研究ノート

# Extensive Reading in English as a Foreign Language/ English as a Second Language Contexts

Lawrence S. LEVY

## Introduction

Most individuals find language learning a challenging task that calls for substantial effort and resources. The challenge becomes even greater when reading is the only option that can help acquire fluency in a given language. Unfortunately, many people do not enjoy reading -particularly the current generation of young people that prefer to spend their spare time playing games on the computer or watching videos. In short, a major hurdle to the development of a reading culture in many societies is the existence of a negative outlook towards reading（Yildirim, 2014）. The conflict between needing to read in order to learn, and the aversion to reading seen in many learners, is poorly approached in many language programs. Educators would do well to actively work at developing a reading culture among many of today's learners. This paper postulates that the major barriers to the development of a reading culture among students can be overcome using the extensive reading approach, and that individuals trying to learn a second language will surely find extensive reading beneficial.

Individuals seeking to master a new language can only truly do so if they acquire excellent reading skills. However, one factor that hampers success in the acquisition of fluency in a second language is the observation that the approach used in many schools does not foster reading skills. According to Yildirim（2014）, teachers are partly to blame for the negative attitudes held by students towards reading. This is because of their preference for intensive reading, which essentially entails subjecting learners to study short texts while requiring them to examine the content of such texts closely. A major disadvantage of this approach is that learners have no influence on the material they read, which lowers their morale and interest. Furthermore, intensive reading often exposes learners to excessive new vocabularies, which is discouraging as it may lead to boredom and over taxation.

Extensive reading has emerged as a practical solution to the above problem from several perspectives. First, extensive reading ensures that students are given easy reading material. Teachers using the ER approach can either choose texts that match the reading competence of individual students, or allow the students themselves to choose the texts they want to read. Second, extensive reading differs from intensive reading in that it seeks to fulfil a number

of objectives, which include reading for pleasure, general understanding, and acquisition of information. In contrast, intensive reading is aimed at ensuring that a student fully understands a given concept, and does not really concern itself with the degree to which the student derived enjoyment from reading a given text.

Day, Prentice et al.（2016）define extensive reading（ER）as a teaching approach that encourages learners to read as much as they can in order to gain fluency in English and any other foreign language. This basic approach is based on the principle that reading is the best way of learning how to read. An interesting feature about ER is that students are given autonomy to choose the genre and volume of materials to read. However, instructors should be keen to ensure that the material chosen is easy to read. Through this approach, students benefit in a number of ways. For instance, they are able to capture the overall meaning of a particular text while at the same time finding great pleasure as well as enjoyment in reading. Moreover, students are not under any hard rules to read every book they choose; teachers using the ER approach allow learners to discard a book if they perceive it to be too hard or uninteresting.

## Usefulness of Extensive Reading in Language Acquisition

### Broad Content Exposure

Extensive reading has been proved to confer a number of benefits to students as well as teachers. To begin with, learners' comprehension skills are greatly improved through extensive reading. From the foregoing definition, it is easy to understand how this happens. Essentially, ER encourages learners to read as widely as possible, and this offers them comprehensible input. Bell（1998）explains that ER is more effective than traditional instructional approaches that tend to provide artificial, planned, and restricted exposure to foreign languages. In ER, there is no restriction to the volume of material that learners can read, and this gives them sufficient broad exposure to a given language. On top of this, extensive reading takes place in an environment that is tension-free. All these factors assist learners to comprehend a new language quite fast, and with minimal pain.

### Improved Fluency with Vocabulary

A second benefit of ER, to learners attempting to acquire fluency in a foreign language, is that it increases one's knowledge and mastery of vocabulary（Bell, 1998）. Studies reveal that it is not effective for teachers to attempt teaching vocabulary to students through direct instruction. That even though direct instruction may equip learners with knowledge of vocabulary, the result is often short-term in the sense that very few words can be retained in the learners' minds. To ensure that learners' acquire long-term mastery of vocabulary, ER has been used successfully. As Grabe（2009）notes, extensive reading facilitates vocabulary growth in that it builds and

develops the cognitive skills of learners. Through extensive reading, individuals develop the capability to remember new words and assign meanings to them. On top of this, extensive reading allows learners to create conceptual space in order to accommodate new words. This way, the learner in a natural manner acquires a vast collection of new vocabulary, and this is important in second language acquisition in terms of reading and writing fluency.

Regarding the usefulness of ER in vocabulary growth, Grabe（2009）reports that about 10% of all new vocabulary is learnt via reading exposure. The rationale behind this is that as a student comes across a new word when reading a book or any other material, he or she acquires new vocabulary. The more books the student reads, his/her vocabulary collection is enriched substantially. This clearly explains the connection between extensive reading and improved vocabulary growth within an English as a Foreign Language（EFL）/English as a Foreign Language（ESL）context.

It is important to note that mastery of vocabulary is not helpful to ESL learners alone; it also has an advantage to students who are learning English as their first language. Day and Bamford（2005）outline two categories of vocabulary as used in the context of ER. The first category, sight vocabulary, is manifested by students who are able to automatically recognize the meaning of a word when they see it in its printed form. In short, sight vocabulary develops when individuals read extensively, hence encountering a collection of words that are then synthesized into "a single, highly cohesive representation"（Day & Bamford, 2005 p. 16）. Due to this, a learner becomes so familiar with a given word that he or she can automatically interpret its meaning. Developing such capability is helpful to ESL learners as well as EFL learners. Within an EFL/ESL context, sight vocabulary is important as it increases learners' confidence together with their reading speed（Day et al., 2016）.

The second category, general vocabulary, entails mastery of many words. Day and Bamford（2005）posit that it is easy to understand texts if one has knowledge of as many words as possible, irrespective of whether the language they are learning is their first language or a foreign language. This is to say that comprehension of any language is largely determined by one's vocabulary. Although new vocabulary is sometimes learnt through guesswork（guessing the meaning of a given word as it is used within a particular context）, research shows that the easiest way of acquiring vocabulary is incidental learning, which takes place during reading （Day & Bamford, 2005）. Based on this finding, ER is particularly encouraged for all language learners in order to provide them with the massive vocabulary they require to become fluent in languages.

**Enhanced Motivation and Learner Autonomy**

Besides increasing vocabulary knowledge and building comprehension skills, due to its motivational effect, extensive reading is a very effective language instruction approach.

According to Bell (1998), the idea of giving students autonomy to choose the genre of material to read, as well as the pace at which to read, is in itself motivational because it addresses the needs and interests of individual learners. In addition to this, ER acknowledges and supports the fact that reading is an individual undertaking, hence the reason to allow individuals to learn at their personal pace depending on their level of proficiency (Nation, 1997). From another perspective, this implies that ER offers flexibility to learners and teachers.

Maley (n.d) categorically states that extensive reading is the cheapest and most effective way of building learner autonomy, while helping individuals obtain spoken and written fluency in a language. Supporting the assertion that reading is inherently an individual activity, the author highlights a key feature of extensive reading: it allows individuals to read anywhere and anytime they choose. In the same way, readers are at liberty to begin and stop reading whenever they want, and at their preferred speed. These advantages help a learner to interpret and visualize the material they read according to their own understanding.

## Improved Linguistic Proficiencies

### Spelling

It is equally important to note that extensive reading helps to improve students' proficiency in spelling. Based on findings from an investigation conducted among ESL learners in the United States, Day and Bamford (2005) state that students who read more tend to be better spellers. Similar findings were made among Japanese students studying English: reading for pleasure exposes students to a variety of target words that help in boosting one's spelling ability. From these findings, it is accurate to conclude that extensive reading is an approach through which individuals can improve their spelling skills

### Linguistic Proficiency

Another benefit of extensive reading in second language acquisition is that it improves learners' linguistic competence. According to Day and Bamford (2005), all studies that have been conducted in an attempt to identify the impact of extensive reading on learners reveal a common theme: an increase in overall proficiency in the language. In the US, for instance, research has shown that adult students who read novels for fun become more competent in terms of listening as well as speaking abilities. Similar results have been obtained in England and Hong Kong, with learners who read extensively demonstrating a notable improvement in linguistic proficiency (Day & Bamford, 2005).

### Writing Proficiency

At this point, it is worth acknowledging the contribution of extensive reading to the

improvement of writing fluency. According to Day and Bamford（2005）, it is quite impossible for one to learn how to write without learning how to read. In fact, the authors postulate that one can develop writing skills without necessarily enrolling in a writing class, or having obtained special instruction about writing. This is understandable if one considers that as an individual reads widely, he or she comes across new words, while becoming exposed and familiar with crucial concepts of grammar and sentence structure. There is development in understanding what "feels" correct from repeated exposure to the target language. As a result, the individual boosts his/her writing skills through reading alone.

## Reading Rate

It is not possible to overlook the connection between extensive reading and increasing reading rate, which is generally used to measure reading fluency. Quoting findings from multiple different studies, Day et al.（2016）state that students who read more are capable of reading faster than those who read less. This has a positive impact on language acquisition because of the reality that one cannot become a fluent reader unless he or she can read at a fast rate. Similarly, research has shown that people who can read fluently are also better readers as compared to slow readers. In the context of language learning, reading fluency is the capability of reading and processing words rapidly and correctly. With reference to this definition, it can be said that extensive reading produces fluent readers from a number of perspectives, the key one being individuals who have a good command of sight and general vocabulary.

## Extensive Reading vs Intensive Reading

In order to make a convincing argument about the effectiveness of extensive reading in language acquisition, Day et al.（2016）draw a comparison between intensive reading and extensive reading. Regarding the former, the authors observe that three major approaches are used: grammar translation, comprehension questions, and comprehension work. In brief, grammar translation is an approach in which students are required to read and translate short passages using their native language. While this approach has its benefits, it is worth noting that the passages are usually very difficult to read. Moreover, an undesirable outcome of the grammar translation approach is that it misleads students into thinking that learning English is all about studying grammar and translating passages. In addition, the approach is not motivational because of the high possibility that students will only engage in reading activities when they are in class or for studying.

Such an approach does little to foster active participation of students. In order to stimulate all students to participate actively in a language-learning activity, the author proposes extensive reading of texts and the maintenance of a reading journal, as these provide a forum through which learners not only read texts written in a foreign language, but they also get an opportunity

to reflect on the text. As a result, students have the time and opportunity to transcend the simple act of decoding and translating words; they can "enter into an interactive dialogue with the text" as they seek the meaning of that particular text（Alami, 2013 p. 41）.

The second approach used in intensive reading, the use of comprehension questions, also has its drawbacks in terms of improving language fluency. As the name suggests, the comprehension questions approach involves the reading of short passages and afterwards answering several comprehension questions. The purpose of this strategy is to evaluate the literal understanding level of students, besides helping them become knowledgeable in grammar and sentence structure. Day et al.（2016）argue that the comprehension questions approach is only useful for students seeking to demonstrate competence to pass entrance examinations. In short, the approach is of little use in language acquisition because it focuses only on grammar, and does not provide learners with enough reading material to build and expand their reading and language abilities.

The third approach, the comprehension approach, used in intensive reading, also has its shortcomings. Inasmuch as it seeks to improve learners' comprehension abilities through recognizing key viewpoints whilst at the same time building learners' vocabulary knowledge, the approach does not provide students with enough opportunity to read as sufficiently as they should in order to help them learn how to read. More precisely, the comprehension activities approach is faulted on grounds that it emphasizes teaching students how to read in order to learn, whereas the focus should be learning how to read（Day et al., 2016）. While this should not be misinterpreted to suggest that reading to learn is not important, the key point is that students who are trying to gain fluency in a given language need to acquire a substantial level of ability to read in order to be capable of effectively learning through reading.

An often quoted concept in texts addressing the advantages of intensive reading in language acquisition is Stephen Krashen's input hypothesis, which essentially states that the level of acquisition of a given language increases by one level above a student's current comprehension level when he or she is exposed to new materials that are of a level higher than the student's current comprehension level（Koch, 2009）. Popularly summarized as *i+1*, this hypothesis is the guiding principle in intensive reading. To be precise, it is assumed that intentionally providing new materials that are of a level higher than students' current comprehension level accelerates the ability of students to learn a given language. According to Koch, this comprehension focused level approach to applying the hypothesis is both flawed and ineffective; it subjects students to greater difficulties because they have to struggle to understand higher level concepts as well as vocabulary. As a result, if the material is beyond grasp, the natural motivation of students may go down, rendering the entire learning process a failure.

With reference to the 'i + 1' hypothesis, extensive reading has proved to be an effective approach. Simply put, extensive reading seeks to build comprehension abilities of learners

through reading simple concepts that match their level of comprehension（Koch, 2009）. A good illustration of the effectiveness of ER in language acquisition is the Start with Simple Stories（SSS）program. The program is self-explanatory; readers are encouraged to begin with easy-to-read books, and advance as they progress to higher grades. Similarly, the program permits readers to skip any unfamiliar words that they come across when reading. It is also allowed, even encouraged, to abandon a book if it seems to be uninteresting or difficult. The rationale behind skipping unknown words and abandoning uninteresting or difficult texts is that students are able to read uninterruptedly whilst also acquiring fresh vocabulary. In short, this practice builds the learner's vocabulary because he or she is likely to encounter a set of words multiple times.

From the characteristics delineated above, extensive reading, as exemplified through the SSS program, increases students' motivation to read. On a different note, extensive reading is beneficial in helping students to develop the capability to infer meanings in the process of reading. With reference to the SSS program, it is significant that use of dictionaries is highly discouraged. As Koch（2009）explains, the purpose of this is to ensure that students read texts that match their comprehension level. On top of this, avoiding consulting the dictionary is a more sure way of learning how to make meaning from words that are relatively new. By so doing, the learner acquires a collection of vocabulary, which is equally useful in second language acquisition.

## Effectiveness of Extensive Reading in Language Acquisition in Specific Contexts: Resource-Constrained Environments

The above discussion indicates that ER is helpful to all learners（both native and non-native speakers of a given language）. An interesting finding made about ER is that it is particularly suitable for learners in developing societies - those that face substantial challenges as a result of infrastructural deficiencies and other problems. Renandya（2007）outlines several factors that obstruct success in language learning, and these include lack of relevant, up-to-date coursebooks, under qualified teachers, and crowded classrooms. These factors can be summarized into the statement that successful language learning is obstructed by inadequate resources. Viewed from this perspective, it can be said that extensive reading is an effective approach of boosting language acquisition in developing societies because it helps solve the problem of insufficient resources. This is due to the fact that extensive reading sets no constraints as to the type of material that students should read.

Al-Homoud and Schmitt（2009）did a comparative study in which they sought to ascertain the effectiveness of extensive reading in boosting second language learning in a challenging environment. The study was conducted in a college in Saudi Arabia, a country where English

is not the official language. Subsequently, Saudi Arabia is taken to be an example of settings that are relatively resource-constrained when it comes to second language acquisition. Students who volunteered to take part in the study were split into two categories. One group, which can be regarded as the experimental group, was subjected to extensive reading by being allowed to choose the material they wished to read in order to improve fluency in English. The control group, on the other hand, did not have such freedom; they were lectured by a single teacher and instructed to read a short passage from a specific textbook. After this, the participants were required to answer comprehension questions.

At the end of the experiment, Al-Homoud and Schmitt（2009）observed significant differences between the two groups. Specifically, it was noted that the students who were allowed to select the texts to read recorded notable improvements in terms of vocabulary gains, reading speed, motivation to read etc. as compared to those for when reading texts were selected by the teacher. Based on this observation, Al-Homoud and Schmitt（2009）conclude that extensive reading produces identifiable benefits in terms of language acquisition in settings where resource constraints prevail. According to these authors, resources encompass a variety of factors, such as willingness of students to read, sufficient time to learn a new language, and reading materials.

Still on the issue of resources, Shoebottom（2016）has described the different factors influencing acquisition of a second language. The author categorizes these factors into two: internal factors versus external factors. Of particular relevance to this research are the external factors, which comprise aspects such as curriculum, opportunity, and a supportive environment. Concerning opportunity, Sudsa-ard（2013）posits that individuals need to be provided with ample opportunity to practice the language that they are trying to learn. Similarly, individuals who live within a supportive environment acquire fluency in a given language faster than those who live in non-supportive environments. A good illustration of a supportive environment is a situation where parents support their child, for example, by speaking English at home. Similarly, supportive environments exist where parents take their children to good language schools, thus enabling them to interact with other children who are more familiar with the language that the child is trying to learn.

In consideration of the above characteristics, it is fair to say that few developing societies can provide such supportive environments to their children. Dao（2014）cites Vietnam as an example; very few environments provide learners with an opportunity to speak English, apart from the school setting. In addition to this, it is reported that developing countries generally face a myriad of problems that obstruct effective second language acquisition. For instance, teachers in such countries are not adequately prepared to offer effective instructional programs due to the nature of teacher-training programs that are offered. Similarly, developing countries generally lack sufficient and relevant educational materials to facilitate comprehensive language learning.

On the same note, it has been observed that although technology, particularly the Internet has helped to promote extensive reading, most developing countries lack access to sufficient technological infrastructure. Moreover, even where technological tools are available, they are not adequate to cater for all students（Horvath & Medgyes, 2014）.

Low quality of education has been identified as one of the factors hampering development in third-world countries, especially Africa. Ambatchew（2005）reports a looming crisis in the educational systems of these countries if measures are not taken to improve reading skills in individuals. Citing the example of Ethiopia, the author asserts that teachers appear to be doing a meaningless job, particularly when it is considered that many Ethiopians students struggle with reading assignments. Ambatchew further discloses that calls have been made to introduce supplementary readers in primary schools in the country in order to improve reading skills. In essence, this indicates that extensive reading has been recognized as an approach that can solve the literacy challenges being faced in Ethiopia.

The case study of Ethiopia illustrates the shortcomings of intensive reading, and the usefulness of extensive reading in aiding language acquisition. According to Ambatchew（2005）, primary school teachers in the country have tried to stimulate reading skills in their students by using selected class readers. Unfortunately, an evaluation of the effectiveness of these readers reveals that the reading abilities of students have not improved by any substantial degree, even after being provided with class readers. Several causes have been outlined for this, such as unqualified librarians and untrained as well as demotivated teachers（Ambatchew, 2005）. More surprisingly, it is reported that most school administrators in Ethiopia deny students the opportunity to read extensively. Precisely, students at lower grades（grade 1-8）are either not allowed to utilize school libraries or are not eligible to borrow books from the library. All these validate the thesis that resource constraints are a major barrier to language literacy in developing countries. Having identified the above weaknesses in Ethiopia's school systems, Ambatchew recommends extensive reading as an effective strategy. Among the suggestions put forward is the proposal to allow students to select the type of readers they want to use in class.

Extensive reading seems to be an approach that can single-handedly resolve the resource limitations mentioned above. Again, this boils down to the fact that there are no rules or limitations as to the kind of reading materials that should be used. On the contrary, learners have the freedom to choose the texts they deem useful. In addition to this, extensive reading provides a solution to the problem of inadequately trained teachers, because the teacher is no longer in charge of the learning process; students are the ones who determine the kind of material to read. In short, an inadequately trained teacher can still be an effective teacher by being a dedicated role model.

One of the criticisms leveled against extensive reading is that it requires many books together with other printed texts（Dao, 2014）. The current Internet technology is regarded as

having provided a partial solution to this problem, specifically because it provides teachers and students with access to a vast collection of exciting and authentic materials. However, this poses a challenge to the feasibility of extensive reading in societies where such technology is either limited or totally unavailable. Thankfully, it is correct to say that most people today have access to the internet, whether in developing societies or those that are already developed. This is in light of the fact that most households, if not individuals, own mobile phones, and that most of the phones today are internet-enabled. For these reasons, it has become easier for learners to access materials for reading extensively from the comfort of their homes（Dao, 2014）. In addition, those who lack access to internet-enabled mobile devices can download as many materials as they want from the internet in the colleges or universities they attend. They can take these materials home with them, therefore boosting their reading skills and language fluency.

Asraf and Ahmad（2003）summarize the benefits of using extensive reading to promote the development of language skills in settings characterized by limited resources. Through the implementation of a program of extensive reading in rural schools in Malaysia, the authors illustrate the relevance of ER in boosting language acquisition in resource-constrained contexts. An important observation made by the authors is that students from rural schools perform more poorly than those from urban schools due to lack of sufficient facilities. One of the challenges identified as obstructing language development in rural schools in Malaysia is the lack of enough relevant reading materials. Additionally, students are challenged by lack of enough reading time due to the school timetable.

In order to address the above challenges, Asraf and Ahmad designed the Guided Independent Program in order to assist students to boost their reading ability. In line with the principles of extensive reading, the program was designed so that students had the freedom to select the books they wanted to read. In addition, reading took place in an informal atmosphere in which the teacher's primary role was to help students to derive pleasure from reading. Due to its informal nature, the program allowed students to retell their readings to the rest of the class. At the end of the program, Asraf and Ahmad found that most students found reading very easy. Likewise, students developed a positive attitude towards reading. Besides boosting their reading ability, the Guided Independent Program also helped students to improve writing skills, essentially because reading a variety of books had exposed them to many new words.

In their study, Asraf and Ahmad（2003）made an interesting finding: a significant number of students in rural schools have problems reading assigned English intensive reading texts unaided. This is a finding that partly explains the growing popularity of technology-aided education in the contemporary era. To be precise, technology has been found to be an effective tool of promoting literacy among young learners（Gilgore, 2015）. The Southern Regional Educational Technology Training Center（n.d）clearly describes the role of technology in boosting language acquisition. For example, the Internet offers a variety of free puzzles that help

individuals to enhance their vocabulary. Additionally, it provides free dictionaries that can assist in understanding the correct way to pronounce words.

Another application of technology in teaching is that it provides an environment wherein learners are allowed to connect the content that they read with other texts as well as the world that surrounds them. In short, technology-assisted learning helps students to make meaning of the content they read (The Southern Regional Educational Technology Training Center, n.d). In light of these uses, it can be noted that extensive reading can be used as a substitute for this type of technology-assisted learning in societies with limited access to technological tools of learning. This conclusion is based on the fact that in extensive reading, learners are allowed to read as many texts as possible in order to be capable of assigning meanings to content. Similarly, vocabulary growth is a major benefit of extensive reading. Based on the report that the Internet offers exercises that help in vocabulary growth, it seems that extensive reading helps in vocabulary growth, much the same way the Internet does.

**Sustained Silent Reading: An Example of the Benefits of Extensive Reading**

Like every other concept, ER has received a substantial share of disapproval from critics who argue that it has very little, if any relevance, in improving learners' literacy skills. Green (2005), for instance, argues that extensive reading may not produce significant literary benefits to learners, simply because it allows materials of all kinds to be incorporated into a student's library without being vetted to ascertain whether it adds literary value. The author believes that extensive reading would be more effective if teachers provided more guidance to students, the purpose being to enable them obtain a clear understanding of the purpose of the reading task. This school of thought also criticizes the concept of Sustained Silent Reading for emphasizing individual learning and downplaying or hence excluding the vital activity of guided learning.

The above criticisms appear to weaken when the outcomes of using the Sustained Silent Reading approach are evaluated. Gardiner (2005) provides a personal account outlining these benefits. The author reports having dealt with students who had difficulties learning English. To make the matter worse, most of the students had failed a couple of English classes that they had undertaken in the past. This meant that all traditional approaches of teaching the language had proved ineffective with these particular learners. As Gardiner relates, students learning English as a second language usually find it boring, and thus express outright disinterest in class. According to this author, sustained silent reading is very effective in stirring learners' interest, and motivating them to read on their own.

By definition, Sustained Silent Reading is a teaching methodology in which the teacher allows students to devote a couple of minutes every day to leisure reading. Normally, this task takes a maximum of 15 minutes, and is intended to stimulate reluctant readers into reading more. Sustained silent reading differs from other reading approaches because it is a voluntary

strategy that is implemented in small doses. By virtue of being voluntary, Sustained Silent Reading appeals to learners（Krashen, 2004）.

In response to the counterargument that extensive reading, specifically where reading is done for fun, has little literary merit, Alami（2013）asserts that it is okay to read for fun, as long as the material being read matches the individual's comprehension level. More importantly, the key goal of such kind of reading is to arouse the individual's motivation, eventually making him/her more fluent. On a different note, it should be remembered that reading, regardless of the purpose for which it is done, is one of those activities about which the saying 'practice makes perfect' makes sense. As Alami states, extensive reading is a sure strategy of becoming a successful reader. Individuals get better at reading when they read more. With continued reading, students not only become fluent readers, they also acquire unmatched intrinsic comprehension of grammar and sentence structure.

Another positive result of developing a reading habit is that extensive reading can also be seen to encourage social activity. It gives rise to a virtuous cycle wherein people can't help but talk about the texts that they read（Baker, 2013）. As a result of this, extensive reading is said to produce a positive 'Matthew effect'（or accumulated advantage）on readers. This phrase is coined from the biblical story where the parable of talents is taught to disciples. As the parable goes, individuals with more talents will be given more, while those with few talents are at a disadvantage because the little they possess will be snatched away from them（Baker, 2013）. In the context of extensive reading, this parable suggests that individuals who tend to read more will become better readers, while those who dislike reading find themselves losing mastery of any vocabulary that they knew before. It can equally be understood from the sentiment in the saying "the rich get richer and the poor get poorer".

**Implications for teaching practice**

Having made a strong case for the effectiveness of extensive reading in language learning, it is worthwhile to explore a number of important points that teachers should bear in mind when implementing the ER instructional approach. There is a huge collection of graded reading materials that are available from different publishers, and these can offer an excellent foundation for students learning foreign languages. Even so, controversies have been raised about the authenticity of some graded readers, and these concerns should be taken into consideration in order to ensure that learners only read materials whose authenticity is proven. In response to this controversy, teachers are encouraged to ensure that students read books, newspapers, and magazines that are specifically written for learners studying English as a foreign language. In addition to this, teachers are expected to encourage a collection of genres, such as fiction, science, classics, novels, and travel guides, depending on choice of individual students. In response to this view that some materials used in extensive reading are not

authentic, Day et al.（2016）advise teachers to discard such notions, and allow any material as long as it is appropriate and easy enough to read and understand. The most important point is that the learners are reading actively regardless of the authenticity of the material.

The choice of reading material notwithstanding, an important point to note is that extensive reading should be aimed at maximizing the involvement of all learners. To do this, Bell（1998）outlines several measures that must be taken. For example, it is vital that adequate arrangements should be put in place to make sure that books and other reading materials are available to students at the right time. Similarly, where students are required to maintain a reading journal, it is the teacher's responsibility to supervise the program to ensure that students make appropriate regular entries into their journals.

Inasmuch as extensive reading upholds the idea of reading being an individual activity, maximum results are achieved if the teacher regularly interacts with students in order to evaluate progress and offer necessary reinforcement. Bell（1998）recommends frequent conferencing between students and the teacher, as this not only provides room for assessment, but it also motivates students to read more. By doing so, the teacher gives the impression that he/she is interested in the kind of texts being read by students. Additionally, this is helpful in that it enables teachers to identify students who may be experiencing problems, and who may benefit by choosing a different text.

Another crucial implication of extensive reading for teaching practice is that despite the fact that assessment exercises have been found helpful in teaching, teachers should resist the urge to administer tests when using the extensive reading approach. Extensive reading emphasizes that students should not be subjected to the stress of tests. According to this concept, tests are a barrier to learning because they invoke pictures of memorization and rote learning. In order to avoid such images being formed in students' minds, teachers should hold back as much as possible from administering any form of tests. In addition to this, while it is necessary to encourage students to do extensive reading even at home, no homework should be given. Moreover, students should be allowed to feel like they are in charge of the learning activity. This means that the teacher should employ effective tactics to persuade students to read extensively both at home and in school, but he/she should not make this appear like a rule.

Lastly, it is very important that teachers maintain an atmosphere of entertainment through extensive reading programs. As has been learnt, extensive reading is intended to stimulate students' interest in reading, and this implies that reading should be pleasurable. In view of this, Bell（1998）outlines several strategies that can provide an entertaining atmosphere. For instance, it is okay if the teacher invites guest speakers to make a talk concerning a book that students have recently read. Alternatively, the teacher may design creative posters and leaflets that help students to develop a positive attitude towards reading. In settings where technological infrastructure is available, teachers can also utilize multimedia channels to promote certain

books. These and other strategies help in creating a reading culture among students while at the same time boosting their inspiration to read.

In the context of language programs with significant numbers of students repeatedly failing mandatory classes, adopting an ER approach may be a new avenue to explore for a solution. To date ER has been studied in comparison to traditional language classes with excellent results, it has not yet been suggested or applied as a solution to traditional classes that have been failing to successfully engage students. It is clear with these students that the traditional approach they have been labouring under has not been effective and language classes may feel like a kind of forced drudgery they are not willing to undertake. The paradigm shift of ER – focus on enjoyment, no constant formal tests, and freedom to choose what is read – may trigger a shift in attitude toward language learning. The freedoms encouraged by ER, in contrast to the traditionally structured classes that are not addressing the needs of these failing students, are new and individually empowering for these troubled learners and could be stimulating changes. There is a body of evidence that ER facilitates language acquisition without specific study of the language's details itself. In effect these students, like all ER practitioners, will learn while they are reading without even being aware of the specific competencies they are acquiring. Such discouraged learners my find it exciting to choose and read only what interests them and sharing it with peers. Encouraging these struggling learners to adopt a habit of reading for pleasure may be a method for bypassing their aversion to standard study methods they seem to reject that result in many learners' repeated failures. Getting such students to engage in any kind of linguistic learning activity would be a victory of sorts, and when supported by the teacher may even result in the virtuous cycle that pleasurable learning can result in. Faced with the reality of needing to help such underachieving students find a way to succeed at language study, at least enough to pass their classes, is alone good reason to consider instituting such an approach. For these learners it may remove or lower a significant hurdle to achieve meeting requirements for further study, or even graduation. If in addition it triggered a change in behaviour resulting in adopting a positive attitude to reading, as research in ER supports, the benefit could be life changing for these currently struggling learners. This paper proposes that application of ER for remedial language and learning purposes in general could prove to be a very valuable line of study and future research. It is suggested that such research should consider the effect on such learners in regard to extensive reading's effect on general language skills, attitude toward reading, self motivation to read more in general, and continuing to learn outside of class.

## Conclusion

Learning a foreign language is not easy, and most of the approaches that have traditionally been used to teach second language students have done little to ease the challenges involved.

With specific focus on intensive reading, essentially reading a short, often difficult passage, and answering questions afterwards, research has found that traditional approaches to second language acquisition largely focus on providing individuals with exposure to new words that may not necessarily match their comprehension levels. As a result, students end up feeling overwhelmed and bored. Additionally, intensive reading is not an effective approach for helping students to derive meanings out of new words unless they consult a dictionary. In short, it encourages memorization, whose benefits are only short-term and the detailed study of the language itself rather than learning and experiencing new ideas through the use of language as a tool for access to knowledge. In view of these shortcomings, extensive reading is more and more being seen as a most effective single approach in second language acquisition. The major advantages of this approach include improvement of linguistic competence, improved vocabulary, enhanced reading rate, better spelling ability, and enhanced writing skills. Additionally, extensive reading creates a positive attitude towards reading amongst students, while motivating them to learn more without necessarily being asked to do so. An important aspect about extensive reading, as presented in this research, is that it is applicable in settings where relevant learning resources are not adequate. It is noted that extensive reading has been found helpful in filling the gaps caused by resource constraints in the context of language acquisition. This paper has also postulated that the ER approach may provide a solution to the vexing problem of students being restrained from academic advancement due to failure in traditional language study programs. It is suggested that an avenue for future research should be the application of ER methods for students that are repeatedly failing in traditional programs. Understanding the above information, the adoption of extensive reading for EFL and ESL programs, in all educational contexts, should be embraced as a foundation for any such program.

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和文要旨

# EFL/ESL の文脈における多読

## Lawrence S. LEVY

　言語習得は、活動消費時間、努力、および資源が一体となったものである。この拙稿では言語学習における読書の役割について、「多読」における特定の関心とともに論考する。

　特定の能力に的を絞り幅広く訓練された精読は、積極的であるが物足らぬ結果を生み出すことがわかった。「クラッシェンの入力仮説」という一理論が、しばしば精読のための素材選択に適用される。この理論的なアプローチは、たとえトップダウンからの適用がほとんど不可能だとしても、長所を持っている。

　個々の学習者はそれぞれに異なっている。連動するテキスト中で学習者の習得準備ができた次の語彙項目を最もよく代表するものは、精読プログラムとテキスト上で行なわれるような「フリーサイズ」の選択にはなじまない。状況を複合的にとらえることは、現代の電子テクノロジーとエンターテインメントでは人気だが、結果として読書に否定的な態度を生じさせる。

　読書そして読書文化に積極的な態度を創り出すニーズが存在する。この論文は「多読」プログラムが、様々な状況下で多くの言語プログラムで観察された欠点を最もよく直すとともに、読書に積極的な態度を涵養することも可能だと主張するものである。

キーワード：extensive reading（多読）, intensive reading（精読）, sustained silent reading（持続的黙読）, start with simple stories（簡単な話から始める）, input hypothesis（入力仮説）, literacy（読み書きの能力）, language acquisition（言語習得）