Extensive Reading on Postgraduate Students' Perceptions and Its Effects on Reading Comprehension

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ABSTRACT

| Keywords: extensive reading, reading comprehension, students' perceptions, reading, ER. | Several studies have shown the effectiveness of extensive reading (ER) in English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms. This study aimed to explore students' perceptions of ER and its benefits on reading comprehension. Extensive reading is considered to be a useful reading technique to arouse students' reading abilities. Data were collected from 36 participants who are master's candidates at a university in Southern Vietnam through a 3-Likert scale questionnaire and a semi-interview on study issues. The findings of the study claim that students applied ER to their reading processes through free reading, free topics, and non-pressure on reading tasks. Students believe that ER activities help to improve reading competence and unconsciously build up a reading habit for readers. From the results of the study, ER proves its advantages by what students gained, such as the ability to comprehend reading passages and to make inferences or predictions. The researcher suggests further studies should focus on factors that affect ER processes and conduct experimental research to evaluate ER advantages. |

Background of the study

On the perspectives of second language acquisition (SLA), Krashen (1985) states that reading materials are considered to be one of the inputs of languages that are analyzed and acquired through a Language Acquisition Device (LAD). He also says that students may acquire a language greater if the inputs are comprehensible and interesting. Extensive reading (ER) is required to explore languages and engage in learning. Therefore, many pieces of research on this topic in Vietnam and over the world open a large image of ER (Phuong, 2018; Waring & Vu, 2020; Uemura, 2020; Sun, 2020). In English learning, reading plays an important role in developing many other aspects of a language, such as vocabulary, grammar, structures, meanings, etc. According to Ni'mah and Umamah (2020), they suggest that ER may be an effective tool to make reading enjoyable and interesting to students. Furthermore, Stanley (2005) suggested that extended reading entails students reading long texts or significant amounts of text for general understanding and enjoyment.

Statement of problems

Recently, there has been an interest in ER, which has been researched by many authors. Besides the benefits of ER, some research shows its limitations. Due to the limit of time allowance in class, the researchers did not have enough time to investigate the impacts of student encouragement to make ER become a habit in their daily life (Ruzin, 2019). The studies of Tien (2015) and Hagley (2017) showed that within the study period, their students significantly improved reading comprehension. Still, it could not become a habit after they completed their studies (Hagley, 2017). Another study written by Nurviyani (2020) described that students were lack of motivation when implementing ER. They felt bored while searching for appropriate materials to read. Although they were able to comprehend the passage quickly, their reading comprehension development was not improved significantly due to many unknown words. According to Elley (2001), several instructors appear to have little or no knowledge of ER or to have made incorrect assumptions about ER. Few believe that ER is beneficial to ER advanced-level students, i.e., those who can read lengthier and more difficult texts. They might argue that understudies with inferior abilities would not gain anything from ER.

In Vietnam, generally, many schools or universities have focused on textbooks and fairly applied ER in their classes. They taught students and guided them to read intensively instead. The others applying ER are misunderstanding ER approaches (Waring & Vu, 2020). Therefore, engaging students to read extensively is a missed aspect of teaching and learning. In particular, students who are participating in a master's course already have experience in this field. They normally are teachers who teach in educational schools or institutions. When studying at a Vietnamese university, the researcher found that master's students are facing many difficulties in reading learning materials such as textbooks, extra documentaries, and journals relating to their linguistics major. Many of them have issues with reading comprehension skills, although they have built up reading skills for many years when being at the undergraduate level. Moreover, the students get stressed with a lot of new terms and concepts related to linguistics. They seem to be lost in the reading mazes and feel hard to be enjoyable with textbooks. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct research on reading strategies to solve these problems.

Purpose of the study

For all the reasons mentioned above, the researcher decided to carry out this study titled "***Extensive reading on postgraduate students' perceptions and its effects on reading comprehension***," with the main focus on students' perceptions of ER. In this paper, the researcher target to investigate students' perceptions of ER, which may help them to improve their comprehension skills, and also figure out the factors that affect their reading comprehension when applying ER in learning.

Literature review

Extensive reading

Recent theoretical developments have revealed that ER is a considered approach to developing reading skills (Krashen et al., 2004). Grabe and Stoller (2013) say that ER is a method that allows students to select appropriate materials which are suitable to their levels and read them as much as possible. Furthermore, Bamford and Day (1998) defined that ER activities may bring motivation to students and build up a solid habit of reading. This has also been explored in prior studies by Carrell and Carson (1997); Nuttall (1982), as cited in Willy A (2009), that the terms "extensive reading" and "intensive reading" are not interchangeable. Intensive reading

usually involves students working with short texts under the teacher's supervision. The goal of intensive reading is to assist students in getting a deeper understanding of the material, develop reading skills (such as identifying primary ideas and text connectors), and improve vocabulary and grammatical knowledge. It's crucial to remember that these two approaches to reading instruction—intensive and comprehensive reading—are not mutually exclusive; they serve different but complementary functions.

In the light of a report by Krashen (2004), it is conceivable that ER is part of the Free Voluntary Reading (FVR) movement, which promotes independent, voluntary reading. Sustained Silent Reading and Self-Selected Reading are two more types of FVR. Another perspective of ER written by Bamford and Roberta (2015) states that ER is based on reading simple content with one to two unfamiliar words on each page for broad comprehension. Students select their own content and have the option to stop reading if the information is not engaging. After reading, there are no assessments; the purpose is for students to express their personal reactions to what they have read. ER is similar to reading in a native language in that its main components are purpose and pleasure.

According to Day and Bamford (2002), an ER process should include the following elements:

1. Students will probably read as much as possible, both inside and outside the classroom.

2. Different materials are available on different subjects to facilitate reading in different ways for different reasons.

3. Students choose what to read and stop reading materials if they are not interested.

4. The purpose of reading is generally for joy, information, and general understanding. These purposes depend on the type of material and the student's interests.

5. Reading is its own reward. There is little or no follow-up practice after reading.

6. The reading material corresponds to the student's language proficiency in terms of vocabulary and grammar. Dictionaries are rarely used when reading, as stopping searching for words makes it difficult to read fluently.

7. Reading is done individually and quietly, outside the class, at the student's own pace, at the time and places the student desires.

8. Reading books and materials are usually faster than slower because students read books and materials that are easy for them to understand.

9. The teacher will guide the students toward the goals of the program, explain the methodology, track what each student is reading, and guide them to get the most out of the program.

10. Teachers are role models for students as readers, active members of the classroom reading community, and show what it means to be a reader and the benefits of being a reader.

These mentioned-above elements highlighted the guidance to apply ER into the teaching process. The following part is a definition of reading comprehension, which is the result of ER application from different perspectives of related research.

Reading comprehension

Reading comprehension is one of the most complex actions that humans engage in. Reading theorists have focused on comprehensive and meaningful descriptions of reading comprehension, and various theoretical models have been proposed in recent decades (McNamara & Magliano, 2009; Perfetti & Stafura, 2014). These models range from general theoretical models that describe the relationships and interactions between subcomponents of understanding to process-specific models of understanding. After examining the different frameworks and models, there is a significant impact on theory development, reading comprehension research, and teaching. Perfetti et al. (2005) state that reading comprehension requires the coordination of a number of cognitive and linguistic processes, including word reading, functioning memory, making inferences, comprehension control, vocabulary, and prior knowledge.

Following the ideas mentioned above, Brown (2001), as cited in Pham (2021), describes reading comprehension as primarily a proper and efficient understanding of the meaning of the text in order to fully understand and answer descriptive questions. Reading literacy is meaningless if the reader does not understand the content of the text (Tokunaga, 2008, as cited in Tran, 2021). It means that the readers will not perform reading comprehension unless they can decode the hidden message in the text.

To sum up, there are many different definitions of reading comprehension based on the researchers' perspectives. Pham and Le (2019) define the last definition of reading comprehension. They refer that reading comprehension is a dynamic process in which the text and the reader's prior knowledge interact to create meaning. There are some related studies presented in the following part in order to clarify the relationship between ER and reading comprehension.

Related studies

Previous research on the impacts of ER has used a variety of research methodologies, but few have implications for how ER enriches reading comprehension at the master level.

A study entitled "Online Extensive Reading in an EFL Context: Investigating Reading Fluency and Perceptions" on Vietnamese students was conducted in 10 weeks by Bui and Macalister (2021). Using pre-and post-tests to collect students' self-assessment after participating in an extensive online reading program, the results show that ER has a positive impact on reading development, increasing about 20% of reading proficiency. Furthermore, this study shows through a semi-structured interview that students' attitudes were positively changed thanks to ER. However, due to the small number of participants, this study needs to be examined at a larger scale to understand students' perceptions of ER better and to uncover missing areas of ER's impact on reading fluency.

In a seminar at the University of Hawaii, Hitosugi and Day (2004) titled "ER in Japanese" implemented an ER program based on Japanese children's literature. This ten-week program enhanced students' reading comprehension scores on a standard test. It also improved students' attitudes toward studying Japanese and their motivation to do so. The researchers offered a full overview of the challenges they faced when adding ER into the course, which is a valuable contribution. This account can help researchers better understand how to use ER in the future.

Along with the above studies, a recent study performed by Khalid (2015) titled "The Effectiveness of an ER Program in Developing Saudi EFL University Students' Reading Comprehension" consisted of 54 samples and was divided into two groups: experimental (ER treatment) and control one (conventional method). The results of this study show that ER can

increase motivation and make learning interesting. He also emphasizes the important role of ER as a powerful tool to improve student performance and positively impact students' reading comprehension. The limitation of this study is it requires further research on a bigger scale of participants and to analyze more variables relating to his study. According to Leung's (2002) case study, he looked at extensive reading and its association with adult self-study of Japanese over the course of a 20-week period. ER practice appears to have impacted vocabulary and reading ability, according to the findings. According to this study, Hong and Wang (2007), as cited in Wang and Chu-Tai Ho (2019), found that their female sample improved in reading, listening, speaking, and writing when applying ER to her reading process.

The association between substantial reading and affective aspects has also been studied. ER is highly recommended by Krashen (1993, 1994); Krashen and Terrell (1983) since it entails subconscious learning, intelligible material, and a low affective filter, the latter being very likely the core for the learner to maintain efforts. In a recent review of ER research – "The Effectiveness of Core ER Principles", Jeon and Day (2015) examined five main components of ER treatments, presenting Day and Bamford's (2002) principles on three main aspects: materials, learner attitudes and role of teachers. The results emphasize that the implementation of five basic principles can influence the outcome of the ER program. The researchers believe that the ER approach is more useful for adults than for adolescents. Finally, students guided by skilled and passionate teachers can get much more motivation to learn.

Research Questions

With different points of view, each research has shown a nature image of *ER*. The understanding issue is what master candidates know about *ER* while they may use this technique without recognizing it purposely beneficial to their study. To figure out this issue, the researcher decided to focus on the questions below:

Research question 1 (QR1): What are students' perceptions of ER at the master level?

Research question 2 (QR2): How does ER improve reading comprehension at the master level?

Methods

Pedagogical Setting & Participants

The aims of the research were to find the students' perceptions of using *ER* in their study and to answer how it improves reading comprehension in the context of postgraduate studies. Therefore, this study was conducted in Foreign Languages Department at a Vietnamese private university. Forty master candidates were studying during the period of sample collecting, and only thirty-six responses (90%) were collected. The participants were postgraduate students who were studying Master of Linguistics in this school. They mostly were teachers who had experience in teaching English as a foreign language. In addition, they understood and applied extensive reading both in class and at home. To complete the tasks of assignments and projects during this master's course, they must read a lot of materials, documentaries, books, articles, and so on. Therefore, using different strategies to read and comprehend the course books is one of their learning methods.

Design of the Study

Table 1. The 3-Likert scale questionnaire on student's perceptions of ER and the improvements gained by ER application

Questions	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
SECTION 1			
SP1: I know what extensive reading is.	1	2	3
SP2: I believe that practicing extensive reading is important.	1	2	3
SP3: I believe that my skills are improved by extensive reading activities.	1	2	3
SP4: I believe that extensive reading is a good learning habit.	1	2	3
SP5: I believe that extensive reading has become my regular activity in learning.	1	2	3
SP6: I believe that extensive reading is a necessary skill in postgraduate courses.	1	2	3
SP7: I believe that extensive reading is not only offline but also online.	1	2	3
SP8: With extensive reading, I can get more knowledge about the topic I am searching for.	1	2	3
SP9: With extensive reading, I can access to many different English inputs in various contexts.	1	2	3
SP10: With extensive reading, I can learn English with fun and pleasure.	1	2	3
SECTION 2			
ER1: Extensive reading helps to increase vocabulary.	1	2	3
ER2: Extensive reading helps to sequence a passage into an ordinal series.	1	2	3
ER3: Extensive reading helps to understand the details of what you have read.	1	2	3
ER4: Extensive reading helps to understand the main ideas of what you have read.	1	2	3
ER5: Extensive reading helps to summarize the gist and draw the conclusion.	1	2	3
ER6: Extensive reading helps to make inferences / predictions.	1	2	3
ER7: Extensive reading helps to remember new words easier.	1	2	3
ER8: Extensive reading helps to read the entire text faster.	1	2	3
ER9: Extensive reading helps to find the distinction between two relating articles.	1	2	3
ER10: Extensive reading helps to answer reading comprehension questions effectively.	1	2	3

A 20-item questionnaire was written in English and sent to thirty-six participants via a system called Google form. The questionnaire was designed with a 3-Likert scale (1=disagree, 2= agree, 3= strongly agree) and divided into two sections to gather students' perceptions of *ER*– Section 1 and to understand how *ER* improves students' reading comprehension–Section 2.

Participants were free to access the Google form to read and complete the survey at a flexible time as their wish. Each person could only send a response to contribute to the data collection of the study. The items of the survey were designed based on the elements of Day and Bamford's *ER* process (2002), which were stated above in the literature review section. In order to clarify the collected data from the survey, three students were randomly selected to participate in a

semi-structured interview with four asked questions.

Data collection & analysis

Procedure of the study

This research was conducted in a mixed-method research design, collecting data from questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. In this study, the researcher used both quantitative and qualitative research methods. According to Nassaji (2015), qualitative research was used to collect data from many sources in order to acquire a better knowledge of individual participants, including their thoughts, perceptions, and attitudes. Therefore, the researcher asked for permission from the department head to take fifteen minutes in each class to address this study's purposes and get the students' approval. After getting approvals, the questionnaire was delivered to participants individually by a link on the Google form platform. All the information collected was confirmed to be confidential. Then, when asking for a semi-structured interview, there were three participants who were interested in ER implementation and volunteered to be interviewed. To ensure confidentiality, three participants were coded and given a pseudonym from PT1 to PT3.

Statistical Package analyzed the collected data from the survey for Social and Science (SPSS) version 25. Firstly, reliability analysis was conducted to check the reliability of the collected data. Then, the researcher proceeded with descriptive statistics to explain the results.

The interview questions were prepared to confirm participants' understanding of the responses and to explore other aspects of ER that the survey could not be defined.

Data collection

Cronbach's Alpha was used to evaluate the reliability of the 3-Likert scale for finding student perceptions on extensive reading (Table 2) and how extensive reading improved reading comprehension (Table 3). There were a totally of five items (SP9, SP10, ER1, ER7, ER10) dropped since their Corrected item-total Correction was less than 0.3 (0.17, 0.08, 0.18, 0.62, -0.03). After dropping five items, fifteen items had Cronbach's Alpha figures ≥ 0.6 and Corrected item-total Correction ≥ 0.3. This meant the fifteen variables were enough reliability to proceed with further analysis.

Table 2. The reliability statistics of students' perceptions of extensive reading.

Students' perceptions on extensive reading	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
SP1: I know what extensive reading is.	20.44	1.97	0.79	0.87
SP2: I believe that practicing extensive reading is important.	20.44	1.97	0.79	0.87
SP3: I believe that my skills are improved by extensive reading activities.	20.44	1.97	0.79	0.87
SP4: I believe that extensive reading is a good learning habit.	20.44	1.97	0.79	0.87
SP5: I believe that extensive reading has become my regular activity in learning.	20.58	1.56	0.70	0.88
SP6: I believe that extensive reading is a necessary skill in postgraduate courses.	20.58	1.56	0.70	0.88
SP7: I believe that extensive reading is not only offline but also online.	20.50	1.86	0.56	0.88
SP8: With extensive reading, I can get more knowledge about the topic I am searching for.	20.47	1.86	0.72	0.87

After piloting the questionnaire with three volunteers, the researcher sent it to the participants to investigate their perceptions of ER. Performing reliability evaluation, there were still eight statements that were supposed to discover student perceptions of ER (*shown in table 2*). However, these statements were readable and understood by the respondents to show their perceptions of ER, such as its definition, importance and implementation in learning.

Table 3. The reliability statistics of how extensive reading improves reading comprehension.

Extensive reading improves reading comprehension	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
ER2: Extensive reading helps to sequence a passage into an ordinal series.	15.56	13.85	0.62	0.95
ER3: Extensive reading helps to understand the details of what you have read.	15.61	12.13	0.77	0.94
ER4: Extensive reading helps to understand the main ideas of what you have read.	15.61	10.99	0.93	0.92
ER5: Extensive reading helps to summarize the gist and draw the conclusion.	15.67	10.97	0.92	0.92
ER6: Extensive reading helps to make inferences / predictions.	15.44	13.51	0.84	0.94
ER8: Extensive reading helps to read the entire text faster.	15.83	12.14	0.77	0.94
ER9: Extensive reading helps to find the distinction between two relating articles.	15.61	10.99	0.93	0.92

Applying the same procedure of analysis, table 3 recorded seven statements that ensured the reliability and validity in order to inspect the effectiveness of ER practice in reading comprehension. The improvements were described by things that students performed in

reading. Afterward, the respondents fully understood and ranked their opinions based on their experiences in reading.

Results/Findings and discussion

The main purpose of this chapter is to answer two research questions based on descriptive statistics such as minimum, maximum, mean, standard deviation (SD), and percentages. Then, the researcher described the result of the semi-interview to discover other aspects of the participants about ER. This result would be shown as short summary statements.

Research question 1 (QR1): What are students' perceptions of ER at the master level?

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of students' perceptions of extensive reading.

Student's perceptions on extensive reading	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
SP1: I know what extensive reading is.	36	2.86	0.487
SP2: I believe that practicing extensive reading is important.	36	2.81	0.577
SP3: I believe that my skills are improved by extensive reading activities.	36	2.86	0.487
SP4: I believe that extensive reading is a good learning habit.	36	2.92	0.368
SP5: I believe that extensive reading has become my regular activity in learning.	36	2.64	0.683
SP6: I believe that extensive reading is a necessary skill in postgraduate courses.	36	2.78	0.485
SP7: I believe that extensive reading is not only offline but also online.	36	2.75	0.604
SP8: With extensive reading, I can get more knowledge about the topic I am searching for.	36	2.89	0.398
Valid N (listwise)	**36**		

To answer the first research question, the researcher displayed the data collected as above (*shown in table 3*). In table 4, students' perceptions of ER were described from SP1 to SP8. Then, data were analyzed and exerted from the descriptive result of SPSS. The researcher mainly used the mean (M) as a tool in order to rank and evaluate the participants' responses.

According to table 4, master's students strongly stated that ER is a good learning habit (M=2.92). It is in accordance with Bamford and Day (1998), who indicated that ER might bring motivation and build up a solid habit of reading. Moreover, 91,7% of respondents think that they can gain more knowledge about what they are reading by ER (M=2.89). Thanks to the recognition of what ER is (M=2.86) and the importance of ER (M=2.81), students believed that their skills were improved by ER activities (M=2.86). They realized that ER is a necessary skill to study in postgraduate courses (M=2.78). Therefore, they tried to apply ER whenever they read books or documentaries offline or online (M=2.75). Last but not least, although Tien's (2015) and Hagley's (2017) study stated that ER had a significant impact on students' reading comprehension and could not last long after they finished their study, over 80% of participants still think that ER has become their regular activity in learning (M=2.64). Generally, postgraduate students have an overall perception of ER. From the mentioned-above results of students' perception of ER, it is implied that most of them understand ER and its activities which

help their study. Some of them who do not frequently practice ER feel that ER is not as important as they think (8.3%). Therefore, ER may not become their regular activity (11%).

Research question 2 (QR2): How does ER improve reading comprehension at the master level?

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of how extensive reading improves reading comprehension.

Extensive reading improves reading comprehension	N	Mean	SD
ER2: Extensive reading helps to sequence a passage into an ordinal series.	36	2.67	0.478
ER3: Extensive reading helps to understand the details of what you have read.	36	2.61	0.688
ER4: Extensive reading helps to understand the main ideas of what you have read.	36	2.61	0.766
ER5: Extensive reading helps to summarize the gist and draw the conclusion.	36	2.56	0.773
ER6: Extensive reading helps to make inferences / predictions.	36	2.78	0.422
ER8: Extensive reading helps to read the entire text faster.	36	2.39	0.688
ER9: Extensive reading helps to find the distinction between two relating articles.	36	2.61	0.766
Valid N (listwise)	36		

In response to these questions, table 5 shows the results of the influences of ER on reading comprehension. Overall, most of the participants agree that practicing ER makes a significant impact on their reading comprehension. For instance, practicing ER in learning also helps students read the text faster (M=2.56) by understanding the passage sequences (M=2.67). Besides, comprehension improvement is identified by making inferences from what they read (M=2.78). Supporting this statement, Perfetti, Landi and Oakhill (2005) state that reading comprehension requires the coordination of making inferences from the text. In addition, applying ER improved their reading comprehension by understanding main, detailed ideas and being able to distinguish between two concepts or articles (M=2.61). Contributing to this influence, students may summarize the gist and draw a conclusion after reading (M=2.56).

The results of the semi-interview

In the interview section, the researcher received some other opinions of three participants about their perceptions of ER and its influences on reading comprehension.

Interview question No.1: What are your attitudes toward extensive reading?

The results collected from the semi-structured interview were constructive and consistent with some studies mentioned in literature reviews (Ruzin, 2019; Bamford & Day, 1998; Khalid, 2015). They stated that ER is one of the reading strategies that arouses students to read, as well as is related to free reading with free topics. Meanwhile, frequently practicing ER makes their skills improved as well as a necessity to build a reading habit. The following quotes illustrate these:

> "At first, I think reading is boring because of reading tasks. It would be more interesting if *we read whatever we want*. When learning a new subject, *I prefer to read* not only the text-books but also *other materials* such as journals, reviews on the same topics. It helps me to feel more relaxed and *approach reading in an active way*." (PT1)

"I think *ER is a reading strategy* rather than a skill. I like to read *wherever I got time and read whatever I like*. Topics are not important at all, the more we read, the more knowledge we gain." (PT2)

"Yeah! I also have the same opinions with both of them. I think *practicing reading* frequently helps me to *form a habit* and makes me be knowledgeable." (PT3)

Interview question No. 2: Which platforms do you find your reading materials? Does it take a long time to search for what you need / desire to read?

In this question, the results were various among three participants. Based on their learning and teaching experience, they could find different sources to access reading materials. Most platforms to find reading materials are the school library and the internet. They spent a lot of time searching for the appropriate resources. Therefore, finding suitable reading materials is not easy, especially for those who are studying to a high degree. These are described below:

"I usually go to *school library* to look for the books I want. However, sometime I cannot find the relevant books. Later, I decided to search the topic I was inquiring *on the internet*. As you know, there are *tons of resources*. I felt like I was getting lost. It *took me a lot of time* to find the best suitable one". (PT1)

"Yeah, me too. I got troubles with *online searching*. I often search reading materials on Google Scholar. I think it *saves my time* because of useful searching tools comprised in this web." (PT2)

"Beside the materials given by lecturers, I *spent a lot of time on searching* for some other simpler materials to support my studies via the internet. I also searched for books, articles and journals through *Google Scholar, Springers, or other publications*." (PT3)

Interview question No. 3: What do you think about the benefits of extensive reading?

The results of this question make ER essential for postgraduate candidates (SP6). PT1 believes that "*practicing ER helped her to become a better reader by focusing on the meaning of the text rather than its language*". Whilst PT2's saying is that "*I can comprehend the text from overall to details and it is easily to understand the gist and to draw the summary due to the non-pressure of reading*". These were put in light of descriptive statistics that summarizing and understanding were both valid for extensive reading (ER5; ER4). It is proven by Brown (2001), as cited in Pham (2021), that reading comprehension requires readers to fully understand the text and decode the hidden messages in the text.

Interview question No. 4: Do you think that there is a relationship between extensive reading and reading comprehension at a higher level? If yes, please define the ways that you used to develop your understanding?

It is reported that all of the interviewees claim that extensive reading is a strategy that could enhance reading comprehension. Cho and Krashen (1994) reported that English second language learners improved their reading competence through ER. Understanding ER process helps to improve reading comprehension by selecting appropriate materials which are suitable for readers' level. Besides, applying ER's principles (Jeon & Day, 2015; Day & Bamford, 2002) in reading activities is essential to improve reading comprehension. In addition, reading with joy and interest (Krashen, 1985) motivates students to acquire language. Finally, when conducting ER, teachers play the role of facilitators to explain the reading methodology and keep students on track. These statements are totally described in the ER process of Day and Bamford (2002), which supports the evidence of the relationship between ER and reading comprehension.

"Yes, of course. It is good if I *understand how ER process is*. You know, I save time and energy to improve reading comprehension. I begin with short texts to longer texts, from easy to more complicated, from standard knowledge to an academic one and read it with joy. I think *the most important thing to improve my reading is to read with joy and interests. My teachers also help me to identify which reading materials are suitable for my study. Whenever I got problems, just need to ask them*". (PT1)

"What I learned when practicing ER is *guessing skill*. I can guess the meaning of new lexical items without using dictionaries. In my opinion, *this skill helps improve my reading comprehension*, especially when I need to read a lot of reading papers given in my master's course. This would *not successful without a favor of my facilitators*. They encourage me to keep reading and sometimes I get stuck because of misunderstanding, I email them to *ask for a support*." (PT2)

"Definitely yes! I use *ER as a reading strategy*, so it gives me a lot of benefits. For example, I can *read a long passage faster* and *understand the gist easier*. Whenever I need to find detail information, I know which part of the text I need to read. *It would not be reachable if I did not practice ER in my study*." (PT3)

Conclusion

Summary of the findings

In a nutshell, students' perceptions of ER are informative and practical. They believe that practicing ER may bring motivation and build up a solid habit of reading (Ruzin, 2019). According to the data collected, ER is considered to be a necessary strategy to implement in the learning process. They also remind us that practicing ER will bring a significant impact if it becomes regular reading activity. Besides, the data shows how students use ER to improve their reading comprehension. Thanks to ER in learning, students can understand the text faster and guess the meaning of new lexical items more easily. Therefore, reading with the sequence organized in the text helps to find the gist and detailed information and to make inferences for hidden messages.

Finally, some suggestions on the ER process were discovered through a mini-interview. Students suggest reading from easy to complicated levels and reading with joy and interest in order to improve reading comprehension. The teacher role is a facilitator who guides, explains, and monitors students to reach their reading goals.

Conclusion

In conclusion, ER proves its benefits to reading comprehension. Most of the participants believed that ER would be a great tool for participating in the learning process generally and in reading comprehension specifically (Khalid, 2015). From the cognitive perspective, students perceived ER as a fun and enjoyable activity in their study (Day & Bamford, 2002; Perfettiet al., 2005). Drawn from students' perceptions toward ER, students can gain more knowledge on their concerned topics due to understanding the meanings of the text (Brown, 2001 as cited in Pham, 2021). They built up ER skills as a habit of the reading process to improve reading and the other (Ruzin, 2019). On the other hand, students gain much improvement in reading competence and sub-benefits related such as predicting, summarizing, sequencing a passage, faster reading, and distinguishing between two texts.

Implications of instructions

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher suggests applying ER to learning and teaching in universities. Teachers should do research on learners' need to collect and present both an interesting series of learning materials and an effective curriculum (Tran & Pham, 2021 as cited in Pham, 2022). Stakeholders need to fulfill the library with trusting and interesting books for those who would like to read and gain reading comprehension skills for joy or for academic purposes. Finally, learners should increase the frequency of applying ER to their reading process in order to make it become a solid habit and have reading proficiency levels upgraded.

Recommendation for further research

Nonetheless, the focus of this study was still on students' perceptions of ER and its advantages. The study would be much more effective if it were able to manage and identify the factors that influence ER processes and students' reading comprehension. Furthermore, additional research should be conducted with a large number of participants at the postgraduate level to investigate other parts of this study that have yet to be discovered. Finally, the upcoming study should assess ER effectiveness using pre-tests and post-tests from two different groups. Due to the outstanding issues, ER has attracted the curiosity of numerous scholars interested in reading comprehension and techniques.

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