, pictures, and typeface, (Omaggio, 1986, Young, 1995) but does not include characteristics that make a form instantly recognizable.

This superficial treatment of form fails to acknowledge its role in establishing expectations in the reader. The form itself plays an important role in what the reader chooses to read and signals to the reader where information is stored and how to access it. Do I have time for a short read? A long one? Do I feel like something intense? Informative? Newsy? Inspiring? How will I find what I want to read? Does the form contain a table of contents? Where is it found? Does it include sections? How are these sections divided? Is it likely to include visuals?

In other words, *reading the form is a part of reading the text and contributes to the reader's overall reading experience.*

For example, when I read a newspaper, I have the physical experience of unfolding and searching for what is to be read. The gritty feel of the paper as the ink rubs off onto my fingers and the tightly packed columns discourages me from writing in the paper as I skim to get the main idea and the interesting details of an article to share in conversation. While reading a textbook the feeling changes: I know that somehow the article in the textbook should be connecting to the chapter theme or topic. This connection is imposed and I start thinking about what the teacher expects me to gain from reading it. When I read a photocopy, I know that the article is mine. I can choose to do with it what I want: if I'm bored I can doodle on it; if I am intrigued there is enough room on the edges of the paper to make notes. When I receive a photocopy I think that it has been especially selected to cater to my learning needs or interests. So, even though the "text" or words of an article in a magazine, on a photocopy or in a textbook might be the same, the fact that the form is different means that each reading experience is also different. The form of the text itself stimulates different parts of the learner's background knowledge, regardless of whether the form is in L1 or L2.

Grellet points out that, "(i)t is obvious that a reprint will never be completely authentic, since a textbook consists of several texts taken out of context and juxtaposed (1981, p.8)". In other words, authentic text embedded into another form takes on the characteristics of that form. For example, an ESL textbook is a

form that students are familiar with and have certain expectations about before it is even opened: it has been prepared for them to learn a language, and as such becomes language learning material. Likewise, a photocopy of a newspaper, journal, or magazine article carries with it the perception that the material has been pre-selected by the teacher for a specific purpose.

My perceptions of the role that form plays in the reading activity beckons me to explore how learners see the role of form in their second language literacy development. Although the literature dealing with authentic text discusses factors such as providing students with a variety of authentic text, giving students class time to read, helping them to develop individual purposes for reading, and teaching them how to select appropriate reading materials, it has not yet explored the role of *form*. This research will then explore the connection between students' L1 and L2 reading habits, as well as their purposes for selecting and reading different forms in their L2.

Chapter 3: Waves

> Wave-any progressive movement of water or any progressing part resembling a wave of the sea (Barnhart, Stein, 1967, p. 1379)

In class I was so used to being given articles and textbooks to read critically, that when the teacher said he was going to give us a poem to read I grabbed the photocopy with anticipation and apprehension. I exchanged an expectant, questioning glance with the Korean student beside me. I didn't really read poetry, and by her glance, I suspect that she didn't either.

As I looked at the handout, the instructor's voice wafted in and out of my attention span as I skimmed over the poem, "The Panther" by Rainer Maria Rilke, which was given to us in its original German form, with five English translations of the poem. The task was to identify which translation we liked best and why.

There was silence in the classroom as the group divided into individual worlds to analyze the poems.

As we are completing the task a small book is passed to me. "What's this?" I whisper to the student next to me.

"It's a book about the poet. It belongs to that student over there." She whispers back as she nods towards the student whose book she is holding.

My pen in hand, I start underlining and putting stars beside the parts of each poem that speaks to me. I am pleased with my synthesis of information, resulting in a poem that I like. The task completed, I am ready to share ideas with my classmates.

I turn to my classmate and ask her which one she has picked. Her photocopy is still pristine.

"This is difficult for me. The last thing that a person learns in a second language is how to interpret poetry." She replies.

"Really? You mean you have no opinion? They are all the same to you?"

"No, but..."

My blood starts to boil as I take in the scene before me. Here is an intelligent, well-spoken woman telling me that she feels that she cannot react to poetry. Where does this belief come from? Is this what EFL teachers do to their students?

As we move to a class discussion, all the native speakers of English talk about what they like best about each poem and I join in the discussion. Then those with knowledge of German, make us realize how all the translations pale in comparison. As I listen to the debate, that I am now excluded from, I notice that the woman who passed around her book, and said that Rilke was her favorite poet does not join in. I wonder how she is feeling.

Research Questions

The literature presented in chapters one and two have left me curious about the concept of aliteracy in EFL settings - whether or not students are: 1) exposed to and are independently reading a variety of forms, 2) internalizing purposes for reading, and 3) developing selection skills that will assist them in selecting what to read and, actually read outside of class. The specific research questions are:

1. How do the forms that EFL students read in L1 influence the forms they read in L2?
2. How do the forms EFL students are exposed to in class influence their reading of forms outside of class?
3. a. Are students aware of their own purpose(s) for reading and if so, are these purpose(s) related to specific forms?

   b. If students are not aware of their own purpose(s) for reading, what purposes do they give for reading?
4. Do students use selection strategies when they select reading material? If so, which ones?

Participants

In order to answer the four research questions I drew upon my contacts in Japan. Thus, participants in this study were 89 English students comprised of social science and law students from Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto. These students came from different areas in Japan and were required to take English language courses. After following appropriate ethical procedures (see Appendix A), 85 of the 89 students present in the class completed and handed in a questionnaire. From these students, nine volunteered to participate in a think-aloud interview.

Research Design

Creswell (2002) states that "triangulation is the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals (e.g., a principal and a student), types of data (e.g., observational field notes and interviews), or methods of data collection

(e.g. documents and interviews) in descriptions and themes in qualitative research (p. 280)." Clearly, a combination of data collection strategies is necessary to yield trustworthy data. Although current research illuminates how exposure to authentic text can lead to students having positive responses to reading, what forms students read independently and what they consider when selecting material have been ignored. In this research project a questionnaire and interviews were the instruments of data collection because they allowed for an investigation into specific forms and selection skills, while providing a multi-layered exploration of students' attitudes and behaviour with written forms.

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire collected quantitative data by using closed questions and qualitative data by using open-ended questions. A cross-sectional survey design allowed me to examine "current attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and practices" (Creswell, p. 398). The questionnaire format had four advantages in the context of this study: 1) by limiting the questions to nine different reading forms, students were able to concretely reveal the forms to which they were exposed, or not; 2) the questions were clear and concrete and allowed students to respond to questions about ALL forms, making data analysis more reliable; 3) using closed questions enabled students of all language abilities to answer the questions; and 4) the comparative data generated allowed for themes to be discerned about reading patterns.

The questionnaire consisted of nineteen multiple choice questions to which students had to give information about: 1) background experiences in

English, 2) attitudes towards reading, 3) present reading behavior and 4) future reading goals.

Background Experience in English

In addition to exploring students' experiences using English, the data collected from the first six questions provides an understanding of students' attitudes toward reading, in particular their sense of self-efficacy about themselves as readers in their L1 (Japanese), and their L2 (English). Scott (1996) argues that in order for students to see themselves as readers they need a positive sense of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is defined as "a person's judgement of his or her ability to successfully participate in an activity and the effect this perception has on future activities" (Scott, 1996, p.196). Additionally, Scott (1996) indicates that "self-efficacy perceptions are thought to be situation-specific and not a permanent personality trait or a general self-concept" (p.201), therefore it is important to bear in mind that while there is a relationship between self-efficacy in L1 and L2 there may also be differences.

Attitudes towards reading

To determine if aliteracy might be a concern in the L2 classroom, questions 16 to 19 explore students' attitudes towards reading in L1 and L2.

Present reading behaviour

Questions seven to ten explored the relationship between what forms are read in L1 and L2, and the relationship between what forms are read in class and outside of class. These questions focused on nine different forms and asked

students to identify which forms they had read in each context. Details about the forms can be found in Appendix B.

Future reading goals

Questions 11 to 15 asked participants about what forms helped them in regard to language learning and what forms they would like to read in the future.

Open-ended questions

Students also answered open-ended questions that asked for other options in the ranking questions, as well as reasons for their ranking. Finally, they were given the opportunity to add any additional comments for all other questions. The open-ended questions gave students the opportunity to identify any forms that were not on the list of forms in the first part of the questionnaire and clarify any possible misunderstandings in the closed-questions. These questions also offered the researcher the opportunity to triangulate the data, as well as gain a deeper understanding of participants' reasons for reading certain forms.

The questionnaire was completed in English during class time in order for students to have the opportunity to clarify any misunderstandings, should they arise. Participants were given the opportunity to give reasons for their answers by providing room for additional comments, in English, after each question. Students were also told that they were allowed to write in Japanese if they were unable to express their ideas in English. Their instructor translated the answers written in Japanese into English for me. Since Low (1999) notes, "respondents presume that a given question has been designed with them in mind, and in the

absence of negotiation, further assume that their initial interpretation is what is wanted" (1999), it is possible that participants answered some questions in anticipation of what the researcher expected.

Think-aloud interviews

The think-aloud interviews also provided data about students' reading behaviour and their opinions about reading. However, unlike the questionnaire, the think-aloud format was designed to expose the researcher to the students' selection processes. Interviews were conducted with nine of the questionnaire respondents who volunteered to be interview participants. The interviews enabled me to video and audio record students as they looked through a variety of forms.

The interview followed a think-aloud protocol (Ericsson, 1985; Low, 1999; Upton,1997), in which students could freely look through the materials (forms) and comment on what they thought about each of them, with as little intrusion from the interviewer as possible. As Cunningham and Fitzgerald state,

> (R)esearchers studying from a transactional view need different sorts of methods, ones that allow ways of making readers' stances and responses public with minimizing intrusiveness. These methods may tend to be more discursive in nature, though quantification need not be completely ruled out. (1996, p. 58)

The students were exposed to two categories of forms: authentic text and material specifically for EFL students (see Appendix C for complete list of materials used). Six of the forms provided for the think-aloud interview were the same as those covered in the questionnaire: comic books, children's books, dictionary, magazines, novels, and short stories. The Internet and newspaper,

which were used in the questionnaire, were replaced in the interview with a Kyoto guidebook and a map of Kyoto. The Internet was replaced because the interview site did not have Internet access. The map of Kyoto, and the Kyoto guidebook were added as forms to select during the think-aloud interview because I noticed students reading them in Japanese and English teachers reading them in English. Thus, I knew that they were available in both languages and I wondered if the students knew this.

A think-aloud protocol involves obtaining three levels of verbalization (Ericsson, 1985): 1) vocalization of initial thoughts; 2) probing for a more detailed description of what they said initially; and 3) the student's explanation of why they said what they said. Although a variety of studies have used this method to gain insight into students' purposes for reading (Wade, Buxton, Kelly, 1999) and how they read (Auerbach, Paxton,1997; Young, 1993), none have focussed on students' process of selecting reading materials.

To elicit the initial vocalization of students' thoughts I modelled the think-aloud format with the students and then asked them to look at one of the 'forms' and do a practice. Two participants wanted to observe an interview before they participated in the think-aloud protocol, after which they felt that they had a clear enough understanding of the procedure that modelling and practising was not necessary.

A more detailed description of their process of selection was elicited by prompts during the interview asking participants to explain why they had made

the initial comment. This allowed students to ask for clarification and the interviewer to gain more insight into the participants' selection process.

After each student looked through all of the books s/he was asked to pick 'favorite(s)' and talk about why they were selected. Since students seemed to feel obligated to look through all the material during the first part of the interview, the third part of the think-aloud protocol seemed to draw out a more 'natural' response. In order to see whether students made choices about what they would read based on efferent or aesthetic reading purposes, the directions they were given avoided words that might influence their selections. They were also asked whether they thought the texts they picked would improve their English.

Description of selection and coding

A total of 410 comments were collected from the questionnaire (see Appendix D). From the original 19 questions and 410 comments, 281 comments from 9 of the questions were coded because those questions dealt specifically with purposes for reading. The comments from the other questions were not coded for one of three reasons. First, there were not enough comments to identify themes that would be representative of the questionnaire population. Second, question four, which deals with the respondent's purposes for travelling, received thirty-one responses, but did not contain information that helped identify any purposes for reading. Third, the data collected from question nineteen is coded separately. Thus, 337 comments from 10 questions were coded:

Question	7	10	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
No. of responses	27	17	18	19	14	16	69	52	49	56

In order to code the comments, all comments were read and all possible categories for each individual question were listed. Then the categories were compared to compile a list of themes that were common to all questions. Two other master's students, with backgrounds teaching ESL/EFL, also coded the questions.

Ethics

This research project followed all of the guidelines set out by the Ethics committee of the Department of Secondary Education (See Appendix A). Student participation was voluntary and all students were informed that their participation in no way effected their marks in any of their classes. All of the participants signed permission slips. They could opt out of the questionnaire by declining to complete it or by not handing it in. Since the questionnaires were anonymous the students were told that once the questionnaire was handed in it could not be returned, thus protecting the anonymity of all participants. Eighty-five of the 89 students present in the class submitted questionnaires, representing a return rate of 95.5%.

Students who volunteered for the interview portion of the study were told that they could stop the interview at any moment or they could contact me by e-mail if they changed their minds and did not want their interview to be used in the data. All participants chose to remain a part of the data collection. See Appendix A for a copy of the ethics letter and the form the participants signed.

Delimitations and limitations of the study

Since the research was conducted with students of English at a university in Japan, the results may also be relevant to other FL settings in other countries. Given the age of the students and the fact that many Canadian universities offer ESL programs for university students from Japan, the findings may also be helpful to ESL programs in Canada. University age students were chosen for this study because it was believed that the metacognitive maturity, background knowledge and experience learning English in a variety of settings and English language skills of a college student were required in order to respond to the questions and interview protocol.

A limitation of the study was that students were not always able to respond in their L1. However, participants were told that if they felt that they needed to use Japanese they could. Comments in Japanese were basic and did not differ from comments in English, even though I had them translated, I had sufficient knowledge of Japanese to read and understand most of them. Additionally, the forms used in the questionnaire were limited to those that the literature shows have educational value for second language learning and are forms that personal experience has told me that students have been exposed to.

Chapter 4: Crests

Crest-the foamy top of a wave (Barnhart, Stein, 1967, p.285)

The morning chit-chat in the teachers' room is about the usual: who really knew the answer to last night's final 'Jeopardy' question, the foreign exchange rate and interesting tidbits in the morning paper. The newspaper is a source of our livelihood and sometimes a teaching tool, too. A good 'Ann Landers' makes a great conversation starter and can be used as a model for writing. Local news gives teachers an opportunity to discuss perspective as different versions of the same story are discussed.

This particular morning there is an article written by an American doctor about dating in Korea, more specifically his bad experiences dating Korean women. As we teachers fight for our beliefs and time at the photocopier, the debate about cultural differences, gender, Confucianism, and expectations becomes more heated. "Hey, where is that article? Maybe I should take it into class?"

"I'd be careful if I were you. You might open a can of worms."

In a university setting the trick is to take something that students find uninteresting and make it interesting, but how could I resist something that was really interesting? "It's a chance I'll take."

I get a cautious glance and a shoulder shrug from a senior teacher as I photocopy the article, making an additional copy for myself. I underline vocabulary and phrases I think are challenging, and head to class. I have my original lesson plan just in case the conversation turns violent.

I give the class time to read the article scanning their faces for disapproval, but all I see is rapt interest and some quick tapping at electronic dictionaries. When they finish the article, I ask if there are any words or phrases they would like to go over. To my surprise there are none, the main ideas are clearly understood and the details can be discussed later. What the students want now is time to talk.

The women have lots to say, as the men sit there silently vindicated in obvious agreement about what the American has to say. Finally, the Korean man's dating struggles have been captured in print: the countless meals and drinks they had to pay for, and not on a doctor's income. Add to that the friend the woman brings for security and that any gentlemen is obliged to pay for and dating requires a long-term investment strategy!

The women's defense: the date preparation. According to the standards of Korean society, a woman's appearance is a sign of her ambition. If she is not smartly dressed and in full make-up she is seen as lazy, like the Teva wearing, pony-tailed western woman. Thus the date's dinner is proper acknowledgement for much unseen effort.

Stories are exchanged about horrible dates from both camps. A female student tells a tale of high heels, an insensitive male, and a grueling hike. A male student counters with a tale of chaperoning giggling girlfriends, who could eat as much as they talked, but unfortunately not with him. The gender battle rages on until the end of class when a few concessions about what has to

change for dating to be more enjoyable. The reading was meant to inspire conversation and it did.

As I leave the class, and slip into the teacher's room I feel curious glances grazing me.

"Well? How did it go?"

"Great… I think."

On my way to the cafeteria I run into two of my students and ask them what they are talking about. They are still talking about the news article.
A few days later, with another photocopied text before them, it is the women who sit in class smugly vindicated because that text is a rebuttal to the previous article and was written by a Korean woman. Seeing the other perspective in print legitimizes the women's point of view. I feel that the class no longer sees the previous discussion as the voice of a few, naïve, female university students, but Korean women as a whole, and that voice was worth listening to.

This chapter will present an analysis and interpretation of the data collected via the open- and closed- ended questions of the questionnaire and the think-aloud interviews.

Questionnaire- closed-questions

Results of the analysis of the data collected from the closed questions of the questionnaire will be presented according to the four sections of questions described in Chapter three: 1) background experiences in English; 2) attitudes towards reading; 3) present reading behavior; and 4) future reading goals.

1.Experiences using English

In Japan, studying English is mandatory, and only seven of the people surveyed (8%) studied other languages such as Chinese, Korean, French and German. Although all Japanese students must study English their exposure to English outside the language classroom is limited. Out of the sample of 85 students, 44 (51.8%) students reported that they had exposure to English outside of class through travel or taking English lessons (see Figure 1). Thirty-one students reported having visited an English speaking country. However, out of those thirty-one students, only seven speak English outside of English class. Out of the seven students who speak English outside class and have travelled, only two take English lessons. Only one of the students who has travelled reported taking English lessons and thirteen students reported that they took only English lessons. Although it is possible that respondents did not fully understand the term "English lessons"[2], the data reveals that most students who have any exposure to English outside of class seem to gain it through short-term travel.

Figure 1: Exposure to English outside of English classes

Travel	Travel/ Speak o/s class	Travel/ English lessons	Travel/ English lessons/speak o/s class	English lessons	total
23 (53.2%)	5 (11.4%)	1 (2.3%)	2 (4.5%)	13 (29.5%)	44 (51.8%)

[2] Unfortunately, one challenge of collecting data in the respondents' L2 is that they may have interpreted private lessons as one-on-one tutorials, rather than all lessons taken outside of school, including classes taken at a language institute.

This means that the classroom still offers students the most exposure to English and as such, provides a significant context for English language learning and acquisition.

2. *Reading Attitudes*

To discern the attitudes held toward reading participants in this study were asked 1) to rank their perceived fluency in the four language areas – listening, speaking, reading and writing; 2) to name the L2 skill they thought was the most important to develop; 3) to explain the importance of reading in L1 and L2; and 4) to state whether or not they thought that reading would increase their speaking ability.

Figure 2 reveals the participants' perceptions about their own ability or fluency in each language area. As the figure shows, almost 80 % of the participants described their speaking ability to be at a beginner's level. Over 50% described their listening comprehension to be at a beginner's level while about 40% described their writing to be at a beginner's level and only about 20% saw their reading at that level. Seventy percent of the respondents perceived their reading level to be intermediate, 60% perceived their writing level to be intermediate, 40% perceived their listening level to be intermediate, and 20% perceived their speaking level to be intermediate. Five percent of the respondents perceived their reading level to be advanced, 4% perceived their listening level to be advanced, 3% perceived their writing level to be advanced, and none of the respondents perceived their speaking level to be advanced. More interesting is the fact that no matter how they perceived their ability in each

language area, participants consistently perceived speaking to be their weakest skill and reading their strongest. While small numbers of participants considered their listening, writing, and reading skills to be "fluent", or advanced, no one considered their speaking skills to be this advanced.

Figure 2: fluency ranking

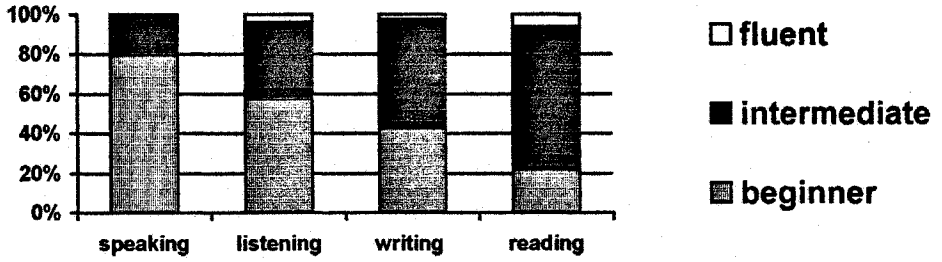


Figure 3 shows that when asked what the most important language skill was to develop in a second language, the majority of participants in this study (54%) stated that reading was the first or second most important.

Figure 3: The most important language skill to develop in a second language

	Speaking	Listening	Reading	Writing
Most important	73 (88%)	44 (70%)	27 (42%)	19 (26%)
2nd	9 (11%)	11 (17%)	8 (12%)	6 (8%)
3rd	0	5 (8%)	13 (20%)	8 (11%)
Least important	1 (1%)	3 (5%)	17 (26%)	40 (55%)
total	83 (100%)	63 (100%)	65 (100%)	73 (100%)

Furthermore, about 90% of participants thought that reading in L1 (Japanese) and L2 (English) was very important to them. See Figure 4.

Figure 4: Importance of reading in L1 and L2

	Very important	**important**	**Not very important**	**Not important**
Japanese (L1)	52/ 61.2%	28/ 32.9%	4/4.7%	0
English (L2)	30/ 35.3%	45/ 52.9%	9/10.6%	0

When participants were asked about what relationship they thought existed between reading and the development of speaking skills in L2, the results were divided into three groups with approximately two-fifths of the participants believing that there was a positive relationship, another fifth claiming neutrality, and the final two-fifths not believing that there was a positive relationship. See Figure 5.

Figure 5: Do you think increasing your English reading ability will increase your English speaking ability?

Strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
10	25	17	21	7

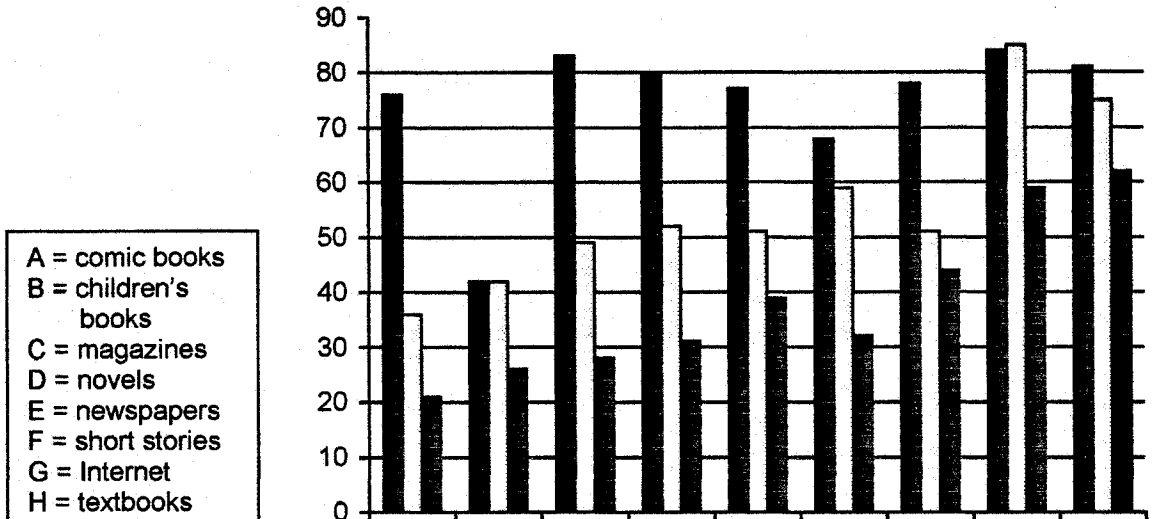
The presentation of data from this study suggests that, although students value the concept of literacy, they value oral communication first and some students do not seem to be aware that the development of written language skills in L2 has a positive influence on the development of oral language skills in L2.

3. Present reading behavior

As mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis one factor which contributes to the diminishing of aliteracy is exposing students to a variety of forms. Questions seven to ten ask students about their exposure to different "forms" in both Japanese and English. The forms were: novels, children's books, newspapers, magazines, textbooks, short stories, comic books, dictionary and

the internet. The data generated allowed for a comparison of which of these forms were read in and out of class in both L1 and L2.

Figure 8: comparison between reading behavior in L1 and L2



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
■ L1 reading	76	42	83	80	77	68	78	84	81
□ L2 reading in class	36	42	49	52	51	59	51	85	75
■ L2 reading outside of class	21	26	28	31	39	32	44	59	62

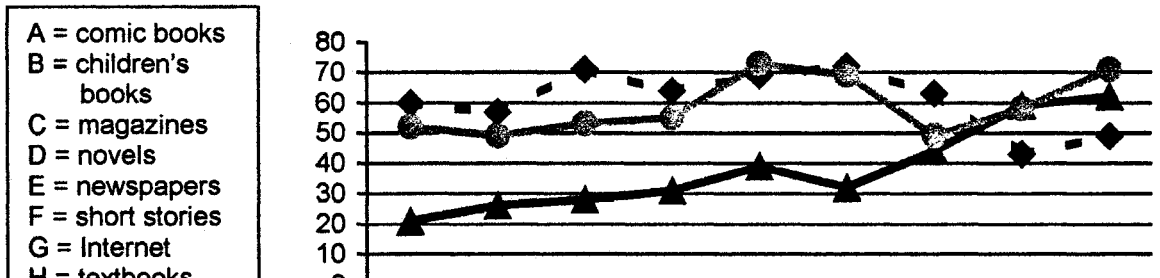
From Figure 8 we can see that the reading of the nine forms is well integrated into the everyday lives of the participants in both languages. For this university-aged sample, the largest number of students read newspapers and textbooks daily. Most students reported that they read newspapers and textbooks and used the Internet and dictionaries several times per week. Outside of children's books, which were read by 49.9 % of the participants in the sample, all materials were read by 81.9-97.7 % of participants in varying

frequencies. The figure also shows a consistent decrease in frequency of reading from L1 to L2 and from L2 in class to L2 out of class.

4. Future reading goals

This portion of data analysis shows the relationship between students' present reading behavior outside of class, future reading goals, and whether students perceive particular forms to be more helpful in language learning than others. Although most students perceive all of the given forms as helpful to language learning it seems that their present reading behaviour is the best indicator of what they intend to read in the future. Textbooks and dictionaries are the two forms that students would like to read less of in the future, perhaps because these forms are associated with language learning and they do not view language learning as an ongoing process. This decrease in interest in textbooks and dictionaries merits further investigation.

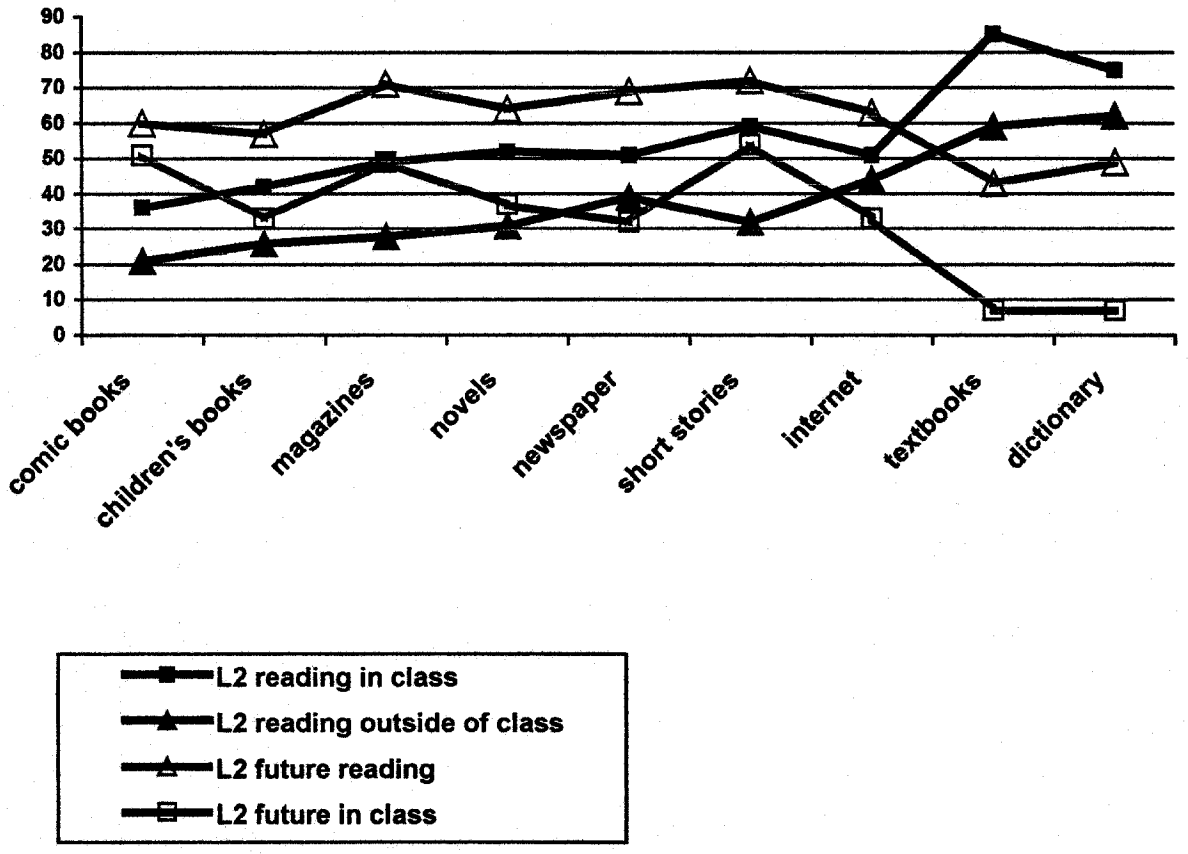
Figure 9: Future reading goals



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
L2 reading outside of class	21	26	28	31	39	32	44	59	62
L2 future reading	60	57	71	64	69	72	63	43	49
helpful to language learning	52	49	53	55	73	69	49	58	71

The information in Figures 9 and 10 suggests that students are exposed to a variety of authentic text, that what is read in the L2 classroom is a predictor of what is read out of class, both currently and in the future, and that students would like to read less in class and read more of what they read now outside of class time. Comic books are the only form that students would like to read more of in class and magazines are the only form that students would like to read the same amount of in class.

Figure 10: present and future in class and out of class reading in L2



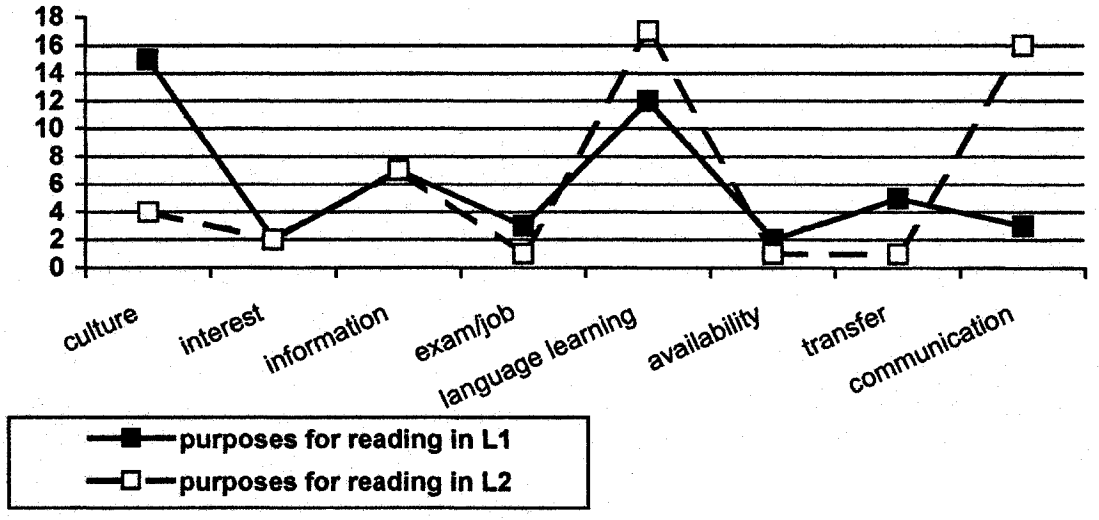
Questionnaire- open-ended questions

This portion of data analysis identified: 1) a relationship between purposes for reading in L1 and L2; 2) how these purposes fall short of what is advocated in the literature; and 3) how past education is a form of background knowledge that influences purposes for reading.

The relationship between purposes for reading in L1 and L2

In answer to questions seven to fifteen, participants identified seven purposes for deciding to read or not to read in both Japanese and English. They are presented in Figure 11: 1) to gain knowledge about the L2 culture or to maintain L1 cultural identity; 2) to respond to a positive or negative interest in reading a topic; 3) to find information or add to their general knowledge; 4) to use reading for exam preparation or in a job with ease; 5) to learn the language or improve language skills; 6) to easily find available materials; and 7) to

Figure 11: Purposes for reading in L1 and L2



read/communicate quickly. The purposes for reading are parallel in both languages, with the exception of reading more in L1 to maintain their cultural identity and reading more in L2 to improve their communication skills.

The comments from the questionnaire support the previous data that shows that the emphasis on developing oral skills means that written skills are being devalued by a large enough number of students to reinforce that aliteracy could be considered a challenge facing these students in their second language literacy development.

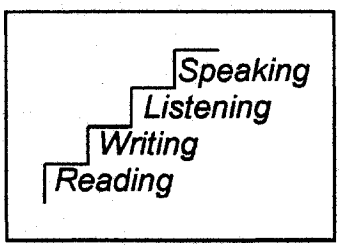
Data-literature mismatch

The purposes students reported for reading are not congruent with the benefits of reading or authentic text use reported in Chapter One. Students did not mention that reading provides them with the opportunity to increase their overall language skills, social skills, reading speed, general background knowledge. This incongruence could be due to different cultural understandings, lack of awareness about the value and role of reading in one's life, or other factors and merits further exploration.

Past Experience

Drawing upon their experiences reading in L1, participants demonstrated a parallel understanding of and for reading in L1 and L2. This might best be captured in the feedback of one participant who described the value of reading in L2 as follows:

Learning English is like a stairway so we can't avoid any steps.



The belief that reading is a necessary stepping stone toward the development of speaking skills in L2 is captured both in the words and tone of participants. When asked about the importance of reading in L2 participants sometimes expressed their frustration through comments such as the following:

. . . we study reading in English a lot, but we still can't speak or have a conversation when we meet Americans…

Certainly, it's important to read, but I don't think reading ability will increase speaking ability, because I read a lot of English reading in English class in high school, but I can't speak English well…

I think speaking is most important

These comments, coupled with the purposes respondents reported for reading shows that there is a relationship between purposes for reading in L1 and purposes for reading in L2. Clearly the experiences of reading in L1 inform the approach to reading in L2. See Figures 11 and 12. My original curiosity about whether L2 readers ever read for pleasure was not fully calmed since the purposes for reading seemed to be entirely functional or 'efferent' in both

languages. This prevalence of efferent purposes for reading was also captured in comments of some of the participants:

(I read) because I can increase my knowledge. I can get profit by information.

I read textbooks to study

(I read) because I think that reading is important for get information.

I think reading is very important when we study grammar, but most important thing to study English is not grammar but speaking.

We can't avoid reading to learn any language.

Figure 12 shows the categories of purposes in descending order of frequency.

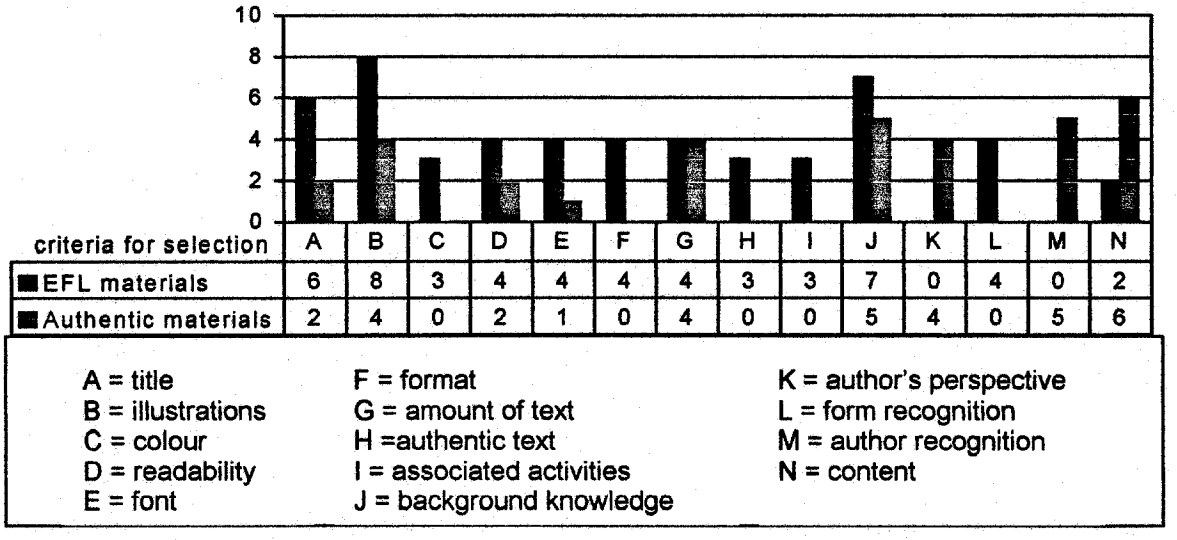
Figure 12: purposes for reading

purpose	context	L1 reading	L2 in class	Future L2 reading	Future in class reading	Language learning	Learn about target culture	total
1. Interest		14	4	10	7	3	2	40
2. Level		4	4	4	7	4	1	24
3. Information		3	1	2	0	2	7	15
4. Language		0	4	0	3	5	0	12
5. Culture		0	0	2	0	0	4	6
6. Availability		1	3	0	1	0	0	5
7. Time		4	0	0	1	0	0	5
Total comments		26	16	18	19	14	14	107

Think-aloud interviews

An analysis of data from the think-aloud interviews and videotape observations reveals that when selecting forms students engage in three consistent activities: 1) they search for links between forms and past experiences; 2) they recognize that the freedom to select text is linked to their reading enjoyment; and 3) they consciously draw upon visual clues to help them to select text. By giving students the chance to vocalize ideas about what they were attracted to while looking at forms, and what helped them to select a favourite form, 14 criteria for selection were identified. They looked at 1) the title; 2) illustrations; 3) colour; 4) language level (readability); 5) font; 6) format; 7) amount of text; 8) authentic text; 9) associated activities; 10) whether they had background knowledge about the topic; 11) how they perceived the author's personality; 12) whether they recognized the form; 13) whether they recognized the author; and 14) the content. See Figure 13.

Figure 13: Criteria for selection



criteria for selection	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
EFL materials	6	8	3	4	4	4	4	3	3	7	0	4	0	2
Authentic materials	2	4	0	2	1	0	4	0	0	5	4	0	5	6

A = title
B = illustrations
C = colour
D = readability
E = font
F = format
G = amount of text
H =authentic text
I = associated activities
J = background knowledge
K = author's perspective
L = form recognition
M = author recognition
N = content

1. Students search for links between forms and past experiences

After observing students' reactions to authentic text and language learning material in a pilot study conducted with Canadian students studying Japanese as a foreign language, I became more aware that exposing students to a variety of forms was not the factor that influenced students' selection of different forms. Students actually go through a selection process that requires a degree of familiarity with the form before they will choose to read the text. This familiarity with a form can activate general background knowledge as well as previous experience with a form. Comments from the pilot study are reported in Appendix E.

From observations and probes during the think-aloud interviews, I noted that the content of authentic text in its original form engaged students in trying to link their previous experience to understanding the general concept of the form. For example, one student's inability to instantly recognize *Japanese Baseball* as a collection of short stories shows how students make decisions based on previous experience with similar forms, rather than evaluating the form of the particular text. The following example shows that once the student makes a connection between the form in front of him and his previous experience with that form, he stops applying selection strategies to what he is currently evaluating.

Interviewee: Japanese baseball? Is this a novel?

Interviewer: It's a collection of short stories, so there's maybe four or five stories in there.

Interviewer: This is not bad.

Interviewer: Why do you say that?

Interviewee: Because short stories are not very difficult to read.

When selecting textbooks, students did not seem to identify its forms or make predictions about its content, even those were strategies used when examining other forms. More often students were unsure of what form they were looking at and sought out visual clues that proved to be not very informative. For example, the black and yellow cover and cartoon figure on the *Macintosh for Dummies* book is instantly recognizable to this researcher as a how-to book, but one participant selected it because the picture was "very cute".

The role that the author plays in text selection was especially intriguing. Two of the selections on the table were Japanese forms that were translated into English. When students looked at these forms they used author recognition and their opinion of the author in selecting whether or not to read it. As in L1, this type of background knowledge is an aspect of critical selection that is difficult to foster if authentic text is not seen in its original form.

2. Students recognize that the freedom to select text links to their reading enjoyment

One interview participant was very aware of the link between freedom to select text and enjoyment as illustrated in this part of one of the interviews.

Interviewee: Yeah, I think Japanese education in English is not good because they force us to read and read and read and we can't speak English.

Interviewer: Do you get a choice of what you want to read or do they just…

Interviewee: yeah, we have because I was in international school, but in a normal high school they don't have a choice and they start to hate English.

To further support the role that the freedom to select plays in text selection, I noticed that students enjoyed forms that did not have to be read either in their entirety or in a specified sequence. They reported that with these types of forms they felt that they had choice about what they would read and did not feel restricted by their language ability. Thus, we might conclude that certain forms such as newspapers and magazines are most appropriate to use for the development of critical selection skills because students have to make choices about what part of the form they will read. Similar to the progression many readers make from reading children's books to short stories to novels, magazines and newspapers offer students the opportunity to read more types of texts and forms and to consciously see their own progression. In a way, magazines and newspapers offer students a wide world of reading selection in a condensed format.

3. *Students consciously draw upon visual clues to help them to select text*

When selecting authentic text in its original form or language learning materials students utilized visual clues such as font, illustrations, photographs, and colour in selecting text. While this provides a starting point for selection, I noted that these factors were not used for critical evaluation of the form but

rather as compensation for not recognizing the form, or not knowing how to evaluate the form. As Osborn (1998) asserts, "(t)he importance of guiding students in translating the printed word into visual images should not be underestimated. The visualization process is a relatively quick method of ensuring surface-level comprehension... (1998,p.42)."

We have already established that there is a relationship between forms read in L1 and forms read in L2, as well as a relationship between forms read in L2 in class and forms read in L2 outside of class. The relationship between what forms students read in class and out of class seems to be tighter than the relationship between forms read in L1 and L2. This may be due to exposure or availability of forms in L2, or to differences in forms. Although the same forms may exist in two cultures, the in class experience (task) with the format of the L2 form may add to the likelihood of it being read outside of class.

From exploring students' selection processes through observation and probing interview questions, I note that critical selection skills were rarely used. This lack of attention or ability impacts the degree to which L2 students engage in L2 reading outside of class. Without exposure to the original form the second language learner is unsure of which texts might meet their interests, needs or match their L2 ability. My research indicates that students have background knowledge of forms in L1 and L2 that can be built upon. In addition to expanding their repertoire, what these students need is to develop selection skills so that they can use them in reading in L2 outside of the classroom. Most

importantly, from the exploratory data in my study it would seem that students do have purposes for reading other than language learning.

Chapter 5: Breakers

Breaker: a wave that breaks or dashes into foam (Barnhart, Stein, 1967, p. 147)

"Okay… If I say "in the hat" what do you think of?" In my mind it's a clear, cultural, literary reference.

This should be so easy to answer." I thought.

" I don't know… put money in the hat?" he answers hesitantly.

"Nooo" I think he is just trying to play with me, I know he knows the right answer.

"Really, what do you think?" I prod with increasing irritability.

"I don't know…put the money in my head Jameson." He counters in a strained Australian accent.

Now I'm confused, obviously he needs clarification. "I said hat, not head."

"I know, but when you said 'in the hat' it reminded me of Spiderman."

I accept defeat as I tell him, "The cat in the hat"

"Oh!" he says as he realizes what I wanted to hear. "I don't think in Dr. Suess."

Summary of findings

From previous experience I knew that students wanted more authentic text and that teachers, researchers, and textbook publishers know the benefit of using authentic text. Textbooks now include authentic text by adding excerpts from novels or newspaper articles, maps, menus and schedules. To authentic text found in textbooks, teachers now add photocopies of authentic text from newspapers, magazines, the Internet, and a variety of books to classroom materials. With the use of authentic text already commonplace this research aimed to explore how the forms of authentic text influenced EFL readers and

their habits and understanding of reading in both L1 and L2. The research identified and answers four questions:

1. How do the forms that EFL students read in L1 influence the forms they read in L2?

2. How do the forms EFL students are exposed to in class influence their reading of forms outside of class?

3. a. Are students aware of their own purpose(s) for reading and if so, are these purpose(s) related to specific forms?

   b. If students are not aware of their own purpose(s) for reading, what purposes do they give for reading?

4. Do students use selection strategies when they select reading material? If so, which ones?

After revealing how the data collected responds to these queries, chapter five will present implications and recommendations of this study.

1. How do the forms that EFL students read in L1 influence the forms they read in L2?

The data from the questionnaire and the think-aloud interview confirms that the forms students are familiar with in L1 are also known to them in L2. Similarly, if they are not familiar with certain forms in L2, they probably are not familiar with them in L1. However, being familiar with certain forms in L2 does not mean that they have been exposed to them in L1 or that they would consciously seek them out as reading material in either language.

2. *How do the forms EFL students are exposed to in class influence their reading of forms outside of class?*

There seems to be a direct relationship between the forms they read in class and the forms they read out of class. The data also reveals that they read less often in L2 outside of class.

3. *a. Are students aware of their own purpose(s) for reading and if so, are these purpose(s) related to specific forms?*

b. If students are not aware of their own purpose(s) for reading, what purposes do they give for reading?

Responses from the questionnaire and the think-aloud indicate that some, but not all, students are aware of their purposes for reading. The purposes for reading identified in this research are: 1) to gain knowledge about the L2 culture or to maintain L1 cultural identity; 2) to respond to a positive or negative interest in reading a topic; 3) to find information or add to their general knowledge; 4) to read with ease; 5) to learn the language or improve language skills; 6) to access materials; and 7) to read quickly. More research is needed to see if purpose and form are related.

4. *Do students use selection strategies when they select reading material? If so, which ones?*

The think-aloud interviews revealed that students used a variety of strategies to select reading material. Students reported looking at the general format of the materials, and more specifically at illustrations; the colour of the cover, illustrations and print; the size of the font; and amount of text. Participants also

used strategies that involved reading the text to judge whether or not: the text was at an appropriate level for them; they liked the title; agreed with the author's perspective; and found the content relevant. Participants also used strategies that rely on making links to background knowledge and experience, such as background knowledge about the content, form or author.

Recommendations or Implications

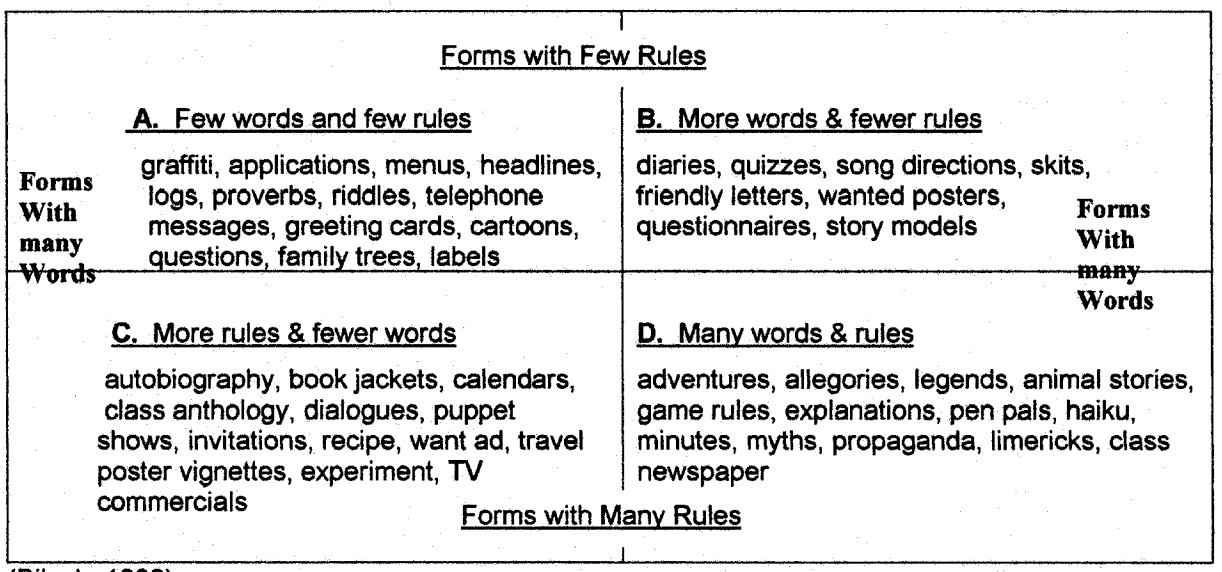
From this study I would like to put forward seven recommendations:

1. Students need to be exposed to a greater variety of written forms.
2. Teachers need a tool for developing a more balanced reading program by including in it a greater variety of authentic forms.
3. Students and teachers need to become more aware of how the form of a text relates to a student's purpose for reading it.
4. The notion of form needs to be built into the definition of authentic text
5. Teachers need to be more conscious of the role that forms play in the EFL reading classroom.
6. Students need to learn more critical text selection skills and teachers need to more consciously teach about the influence that form has in that process, that is, critical selection skills must be taught explicitly.
7. EFL educators must be conscious about ways to avoid the phenomenon of *aliteracy* in their students.

1. *Students need to be exposed to a greater variety of written forms.*
2. *Teachers need a tool for developing a more balanced reading program by including in it a greater variety of authentic forms.*

Although researchers and teachers support the use of authentic text, it is challenging to find reading materials that suit the abilities, age, and interest of students, especially at beginning and intermediate levels (Davis, 1995; Hadaway, Mundy, 1999). The focus on developing literacy skills usually means relying on literature instead of providing students with a more complete sampling of reading forms available in the second language. Exposure to forms should be both broad and balanced. In describing the role that selection of forms can play in developing assignments in writing in L2, Bilash (1998) has created a planning guide for writing instruction. The guide, which considers the impact that form can play on student motivation and potential for successful completion of task, can also be used in planning reading programs. She argues that when planning for writing instruction teachers should carefully consider what forms are assigned and recommends the use of the planning guide when selecting a form. This guide places forms into four quadrants by considering the amount of text of a form the complexity of rules required to complete the form. See Figure 6. By matching a form to a student's ability the student's affective filter is lowered, and a greater variety of writing skills can be developed.

Figure 6: Four quadrants-Gradations of Form



(Bilash, 1998)

Amount of Text

Quite simply, the amount of text refers to the amount of words on the page. As Bilash (1998) points out, the prospect of writing or reading a lot of words can decrease motivation and confidence. In contrast, choosing a form that does not have too many words leaves the student with the sense of possibility of completing a task. In turn, this lowers the affective filter and encourages students to engage in risk-taking.

Complexity of Rules

The rules are what govern the structure of the form. "This can include straightforward rules, such as punctuation, spelling, vocabulary, indentation, or quotation marks, as well as more complex ones, such as syntax, text organization, and other grammatical rules" (Bilash, 1998, p.165). To this important set of rules governing structure should be added sociocultural rules, which may make a reading text easier or more difficult to understand. For

example, the use of changes in gender may be more prevalent in some cultures than others, and as a result, lack of background knowledge about these differences will result in a different interpretation of the text or even impede the meaning making process.

Transfer to reading

The same principles used in planning for writing instruction can be applied to selecting reading materials. Finding different forms with a varying amount of text is only the first step in planning for reading instruction. Since students in this study mentioned that the amount of text was a factor in the selection of a form, we see that it can increase or decrease the affective filter. When students perceive that the amount of text is reasonable for someone of their language ability they will feel like they can complete the reading. However, when they perceive that the amount of text exceeds their ability their confidence decreases and along with it the likelihood of a successful reading experience.

When planning for reading instruction teachers must also consider how the complexity of rules governing a form might influence a student's reading experience. For example, some children's books, advertising, and comics contain few words but are hard for second language learners to understand because of the increase in the complexity of rules. Also, forms with a large amount of text may at first seem daunting, but because of the simplicity of the rules can, in fact, be easy to read. For example, a phonebook which contains many words, can be understood by students at the beginning stages of second language acquisition.

Searching for the appropriate text/reading form to fit all quadrants is a useful activity which creates not only a list of possible forms, but also an *awareness* of the different forms available. 'Amount of text' and 'complexity of rules' are important continua that help to categorize authentic text - forms that are read by native speakers on a daily basis - and can be utilized to enhance variety in a L2 reading program. Since one can not assume that as the amount of text increases so does the complexity of rules, using the quadrants as a guideline assists teachers in developing a more motivating and confidence-building reading program.

3. *Students and teachers need to become more aware of how the form of a text relates to a student's purpose for reading it.*

Although the literature shows the benefit of reading for a purpose (Knutson,1997; Lao, Krashen, 2000; Liaw, 2001) and this study showed that some students are aware of the purposes they establish for reading, the link between form and purposes needs further exploration. This study revealed that in some instances students use their background experience with forms as a strategy in selecting a text to read. Thus, educators must take seriously the task of exposing students to more forms as a part of the authentic texts in their reading programs.

4. The notion of form needs to be built into the definition of authentic text

" The fact that absences can be as informational as presences highlights that we move through the world with sets of expectation (Davis, Sumara, Luce-Kapler, 2000, p. 5)". Moreover, the anecdote at the beginning of this chapter illustrates that even between two native speakers of a language partial information can lead to different interpretations and different perceptions about the source of information.

While conducting this research study I was able to observe the English classes at Ritsumeikan and noticed a discrepancy between student perception of the forms to which they were exposed and the forms used in classroom practice. While students remember doing novel studies, they do not seem to be aware of having been exposed to magazines, newspapers, short stories and the Internet. Yet their teacher reported the use of these forms. If students were exposed to these forms in a textbook or as a photocopy, they may see them as language learning materials and not *forms* that they can access for efferent or aesthetic reading outside of class. In other words, although the teacher knows where the source of the authentic text comes from, when the text is not in its original form, the source, what it looks like and how one experiences it is not necessarily communicated clearly to the students using the authentic text. Clearly, teachers cannot assume that because they are aware of the original forms of authentic texts they use in textbooks or as photocopies that students are aware of the original forms from which these materials are drawn.

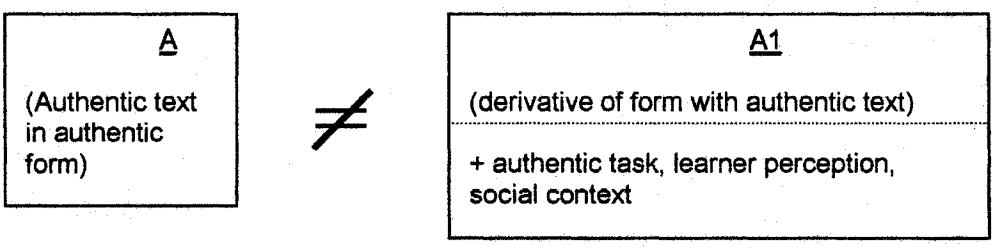
While there is no doubt that use of authentic text promotes reading for a purpose and has a positive influence on the development of students' second language skills (Cooke, 1991; Krashen, 1993; Lao, Krashen, 2000) and overall attitude towards learning the language and learning through the language (Hadaway & Mundy, 1999; Pickard, 1996), there is much about authentic texts that we have still not given attention to. For example, we still do not understand precisely which authentic texts are more/most beneficial to students and why. Before we can address this question we must expand or clarify the definition of authentic text.

In the introductory chapter of this thesis four types of authenticity were put forward: text, task, learner perception, and context. Although Breen (1985), Taylor (1994) and Widdowson (1990) assert that authentic text can seem inauthentic if not used in an authentic context, the data in this study about the experience of using original forms as opposed to photocopies or texts embedded in textbooks begs inclusion in this list.

Teachers know that they can manipulate students' perceptions of a text through how it is presented (the social context) and the tasks which accompany its reading. But, since form itself also calls forth a reader's expectations, the experience of reading the same text varies according to the form in which it appears. In other words, the definition of the term 'authentic text' must be expanded to include not only the written words or text written for native speakers, but also the form in which it appears because the form in which a text appears also influences the reading experience. If we consider a photocopy of a

text as a form unto itself, then an authentic text could be a photocopy of something written for and read by native speakers. However, teachers distributing the text in this form must also be aware of the fact that the photocopy may not offer students exposure to the original form, only to the text itself. See Figure 14.

Figure 14



At some point a lack of exposure to authentic texts limits students in two ways: 1) it does not teach them how to identify the form or even read it; and 2) it does not teach them that the form exists and that it might be a source of out of class reading. Reading a photocopy of a magazine article, or a postcard that has been embedded in a textbook is not the same experience as finding the article in a magazine, looking at the accompanying photos, and skimming the article, or receiving a postcard, looking at the stamp, address, and then reading it.

5. Teachers need to be more conscious of the role that forms play in the EFL reading classroom.

A distinction needs to be made between forms used in the classroom and forms used for the classroom. Teachers at the University level typically select and use three types of forms for reading instruction in the second language classroom: the textbook, originals and photocopies of originals. Most teachers assume that because the actual words are the same that what is being taught and what students are exposed to are also the same. But, as this study shows, each form has its own characteristics and these characteristics influence why it is read and how it is experienced.

6. Students need to learn more critical text selection skills and teachers need to more consciously teach about the influence that form has in that process.

Rarely do EFL students ever encounter the original form of a text, and as such, rarely do they ever have opportunities to make conscious choices about what they read, or how to find what they want to read. For example, consider how rarely students are encouraged to select what they want to read by selecting through a table of contents or by haphazard 'flipping through an original and coming across something interesting'. What goes on during the process of selection has, as yet, not been addressed in the research related to authentic texts. If we agree that a form signals not only a type of content but also the organization of that content, the selection of that content is an inherent part

of the text. In the classroom, we must provide students with safe opportunities to develop automaticity in the selection of tasks or else the energy given to it in the real world will discourage them from reading.

Selection is at once a critical and superficial process that involves looking for indicators such as amount of text, contextual clues such as pictures and headlines before reading and skimming to see if the information within the text relates to one's background knowledge or interests. From this study it is clear that EFL university students engage in some activities as a part of selecting a text to read. However, further research is needed to understand the difference between students selecting forms because they are looking for elements that compensate for their ability level or act as an enhancement to the reading. We also need to recognize and understand that there are different pathways that can be utilized to reach the point where students are reading and selecting forms of their own.

7. *EFL educators must be conscious about ways to avoid the phenomenon of aliteracy in their students.*

While the research is not conclusive, there is evidence that suggests it would be worthwhile to explore the phenomenon of aliteracy among adult EFL learners, especially those in intermediate to advanced second language reading courses.

Author's note: The use of the water analogy throughout this thesis is used because I have found that the nature of teaching is reflected in nature. Like the many forms water can take there are many methods, approaches, and theories that influence the form classroom practice takes in second and foreign language education. Like ripples on the water I felt the disturbances in my current thinking and practice about literacy development which where echoed in conversation and interaction with second language learners. From this awareness I plunged into the undercurrents of theory and practice to understand not only what literacy development involves, but how I came to a deepened understanding of the challenge in defining and providing relevant reading materials to students. The torrential waves of research threw me to the surface again to examine a small portion of the total body of water, and realizing that what I have explored is only the crest of the wave: a beginning. Finally, in my implications I highlight the possibility for theory and practice to meet as the breakers crash against the shore. But as wave after wave crashes against the shore, leaving imprints of its existence I to strive to continue my own cycle of reflective practice in hopes of beckoning second and foreign language students to lifelong literacy.

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Appendix A:

Ethics Forms

Dear Participant,

The purpose of my thesis research is to identify reading materials EFL students in Japan find relevant in pursuing their learning of English. I will use the data collected from the questionnaires to gain insight into what kinds of reading materials that Japanese EFL students have been exposed to and their attitudes towards these materials.

The questionnaire takes approximately 20-30 minutes to complete and consists of nineteen questions. Most questions also ask you to provide reasons for your choices. If you do not wish to answer a question, it can be omitted. If you do not wish to participate, you can choose not to sign the consent form, or hand in a blank questionnaire. However, because your name will not appear on the questionnaire, once they have been handed in they cannot be handed back (to protect the anonymity of all participants).

Your feedback, which is given voluntarily, will be analyzed and may be shared with others in a research context. However, your identity will remain confidential and your responses will in no way influence your mark in this course, evaluation of this course, or any other aspects of this course. If you have any questions or concerns about the research please contact me. Thank you for participating in my research.

Yvonne Ellis

Contact information:
Yvonne Ellis
Office: 492-5347, Department of Secondary Education
E-mail: whyvonne@hotmail.com

University of Alberta

Research Consent Form

I, _____, hereby consent to complete a questionnaire given by Yvonne Ellis:

I understand that:

- I may withdraw from the research at any time without penalty
- All information gathered will be treated confidentially and discussed only with your supervisor
- Any information that identifies me will be destroyed according to the guidelines governing research
- I will not be identifiable in any documents resulting from this research
- I also understand that the results of this research will be used only in the following:
- Research thesis
- Presentations and written articles for other educators

_____
signature

Date signed: _____

For further information concerning the completion of the form please contact:
Yvonne Ellis
Office: 492-5347, Department of Secondary Education
E-mail: Whyvonne@hotmail.com
or
Dr. Olenka Bilash
Office: 492-5101, Department of Secondary Education

Dear Participant,

The purpose of this interview is to identify what elements of reading materials EFL students in Japan find relevant in pursuing their learning of English. The interview takes approximately 1 hour and will be conducted individually. The interview will be video and audio-taped. It consists of the interview participant looking at different materials written in English, and telling the interviewer what s/he thinks about them.

If you do not wish to participate, you can choose not to sign the consent form, or stop the interview at any time. After the data is collected you can choose not to have your information used in the research by contacting my supervisor or me using the contact information at the bottom of this page. You also will have an opportunity to read the transcript of the audio-tape and/or watch the video.

Your feedback, which is given voluntarily, will be analyzed and may be shared with others in a research context. However, your identity will remain confidential and your responses will in no way influence your mark in any courses, evaluation of any courses, or any other aspects of your courses. If you have any questions or concerns about the research please contact me. Thank you for participating in my research.

Yvonne Ellis

Contact information:
Yvonne Ellis
Office: 492-5347, Department of Secondary Education
E-mail: whyvonne@hotmail.com
or
Dr. Olenka Bilash
Office: 492-5101, Department of Secondary Education

University of Alberta

Research Consent Form

I, _____, hereby consent to be

(please check the items for which you are giving consent)

☐ Interviewed

☐ Photographed

☐ Videotaped

☐ Tape recorded

by Yvonne Ellis.

I understand that:

- I may withdraw from the research at any time without penalty
- All information gathered will be treated confidentially and discussed only with your supervisor
- Any information that identifies me will be destroyed according to the guidelines governing research
- I will not be identifiable in any documents resulting from this research

I also understand that the results of this research will be used only in the following:

- Research thesis
- Presentations and written articles for other educators

_____
signature

Date signed: _____

For further information concerning the completion of the form please contact:
Yvonne Ellis
Office: 492-5347, Department of Secondary Education
E-mail: whyvonne@hotmail.com
or
Dr. Olenka Bilash
Office: 492-5101, Department of Secondary Education

Appendix B:

Selection of Forms

Selection of Forms

In order to gain insight into the relationship between exposure to forms and its influence on independent reading the questionnaire is limited to comments about nine specific written forms: novels, children's books, magazines, newspapers, textbooks, short stories, comic books, dictionary, and the internet. Selection of forms is based on accessibility, my own experience using forms in the classroom, what former students and colleagues have reported as having been used in the classroom, and forms reported in the literature (Beers, 1996a, 1996b; Bilash, Williams, Gregoret, Loewen, 1999; Cho, Krashen, 2001, Davis, 1995; Decker, 1986; Frager, Vanterpool, 1993, Ghosn, 2002; Green, 1997; Hadaway & Mundy, 1999; Krashen, 1993; Liaw, 2001; Phelps & Pottorff,1992; Pickard, 1996). Although they may differ in formatting, each form is one that the respondents have background knowledge of in L1, if not in L2. As Smith (1994) points out, "(t)he appearance and organization of a book or newspaper can vary considerably from one community or culture to another, and their schemes have to be known to us if we are to make sense of them"(p. 15). All questions provided space for students to add any other forms that they have read or seen.

Accessibility is an important factor in determining whether students will use certain forms in class or out of class. Accessibility refers to the availability as well as cost of a form. In that regard I found that in the Japanese setting newspapers, magazines, and the internet were more accessible than novels, comic books, children's books and short stories. Japan has two daily English

newspapers, as well as local magazines for native English speakers in Japan, and the Asian version of TIME. Additionally, the Japanese, university students that I have met have access to the Internet at school and Ritsumeikan University in particular encourages English language instructors to utilize the technology available.

Naturally, the first two forms that are predominant in the classroom are the dictionary and textbook. Every teacher can relate to the benefits and challenges of using textbooks. In the second language classroom textbooks can refer to either: 1) subject area textbooks or 2) language learning textbooks. Whether in L1 or L2 suggestions have been made to add to the textbook experience in terms of presenting them in a communicative way that encourages critical thinking (Lally, C. 1998, Frager, A., Vanterpool, M.1993) .

Electronic, and L1/L2 dictionaries are forms that many students utilize as a part of their language learning. According to Bilash, William, Gregoret, and Loewen (1999) dictionaries are beneficial to language learning when students are aware of the purposes for using them. While the most obvious benefit of a dictionary is to increase vocabulary, other benefits are that they present cultural knowledge and can be used at any level.

Through observation and conversation with EFL instructors I also note the use of newspapers, magazines, short stories, and the Internet as forms used in the classroom. These forms are commonly used as authentic text in textbooks and can also be accessed in their original forms. As each has characteristics

unique to its form, they also have benefits when used effectively in the classroom.

The use of newspapers to improve literacy in L1 and L2 show that students need to familiarize themselves with the newspaper format and outlines how it is different from other forms. Newspapers provides students with current information about a variety of topics, at a variety of levels and because it is a different form, may not carry the stigma of novels or textbooks (Phelps, Pottorff, 1992; Foutz in Thimmesch,1984). Additionally, the contents of the newspaper support classroom curriculums and create links to the real world.

With regard to magazines, Rhodes (in Thimmesch, 1984) argues that they provide readers with information about a specified topic. Not only does the reader select what magazine they will read, but once they have committed to reading a particular magazine they can still choose what they will read. (1996b) notes that uncommitted and un-motivated readers like to read magazines because they can get information about a particular topic. Additionally the pictures help them to bring meaning to the text (Young, 1993; Beers, 1996b)

Furthermore, research on the benefits of light reading in L1 and L2 show that newspapers and magazines are a popular form of pleasure reading (Pickard, N., 1996; Rissikoff, K., Pilgreen, J. 1994). Additionally, light reading develops skills for more difficult reading and leads to lifelong reading habits in L1 and L2 (Pickard, N. 1996; Rissikoff, K, Pilgreen, J. 1994).

Research suggests that short stories are a way to introduce literature into the EFL classroom and are especially useful for intermediate students (Liaw,

2001; Osborn, 1998). Liaw (2001) suggests that the benefits of using short stories is that it increases students' confidence, in addition to constructing personally meaningful interpretations of the story by utilizing their background knowledge and experience. Osborn (1998) argues that short stories can be used to increase interest in L2 literature through using short stories as a means of exploring its characteristics.

The Internet is different from other forms because in order to use it properly students have to learn how to filter through information There is an assumption that each generation is using more technologically, and as a result students' Internet access might be overestimated. As a form, we need to distinguish between lessons on the Internet and lessons using the Internet (Green, A., 1994). The benefits of this form are the amount of current information that it provides students and the ability for students to make subsequent choices that reflect their abilities and interest. It also differs from other forms in the amount, quality and type of interaction that students can have. Users of the Internet can choose the amount they interact with others.

Studies concerning free voluntary reading (FVR) and extensive reading programs (ERP) highlight the use of novels for increasing students language abilities and positive attitudes towards reading (Davis, 1995; Renandya, Rajan, Jacobs, 1999; Lao,Krashen, 2000). However, in order to maintain interest in a novel students must have a certain degree of reading fluency (Lee, Lemonnier-Shallert, 1997). Additionally, pre-reading, reading and post-reading tasks are

need careful consideration if this form is to be used successfully in the L2 classroom (Knutson, 1997; Chamot, O' Malley, 1994).

As novels are suggested for advanced students, and short stories for intermediate students, children's books are suggested for, but not restricted to beginners (Ghosn, 2002). Similar to novels and short stories, children's literature benefits L2 and L1 readers by increasing confidence and motivation with regards to reading (Cho, Krashen, 2001,Bloem, Padak, 1996). Children's literature, like its adult counterparts also allow students to explore universal themes, and a variety of topics with illustrations that assist comprehension (Cho, Krashen, 2001; Hadaway, Mundy, 1999; Bloem, Padak, 1996; Ghosn, 2002).

While commonality between use of forms in the two cultures was one factor in selecting the previous forms, the comic book is one form that seems to be more predominantly read Japan. The popularity of comic books in Japan is visible in every sect of society and as such I wanted to see if the popularity of this form was utilized in selecting L2 reading. Although comic books are considered light reading Krashen's (1993) overview of research on comic book use indicates that there are varying degrees of language difficulty. Additionally, studies show that reading comic books can lead to reading other forms (Krashen, 1993; Russikoff, Pilgreen, 1994).

Appendix C:
Forms used for the Think-aloud interviews

Collister, L. (1997) *Basic Baking: Pies and Tarts.* Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Courage Books.

Dobbs, C. (1989) *Reading for a Reason: an intermediate/advanced reading text.* Eaglewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice Hall Regents.

Gilbert, J. (1993) *Clear speech: pronunciations and listening comprehension in North America: student's book* Cambridge, NY, Cambridge University Press.

Hatfield, J., Hatfield, C. (1996) *Reading Games.* China, Addison Wesley Longman Ltd.

Hunt, R., Brychta, A. (1986) *Village in the Snow, Stage 5/ Book 6.* Oxford University Press.

Hutchinson, T. (1997) *Lifelines: intermediate student's book.* New York, NY, Oxford University Press.

Kinsella, W.P., (2000) *Japanese Baseball and Other Stories.* Saskatoon, Canada, Thistledown Press.

Japan National Tourist Organization. (1994) *Tourist Map of Kyoto/Nara.*

Media in Asia. (2001) *Kyoto Journal.* 46.

Lee, L. (1998) *Transitions: student book 1.* New York, NY, Oxford University Press.

Obunsha's Comprehensive Japanese/English Dictionary

Orihara, M. (1988) *Dreaming of Love.* (Y. Tamaki translator) Tokyo, Japan, Kodansha International Ltd.

Stauffer, T. (2000) *Upgrading and Fixing Macs and iMacs for Dummies.* New York,NY, Books Worldwide Inc.

S.U. Press (2001) *Kansai Time Out.* February.

Yoshimoto, B. (1995) *Lizard.* (A. Sherif translator) New York, NY, Washington Square Press

Ziaduden, S., Van Loon, B. (2000) *Introducing Media Studies.* New York,NY, Totem Books

Appendix D:
The Questionnaire

Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions. Directions about how to answer the questions are provided after the question.

1. **What is your first language?** _____

2. **a) What other languages do you speak/read/ write?** _____

   b) How would you rank your fluency in other languages? (Circle the best answer.)

   Language: _____

reading:	fluent	intermediate	beginner	other (please specify)
speaking: :	fluent	intermediate	beginner	other (please specify)
writing: :	fluent	intermediate	beginner	other (please specify)
listening: :	fluent	intermediate	beginner	other (please specify)

   Language: _____

reading:	fluent	intermediate	beginner	other (please specify)
speaking: :	fluent	intermediate	beginner	other (please specify)
writing: :	fluent	intermediate	beginner	other (please specify)
listening: :	fluent	intermediate	beginner	other (please specify)

3. **Why are you studying English?**
   (circle all that apply)

   a) I like North American culture.
   b) I need to learn English.
   c) I want to learn English.
   d) I like the English language.
   e) Learning English increases my job opportunities.
   f) Other (please specify) _____

4. **a) Have you ever been to an English speaking country? Yes No**
   b) Why did you visit that country?

   _____

   _____

   c) For how long were you in that country?

   _____

5. **Do you take private English lessons? Yes No**

6. **Do you speak English with friends outside of class? Yes No**

7. How often do you read the following materials in Japanese?
(Use the numbers in the box to fill in the blank to answer the questions)

1=daily
2=several times per week
3=once per week
4=once per month
5=once per 2-3 months
6=once per 4-6 months
7=once per 7-9 months
8=once per year
9=never

___ novels
___ children's books
___ magazines
___ newspapers
___ textbooks
___ short stories
___ comic books
___ dictionary
___ internet information
___ other (please specify) _____

Why do you prefer some materials over others?_____
_____
_____

8. Have you seen the following reading materials written in English?
(Put a "Y" in the blank if you have seen it and a "N" in the blank if you have not seen it)

___ novels
___ children's books
___ magazines
___ newspapers
___ textbooks
___ short stories
___ comic books
___ dictionary
___ internet information
___ other (please specify) _____

9. How often do you use the following reading materials in English classes?
(1=always, 2=usually, 3=not very often, 4= never)

___ novels
___ children's books
___ magazines
___ newspapers
___ textbooks
___ short stories
___ comic books
___ dictionary
___ internet information
___ other (please specify) _____

additional comments _____
_____

10. How often do you read the following English materials outside of school?

(If you do not read any English materials outside of school, please go to question 7. Use the guide in the box to answer the question.)

1=daily
2=several times per week
3=once per week
4=once per month
5=once per 2-3 months
6=once per 4-6 months
7=once per 7-9 months
8=once per year
9=never

___ novels
___ children's books
___ magazines
___ newspapers
___ textbooks
___ short stories
___ comic books
___ dictionary
___ thesaurus
___ internet information
___ other (please specify) _____

Why do you prefer some materials over others?_____

_____

_____

11. What type of written exercises or texts do you find most useful in learning English?

(1=very useful, 2=useful, 3=not very useful, 4=neutral)

___ written texts that require reading for cultural information
___ written texts that require reading for information about the English language
___ written texts that require reading for your personal enjoyment
___ vocabulary lists
___ translation exercises
___ fill in the blank exercises
___ grammar exercises

12. What English language materials would you *like* to be able to read?

(1=really like,2=like, 3=do not like, 4=neutral)

___ novels
___ children's books
___ magazines
___ newspapers
___ textbooks
___ short stories
___ comic books
___ dictionary
___ internet information
___ other (please specify) _____

Why do you prefer some materials over others?_____

_____

_____

13. What English reading materials would you like to read *in* class?
(1=really like, 2=neutral, 3=do not like)
___ children's books
___ novels
___ magazines
___ newspapers
___ textbooks
___ short stories
___ comic books
___ dictionary
___ internet information
___ other (please specify) _____
Why do you prefer some materials over others?_____
_____
_____

14. What English language materials would you find helpful in learning the *English language*?
(1=very helpful, 2=helpful, 3=not helpful, 4=neutral)
___ children's books
___ novels
___ magazines
___ newspapers
___ textbooks
___ short stories
___ comic books
___ dictionary
___ internet information
___ other (please specify)
_____
Why do you prefer some materials over others?_____
_____
_____

15. What kinds of English reading materials would you find helpful in learning about *English culture*?
(1=very helpful, 2=helpful, 3=not helpful, 4=neutral)
___ novels
___ children's books
___ magazines
___ newspapers
___ textbooks
___ short stories
___ comic books
___ dictionary
___ internet information
___ other (please specify)
_____
Why do you prefer some materials over others?_____

16. **What is the most important language skill to develop in a second language?**
(1=most important, 4=least important)

___ reading
___ writing
___ speaking
___ listening

Why do you think so?

17. **How important is reading in your first language?**
(Circle the best answer.)

- very important
- important
- not very important
- not important

Why do you think so?

18. **How important is reading in English?**
(Circle the best answer.)

- very important
- important
- not very important
- not important

Why do you think so?

19. Do you think increasing your English reading ability will increase your English speaking ability?
(Circle the best answer.)

- strongly agree
- agree
- neutral
- disagree
- strongly agree

Why do you think so?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix E:
Comments made by participants in the Pilot Study

Comments made by participants in the Pilot Study

Before embarking on my research study in Japan I conducted a pilot study with university students who were learning Japanese. They were exposed to a series of authentic texts in Japanese and asked to participate in the think-aloud interview. Their comments reveal that familiarity with a form activates general background knowledge as well as other previous experiences with a form.

> *I like the children's book 'cause when I was France I couldn't speak French so I was forced to read from children's books, and I liked it.*

While students' responses to authentic text in its original form and language learning forms both revealed a reliance on background knowledge or experience to make selections, there seemed to be a difference in what triggered this connection. With regard to language learning forms, students seemed to connect the form to background knowledge.

> *Since I was small, teacher's told me ...to work with books like this, and I have a headache when I see books like this, and this one, too.*

Throughout the interviews students related their previous experiences in English classes with textbooks. Students used this previous experience to evaluate the content, format, level, and authenticity of language and text, hence engaging in a more critical selection process.

> *I'm reading the very exactly, because I see it again. It's good for me, this style. Text sentence and then some question and then some conversation or "What do you think?" yeah, then yeah, blah, blah, blah. This sentence is not so difficult for me, but it's good.*