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Extensive Reading in a Second Language:
Literature Review and Pedagogical Implications

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Abstract

Extensive Reading in a Second Language: Literature Review and Pedagogical Implications

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This Report explores the importance of including extensive reading (ER) program in English as a second language (ESL) or English as a foreign language (EFL) context. To find benefits and implications of L2 extensive reading, the Report reviews comprehensive literature on L2 extensive reading. Research has found that extensive reading enables L2 learners to achieve both cognitive and affective gains. Based on these findings, the report provides some pedagogical implications for an L2 program in ESL/EFL contexts. The suggestions include practical tips such as materials, useful ER activities, and a discussion of teacher roles in an extensive reading program.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Beginning in elementary school, Korean students take English classes for about two or three hours a week. In middle and high school, they take about four or five hours of classes a week, and most students also take private English classes after school. Obviously, Korean students spend a lot of time learning English. However, even when Korean students study English in and out of school, many of them still struggle with listening, reading, speaking, and writing in English. As an English language teacher in Korea, I was curious about the factors that can explain the lack of success in Korean students' English language learning. I argue that a lack of sufficient input causes learners to suffer during English language learning. According to Krashen (1997), to become fluent in the target language, their learners should be given abundant comprehensible input that is slightly above students' current level of competence. That is, students need to be exposed to a large amount of books and other print or non-print materials as well as listening materials in and out of the classroom. As many researchers argue, extensive reading can provide learners with opportunities to read in the target language and improve their L2 competence.

This Report investigates the benefits of extensive reading and its pedagogical implications. In Chapter 2, literature on extensive reading is reviewed and discussed to determine the impact of extensive reading program on the development of overall L2 reading competence, reading motivation, and attitude toward reading. In Chapter 3, based

on a comprehensive literature review, pedagogical implications are suggested. In addition, pertinent extensive reading materials are included, as well as a discussion about teachers' roles in an extensive reading program. Interesting and helpful extensive reading activities are also presented in this section. Chapter 4 concludes with some challenges using extensive reading encountered in EFL contexts and provides more suggestions for successful implementations of extensive reading programs.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 What is Extensive Reading?

Extensive reading in a second language (L2) is defined as “an approach to the teaching and learning of second language reading in which learners read large quantities of books and other materials that are well within their linguistic competence” (Day & Bamford, 1998, p.9). Students choose their own reading materials and read it for general meaning, information, and pleasure (Bamford & Day, 2004). Through extensive reading, students can develop good reading habits, build up knowledge of vocabulary and structure, and enhance positive attitudes toward reading (Richards & Schmidt, 2002).

Extensive reading is different from intensive reading (Renandya, 2007). In intensive reading, students usually read short texts with close guidance from the teacher. Intensive reading classes focus on obtaining detailed meaning from the text, developing reading skills such as identifying main ideas and recognizing text connectors, and improving knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. However, as described in the beginning of this chapter, extensive reading allows learners to enjoy reading without focusing on specific language features. While participating in extensive reading, students acquire necessary information and strive to understand the overall meaning of the text. Renandya (2007) argues that these two approaches should not be seen as being in opposition. That is, both serve different but complementary purposes.

Many researchers have found benefits of extensive reading. Krashen (2004) argues that extensive reading is critical in the development of L2 reading fluency, writing, grammar, and spelling. Extensive reading also fosters vocabulary growth and development (Horst, 2005; Lao & Krashen, 2000). Waring and Takaki (2003) also claim that a massive amount of reading helps L2 learners not only build new vocabulary but also develop “already known vocabulary” (p. 130). Additionally, ER enables L2 learners to better guess unknown words from contexts by refining background knowledge (Hayashi, 1999). ER also has a positive influence on the affective domains, including motivation and reading attitude. In the next chapter, important empirical studies on L2 extensive reading are reviewed and discussed to determine the impact of extensive reading on overall L2 competence, reading rate, fluency, reading motivation, and attitude toward reading.

2.2 Empirical Research on Extensive Reading

Many researchers have investigated the effect of extensive reading programs in ESL/EFL contexts over the last three decades. Elley and Mangubhai (1983) conducted an important study in the 1980s. Their research explored the effects of a reading-based program, the so called “Book Flood,” on the development of second language receptive skills. Subjects were 380 pupils in Classes 4 and 5 (9-11 years old) enrolled in 12 rural schools in Fiji. The study took place over the course of 8 months. This study compared two Book Flood groups (the Shared Book Experience and Sustained Silent Reading group) and the control group. In the Shared Book Experience method, the teacher read

aloud a high-interest story to students and implemented follow-up activities such as role-playing or art work. The Silent Reading method had students read self-selected books silently for 20-30 minutes in class. No follow-up activities were required. The control group followed a regular audio-lingual program. For the pre- and post-tests, the authors used the *STAF Reading Comprehension test* that contained 32 multiple-choice items, the *English Structures Test* with 20 open-ended items (for Class 5) and 35 multiple choice items (for Class 4), the *English Composition Test* that required students to complete a short story, and the interview-based *Word Recognition Test*. Their result showed that the Book Flood groups surpassed the control group in reading comprehension, and also demonstrated 15 months of reading growth in only 8 months. The Book Flood groups improved their reading comprehension skills at over twice the normal rate. For Class 4, the Shared Book group surpassed the Silent Reading group, however, for Class 5, there was no significant difference between these two groups. The Book Flood groups in Class 4 performed significantly better on the test of English structure than the control groups; however, the difference for Class 5 was not significant. On the Word Recognition test, the Book Flood groups showed higher means, but, the difference was not significant. In the written composition test, the differences between the Book Flood groups and the control groups were not significant.

Elley and Mangubhai (1983) conducted a one-year follow-up study to examine the permanence of the effects aforementioned. Subjects were pupils in Class 5 and Class 6 in all 12 of the schools in the previous study. The tests and methods used were also the same as in the previous study. In this study, the two Book Floods groups demonstrated

much greater progress in their English growth on all tests. Additionally, the differences were significant in all cases. However, there was no significant difference between the Shared Book group and the Silent Reading group in any case. In these two studies, the researchers found that L2 pupils exposed to a rich variety of high-interest story books made greater progress in reading comprehension and overall receptive skills. In addition, the one-year follow-up study found that continuous extensive reading has a positive impact on writing as well.

In the years following Elley and Mangubhai's work, many researchers investigated the impact of extensive reading on various areas. Specifically, they explored how extensive reading influences L2 learners' reading comprehension, reading rate, and reading fluency. Another area the researchers were interested in was how learners' L2 reading motivation and attitudes toward L2 reading changed after participating in an extensive reading program. Some researchers explored each area independently, and others examined both areas in a single experiment.

Hafiz and Tudor (1990) examined the effect of a 90-hour extensive reading program that used only graded readers on the fluency, accuracy, and range of L2 structures. Subjects were 25 male secondary school pupils (15-16 years old) in Pakistan. The experimental group read self-selected graded readers for 40 minutes a day for 23 weeks. The comparison group, however, only received normal English instruction. To measure the effect of the reading program, six 30-minute writing tests were used as pre-, during-, and post-tests. The essays written for writing tests were analyzed according to

the following categories: writing readiness, vocabulary range, syntactic maturity, and accuracy of expression.

Results showed that the experimental group made significant improvement in writing readiness (the total number of words written), vocabulary base (the number of separate words used) and accuracy of expressions, but showed no real improvement in syntactic maturity. The authors argue that improvement in writing readiness and vocabulary base enabled the experimental group to develop L2 reading fluency. Furthermore, the experimental group demonstrated dramatic progress in accuracy in terms of the grammatical structure of utterances, lexical choices, and spelling accuracy. However, the experimental group showed similar or slightly lower development in syntactic maturity than the control group. The authors suggest that a reduction in the complexity of the graded readers caused the decline in syntactic maturity. Therefore, extensive reading results in strong gains in fluency and accuracy in L2 competence. However, the use of graded readers can limit the development of syntactic features in L2 due to their simplified syntactic structures they offer.

Few studies had examined reading speed until Bell (2001) investigated the impact of extensive reading on reading speed and reading comprehension. Bell (2001) evaluated the effect of different classroom methodologies on reading speed and examined the relationship between reading speed and reading comprehension. Two groups of elementary level adult learners (n=26) in ESL classes in Yemen participated in this study. The experimental group (n=14) participated in an extensive reading program that featured class readers, a class library, and regular visits to the local library. The control group

(n=12) participated in an intensive reading course based on reading short passages and using follow-up exercises such as comprehension questions, cloze, multiple choice, and true/false items. The study continued for two semesters and the reading program covered one quarter of the total class time (36 out of 144 hours). Both groups did a great deal of reading and spent the same amount of time on reading. For pre- and post-tests, reading speed was calculated in words per minute (wpm) and reading comprehension was measured through cloze, true/false, and multiple choice questions based on selected texts.

Results showed that the extensive reading group achieved greater gains in reading speed and reading comprehension. The intensive group improved 14.08 wpm in mean speed. Alternatively, the extensive group developed 59.43 wpm in mean speed ($t=5.79$, $df=24$, $p<.001$). This result suggests that an extensive reading program based on graded readers is more beneficial to the development of reading speed than traditional reading lessons based on the close study of short texts. In the results of the reading comprehension tests, the extensive group achieved significantly higher scores than the intensive group. In the modified cloze-test, the mean gain of the intensive group was 2.45, but the mean gain of the extensive group was 7.50. ($t=5.22$, $df=23$, $p<.001$) Moreover, in the multiple choice and true/false tests, the intensive group achieved 3.18 in mean gain, but the extensive group acquired 8.57 in mean gain ($t=7.40$, $df=23$, $p<.001$). It turned out that intensive reading was less successful in developing comprehension than providing learners with opportunities to read high-interest storybooks. Thus, the study results pointed out that extensive reading is beneficial for elementary level learners to improve their reading speed and reading comprehension ability.

Some researchers wanted to explore both cognitive and affective gains through L2 extensive reading in their studies. Robb and Susser (1989) investigated the impact of an extensive reading program on the development of reading skills, reading comprehension, reading rate, and motivation. Thus, the researchers tried to examine the effect of extensive reading in both the cognitive and the affective domains. One hundred and twenty-five Japanese university EFL students participated in this study for one year. The experimental group read books from the SRA Reading Laboratory Kits 2c and 3a and answered comprehension questions during each 90-minute class period. During the treatment period, they also read a minimum of 500 pages at home and wrote short summaries. The control group used a skills-building reading textbook and practiced exercises designed to teach the skills required for efficient reading. An additional section of the textbook was assigned for homework. For pre- and post-tests, the authors administered the Multiple Skills Series Midway Placement Test (Boning 1977), which tested general skills such as understanding facts and vocabulary skills, specific skills such as making inferences, and reading speed. In addition, questionnaire on a scale of 0 to 5 (Disagree→ Agree) was administered to determine attitude toward L2 reading at the end of the semester.

Results showed that the experimental group scored significantly higher on the components, “Understanding the important facts” and “Guessing vocabulary from context.” In addition, the experimental group developed a significantly faster reading speed than the control group ($F=4.580$, $p<0.05$). However, with respect to “Getting the main idea” and “Making inferences,” there were no significant differences between the

groups. Furthermore, both experimental and control groups had similar scores on “Sense of improvement,” “Attitude toward method used,” and “Classwork.” However, the extensive group had higher marks on “Intrinsic interest in homework” than the control group (Extensive: 3.27, Control: 2.90 on a scale of 0 to 5 (Disagree→Agree), $F=4.457$, $p<0.05$). In particular, the experimental group found the assigned writing practice more interesting than did the control group. The authors suggest that the regular feedback on the required summaries developed the students’ sense of accomplishment. The researchers concluded that the extensive reading group performed significantly better than the control group on some measures of comprehension and equivalently on other comprehension measures. In addition, the experimental students became significantly faster readers after treatment, and they had more positive attitudes toward the extensive reading curriculum than the skill-based control group.

Lao and Krashen (2000) also evaluated the impact of popular literature reading on L2 reading competence (vocabulary acquisition and reading rate) and reading attitudes in the EFL context. Their experimental group consisted of 91 university students, and their comparison group was composed of 39 university students in Hong Kong. The experimental group read six books in one semester (14 weeks). The vocabulary size (estimated number of words) of the six books ranged from 28,000 to 100,000. The experimental group wrote their feelings and opinions after reading and then discussed the books in class. The comparison group learned traditional academic skills such as organization of essays, editing, proof reading, note-taking during lectures. To measure the acquisition of vocabulary, the Accuracy Level Test (ALT) was administered as a pre-

and post-test. The Rate Level Test (RLT) was also used to measure the reading rate. To examine student reactions to the course, researchers implemented a Reading Attitude Survey.

Results showed that experimental students made clear and significant gains in vocabulary growth and reading rate. The students in the experimental group acquired about 3,000 new words - from 17,000 to 20,000 words - over the course of the semester. However, the comparison students showed non-significant differences in the accuracy pre- and post-tests. Their vocabulary grew only 500 words, from 11,500 to 12,000 words. Furthermore, the experimental group made greater progress in reading speed ($t=11.54$; $df=178$ $P<0.0001$). The mean estimated reading rate increased from 235 words per minute (wpm) to 327 wpm. The comparison group did not grow significantly in reading speed ($t=1.23$, $df=76$), and their estimated rate increased only eight words per minute, from 189 to 197 words. The results of the Reading Attitude Survey showed that the experimental group was far more positive about novel reading and satisfied with the course they took than the control group.

Yang (2001) investigated the effects of reading mystery novels on English proficiency and motivation among 120 adult learners in Hong Kong. The experimental group learners read two mystery novels in addition to the prescribed integrated textbook. The experimental group discussed the books' plots, characters, and social issues. Bi-weekly, the students wrote their opinions about the social issues that they found in the book. The control group students only used the textbook. These students had three consecutive hours of class every week for 15 weeks. The author used 100-item multiple-

choice sentence completion tests for pre- and post- tests. In addition, the author administered a 20-item questionnaire and interviews to figure out any changes in attitude and motivation of the experimental group students. The pre- and post-tests results showed that the experimental group students made a greater improvement than the control group. In the pre-tests, both groups had similar scores. However, in the post-tests, the proficiency gains in the experimental group were roughly twice as large as in the control group. Secondly, the result of the questionnaire showed that students' attitudes became more positive when reading authentic texts. Moreover, they expressed their willingness to continue reading novels. Through interviews, the author found that the students' confidence in their L2 abilities had increased. In addition, the students pointed out that the discussion of the novel was more "substantial" than simply answering grammar questions and the students also reported "writing came easier than before." The interviews also confirmed the researcher's expectation that adult fiction motivates students and inspires a desire to read more. In conclusion, this study showed the benefits of extensive reading for non-academic learners. Through reading mystery novels, the adult learners in Hong Kong achieved greater improvement in their reading proficiency. Moreover, an extensive reading program motivated them to read more and helped them enjoy reading.

Tanaka (2007) investigated the effect of a quasi-extensive reading program on Japanese high school EFL learners' reading comprehension, reading speed, and perception of the program. In this study, both the treatment group (n=96) and the control group (n=94) took five 50-minute English lessons per week: three in English Course 1

and two in Aural/Oral Communication 1 classes. Only the treatment group participated in the Home Reading Program, which used materials created by the instructor. Due to the low proficiency of the students, the instructor chose and adapted 38 passages from books and media to match the students' interests and their proficiency levels. In addition, the experimental group was encouraged to read graded readers if they felt confident after reading the material in the Home Reading Program. In the treatment group, 18 out of 96 students read, on average, 3.8 graded readers for five months.

To evaluate reading comprehension, the author used the STEP Test in Practical English Proficiency developed by the Society for Testing English Proficiency as pre- and post-tests. The author relied on the number of items that the students answered as an approximate indicator of students' reading speed. While the pre-test scores showed no statistical difference between the two groups, the post-test scores for the treatment group revealed that they significantly outperformed the control group. ($t=2.50$, $p=0.01$) in reading comprehension. However, when the author excluded the students who had read graded readers ($n=18$) in the treatment group, the score gains of the treatment group were not significantly superior to the score gains of the control group in reading comprehension. That is, reading graded readers appeared to have had a larger impact than reading the material in the Home Reading Program. In terms of reading speed, although the two groups had no significant difference in the pre-test, in the post-test, the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group ($t=3.00$, $p<0.01$). However, when the graded readers group was excluded from the experimental group, the result was still significant ($t=2.46$, $p<0.01$). In the informal questionnaire, students

responded that the Home Reading Program was both effective and enjoyable. It appears that when students are exposed to a great deal of comprehensible and interesting reading input, they can achieve improvement in their reading comprehension and reading speed. In this study, it was also found that extensive reading can develop the students' positive attitudes toward L2 reading.

Departing from the aforementioned areas, some researchers have also investigated the development of vocabulary knowledge through extensive reading. One representative study was conducted by Horst (2005). He focused on the impact of extensive reading on vocabulary growth. According to the author, previous research had not fully investigated the vocabulary-expanding effects of extensive reading in a second language. Furthermore, many previous studies had offered participants limited opportunities to demonstrate new word learning. Twenty-one adult immigrant learners in ESL classes at a community center in Montreal participated in this study. The students in the three-hour classes met twice a week, and read on average 10.52 self-selected books from 35 graded readers at various levels during 6 weeks. For an hour of class time each week, the students discussed books, completed worksheets, or added entries to vocabulary notebooks.

To specifically examine the effect of ER on vocabulary growth, the author scanned the words in those graded books electronically and created lists of the words in the books. The author also used lexical frequency profiling (LEP) software to classify the words of the books into four categories: (a) the 1,000 most frequent word families of English; (b) the 1,001-2,000 most frequent zone; (c) the Academic Word List; and (d) off-list words - less frequent words that did not occur on any of the earlier lists. The

author used a 100-word test as the pre- and post-tests. This test asked students to state whether they knew the meaning of the words by marking, “Yes,” “NS(Not Sure),” and “No.” In the pre-test, the author put 50 words from the 1,001-2,000 word frequency range, and 50 from off-list words in the graded readers. The format of the post-test was identical to the pre-test. However, the author gave individualized post-tests about the books each participant read. Pre-and post-test results indicated a significant mean increase on both 50-word sections of the test. In the 1,001-2000 most frequent list post-test, the participants made a significant mean increase of about 7 words rated YES (from 41.35(M) to 47.94(M), $t=5.47$, $p<0.001$). Furthermore, in the off-list words post-test, the students made a greater mean increase of 10 words rated YES (from 33.80(M) to 43.59(M), $t=2.78$, $p<0.001$). These results suggest that participants learned well over half of the unfamiliar off-list words they encountered in the books. Participants also appear to have acquired knowledge of the unknown 1,001-2000 most frequent words as well. Extensive reading seems to have positively affected L2 vocabulary learning in this study since the carefully designed test methods made it possible to examine the actual effects of extensive reading on vocabulary growth.

Extensive reading researchers have also been interested in the development of L2 reading strategies through L2 extensive reading. To determine the effectiveness of ER on the development of L2 reading strategies, Hayashi (1999) investigated the influence of extensive reading on reading strategies of the EFL learners at different proficiency levels (intermediate and beginning) as well as the relationship among reading ability and the amount of reading, vocabulary development, and students’ reactions to extensive reading.

The subjects were 100 Japanese EFL sophomores, and their classes met twice a week for 45 minutes for nine months. The author used a textbook consisting of newspaper articles, and the students read self-selected books as an out-of-class assignment. They were required to read more than 100 pages per month. After reading, the students wrote a summary and a book reading report. To measure reading ability, the author used the TOEFL institutional test for pre- and post-tests. The author also administered a questionnaire to examine the students' reading strategies and their reactions to extensive reading. For the vocabulary test, the author used a TOEFL practice test consisting of multiple-choice questions.

According to the results, the most remarkable changes in reading strategies were the decrease in the use of "translation into L1" and "use of a dictionary," and the increase in "contextual guessing." 10.8 % of intermediate level students used translation in the early stages, but only 1.8% in the later stages. In addition, 15.7% of the beginning level students used "translation into L1" in the early stages, but only 3.2% in the later stages. Both levels did not frequently use a dictionary in the later stages, and the usage of "contextual guessing" increased in the later stages. Another significant difference was the amount of reading in the L1. The numbers of books the intermediate level students read in both the L1 and L2 were higher than those of the beginning level students. The author suggested that reading a lot in the L1 is an effective way to clearly understand the meaning of L2 items since reading in the L1 gives learners a "content scheme" as background knowledge. Furthermore, the TOEFL reading scores of both intermediate and beginning levels students improved, but the reading scores of those who did not read

books out-of-class did not improve at all. Results showed that the vocabulary of both groups had developed from pretest to posttest: 10% for intermediate and 20% for beginning respectively. In the questionnaire tests, 95.5% of students replied that their reading skills improved through reading self-selected books. Finally, 100% of students responded that the teacher's comments on their reading reports encouraged them to read other books. The use of bottom-up strategies such as "use of dictionary" and "translation to L1" decreased among both intermediate and beginning level students, and, the use of top-down strategies such as "guessing from context" increased. Students' overall reading and vocabulary abilities improved through the extensive reading program. In addition, their motivation to read self-selected books improved at the end of the program.

Nishino (2007) presented a longitudinal case study on the reading strategies and motivation of 2 Japanese middle school students beginning to read extensively in English. During the 2.5-year study, the researcher conducted four interviews with each student, gave tests regularly, and observed participant behavior during the reading sessions. Students, Fumi and Mako had a 15-minute reading session four times a week with the researcher. They read graded readers as well as three authentic books: *Harry Potter 4*, *Harry Potter 5*, and *Stravaganza*. The researcher responded to their questions, assisted with their book choices, and added vocabulary glosses to several books. Interviews and observations indicated that students used a variety of reading strategies and that these strategies changed as they read more books. When Mako and Fumi read graded readers in Level 1 (400 headwords) to Level 3 (1,200 headwords), they referred to the glossaries quite frequently. However, when reading at Level 4 (1,700 headwords), they referred to

glossaries much less often. Both of them used reading strategies such as “grouping words” and “using background knowledge” while reading *Harry Potter* series. Their use of the “contextual guessing” strategy differed. While Mako preferred to guess unknown words from the context, Fumi consulted the glossary or used a dictionary to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words. In addition, the participants’ L2 reading motivation changed during the 2.5 year extensive reading experience. Mako and Fumi responded that they enjoyed reading graded readers and felt satisfied when they finished reading a book. The researcher suggests that the extensive reading experience might have facilitated the two girls’ reading comprehension and enhanced their intrinsic motivation. However, when they finished reading *Harry Potter 4*, their motivation to read graded readers decreased, and they no longer found graded readers as interesting as before. Fumi and Mako developed their reading strategies during the extensive reading program. However, the participants used different strategies depending on their individual learning styles when they came across unknown words. Furthermore, the extensive reading program enhanced the two girls’ intrinsic motivation to do L2 reading. However, this study shows that the learners’ motivation can decrease when they lose interest in L2 reading materials.

Takase (2007) conducted another interesting study regarding the impact of ER on L2 reading motivation. She investigated the components of L2 reading motivation for Japanese high school students, the most influential predictors of motivation for L2 reading, and the relationship between reading motivation and performance in Japanese and English. The author assessed 219 female high school students who participated in an extensive reading program for one academic year. The reading class met twice a week for

45 minutes each with approximately 60 sessions for the year. In the class, the students practiced reading comprehension skills using textbooks, and they read graded readers as an assignment. After reading each graded reader, students wrote summaries and book records. The author used a questionnaire and interviews to determine the students' motivating factors and attitudes toward L2 reading. As a means of measuring the students' reading proficiency levels, the author used the Secondary Language English Proficiency (SLEP) test as pre- and post-tests. R

Results found no relationship between L1 and L2 reading performance. The two most statistically significant components for L2 reading motivation were intrinsic motivation for L1 reading and intrinsic motivation for L2 reading. These two were the statistically significant predictors of L2 reading motivation. The author also regarded entrance exam-related extrinsic motivation as another important motivation. She suggests that this component is unique to this research because the participants were expecting to take the university entrance examination in a year. Furthermore, the author found no relationship between the participants' L1 and L2 reading performance. She suggests that reading performance in the L1 and L2 did not correlate partly because of the participants' insufficient L2 reading proficiency. The study also found that participants who had not developed positive L1 reading habits experienced a great sense of joy and accomplishment and this feeling sustained their L2 reading throughout the year. However, this sense of accomplishment was limited to L2 reading and did not influence L1 reading motivation. Both intrinsic motivation for L2 reading and intrinsic motivation for L1

reading were the best predictors of reading books in the L2; however, reading performance in the L1 and L2 did not positively influence each other in this study.

Different from the researchers who utilized printed L2 reading materials in their ER program, Arnold (2009) investigated the affective and linguistic benefits of an online extensive reading program in German as a foreign language. Eight students in an advanced composition and conversation class for German participated in this study. The class met twice a week for 75 minutes. Over the course of the study, the students participated in seven extensive reading sessions in the computer lab. They could read anything of interest. They had follow-up discussions after reading and filled out a reading report in German. This study used self-reported data: (1) a reading questionnaire administered at the beginning of the semester, (2) reading reports filled out for each extensive reading session, (3) two student reflections about the reading process and their progress, and (4) an end-of-semester questionnaire about the online program. Quantitative data sources were mostly multiple-choice and Likert-scale questions on the reading questionnaire, exit questionnaire, and reading reports. The same measures included qualitative data such as open-ended questions and opportunities to comment on Likert items. The reflections provided additional qualitative data.

Results showed that this online extensive reading program positively affected students' language proficiency and motivation. The students reported an average 3.95 score (on a scale from 1 to 5) about how much they enjoyed reading the texts. In their reflections, the students reported that they adjusted their reading strategies depending on the text. In addition, they said that they applied specific reading strategies, such as

bottom-up (e.g., morphological strategies) and top-down strategies, to deal with unknown lexical items. All students reported that they gained confidence in their reading ability and that their self-efficacy increased after they successfully finished reading the text in German. Moreover, five learners felt that their reading speed and fluency had improved over the course of the semester, and six students reported that their recognition vocabulary had expanded because some words kept appearing in various texts. On the exit questionnaire, several students commented that extensive reading sessions had encouraged them to do more pleasure reading in German outside of the classroom. According to Arnold, this online extensive reading program helped learners increase their motivation to read, raised their confidence in their ability to read L2 texts, improved their reading ability, and encouraged them to read for pleasure.

2.3 The Benefits of Extensive Reading

The aforementioned empirical studies reveal several benefits of extensive reading including improvement of motivation, development of reading comprehension and reading speed, vocabulary growth, writing progress, and reading strategy development.

2.3.1 Improvement in L2 reading motivation and the development of positive L2 reading attitudes

Students who participated in extensive reading programs showed greater improvement in their motivation to read in L2 and demonstrated development of positive attitudes towards L2 reading. According to Wigfield and Guthrie (1997), students who

are intrinsically motivated read more, and students with greater exposure to reading materials see improved comprehension and vocabulary growth. Furthermore, Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) argues that students with high intrinsic motivation, a learning goal orientation, and high self-efficacy are relatively active readers and high achievers. Takase (2007) examined the impact of motivation on extensive reading and found that both L1 intrinsic motivation and L2 intrinsic motivation significantly predicted the amount of L2 reading. That is, intrinsic motivation greatly facilitates readers' engagement in reading. Furthermore, in Nishino's (2007) study, the two girls' L2 reading motivation changed during the 2.5 year extensive reading experience. An interesting reading experience enhanced and maintained their intrinsic motivation to read. Mason and Krashen (1997) also found that once struggling and reluctant students developed into eager readers while participating in an extensive reading program. Moreover, according to Day and Bamford (1998), positive attitudes can motivate students to read in the second language and learn about the cultures and people who speak the language. Studies also found that extensive reading had a positive influence on attitudes towards L2 reading (Arnold, 2009; Hayashi, 1999; Lao & Krashen, 2000; Robb & Susser, 1989). Therefore, extensive reading experiences promote learners' intrinsic motivation and develop positive attitudes towards L2 reading, which are important factors in the development of skilled L2 reading.

2.3.2 The Development of Reading Comprehension, Reading Speed, and Reading Fluency

Extensive reading contributes to the development of reading comprehension and reading speed. Both L1 and L2 researchers argue that increasing reading rate and developing reading fluency are important to becoming a fluent reader (Alderson, 2000; Day & Bamford, 1998; Grabe, 2009; Nation, 2001). Fluent L1 readers recognize almost every word they encounter while reading. However, Grabe (2009) points out that limited L2 knowledge impedes L2 learners' reading comprehension and slows down reading rate. He also argues that both syntactical and vocabulary knowledge are critical factors to becoming a fluent L2 reader. This indicates that L2 learners need to be exposed to sufficient input through extensive reading. Several studies show that extensive reading helps learners improve their reading comprehension and increase their reading speed (Bell, 2001; Elley and Mangubhai, 1983; Mason and Krashen, 1997; Robb and Susser, 1989; Tanaka, 2007; Yamashita, 2008). In particular, Elley and Manubhai (1983) argue that participating in extensive reading programs enables the students to develop their vocabulary knowledge and build stronger knowledge about syntax. Improved word recognition and greater knowledge about the structure help them become both faster and more fluent readers. Therefore, extensive reading provides L2 learners with opportunities to develop their L2 reading comprehension and fluency.

2.3.3 Gains in Vocabulary Knowledge

Extensive reading is one of the most valuable methods for learners to improve their vocabulary. Grabe (1988) points out that fluent readers need “a massive receptive vocabulary that is rapidly, accurately, and automatically accessed” (p. 63). Therefore, the lack of such a vocabulary may be the greatest impediment to fluent reading for ESL students. In addition, Nagy and Herman (1987, cited in Day & Bamford (1998), p. 17) also maintain that incidental learning of words during reading may be the single easiest and most powerful means of promoting large-scale vocabulary growth. Horst (2005) showed that extensive reading helps learners expand their vocabulary. Furthermore, participants gained new knowledge, learning more than half of the unfamiliar words that occurred in their extensive reading materials. In studies by Lao and Krashen (2000) and Hayashi (1999), the extensive reading group made significant gains in vocabulary growth. Taken together, these empirical studies support the value of extensive reading in ESL/EFL contexts. Therefore, reading large amounts of comprehensible and interesting texts helps learners achieve a richer vocabulary.

2.3.4 Improvement in Writing

Extensive reading also influences writing. Elley and Mangubhai (1983) showed that young children in the extensive reading program made significant improvements in “learning written English structure.” Furthermore, Hafiz and Tudor (1989) found that learners in the extensive reading program made significant gains in writing in L2, even though they were not given any particular writing tasks. In addition, Mason and Krashen

(1997) also reported that extensive reading itself had a positive influence on L2 writing improvement. Some of the empirical studies - combined with writing tasks - reveal another possibility. These studies show that extensive reading paired with follow-up writing activities improves learners' motivation to read. According to Smith (1988), writing is one way of promoting engagement with a text, which leads to better comprehension. It may be that students realize that writing is a useful way to improve their understanding of readings. Based on these studies, it can be argued that extensive reading can improve L2 writing proficiency and, when combined written activities, extensive reading can motivate learners' to keep reading.

2.3.5 The Development of Reading Strategies

Extensive reading improves L2 learners' reading strategies. Grabe (2009) argues that reading is an interactive process between the reader and the text. It requires sufficient knowledge of language, of the world, and of a given topic. When readers have sufficient knowledge of a given text and language, they may discover their own strategies to understand the meaning of the text. Reading many different kinds of books and articles in the L1 and L2 may give L2 learners rich background knowledge and the means to guess the meaning of unknown words based on context. Hayashi (1999) also found that the extensive reading group showed a remarkable change in their reading strategies. The use of bottom-up strategies such as "use of dictionary" and "translation to L1" decreased at the later stages of extensive reading, while the use of top-down strategies such as "guessing from context" increased. In addition, Nishino (2007) indicated that his two

participants, Mako and Fumi, developed reading strategies such as “grouping words” and “using background knowledge” during the extensive reading program. Therefore, extensive reading has a positive impact on the development of L2 reading strategies.

Chapter 3

Pedagogical Implications of Extensive Reading in ESL/EFL Contexts

Many L2 researchers emphasize the importance of incorporating extensive reading into foreign language curricula. In this chapter, I discuss important pedagogical implications such as materials, ER activities, and the role of the teacher.

3.1 Materials for Extensive Reading Program

The teacher should be cognizant of several important issues when choosing reading materials for an ER program. First, reading materials can determine the success of an ER program. If the materials do not fit learners' L2 competence and do not appeal to learners, readers will lose interest and will not be motivated to read. In Nishino's (2007) study, participants reported that their motivation decreased when they lost interest in L2 reading material. Another important principle of ER material selection involves the guarantee of learners' autonomy. This means that students should have opportunities to select books according to their interests and L2 competence. Hayashi (1999) found that students who chose their own books that related to their interests were satisfied with reading. That is, students become even more motivated to read books when they have the freedom to select books they want.

One useful reading material utilized by both teachers and learners in L2 extensive reading is graded readers. Graded readers are "extended texts, mostly fiction, written in language reduced in terms of structures and vocabulary" (Hill, 1997, p. 57). They are

regarded as a major teaching resource for many instructors in language learning. Nuttall (1996) argued that if teachers and learners cannot find proper authentic materials at the right level, simplified and specially written materials for L2 learners can be used. Many researchers (Hafiz & Tudor, 1990; Bell, 2001; Horst, 2005; Tanaka, 2007) found that using graded readers improved learners' fluency and accuracy in L2 competence. Bell (2001) discovered that an extensive reading program based on graded readers is more beneficial to the development of reading speed and reading comprehension than traditional reading lessons that are based on close study of short texts. Horst (2005) also found that reading graded readers had a positive impact on vocabulary growth. However, graded readers sometimes lack normal text features and sound unnatural. Abridged and adapted texts sometimes focus too much on vocabulary and grammatical structure, and not on natural discourse. Hafiz and Tudor (1990) also argued that the use of graded readers can limit the development of syntactic features in L2 due to the simplified syntactic structures they offer. Therefore, teachers should take a careful look at graded readers and find appropriate texts that are both authentic and simple. Learners can build confidence and develop reading fluency when they read carefully chosen texts under teachers' thoughtful guidance.

Authentic materials such as novels, literature, magazines, and newspapers can be a great resource for an extensive reading program. According to Lao and Krashen (2000), literature can be a useful material in an ER program. Yang (2001) utilized mystery novels for an extensive reading group. The experimental group in his study reported that authentic materials such as adult fiction and mystery novels motivated them to read more

and helped them to enjoy reading. In Nishino's (2007) study, students showed great interest in the *Harry Potter* series and the novel *Stravaganza*. The study revealed that using real novels enhanced students' intrinsic motivation. As Takase (2007) argued in her research, intrinsic motivation is one of the most powerful components of L2 reading engagement. Therefore, if learners have chances to read real fiction and other literature according to their L2 competence, their L2 reading motivation will improve. Furthermore, authentic texts provide learners with opportunities to experience the genuine discourse of the target culture (Nuttall, 1996). However, when students choose authentic materials such as from novels, magazine, or newspapers, the teachers should provide careful guidance about how to choose appropriate reading materials according to their linguistic and background knowledge (Day & Bamford, 1998). In the discussion of authentic texts, Nuttall (1996) argued that linguistically difficult texts are not appropriate for the development of L2 reading skills. He also claimed that difficult texts can damage learners' confidence. Therefore, teachers should be well aware of the significance of the appropriate reading material levels and help learners avoid struggling with difficult texts.

3.2 Extensive Reading Activities

In the previous section's review of research, some researchers provided students with after-reading activities. In Arnold's study, students performed follow-up discussions and wrote a reading report. The participants in Lao and Krathen (2000) also wrote their feelings and opinions after reading and discussed the books in class. Researchers (Bamford & Day, 2004; Day & Bamford, 1998) argue that interesting pre-, during-, and

post-reading activities can promote learners' interests in L2 reading and enhance their L2 reading motivation. Hayashi (1999) also suggests that having discussion with others after reading books helps readers with their comprehension. Furthermore, collaborative work such as storytelling and debate is very helpful for students' deep understanding of the story. Therefore, in this section, some useful ER activities are presented as a means of creating a more beneficial L2 reading class.

3.2.1 Listening, Reading, and Vocabulary Activities

Radio Serial

This activity involves both extensive listening and extensive reading. When the class starts, students listen to the first chapter (or more or less) of a graded reader. In the next class, the students hear the next chapter of the story, so it becomes a serial story. The teacher set aside some class time for listening to the story. By listening to the story, students can become interested in the story and borrow the story book from the library. That is, this activity can promote learners' motivation to read in L2.

Book Flood

The teacher establishes a set time in each language lesson (e.g., 15 minutes at the beginning of the lesson or the final 30 minutes of class for silent reading). Then, students read books of their own interest silently in class. The best-documented application of the Book Flood is in the Fiji experiment by Elley and Mangubhai (1983). Students read books for 30 minutes per day during the class. They found that the participants in Book

Flood made greater progress in L2 competence than the control group. In the follow-up research, they also found that participants' gains maintained a year later.

Vocabulary Journal

This activity helps students to expand their vocabulary knowledge and acquire new vocabulary. First, after students read a book, they scan what they have read and write down new or unfamiliar words they encountered while reading. In their vocabulary journal, students can also include several information: the name of the book, the page, and the date when they encountered the word, definition, a synonym, or the sentence in which the word was initially encountered.

3.2.2 Speaking Activities

Favorite Books

In this activity, students ask and answer questions about the best books they have read so far in pairs. This activity helps students learn about good books to read and practice both speaking and listening. To do this activity, the teacher distributes the Favorite Book handout and models the activity before students perform it in the next class. Then, students review their reading notes or their old book reports at home and choose one book and prepare answers to the Favorite Book Questions. In the next class, students work in pairs and take turns asking and telling about their favorite books. After both partners have answered the questions about their books, they can move to a new

partner and begin again. Students can note down the titles of any books that they want to read after listening to their partner's favorite book.

Poster Presentations

This activity let students make poster about their favorite book and present the posters to their classmates. Before students perform this activity, the teacher shows a few examples of posters and demonstrates a poster presentation. The teacher also put some example poster around the classroom and let students circulate and look at them. As a whole class, students have opportunities to discuss what makes a good poster and what needs to be included in the poster. For homework, students are asked to prepare a poster about an interesting book that they have read recently. In the next class, students give their poster presentation to other students in a small group. This activity can be done as a whole class if the class size is small.

3.2.3 Writing Activities

Online Book Discussion Forum

In this activity, students use the Internet to discuss a book they have read with other classmates who have read the same book. In class, the teacher shows his or her students how to create online discussion forum folders for books they are reading. The teacher or students themselves can label folders with the title of a specific book. Students can post questions and reactions concerning a book they are reading. They can also read and comment on what others have written about the book. This activity will help students

develop both writing and reading skills and give opportunities to interact with other classmates. This shared reading and writing environment will be less pressured and safer than face-to-face discussion.

Interactive Reading Community

Before doing this activity, the teacher introduces the online bulletin board that students have to access and post their writings. Next, the teachers teach their students how to write a reaction paper. Each paper should have at least three paragraphs including an introduction, body paragraph, and a conclusion. The teacher can also show her own reaction paper as a model and teach students how to organize their reports. After reading a book, students visit the online bulletin board and post their reaction paper. They also comment on other classmates' reaction paper at least once a week.

3.3 The Teacher's Role in an Extensive Reading Program

Teachers should carefully consider various L2 learner factors such as L2 reading ability in order to organize extensive reading programs. If either the level or the content-area is inappropriate, or if the variety of titles is insufficient, students may not enthusiastically approach extensive reading programs. Before implementing an extensive reading program, teachers should analyze learners' levels and interests and help them find appropriate reading materials.

Teachers can carefully develop follow-up activities to motivate learners to actively participate in extensive reading. Lao and Krashen (2000) found that having

students discuss and express their feelings and opinions in class after extensive reading encouraged students to read more. Furthermore, in Hayashi's (1999) study, all students reported that the teacher's comments on their reading reports encouraged them to read other books. That is, discussion or writing activities followed by peer and teacher feedback promote learners' motivation to read. Therefore, extensive reading requires teachers' careful selection of reading materials and well-organized follow-up tasks.

Chapter 4

Conclusion

Extensive reading benefits L2 learners in a number of ways. First, extensive reading helps students develop positive attitudes towards reading and motivates them to continue reading on their own. In addition, learners' reading fluency and overall L2 competence improves with extensive reading of L2 reading materials. These accomplishments are made possible when teachers and administrators provide their learners with opportunities to participate in an extensive reading program. Participants reported that they enjoyed reading a large amount of reading materials without translating each word or analyzing the grammatical structure of the target language. The results of these experiments reveal that an extensive reading group shows much greater growth in vocabulary and reading fluency than intensive reading group.

Although many studies report the positive impact of ER, this approach is still not widely practiced in ESL/EFL classrooms. Tanaka (2007) pointed out several ER implementation problems in EFL contexts such as Korea and Japan. First, it is difficult for L2 teachers to include supplementary classroom activities for ER beyond the content prescribed in nationally authorized textbooks. Most high school teachers focus on intensive reading, concentrating on grammar and vocabulary in relatively short texts. Sometimes, the class ends up demanding a translation of the passage into their native language. Nuttall (1996) calls it "the vicious circle of reading": "reading slowly, not enjoying reading, not reading much, and not understanding" (p. 127). In addition,

teachers and administrators have difficulties implementing ER programs in many EFL contexts because of cost, time, and the lack of trained teachers. However, particularly in input-poor EFL settings, extensive reading should be implemented inside and outside the classroom. That is, increasing the amount of exposure to a target language is an important way for learners to improve their L2 competence. Therefore, L2 instructors need to find a way to provide their learners with opportunities to read more extensively in their curricula and to implement their own ER program according to their L2 learning environments.

Extensive reading can be implemented both inside and outside of the classroom. Day and Bamford (1998) suggest that extensive reading can be included in a second/foreign language curriculum in at least four broad ways: as a separate, stand-alone course; as part of an existing reading course; as a noncredit addition to an existing course; and as an extracurricular activity (p. 41). Furthermore, as in Tanaka's (2007) Home Reading Program, teachers can give extensive reading assignments to L2 learners if they cannot allot time in their current curriculum for extensive reading. Grabe (2009) also suggests that teachers provide students with free-reading time. During this time, students can read material of their own choice, while the teacher circulates around the classroom and provides help, answers questions, and encourages them. Grabe (2009) recommends that free-reading time be scheduled regularly throughout the week in order to be effective. Other options for promoting extensive reading in school include a reading lab, a class library, and school library visits (Day and Bamford, 1998). Methods of implementing extensive reading programs can differ depending on circumstances that are encountered

in their programs. However, under any circumstance, L2 reading teachers should make every effort to help learners experience interesting and enjoyable books in the target language and build confidence in L2 reading.

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