

READING HABITS AND ATTITUDES OF THAI L2 STUDENTS

by

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the reading habits of three Thai students between their early twenties to early thirties. Although the focus of interest is on their English reading, their reading habits in Thai and English, both fiction and non-fiction, are studied. None of the three subjects regularly reads fiction in Thai or English, and non-fiction books are read almost exclusively for the purpose of study. The research confirms the hypothesis that present reading habits are determined by positive or negative reading experiences in the past. Subjects who enjoyed positive experiences reading fiction or non-fiction in their early years have become regular readers of fiction or non-fiction; the subject who had negative early reading experiences is not a regular reader of any kind of books in either Thai or English. The study does suggest, however, that despite the strong effect of early reading experiences, positive reading experiences in the present can help adults become engaged readers.

Key terms:

Reading; Reading attitudes; Motivation; Reading motivation; Influences; Thai students; Reading culture; Reluctant reader; Engaged reader; Positive reading experiences; Habits; L2 reading.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

This study is an examination of the English and Thai reading habits of Thai students in their L1, Thai, and their L2, English, at tertiary and post-tertiary level, in an effort to establish the reasons behind their general reluctance to read English. Since their attitude to English reading could be affected by past experiences of reading both English and Thai, I have explored their reading habits in relation to the reading of fiction and non-fiction in books, magazines, newspapers and on the Internet, both in Thai and in English. By exploring past experiences of my three subjects, I hope to determine whether this reluctance to read should be understood as a result of a number of factors, or whether it can simply be seen as due to the absence of any positive experience of reading in Thai or English.

Chapter 1 gives an outline of the whole study. Section 1.2 summarises the central questions of the study and section 1.3 presents the background to the study: what prompted me to embark on the study, and the factors I focused on. Section 1.4 summarises the aims of the research, section 1.5 the questions the research was intended to answer. Section 1.6 presents the hypotheses. Sections 1.7 and 1.8 outline the research method and procedure. Section 1.9 presents a brief outline of chapters 2 to 5.

1.2 Research problem

Language learners need to develop four skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing. The skill of reading is not only important in itself, but it contributes to the other three skills. Thai students learning English, however, do not regularly read fiction or non-fiction in English, even when they are highly motivated to improve their English for the purpose of examinations or in preparation for study abroad.

Given the importance of reading not only in the development of language proficiency but also in the development of a comprehensive and comprehending view of the world and of life in this world, this reluctance to read is a matter of concern.

The purpose of this study was to conduct an in-depth examination of the English and Thai reading habits and attitudes of three Thai students, in an effort to establish the main reasons behind their reluctance to read English. Most Thai students I come into contact with are similarly reluctant to read. The standard reason given by teachers for this reluctance is that there is no “reading culture” in Thailand. There are other possible reasons, however, such as the place of reading in the home (in Thai, but also in any other language), the nature of materials used and teaching methods at Thai schools and universities (again in Thai and English), a dearth of reading material in English available through libraries, and lack of English reading ability. All of these need to be considered.

The questions I wanted to answer were: What factors bring about the lack of motivation among Thai students learning English to read English books? Are there any factors which are more important than others? Does any one factor alone have the potential to make reading a negative experience for young Thai people?

1.3 Context of the research problem

I am teaching in an Australian-based English language school in the centre of Bangkok. Classes run mornings, afternoons and evenings during the week, and mornings and afternoons over the weekend. We have five full-time teachers and about the same number of part-time teachers. I am one of only two who are career teachers, with university teaching qualifications, and a background in high school teaching. The others mostly have business backgrounds, while the younger ones have done a TEFL course after graduation, then gone straight into TEFL. We have a training director and a director of studies (the other career teacher), both native English speakers.

Classes are small, with between six and fifteen students in each. Most of the students are Thai. Many are Thai Chinese, who make up a significant part of Bangkok's population, and are Thai speakers though they may still speak Chinese to grandparents at home. There are occasionally students from other countries – China, Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia, Korea – but these would not be more than 5% of the total. Classes are largely made up, therefore, of Thai speakers.

Some of the students at the school are in their mid to late teens, simply wanting to improve their general ability, and some are adults in their thirties and forties, seeking to advance their careers. The majority, though, are in their early twenties, recently graduated or about to graduate with their first degree, and aiming to do a master's degree abroad, usually in Australia. For this, they need to show a satisfactory score in either the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or IELTS (International English Language Testing System) test. The IELTS test is now more in demand, especially for those planning to study in Australia. Most students at my language school plan to take the IELTS test, and our task is to prepare them for it. Details of the IELTS test are given in Appendix B. The school also offers courses in General English, but the focus is on examination preparation and related skills, particularly reading and writing.

Although the IELTS test is primarily a test of a candidate's English, it demands also some of the skills that students require in academic situations: listening to, reading, understanding and responding to ideas and opinions; arguing logically, orally and in writing. Obviously, the skills needed for these activities require a certain level of linguistic proficiency, but they also require a range of ideas and the vocabulary with which to discuss these ideas. Such ideas and vocabulary come from various sources such as radio and television, but primarily from written sources such as books and newspapers.

Reading is thus crucially important for our students, both in their present goal of achieving a good score in the IELTS test, and also in their future studies in English-medium universities abroad. The fact that students rarely read anything other than comic books and magazines, both in Thai and in English, is therefore a matter of concern. I felt it important to try to ascertain the reasons behind this lack of interest in

reading books in either Thai or English, and the unwillingness to read English although they were studying the language.

Areas I considered pertinent to consider were:

- Attitudes to reading in Thailand
- Cognitive aspects: students' reading ability
- Affective aspects: students' feelings about reading
- Social aspects: students' home and educational background

1.4 Research aims

I believe that reading, both fiction and non-fiction, is essential in developing fluency, vocabulary range, the ability to read with comprehension, and a range of ideas and opinions. This is true for students' first language, Thai, and for English. This research is about Thai students' reading attitudes and habits, particularly in English, focusing on the affective factors that make them readers or non-readers.

Through my questions, I aim to establish what makes a person a keen, independent, engaged reader, or, on the other hand, a reluctant reader. By my definition, a keen reader reads regularly, and with pleasure; an independent reader reads of his or her own volition, not only when instructed to or for the purposes of study or professional development. Guthrie (2001: 2) says that an "engaged" reader is "intrinsically motivated to read for knowledge and enjoyment". Such internally motivated readers read "because of personal interest and desires to learn, relax, escape, or empathize" (Block, 2003: 82). Reluctant readers have been defined by Stringer and Mollineaux (2003: 71) as "those who are able to but do not possess the desire or the inclination to read." According to the Online Dictionary for Library and Information Science (ODLIS), a reluctant reader is a person who, for whatever reason, chooses not to read, doing so only when necessary. In a study of 21,000 youths, O'Neil (1991) found that lack of motivation had a negative effect on literacy development (cited by Block, 2003: 82). I investigated, therefore, the factors that could make a student choose to read, or not to read.

1.5 Research questions

Questions I aim to answer are as follows. The first five questions (a to e) concern Thai, English or any other language. The final question (f) concerns English only.

- a) What are the circumstances that motivate the keen, engaged reader to read for pleasure?
- b) What are the circumstances that motivate the keen, engaged reader to read of his or her own volition for the sake of knowledge?
- c) What are the circumstances that create the reluctant reader?
- d) How important are circumstances at home, school and university in making the keen or the reluctant reader?
- e) How important are an individual's feelings about reading in determining whether they become keen or reluctant readers?
- f) How important is an individual's perception of their own English reading ability in determining whether they become keen or reluctant readers of English?

1.6 Hypotheses

A general hypothesis and four sub-hypotheses are derived from these questions.

General hypothesis: Thai students who have had positive experiences of reading in Thai or English will become independent readers of English, reading for pleasure or for self-improvement.

Related sub-hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1a: Students who come from homes where reading for pleasure (in Thai, English or any other language) is encouraged will become independent readers of English.

Hypothesis 1b: Students who attended schools where reading for pleasure in any language was encouraged will become independent readers of English.

Hypothesis 1c: Students who attended universities where lecturers encouraged reading (which at university level would be in Thai and English) by stimulating interest in a subject will become independent readers of English.

Hypothesis 1d: Students whose siblings or friends read for pleasure will become independent readers of English.

1.7 Research method

The study takes the form of a largely qualitative case study in three phases.

Being predominantly qualitative, the research makes use of qualitative data such as interviews, case histories and questionnaires (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989: 122). Being partly descriptive, it seeks to organize, summarize and explicitly describe “naturally occurring phenomena” (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989: 124). It is partly deductive, aiming to demonstrate a clear relationship of cause and effect (1989: 89), and partly inductive, hoping to arrive at new insights into the phenomenon (1989: 88). It takes the form of a case study, being an investigation of a single instance of a class of objects or entities (Nunan, 1992: 79) It also involves the principles and some of the methods of ethnographic research, being a study of the culture and characteristics of a particular social group in a real-world setting (1992: 55).

The data collection consists of three phases. First, there is a questionnaire, including multiple-choice questions, Likert-scale questions and questions requiring short answers. Then, there are follow-up questions via e-mail in connection with replies given to the questionnaire. Finally, there is a face-to-face interview, a final chance to probe and clarify replies given to the questionnaire and to the follow-up questions.

The three subjects were all in the same class at the Language School IDP in Bangkok in 2006: two females in their twenties, and one male of thirty years. In 2007, one of the female subjects went to study in London; the other two subjects remained in their jobs in Thailand, but are planning to go abroad to study in 2008.

1.8 Research procedure

First the questionnaire was administered, sent by e-mail and received back by e-mail.

Second, the questionnaire responses were read and, via e-mail again, the subjects were asked further questions related to their replies, with the hope of probing further, getting them to elaborate on experiences and attitudes.

Third, an interview was conducted with the two of them who were still in Thailand. This was to get them to elaborate on issues covered in the questionnaire and e-mailing, and also to determine whether thinking about their attitudes and experiences regarding reading had in any way altered their motivation to read. The interview was recorded.

1.9 Synopsis of the dissertation

Chapter 2 of the dissertation is a literature review. First, there is a discussion of the importance of reading, particularly for the L2 learner. This is followed by a consideration of what is involved in learning a language, and of the difficulties faced in learning to read in one's home language and in an L2. The final section examines motivation in learning an L2, and then motivation to read, pointing out the link between attitude and motivation.

Chapter 3 discusses the method employed in the study. The first section comprises the approach. This is followed by a short profile of the subjects, followed by a description of the materials and of the procedure followed. Finally, there is an account of how data was analysed.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the research. First a summary of the responses given by each subject is provided, then an overall summary of results. Finally, there is a discussion of the findings, followed by a conclusion.

Chapter 5 is the conclusion, summarizing the contribution of the study, pointing out its limitations, and offering suggestions for further research.

Five appendices are included: a newspaper article related to section 2.1, details of the IELTS test, the initial questionnaire presented to the subjects, the e-mail questions and responses, and the final interview questions.

2 Literature review

This chapter reviews literature on experiences of reading and on independent readers. First, there is a discussion of the importance of reading, particularly for the L2 learner. This is followed by a consideration of what is involved in learning to read in a language, and of the difficulties faced in learning to read in one's home language and in an L2. The final section examines motivation in learning an L2, and then motivation to read.

2.1 The importance of reading

At the opening of a Book Fair at Bangkok's Queen Sirikit National Convention Centre in October 2007, statistics from the National Statistics Office related to Thai reading habits were bandied about. Thai people read just two books a year, in contrast to Vietnamese, who read sixty books a year, and Singaporeans, who read forty-five (*The Nation*, October 19, 2007). However, a spokesman for the Education Ministry insists that Thai youth are keener on reading nowadays. In 2003, Thai children read an average of seven lines a day, but this number had increased by 7.9 per cent by 2005. The ministry's lofty aim was to raise this to a daily average of 12 lines a day by the end of the year 2007 (*The Nation*, June 14, 2007).

Whatever the truth behind the statistics, and whatever the proportion of English and Thai in those seven or eight lines read, it is clear to teachers of English in Thailand that most Thai students do not read much English. This is true even when they are highly motivated to improve their English for the purpose of examinations or in preparation for study abroad. Many of them have had to do a fair amount of reading in English as part of their university studies, and those already working may do reading in the specific area of their profession. They are not, however, in the habit of reading books, either fiction or non-fiction, for recreation or for pleasure. Given the importance of reading not only in the development of language proficiency but also in the development of a comprehensive and comprehending view of the world and of life in this world, this reluctance to read is a matter of concern.

Later in October, no doubt as a reaction to the Book Fair and the statistics aired, an editorial appeared in Bangkok's *The Nation* newspaper. This is the first paragraph:

To say that a reading culture is not one of Thailand's strong suits is a gross understatement. Reading, either as a means of self-improvement or just pleasurable escapism, has never been associated with the idea of fun in the Thai social context. Indeed most Thais, if pressed, would admit that reading, a solitary activity, is the direct opposite of having a good time. People who read books are widely frowned upon as introverted, too serious, unsociable or lacking in social skills. Most Thais would rather engage in gregarious group activities like eating, drinking, watching television or movies, or just talking, all of which they find more enjoyable and which, usually, makes little demand on their intellect. This pattern of behaviour cuts across socio-economic classes. (*The Nation*, June 14, 2007. See Appendix A.)

It is important to establish the main reasons behind the reluctance to read of most Thai students I come into contact with. The standard reason given by teachers is the same as that given in the editorial quoted above: there is no "reading culture" in Thailand. In other words, Thai students are not keen, independent readers because it is not a common activity in their culture. Other factors that are cited as reasons for this non-reading culture include materials used and teaching methods at Thai schools and universities, a dearth of reading material available through libraries, and lack of reading ability.

These are presented as reasons why teachers are faced with a hopeless task: they cannot change Thai culture, they cannot change the ways of Thai schools and universities, they cannot change the way the government allocates funds to libraries, and they cannot change the students. Most students in language schools are in their late teens or early twenties, and common wisdom has it that it is too late to change either their attitudes to reading or their reading ability. The task may not be easy, but I do not believe it is impossible. There may be many reasons why Thai students are not keen readers, including cultural norms and practices, but also numerous other factors

and experiences at home, at school and at university. I suspect that the major reason for our students' present reluctance to read is a lack of positive experiences of reading, both in English and in Thai. Students' present situation also needs to be considered, since I do not believe that it is too late to encourage students to read and to develop a love for reading through providing the opportunity for positive reading experiences.

The importance of reading in language learning and language proficiency is well-documented in the literature. Gradman and Hanania (1991) investigated the relationship between ESL learners' language achievement and forty-four background variables, including formal learning experiences, exposure to the language in class and outside, and attitudes to English. The results of their multiple regression analysis showed "the strongest effect to be that of extracurricular reading" (1991: 42). "Foremost among [factors which must contribute to success in language learning] is the extent of active exposure to the language through individual outside reading" (1991: 48). Even more remarkably, an intensive English programme did not seem to help those who did not do extracurricular reading in English, while the readers "seem to do quite well whether or not they have taken intensive English" (1991: 47).

In a paper presented at the RELC Conference in Singapore in April 2004, Stephen Krashen discussed evidence for the "power of reading" (Krashen, 2004: 1). He referred to four studies which "consistently report a positive relationship between the amount of free reading done and various aspects of second and foreign language competence": Lee, Krashen and Gribbons (1996) regarding the acquisition of relative clauses; Stokes, Krashen and Kartchner (1998) regarding the acquisition of the present subjunctive in Spanish; Constantino, Lee, Cho and Krashen (1997) regarding TOEFL scores; and Lee (2001) regarding factors which make writing difficult. He also referred to later studies in which he was involved regarding the use of teen romances in ESL learning, where "recreational reading was the only plausible explanation for progress" (Krashen, 2004: 2). This research was reported more recently by Cho in the *International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching* (Cho, 2005).

Elley outlined a set of studies on the effects of “book floods” on students’ acquisition of a second language in elementary schools. Students were “consistently found to learn the target language more quickly. When immersed in meaningful text, ...children appear to learn the language incidentally” (Elley, 1991: 375). The “Fiafia” Program on the Pacific Island of Niue was “superior in improving children’s language achievement” (1991: 382). In the Fiji Book Flood, “particularly striking was their superior performance on English structures that they had apparently acquired incidentally from their reading” (1991: 388). Pupils who took the Reading and English Acquisition Program (REAP) in Singapore were 10% more likely to pass the regular school examination at the end of the year (1991: 397).

In a study by Yang on the effects of extensive reading in the form of mystery novels on classes of Hong Kong adult learners of English, students’ knowledge of grammar, sentence structure and usage were tested before and after the programme. Those classes engaged in novel reading showed a “substantial advantage” over the non-reading groups (Yang, 2001: 454, 457).

The effect of an interactive reading programme on Korean children’s “pragmatic competence in English” was studied by Kim and Hall (2002: 333). They determined that participation in the programme “led to significant changes over a four-month period in the mean number of words, utterances, and talk management features” used by the children.

Nagy, Herman and Anderson (1985), cited by Chow and Chou (2000), investigated whether students acquire measurable knowledge about unfamiliar words while reading natural text. They concluded that “a moderate amount of reading will lead to substantial vocabulary gains” (Chow & Chou, 2000). Also on the subject of vocabulary, Parry (1991) investigated how language learners acquire vocabulary. The subject in her study, whose vocabulary was limited, read very little. As a result, she did not come across many words and was consequently slowed down in her reading by the many words that were unfamiliar. This, in turn, meant that she did not read much, “and so on”. She concludes: “To establish a firm foundation for the vocabulary building to be done in academic courses, we should encourage our students to read as much as they can before they leave our classes” (Parry, 1991: 649).

The importance of background knowledge in the understanding of L2 texts is stressed by Carrel and Eisterhold (1983). They recommended that in teaching texts, teachers should try to build up the learners' background knowledge by using "prereading activities, including those that provide learners with appropriate vocabulary" (Fan, 2003: 223). One conclusion of the study on learners' acquisition of vocabulary reported in Fan (2003) was that "reading a great deal outside class is as important as, if not more important than, paying attention to the words used in class" (2003: 233).

The research of Carrel and Eisterhold (1983) touches on the vital issue of reading itself in the process of learning to read. Successful reading depends on various skills and attributes such as automatic word decoding, knowledge of grammatical structures, and background knowledge, but some of these skills can best, or sometimes only, be developed by reading itself. To read well, the learner must read a great deal. The skills and attributes required for successful reading are discussed in detail in section 2.2.1 below.

Fluent reading is essential for the enjoyment and appreciation of literature. The study of literature itself is not a regular part of ESL learning nowadays, but since it is of value in the learning of a second or other language, it is worth considering the reasons why literature has been studied over the years. Claire and Olivier Kramsch (Kramsch & Kramsch, 2000) present a review of the role that literature has played in foreign language teaching from early in the last century, seen through articles in the *Modern Language Journal* between 1916 and 1999. Although much of this concerns the teaching of French and German literature, particularly during the early years of the century, it has relevance to the teaching of English literature and literature translated into English. In the first twenty years of the 20th century, literature was used for the "aesthetic education of the few" (2000: 553). Julius Sachs of Columbia University in 1918 said that literature was the gateway to understanding nations, and that it should be used for moral education (Sachs, 1918 in Kramsch & Kramsch, 2000: 555). Laurence H. Pechin, who taught French in San Francisco, said that "French poets will give [American students] the clear logical, reasoning power of the Frenchman, and the refined, delicate, sensitively developed emotional nature common to the French race" (Pechin, 1917: 17).

In the 1920s, literature was used for the “literacy of the many” (Kramsch & Kramsch, 2000: 553). In the 1930s and 1940s, literature was read for “moral and vocational uplift” (2000: 553). More recent works of literature were chosen for their human interest and their social message (2000: 560). From the 1950s to the 1970s, literature was used for “ideational content” and “humanistic inspiration” (2000: 553). Finally, in the last decades of the century, literature provided an “authentic” experience of the target culture (2000: 553), and literature study became a means toward achieving communicative proficiency.

The reading of literature can be seen, therefore, as an activity which teaches many worthy attributes like morality, the understanding of people and nations, and the ability to think logically. At the same time, students reading literature absorb grammar and vocabulary, improving their ability to read, write, speak and understand spoken English. The knowledge of a foreign culture and morality helps in the understanding of the written and spoken words of that culture. Also, since literature is often emotionally involving, it engages the reader in an enjoyable experience that the reader might wish to return to regularly.

Some see literature itself as profoundly important. Sven Birkerts (1994: 2006), in his “The Gutenberg Elegies”, writes about the fate of “literature and old-style contemplative reading” in the present age of electronic media. In books we find “the gathered weight of literary expression, what we used to consider our cultural ballast” (Birkerts, 2006: xii). Reading for him is a “filtering of the complexities of the real through artistic narrative” (2006: xv). Books offer the reader “a chance to subject the anarchic subjectivity [of the reader] to another’s disciplined imagination, a chance to be taken in unsuspected directions under the guidance of some singular sensibility” (2006: 164). The usefulness of all this to the learning of a second language lies in the power of interesting, relevant and important material to engage the reader both intellectually and emotionally. The importance of reader engagement is discussed in section 2.2 below.

In view of the importance of reading, improving learners’ attitudes to reading is of enormous importance. The more they read, the more they will improve in terms of

vocabulary, grammar structure, even oral competence, as outlined above. Much research has gone into the effects of large amounts of reading, be it in the form of extensive reading, silent sustained reading, book floods, independent reading, or private reading. Furthermore, the improving of attitudes is a common finding. Krashen (2004: 4) says that “it is not the actual time reading during SSR (sustained silent reading) that counts, it is the desire to read more that counts”. In the outline of book floods, Elley (1991: 375) states that “when immersed in meaningful text, ... children appear to ... develop positive attitudes towards books”. The “Fiafia” Program on the Pacific Island of Niue improved children’s attitudes” (1991: 382). The adult learners in Yang’s study agreed that the reading of novels had increased confidence in their abilities (Yang, 2001: 458).

Before leaving the topic of the importance of reading, it might be pertinent to touch on the topic of reading electronic media. Research suggests that “adolescents are spending more time reading Web-based texts and less time reading traditional print-based texts (Doherty & Orlofsky, 2001, online document, cited by Spires and Cuper, 2002: 2). The present research focuses, though, on students’ reading of fiction and non-fiction in books, not on the Internet. This is chiefly because these are two very different types of reading. The effects of extensive reading on the Internet have yet to be thoroughly researched, but my concern is with the positive effects mentioned above (advances in language learning and proficiency, knowledge and understanding of a foreign culture) that come from reading printed material in books. See Elley (1991: 375, 382, 388, 397); Fan (2003: 233); Gradman and Hanania (1991:42); Kim and Hall (2002: 333); Kramsch and Kramsch (2000: 553, 555); Krashen (2004:1); Nagy, Herman and Anderson (1985); Parry (1991: 649); Pechin (1917: 17); Yang (2001: 454, 457, 458).

Of course, the electronic media offer wonderful possibilities: nearly limitless access to information; searchable, modifiable and enhanceable electronic books (Anderson-Inman & Horney, 1999: 5); CD-ROM; multimedia; and virtual reality. These possibilities can lead us to wonder whether the printed media will survive – “albeit only as a retrievable electronic file” (Topping, 1997: 12). With the enormously fast development of technology, the future is uncertain; all we can do now is to say what

the reading of printed text on paper does for the reader what text on a screen while surfing the Internet does *not* do.

Reading text on the screen is “unlike the continuous scanning of linear text and more like the “reading” of tea leaves, [or] someone’s palm... . It involves more frequent and more overt selectivity on the part of the reader – and thus potentially both more partial understanding and deeper understanding. ... Indeed, using a hypertext is perhaps more like “navigating” than “reading” (Topping, 1997: 2-3). Sven Birkerts (2006: xiv) sees “a transformation in the nature of reading, a shift from focused, sequential, text-centered engagement to a far more lateral kind of encounter. Chip and screen ... have put single-track concentration, the discipline of reading, under great pressure. In its place we find the restless, grazing behaviour of clicking and scrolling.”

Whether this kind of reading can enhance students’ language learning, particularly L2 language learning, remains to be seen. Birkerts is concerned with something deeper. He fears that with all the complex and sophisticated images and cross-referencing of the electronic media, we may be sacrificing “depth” (2006: 26). He recognizes that while “circuit and screen” communicate certain kinds of data effectively, they are “antithetical to inwardness” (2006: 192-193). Wisdom is not just about “the gathering and organizing of facts”, but about “a penetration to the underlying laws and patterns” (2006: 75). Again, this may seem far from the issue of enhancing L2 language learning. It is not, however. Birkerts is referring to a kind of reading that is purposeful, vital, meaningful, and this is the kind of reading that engages a reader.

2.2 Learning to read in a language

It is valuable to consider some of the factors that could make reading for Thai learners of English a less than pleasurable experience. The process of learning to read is, for anyone, fraught with difficulties. The difficulties experienced in learning to read in a second or other language are not the same, though, as those experienced in learning to read in one’s mother tongue.

2.2.1 What is involved in learning to read a first language?

There are numerous skills to master before the language learner can become a successful reader. These skills can be seen as hurdles to overcome before the reader can enjoy reading, and before reading can become a pleasurable activity.

Reading involves a number of processes that must happen simultaneously in order for the reader to achieve fluency and comprehension. Successful comprehension results from an integration of information derived from the text and preexisting knowledge (Koda, 2004: 4). The skills involved in doing this can conveniently be seen as lower level and higher level processes (Grabe & Stoller, 2002: 20). The lower level processes include understanding the words, the syntax and the semantic relations in the text. All of these necessitate successful activation of working memory. The higher level processes involve an understanding of the gist and main ideas of the passage through applying knowledge of text structure, discourse organization and genre, through use of metacognitive reading strategies, and by applying metalinguistic awareness.

The most fundamental process in reading is the decoding of words, that is, recognizing and accessing their meaning. Grabe and Stoller (2002) call it “lexical access – the calling up of the meaning of the word as it is recognized” (2002: 20). This automatic word recognition is necessary since it frees short-term memory capacity for the task of comprehending the word and integrating its meaning with the overall meaning of the sentence, paragraph, and text (Pressley, 1998: 61).

What is necessary, then, for a word to be recognized? In learning to read English, the student must first learn the English alphabet, and the sound which each letter represents. Words are represented in print at the level of phonemes, units of sound like “b” and “d”. A difficulty for the learner is that there is not always a one-to-one correspondence in English between letters and phonemes: the word “which” has three phonemes but five letters. In learning to read one’s home language, understanding the written word usually means recognizing a word that is already known orally. The mis-

match between phonemes and letters complicates the recognition of the word from speech. (Adapted from Torgesen & Mathes – CORE Reading Research Anthology.)

While phonological decoding is an indispensable competence for reading, the understanding of individual words is only the first step. Each word appears in a phrase, in a sentence, in a text, and it derives its precise meaning from the context. Understanding the overall meaning, therefore, requires the ability to “integrate lexical and contextual information” (Koda, 2004: 34). For example, the word “bank” has different meanings in these sentences:

She was walking along the bank of the river.

It's better to keep your money in the bank.

He may help you, but don't bank on it.

For readers to understand the precise meaning of the word “bank”, they have to understand the context. Without an understanding of the words “river” and “money”, comprehension of the first two sentences would be virtually impossible. Decoding or understanding a word, therefore, necessitates the understanding of many other words.

Understanding many words is not, however, a simple matter of gathering the meaning of many words. Stahl and Fairbanks (1986), in a meta-analysis of L1 vocabulary studies, show that vocabulary instruction which only provides definitions of new words has a “limited impact on overall comprehension improvement” (Koda, 2004: 49-50). What is needed is knowledge of the different forms and meanings of a word, its denotations and connotations, how it can be broken down into morphemes and what other words it collocates with. For this, the reader must be familiar with seeing that word in many different contexts.

The next stage, after understanding individual words in their context, is called “syntactic parsing”, which Grabe and Stoller (2002) describe as the extraction of grammatical information which “helps to disambiguate the meanings of words that have multiple meanings out of context” (2002: 22). Thus the meanings of words like “bank” and “book” vary when used as a noun or a verb. Another process which happens at the same time as syntactic parsing, called “semantic proposition formation” (2002: 23) involves combining word meanings and structural information

clause by clause so as to give the reader time to integrate information with what has gone before.

A recurring theme in accounts of the process of decoding is the importance of practice. Grabe and Stoller (2002: 21) say that both rapid processing and automaticity in word recognition requires “thousands of hours of practice in reading.” Koda (2004: 30) points out that poor decoders become increasingly frustrated with reading. “With sustained frustration, reading becomes anything but rewarding, further discouraging voluntary reading”. Reading will therefore continue to be a difficult task and the individual will continue to be a reluctant reader. For anybody to become a keen reader, they must be able to read efficiently, comprehendingly and with pleasure.

This section of the chapter discussed the difficulties involved in learning to read in a first language. The next section examines the additional difficulties encountered by a language student learning to read a second language.

2.2.2 Difficulties involved in learning to read a second language

Reading enjoyment can come only when the reading is reasonably fluent and effortless: achieving this is even more difficult for the second language learner. There are many difficulties to be overcome, related to the decoding of words, the development of phonological skills, syntactic parsing, knowledge of text structure, the development of automatic processing and use of metacognitive skills. Each of these is considered briefly below.

Reading starts with the decoding of words. In the Thai alphabet, letters represent sounds, but the alphabet is not the Roman alphabet. Thai learners of English therefore need to learn an entirely new alphabet, with its wealth of orthographic inconsistencies. English is considered an orthographically “opaque” language (Grabe & Stoller 2002: 50), that is, the letter-sound (grapheme-phoneme) relationships are not easy to predict. Letters, individually or in combination, may have different pronunciations.

The next step is to recognise the meaning of the word. For the L1 reader, this usually means recognising the word from existing oral vocabulary. For the L2 reader, though, the word cannot usually be “recognised” since it is probably not yet part of existing oral vocabulary. Most L2 learners start to learn to read around the time that they start to learn the language, whereas L1 learners have usually had three or four years of oral experience of the language. Koda (2004) concludes from research that phonological skills directly affect reading ability, that knowledge of letter patterns and their linkages to sounds “facilitates rapid automatic word recognition” (2004: 46). The importance of this is stressed by Nation and Angell (2006: 84): “Models of reading development and reading instruction need to be sensitive to this complex interplay between spoken and written language, and most critically, to emphasize that reading skills develop from a firm foundation of oral language proficiency”. The problem is compounded in teaching contexts like that in Thailand where most of the teachers of English in Thai schools are Thai nationals, with limited proficiency in English. English is taught through the medium of Thai, with a heavy emphasis on grammar rules and translation. Covey (2007) described the English teachers from village schools who come to the Language Centre of the Udon Thani Rajabhat University. Only about 10% of them studied English as their major. “These teachers don’t *speak* English, and therefore their students cannot *hear* English” (2007: 3).

The next level up from the decoding of words is syntactic parsing. There are many differences between the sentence structure of Thai and English. Also, in Thai, there are no inflections for number, gender or case, and pronoun subjects and objects can be omitted. Time is indicated not by different tense forms but by words added to signal past or future. In Thai, there is no distinction between adjective and adverb. Finally, there are no articles and few determiners in Thai. (Sources: Kolln, 1994; Quirk & Greenbaum, 1993; Raimes, 2001; Troyka, 1995.)

There are thus major differences in grammar and syntax between Thai and English. There are differences in text structure as well. Though some aspects are similar, there are enough important differences to present difficulties for the L2 reader. For example, in Thai, the writing is divided into paragraphs, and each paragraph contains one main topic, as in English. However, the internal structure is different, without the

topic sentence and supporting ideas found in the standard paragraph in academic writing in English.

Koda (2004: 97) makes an interesting observation about sentence length. She says that shorter sentences are not always easier to understand than longer sentences. She refers to two studies (Irwin & Pulver, 1984; Pearson, 1975) that verify that “native English readers, both children and adults, exhibit a strong preference for complex sentences conjoined with explicit connectives instead of loosely linked simple sentences” (Koda, 2004: 97). Easy, graded readers, designed to help L2 learners, and often used in EFL classes in Thailand, might therefore present unexpected comprehension difficulties.

According to Koda (2004), poor decoders, experiencing difficulty in extracting print information, become increasingly frustrated with reading. “With sustained frustration, reading becomes anything but rewarding, further discouraging voluntary reading” (2004: 30). Without adequate reading practice, learners’ word-recognition skills remain undeveloped, and comprehension does not develop.

The same needs to be said about syntactic parsing. Grabe and Stoller (2002: 23) point out that rapid and automatic processing at the level of syntax is necessary for the reader to benefit from information from grammatical structures. To develop automaticity in this, L2 students, in the same way as developing L1 students, need “countless hours of exposure to print (that they are capable of comprehending successfully).”

With the lower level processes, then, the L2 reader is at a serious disadvantage as compared to the L1 reader. With little or no lexical resources available, word decoding is a matter of learning new combinations of sounds, and new meanings. Being without the years of grammatical knowledge amassed by the L1 learner through daily communication, the L2 learner experiences the unfamiliar structures as a further hurdle to overcome on the way to an understanding of the text. The process of reading will continue to be laborious until the L2 learner has amassed enough word and grammar knowledge to acquire fluency and automaticity in word decoding and syntactic parsing. However, according to Koda (1996) and Lundberg (1999), “most

L2 readers are simply not exposed to enough L2 print (through reading) to build fluent processing” (Grabe & Stoller, 2002: 47). This would certainly be the case with my Thai students and also with the subjects of the present research.

In the higher level processes, the application of metacognitive awareness, L2 readers can benefit from their experience of reading in the L1. First, they can use their awareness of text structure and of discourse organization in their L1 to inform their reading of L2 text (Grabe & Stoller, 2002: 80). Text structure and cohesiveness are achieved through connective devices such as “then”, “but”, and “therefore”, and through pronouns, synonyms, ellipses and parallel expressions (2002: 80). Discourse organization refers to sequences within the text such as problem-solution and cause-effect, as well as the overall structure and signalling patterns of different text genres (Grabe & Stoller, 2002: 80). However, background knowledge of discourse organization in L1 texts can also impair comprehension. In a study of Thai university students by Bickner and Peyasantiwong (1988), the conclusion was that Thai students believe that an academic essay should explain the issue “by compiling and reporting all details”. A study by Indrasuta (1988) showed that while American students see the purpose of narrative as entertainment and information, Thai students see it as a vehicle for “exposition and instruction” (Koda, 2004: 170). This is what they might anticipate in their reading of English texts.

The role of the L1 and of transfer between the L1 and the L2 is not simple. At lower levels, L2 learner readers are aided by a large resource of known words in their L1 which can be connected to new words in English and knowledge of the grammar of the L1 can help in learning the L2 grammar. Similarly, at higher levels, students reading in an L2 can apply metalinguistic awareness learnt in the L1, using strategies such as predicting meanings and checking comprehension. Also, they can apply metacognitive awareness acquired in L1 reading, using their knowledge of text structure and genre to aid their understanding of the text. At these levels, though, false expectations can lead to confusion. Thus, transfer of cognitive skills from the L1 can have both positive and negative effects. Where the effects are negative, the L2 reader will be further hindered in their goal of becoming a fluent reader.

The transfer of attitudes to reading from L1 to L2, which is the focus of my research, is dealt with in section 2.3.2 below.

2.3 Motivation in language learning

In this section I look first at the issue of motivation in learning a language, then more specifically at motivation as related to learning to read.

2.3.1 Motivation in ESL

The distinction between motivation and attitude varies from one researcher to another. There is consensus that motivation and attitude are related, if not actually the same thing. Generally, though, attitudes are seen as affecting motivation: a positive attitude to learning a language usually leads to motivation to learn that language. This is stated specifically in the writings of Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972) and others in sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 below, but the relationship is implicit in the theories of many other researchers. Discussion of motivation in this section 2.3, therefore, is implicitly or explicitly related to the issue of attitude, which is the focus of research in the present study.

Motivation in ESL learning has been closely studied since before the middle of the last century. While earlier theories focussed on the personality of the learner, more recent studies have given attention to the learning environment.

Early on, in 1954, Maslow presented his initial formulation of the hierarchy of human needs. There are lower “deficiency needs” (physiological, safety, belonging and love, esteem) and “growth needs”, which culminate in the need for self-actualisation, which is to find self-fulfilment and to realize one’s potential. When “lower” needs are satisfied, then a person can act on the “higher” needs. Although related to general human behaviour, each of these levels comes into play in the learning situation, and can be seen in later theories of motivation and learning.

After the simple physiological needs of food and shelter, safety needs include “freedom from fear, anxiety and chaos” – fear of failure, anxiety about not understanding, not remembering, not succeeding (Maslow, 1987: 18, 19). Anything in the learning situation that produces an attitude of fear and anxiety, therefore, would reduce the motivation to learn. Belongingness and love needs come next. Like all people, the learner desires love, a place in the group, fearing “loneliness, ostracism, rejection, friendlessness...” (1987: 20). Students might want to learn, but fearing rejection by their peers, may consider language learning as a threat to their acceptance by their peers. Then there are the esteem needs. All people have a need for self-respect or self-esteem, and for the esteem of others (1987: 21). Teachers expect students to embark on new learning which involves making mistakes, appearing foolish, thus losing the respect of self and of others (1987: 21). Students learning a language are at risk of being in a situation where they lack mastery and competence, and where they may achieve nothing. So, rather than suffer further discouragement, and damage to self-image, the student will avoid the fight where he is the loser, will pretend rather to have no desire to learn. Finally, there is the need for self-actualisation, for “self-fulfilment” (1987: 22). Self-actualised people are able to strive for improvement and progress either because the lower needs have been satisfied, or by ignoring these needs and concentrating on the problem, not the self: they are “more problem centred than ego centred” (1987: 134). Such people could see language learning as a means to self-improvement.

Although Maslow’s ideas can be seen in a number of later theories of motivation, Dörnyei (2001b) considers that Maslow’s concept of *needs* has been replaced by that of *goals*, seen as the “engine” to “fire an action and provide the direction in which to act” (2001b: 25). Goals that are both specific and difficult lead to the highest performance. High commitment to goals is achieved when the individual is convinced that the goal is important and attainable (2001b: 26).

Another major notion in the field of motivational psychology is that of “expectancy value”. Weiner (1992) lists three concepts which derive from the notion of expectancy value. First is attribution theory, which posits that an individual’s conception of past failures and successes affect future goal expectancy. Second is learned helplessness, which refers to a resigned, helpless state where the individual feels unable to change

his lack of success, and so does not try. Third is self-efficacy, which develops as a result of past successes and which inclines the individual to expect more success in the future (Dörnyei, 1994: 276-277). Positive experiences such as successful or enjoyable language learning at school could therefore engender a positive attitude which would incline the language learner to expect further success or enjoyment. Negative experiences could produce a negative attitude to language learning and thus lead to demotivation, since they would incline the language learner to anticipate further failure or unenjoyable language learning in the future.

Theories on motivation include those that focus on the distinction between integrative and instrumental motivation. Early on, Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972) saw motivation as determined by attitudes to the target language, and the goals or orientations – integrative or instrumental - of the learner. In the context of French Canadians learning English, attitude to speakers of the target language was of major importance.

... the individual's attitudes towards the L2 and L2 community ... exert a directive influence on one's L2 learning behaviour, which makes intuitive sense (since people are unlikely to be successful in learning a language whose speakers they despise) and which is also in line with the traditional stance in social psychology ...that someone's attitude towards a target influences the overall pattern of that person's responses to the target. (Gardner, 1979: 47-48)

Gardner, in his Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (1985: 52-53), explored student attitudes such as attitudes to French people and the French language. Learners' attitudes to French and French people were important in determining the learners' level of integrative motivation, that is, the desire to learn a language in order to communicate with people of the other culture, and level of instrumental integration, which is the desire to learn a language because it will be useful for certain goals such as getting a job and passing an examination.

Dörnyei (2003) believes that such attitudes are important not only where the target language community is nearby and accessible, but anywhere where learners could feel a desire to identify with the target language (2003: 6). In a meta-analysis of studies conducted by Gardner and associates, it was noted that the availability of the language in the immediate environment had no clear moderating effect on these relationships

(Masgoret & Gardner, 2003: 203). Integrative motivation can thus be significant even when there is little chance of contact with the target language community. The desire to understand or get to know English speakers in one's own country or abroad, as well as the need to master English for the purposes of study or work, could thus be a strong motivation in learning a language.

Deci and Ryan (1985) developed the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation: intrinsic motivation is engaging in an activity because the activity is enjoyable and satisfying, while extrinsic motivation is for some instrumental end. According to the "self-determination theory" of Deci and Ryan, the various motivations can be placed on a continuum between self-determined (intrinsic) and controlled (extrinsic), depending on how internalized they are. In terms of this theory, extrinsic motivation such as an entrance examination or a reading test can become adopted and internalized, leading to intrinsic motivation (Dörnyei, 2001b: 28-29). The theory thus stressed the importance of the learner's autonomy: their choosing what to study, and how. This means that if students are to internalize the norms and standards transmitted through schooling, these will need to be presented in a way that facilitates the students' feelings of "relatedness, competence, and autonomy" (Vansteenkiste, Lens & Deci, 2006: 21). Language learners' attitudes to reading in any language could therefore be influenced by whether reading and reading tasks are presented in an autonomy-supportive fashion or not. Motivation to read could therefore be influenced by such factors as whether reading at home and school is presented as something pleasurable, an activity which the individual can do if they wish, or as something that must be done in order to pass examinations, and for which the reward will be a pass, not pleasure. Autonomy-supporting learning activities could produce a positive attitude to language learning, which could increase motivation to learn.

From the above studies of the cognitive and affective aspects of motivation, attention came to be given to sociocultural aspects, including both a consideration of the culture of the broader society in which the learner lives as well as the educational milieu of the classroom: the fellow students, the teacher, and the teaching method.

For the purposes of this study, the contrast between the influence individualism in western cultures and collectivism in oriental cultures might have on reading attitudes

is worthy of note. According to Triandis (1995), individualists focus on the achievement of personal goals for the purpose of “pleasure, autonomy, and self-realisation”. Collectivists focus on the achievement of group goals for the purpose of “group well-being, relationships, togetherness, the common good, and collective utility” (1995: 1).

This focus on group goals is seen in Thailand. “In Thailand, society constructs its reality as group or social interest rather than individual interests” (Thanasankit & Corbitt, 2000). The goals of the group take precedence over the goals of the individual. With school assignments, those with the “answers” are obligated to share them with others. This is the process of “information sharing”. A person who withholds information is not a “good person” because he or she is ignoring his or her obligations to the group. A person who is lazy can count on the group to “carry him through” because it is their obligation to do so (Covey, 2007: 10). Motivation to commit oneself to learning and improvement, must lose some of its power when classmates can help you with the answer. Another aspect of Thai culture which could discourage positive learning practice is the concept of “krenjai” (Holmes & Tantongtavy, 1995), which demands sensitivity to others, avoiding doing or saying anything that could hurt or embarrass other people. Thus, in the teaching context, Thai students may be unwilling to ask questions of the teacher for fear of challenging face – for the teacher might not know the answer, and would thus lose face – and causing offence (Adamson, 2005: 75-76). All of these would work against Thai learners of English having a positive attitude toward learning a language, and therefore being motivated to learn..

Three aspects of social and cultural values are highlighted by Chen and Stevenson (1995): the value placed on education, cultural beliefs about learning, and social support for academic pursuits from family and peers (Dörnyei, 2001b: 32). It is worth considering the possible role of Chinese culture in the motivation of Thai students. This is not only because one of the subjects in this study is a second-generation Chinese Thai, but also because of the strong presence and influence of the Chinese in Thailand – they comprise about 15% of the population, are found at all levels of Thai society and play a leading role in business and politics. In a study among English language learners in Taiwan, Chen, Warden and Chang (2005) describe the

importance in Taiwan of the family and clan. From the 14th to the 20th centuries, children were reminded to “work hard in school in order one day to honour the clan” (Leung, 1994: 390). Chen et al. claim that this emphasis has not diminished over time (Chen et al., 2005: 613). In their study, it was determined that integrative motivation played no significant role in students’ motivation, whereas the strongest was “required motivation” (Warden & Lin, 2000), that is, extrinsically motivated by a requirement to do well for the family and clan. Attitudes to academic learning as a way to bring honour to the family could thus affect motivation to learn a language.

On parental influences, Dörnyei refers to Eccles, Wigfield and Schiefele (1998), who identify four factors that shape student motivation: developmentally appropriate timing of achievement demands/pressure; high confidence in one’s children’s abilities; a supportive affective family climate; and highly motivated role models (Dörnyei, 2001b: 34).

In the learning environment, Dörnyei (2001b: 35-37) divides teachers’ motivational influence into four dimensions: first, the personal characteristics of teachers, such as motivation, warmth, commitment, empathy and competence; second, teacher immediacy, meaning the perceived closeness and accessibility of the teacher; third, active motivational socializing behaviour by which teachers can exert a direct influence through appropriate modelling, task presentations, and through a system of feedback and rewards; and fourth, classroom management, including setting and maintaining group norms and maintaining authority that is autonomy supporting rather than controlling. Still in the learning environment, group norms also play an important role. The student is part of a group, and group norms and demands cannot be ignored. According to McCaslin and Good (1996: 642), the “need for student ‘belongingness’ or ‘affiliation’ has been articulated by educators for some time”.

Recent research has focused on the temporal dimension of motivation. Dörnyei (2001b: 41) points out that motivation is not a constant state, but changes over time in response to changing outside influences, to fluctuations in the success achieved in the academic task and the learner’s inner moods and feelings. Dörnyei divides the motivational process into three: the preactional stage, which involves goal setting and initiation of action, the actional stage, which involves ongoing appraisal and action

control, and the postactional stage, which involves ongoing appraisal and action control (Dörnyei 2001b: 87 and 2003: 18-20). Motivating students to read should also involve helping them to develop their own “self-motivating strategies” (2003: 23). He quotes from his own 2001 paper (Dörnyei, 2001a) the four components of motivational teaching practice: creating the basic motivational conditions, generating initial motivation, maintaining and protecting motivation and encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation.

In summary, when examining motivation factors in the subjects’ language learning and reading behaviour, it must be remembered that motivation is multi-faceted, being determined by various factors and attitudes.

First, there are cognitive and affective factors within the individual. To be considered here is the subjects’ conception of their L2 reading ability, particularly in view of the differences between Thai and English. More importantly, though, it should be determined whether the motivation to read comes from within (intrinsic) or without (extrinsic), or somewhere in between. Also, the motivation can be integrative (usually but not always intrinsic) or instrumental (usually extrinsic). This integrative motivation is a consequence of a positive attitude to the target language and its speakers; the instrumental motivation is a positive opinion of the value of learning and knowing the target language.

Second, there are factors in the learner’s environment which give rise to the cognitive and particularly the affective factors. To be considered here are the home environment, parents and siblings; the school environment, teachers, learning experiences and class mates; the university environment, lecturers and studies; and the present, at work and in any recent English language studies. Were these places supportive of autonomy? Did they promote students’ enjoyment of reading? Did they motivate at different stages of the learning process? Did they produce positive attitudes to learning the language?

In each life situation, the subjects’ motivation needs to be considered from different perspectives. For example, at school, did the student have the chance to develop intrinsic motivation? Were goals presented by the teacher in an autonomy-supporting

or -controlling fashion? Was the teacher warm and accessible? Were extrinsic goals like examinations presented in a way to encourage internalized motivation, or was it in a way to stifle enjoyment and therefore eliminate the chance of intrinsic motivation? Did the student have a feeling of self-efficacy in their language ability and their ability to do the task? Did they see a good reason for the task? Did they have clear goals?

2.3.2 Reading motivation

Looking more specifically at motivation to read, I shall first highlight the importance of the role of attitude. Then, I shall discuss the cognitive and affective aspects of reading motivation, that is, the factors related to the individual learner. Then I shall look at studies that have explored the influence of home background and school experiences. There is a focus here on the kinds of class activities and the kinds of reading that are favourable to motivation. Finally, I shall discuss the barriers to motivation resulting from cultural differences between the L1 and L2 communities.

Reading attitude has been defined in various ways, for example, as “a system of feelings related to reading which causes the learner to approach or avoid a reading situation”. These “feelings about reading should influence how much individuals involve themselves in reading; thus, attitudes about reading should relate to individuals’ motivation for reading” (Alexander & Filler, 1976, cited in Wigfield, 1997: 62). Wigfield also says that “although attitudes toward reading are said to have motivational consequences, the work in this area by and large has not been connected to the dominant theories in the motivation literature” (1997: 62). Part of the reason for this difficulty of relating attitude and motivation, perhaps, is the complexity of the relationship between attitudes, motivations and action. For example, students may have a positive attitude to reading from seeing others enjoy reading, but because of low linguistic ability, poor teaching or inappropriate reading material, they cannot read well, and therefore do not enjoy reading, and are therefore not motivated to read more. Or, despite a positive attitude to reading, and the ability to read efficiently, students may not be motivated to read because of peer opinion which sees reading as

“sissy”, or because TV and computer games bring more instant gratification, or because playing sport gives a greater sense of satisfaction.

Students’ attitudes to L2 reading can be affected by experiences of L1 language learning and reading, but their attitudes to their L1 and L2 are not likely to be the same. They will have different motivations for reading in the two languages, based on varying academic goals, socialization practices from home and community, prior educational instruction and socio-political differences between the two cultures. These differences will lead to perceptions of how well they can read, which will in turn influence their self-esteem, emotional responses to reading, interest in reading and willingness to persist (Grabe & Stoller, 2002: 57). All of these have an effect on motivation to read. Yamashita (2004) conducted a study on the relationship between L1 and L2 reading attitudes, and the relationship between these attitudes and learners’ performance in L2 extensive reading. Participants in the study were 59 Japanese university students enrolled in the author’s two EFL extensive reading classes. The research focuses on the affective, not the cognitive domain, and supports the transfer of the affective (but not the cognitive) domain of reading attitudes from L1 to L2. The value that students attach to reading was the “most likely to be transferred and shared in both languages” (2004: 7). However, this attitude did not automatically translate into motivation to read more. Attaching a high value to reading does not always motivate students simply because they may find no pleasure in it (2004: 9).

Wigfield (1997), concentrating on the cognitive and affective aspects of reading motivation, focuses particularly on theories related to the students’ ability: self-efficacy theory and expectancy-value theory, and those related to students’ reasons for doing an activity: subjective task values, achievement goals, and intrinsic/extrinsic motivation. According to self-efficacy theory, when children believe they are “competent and efficacious at reading, they should be more likely to engage in reading” (1997: 60). Expectancy-value theory implies that students are motivated to read when they have the sense that they will do well on the task. Subjective task values are incentives for doing an activity, in this case reading, because it is interesting, important or useful (Eccles, Adler, Futterman, Goff, Kaczala, Meece & Midgley, 1983; Wigfield & Eccles, 1992). Achievement goal theory implies that children will read if it will achieve a goal, either of learning to read better or of

outperforming others (Ames, 1992; Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Intrinsically motivated readers read to learn something, or for the pleasure it brings. Thus, students wishing to learn to read better are intrinsically motivated; the motivation for those wishing to outperform others is extrinsic. Either way, the positive attitude towards the value of reading motivates the learner.

Wigfield (1997) makes an assessment of whether or not reading motivation is domain specific, that is, whether the motivation to read is different from motivation to do anything else. He concludes that “for some of the important motivation constructs, particularly competence and efficacy beliefs, there is strong evidence for domain specificity. For other constructs, particularly achievement goal orientations, most of the measures are general” (1997: 62). A student may be motivated to learn English, but not motivated to read because of a perceived lack of competence in reading, or because of a perception that reading will not be useful.

It is useful to remember here the notion of “learned helplessness”, originally formulated by Seligman (1975), which is one of the most important barriers to motivation. It is relevant to all aspects of language learning, including reading. The attribution of “a lack of success to a lack of ability” and seeing “that lack of ability as being beyond personal control” (Galloway, Rogers, Armstrong, Leo & Jackson, 1998: 99), will demotivate the learner reader. Attempts by teachers to help, in the form of offering special help, easy readers, a partner who can help, “are likely to be interpreted as confirmation of the pupil’s essential lack of competence” (1998: 99-100). This attitude of learners towards their own inability is a negative motivation to read.

Engaged readers, for Guthrie (2001: 2), are those who “are intrinsically motivated to read for knowledge and enjoyment”. Engaged readers “seek to understand; they enjoy learning and they believe in their reading abilities. They are mastery-oriented, intrinsically motivated, and have self-efficacy” (2001: 1). These ideas are very close to those of Wigfield (1997). The engaged reader is a motivated reader. The motivation is intrinsic, for the sake of personal enjoyment or for the pleasure in acquiring new knowledge. Motivated readers have a positive attitude to reading: they want to understand, so read with a questioning mind, questioning the text, questioning the

author. They have a positive attitude to their own ability to read and to understand. Nevertheless, they wish to improve their reading skill: they wish to master it, but being intrinsically motivated, they aim for mastery for personal satisfaction rather than for the sake of being better than others. Wigfield and Guthrie (Wigfield, 1997) found “strong and significant differences in the amount of reading across the high, middle, and low intrinsically motivated groups. Children higher in intrinsic motivation read much more than did children who were medium and low in intrinsic motivation. In contrast, the three groups of extrinsically motivated children did not differ as greatly in the amount of reading they did (Wigfield, 1997: 64).

Understanding literacy development, according to Sonnenschein, Brody and Munsterman (1996), calls for an examination of the relevant contexts and their interrelations (e.g. home, school and community), including the beliefs and values of the adults responsible for structuring the environments (Baker, Scher & Mackler, 1997: 70). Baker et al. (1997) offer a review of literature on home and family influences on motivations for reading. They note first that reading researchers often use the terms “attitude”, “interest” and “motivation” interchangeably. When they use attitude, it is in the social psychological sense, involving affective, cognitive, and behavioural dimensions (Athey, 1982; Matthewson, 1994; McKenna, 1994). Thus, “a child who has a positive attitude towards reading should like reading, should think that reading is a desirable activity, and should engage in reading voluntarily” (Baker et al., 1997: 69).

From this it can be seen that intrinsic motivation is very relevant when considering home influences. Csikszentmihalyi (1991) claims that children who know adults who read for pleasure take it for granted that reading is worthwhile, and thus have a positive attitude to it. McKenna (1994) states that when children experience pleasurable interactions with books, they realize the intrinsic enjoyment that can be derived from reading (Baker et al., 1997: 70). Baker, Serpell and Sonnenschein (1995) say that children whose home experiences promote the view that literacy is a source of entertainment are likely to become intrinsically motivated to read (1997: 70). Positive reading experiences at home produce a positive attitude towards reading which motivates children to read. Joint storybook reading is related to later interest in independent reading, according to Greaney and Hegarty (1987) and Neuman (1986).

According to the same two studies, parents' encouraging library use is a strong predictor of motivation to read (1997: 73). The importance of libraries that are stimulating and welcoming, and librarians who are friendly, informed and helpful, is thus clear. Learning, according to Vygotsky (1978), occurs in a social context as the child gradually acquires competence through interaction with more expert others (1997: 70).

A number of studies focus on the importance of activities around reading. Guthrie, McGough, Bennett and Rice (1996) point out that storybook reading "sets the stage" for the social interaction involving books that is characteristic of "engaged readers" in the school years (1996: 74). Snow (1994) asserts that storybook reading is "not so much an event in itself as it is a microenvironment in which relevant experiences occur." Reading itself is important, but also important are "the kinds of conversation reader and child have with one another during the reading session, the affective quality of those interactions, and the print-related discussions that ensue" (Baker et al., 1997: 74).

Baker, Scher and Mackler (1997) examined home literacy experiences in the Early Childhood Project. Children in middle-income homes were "more likely to use literacy as a source of entertainment than were children in low-income homes" (1997: 72). They recognize, though, that "a greater availability of materials" may have contributed to this income-group difference. They cite Neuman (1996), who argues that "differential access" may be a powerful contributor to "differential achievement" (1997: 72). Also, "parents of high-interest children were more likely to have a college or graduate degree and to have more books" (1997: 73). In other words, children read for entertainment not because their parents had a reasonably good income but because reading material was readily available in the home. Children are motivated to read for pleasure, then, when they see adults reading with enjoyment, when they have pleasurable encounters with books, and when books are readily available.

In another study, Monzó and Rueda (2001) investigated how family contexts of immigrant Latino children contribute to their developing an achievement orientation toward literacy and schooling. Minority children are often thought to lack motivation; however, findings indicate that a diverse set of sociocultural factors interact to affect

achievement orientations towards literacy and schooling, also that the importance of literacy was very clearly understood by children.

The writers point out that theories such as goal theory (Wigfield & Eccles, 1992) and self-worth theory (Covington, 1998) have proven less useful in explaining motivation in ethnically and linguistically diverse students, since they neglect the “cultural and historical forces that shape [individual] beliefs and goals” (Monzó & Rueda, 2001: 4). Motivation, they say, does not take place “in the mind of the individual; it is produced in social interaction. ... These interactions are further shaped by the context in which they take place and the sociocultural and historical nature of that context”. In the study, 21 children from five Latino families were observed in the classroom, and given the Student Motivation to Read Profile (Gambrell, Palmer, Codling & Mazzoni, 1996), which measures reading self-concept and value in reading. Teachers completed a Student Reading Motivation Questionnaire (Sweet, Guthrie & Ng, 1998). There were also teacher and parent focus groups, and interviews with the children’s “primary caretaker”.

Research found that parents had “overwhelmingly high educational aspirations for their children”, and placed a high value on formal schooling, consistently making “this value transparent to their children”. Factors in motivating children to read at home include: a) positive experience with school-based literacy activities, b) access to books at home, and c) knowledge of the availability of libraries. Factors obstructing reading include “real constraints” like stress in the family and economic problems. The usefulness of this study is that it demonstrates that motivation to read is independent of economic status and ethnicity, and is influenced in the same way as it is in more affluent families by parental support and availability of books.

Moving on to experiences at school and other educational institutions, classroom contexts are discussed in Guthrie and Alao (1997), who propose eight principles in designing class activities that would increase “long-term motivations for reading” (1997: 95). These include organizing instruction around interdisciplinary themes, planning activities where students react to concrete stimuli and express themselves through writing and discussion, providing a wide range of informational resources, and allowing students to assume responsibility for learning by helping them select

topics and texts. These principles are in line with criteria proposed by other authors. Among these are Lepper and Hodell (1989), who suggest that classrooms should avoid undermining intrinsic motivation with too many extrinsic incentives, and that intrinsic motivation should be enhanced by providing for challenge, curiosity, student control, and fantasy. The issue of student control is important, and has been discussed in section 2.1 above. Dörnyei (2001b: 37) discusses how the teacher can maintain control, but that this control should be autonomy supporting rather than controlling.

The importance of class activities around reading is demonstrated in a number of studies. Buzard, Jarosz, Lato and Zimmermann (2001) noted among their second to eighth grade classes “a reluctance to read that interfered with academic growth” (2001: 3). A survey revealed that this was largely because reading materials were seen as outside students’ skill and interest levels, and because students lacked the skills to read “rich and engaging” books. The authors note the importance of fluency in becoming a successful reader, and refer to paired reading as an authentic reading activity that promotes fluency (Rasinski, 2000). Reading and writing both promote fluency in reading. Keeping daily journals and writing about humorous experiences help create keen readers (Fuhler, Farris & Walther, 1999). A programme was devised that incorporated varied and relevant reading material, cooperative learning activities (pair and group reading, working together on text-based projects, sharing journals, etc.), reading instruction appropriate for different reading proficiency levels and active reading strategies (predicting and questioning, setting a purpose for reading, etc.). Post intervention data indicated an “increase in their motivation to read as well as in their reading skills”. Surveys indicated a more positive attitude to reading, and tests indicated an increase in the number of words read per minute and an increase in comprehension (Buzard et al., 2001: 66). In the study by Maxim (2002), the author concluded that the successful reading of an adult romance novel by beginner students was partly due to the students’ working together: “in-class group reading allowed the students to pool their knowledge and work with their classmates towards comprehension” (2001: 30).

Cullum (1998) used a think-aloud protocol to discover why her “accomplished fifth grader” was a reluctant reader. Her subject had the necessary word decoding ability, the strategies of predicting and questioning the text, and incorporating background

knowledge. One lack was that she never “question[ed] the authority of the text” (1998: 6), and this she did only when paired with her sister and allowed to talk about the meaning of what they were reading. Cullum suggests that emphasis should be placed on true interaction between readers at various grades and ability levels. Encouraging them to read, think about, and discuss texts with one another might help to enhance reading comprehension and “simply to promote genuine enjoyment” (1998: 11). This “genuine enjoyment” is, of course, what creates the positive attitude which in turn promotes motivation to read more.

Guthrie (2001: 3) notes that motivation for reading decreases as children go through school. This is, first, because children compare their own ability with that of others, and see themselves as inferior. Secondly, instructional practices like social comparison between children, too much competition and little attempt to spark children’s interest in different topics can lead to a decline in competence beliefs, mastery goals, and intrinsic motivation (2001: 3). Moving up in the school, children go from a responsive classroom where students’ opinions are heard to teacher-centred classrooms with few opportunities for self-expression, and a focus on extrinsic motivational goals, such as getting good marks. This changes mastery orientation to performance orientation, and reading becomes a task to complete, not an opportunity to understand or enjoy a text. Guthrie asserts that “classroom contexts can promote engaged reading” when teachers provide prominent knowledge goals, “real-world connections to reading”, meaningful choices about what to read, and interesting texts that are familiar, vivid and relevant. Teachers can further engagement by teaching reading strategies” (2001: 1). Strategies could include ways of finding information and main ideas. Also, Guthrie (2001: 6) suggests that there be “collaboration” between students: a “social discourse among students” that enables them to construct knowledge socially from text. This collaboration, according to Guthrie, promotes students’ intrinsic motivation and mastery goal orientation.

Jacobs and Gallo (2002) suggest that extensive silent reading would be more successful if combined with student-student cooperation. In their study, they allowed students to choose their own books (which could be a reader for the whole class, or for a group, or for a pair). They answered questions about the book first set by the teacher, then set by other students. Students created posters, murals and board games,

book marks and so on, or wrote book reviews, to advertise books they liked (2002: 4-5). The researchers found that students whose extensive reading was accompanied by peer interaction significantly outperformed students who had no interaction with fellow-students. They outperformed others “on gains in reading achievement” and showed “significant gains on the attitude variable”. Benefits of group interaction are that students can engender positive attitudes by “infect[ing] one another with enthusiasm for reading”, can suggest and be a source of good reading materials, can help less proficient students and can provide an audience for other students to share their thoughts and ideas (2002: 2-3).

The choice of reading material is, of course, crucial. Students who are not interested in the texts provided will not be motivated to read them. Students’ enjoyment in reading for its own sake is essential to engaged reading. Csikszentmihalyi (1991) describes engaged reading as a state of total absorption or “flow” (Guthrie, 2001: 2). Expressed differently, the engaged reader wants a “chance to be taken in unsuspected directions under the guidance of some singular sensibility” (Birkerts, 1994, 2006: 164). As with general language learning, students respond positively to autonomy. Having the freedom to choose motivates students to become engaged in their reading. Guthrie (2001: 8) suggests making available books and various other resources and giving students “some choice about the subtopics and texts for learning”. Henry (1995) notes that allowing students to choose their own texts is an important strategy for giving emerging readers a chance to build confidence and commitment by maximizing their interest and potential participation in the reading experience (Cullum, 1998: 11). It has been demonstrated by Hunt (1971) that when students have a strong interest in what they read, they can frequently transcend their usual reading level (Worthy, 1996). A study by Hill and Beers (1993), though, indicated that although the majority of teachers viewed themselves as avid readers who kept up with professional journals, few of them regularly read journals about book lists and reviews (1993: 1). Also, while teachers indicated that “fostering positive attitudes” and “sharing good literature” were their two most important objectives, they still spent 50% to 70% of their time teaching decoding, comprehension and vocabulary skills (1993: 6). Even keen, committed teachers, then, give insufficient attention to locating, making available and promoting the kinds of material that would interest and therefore motivate students.

In her article, Worthy (1996) gives lists of books and materials that would interest and support struggling readers, including books of poetry, speeches, cartoon collections, series and non-fiction. Also recommending comics or graphic novels, Snowball (2005) quotes Crawford (2004) who says that comics are an “invaluable tool for motivating reluctant readers” (Snowball, 2005: 43). She reports that Krashen (1993) has found ample evidence that reading comics does lead to more “serious” reading (2005: 44). Kyung-Sook Cho in the *International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching* (Cho, 2005) discusses the benefits of light reading. After a discussion of the *Sweet Valley Kids* series, and how its popularity among students at a community college in Los Angeles led to a more positive attitude to reading and the desire to read more in the series, Cho notes how important it is to capture the interest of students. She refers (Cho, 2005: 3) to studies that show that “a surprising percentage of children claim that there was one positive reading experience that got them interested in reading” (Kim & Krashen, 2000; Von Sprecken, Kim & Krashen, 2000). This could be the “home run book”, one very positive reading experience that can create a life-long interest in reading (Trelease, 2001).

Graded, simplified readers can appeal to weak readers because they are easy to read and understand, but they usually lack the colour and the power of the original since interesting detail and evocative vocabulary have been removed. Also, as has been mentioned above in 2.2.2, easy, graded readers, designed to help L2 learners, might present unexpected comprehension difficulties since simple sentences lack the explicit connectives of complex sentences (Koda, 2004: 97). Graded readers may thus fail to motivate readers because they are not emotionally involving and because of the language difficulty.

In contrast, a number of studies have shown that teenage or adult novels, not written specifically for L2 learners, can be enjoyed by language learners, and can motivate them to read more. The success of the *Sweet Valley Kids* series among school students has already been mentioned. Yang (2001: 451) speaks of “important motivational benefits” of a programme in Hong Kong where adult learners studying English read mystery novels. Most students agreed that it was a “positive experience”, and that confidence in their abilities had increased (2001: 458). Students in the US read a 142-

page romance novel in German in their first semester of German (Maxim, 2002: 20). It was found that spending time reading fiction did not have an adverse effect on the standardized examinations. The advantage of extended text is that “recurring situations, characters, behaviour, and words seemed to aid readers’ comprehension” (2002: 30). Students can derive meaning “by making connections between segments, episodes, and events in the text.” A longer text provides its own background, supplying students with the information that can help to override limited L2 proficiency (2002: 21). The same could obviously be said of any teenage or adult novel, particularly a series such as the *Sweet Valley High* books (Cho, 2005). Extended text is also more likely to produce affective involvement in the reader as characters become familiar and the storyline introduces moments of suspense. Successful comprehension and affective involvement motivate students to read more.

Ways of reading also affect motivation. Reading can be done as part of a class, or in groups, or alone. Reading as part of a class or in groups has been discussed above in relation to reading-related class activities. Reading alone or in groups can be done silently, and in schools this is usually part of a programme of extended or extensive reading. Sustained reading can engage students in their reading, and this engagement leads to motivation to read more. The effects of large amounts of reading have been discussed above, where it was stated that the improving of attitudes to reading is common. In the book flood programmes surveyed by Elley (1991), for example, children developed positive attitudes to books. Yang (2007) conducted a study in Hong Kong, where students participating in an SSR (sustained silent reading) programme reported that it allowed them to “cultivate a reading habit”; teachers and students agreed that reading “promotes language proficiency” (2007: 10). Chow and Chou (2000) cite a number of studies that confirmed the positive effect of SSR on attitudes to reading. One is a study by Pilgreen and Krashen (1993), in which students reported that they engaged in outside reading more than before the programme, and liked leisure reading better.

Finally, cultural differences between the L1 and L2 communities can affect motivation. As discussed above in section 2.1, the value placed on education, cultural beliefs about learning, and social support for academic pursuits from family and peers varies from culture to culture (Dörnyei, 2001b: 32). Triandis (1995: 1) notes the

contrast between individualism and collectivism in western and oriental cultures respectively: individualists focus on the achievement of “personal goals, by themselves, for the purpose of pleasure, autonomy, and self-realisation”. In contrast, collectivists focus on the achievement of “group goals, by the group, for the purpose of group well-being, relationships, togetherness, the common good, and collective utility” (1995: 1). On one hand, the incentive of reading so as to learn so as to give glory to the group, or clan could be a strong motivation. The study by Warden and Lin (2000) showed that “required motivation” was the strongest motivation for Taiwanese students to read, an extrinsically motivated requirement to do well for the family and clan. On the other hand, collectivism could also be a disincentive. This is seen in Thailand in the process of ‘information sharing’. (Covey, 2007: 10), where “those with the ‘answers’ are obligated to share them with others. Motivation to commit oneself to the arduous task of learning to read must lose some of its power when classmates can help you. The other aspect of Thai culture which could discourage a student in their attempts at reading is the concept of “krengjai” (Holmes & Tantongtavy, 1995), which demands not doing or saying anything that could embarrass other people. Thus, Thai students may be unwilling to ask the teacher for an explanation of a word, or for the meaning of the writer, in case the teacher might not know the answer, and thus lose face (Adamson, 2005: 75-76).

Another aspect of Chinese culture that can be a positive influence on motivation among Thai students (either through family links or friends) is the enormous regard among Chinese people for the written word. According to Atlas (1988), the Chinese believe strongly in the power of good writing to shape logic and morality, and to promote social progress. Wang (2001), in a survey of attitudes among Chinese students in China, notes that “erudition is one of the important goals the Chinese students pursue in their studies” (2001: 23). The positive attitude in the form of an incentive to read for the betterment of one’s own logical powers and morality, to achieve erudition, and for the good of one’s society is a strong motivation.

Although they are not the focus of this research, the electronic media should at least be mentioned. Certainly, they compete with traditional written media in the lives of our students. Since “adolescents are spending more time reading Web-based texts and less time reading traditional print-based texts” (Doherty & Orlofsky, 2001, online

document, cited by Spires & Cuper, 2002: 2), this has to mean that the motivation to read the electronic media can be stronger than the motivation to read books. In a review of *Adolescents and Literacies in a Digital World* by Donna Alvermann, Cammack (2003) says that the book makes the point that our own practices and definitions of technology and literacy may be obsolete from the point of view of our students. “Digital culture locates adolescents in new ways – ways that necessarily challenge earlier views on what counts as literacy, for whom, and when” (2003: 2). Whereas now it is comfortably asserted that students who do not read books are not readers, in the near future this assertion might ring hollow in the light of the power and influence of the electronic media. For now, though, enough of the world’s learning is contained in books and best accessed through books for us to claim that students who do not read books are not readers.

Despite evidence from research about gender differences (such as Duckworth and Seligman, 2006), gender differences have not been considered in this study largely because of the limited number of subjects. The third subject’s revelation of how, in high school, boys did not read books, but got the necessary information from the girls in the class, was startling. The revelation was not explored further, but it clearly demonstrated how methods of studying books in some Thai high schools do not encourage reading for pleasure.

The checklist at the end of the previous section is now repeated, but related specifically to reading. When examining motivation factors in the subjects’ reading behaviour, it is important to remember that motivation is multi-faceted, being determined by various factors and attitudes.

First, there are factors within the individual, cognitive and affective. To be considered here is reading ability, particularly in view of the differences between Thai and English. More importantly, though, the study considers whether the motivation to read comes from within (intrinsic) or without (extrinsic), or somewhere in between. Also, the motivation can be integrative (usually but not always intrinsic) or instrumental (usually extrinsic). This integrative motivation is a consequence of a positive attitude to the target language and its speakers; the instrumental motivation is a positive opinion of the value of learning and knowing the target language. Of major

importance here are the self-determination theories, but also important are self-efficacy theories, expectancy-value theories and goal theories. The relevance of Maslow's needs theory is also considered.

Second, there are factors in the learner's environment which give rise to the cognitive and particularly the affective factors. To be considered here are the home environment, parents and siblings; the school environment, teachers, learning experiences and classmates; the university environment, lecturers and studies; and the present, at work and in any recent English language studies. Were these places supportive of autonomy? Did they promote students' enjoyment of reading, and thus encourage positive attitudes to the activity? Did they motivate at different stages of the learning process?

In each life situation, the subjects' motivation needs to be considered from different perspectives. For example, at school, did the student have the chance to develop the positive attitudes that lead to intrinsic motivation in reading? Were goals presented by the teacher in an autonomy-supporting or -controlling fashion? Was the teacher warm and accessible? Were extrinsic goals like examinations presented in a way to encourage internalized motivation, or was it in a way to stifle enjoyment in reading and therefore eliminate the chance of intrinsic motivation? Did the student have a feeling of self-efficacy in their reading ability? Did they see a good reason for the reading? Did they have clear goals?

This chapter discussed the difficulties encountered by language learners in the process of learning to read. The next chapter examines the method employed in the study.

3 Research method

This chapter discusses the method employed in the study. The first section comprises the approach. This is followed by a short profile of the subjects, followed by a description of the materials and of the procedure followed. Finally, there is an account of how data was analysed.

3.1 Research type

This research is a case study and it makes use of ethnographic research methods.

Qualitative research, according to Nunan (1992: 4), is concerned with “understanding human behaviour from the actor’s own frame of reference”. In this study, the subjects were asked to give their ideas, relate their experiences and describe their feelings. Qualitative research is also “grounded, discovery-oriented, exploratory, expansionist, descriptive, and inductive” (1992: 4). “Grounded theory” is the practice of “deriving theory from data rather than the other way round” (1992: 57), and this study aimed at reaching a theory by first exploring the experiences and feelings of the subjects. The goal was to discover factors in the subjects’ lives that would explain their reading habits. Starting with the questionnaire, and moving through questions and answers through e-mail and finally an interview, the aim was to explore, and to encourage the subjects to explore, their feelings and motivation. This research is also descriptive. According to Seliger and Shohamy (1989: 117), in descriptive research the researchers “begin with general questions in mind about the phenomenon they are studying or with more specific questions and with a special focus”. Further on (1989: 120) they state that “the ultimate goal of qualitative research is to discover phenomena such as patterns of second language behaviour not previously described and to understand these phenomena from the perspective of participants in the activity”.

The particular qualities and advantages of qualitative research have been discussed by Burns (1997). He points out that the task of the qualitative researcher is to “capture

what people say and do as a product of how they interpret the complexity of their world, to understand events from the viewpoints of the participants” (1997: 12). Qualitative research has shown the need to pay attention to “the multiple realities and socially constructed meanings that exist within every social context”. In contrast, quantitative research has involved a “fragmentation or compartmentalized style of evaluation which ... leads to distortions of reality” (1997: 12). Qualitative research “can reveal subtleties and complexities that could go undetected through the use of more standardized measures” (1997: 14). An advantage of qualitative descriptions is that their “descriptive, narrative style” might be of benefit to the practitioner, the ordinary teacher who lacks a knowledge of “sophisticated measurement techniques” (1997: 14). Qualitative research is thus relevant to this study first, because the aim of the study is to understand the subjects’ reading habits from their own point of view and second, because the reporting style is easily accessible to the ordinary teacher.

Finally, this research is a case study using ethnographic study methods. Nunan (1992: 55) states that ethnography involves the “study of the culture/characteristics of a group in a real-world rather than laboratory setting”. Ethnography involves “interpretation, analysis, and explanation – not just description” (1992: 57). Nunan quotes Watson-Gegeo and Ulichny (1988) in describing ethnographic research. “Explanation takes the form of ‘grounded’ theory”. This “grounded theory” is theory that is based in and derived from data, and arrived at through a systematic process of induction (Watson-Gegeo & Ulichny, 1998: 76). It also involves “holism” and “thick” explanation: Holistic research takes into account both the behaviour of the individuals and/groups under investigation and the “context in which the behaviour occurs”, which has a major influence on the behaviour (Nunan, 1992: 57). “Thick” explanation refers to a taking into account of all the factors which may affect the phenomenon being studied (1992: 58). Thick explanation is appropriate for this study since the study aims to explore and describe all possible influences on the subjects’ reading habits.

3.1.1 Hypotheses

According to Nunan (1992: 13), deductive research “begins with a hypothesis or theory and then searches for evidence either to support or refute that hypothesis or theory”. This research started with the hypothesis that positive experience of reading in Thai or English would make Thai students regular, independent readers. An exploration of the subjects’ habits, experiences and attitudes should either support or refute that theory. Seliger and Shohamy (1989: 124) describe qualitative research as “hypothesis-generating”. By considering the data, “possible patterns ... can be inferred *inductively* from the data” and questions and thus hypotheses “are suggested by these recurring patterns”. I had ideas about what makes students reluctant readers or non-readers, but I wanted to find out whether there are other motivating factors, and whether there are common factors or combinations of factors.

General hypothesis: Thai students who have had positive experiences of reading in Thai or English will become independent readers of English, reading for pleasure or for self-improvement.

Related sub-hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1a: Students who come from homes where reading for pleasure (in Thai, English or any other language) is encouraged will become independent readers of English.

Hypothesis 1b: Students who attended schools where reading for pleasure in any language was encouraged will become independent readers of English.

Hypothesis 1c: Students who attended universities where lecturers encouraged reading (which at university level would be in Thai and English) by stimulating interest in a subject will become independent readers of English.

Hypothesis 1d: Students whose siblings or friends read for pleasure will become independent readers of English.

3.2 Subjects

The three subjects were all students at the Language School IDP in Bangkok in 2006. All three subjects are of Thai nationality, and are native speakers of Thai. One of them (subject 2) is Thai Chinese, having Chinese grandparents, but with both parents born in Thailand. Two of them are professionals, planning to study for a master's degree abroad in 2008, and one is still a student, currently studying for her master's degree in London. They all did a 120-hour IELTS preparation course, have written the test and received their results.

A brief profile of each:

Subject 1 is a Thai female of 24 years, and single. She is a student. At school she studied science. She has an LLB in Civil and Criminal Law from Chulalongkorn University, 2005. She started her MSc in Criminal Justice Policy at the London School of Economics on 1 October 2007. Her IELTS test score (in October 2006) was: Overall 6.5 with Reading 7; Listening 6; Writing 6; Speaking 6.

Subject 2 is a Thai female of 24 years, and single. At school she studied science. She is working as an account executive at Fif Design Co., Ltd. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Industrial Design, majoring in Packaging Design. Her IELTS test score (in April 2007) was Overall 7.5 with Reading 7.5; Listening 7.5; Writing 7; Speaking 8.

Subject 3 is a Thai male of 30 years, and single. At school he studied Maths and Science. He is working as a quality design engineer at Michelin Co., Ltd., assuring the quality of measurement systems. He has a Master's Degree in Mechanical Engineering, majoring in Energy. His latest IELTS test score was Overall 6.5 with Reading 7; Listening 6.5; Writing 6; Speaking 6.

3.3 Instruments

The questionnaire, see appendix C, consists of four sections. The first section requires the subjects' biographical details, including the result of their IELTS test or tests. The second section asks for the subjects' reading habits: there is a table to fill in, giving details of how often and for how long they read different texts, and then 10 questions requiring more information about the different genres of reading. The third section consists of 82 Likert-scale questions (from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*), exploring students' reading habits, reading experience and experiences, and attitudes to reading. The fourth and final section contains 22 questions about the subjects' reading habits and experiences, but asking for more details than in the third section.

The subjects were also required to respond to questions which were e-mailed to them, in response to their questionnaire replies. Lastly, the final interview with the subjects was recorded.

Questionnaires are useful in collecting data on phenomena "which are not easily observed, such as attitudes, motivation, and self-concepts" (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989: 172). Since there are questions on personal experiences and responses, it is good for the questionnaire to start with biographical details, which are factual and non-threatening. Burns (1997) notes that demographic questions "do not usually offend and lead the respondent well into the questionnaire, thereby making it more difficult to withdraw" (1997: 475). Equally factual is the second section, asking for details of what is read, how often and for how long. These questions should, however, stimulate the mind and memory of the subjects. Burns (1997: 475) calls these "warm-up questions".

The third section, the Likert-scale questions on attitudes to reading and experiences related to reading, aims at eliciting a personal response. It is not possible to make statistically meaningful calculations with such a small number of subjects. However, responses to the Likert-type questions indicate feelings on various topics which can

illuminate the reasons behind the subjects' reading habits and attitudes. As pointed out by Dörnyei (2001b), although originally developed to measure attitudes, the Likert scale is also useful in measuring interests and values (2001b: 200).

As noted by Burns (1997: 461), one advantage of the Likert method is that it is "based entirely on empirical data regarding subjects' responses rather than subjective opinions of judges". Challenged to assess how far they agree or disagree with a statement, subjects' feelings about reading and their memories of reading experiences should be stimulated. One disadvantage of the Likert method mentioned by Burns is that the total score has little clear meaning, since "many patterns of response to the various items may produce the same score" (1997: 462). In my research, though, I am not interested in a total score, but in individual attitudes and practices, and categories like childhood/teenage/adult experiences, or family/school/university experiences, or positive/negative/neutral experiences.

These individual attitudes and practices may not be statistically significant, but could be usefully extrapolated in order to study and understand other students in similar situations. Yin (1984) believes that the issue of validity is as important for case study research as it is in other more quantitative types, and that the case study researcher needs to "establish the domain or population to which a study's findings can be generalized" (Nunan, 1992: 80). Yin claims that the case study can have as much external validity as "survey research". He refutes the allegation that case studies lack external validity since they are not suitable for statistical generalization, saying that they rely instead on an equally valid "analytical generalization" (Yin, 1984: 39).

The fourth section does the same as the third section, though probing for more detail. There are more open-ended questions, providing the opportunity for longer and more thoughtful answers. Wallace (1998) notes that open questions are useful where you have "difficulty in anticipating the range of responses", and that they can yield "unexpected (and therefore, perhaps, more interesting) data" (1998: 135). The purpose of the e-mail follow-up was to ask subjects to elaborate on or ponder further over interesting experiences or attitudes.

The idea of the interview was to explore further answers given by e-mail, and also to investigate issues that might have arisen in comparing the responses of the different subjects. The interview was partly structured, in the sense that there was an “interview schedule” (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989: 167) to give direction to the interview. The aim, though, was to make the interview largely unstructured or open-ended. Burns (1997: 330) remarks that such an interview style permits “greater flexibility than the close-ended type and permits a more valid response from the informant’s perception of reality”. Also, it facilitates access to events that cannot be observed directly, as with happenings in the past (1997: 332). Seliger and Shohamy (1989) remark that the interviewer can “probe for information and obtain data that often have not been foreseen” (1989: 166). By allowing the respondent maximum freedom of expression, “ample and often unexpected information emerges” (1989: 167). Techniques for an unstructured interview include *parroting* – repeating the last few words of the subject, and the use of *minimal encouragers* like “I see” and “Go on”. Questions asked are descriptive, asking subjects to describe “experiences, places, people and events” (Burns, 1997: 332-333).

The final interview (see Appendix E for the questions) was conducted with the two subjects together. One advantage of doing this was that one subject’s experience stimulated the memory of the other subject, who then recalled events and experiences that the questionnaire and e-mailing had not elicited. Arksey (1996) refers to Seymour, Dix and Eardley (1995) in saying that joint interviewing “produces more complete data as interviewees fill in each other’s gaps and memory lapses” (Arksey, 1996: 3). The other advantage is that the subject with stronger communication skills was able to aid the weaker in expressing himself in the foreign language, English.

3.4 Procedures

Ethnographic research involves a study of the culture and characteristics of a group in a real-world setting (Nunan, 1992: 55), and its object is to produce a ‘thick’ explanation or description of the situation that takes into account all factors which may have an effect on the phenomenon being investigated (1992: 58). Since I decided

to carry out the research after the end of the 120-hour course that the subjects attended, largely to avoid being criticized for doing research during class time, observation did not play much of a role in my study. However, the questionnaire, further questioning and the final face to face interview achieved a detailed picture of the subjects' reading habits and attitudes.

A case study, according to Brown and Rodgers (2002: 21), comprises an "intensive study of the background, current status, and environmental interactions" of a social unit. This social unit could be an individual, a group, or a community. I explored the subjects' home and educational backgrounds, their present reading habits and the relationship between the two.

The questionnaire was administered, sent by e-mail and received back by e-mail. The subjects' responses were summarised, and unclear replies were noted. Second, the questionnaire responses were read and, via e-mail again, the subjects were asked further questions related to their replies, first to clarify issues from the questionnaire, and then to probe further, getting them to elaborate on experiences and attitudes. Third, an interview was arranged with the two of the three subjects who were still in Thailand. This was to get respondents to elaborate on issues covered in the questionnaire and e-mailing, and also to determine whether thinking about their attitudes and experiences regarding reading had in any way altered their motivation to read. The interview was recorded.

3.5 Data analysis

The data collected for analysis consisted of:

- The questionnaire responses
- Our e-mail correspondence
- The tape recording of the interview

Because of the relatively small size of the group, I did not analyse the subjects' answers to produce statistics. The aim was first to produce a profile of each subject,

exploring the full range of their reading experiences in order to ascertain the reason for their being readers, reluctant readers, or non-readers. Second, connections were made, pointing out similarities and differences between the subjects' profiles. The results would not be numerical, though I expected that I might note, for example, that two people had the experience in school of being humiliated by a teacher's response to their reading, or that three would say they would read if they had more free time. Noting that this is three out of eight or 37.5% of the population would not be significant with so few subjects.

I created categories such as childhood/teenage/adult experiences, family/school/university experiences, and positive/negative/neutral experiences. This helped ensure that I covered all possible issues affecting the subjects' present reading habits and attitudes, and also helped the subjects focus on the different areas of their lives where significant reading-related events may have occurred.

4 Findings

This chapter presents the findings of the research. First a summary of the responses given by each subject is provided, then a summary of results. Finally, there is a discussion of the findings, followed by a conclusion.

4.1 Profiles

Subject 1: Reading habits and attitudes

Reading habits: The first subject (24-year-old Thai female) does not read English or Thai fiction, but often reads study-related material in Thai and English. She often buys study-related books in English.

She reads Thai magazines about movie stars and fashion on average for thirty minutes per week, English fashion magazines for about half that time. She feels strongly that magazines are more interesting than books. She reads English newspapers for a total of about two hours a week, for news about political and social events, and Thai newspapers slightly less than two hours, mainly for entertainment and information about movies. She has never read comic books because she finds them “hard to understand”, preferring to watch cartoons on TV.

Now studying in London, she says that her reading habits have changed “in many important ways”. First, in terms of the amount, she needs to read at least six hours a day, which includes reading from course reading lists in preparation for lectures and seminars. In contrast, at home in Thailand she would only read books and review material at weekends, or for a month before an examination. Second, in terms of what she reads, she now reads academic material almost exclusively. She “rarely” reads a magazine or newspaper, but keeps up with the news through the BBC on the Internet. Third, in terms of venue, she now often studies in the library; in Thailand, she most often studied in Starbucks, but in the UK that is too expensive.

Attitudes: She does not find reading and understanding English difficult, though often she finds she does not read fast enough. Vocabulary only sometimes presents a problem of comprehension. To understand what she reads, she now uses the technique of guessing the meaning from context, and then checking the meaning in a dictionary later. She feels that she does not read English fiction regularly because she does not derive “any great fun” from it.

Reasons for reading: Her main reasons for reading English are that it helps her in her job and in her life in general. Also, she very much wants to understand English speakers and culture, and thinks it is useful for staying or travelling abroad. Finally, she hopes by reading to improve her English. She does not feel that the desire to please parents or teachers played a significant role in making her read at any time.

Parents, siblings, home, friends

Her parents sometimes read books of fiction. Sometimes they used to read poetry and fiction to their children. They sometimes bought books for them, mostly study-related. They seldom took them to a library or bookshop. They gave moderate encouragement to their children to read, allowing their children to decide on their own reading, but there were not many books available at home. She would read at home, mostly academic books set for reading by school teachers. Her siblings sometimes read. Many of her friends read fiction in Thai, but comic books are more popular. She mentions just one friend who reads Harry Potter books in English, and she believes that this helps her friend expand her vocabulary. One of her friends at university is Chinese, and has a very serious attitude to work. She read a number of the core books before the English course started. “However, I do not think that her attitude toward the study has influenced mine. For me, I think every person has his or her own style of study in order to be successful.”

School and university

School: She never noticed whether her school teachers were regular or keen readers. Teachers gave the students freedom in choosing books, and study-related discussion was frequent with classmates and with the teacher. The teacher would ask the students

to prepare the reading before the class. They would be divided into groups to discuss the main idea of the books, the responses of the students to these ideas, and to distinguish between factual information and the author's opinion. They were also asked whether they agreed with the author or not. Finally, though, "the teacher summarized the whole reading and lastly checked the answers of the question paper." There was time for silent reading of English and Thai books at school, which she enjoyed. She was taught techniques for reading: skimming, scanning and guessing the meaning of words from context. The library at school was a welcoming place. One interesting book that she remembers in the school library was an illustrated English dictionary "with a lot of pictures". She enjoyed reading books on general topics, but not fiction. She was generally happy at school.

University: At university, one lecturer in particular used to emphasise the importance of reading for a person's future career, saying that reading would bring more knowledge which could be applied to various tasks and put into practice. There was frequent discussion of material read, and her interest was often stimulated to read further. She enjoyed reading study-related material most.

Language school: After university, at her language school, she felt that the teachers showed a fair amount of enthusiasm for reading.

Television and the Internet

She feels strongly that TV is more informative than written sources, and she would definitely feel bored if she had no TV. She does not feel that the Internet is more interesting, or more useful, than books. Nevertheless, she is happy when on the Internet, and enjoys using it for news about politics (in English) and about entertainment (in Thai).

Subject 2: Reading habits and attitudes

Reading habits: The second subject (24-year-old Thai female) does not regularly read English fiction or Thai fiction, or Thai non-fiction. When she was younger, she read a number of Roald Dahl books in Thai translation. She found them more interesting

“early on in the book” than the Harry Potter books, which “take too long to get interesting”. She has tried reading them in English, but finds them “a little hard to understand, some vocab is really difficult, I couldn’t get the whole picture of the story”. All her siblings, though, have read all seven of the Harry Potter books in English! She spends about thirty minutes a week reading English books she has bought about marketing, management and design. She also reads books “related to Dhamma but it’s more like telling a story of a person’s life, what he’s been through and what he’s doing and what he will get as a result of his actions and so on”. She doesn’t take a book with her on holiday, but because she doesn’t like to carry lots of things! She borrows other people’s books.

She usually finds magazines more interesting than books, and feels strongly that reading them is not a waste of time. She reads magazines about fashion and decorating in English and Thai, about current events in English and about entertainment in Thai. Most of the magazines are in Thai, on which she spends about 45 minutes a week, more than double the time she spends reading magazines in English. She spends about fifteen minutes a week reading English newspapers, and about seventy minutes a week on Thai newspapers, which she reads every day.

She sometimes reads Japanese and English comic books for fun and to relax. When she was younger, she read documentary comics for children, which she feels are quite different. These documentary comics were independently chosen, available in the school library, read during breaks and borrowed from the library to take home. In the interview, she said, “My parents didn’t allow [their] children to read comics ... not Japanese cartoons, but [they] would let us buy American cartoons; maybe the perception of Japanese cartoons mostly related to sexual [things], about sexuality”.

Attitudes: She does not find reading English particularly difficult, but understanding the meaning of words is sometimes a problem. The method she uses now for understanding what she reads is to skip the words she does not understand and try to get the main idea of the sentence or the story. If there is a word that she really wants to know, she consults the dictionary “right away”. She sometimes notes the word in her vocabulary book, but she “rarely” studies this book.

She feels that she does not read English fiction regularly simply because it is easier to understand Thai than English. If there is a choice between Thai and English, she always chooses the Thai book unless the only version available is in English. In the interview, she made observations about reading non-fiction in Thai translation. She prefers reading non-fiction in the original English because in the Thai version they “translate word for word and you cannot understand the tone of the writer.” Non-fiction books in Thai translation can be “super-boring, especially business books”. The Thai is hard to understand because the language used is very formal, whereas the original English version uses “spoken language that is easier to understand.” If the text is not “too difficult”, she prefers reading it in English.

In recent years, she has not read much. This is partly because of lack of free time, partly because she spends a lot of time at work, and when not working, wants to relax, get some exercise and “not use my eyes”.

Reasons for reading: Her strongest motives for reading are that it helps her in her job and in her life in general, and because she very much wants to understand English speakers and English culture, including films and music. She also feels that it is useful for study or travelling abroad. Reading, she believes, teaches us about life and about people. Finally, she has a strong desire to improve her English. She definitely does not feel that the desire to please parents or teachers played a significant role at any time in making her read.

Parents, siblings, home, friends

Her parents read newspapers, the National Geographic and journals every day. They never used to read to their children, though. Her parents sometimes took her to a library or bookshop. They encouraged her strongly to read, and there were many books available at home. They often bought documentary comics for their children, and she enjoyed reading these. In her responses to the questionnaire, she said that there was no influence on her reading habits from Chinese relatives or friends. The picture she gave in the final interview was very different. “My ancestors were Taiwanese, I believe that’s the same as Chinese”. She noted that she and her family always identify their family as from Taiwan, not China. “My parents were quite

modern compared to the first generation Chinese coming to Thailand, both well educated, master's degrees. They did not force their children to read, they encouraged them to read, not forced. They recommended which book was good, interesting, let you decide what you want to read, if not, OK." She referred to the library ship which comes once a year to the port of Bangkok. It is possible to buy books, "mostly children's books, cartoons, fiction for kids." She observed that this "actually made me interested in reading, taken there when I was little; I started to read more and more, first comics, then with less illustrations, then just text. Mostly English, but easy, made for children to read." Pressed to say whether her parents were a big influence in shaping her reading habits, she said, "No, they say education is important, not reading is important. They let us be what we want to be, but encourage us to read." Despite this, she remembers how her mother always used to stress the importance of time, of not wasting time. She would tell her children always to carry a book or newspaper around with them so they could "get something out of it". However, she noted, "when somebody forces you, you don't want to do it. I was not trying to be a bad daughter, but often I took a book but didn't read it."

Later, her friends at school liked going to the library during breaks, and that encouraged her to "find something to read". Still later, she would choose books on design and other non-fiction, and her father would pay for these. Her three siblings often read English fiction, ranging from the Harry Potter books to "The Da Vinci Code". Some of her friends read fiction, or work-related books and books about design in Thai and English, but comics are much more popular.

When asked if there was anyone in her life she associated with books and reading, she talked about her younger cousins. They are "smart students" at school, "but read lots of fiction, not textbooks". Her friends who are top students she normally sees reading text books, but the cousins are different. They spend a great deal of time reading cartoons, magazines and fiction books, but they still get high scores at school. "At book fairs, they buy boxes of books that they cannot carry themselves, and finish them in a week." Her opinion of them is that they are "smart". They do not read all the time; they also play sport and can do Thai dancing. They are "not bookworms, just normal people who are smart and read a lot."

School and university

School: Some of her school teachers were readers, probably of non-fiction. Students were given a fair amount of autonomy in choosing books, and discussion of prescribed fiction was frequent. There were times for silent reading, but usually not in the sense of free, extensive reading. Rather, students would be set a passage to read, and then be tested on the meaning. “We’d have to get something out of it, some information, so I’d get nervous and not get much out of it.” There were occasionally times when they could silently read in class one of the “extra books” they had to read. They were assigned a certain number of pages, and they would read without the teacher asking questions. She was in a private Catholic school, and all the books for extra reading in Junior High were in English.

Reading techniques such as how to derive the main idea and how to read fast were taught in relation to newspapers. The library at school was not a comfortable, welcoming place, and teachers did not take students to the library for book-related activities. Her only experience of this was during her one year as an exchange student in the United States, where teachers took students to the library to find books or do research. “That was interesting”, she said, “It didn’t happen here. Here it was my friends who took me to the library.” The only interesting English books she remembers reading at school were folk tales. In English, she read folk tales, and short stories in the form of myths and legends and detective stories. In Thai, she read documentary comics for children.

University: At university, there was seldom discussion of what they read, and she was seldom stimulated to want to read more on a topic.

Language school: After university, at her language school, some of her teachers were readers, and encouraged the students to read. There were some interesting books available.

Television and the Internet

She does not feel that TV is more informative than books, and would not be bored if she had no TV to watch. The Internet is sometimes more interesting or more useful to her than are books. On the Internet, in English, she reads about general news, entertainment and cooking; in Thai, she reads about places to visit.

Subject 3: Reading habits and attitudes

Reading habits: The third subject (30-year-old Thai male) describes himself as an irregular reader of all types of books, Thai and English, fiction and non-fiction. Although he says he “likes reading”, he never takes a book with him on holiday. He has read all the Harry Potter books, the first few in Thai and the last three in English. He has not read other fiction books in English. He says that friends have given him other books, but they are “still sitting on the shelf”. At university, he enjoyed reading course books in English and Thai. Now he reads “only to find information”, buying books in Thai and English about Information Technology and travel, or when an examination “pushes” him to read textbooks.

He considers magazines far more interesting than books, reading Thai magazines (and very occasionally English magazines) on the subjects of pop and movie stars, sport, information technology and entertainment for an average of about 90 minutes a week. He reads Thai newspapers for a total of about an hour a week, English newspapers for about half that time. He reads English and Japanese comic books about adventure, horror and fantasy, three to four comic books a week “but not every week because I have more responsibilities [these days]”. When he was younger, in his early twenties, he read comics “almost every day”. He reads comics for amusement, and also because they give him encouragement and inspiration. He feels he can see examples of good and bad people and ways of living in these comic books. As an example, in the Japanese comics “Doraemon”, the title character’s friend makes mistakes, and Doraemon always helps him, but finally the friend must solve the problem himself. Another example is the portrayal of sportsmen which shows how much effort is needed for success. He feels that comics can be a good way to communicate with children and to inspire them.

Attitudes: He finds reading English very difficult, particularly because of the vocabulary, which he finds “difficult to understand”. The techniques he now uses in understanding words is to read the whole sentence and guess the meaning of unknown words. If that does not succeed, he will read the whole paragraph. Sometimes, though, he needs to consult a dictionary, and notices synonyms, antonyms and examples, all of which help him remember the word. Reading English can sometimes leave him with positive feelings, but it more often makes him feel anxious, or bored.

There are various reasons why he is not a regular reader of English fiction. The reasons he gave in the questionnaire and the responses by e-mail were first, that he works, and spends two hours a day commuting. When he has free time over the weekend, he sleeps and relaxes: “reading books takes so much energy from me, I need to concentrate so much that it gives me a headache”. Then, if he finds the first few pages of a book boring and uninteresting, he will abandon the book immediately because he does not want to waste his “energy and effort”. As with many people in Thailand, the Harry Potter books are an exception. He started reading them because his friends were reading them, and then he realized why the books are so popular: “the magic – J.K. Rowling’s ideas are wonderful, amazing.” Normally, he finds English fiction “hard work”, but he did not see reading Harry Potter as hard work because he could not wait for the Thai version so he “had to read them in English”.

Reasons for reading: He does see positive outcomes of this reading though: it helps him in his job, it helps him make decisions, it helps him to understand English people and culture. He reads English because he wants to be “well-educated”, because it is useful for staying or travelling abroad, and because information he seeks is often in English. In answering the questionnaire, he said that he does not feel that the desire to please parents or teachers played a significant role at any time in making him read. From the interview, though, it is clear there was strong parental influence, described below.

Parents, siblings, home, friends

At home, his parents never read books themselves, though they sometimes used to read to their children. They often bought them fairy tales and comic books as well as course books for school. According to the questionnaire responses, they would occasionally take them to a library or a bookshop, and sometimes would encourage them to read. In the interview, he came out with strong feelings about the influence his parents had on his reading habits. His parents are both teachers, and their friends were teachers, and they would frequently talk about how their friends' children were doing well at school, being top of the class, and so on. "They always told me to read and read ... terrible, I think I was always against reading – as long as they told me to read, I didn't want to." When asked if there was anyone in his life he associated with books and reading, he spoke heatedly about his sister. "I don't like fiction because my sister always reads cartoons and fiction. ... I don't want to be like her. I think it wastes money and wastes time, I don't know what she wants to get out of it. I have read Harry Potter, but my sister buys three or four books a week. That's too much."

His siblings sometimes read. Some of his friends read fiction and books about technology and travel, but they read predominantly cartoon books, which they prefer to ordinary books.

School and university

School: At school, his teachers did not appear to be readers, though he never really noticed. According to questionnaire and e-mail responses, teachers gave students strong encouragement to read, and gave them freedom in choice of books, though in the interview he indicated that no autonomy was allowed. There was no discussion of ideas from books. Instead, the teacher set each group the task of translating different passages into Thai, and then of sharing opinions of what each group "got from the passage". In the interview, he gave a more complex picture. He went to a Catholic primary school, then to a Thai public high school. They were very different. He felt that when he was in primary school, his English was "very good", but when he moved to public high school "it was worse". In primary school, the teachers were "quite

strict”, and the “brothers or sisters always kept their eye on us.” In high school, he often skipped class – “nobody cared”. In primary school, “English was important, intensive”; in high school, it was “very easy – my English did not improve”. In primary school, their English teachers were normally Thai, but they had one or two hours a week with an English speaker. In high school, however, all the English teachers were Thai, and they “could not encourage me to read books”. He recognizes that it might not have been only the school system and teachers that affected his English progress and his reading habits. “Maybe in high school I was a teenager, had different friends, that could have had an influence.”

They had to read “extra” books, but these were always in Thai. Even so, the circumstances are significant. Students were tested on the books at the end of the semester. He said, however, that he never read the books. “One semester, one book, at the end there is a test, but I never read, I always copied from my friends. Normally boys don’t do that, the girls read the books and we always copy from the girls. Sometimes girls would make short notes for us – we never read a book.”

Reading strategies were not taught: in a reading class, the method was for the student to read the story in the book and then for the teacher to give the meaning of difficult words. The library did not have very interesting books, only some interesting student magazines and newspapers. Also, the library was not a friendly, welcoming place. The only time they went to the library was when a teacher was absent and they were taken there. They were not expected to take out a book, though. They were just “left in the library, just talk talk talk, and then when the bell goes go on to another class.” He read English books and newspapers at home that had been set for reading by teachers at school. A teacher recommended that he read the “Student’s Weekly” newspaper. He particularly enjoyed reading the comics in the newspaper, also reading other students’ assignments. He did not enjoy reading for homework, particularly tasks such as to “find 200 vocabulary words from next semester’s book”. He was generally very happy at school.

University: At university, there was seldom discussion of prescribed reading, and he was seldom inspired to read further on a topic. He did, however, enjoy reading the course books.

Language school: After university, at his language school, he observed that his teachers were readers, and that they encouraged him to read. Reasonably interesting books were available to the students.

Television and the Internet

He finds watching TV or DVDs “more attractive” than reading books. He finds the Internet much more “useful” than books. He watches TV for entertainment, sport, economics news and general interest, finding TV more informative than books. He would be bored if he had no TV to watch. He finds the Internet more interesting than books, and much more useful. He is happy when on the Internet, reading about entertainment, sports, economics and general interest, all in English and Thai.

4.2 Summary

For each section of the subjects’ reading history, I present first a summary in tabular form. I have expressed Likert scale numbers/levels of agreement with adverbs of degree or with a simple yes/no:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 (I strongly agree) | Definitely |
| 2 (I agree) | Yes |
| 3 (I partly agree) | Sometimes/Possibly/Some |
| 4 (I disagree) | No/Not really |
| 5 (I strongly disagree) | Definitely not |

Table 1: Book reading

Question	Subject 1	Subject 2	Subject 3
Do you regularly read:			
English fiction?	No	No	No
Thai fiction?	No	No	No
English non-fiction?	No	Yes. Marketing, management, design.	No. Only to find information.
Thai non-fiction?	Yes. Often buy study-related books.	No	Sometimes. IT, travel, economics.

There is a clear difference between reading of fiction and non-fiction. None of the three subjects read English fiction regularly. Only one reads English non-fiction regularly, reading books related to her work; one consults English books only when looking for specific information. Only one reads Thai non-fiction regularly, study-related; the other reads Thai non-fiction sometimes, related to personal interests.

Table 2: Magazine, newspaper and comic book reading

Question	Subject 1	Subject 2	Subject 3
Do you read magazines?	Yes	Yes	Yes
What topics in English?	Fashion	Fashion, Decorating	-
What topics in Thai?	Fashion, movie stars	Fashion, Decorating	Pop and movie stars
How much per week in English/Thai?	15 mins/30 mins	20 mins/45 mins	-/90 mins
More interesting than books?	Definitely	Sometimes	Definitely
Do you read newspapers?	Yes	Yes	Yes
What topics in English?	Political, social interest	Current events	IT, entertainment, sport
What topics in Thai?	Entertainment, movies	Entertainment, first page	IT, entertainment, sport
How much per week in English/Thai?	120 mins/100 mins	15 mins/70 mins	30 mins/60 mins
Do you read comic books?	No. Prefer cartoons on TV	Yes	Yes
What type?	-	English and Japanese	English and Japanese; adventure, horror, fantasy
How much?	-	sometimes	3-4 comics a week

All three subjects read magazines and newspapers regularly. Two of the subjects read English magazines, the most popular topic being fashion. All read Thai magazines, the popular topics being fashion, pop and movie stars. Compared to books, magazines are generally more popular. All subjects read English and Thai newspapers. Popular topics in English newspapers include politics, current events, social interest and sport. In Thai newspapers, popular topics are entertainment (predominantly), sport, and IT. Two subjects read comics regularly, English and Japanese comics being most popular.

Table 3: Attitudes to English reading

Question	Subject 1	Subject 2	Subject 3
Do you find English reading difficult?	Not really	Sometimes	Yes
Wherein lies the difficulty?	Sometimes being unable to read fast enough	Sometimes not understanding words and ideas	Frequently in understanding words
Do you feel good when you read English?	Yes	Yes	Sometimes
Do you feel anxious when you read English?	No	Sometimes	Yes
Are you happy in a library?	Sometimes	Definitely	Sometimes
Would you be bored without a book?	No	Sometimes	No
Do you take a book with you on holiday?	Only study-related	No	No
Why do you read?			
For your job?	Yes	Yes	Sometimes
It's helpful in your life?	Yes	Yes	Yes
It helps with making decisions?	Possibly	Possibly	Yes
You want to understand English speakers?	Definitely	Definitely	Yes
It helps understand English speakers?	Yes	Possibly	Yes
It helps understand English culture?	Yes	Yes	Yes
It helps understand films and music?	Possibly	Yes	Possibly
It's useful for travel abroad?	Definitely	Yes	Definitely
It helps you become a good person?	Possibly	Not really	Possibly
It helps you become a happy person?	Possibly	Not really	Possibly
It helps you understand the problems of today?	Yes	Possibly	Yes
It's part of being educated?	Possibly	Yes	Definitely
You want to improve your reading skill?	Definitely	Not really	Yes
Do you read to please your parents?	Possibly	No	No
Do you read to please your teachers?	Possibly	No	Possibly

Two subjects find reading English difficult at times because of the vocabulary. All three report positive feelings when reading English though two of them sometimes feel anxious. One of the subjects would sometimes be bored if she found herself without a book, the other two would not. There seems general consensus among the subjects that reading helps in one's job, is useful in one's life, in understanding English culture and in travel abroad. Two think it might help in understanding English films and music; one thinks it definitely does. All three subjects doubt whether reading can make you a better or happier person. All but one see it as an essential part of being well-educated. Only one subject feels that their reading might come from a desire to please their parents. Two think that it could be from a desire to please teachers; one does not.

Table 4: Parents, siblings, home and friends

Question	Subject 1	Subject 2	Subject 3
How often do your parents read?	Sometimes	Every day	Regularly
What do they read?	Fiction	National Geographic, newspapers, journals	Anything but books.
Did they read to you as a child?	Sometimes: fiction and poetry	Never	Sometimes
Did they buy books for you?	Sometimes: study-related	Often: study-related	Often – fairy tales, comics, course books
Did they take you to libraries or bookshops?	Seldom	Sometimes	Sometimes
Did they encourage you to read?	Sometimes	Definitely	Sometimes
Were there many books available at home?	Not really	Yes	Yes
Do your siblings read?	Yes, sometimes	Yes, often	Yes
What do your friends read?	Some read Thai fiction, most read comic books	Some read fiction and work-related books, many read comics,	Some read fiction, about technology, travel. Comic books most popular.

The parents of all the subjects read, but in only one case do they read fiction. They all read newspapers or magazines. Parents of two of the subjects used to read to their children and the same parents bought their children books. At the same time, one set

of parents who did not read to their children bought them books. Two sets of parents made books available at home, but in one case there were not many books the children could read. Siblings of all subjects read. All three subjects have some friends who read fiction, usually Thai, but comic books are generally preferred.

Table 5: School and university

Question	Subject 1	Subject 2	Subject 3
At school, were your teachers readers?	I never noticed.	Some were, probably of non-fiction.	Not really, I never noticed.
Did they encourage you to read?	Not really	Not really	Definitely
Did you have autonomy of book choice?	Yes	Sometimes	Yes
Was reading discussed?	Often: study-related	Often: prescribed fiction	Seldom
Was the library a welcoming place?	Definitely	Not really	Not really
Did it have many interesting books?	Some	Some	Some
Did you enjoy reading at school?	Fiction not really; other yes	Fiction yes; other sometimes	Fiction not really; enjoyed some course books
What did you read?	Study-related, English and Thai	English: short stories, detective fiction; Thai: documentary comics for children	Course books
Do you remember any particularly good or bad experiences related to language learning?	No	No	No
Were you happy at school?	Definitely	Yes	Definitely
Was primary better than high school?	Possibly	Yes	Possibly
At university, did lecturers encourage you to read?	Yes: one lecturer emphasized the benefits of reading for work and career	Not really	Not really
Was your interest stimulated to read more on a topic?	Often	Seldom	Seldom
Was there much discussion of things read?	Often	Seldom	Seldom
What did you read while at university?	English and Thai: study-related, newspapers; Thai: fashion magazines	English: design magazines; Thai: fashion, dhamma	Textbooks and journal articles

At your present or recent language school, are the teachers readers?	Yes	Yes	Definitely
Do they encourage students to read?	Yes	Yes	Definitely
Are interesting books available?	Some	Some	Yes

School: Two of the subjects never really noticed if their teachers were regular readers; the other subject said teachers probably read non-fiction. One of the subjects had teachers who encouraged them to read, the other two were “not really” encouraged. Two of the three subjects had teachers who stimulated discussion in class of material read. Autonomy of book choice was granted to only two of the subjects. The library was a welcoming place in only one case, but all three reported a reasonable range of interesting books. Only one subject enjoyed reading fiction. All enjoyed reading non-fiction to some degree. All three subjects were happy at school, but felt that primary school may have been more enjoyable than high school.

University: Only one subject said that lecturers really encouraged them to read, often stimulated them to read further on a topic and frequently encouraged discussion of the reading. Only one other subject reported often being stimulated to read further on a topic.

Language school: All three subjects reported that their teachers were readers, and that they encouraged students to read. All reported that there were books available to read.

Table 6: Television and the Internet

Question	Subject 1	Subject 2	Subject 3
Is television more interesting and informative than books?	Definitely	Not really	Yes
Would you be bored if your TV wasn't working?	Definitely	Not really	Yes
Is the Internet more interesting than books?	Not really	Sometimes	Yes
Is the Internet more useful?	Sometimes	Sometimes	Yes
What do you read on the Internet?	English: politics; Thai: entertainment	English and Thai: general news, entertainment, cooking; Thai: travel	English and Thai: general news, entertainment, sport, economy
Are you happy when on the Internet?	Yes	Sometimes	Yes

Two subjects find television more interesting and informative than books, and could be bored if their TV was not working. Only one subject finds the Internet more interesting and useful than books; two do sometimes. They all feel happy when using the Internet.

4.3 Discussion of findings

The following section comprises a discussion of the findings in the light of the hypotheses as stated in Chapter 3. These hypotheses are as follows:

General hypothesis: Thai students who have had positive experiences of reading in Thai or English will become independent readers of English, reading for pleasure or for self-improvement.

Related sub-hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1a: Students who come from homes where reading for pleasure (in Thai, English or any other language) is encouraged will become independent readers of English.

Hypothesis 1b: Students who attended schools where reading for pleasure in any language was encouraged will become independent readers of English.

Hypothesis 1c: Students who attended universities where lecturers encouraged reading (which at university level would be in Thai and English) by stimulating interest in a subject will become independent readers of English.

Hypothesis 1d: Students whose siblings or friends read for pleasure will become independent readers of English.

The results confirm that the frequently-encountered reluctance to read on the part of Thai students is not due simply to the lack of a reading culture in Thailand. All three subjects give evidence of strong influences in their home and school backgrounds, and from friends. However, the picture is not uniform, and one explanation does not suffice for all three. Each subject's circumstances are very different. It would seem that each subject had some measure of positive experience related to reading at some stage or another, but these positive experiences were either restricted to one kind of reading, or counterbalanced, or perhaps outweighed, by negative experiences or by competition from other media.

4.3.1 Subject 1

Subject 1 has had moderately positive experiences. At home, reading was encouraged through the parents' reading fiction and poetry to the children, and through the parents' buying study-related material, though this was not supported by an availability of books at home. She enjoyed silent reading at school, but only non-fiction. It appears, therefore, that the parents' reading stories to their children had not succeeded in convincing her of the intrinsic enjoyment that reading can bring. Activities at school around reading were reasonably conducive to reading enjoyment, the teacher allowing students the freedom to exercise judgment and give opinions; however, at the end of the discussion, the students still expected the teacher to summarize the reading and check the answers of the question paper. This indicates that there were "right" answers to the questions, which the teacher knew and communicated. The discussion was, therefore, not as meaningful as it would have been had the students been given more autonomy, and had their opinions been valued more highly. The motivation to read for the purpose of class discussion was therefore not entirely intrinsic, but somewhere on Deci and Ryan's (1985) continuum between self-determined (intrinsic) and controlled (extrinsic).

At university, she was often stimulated to read further, which argues a strong, intrinsic motivation. Despite this, her reading of books was restricted to weekends and just before examinations, which indicates a more extrinsic motivation. This type of motivation can be strong when the reasons for the reading can be internalized. Now she reads a good deal (in English) in preparation for lectures and tutorials, which would indicate that an extrinsic motivation has become internalized. Her feelings of "relatedness, competence and autonomy" (Vansteenkiste, Lens, & Deci, 2006: 21) are now satisfied, as she realizes that extensive reading is now essential for her present master's degree study.

She has always read because she believes it will help improve her English. This is an indication of the motivational strength of goals, in accord with achievement goal theory (Ames, 1992; Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Although instrumental (which is potentially a weaker motivation, being extrinsic), it is also internalized and therefore intrinsic. Looked at from another perspective, this desire to improve her English indicates mastery-orientation, one of the qualities of the engaged reader according to

Guthrie (2001: 1). In addition, her desire to understand English speakers and to travel abroad confirms the strength of integrative orientation. This was found by Gardner (1979), whose study demonstrated the motivational strength of the desire to learn a language so as to communicate with people of another culture (1979: 47-48), and by the study of Kruidenier and Clément (1986), which showed the two most important orientations to be travel and friendship. The subject does not seem to have acquired an appreciation of the pleasure value of reading, though. This would be a stronger motivation, being purely intrinsic. It would override the “anxiety about not understanding” (Maslow, 1987: 19), and free her to improve herself further, that is, to engage in self-actualisation.

There is competition, from magazines (which she finds far more interesting than books), newspapers (which she reads regularly), TV (which she considers “more informative” than written sources), and the Internet (which she enjoys using). The fact that she reads English non-fiction regularly despite this competition argues for a strong desire to improve her English, in accord with achievement goal theory (Ames, 1992; Dweck & Leggett, 1988), and for the other instrumental and integrative motives mentioned above (Gardner, 1979; Kruidenier & Clément, 1986). She can read with reasonable fluency and comprehension, which would permit reading to be a pleasurable experience. However, she does say that although reading English for her is “not really” difficult, she does sometimes feel that she does not read fast enough. Her self-efficacy is thus limited. This frustration could detract from the pleasure of reading. In the words of Koda (2004: 30), “with sustained frustration, reading becomes anything but rewarding, further discouraging voluntary reading”.

All in all, it would appear that reasonably positive experiences at home and at school and strong intrinsic and internalized extrinsic motivation have led to her becoming a regular reader of English non-fiction. Why she is not a regular reader of English fiction is not evident; however, given her practical nature – seen in the way she reads to improve her English and for her job – one could surmise that she simply does not see a clear advantage in reading fiction.

For Subject 1, therefore, my general hypothesis is confirmed: she has had positive experiences of reading in English and in Thai (at home, school and university), and

she has become an independent reader of English non-fiction, reading for self-improvement. It should be noted, though, that independent reading of English non-fiction could be due not only to the influence of positive reading experiences in her past, but also to the intrinsic motivation to improve her English. She reads not so much for the sake of pleasure as for the sake of self-improvement. Hypothesis 1a is confirmed: reading of non-fiction was encouraged, and she has become an independent reader of non-fiction; however, despite the good example of her parents and their encouragement through reading of fiction and poetry, she did not become an independent reader of English fiction. Hypotheses 1b and 1c are confirmed, again only in relation to the reading of non-fiction. Hypothesis 1d is confirmed, since although the one friend she mentions who enjoys reading (Harry Potter) does not appear to have influenced her, her siblings do read.

4.3.2 Subject 2

Subject 2 has had positive experiences of reading. At home, book reading was encouraged, and there were books available. Her parents set a good example by reading different types of materials. They gave strong encouragement by buying documentary comics and, later, books, and taking her to the library ship in Bangkok. Her enjoyment of reading dates from then. This enjoyment is important, since it provides the strong, intrinsic motivation to read more. According to Guthrie (2001: 2), engaged readers “are intrinsically motivated to read for knowledge and enjoyment”. The subject’s friends influenced her to visit the library and take out books, and in her cousins she has a good example of people who are great readers, but also well-adjusted all-rounders. Her siblings also read, and they read English fiction. At home, then, all conditions were conducive to the enjoyment of reading. At school, activities around reading were both positive and negative. The autonomy given in choosing extra books to read, the silent reading in class, without the threatening prospect of a test, were positive. The norms behind the classroom activities were presented in an autonomy-supportive way, thus making internalization possible (Vansteenkiste, Lens & Deci, 2006: 21). Negative was the being quizzed on the content of material read. She had positive experiences related to using books in the library in the US.

She reads fiction and non-fiction in English for instrumental and integrative motives as well. The instrumental motive is to help her in her job, though this is apparently

internalized, given the amount of reading she does. The integrative motives include the desire to understand English speakers, English culture, English films and music, and for travel. This integrative desire is a strong motivation (Gardner, 1979; Kruidenier & Clément, 1986).

Despite all the positive factors, these days she reads fiction in English only when the Thai version is not available. This indicates a desire to use the most effective and efficient method rather than a lack of English proficiency. On the other hand, she does report that she sometimes finds difficulty in reading English because of the inability to understand words and ideas. Reading is not entirely painless, therefore. It is important to note, though, that whether the reading is in Thai or in English, it is done for the motive of pleasure, which is a strong intrinsic motivation (Guthrie, 2001: 2). The strength of this motivation should begin to override the difficulty she experiences with vocabulary, and the amount of reading she does will gradually reduce the frequency of vocabulary-related difficulties. Expressed in terms of Maslow's theories (Maslow, 1987: 19), reduced anxiety about not understanding will progressively free her to engage in self-actualisation, meaning in this case further improvement and enjoyment of reading in English.

All in all, then, positive experiences at home and school, and the strong intrinsic motivation to read for pleasure and for other integrative and instrumental motives, should logically have led to her to become an independent reader. This she is, though the amount of reading is limited by her very practical desire to read the version which is most accessible, which is, interestingly, the Thai version for fiction and the English version for non-fiction.

For Subject 2, then, the general hypothesis is confirmed. She enjoyed reading books when she was young, at home and at school, and these days she enjoys reading English non-fiction for self-improvement. Hypothesis 1a is confirmed: as a child, she had happy experiences at home of reading fiction, and she enjoys reading English non-fiction today. Hypothesis 1b likewise is confirmed. Hypothesis 1c is neither confirmed nor disproved since she does not mention any particularly positive experiences at university. Hypothesis 1d is confirmed: siblings are keen readers.

4.3.3 Subject 3

Subject 3 has not had many positive experiences of reading. At home, he felt pressured to read. Motivation was thus purely extrinsic; reading was definitely not presented as a goal that could be internalized (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Vansteenkiste, Lens & Deci, 2006: 21). The pressure to read was not supportive of his own needs but rather competitive for the sake of the parents. At school, discussion around the reading was rare, consisting mostly of translation into Thai and of the teacher giving the definitive meaning of the text. There was thus little chance of meaningful discussion. Reading strategies that could enhance reading comprehension and therefore enjoyment were not taught. No autonomy was given in the choice of books to read, and the goal of reading was to pass a test on the book at the end of the semester. The motivation was entirely extrinsic, and difficult to internalize. What made internalization even more unlikely was the fact that both the subject (getting notes and answers from the girls in the class) and the girls (helping the boys by giving them notes and answers) were doing the right thing according to the Asian collectivist notion and the Thai notion of “krengrjai” (Adamson, 2005: 75-76; Holmes & Tantongtavy, 1995). It is Maslow’s hunger for a place in the group (Maslow, 1987: 20), a need that must be satisfied before self-actualisation can begin, aggravated by a cultural imperative. At university, he was never stimulated to read further on any subject. Nothing at home, school or university, therefore, gave him the opportunity to experience the enjoyment of reading, and thus to provide the motivation to read more, and to read for pleasure.

He still experiences difficulty with reading, and finds it demanding and tiring. He reports that he frequently finds difficulty with the meaning of words. This in itself could prevent him from becoming an independent reader who enjoys what he is reading. In terms of attribution theory (Weiner, 1992), his conception of past failures affect his expectation of achieving his (reading) goals in the future. Lacking self-efficacy (Dörnyei, 1994: 276-277), the intrinsic motivation of enjoyment is far away. The main positive experience he has had of book reading has been the Harry Potter books, which he read first because of friends’ recommendation, and then later because he was caught up by the ideas, the magic and the story. This peer influence has had the effect of temporarily overriding the negative effects of past home and school experiences, and the present reading difficulties. For the moment, though, the effect of

these affective and cognitive factors outweigh the pleasure he experienced in reading three Harry Potter books in English.

All in all, negative reading experiences in his past as well as difficulties experienced in the present prevent him from enjoying reading books. Without enjoyment, he will not read, and if he does not read, he will not improve, and enjoyment will be further delayed (Koda, 2004: 30).

For Subject 3, then, the general hypothesis is confirmed: in general, he has had few positive experiences of reading, and now he is not an independent reader of English; the one positive reading experience (of Harry Potter) has motivated him to read the books in English, but this has not yet affected his overall attitude to reading and his reading habits. Hypothesis 1a is confirmed, since at home reading was encouraged not for the sake of enjoyment but in order to compete with others. Hypothesis 1b is confirmed, since the lack of meaningful discussion at school can be expected to lead to the lack of independent reading today. Hypothesis 1c is likewise confirmed: at university there was no stimulation to read further, and today there is no independent reading. Hypothesis 1d is disproved, since the reading habits of a sibling have had the effect of demotivating him from reading, while the influence of friends in motivating him to read Harry Potter has not succeeded in making him an independent reader.

4.3.4 Summary

The general hypothesis, that Thai students who have had positive experiences of reading in Thai or English will become independent readers of English, reading for pleasure or for self-improvement, is confirmed in all three cases. The findings show that in two instances, positive reading experiences lead to independent reading in English. One case shows that negative reading experiences can lead to a lack of independent reading in English.

Sub-hypothesis 1a, that students who come from homes where reading for pleasure (in Thai, English or any other language) is encouraged will become independent readers of English, is likewise confirmed in all three cases. Two cases show that reading for pleasure at home can lead to independent reading in English, one shows

that reading for an imposed, external motive, not for pleasure can lead to a lack of independent reading in English.

Sub-hypothesis 1b, that students who attended schools where reading for pleasure in any language was encouraged will become independent readers of English, is confirmed in all three cases. Two cases give evidence that pleasureable reading experiences at school can lead to independent reading in English, one case shows that the absence of pleasureable reading experiences can lead to a lack of independent reading in English.

Sub-hypothesis 1c, that students who attended universities where lecturers encouraged reading (which at university level would be in Thai and English) by stimulating interest in a subject will become independent readers of English, is confirmed in two of the three cases. One case shows that stimulating reading experiences at university can lead to independent reading in English, one case shows that unstimulating reading experiences can lead to independent reading in English. In the third case, the sub-hypothesis is disproved since the subject is an independent reader of English despite unstimulating reading experiences at university.

Sub-hypothesis 1d, that students whose siblings or friends read for pleasure will become independent readers of English, is confirmed in two cases, with evidence that the reading habits of siblings or friends can affect independent reading in English. One case, where a sibling reading for pleasure has been a demotivating factor, disproves the sub-hypothesis.

The strongest confirmations, therefore, are in the general hypothesis and in sub-hypotheses 1a, that students who come from homes where reading for pleasure (in Thai, English or any other language) is encouraged will become independent readers of English and 1b, that students who attended schools where reading for pleasure in any language was encouraged will become independent readers of English. The research strongly confirms that, for these three subjects, positive experiences of reading, in English or in Thai, led to them becoming independent readers of English, reading of their own volition either for pleasure or for the intrinsic motive of self-improvement. The research also strongly confirms that pleasureable reading

experiences at home and school have a significant influence on independent reading later on in life. Finally, the research shows that reading proficiency in English is necessary for reading in English to be independently pursued.

It should be noted that none of the three subjects are regular, independent readers of English fiction. This is not surprising. To be successful, reading must be fluent and comprehending. For this, lots of practice is needed, and for readers to persist with a lot of practice, they must become engaged – in some way captured cognitively or affectively by the text(s) they are reading. None of the subjects appear to have been in home or school situations where they had the opportunity for much enjoyable reading, not pressured by the demands of testing, or the need to compare favourably with others. The reading of magazines and newspapers, and on the Internet, is different from reading books. Reading magazines and newspapers is often a process of skimming and scanning: from text to pictures, from captions to text, and on the Internet from one hypertext or website to another. Comprehension is aided by illustrations, photographs, text boxes, and the like. Magazines, newspapers and the Internet do not require concentrated reading, as successful comprehension depends largely on understanding words with graphic assistance. Also, they are fashionable, topical and free from the threat of a test or a need to compete.

Reading is best motivated by intrinsic factors, ideally reading for the pleasure of reading, for fun, for entertainment. Wigfield and Guthrie (in press) found that children with high intrinsic motivation read much more than those with lower intrinsic motivation. In contrast, there was little difference in the amount of reading done by children with high or low extrinsic motivation. (Wigfield, 1997: 64). Reading for the intrinsic motive of pleasure has rarely been a part of my subjects' experience. Rather, reading has been for the extrinsic motives of satisfying the teacher, passing examinations or fulfilling a reading requirement.

It would seem from this research that the situation in Thailand is not so very different from the situation in the West. So many Thai people are reluctant readers not because of some exclusively Thai lack of reading culture, but because of elements in their home and educational backgrounds which have not been conducive to the fostering of keen, independent readers. This true for Thai and English, fiction and non-fiction, but

it is more acute in the case of English fiction because of the difficulty of becoming fluent in a new language without adequate support from the home or the school.

The odds are therefore against the subjects in this study becoming regular, independent readers because of one or more of these factors:

- Insufficient opportunity at home for reading for pleasure
- Reading activities at school that are not fun and do not engage
- Lack of stimulation to read further at university
- Insufficient practice to become fluent

It would be expected that in each individual, there would be a different combination of elements, though one particular aspect – cognitive, social, emotional, cultural, familial – may be the major determinant of motivation. If teachers want to be able to influence students' motivation, then, they need to determine the major influences in each individual student. I would suggest that the best way to determine what motivates students to read or demotivates them from reading is to consider all the possibilities, and to build a profile of each student. Putting together the profiles of all the students in a class group should indicate to a teacher how he or she could influence students' motivation during the time that they are in his or her class.

5 Conclusion

This chapter is the conclusion, summarizing the contribution of the study, pointing out its limitations, and offering suggestions for further research.

5.1 Contribution of the study

The lack of a reading culture in Thailand is often presented as a fact that teachers just have to live with. At a language school where students are mostly graduates preparing for study abroad, teachers are faced with a hopeless task: they cannot change Thai culture, they cannot change the ways of Thai schools and universities, they cannot change the way the government allocates funds to libraries. It might be too late to change either attitudes to reading or reading ability in language learners out of their teens. Brown (1994: 63) points out how school-age children develop attitudes to people and languages which could become stereotypes. A fixed, negative attitude to reading in English, or to one's own reading ability, is difficult to change. As for reading ability, learners become "arrested" at certain interlanguage levels, and their error patterns become fossilized (Stern, 1983: 410). This "arrest" and "fossilization" may well affect the skill of reading.

The teacher's task may not be easy, but it is not impossible. First, the study shows that attitudes to reading can be changed: positive experiences of reading lead to language learners becoming independent readers. Language teachers can provide positive experiences by supplying reading matter that excites, interests, involves and engages; they can stimulate discussion in which students are cognitively and affectively involved and where they feel that their opinion really matters; they can give students the opportunity both to read quietly by themselves and also to talk with other students about what they have read. Second, reading ability can be developed, albeit at a slow pace, with students out of their teens, but it can be done. Again, what is needed is reading material that engages the interest of students so that they want to read a great deal, thus getting the practice without which reading fluency cannot be achieved.

It is important for teachers to consider the various possible reasons for their students not being keen readers. It may be because of a lack of interesting reading material at home or at school, or because of school reading experiences that were teacher- and exam-centred, or even because of limited reading proficiency. When teachers know the reasons behind their students' attitudes, they can plan and manage teaching materials and activities appropriately.

I hope that my research will go some way towards solving the problem of non-readers or reluctant readers among students by making their teachers aware, first, that they need to consider a number of possibilities when trying to understand why students do not read and, second, that they are still in a position to help make positive changes in the reading attitude and habits of students.

Apart from what it revealed about attitudes and motivations behind students' reading habits, the research also confirmed the value of the interview in qualitative research. Lazaraton (2003) refers to the "Qualitative Research Guidelines" given in the *Information for Contributors* section in each issue of *TESOL Quarterly* (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, 2001). These guidelines mention that data collection strategies include "prolonged engagement" and "persistent observation" (2003: 11). In my research, there was only one interview, but it came at the end of a period of about eight months, starting with the questionnaire and continuing with four sets of e-mailed questions and answers, during which time the subjects were able to think over the issues raised in the questionnaire, and during which some measure of trust and goodwill seemed to have developed between us.

The interview was remarkable for the amount of interesting information divulged by the two subjects. The male subject remarked, unsolicited, that when he read the summary of the questionnaire responses, he recognized that it was an accurate summary, but that it did not sound like a description of him. He felt he wanted to explain many of the answers to give a truer feel to the description. Also, possibly as a result of thinking about and answering questions about his reading habits over the space of some weeks, he came up with quite emotional descriptions of family influences on his reading. The female subject also came up with wonderfully fluent

and thorough descriptions of family influences and her own attitudes to reading. It is clear that, in qualitative research, an interview has the potential of unearthing far more information than questionnaires and written answers.

The profiles of the subjects built up by means of the questionnaire and further written questions and answers was incomplete, and seemed, to the subjects themselves, unreal. They did not feel that there was anything inaccurate, but that they did not recognise themselves in the description: “I wasn’t sure it was really me” (Subject 2); “I thought who is this guy, sounds horrible. When you ask question by question, but when you combine the answers, it’s different. It really hurt, I think I’m very bad, and when I show it to my colleagues, they laugh laugh laugh and say yes that’s really you. ... I think speaking is much better because in a short question it’s too short, I cannot express what I feel. When you summarise, it’s correct, but I think why don’t I explain more” (Subject 3).

The interview clearly has possibilities that quantitative research lacks. Holiday (2004: 732) notes:

Five years ago, my students and I were concerned with the size and representativeness of interview samples. Now we are in deep discussion about creative moves in data collection and analysis, such as pursuing meaning through successive, sometimes opportunistic conversations; describing rather than recording interactions; fictionalizing and reconstructing observed experience; using personal narrative both to help us focus on data and find entries into realities.

In this study, personal narrative revealed unexpected truths. Subjects came up with unexpected responses; although prompted by the questions, they offered information about themselves that was not specifically asked for. The interview succeeded, therefore, in developing “a participant’s rather than a researcher’s perspective” (Markee, 2000: 26).

5.2 Limitations of the study

Seliger and Shohamy (1989) have described one of the difficulties involved in qualitative research. In an interview, the researcher is asking language learners what they think, but “the observer and the learner usually speak different languages”. The learner is using language that “is still incompletely learned” (1989: 120). Although Seliger and Shohamy are here referring specifically to observation of learning situations, their caveat is still relevant. In this instance, the subjects were not always able to express themselves as fully as they could in their native language, and sometimes their words were perhaps not accurate representations of their thoughts and feelings. There are some simple differences in vocabulary to which English teachers in Thailand have become accustomed. For example, a Thai student describing a teacher as “serious” is making a negative judgement. For Thai people, for whatever reason, “serious” implies lacking in fun, unsmiling, and disapproving. There are undoubtedly many other instances too where an English-speaking researcher does not have an accurate perception of the situation. For this reason, I encouraged my subjects to use Thai words when they felt unable to express the true meaning in English. Despite these precautions, I believe that a researcher fluent in English and Thai would succeed better in getting at the truth.

I do not believe that this study is limited because of the small number of subjects. As noted in section 3.1 above, qualitative research does not require information about a vast number of subjects, but rather an in-depth, comprehensive and convincing description of a single case which could consist of a small number of subjects, even of one subject. Burns (1997) writes of paying attention to “the multiple realities and socially constructed meanings” in social contexts (1997: 12). Qualitative research also involves “thick” explanation, taking into account all the factors which may affect the phenomenon being studied (Nunan, 1992: 58).

The limitation became apparent when I held what I had planned as my final interview with the two subjects still in Thailand. They had filled in the questionnaire and answered questions that I sent later by e-mail promptly, diligently and fully. However, in the interview, speaking easily with little prompting from me, they gave a different

picture from that built up from the questionnaire and written answers. Sometimes, what they said contradicted earlier responses. This was either because they had not fully understood questions in the questionnaire (usually because of lack of clarity on my part), or because they had since thought about the issue, and come to a better understanding. At other times, what they said in the interview gave a fuller picture which made clear the reasons behind some of their attitudes and motivations. There were other moments when memories were triggered, sometimes by what the other subject had said, and they spoke emotionally about issues that have had significant effects on their reading habits.

The limitation, then, was that my subjects did not have enough opportunity to talk to me and with each other about their reading. I think that the questionnaire and other questions were useful, perhaps necessary, in initiating their thinking on various issues, so I think they were worthwhile doing. Also, I recognize that the interview came at the end of many months during which we had been first teacher and students, then researcher and subjects. During that time, a relationship developed between us, and, by the end I believe, a trust. I therefore do not regret conducting the interview at the end. Having an interview at the beginning would not have yielded the same thoughtful and honest offerings. Nevertheless, more interviews or meetings, if presented to my subjects as part of the original plan, could have produced more interesting realizations and revelations. Taylor and Bogdan (1984) suggest that repeated face-to-face interviews are directed towards “understanding informants’ perspectives on their lives, experiences or situations” (1984: 77). The advantage of repeated contacts, according to Burns (1997), is that there is a “greater length of time spent with the informant, which increases rapport” (1997: 331).

One of the subjects sent me an e-mail after the interview which confirmed the value of the process of questionings and, in particular, of the interview. After saying that it was a pleasure to have helped me in the writing of my thesis, he wrote, “and thank you to make me know myself better”. This was the same subject, as noted in section 5.1 above, who said that the interview was better because it gave him the chance to give the reasons behind his answers.

I believe that further interviews or even informal meetings would have yielded more, and would have made this study less limited. Since I can repeat this research with new classes of students, I will have the opportunity to include a series of interviews in an action research programme. Apart from the valuable information that they will yield, these interviews will also be excellent communication practice for my students in an authentic interview situation.

5.3 Suggestions for further research

The present research was valuable both in demonstrating the complexity of factors influencing students' motivation, and in showing how teachers can still effect positive changes in their students' reading attitudes and reading habits.

It could serve as a model for action research that could be carried out by any language teacher anxious to develop a love of reading in their students. Although I delayed the beginning of the research till after the end of the course at school, I feel sure that the process could be started during the course, while the researcher and subjects are still teacher and students. In fact, this would have at least three advantages. First, it would help the teacher to understand the reading background of the students, and to plan and adjust the teaching accordingly. Second, it would give enough time for more than just one follow-up meeting or interview without extending the whole process till the point where researcher and subjects lose interest in the project. Third, it would give an opportunity for the students to do authentic writing on an issue that could be of value to themselves.

Whether conducted as action research or not, such a study would be valuable in making language teachers aware of the reasons behind students' reading ability and attitudes, and thus giving them the opportunity to make reading activities more enjoyable and more relevant. At the same time, such a study would help students to understand their own attitudes to reading, and thus motivate them to read independently for their own pleasure or self-improvement.

Two other issues related to the reading of books need to be researched. The first is the role of competing media: other printed material such as magazines and newspapers, and the Internet. The second is the difference in the kind of reading employed for books, for magazines and newspapers, and for the Internet.

All three of my subjects read magazines and newspapers more regularly than they read books. What are the reasons for this? Is it a preference for pictures and graphics? Is it the topics featured? Is it the length of articles, or the difficulty of the language? Is it fashion, in the sense that it is fashionable to be seen reading certain publications? With regard to the Internet, all the same questions can be investigated. The Internet, though, is more complex. It offers a wealth of information accessible in a fraction of a second; it offers spectacular graphics and sound and video; it is interactive, allowing the user to read text and comment on it and even change it. Are all its attractions just too much competition for the book? Is the Internet just too convenient a way of accessing information? Secondly, the nature of the reading process for these different media needs to be researched. Reading a book is a quiet, slow, meditative process: reading newspapers and magazines does not demand the same period of concentration or even the same depth of thought; reading on the Internet is hurried, dipping in here and there, scrolling and clicking and moving on to another site. Is one kind of reading better than another? Which type of reading is best for helping language learners to become fluent readers? Which type of reading will help readers become independent readers, reading for pleasure?

These avenues of research could also be carried out effectively as action research, by teachers in classrooms, and as a constructive and educative part of the course curriculum. For language learners, books, newspapers, magazines and the Internet can all help in the process of learning to read. Research might be able to clarify what it is that each medium can do best.

Whether teaching or researching, whether planning group activities or individual activities, whether supervising quiet reading or lively book discussions, teachers would do well to remember the words of Nuttall (1989: 192):

Reading is like an infectious disease: it is caught, not taught.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A



EDITORIAL

Govt must act on low reading rates

Thailand needs to promote a culture of literacy via upgraded libraries and subsidies for book production

Published on October 19, 2007

To say that a reading culture is not one of Thailand's strong suits is a gross understatement. Reading, either as a means of self-improvement or just pleasurable escapism, has never been associated with the idea of fun in the Thai social context. Indeed most Thais, if pressed, would admit that reading, a solitary activity, is the direct opposite of having a good time. People who read books are widely frowned upon as introverted, too serious, unsociable or lacking in social skills. Most Thais would rather engage in gregarious group activities like eating, drinking, watching television or movies, or just talking all of which they find more enjoyable and which, usually, makes little demand on their intellect. This pattern of behaviour cuts across socio-economic classes.

We are reminded of the unpopularity of reading in this country every time publishers organise their book fairs. With this year's Book Expo being held at Queen Sirikit National Convention Centre, it is reported that the average Thai reads just two books per year and outlays a meagre Bt260 for these. Compare this to Vietnam, where the average person finishes about 60 books a year, and Singapore with 45, and one can't help but worry about our poor reading culture.

The question that comes to mind is, how is Thailand going to compete in the global marketplace if people do not read enough to acquire knowledge, broaden their horizons, or deepen their understanding of what is going on in their society and the world at large?

This year's book exposition organised by the Publishers and Booksellers Association of Thailand (PUBAT) in Bangkok, which runs until October 28, is expected to attract 1.2 million visitors from all over the country. As with similar expositions, publishers try to promote new titles and reduce book inventories by offering big discounts. It is a time when readers of all ages splurge on books.

While it is heartening to know a sustained campaign to promote a love of reading among the young has produced new generations of avid readers, the problem is they are concentrated in middle-class families who have the money to spend on books to indulge their children. The sad truth is that, for the majority of kids and budding readers in the provinces and rural communities, book prices are way beyond their means.

Worse, public and school libraries whose role it is to bridge the gap between rich and poor in terms of acquisition of knowledge, by offering access to quality books at little or no cost have failed miserably to serve their intended purpose.

Most local governments and schools do not attach importance to their library services and usually do not allocate enough financial resources to maintain good collections of books.

Thailand has one library to serve every 84,000 citizens. This compares unfavourably with South Korea, which is reported to have one library for every 20,000 people. Some book publishers point to the correlation between a country's economic performance and its citizens' reading habits.

According to a survey conducted jointly by PUBAT and the Thai Health Promotion Foundation, efforts to promote a love of reading among the young still face serious hurdles. Too many Thais are too comfortable in relatively passive activities like listening to the radio or watching TV, while the Internet, computer games and night-time entertainment also take up big chunks of people's leisure time.

While it is important that Thailand does its best to get its citizens to read more particularly the young policy-makers, book publishers, booksellers, school administrators, social workers and the mass media must put their heads together to find ways to make books more accessible to all.

For a start, the price of the average book, at over Bt100, is too steep when most people spend only around Bt25 for a decent meal. At a time when the size of the domestic book market is still small, book prices should be brought down to a level in line with the cost of living, perhaps through government subsidies. The subsidies could then be gradually scaled back as the Thai book market grows, and when economies of scale come into play and bring the cost of book production lower.

The Nation

APPENDIX B

The IELTS Test

The IELTS test is in four parts: Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking (Interview). A satisfactory score (usually between 6 and 7) is taken to indicate that the candidate has sufficient English language and logical thinking skills to be able to manage study at a master's level at an English-medium university.

- The Listening Test (40 questions on a 4-part, 25-30 minute recording on cassette or CD) assesses the candidate's ability to listen for particular information, to hear and understand ideas, to distinguish between a speaker's main points and details. The first two sections are concerned with "social needs", one being a simple dialogue where candidates need to pick up from their listening details like names, dates and places, and the other a discussion between two or more people on an everyday topic such as attending a film festival, or going on a camping trip. The third and fourth sections are more closely related to educational or training contexts, the third being a discussion on topics such as completing a university assignment, and the fourth a monologue, a talk or speech or lecture on an academic topic such as deforestation, the influence of technology on education, the danger of health fads, or the effects of tourism on a country. Types of question include multiple choice, sentence completion, short-answer questions, labeling a diagram and notes/summary/flow chart/table completion.
- The one-hour Reading Test consists of 40 questions on three reading passages with a total length of 2000 to 2750 words. The passages are from books, magazines, journals and newspapers written for a non-specialist audience. The Reading Test assesses, apart from vocabulary and the ability to guess the meaning of unknown words from context, the candidates' ability to read quickly and with comprehension, to understand the gist of passages and paragraphs, and to interpret ideas, opinions and attitudes. The most frequent types of question are multiple choice, matching headings with paragraphs, filling in blanks in a paragraph (usually a summary of the whole passage) with specific words either given in an accompanying box or from the reading

passage, deciding whether statements about the text are true, false, or impossible to say, and matching sentence beginnings and endings.

- The one-hour Writing Test consists of two parts: Task 1, which requires a description of a graph, bar chart, pie chart, table of figures, diagram, flow chart, process or map, and Task 2, which requires a discursive or argumentative essay on a given topic. Task 1, 150 words minimum, demands the ability to detect main trends and features, to select the most important details, and to describe them clearly. Task 2, 250 words minimum, demands the ability to form and express an opinion on a given topic, and to present a logical and well-organized argument. The examiner gives a score for four equally-valued categories: **Task Approach** (how well the question is answered in terms of logic, relevance, strength of supporting ideas); **Cohesion and Coherence** (how well-structured the sentences, with logical and grammatical links, how well-connected the ideas, how well the overall paragraph structure contributes to the clarity of the argument); **Lexical Resource** (how accurate, appropriate and varied the vocabulary); and **Grammar** (how correct in grammatical detail, how varied and well-balanced in terms of sentence type and structure).
- The 12 to 15-minute Interview is in three parts: the first, a warm-up, about the candidates' personal occupations, likes and dislikes; the second, a two-minute long turn on an everyday topic, with one minute's preparation time; the third, questions related to the long turn topic, but of a more general nature. The first part tests the candidates' ability to respond easily and idiomatically to everyday topics such as free-time activity, sport, reading, weather and giving of gifts. The second part tests their ability to speak on the given topic fluently and idiomatically. The third part tests their ability to express and respond to ideas, to give opinions, to discuss general topics such as the importance of free-time activity, the attention given to sport in children's education, the value of reading, climate change and the stresses of modern city living.

Further details are available to the public on www.ielts.org.

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is in four sections, Sections A to E. Try to answer the questions carefully, and thoughtfully.

The first section asks for biographical details. Here, if your answers are accurate, then they are correct! For the rest of the questionnaire, though, there are no right or wrong answers, or good or bad - only truthful.

Section A: Biographical details

Name:

Nickname:

Male Female

Age: 0-19 20-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60 or above

Educational level: (Bachelor's, etc)

IELTS score(s):

Overall: Listening Reading Writing Speaking When?

Overall: Listening Reading Writing Speaking When?

Overall: Listening Reading Writing Speaking When?

Section B: Reading habits

First fill in the table about how often and for how long you read. Then answer the questions below the table (numbers 1 to 10).

	THAI			ENGLISH		
	Yes/No	How often	Minutes per week	Yes/No	How often	Minutes per week
Newspapers						
Magazines						
Books: fiction						
Books: non-fiction						
Others (please specify other types - work-related, study-related - or other languages)						

Questions

1. What types of newspaper articles do you read: political, sport, social interest? If you read other types of article, please specify.

In English:

.....

In Thai/other:

.....

2. What kinds of magazines do you read? Are they about sport, politics, social events, pop and movie stars, travel, fashion? If other, please specify.

In English:

.....

In Thai/other:

.....

3. What kinds of books do you read – novels, short stories, poetry, drama?

In English:

.....

In Thai/other:

.....

4. What kinds of fiction do you read – adventure, action, family drama, romance, science fiction, horror? If other, please specify.

In English:

.....

In Thai/other:

.....

5. What kind of material do you read on the Internet – general news, politics, sport, entertainment? If other, please specify.

In English:

.....

In Thai/other:

.....

6. What do you take with you or buy to read when you go on holiday, or travel anywhere? If you take or buy nothing, leave blank.

In English:

.....

In Thai/other:

.....

7. What kind of reading did you do when you were at school?

In English:

.....

In Thai/other:

.....

8. What kind of reading did you do when you were at university?

In English:

.....

In Thai/other:

.....

9. What reading did you ENJOY at school and university?

In English:

.....

In Thai/other:

.....

10. When you are reading, what do you find the most difficult – understanding the ideas in the text, understanding words, or reading fast enough?

In English:

.....

In Thai/other:

.....

Section C: Reading attitudes and experiences

A. For each of the statements below, put a tick next to number 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5. The meanings of the numbers are:

- 1: I strongly agree**
- 2: I agree**
- 3: I partly agree**
- 4: I disagree**
- 5: I strongly disagree**

Many of the questions may look similar, but please answer them all.

- 1. Magazines are more interesting than books. 1 2 3 4 5
- 2. When I read books, I feel happy. 1 2 3 4 5
- 3. When I surf the Internet, I feel happy. 1 2 3 4 5
- 4. I enjoy spending time in a library. 1 2 3 4 5
- 5. When I have to read something, I feel anxious. 1 2 3 4 5
- 6. Reading books helps a person learn a language. 1 2 3 4 5
- 7. I enjoyed reading books of fiction at school. 1 2 3 4 5
- 8. I was generally happy at school. 1 2 3 4 5
- 9. I enjoyed primary school more than high school. 1 2 3 4 5
- 10. I read only when I need to find some information. 1 2 3 4 5
- 11. Reading is for people who don't like action. 1 2 3 4 5
- 12. Reading books is OK if there are lots of pictures. 1 2 3 4 5
- 13. Reading poetry makes me feel good. 1 2 3 4 5

14. I would rather see a play in a theatre than read the
play in a book. 1 2 3 4 5
15. Reading magazines is a waste of time. 1 2 3 4 5
16. When I read English there are many words I cannot
understand. 1 2 3 4 5
17. When I don't understand words in an English book or newspaper, I
feel bad about myself. 1 2 3 4 5
18. Surfing the Net is more interesting than reading
a book. 1 2 3 4 5
19. I enjoy reading things on the Internet. 1 2 3 4 5
20. I enjoyed reading at school. 1 2 3 4 5
21. I didn't enjoy reading at school. 1 2 3 4 5
22. I like reading Thai books, but not English. 1 2 3 4 5
23. I like reading English books, but not Thai. 1 2 3 4 5
24. I like reading Thai and English books. 1 2 3 4 5
25. I don't like reading Thai or English books. 1 2 3 4 5
26. I have many books at home. 1 2 3 4 5
27. I don't have much free time for reading. 1 2 3 4 5
28. I find reading English difficult. 1 2 3 4 5
29. Reading teaches me a lot about life and
about people. 1 2 3 4 5
30. I get bored in my free time if I don't have
a book to read. 1 2 3 4 5

31. I get bored in my free time if I don't have a friend
to talk to. 1 2 3 4 5
32. I get bored in my free time if the TV isn't working. 1 2 3 4 5
33. I learn more from TV than from reading books. 1 2 3 4 5
34. If you want to be well-educated, you must
read books. 1 2 3 4 5
35. Reading books teaches you things that help you
make decisions. 1 2 3 4 5
36. Searching the Internet teaches you things that help
you make decisions. 1 2 3 4 5
37. I love receiving a book as a present. 1 2 3 4 5
38. I would rather spend money on books than
on clothes. 1 2 3 4 5
39. I read English books only when my English teacher
tells me I should. 1 2 3 4 5
40. Reading English books will help me in my job. 1 2 3 4 5
41. I think reading English books will be helpful for me
in my life. 1 2 3 4 5
42. I don't think reading English books will be helpful
for me in my life. 1 2 3 4 5
43. When I don't understand something I am reading, it makes me feel
less confident about myself. 1 2 3 4 5
44. Reading English books will help me understand
English-speaking people. 1 2 3 4 5
45. I want to understand English people and culture. 1 2 3 4 5

46. I want to be like my friends, and they don't read.
(If your friends like reading, don't answer this question.)
1 2 3 4 5
47. I want to improve my own knowledge through
reading English books. 1 2 3 4 5
48. I had a teacher or teachers who enjoyed reading and
made me feel I would like to read. 1 2 3 4 5
49. I want to be able to understand and speak to
English-speaking friends. 1 2 3 4 5
50. I have set myself a goal to improve my English. 1 2 3 4 5
51. I do not want to improve my English language skills.
1 2 3 4 5
52. I can improve my English skills more quickly by
studying grammar than by reading a book. 1 2 3 4 5
53. I want to master the skill of reading English. 1 2 3 4 5
54. Reading English is hard work. 1 2 3 4 5
55. Reading English will help me become a good
person. 1 2 3 4 5
56. Reading English will help me become a happy
person. 1 2 3 4 5
57. Reading English will help me become a good
citizen of my country. 1 2 3 4 5
58. Reading English will help me understand
problems in the world today. 1 2 3 4 5
59. My parents encourage/have always encouraged me
to read. 1 2 3 4 5
60. I think books are too expensive for me to buy. 1 2 3 4 5

61. My English classes at school were not interesting. 1 2 3 4 5
62. Experiences in English classes have often made me
feel bad about myself. 1 2 3 4 5
63. After graduating from university, I don't want to
read any English again. 1 2 3 4 5
64. English will be useful for me when I travel or stay
abroad. 1 2 3 4 5
65. I read when I was younger because I wanted to
please my parents. 1 2 3 4 5
66. I'm not very good at English. 1 2 3 4 5
67. I want to learn English to understand English
films and music. 1 2 3 4 5
68. English is only important for passing exams. 1 2 3 4 5
69. I like study best when it really makes me think. 1 2 3 4 5
70. It is important to me to do better than other students
or colleagues. 1 2 3 4 5
71. It is important to me to be popular. 1 2 3 4 5
72. I like to work on easy problems in my study or work
so that I'll do well. 1 2 3 4 5
73. I like work or study best when I can finish it
quickly. 1 2 3 4 5
74. I have a quiet place where I can read undisturbed. 1 2 3 4 5
75. At university, I had a quiet place where I could read
and study undisturbed. 1 2 3 4 5

76. The library at my school(s) was a quiet, comfortable,
welcoming place. 1 2 3 4 5
77. The library at my school(s) had many interesting books.
1 2 3 4 5
78. Teachers at school allowed us to choose the books we
wanted to read. 1 2 3 4 5
79. At my language school, teachers often encourage
us to read. 1 2 3 4 5
80. At my language school, the teachers are keen
readers. 1 2 3 4 5
81. At my language school, I have access to lots of
interesting reading. 1 2 3 4 5
82. I don't think books will be important fifty
years from now. 1 2 3 4 5

Section D: Reading habits and experiences

In this final set of questions, first tick one of the five alternatives, and then write an answer to any question(s) below it.

1. I take a book (English or Thai or other) with me when I go on holiday.

Always Usually Often Sometimes Never

a) What kind of book do you take?

.....

b) How much of the book do you read?

.....

.....

2. My parents read to me when I was a child.

Every day Often Sometimes Never

a) What did they read to you?

.....

b) When did you start reading yourself?

.....

3. My parents took me to a library or bookshop.

Often Sometimes Seldom Never

4. My parents bought me books.

Often ... Sometimes Seldom Never

If they bought you books, what kinds of books did they buy?

.....

.....

5. My parents read books (now and in the past).

Every day Often Sometimes Never

What kind of books do they read?

.....

.....

6) My brothers and sisters read books. (Leave blank if you have no brothers or sisters.)

Often Sometimes Occasionally ... Seldom Never

7. I buy books.

Often Sometimes Occasionally Seldom Never

a) What kind of books do you buy?

.....

b) What language are they in?

.....

8. I borrow books from a library.

Often Sometimes Occasionally Seldom Never

a) What kind of books do you borrow?

.....

b) What language are they in?

.....

9. I read a book when I want to go to sleep because reading

relaxes me and makes me feel sleepy.

Often Sometimes Occasionally Seldom Never

10. My language teachers at school loved reading.

All of them Many of them Some of them Few of them None of them ...

I never noticed

If you noticed, what kinds of books did they read?

.....

.....

11. I read books for pleasure, for fun.

Often Sometimes Occasionally Seldom Never

12. I had teachers/a teacher at school or university who made me hate reading.

Yes No

If yes, what did he/she/they do?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

13. I had teachers/a teacher at school or university who made me love reading.

Yes No

If yes, what did he/she/they do?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

14. At school, we discussed in class books that we had read.

Regularly Often Sometimes Seldom Never

What kinds of books did you discuss?

.....
.....

15. At university, I got together with other students to discuss things we had read.

Often Sometimes Seldom Never

16. At university, I was so interested in my subject that I wanted to read more than the compulsory, prescribed reading.

Often Sometimes Seldom Never

17. My friends enjoy reading books.

All of them Many of them ... Some of them ... Few of them ... None of them

a) What kinds of books do they read?

.....
.....

b) What languages are the books in?

.....
.....

18. My friends enjoy reading comic books.

All of them Many of them Some of them ... Few of them ... None of them ...

19. My friends prefer reading comics to reading books.

All of them Many of them Some of them ... Few of them ... None of them ...

20. What I've read in English has been boring.

All of it Most of it A lot of it Some of it None of it

21. I read to escape from an unpleasant or unhappy situation.

Often Sometimes Seldom Never

22. Education is important in my life.

Very Quite Not very ...

Give a reason for your answer.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

**THAT IS THE END OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!**

APPENDIX D

E-MAIL QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

Subject 1

First set of e-mail questions and responses:

1. Think of things you read in English in your early years at home and school.

a) Where were you reading? At home? At school? On holiday?

a. Mostly at home.

b) What were you reading? Books? Comics? Comic books? Magazines?

b. Some books, particularly academic ones.

c) Why were you reading? Given to you by your parents? Recommended by friends? Set by teacher at school?

c. Set by teachers at my school.

d) What did you enjoy reading? What didn't you enjoy reading?

d. I enjoyed reading. Magazines, do not enjoy fiction.

e) Did you ever do individual silent reading at school? Did you enjoy it?

e. Yes I did and I enjoyed.

2. Can you remember interesting reading material in English in your school libraries?

Yes I can. That book is kind of English Dictionary with a lot of pictures.

3. Did teachers at school ever teach reading strategies – how to read, how to help understanding of what you read, how to understand new words, how to remember the meanings of new words?

Yes they did. Skimming Scanning Guessing the meaning of words from the context.

4. Did you ever discuss English books read at school? Who with?

Yes, with my classmates and the teacher who assigned.

5. What techniques do you use now to understand words when you are reading, and to increase your English vocabulary?

Try to guess the meaning from the context first and check the meaning from the dictionary later.

6. Has there been any influence in your reading from Chinese (in your family, relatives, friends) attitudes to school, study, reading?

No Probably because I am 100% Thai.

7. Why, in one sentence, do you not read English fiction regularly – no point, no time, too hard, no pleasure, no fun, not available?

For me, I haven't got any great fun from reading fiction.

Second set of e-mail questions and responses:

1. In question 1e, about silent reading, was the reading you did and enjoyed in Thai and in English?

I enjoyed reading silent either Thai or English book.

2. In your response to question 4, you said you discussed English books read at school. Can you remember the kinds of things you discussed - translation into Thai, factual content, themes, ideas, characters in the books?

The teacher asked my classmates and me to discuss the main idea of such books and try to differentiate between factual information and the author's opinion and whether we agreed with the author or not. Looked up some new vocabularies in a dictionary.

3. A last question: Now, in London, are your reading habits at all different from what they were when you were at university in Thailand? Any aspect - what you read, how much you read, where you read, how much you enjoy what you read?

My reading habit has changed in many important ways. Apart from attending lectures or seminars I need to study by myself at least 6 hours per day (do some reading in advance before the classes according to the reading lists of such courses). I often study in the library. Sometimes I study in the coffee shop like Starbuck but less than when I was in Thailand because Starbuck here is a lot more expensive than in Thailand (I always study in Starbuck in Thailand). Books I read are of course academic ones. I rarely read magazine or newspaper. Normally I check the news from the internet (BBC) During my undergrad years, I always read books and reviewed some material only on weekend and read every day only 1 month before the exams On weekdays I went to the gym sometimes or ate out with my friends.

Third set of e-mail questions (after the interview with the other two subjects):

I had a very interesting interview with the other two subjects last Saturday. The answers to four questions were particularly interesting, and I'd like to put the questions to you.

1. At home, did your parents encourage you to read, force you to read, not encourage you to read?

No not at all. They are kind of letting me manage my study by myself.

2. At school, how did your English teachers deal with reading? What did you read (English and Thai), how did you discuss the reading, was it for tests or did you have periods of silent reading just for pleasure?

Firstly, they assigned students to prepare the reading before the class. In the class, the teachers began with dividing students into small groups (4-6 people) to run discussion about such an article/chapter (summarize the main ideas, the opinions of the students, new vocabularies, help one another answer the question paper). Then the teacher summarized the whole reading and lastly checked the answers of the question paper.

3. Is there anyone in your life that you associate with books and reading? Who? What do they read? How much? What is your opinion of that person?

My friend university friend love to read Harry Potter (English version). I think it helps improve her reading skill in terms of the speed as well as vocabularies.

4. Chinese people are relatively more serious about education, knowledge, erudition, being educated for the glory of the family or the clan, than the Thais are. Did Chinese relatives or Chinese friends have an influence on your attitude to education and reading?

Yes, I have one Chinese friend we studied the English course. It seems to me that she takes the matter of study very seriously. For example, she told me before the term began that she had already read some core books according to the reading list of her master programme. However, I do not think that her attitude toward the study has influenced mine. For me, I think every person has his or her own style of study in order to be successful.

Subject 2

First set of e-mail questions and responses:

1. Think of things you read in English in your early years at home and school.

a) Where were you reading? At home? At school? On holiday?

Mostly at home and school.

b) What were you reading? Books? Comics? Comic books? Magazines?

Books (folk tale, novel)

c) Why were you reading? Given to you by parents? Recommended by friends? Set by teacher at school?

I first started to read and liked to read because my parents bought lots of documentary comics. Later on, the friends in my group liked to go to the library during breaks and that encouraged me to find something to read. There were times in Junior High that I had to read extra English books which were assigned by the teachers which I believe is normal to many school in Thailand especially private school.

d) What did you enjoy reading?

Fiction, documentary comics

What didn't you enjoy reading?

Text book

e) Did you ever do individual silent reading at school?

Yes.

Did you enjoy it?

It was OK. Does it means ALONE? I prefer to have a friend nearby but quietly though.

2. Can you remember interesting reading material in English in your school libraries?

As far as I remember, not many. Folk tale for sure. Apart from that, I don't remember.

3. Did teachers at school ever teach reading strategies – how to read, how to help understanding of what you read, how to understand new words, how to remember the meanings of new words?

That would be times when I was in Junior High. The teacher started letting us read fictions and then we'd have to discuss in class. Nothing in particular. However, later on, she taught how to "really read" and get the main idea, read fast and so on from the newspaper.

4. Did you ever discuss English books read at school? Who with?

Yes, friends and teacher in English class.

5. What techniques do you use now to understand words when you are reading, and to increase your English vocabulary?

Well, honestly, most of the time I'd skip the words that I don't understand and only try to get the main point of the sentence or the story. But if it's really something I want to know, I'd open the dictionary right away and sometimes note the word in my vocabulary book I have (but rarely read).

6. Has there been any influence in your reading from Chinese (in your family, relatives, friends) attitudes to school, study, reading?

I don't really understand this question. But if I understand it correctly, "Chinese attitudes" has had no influential to my reading..

7. Why, in one sentence, do you not read English fiction regularly – no point, no time, too hard, no pleasure, no fun, not available,?

I think it's easier to understand Thai rather than English. So whenever I see Thai and English books placed together, I'd normally pick the Thai book first (but if the English title is really really interesting then I might read the Eng. first). And if it isn't interesting, I'd then read the English book.

Second set of e-mail questions and responses:

1. How much time do you spend on reading English magazines and newspapers?

Around 2 hrs. per week. Actually, I'd prefer reading English magazines more than newspaper but since they cost much more so I don't get to read mag often.

10. Do you find reading English difficult because you lack a wide vocabulary, or because you don't understand the exact meaning of specific words?

Yes on both reasons but mostly would be because I know limited vocabs.

11. What do your siblings read?

Fictions, magazines, newspapers, text books, non-fictions. All 3 siblings of mine (one older and 2 younger sisters) read English fictions. All of them don't have problem with reading English books - their English are a lot better than mine. I've seen my older sister read The Davincy Code and other books that came in a set which I've forgotten the name of the rest. While my 2 youngers have read all the English Harry Potter books. Actually, there are more but I don't remember.

12. What kind of books were available at your parents' home - fiction (stories, novels, etc.)?, non-fiction (what subjects)?magazines?

ALL

Subject 3

First set of e-mail questions and responses (related to the original questionnaire, appendix C)

1. In Section B [of the questionnaire], in the table, you answered that you do not read English or Thai fiction books. Then, in question 4, you say English and Thai "Adventure". Can you explain? Do you mean that you don't read adventure books regularly, or that the adventure stories are not in book form (magazines, comic books, etc.)? Or what?

Normally, I do not often read Thai/English fiction books. It depends on which story I would read. Such as, Harry Potter, I read all 6 years in both Thai and English version but only once a year. Then I was not able to know how many minutes per week. I thought it's not habit then I said no.

2. In Section C, question 24, you say you like reading Thai and English books. That also seems to contradict your answer in the table that you do not read English or Thai books.

Actually in the table, I have read all those books both in Thai and English but some kinds only once a year, once in 3 months. So, I was not able to answer in minutes per week's column. I'm not sure these are my habits in your meaning.

3. In Section C, questions 44 and 45, you say you believe that reading English books will help you understand English-speaking people, and that you want to understand English people and culture. Why, then, do you not read books? This is not a "Why are you such a bad student?" question. When we don't do something that we know is good for us, there is usually some reason for it, often a good reason. It would be interesting for you to think about why you don't read books, and then tell me! (In question 27 of Section C, you partly agree that you don't have much free time for reading. Does that mean that lack of time is one reason, but that there are others?).

I work in Saraburi and take 2 hours a day wasting for transportation. Weekday is forgettable to read books. For weekend, a half of time I spend it for sleeping and relaxing and the rest for activities. But reading Books take so much energy from me, I need to concentrate so much that make me have a headache. Only text books (for exam.) can push me to read them. For other activities, searching internet, watching TV or DVD are more attractive although they also make me have a headache if I take long times but I prefer to do these more.

Finally, not related directly to any of your questionnaire answers:

4. Do you read comic books? What kind are they - Japanese/Thai/English/.....;adventure/horror?.....?

Yes, I read Thai comic books but Japanese and English comic books, I read few because they are very expensive. They are about adventure, horror and fantasy.

5. How often do you buy them? How much time per week do you spend reading them?

Normally I rent or borrow them, only special books I'll buy. 3-4 small books a week, but not every week because I have more responsibilities. When I was young (5 years ago) I read it almost every day.

6. Why do you read comic books? Do you get the same pleasure from reading comic books as you did when you were younger?

I read them because I don't spend money to buy them, I can rent and borrow them any times. Some of them inspired me to do my dreams, some amused me, and some enhanced my brain.

Second e-mail question and response:

In your previous response, writing about comic books, you said they help you to “do my dreams” and to “enhance my brain”. What do you mean by these two expressions?

Some comic books do not give only funny but encourage or inspire my life. I can learn the good and the bad example from the books. Some principles come out of the book. For example, DORAEMON (Japanese comics), his friend always make the mistake, he always help. But finally his friend must solve that mistake by himself. Some story about the successful sportsman, it will write about how much effort we must be used for the success. Comic books can be the good way to communicate (writing with the pictures) to children and inspire them.

Third set of e-mail questions and responses:

1. Think of things you read in English in your early years at home and school.

a) Where were you reading? At home? At school? On holiday?

Home and School

b) What were you reading? Books? Comics? Comic books? Magazines?

Books and Newspaper

c) Why were you reading? Given to you by parents? Recommended by friends? Set by teacher at school?

Set by teacher

d) What did you enjoy reading? What didn't you enjoy reading?

My teacher recommended to read newspaper "students weekly"

I enjoyed reading comics in newspaper and sometimes reading other students interview. I didn't enjoy reading for homework, for example, to find vocabulary at least 200 words from next semester's book

e) Did you ever do individual silent reading at school? Did you enjoy it?

Yes, I did but not much interesting

3. Can you remember interesting reading material in English in your school libraries?

Just only student magazine/newspaper

4. Did teachers at school ever teach reading strategies – how to read, how to help understanding of what you read, how to understand new words, how to remember the meanings of new words?

Only in Reading class they taught me but only follow the stories on the book and gave the meaning of difficult words. (English for passing the test)

5. Did you ever discuss English books read at school? Who with?

Discuss? Teacher set the group to translate the different passages and share opinion what each group got from the passage.

6. What techniques do you use now to understand words when you are reading, and to increase your English vocabulary?

Reading the whole sentence and guess, if still do not understand I will read the whole paragraph. Sometimes, open the meaning from dictionary, see synonym and antonym, see example and remember.

7. Has there been any influence in your reading from Chinese (in your family, relatives, friends) attitudes to school, study, reading?

No

8. Why, in one sentence, do you not read English fiction regularly – no point, no time, too hard, no pleasure, no fun, not available,?

When I start reading the first chapter, if it seems boring and not interesting, I will leave it immediately because I will not waste my energy and effort to read that books. Wordings are difficult, I am ok with interesting book. And also, the cost is high, nobody recommend the good book and no time.

APPENDIX E

QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEW

A. Questions for both:

1. Has there been an influence through family, relatives, friends or school, of Chinese culture or Chinese attitude to learning?
2. Do you not like reading English fiction because you don't like reading Thai fiction?
3. In a sentence: why don't you read English fiction? Is there a different "feel" to an English book?
4. What kind of silent reading did you do at school? How often? How long? English and Thai?
5. Were your school teachers autonomy-supportive? Did they allow you freedom in what to read, and when to read?
6. Was reading presented with an intrinsic or extrinsic motive? Or: what was presented to you at school as the purpose or goal of reading?
7. Do you associate anybody in your life with book reading? What is or was your opinion of that person?
8. What kind of discussions around material read did you have at university?
9. If reading a book is not fun, what about reading on the Internet?
10. Have your reading habits changed over the past few months?

B. Question for subject 2:

On holiday, you borrow books from friends. Are the books in Thai or English?

C. Questions for subject 3:

1. You have read Harry Potter. What's next?
2. You have said that words you read are sometimes difficult to understand. What kinds of words?
3. At school, students followed the story in the book. Who read?
4. You wrote in your e-mail responses that you enjoyed listening to other students' interviews. Interviews about what?