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The contribution of supplementary readers to the english language learning and teaching : the case of some secondary schools in Bujumbura

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UNIVERSITY OF BURUNDI

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE
AND LITERATURE

THE CONTRIBUTION OF SUPPLEMENTARY 'READERS' TO THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING: THE CASE OF SOME SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BUJUMBURA

By

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree "**Licencié en Langue et Littérature Anglaises**"

Bujumbura, March 2006

DEDICATION

To my dear parents who gave me

a reason to believe in myself.

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The work presented here would have failed without the cooperation of a number of persons and institutions.

I deeply appreciate the tireless efforts of all the lecturers of the Department of English Language and Literature, for the intensive training they gave me during my studies at the university in order to produce this work. I also thank the other lecturers of the University of Burundi who, in one way or another, made this study a success. I can't help thanking the Makerere University which inspired me with references.

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SUMMARY

This scientific study is subdivided into five (5) chapters. In Chapter one, which is the General Introduction, the researcher introduces English as a language with a high instrumental value in Burundi as well as all over the World.

However, in the statement of the problem, the sad notice is that the standard of English in Burundi is steadily declining. That being said, the purpose of the study is to find out whether supplementary READERS are taken into consideration in the English classroom. If yes, to take a look on the way they are used and to promote the English language by exploiting supplementary READERS in the classroom.

Going to the study significance, the researcher believes that his scientific work would enable English language teachers to assess and exploit supplementary READERS as a catalyst for language teaching and learning.

The chapter two gives a little feedback where former researchers had already noticed the neglect of READERS in the English language classroom for quite some time. Generally in this chapter, activities such as classroom activity, assessment and practical advice and suggestions on how to exploit READERS to promote language are made.

This scientific study follows up a well-structured methodology which is clearly explained in Chapter 3. The researcher shows for example the way the sampled the population, how he did lesson observations and the instruments he used and so on and so forth.

In Chapter four, the researcher presents and examines data analysis and findings.

As far as the Chapter five is concerned, conclusion and recommendations are made based on the analysis of the findings. Both teachers and students are aware of the value of supplementary READERS as a language teaching and learning resource, but they have been frustrated by lack of knowledge of how to affectively exploit them amidst the heavy school curriculum. The main recommendation here is that workshops should be planned and designed in different parts of the country on "The exploitation of READERS in the English language classroom" for proper use of the supplementary READERS.

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CHAPTER 1: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

The English language has nowadays a high instrumental value in Burundi as well as all over the world. It is the medium of international Communication, the medium of some development programs, the language for trade and wider communication with the world. In view of its high instrumental value, English enjoys a higher status than any other language in Burundian as it puts our country into contact with different peoples. Thus, it is necessary for Burundian students to master English for effective communication.

However, we have to all sadly comment on the deteriorating standard of English in Burundi. With great concern we have noted the poor self-expressions of students in simple tasks like directing visitors, responding during interviews, and writing applications, and we have expressed our wish to reverse the trend.

Many people in Burundi are complaining about the deteriorating standard of English. The evidence for this is that the contact with people coming from countries that use English with Burundians, be it for some developmental affairs or other things, is always in need of interpretation. We can find very few cases where the contact is immediate. Teachers in secondary schools are concerned about their students' poor performance in English. The Ministry of Education keeps on harping on the need to improve English language. Complaints come from various institutions of higher learning. Employers too, are irked by the poor performance of school leavers at interviews and their inability to perform simple tasks like

completing forms. This reflects a countrywide concern about the declining standard of the English language.

I believe that one of the ways of improving the English language with all its (standards) skills is through exploiting supplementary READERS in language teaching, whereby supplementary READERS are story books that are part of a planned series for those learning a language. Hereinafter, these story books shall be referred to as 'READERS' (in upper case print), while 'readers' (in lower case print) shall refer to a person who reads. Greenwood (1996: 6) backs the researcher's belief that exploiting READERS might improve the standards of English. He holds the view that the best way to improve knowledge of a foreign language is by living amongst its nature speakers, and the next best is to read extensively in the target language. Currently Burundi cannot afford to send all students of English to Britain to live with British in order to acquire near nature competence. Instead, READERS (can) should be fully exploited to expose the students to authentic use of English in real life situations presented in the books. In the same line of thought, Silberstein (199 : 7) states that "... Class READERS provide a wide range of language experience which reinforces use in real life tasks." In other words, when someone reads, and rereads a READER, not only his interest is directed to what comes afterwards, but he is also benefiting from the a language material without being aware of it. The content of the READER will furnish the reader with the ability to express himself in real life situations.

However, in most English language classroom in Burundi, READERS have been neglected in favour of the short texts or passages in the current Today's English course books with the view, according to the National Curriculum Development Centre (1983:1), that "English as a subject has to conform to the constraints of the stringent time-tabling, to give

some room to a number of new important subjects in the school curriculum." Thus READERS have been left out of most of the language lessons to save time for the other subjects, while reading habits have been killed.

Hence, taking into account the high status of English in Burundi and its deteriorating standard, the researcher participated in action research with fellow teachers of English. The aim of the research was to investigate whether effective use of READERS in the English language classroom can rejuvenate the standard of English.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The standard of English in Burundi is steadily declining. Very few people can speak English fluently, in spite of the increasing number of users. Likewise, great concern is shown about the declining standard of English at the secondary school level as reflected in the examination results, despite English being a compulsory subject. Similarly, Wossita (1998: 13) in Uganda states that the inadequate exposure to reading books is the cause of the declining standard of English. In our country, the situation is not different for reading seems not to be encouraged. Consequently, the English language material is at low level.

Given such a scenario, this study investigated the possibility of improving the standard of English through using supplementary READERS as a catalyst in English language teaching and learning.

1.3. Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to find out whether supplementary READERS are being used in the English language classroom. If yes, to see how they are used and to promote the English language through the exploitation of READERS in the classroom. If no, to show the importance of contribution of supplementary READERS to the English language learning and teaching.

I.4. Objectives of the study

The Objectives of the study are:

(i) To find out whether supplementary READERS are valuable resources for English learning and teaching.

(ii) To analyse both the teacher's and students' attitudes towards using supplementary READERS in the English language classroom.

(iii) To find out whether supplementary READERS are being used or not in the English language classroom.

(iv) To devise means of effectively using supplementary READERS to improve the standard of English.

1.5. Scope and Delimitation

The researcher worked with English teachers from secondary schools in the Bujumbura mayorship during the research, and some of their students.

The researcher assessed and analysed the position of READERS as was reflected in the English teachers' classroom practice, and attitudes of both teachers' and learners' classroom experience.

1.6. Significance

Bearing in mind the deteriorating standard of English in spite of its utility in Burundi, the researcher felt that the study would enable English language teachers to assess and exploit supplementary READERS as a catalyst for language teaching and learning in view of improving the student's command of the English language.

The study is also bound to reinforce the Ministry of Education Inspectorate's venture for In-Service Training of teachers in order to improve the standard of English. It might also enlighten curriculum developers about the gap existing in the English language curriculum.

The following kinds of READERS can be found in different schools' libraries where the researcher conducted his study: "Dracula" by Bram stoker, "The Woman who Disappeared" by Philip Prowse, "Tales of Goha" by Leslie Caplan, "The Smuggler" by Piers Plowright, "The Queen of Death" by John Milne, "I'm king of the Castle" by Susan Hill, "The Peacemakers" by Duncan Forbes, "This Fall Apart" by Chinua Achebe, "The Moon is Down" by John Steinbeck, "Meet Me in Istanbul" by Richard Chisholm, "Bristol Murder" by Philip Prowse, "The Walker After Death" by Barrie Elli-Jones, and many more. In fact, such READERS are short story books that provide a choice of enjoyable reading material for learners of English. They are good in terms of providing a basic vocabulary estimated at 1,600 words ; at the same time, students are given some opportunity to meet new words whose

meanings are either clear from the context or are explained in the glossary. Help is given to the students in the form of illustrations, which are closely related to the text.

In terms of structure, most of structures used in the READERS will be familiar to students who have completed an elementary course of English. Other grammatical features may occur but their use is made clear through context and reinforcement. This ensures that the reading as well as being enjoyable provides a continual learning situation for the students.

In addition, with regard to the information of a READER, information is vital to the understanding of the story, is presented in an easily assimilated manner and is reported when necessary. Difficult allusion and metaphor are avoided and cultural backgrounds are made explicit.

However, in order to serve as catalyst for English language teaching and learning, READERS need to be fully exploited so as to bring up English whose current state leaves a lot to be desired.

1.7. Research questions

The study tired to answer the following questions:

(i) Are READERS valuable resources for English learning and teaching?

(ii) What are the teachers' and students' attitudes towards using READERS?

(iii) Are READERS currently used or not in teaching English?

(iv) How can READERS be used to improve the standard of English?

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

Over the past fifteen years, it has become common place to advocate teachers' involvement in research into the ecology of their own classrooms. Thus, in this chapter, studies on the use of READERS in English teaching are reviewed. In general, in most of the studies, classroom activity assessment and practical advice and suggestions on how to exploit READERS to promote language are made.

However, although others may have carried out research on the use of READERS, in Burundi there still exists a gap in the effective use of READERS which has contributed to the steady deterioration of the standard of English.

2.2. Supplementary READERS as a Valuable Resource for English Language Learning and Teaching

For quite some time, the neglect of READERS in the English language classroom has been the concern of many teachers in Burundi as well as in many countries. Researchers like Hedge (1994) and Collie and Slater (1987) have already squarely addressed this problem. Hedge treats the READER as a total language learning resource, not simply as a device for promoting reading. She comments that "the READER is conceived of as a springboard to propel the learner into manifold language learning activities..." (1994: 1).

Collie and Slater (1987: 3) hold the view that "READERS offer a bountiful and extremely varied body of written material which is important... they say something about fundamental human issues, which is enduring rather than ephemeral."

Similarly, Greenwood (1996) acknowledges that READERS are authentic material in that they are not simply fashioned for the specific purpose of teaching language, but they are samples of language in use. For instance, the real life linguistic situations are depicted in the following READERS: travel in Gulliver's Travel; mystery in Alice's Adventures in wonderland; juvenile adventure in Oliver Twist; disguise in Mrs. Doubtfire and Sister Act; caring for others in Mother Theresa; and ambition in Book of Heroic Failures.

When learners are exposed to such story books, they grow in understanding of themselves and others. The more a story book contains an attractive real life linguistic situations, the more the learner gets interested in it and therefore learns (draws) more from it. And the more he reads, the more he has language competence (linguistic competence). For example in Book of Heroic Failures where the theme is ambition, learners will be interested to know how ambitions is the character in the READER. Likewise he will get much appetite to read and little by little in his mind he will think of himself referring to the similar situation in his real life. The need to discover himself through reading will help him master English language in that, language itself is the main tool to describe events. Caring for others in Mother Theresa is a subject in that READER which can help readers know the kind of people they are before situations similar to those in the story book. And this contributes in achieving linguistic experience for the learner reads, reads and rereads for better comprehension.

Pearson (1987: 153) points out that when we read for pleasure, we read in a variety of roles, which increase our interest, enjoyment and involvement. He, (1987: 153) states that "... roles such as travellers, politicians, day-dreamers, spouses, patients are only occasionally as students..."

Knowing this, teachers should encourage this role recognition in their classes, but they restrict entry into these inner worlds by insisting on narrow, language based activities only. These activities reinforce the role of the student and reduce the value involved in imaginative response to reading. In this connection, Greenwood (1996: 7) maintains that "... READERS can be helpful in the language learning process because of the personal involvement they foster in readers..."

Engaging imaginatively with READERS enables the learners to shift the focus of their attention beyond the rule-based aspects of the English language system and appreciate the socio-semantic system. When a learner explores a READER, the result is that s/he begins to inhabit the text (Griffith and Klesius, 1996). S/he is drawn into the book. Pinpointing what individual words or phrases mean becomes less important than pursuing the development of the story. The reader is eager to find out what happens as events unfold. Eventually s/he feels close to certain characters and shares their emotional responses. As Collie and Slater (1987: 93) put it, "... the language becomes transparent, and the fiction summons the whole person into its own world..."

Consequently, such exposure to reading materials facilitates the learners' responses in different linguistic situations. According to Pedersen (1995: 2), "... the full range of language is present in stories, learners have an experience with the powerful real language of personal

communication not the usual 'teacherese' of the foreign language classroom..." Thus in real life situations an individual who has always been exposed to similar situations in fictions does not respond reluctantly. Self expression becomes easy and automatic. A student who has a habit of reading is more likely to speak a language fluently than the one who never reads. The latter has the tendency to hesitate or interrupt while uttering his sentences whereas the former is sure of what s/he is saying and therefore does it with no fear of producing mistakes.

In addition, both Brumfit (1985) and Widdowson (1975) maintain that effective exposure to different READERS increases the learners' receptive vocabulary and facilitates transfer of language forms to the real life situations the learners experience on encounter. Similarly, Wossita (1998: 22) states that "... in Uganda the declining education standards are caused by the poor reading culture." It is the same case in Burundi where the reading culture is not any better. The best way for a student to gain control of an adequate vocabulary in context is through reading. According to Silbestein (1994) READERS review and fix the vocabulary already learned. He says that "READERS stretch the vocabulary so that he learner is enabled to give a greater width of meaning to the words already learned. Vocabulary, structure, and textual organisation are all reviewed in subsequent readings" (P.13).

With regard to the importance of READERS, Greenwood (1996), Hedge (1994), and Pearson (1987), all emphasize that READERS expose learners to language that is as genuine and undistorted as can be managed in the classroom context.

In READERS, learners are exposed to a language that is intended for native speakers and thus gain additional familiarity with many different linguistic uses, forms, and

conventions. Therefore READERS are an important resource for language learning and teaching.

2.3. Teachers' Attitudes towards Supplementary READERS in Teaching the English Language

The previous subsection highlighted how valuable READERS are in learning English. In most cases however, teachers either ignore READERS, or neglect and abuse them, failing to recognize their contribution to the learning and teaching a language. Drawing from her own experience as a teacher in Nigeria, Barnes (1996: 285) quotes the following teachers' comments:

Teacher A: "Reading for pleasure is a private and personal thing. I cannot see how this can be used in the English language classroom".

Teacher B: "I am trying to get through a fairly dense syllabus to equip my students, ultimately, for examinations; I cannot square the time for fills".

Teacher C: "READERS are an expensive luxury. The school cannot afford them. Other things must come first."

Such comments are quite similar to what the researcher used to hear from colleagues before his research got started. The researcher personally heard a teacher from the 'Lycée du Saint Esprit' saying that "Reading is helpful in the process of learning a language in that story books provide a wide-range of vocabulary which in fact is used in everyday life. But the fact is that students cannot get enough time to read."

When teachers bear such distorted views, the same views are imported to the learners who also believe that READERS prevent them from doing something more important, and are a waste of learning time. During his trainings at the "Lycée du Saint Esprit', the researcher had the curiosity to know about the use of READERS from one of his students and his answer is as follows:

"We are often busy with other things rather than reading. I would like to read as many English books as possible for improving my language. However, our English teacher doesn't encourage us to."

Nevertheless, some teachers have endeavoured to effectively use of READERS in different settings. For instance, Hedi in a north African school where the blackboard and chalk are his only teaching aids, improvises and writes out extracts from READERS upon which he develops discussions (Hedge, 1994). While Hedi lacks the books, Williams (1986) reports about Apama's Class where there is an aboundance of READERS but with very little time allocated for the English language course.

Thus, she resourcefully uses READERS for the foreign learners to achieve their goal within the shortest possible time. In addition, Hemedi (1998) reports about Sauda who gets caught up in a hundred English language classrooms in Tanzania where she has enough books but effective learning can only take place in the front part of the class. The back part is unduly distracted because the teacher can hardly get to them. On the other hand, Greenwood (1996) reports about Healther's Adult Education Centre in Scandinavia where a group of twenty adult students contribute a small sum of money each. The teacher uses the money to buy different READERS for their English course.

In spite of their different possibilities and problems, the teachers cited above tried their best to exploit READERS as a resource in language teaching. Thus, the researcher felt that teachers in Burundi could also be helped to utilize READERS while getting through their teaching activities.

2.4. Readers' Attitudes towards Supplementary READERS

"Unwilling readers are a problem in most English language classrooms at present" (Greenwood, 1996: 11). In this respect, this reluctance stems from a variety of social causes or pressures on both the learners and teachers. For instance, in Burundi, lower secondary schools students are burdened with extremely heavy time tables with several subjects, all of which are compulsory.

Pearson (1987: 42) states that "... Reading is therefore associated with memorizing and regurgitating, and hard work". Taking a set of READERS into such a class of students and presenting them with still more words to read will understandably produce displays of reluctance. Given the situation, program designers should know that there are some practical techniques that are to be privileged for learners to know a language. For instance, to encourage students to read story books of their choice and organize exposés. In fact, presenting an exposé for a student is helpful in that it enables him/her to speak fluently as he/she does it repeatedly. One of the things that can prevent a student from speaking a language is the fear of his/her classmates. Another is the fear of producing mistakes. Therefore, with the habit of being in front of his/her classmates and talking to them, the fear

disappears and the student gets familiar with the language and is no longer afraid of making errors.

In addition, programs that permit discussions between students such as choosing READERS that comprise for instance theatres would be helpful. Such conversational books should be forwarded so that each student can get his role to present before his classmates. Language teachers. In spite of the overloading of time-tabling of courses Language teachers should organize games in class that are referred to as the reflections of what students have already read in the READERS. Likewise, every learner will have opportunity to express himself and the teacher will register his students' weaknesses and strengths.

Gambrell (1996: 73) reports that "... some teachers have given up, while others have been tempted to adopt a system that the students are familiar with in other subjects, and insist that the reading is done to enable them to answer comprehension question..." Such a system is really destructive. Reading is no longer a pleasurable activity, and the teachers, aware that the learning is taking place on a cognitive level only, soon or later abandon the attempt altogether, knowing that it is accomplishing very little or none of the intended original aims. With regard to what Gambrell is reporting, teachers who recommend students to read their books for the purpose of answering comprehension questions should know that it's not just a matter of reading and understanding a story-book. In addition to that, students need some other time to talk about what they have read. If a student knows that he has nothing to do other than reading and answer comprehension questions, this will make him lazy and he may even give the book to someone else to read it and explain to him the story so that he could be able to answer the comprehension questions in class. Teachers of English and of a language in general should know that reading provides the reader with an important linguistic luggage that will help him

to express his ideas in real life situations. However, that linguistic luggage needs to be exploited, that is, has to be allocated time for practice. In that way, preparations would have met opportunities. All along my training at the 'Lycée du Saint Esprit', I came across one student complaining. He said: "I do like novels. But I want to learn to speak English, not just read it."

It is quite understandable that the student is complaining about not to having the opportunity to practice his English. With respect to reading, Greenwood (1996: 6) found out that "... less academic students are also unwilling or reluctant readers. Reading is for them a passive, boring activity, performed constantly in isolation..." Similarly, Griffith and Klesius (1996: 9) argue that "... And do not read READERS which are long and bear comprehensive linguistic uses, forms and conventions which they can emulate in real life circumstances..."

And this is quite similar to the situation in Burundi where since the 1980[5] we have been rapidly spawning a generation who, given free time, prefer to fill it with either the quick thrill of video, or comics and carton strips. The result has been a population incapable of self-expression, and reflection-skills which are theoretically available at all academic levels.

Although the readers' attitudes so far cited are generally negative, the researcher happened to discuss with one of the English teachers at Lycée Vugizo and heard from him the following students' pleas to their teachers about READERS:

Student 1: "you always tell us to go to Library to read novels, but they are too much difficult! I always have to look up so many words in the dictionary!"

Student 2: "my dad gives me novels to read, but they are so long! Just imagine, the same book, week after week, all term! Boring! Teachers, how about some short stories?"

Student 3: "Excuse me Madam, could you recommend a novel that I might read to improve my English? I need more vocabulary and you've always commented that reading helps"

Those students' pleas are directed to their English teacher and were delivered by one of the teachers of the school while holding a conversation with the researcher. The requests reflect that there are some students who are aware of the value of READERS and feel the need for the teachers' assistance in using them properly.

2.5. Activities Involving Supplementary READERS in the English Language Classroom

The skills required to read with depth and pleasure have to be nurtured; they do not develop overnight (Brumfit, 1985: 21). As Gambrell (1996: 17) points out the range of activities available to the teacher who embarks on exploiting READERS in teaching is large. However, as Pearson (1987: 32) indicates out it/is the resourcefulness and enthusiasm of the teacher that will dictate the success of these activities.

What these activities should have in common is the learners' close involvement with each other and with the READER, and the acknowledgement of the use of READERS as part of a process rather than as a product to be measured by the yardstick of comprehension questions or number of READERS superficially read within a school term.

A number of studies have shown that activities in the reading classroom should fall under three major categories: pre-reading, while-reading, and after-reading activities (Gambrell, 1996; Greenwood, 1996; Hedge, 1994 and Silbersein, 1994). Activities designed for pre-reading sessions attract the reader's appetite and stimulate curiosity to read. One way of stimulating interest is to withhold the READER spend time building interest in and curiosity about characters, places, themes and actions by permitting only glimpses of small selections from the text. In this connection, Hedge (1994: 3) cautions that "... These bits must be carefully selected. They must stimulate curiosity but not provide so much information that the need to read is removed..."

The while-reading stage increases the reader's awareness and encourages him/her to look more closely at the READER before its completion, and also enables the teacher to gauge how successful the READER is and perhaps modify and adapt aims and place. At this stage, learners should be actively engaged in negotiating for meaning, through activities that place emphasis upon the recycling of facts and key language. In this connection, Collie and Slater (1987: 27) recommend that "... Learners must be taught how to read and respond to books and not simply to answer questions...". According to Collie and Slater, learners should be encouraged to read in a variety of roles such as travellers, astronauts, policemen, doctors, business persons, beggars, and many others. As for Sesnan (1991: 13), he states that "... Assuming roles increases their interest, pleasure and involvement..." He goes on saying that "... This prepares the learners to communicate effectively in different life situations..."

Finally, the after-reading stage should encourage the learners to reflect upon what they have read and help them to expand and enhance their perceptions. Activities at this stage should provide opportunities from communication and interaction among learners. Learners

should have the opportunity to enter the author's world without the traditional teaching method of comprehension checks.

In short, this study endeavoured to encourage teachers to grant learners access to the world of the READERS and enable them to perceive the writers, skills and aims while practising a wide range of language skills, which will enhance the learners' communicative competence.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

In this section, I present the different techniques used all along the period of collection of data. Like in other works where researchers chose the appropriate techniques that may guide them in achieving the best results, herein, the researcher shows the way he sampled the population, the way they did lesson observations and the instruments he used.

3.2. Research Design

I used a participatory action research design. I focused on improving the standard of English using supplementary READERS. Together with collaborating teachers, the researcher collected and analysed baseline data on the use and usefulness of READERS, and the attitudes of both teachers and students towards READERS in the language classroom. The findings were tested by feeding them back into changes in classroom practice through designing and using activities which exploit READERS as sources of language teaching and learning material. There, data was collected through lesson Observations, interviews, focus group discussions and S.W.O.P. (strengths, weaknesses, objectives and problems) analysis. The data was analysed qualitatively to establish the effect of the change in classroom practice on language proficiency.

3.3. Sample

The sample consisted of 2 categories of subjects, that is, the category of students and another one of teachers. I dealt with, two secondary schools from Bujumbura mayorship, that is, the 'Lycée du Saint Esprit' and the 'Lycée Vugizo'. The reason for choosing those school is that first I did my student teaching training at the 'Lycée du Saint Esprit' and that it would be easy for me to gather information in that I got a chance to notice some realities before.

Secondly, the Lycée Vugizo facilitated me in terms of distance as far as the means of travel were not favourable. At each of the two schools, I selected two classes from the upper level, that is, the 3rd form and 2nd form Arts. The reason of choosing the upper level is that, considering that most public schools start the English programs at 6th form secondary school, it wouldn't be easy for students from lower level to read and understand books (READERS) written in English. On the other hand, I judged the upper level as the level of reading and understanding. My study was concentrated in the art section because students from there are likely to read more than those from the scientific section who in fact, do not even have enough time to join READERS. In each class of each school, I sampled a third of the population following the alphabetical order. At the 'Lycée du Saint Esprit', the 2nd form Art was constituted of 45 students and I had to deal with 15 students; the 3rd form was made up of 48 students and I dealt with 16 subjects to be counted from the number one alphabetically. There was no gender distinction. At the Vugizo Lycée, the 2nd form Art comprised 43 students and I sampled only 14 because I couldn't manage to question half a person. The 3rd form had 49 students and the sample was 16 subjects. The category of teachers is made of teachers teaching respectively in the classes I dealt with, which gives a total of 4 teachers.

Consequently I requested each teacher to follow up the subjects of his own class who had been interviewed after the first lesson observation in the process of collecting baseline data. In fact, they had been interviewed about what they think of using supplementary READERS in the process of learning the English language. At the same time I suggested ten English READERS to my subjects to read in the course of more or less 3 months.

Thus, sixty one (61) students were actively involved in the study, although one hundred eighty five (185) of my population benefited from teaching.

3.4. Instruments

In order to collect baseline data on effect change and monitor action during the study, I relied on several techniques. These were lesson observations, semi-structured interviews, SWOP (Strengths, weaknesses, objectives and problems) analysis, focus group discussions and INSET (In-Service Training) workshop. Each of these techniques is described, and samples appended.

3.4.1. Lesson Observations

Observation forms with criteria devised by the researcher were used as tools for observing reading lessons to collect baseline data at the beginning of the study. In fact, my first lesson observation took place in May 2005 at both schools and in all the 4 classes. My second lesson observation was conducted later on in September after about 4 months. In the first lesson observation, I was observing reading lessons. In the latter, I observed the way the teacher proceed to teach the lesson and how students behave all along the reading of texts. Concerning teachers' techniques, there are some who told the students to read silently in a 10

minutes period and then read after themselves loudly only once and then asked the students to read one by one. Then, they passed to the comprehension questions. Others read first and students followed carefully. After, students read aloud and then answered the comprehension questions. Other teachers thought of selecting from texts some words they judged difficult and wrote them on blackboard with their meanings, before the reading, in order to help students to understand the text. During the first observation, none of the teachers thought of asking students to tell the text story in few words, that is, the summary of the text after they had already answered the comprehension questions. Nor did they think of creating an atmosphere of discussions about what students thought of characters, about the moral lesson, etc. The same format was used, 4 months later, for observing language lessons where suggested supplementary READERS were being exploited as a source for teaching and learning materials. At this time, each of the subjects was asked to tell the story of what he had read and his classmates asked him questions. Likewise, it's like a whole class discussion which creates a climate of not fearing to express oneself. During the observation, I did not forget to take into account of pronunciation, fluency, hesitations to speak, etc., and then compare them to the first observation.

3.4.2. Structured interviews

To establish the value of supplementary READERS in the language classroom, two different sets of flexible interview guides were designed to find out both the teachers' and students' attitudes towards classroom activities involving READERS. The interviews were held both at the beginning and at the end of the study. In both instances, the students' responses were carefully analysed to check on their language proficiency, and for

triangulation purposes. All responses from both teachers and students were written down and kept in a safe place. The two sets of flexible interview guides are recorded in appendix.

3.4.3. S.W.O.P. Analysis

To further establish the use and usefulness of READERS and for triangulation purposes, S.W.O.P. analysis sheets, designed by the researcher were used by the English teachers to analyse the strengths, objectives and problems of using READERS in the language classroom. This analysis was done both at the beginning and at the end of the study. The analysis covered both schools. The SWOP analysis sheets are recorded in appendix.

3.4.4. Focus group discussions

These are discussions held in English where both teachers and their students express their own ideas about the current classroom practice in exploiting READERS, the use and usefulness of READERS. During the discussions both teachers and students tell their attitudes towards classroom activities involving READERS. These discussions were held within language classrooms both at the beginning and end of the study. They elicited the same information that had been collected using the other research instruments for purposes of triangulation. I myself participated in the discussions and wrote down the information on a sheet of paper.

3.4.5. INSET Workshop (In-Service Training Workshop)

This part consists of planning, preparing and running a four-day workshop for the English language teachers by the researcher, in order to find out how READERS can be used to improve the standard of English. The purpose of the INSET Workshop is threefold. First of all, it was meant to give a chance to the teachers to share experiences and insights on whether the effective exploitation of READERS can help ameliorate the standard of English. Secondly, it was aimed at designing activities that would ensure the effective use of READERS in the English language classroom. Thirdly, it was to give an opportunity to the teachers to demonstrate using the designed activities to check their impact on the teaching and learning of the English language. The designed activities are such as proposing texts from the Today's English to the students so that they could read them on their own at home and then could answer the comprehension questions and give the summaries orally according to how they understood the texts in class with others. Afterwards, students had a chance to discuss among themselves and with their teacher. The workshop was conducted by the teacher who was to report the information about the strengths and weaknesses of his students to the researcher after a period of four days. This workshop took place at both schools and this had to be done before the researcher suggested the READERS to the subjects for study.

3.5. Research Procedure

After approval of the research topic, I designed lesson observation forms, interviews guides and SWOP analysis sheets. I administered them on a pilot run and then adjusted them accordingly. Then I requested and oriented the teachers of English language at the concerned schools, selected subjects and eventually collected baseline data. This data was analysed and

the findings were fed back into changes in classroom practice through INSET and subsequent classroom teaching.

To determine the impact of exploiting READERS in the language classroom, data was collected through lesson observations, structured interviews, focus group discussions, SWOP analysis and both students' and teachers' responses to the interviews. All the data collected was analysed quantitatively and presented in summaries, categories and frequencies.

For ethical reason, the teachers preferred anonymity. Thus the researcher in reporting the findings used letters to refer to the different teachers who fully participated in the study.

3.6. Data Analysis

The researcher drew up four major types of data: accounts of lesson observations, responses to structured interviews, focus group discussion protocols, and SWOP analysis notes as outlined below.

3.6.1. Accounts of Lesson observations

In fact, there were in form of codes and comprehensive notes that were summarised by the researcher in order to keep a precise report about classroom practice in using READERS. The researcher observed and analysed teacher's techniques while teaching a reading lesson. He then took into account students' pronunciation while reading and their fluency while speaking English. This was observable whenever students were summarising orally the texts or while they were answering comprehension questions. Then the observation report made at

the beginning of the study was compared with the one at the end, to check the nature of change in classroom practice and the students' language performance.

3.6.2. Interview responses

Both the teachers' and students' interview responses were written down, examined, categorised, counted, summarised, and some were quoted verbatim (See appendices 7 and 8) to establish their perceptions of the value of READERS, and their attitudes towards using READERS in the language classroom.

3.6.3. Focus group discussions

After the researcher had collected the information from focus group discussions by writing down what were the opinions of both students and teachers about the use of READERS, he then compared them to the interviews' responses and observations' reports after having examined and summarised them, to ensure the validity and reliability of the information that had already been obtained.

3.6.4. S.W.O.P. Analysis protocols

Teachers summarised on a sheet of paper given to them by the researcher, the strengths, weaknesses, objectives and problems of using READERS in a language classroom. Afterwards the researcher collected them and analysed them qualitatively.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

In this chapter, the findings are presented on the research questions reflected in the following sub-headings:

- What do the students think of the value of READERS?
- How to the teachers view the value of READERS?
- What are the students' attitudes towards using READERS in class?
- What are the teachers' attitudes towards using READERS before INSET?
- Is there any evidence on language use from the language classrooms?
- How were READERS used after INSET?
- Is there any evidence on language use from interview responses?

4.1. What do students Think of the Value of READERS?

Examination of students' interview responses and their distribution among categories disclosed predominant views about the value of the READERS. Their views both at the beginning and the end of study are summarised in Table 1. Both schools are put together.

Question: What are your views about the contribution of supplementary READERS?

Respondents: Students

Number of respondents: 61

Table 1: What are your views about the contribution of supplementary READERS?

	Responses to Interviews		
Category of response Items	**First round**	**Second round**	**% increase in responses**
Improve pronunciation	20	36	26
Improve reading	55	61	10
Improve speaking	46	51	8
Help to get information	61	61	-
Increase vocabulary	38	57	31
Good leisure activity	53	61	13
Break monotony of academic work	4	52	80
Share others' experience	13	61	79
Prepare one for future encounters	10	50	66

At the level of the first round of interviews, the table shows that of 61 students, 20 argue that READERS help improve pronunciation, 55 say that they help improve reading, 46 that they contribute to improving speaking. The total number of the subject, that is 61 say that READERS help get information, 38 that they help increase vocabulary, 53 that it is a good leisure activity, 4 indicate that READERS break monotony of academic work, 13 that they help share others' experience, and 10 let us know that READERS prepare one for future encounters. With analytical spirit, we can observe that the categories of highest frequency were "To get information", "Improve reading", "good leisure activity" and "Improve speaking".

At the level of the second round interviews, the table shows that out of 61 respondents, 36 sustain the improving pronunciation, the total number is for the improving reading, 51 are for the improving of speaking. All the subjects argue that READERS help get information, 57

sustain the increasing vocabulary, 61 that is, the total number are for the good leisure activity, 52 that READERS break monotony of academic work, the total number say that READERS help share others' experience, and 50 let us know they help prepare one for future encounters.

However, at the end of the study a better perception of the value of READERS is reflected through the increase of frequency of response in all categories. There was a remarquable increase in responses of 80% in breaking monotony of academic work, 79% in sharing others' experiences, and 66% in preparing one for future encounters. Thus, students developed a better view of READERS after their teachers had used them effectively in class.

4.2. Teachers' Views of the Utility of Supplementary READERS

Baseline data obtained from the teachers through structured interviews, focus group discussions and SWOP analysis disclosed that the teachers were all well aware of the value of READERS in reinforcing the English Language learning and teaching as reflected in Table 2.

Question: What do you think of the usefulness of supplementary READERS?

Respondents: teachers

Number of respondents: 4

Table 2: What to do you think of the Usefulness of supplementary READERS?

	Responses	
Subjects / **Category of value**	**Agree**	**Disagree**
Improve comprehension ability	4	0
Widen vocabulary of English language	4	0
Facilitate creative writing	3	1
Improve fluency	4	0
Improve reading speed	4	0
Improve communication skills	4	0
Develop students' imagination	3	1
Expose students to functional use of language	4	0
Improve spelling	2	2

The table shows that all the 4 respondents that were concerned agree with the fact that supplementary READERS improve students' comprehension ability, widen vocabulary of English language, improve fluency, improve reading speed, improve communication skills and expose students to functional use of language. The table shows also that out of 4 respondents, 3 agree with the fact that READERS facilitate creative writing whereas 1 denies it. 3 teachers sustain that READERS develop students' imagination and 1 rejects the idea; out of 4 respondents, 2 argue that they improve spelling and 2 other ones do not thing so against. On the whole, the high percentage values ranging between 50 to 100 percent is an indicator that teachers strongly agreed READERS are a valuable language resource.

Table 3 : Students' Attitudes towards using READERS

Respondents : students

Number of respondents: 61

Question: What do you think of Using READERS to reinforce English Language Learning?

	Responses/Answers		
Type of comment	**Yes**	**No**	**No comment**
Enjoy reading	54	0	7
No time for reading READERS	61	0	0
Teachers do not bring READERS to class	40	21	0
Reading during holidays	45	6	10
Burdensome to look up difficult words	47	0	14
Reading is slow and boring	52	0	9
Prefer films to reading	61	0	0

The table reveals that for 40 out of 61 respondents, teachers did not bring READERS to class at all. Thus, students hardly had opportunity to read in class. However, 45 respondents claimed that they read during the holidays. 47 complained that some books are difficult to understand yet when they watch the films the action helps them to understand, even if they do not hear each of every word.

Whereas for a book one needs to look up difficult words in the dictionary, then, the reading gets slow and boring as claimed by 52 respondents. All the respondents prefer watching films to reading, at the same time, they argue that they have no time for reading READERS. The table shows also that out of 61 respondents, 54 sustain the idea that through READERS, they enjoy reading.

4.3. Students' Interview Responses Quoted Verbatim

Student 1: I enjoy reading but our time-table is so packed that we always have homework. But I read during holidays.

Student 2: Novels are much too difficult; I always have to look up so many words! But when I watch VIDEO I can understand the story even if I don't hear some of the words.

Student 3: Books are long you can watch a film for only three hours, and spend a whole holiday reading the same book.

Student 4: It is easier to be distracted while you read but when watching video you can ignore all the people around you.

In short, as reflected in the students' responses, the students' attitudes towards READERS are generally negative. They have no time to read during school time yet, when they have time during the holidays, they prefer watching films to reading, claiming that READERS are difficult and long.

4.4. Teachers' Attitudes towards Using READERS in Class

The teachers' justification for neglecting READERS or not using them at all is reflected in their statements, which are quoted verbatim from the teachers' interview responses.

Teachers' comments:

Teacher A: -"Reading is satisfactorily catered for in the Today's English course Book. I don't see why I should waste class time reading READERS with my students. I always advise them to read during their free time".

- "Books are very costly these days and our headmasters' priority is to put up new buildings for they are easily noticed by the parents. No parent has ever inquired whether students read story books".

Teacher B: "Given the congested school time-table I cannot see how I can convince my students to read READERS during class-time. They consider it a time wasting activity."

Teacher C: "Parents are interested in purchasing text books for other subjects one can hardly convince them to buy READERS to reinforce their children's language."

Teacher D: "Using READERS in the classroom demands a lot of preparation on the part of the teacher. I have no time to waste. I have to work elsewhere to subsidise my salary."

The teachers' comments illustrate four main views. First, that teachers are fostering the students' reluctance to read by consoling themselves that the passages in the Today's English course book provide enough reading material. Then, that teachers feel that READERS are preventing them from doing something more important for their students, and deprive the students of learning time. At the same time, parents are also not bothered about their children's language improvement. Finally, that teachers are unaware of how to use and exploit READERS in their classrooms. These attitudes are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4 : Teachers' Attitudes towards Using READERS

Respondents: teachers

Number of respondents: 4

Question: what do you think of using READERS in class?

	Responses	
View	**Agree**	**Disagree**
Passages in the course Book are enough	3	1
READERS deprive students of learning time	3	1
Parents are not bothered about students' language	4	0
Cannot measure that learning has taken place	2	2

From table 5, the teachers' attitudes towards using READERS in the language classroom are generally negative. 3 teachers out of 4 claim that the passages in the course Book provide enough reading material for the students. In addition, 3 teachers say that READERS deprive students of learning time.

According to the total number of respondents, that is 4 teachers, parents seem not bothered about the students' language improvement as long as their academic results are good. Whereas, 2 respondents are at a loss as to how they can measure that learning has taken place when they use READERS.

4.5. Some Evidence from Language Classroom

Baseline information about the current use of READERS in the language classroom is presented in Table 6. The activities presented within the table are relevant to the use of supplementary READERS in the sense that they are related to how READERS are used by teachers.

Table 5: Teachers' Use of READERS with Students

	Responses	
Activity	**Used**	**Not used**
Using READERS in class	1	3
Students sent to library	1	3
Using READERS just to keep students busy	1	3
Sustained silent reading in class	1	3
Teacher reading with students	1	3
Using the Today's English Course Book	3	1

During the lesson observations that were carried out in April 2005, it was observed that among 4 respondents, only one used READERS with students. One teacher out of 4 sent the students to the library, instructed each to pick a book to read, and then write a book review as homework. 1 teacher out of 4 brought READERS of different titles to class from library, issued them to the students and asked them to read silently while the teacher marked their previous composition work. Towards the end of the lesson, the teacher wrote some general questions on the blackboard and instructed the students to answer them as homework. While another teacher brought READERS of the same title Jurrasic Park and then asked the students to read loudly in turns. As each student read, the teacher interrupted either to repeat a mispronounced word, a wrongly intoned question, or fill in an omitted word. Thus, the reading was heavily punctuated with the teachers' corrections. In addition, "the lesson is tiring and boring although the book is interesting", said the teacher.

The remaining 3 teachers were using the Today's English Course Book, in which all the language skills are catered for. However, the researcher realised that those teachers were following the course Book as Gospel truth, without adapting the course materiel to their students' needs.

Thus, in 3 of classrooms READERS were not being used. While in 1 classroom where they were used, they were used wrongly, such that both teachers and students ended up with a lot more work to do, frustrated and bored.

4.6. How READERS Were Used after the In-Service-Training

In this section, the researcher analyses accounts of lesson observations done in September 2005. In fact, the training was provided by the researcher himself. During the second set of observations, the researcher realised that the teachers were using READERS to teach different aspects of the English language.

Teacher A from the 3rd form was teaching vocabulary using a crossword puzzle, exploiting all information words the students had come across in their reading of Mother Theresa.

Teacher B was teaching summary writing in 2nd form using short READERS: The Fruits of Betrayal and Lost in London.

Teacher C was using close passages in 3rd form, drawn from READER Strangers on the Train to teach articles, adjectives and pronouns.

Teacher D in 2nd form helped students to practice asking and answering questions orally through a story quiz based on a READER they had read for homework, Book of Heroic Failures. He also taught creative writing based on READER using predictions from the title, from cover design and anticipation of plot, exploiting Oliver Twist.

All the above innovations had been discovered during the INSET Workshop conducted by the teachers themselves. Thus, the fourth research question "How can READERS be used to improve the standard of English?" had been answered in practice as

reflected in the second set of lesson observations. During the INSET workshop, the teachers had initiated the answer to the exploitation of READERS in the language classroom. Back in their schools, the teachers used READERS guided by the activities they had designed during the workshop. And the answer to the question is crowned in the teachers' perceptions of changes in the students' language proficiency, which are summarised in Table 6.

Question: How do you perceive changes in your students' English language proficiency?

The answer is given are summarised in Table 6.

Table 6: Teachers' Perceptions of Changes in the Students' English Language Proficiency

	Perceptions		
Aspect	**Improved**	**No change**	**No comment**
Reading speed	3	1	0
Vocabulary	4	0	0
Readiness to speak	3	0	1
Level of comprehension	3	1	0
Ability to discuss	2	1	1
Fluency	3	0	1
Grammatical accuracy	4	0	0
Pronunciation	3	0	1
Creative writing	3	1	0

Table 6 summarises what the teachers felt about the students' language improvement after effectively using READERS for about 5 months after the first observations period. In fact, these 5 months include more or less 3 months of school time and 2 other reserved for great holidays. Overall, the teachers perceived that the students' English language had improved as reflected in the table. For instance, the table shows that 4 out of 4 respondents reported an improvement in both vocabulary and grammatical accuracy. While 2 or 3 out of 4 perceived an improvement in all the other aspects. Thus, READERS were used to improve the students' standard of English.

4.7. Evidence from Interview Responses

The interview questions consisted of asking students what they think of using READERS in English language classrooms, whether they usually used them in class or not, what they think of their value, whether they like to read or not, whether their teachers helped them to read or not and other questions concerning the use of READERS.

Table 7 summarises what I felt about the students' speaking after the teachers had used READERS in teaching English. I came up with this summary after analysing concurrently and comparatively the two sets of students' interview responses.

Table 7: Researcher's Perceptions of Changes in Students' Oral English Language Proficiency

	Rate of progress		
Aspect	**At the beginning %**	**After using READERS**	**Improvement %**
Confidence	18	95	77
Grammatical accuracy	13	63	50
Fluency	10	71	61
Pronunciation	43	57	14
Length of utterances	60	89	29

With regard to how these aspects were measured, some questions concerning grammar were given to students for instance to put words in plural or singular and to put verbs in correct tenses. The confidence, fluency, pronunciation and length of utterances were analysed while students were answering orally, then there was a comparison with the situation before.

As reflected in Table 7, the students' confidence had greatly improved as 77% of the students were more confident and ready to answer the interview questions. I, as researcher also noticed that the overall fluency had improved in 61% of the students, grammatical accuracy also improved by 50%, and length of utterances by 29%.

Although there was an overall improvement in all the aspects categorised in Table 7, perceptions of changes in the students' pronunciation were less obvious with 14%. In general, I personally perceived that the students' oral English Language Proficiency had improved.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Discussion

The study endeavoured to discover the value of READERS as a catalyst for English language learning and teaching, teachers' and students' attitudes towards using READERS, the current use of READERS and how they can be used to improve the standard of English. The literature reviewed in Chapter two highlighted the value of READERS, teachers' and students' attitudes and how READERS have been used elsewhere in English language classrooms. Thus, this discussion dwells much in the values, attitudes and use of READERS among the population that I studied in relation with previous studies.

Question one: Are READERS a valuable resource for English learning and teaching?

As disclosed in the findings presented in chapter Four, both the students and the teachers used in this study acknowledge the value of READERS as a resource for English language learning and teaching.

As reflected in Table 4, students perceive that READERS can improve reading, speaking, pronunciation and comprehension. They can also break the monotony of academic work, and prepare the students for future language use. Thus, READERS are perceived as a total language learning resource. This perception is in agreement with Hedge (1994: 1) who states that "... the READER is conceived of as a springboard to propel the learner into manifold language learning activities..."

In line with the students' views, the teachers also acknowledge the value of READERS in reinforcing language learning (see Table 2). Like Greenwood (1996), they agree that READERS are samples of languages in use, which expose students to functional use of language and develop their imagination.

Furthermore, as reflected in Table 6, teachers' perceptions of changes in the students' English language proficiency support Brumfit (1985) and Widdowson (1975), who maintain that effective exposure to different READERS increases the learners' receptive vocabulary, and facilitates transfer of language forms to the real life situations the learners experience or encounter. The teachers reported that their students can now speak out, read faster, understand better, discuss with confidence and grammatical accuracy.

Overall, the value of READERS has been positively reflected in both the teachers' and students' perceptions.

Question Two: (a) What are the teachers' attitudes towards READERS in teaching English?

The teachers' attitudes were initially generally negative, as reflected in their interviews responses which are quoted verbatim in Appendix 8. Their attitudes were similar to those of the Nigerian teachers quoted by Barnes (1996). Like the Nigerian teachers, the teachers viewed READERS as a waste of time given the heavy school schedules. They also viewed them as an expensive luxury compared to other school priorities, and a leisure activity which students should do on their own, without the teachers' support.

3 out of 4 teachers had abandoned READERS in favour of the short passages in the Today's English Course Book (See Table 5). These teachers were in conformity with the view that "English as a subject has to conform to the constraints of the stringent time-tabling" (Brumfit, 1983: 1).

However, after the INSET workshop on 'Exploiting READERS in the language classroom' which inaugurated change in classroom practice, these teachers' attitudes were changed. In Implementing and trying out the activities in their own classrooms, the teachers realised how time-saving and beneficial the effective exploitation of READERS is.

In the end, the teachers' initial negative attitudes towards using READERS in teaching English were changed when they participated in INSET, and after trying out the INSET activities in their own classrooms. Gradually, they actually realized the change in their students' language proficiency. There was a lot of improvement exhibited in various aspects of the English language (See Table 6).

Question Three: (b) What are the students' attitudes towards READERS?

Like their teachers, the students' attitudes were also generally negative at the beginning of the study. As highlighted by Greenwood (1996), I encountered the problem of unwilling readers. The students' reluctance to read mainly stemmed from the pressure of the heavy school curriculum, and their access to video tapes. Most of the students preferred watching video to spending the whole holiday reading just one novel. They regarded reading as a slow activity compared to watching a tape of the same story, which in reality is true.

However, as disclosed in the students' interviews held at the end of the study, the students exhibited a positive attitude by acknowledging that READERS break the monotony of academic work, and are not associated with memorising and hard work as Pearson (1987) points out. The students now realise that READERS can comfortably be accommodated in their heavy school schedules for the reinforcement of their language skills as reflected in Table 4.

Question Four: How are READERS Currently Used in Teaching English?

On the basis of the findings of the lesson observation done at the beginning of the study, only 1 out of 4 (25%) teachers use READERS in their classrooms. And they mainly use them to occupy their students when they are overloaded with marking. Thus, there is inadequate exposure to reading books.

Confirming the view that READERS are not being used in most language classrooms, 3 out of 4 (75%) research subjects were not using READERS in their classrooms. They were only using the Today's English Course Book systematically, following the activities as designed by the authors, without considering their students' needs.

So, currently READERS are haphazardly used in teaching in a few classrooms. In most classrooms, the Today's English Course Book has replaced the READERS.

Question Five: How can READERS be Used to Improve the standard of English?

This question was answered during the INSET workshop, where activities based on READERS were designed to help teachers teach different aspects of the English language. The teachers shared useful ideas, suggestions, demonstrations and examples of classroom activities that are practical and relevant to the real-life circumstances in which most teachers work. Teachers were very willing to share the considerable knowledge they have gained through experience in their respective classrooms. In harmony with Brumfit (1985), they agreed that the Skills required to read with depth and pleasure have to be nurtured. Such skills do not develop overnight.

The teachers also agreed that if students are to become independent English language users, they need to experience a range of reading materials corresponding to the kinds of real life situations where they intend to use the target language. This is in agreement with Collie and Slater (1987: 3) who hold the view that "READERS offer a bountiful and extremely varied body of written material..."

Thus, according to the findings from the second set of observations, it has been noted that the teachers used READERS to teach vocabulary through crossword puzzles; summary writing through book reviews; articles, adjectives and pronouns through cloze passages; question and answer techniques through story quizzes; and creative writing through prediction and anticipation of plot. This is quite consistent with Gambrell (1996) who states that the range of activities available to the teacher who embarks on exploiting READERS in teaching English is quite large.

After using READERS in teaching different aspects of the English language, the teachers were able to report, at the end of the study, that their students' language proficiency has improved, as it is exhibited in Table 7. Thus, READERS have been used to improve the standard of English. The findings obtained from the second interview responses of the students also confirm the improvement in the students' language proficiency.

5.2. Conclusions

From the analysis of the findings, it is possible to draw several conclusions.

First of all, both teachers and students are aware of the value of READERS as a language teaching and learning resource, but they have been frustrated by lack of knowledge of how to effectively exploit READERS amidst the heavy School curriculum.

Secondly, with guidance and support, teachers are willing to adopt and adapt READERS in their English language lessons. During the INSET workshop, collaborative work, mutual reinforcement and support had strop implications beyond the surface level of experiencing a change in language teaching materials. Teachers' ability to apprehend their own practice bore a direct relationship on the collaborative team work developed. By sharing insights, learning about each other's classroom practice and supporting one another, teachers' motivation and self-confidence were enhanced. Thus, the readily put in practice what they developed during the workshop.

Then, it can also be concluded from the findings that the teachers realized that they can use READERS to teach different aspects of the English language. They discovered that

they could effectively use READERS without depriving their students of learning time. Teachers learnt adaptability by recognising the possibilities of developing different language teaching strategies using the same READER. The criteria they developed did not specify exactly how to go about a particular READER, but rather revealed a general awareness of the existence of different teaching strategies applicable to any single READER.

Finally, as reflected in Tables 6 and 7, it can be concluded that READERS are really a valuable resource for improving the standard of English. Both Tables reflect reinforcement in language proficiency.

5.3. Recommendations

Given the fact that effective exploitation of READERS can help to improve the standard of English, and bearing in mind the status and value of English in Burundi and all over the world, I would like to make some recommendations for teachers, the Ministry of Education, and future researchers.

The 'Bureau d'Etudes des Programmes pour l'Education Secondaire' direction should plan and design workshops in different parts of the country on 'The Exploitation of READERS in the English language classroom' in order to help the teachers to make proper use of the READERS already stocked in their Offices 'Bureau d'Etudes des Programmes pour l'Education Secondaire', in an endeavour to improve the standard of English. In turn, the teachers should take the initiative to put into practice, in their respective classrooms, what they came up with during INSET workshops.

The Ministry of Education Inspectorate should put in place and support Inspectors to follow up the utilisation of 'Bureau d'Etudes des Programmes pour l'Education Secondaire' books, monitor and evaluate the use of READERS, to ensure that all schools meet the minimum standards for education in Burundi.

It is also necessary for future researchers to further corroborate the findings of this research on a large scale. Replications of design and methodology, with different teachers and students in other areas of the country are also needed. In future research does corroborate these findings, they may carry further implications for effective teaching of English countrywide. Such implications will concern increasing the teachers' creativity in adapting READERS in the current language curriculum, and in turn, raising up the standard of English.

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Appendix 1

Reading Lesson Observation Form

Date.....
School ..... Teacher .....
Class ..... Number of students .....
Observer .....
Materials

Please record the main activity in each five-minute unit during the lesson. See below for the key to activities. Record by putting a tick (/) in the corresponding box.

Time Lesson Starts:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
0 - 5																
5 - 10																
10-15																
15-20																
20-25																
25-30																
30-35																
35-40																
40-45																
45-50																
50-55																
55-60																
60-65																
65-70																
70-75																
75-80																

1. Teacher distributing books
2. Students picking books for themselves.
3. Teacher giving instructions.
4. Teacher reading aloud.
5. One student reading aloud.
6. All the students reading aloud.
7. Sustained silent reading.
8. Pair-work activity.
9. Group-work activity
10. Class discussion.
11. Individual student speaking to class.
12. Students writing their own responses individually.
13. Teacher asking questions/Students answering orally.
14. Students writing by copying from the blackboard.
15. One to one teacher/student interaction.

Appendix 2

Teacher's Semi-Structured Interview Guide 1

1. Questions that reflect the teacher's view about the lesson he/she has just taught.

2. Questions that reflect how the teacher usually uses READERS in his/her classroom.

3. Questions that reflect the teacher's views about using READERS in class in spite of heavy school schedules.

4. Questions that reflect the teacher's views about READERS as a resource for language teaching and learning.

Appendix 3

Student's Semi-Structured Interview Guide 1

1. Questions that reflect the student's attitude towards reading as a leisure activity.

2. Questions that reflect what type of material that student usually read.

3. Questions that reflect the student's attitude towards using READERS in class.

4. Questions that reflect the student's view about READERS in developing language skills.

Appendix 4

SWOP Analysis Sheet

Date ..... Teacher ..... Class ..... School .....

SWOP Analysis of READERS in the current language classroom considering the strengths, weaknesses, objectives and problems involved.

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Objectives	**Problems**

Appendix 5

Teacher's Semi-Structured Interview Guide 2

1. Questions that reflect the teacher's view about the lesson he/she has finished teaching.

2. Questions that reflect the teacher's perceptions of the responses of the students.

3. Questions that reflect what aspects of the English language the teacher has so far taught using READERS.

4. Questions that reflect the teacher's perception of change in students' language proficiency.

Appendix 6

Student's Semi-Structured Interview Guide 2

1. Questions that reflect whether the English teachers have been using READERS in teaching English.

2. Questions that reflect what aspects of English have been taught using READERS.

3. Questions that reflect the student's views about what has been gained or lost during the lessons where READERS have been used.

4. Questions that reflect whether a student's English has improved or not.

Appendix 7

Students' Interview Responses Quoted Verbatim

Student 1: I enjoy reading but our time-table is so packed that we always have homework. But I read during the holidays.

Student 2: Novels are much too difficult. I always have to look up so many words! But when I watch video, I can understand the story even if I don't hear some of the words.

Student 3: Books are long. You can watch a film for only three hours, and spend a whole holiday reading the same book.

Student 4: It is easier to be distracted while you read, but when watching video, you can ignore all the people around you.

Appendix 8

Teachers' Comments Quoted Verbatim

Teacher A: Reading is satisfactorily catered for in the Today's English Course Book. I don't see why I should waste class time reading READERS with my students. I always advise them to read during their free time.

Teacher B: Books are very costly these days, and our headteacher's priority is to put up new buildings for they are easily noticed by the parents. No parent has ever inquired whether students read story books.

Teacher C: Given the congested school time-table, I cannot see how I can convince students to read READERS during class time. They consider it a time-wasting activity.

Teacher D: Parents are interested in purchasing text books for other subjects, one can hardly convince them to by READERS to reinforce their children's language.

Teacher E: Using READERS in the classroom demands a lot of preparation on the part of the teacher. I have no time to waste, I have to work elsewhere to subsidise my salary.

Teacher F: I am aware that READERS can improve language but, I have no way of checking that learning has taken place other than by asking comprehension questions. Yet I have no time for reading the books and then making the students' books.

Teacher G: Parents are mainly interested in examination results. Thus, I am trying to get through the syllabus to equip my students for examinations. I only send my students to the library so as to have time to mark their work.