廣泛閱讀如何影響英文為外語之低成就學習者之學習觀感與閱讀習慣

黃玉萍 * 吳永倩 **

摘要

經由許多研究證實廣泛閱讀(extensive reading)對英語學習者在詞彙習得、文法知識、閱讀理解、閱讀速度與流暢度等方面皆有幫助，然而台灣現今教學環境通常仍以輔導學生通過考試或取得證照為目標，教學重點常以傳統語言技巧的密集訓練與反覆練習為主。因此多數學生在課堂中較少機會接觸廣泛閱讀，課後更無習慣自行進行英文課外閱讀。由於閱讀量不足加上缺乏閱讀習慣，台灣許多學生，尤其許多科技大學學生，對學習英文感到陌生及艱難。再者許多科技大學常使用統一教材教授通識英文課程，有些學生覺得教科書太容易，然而大多數學生卻覺得困難，因此統一教材使得多數低成就學生對學習英文更加缺乏興趣。為尋求解決之道以幫助這些學習者，本研究採用廣泛閱讀方式，以一家科技大學三班通識英文課學生為對象，實施為期約六個月的廣泛閱讀課程。結果顯示實施此課程後這三班學生的閱讀理解成績無明顯進步，但他們在學習英文與培養英文閱讀習慣能改善他們英文能力方面持正面觀感。

關鍵詞：廣泛閱讀、通識英語、科技大學、學習觀感、閱讀習慣

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The Impact of Extensive Reading on Beginning-level EFL Learners' Learning Perceptions and Reading Habit

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Abstract

Previous studies have made the claim that Extensive Reading (ER) helps English language learners (ELLs) in terms of vocabulary acquisition, grammar knowledge, reading comprehension, reading speed and fluency, etc. Nevertheless, the current reading instructions in Taiwan have emphasized on test-oriented and skills-based training. As a result, most students have little exposure to free voluntary reading in class, let alone read extensively as a habit outside the classroom. Due to the limited-input learning environment and a lack of reading habit, students in Taiwan usually perceive learning English as a tough task, especially to low achievers in many technological universities. In addition, since the learning material for general English (GE) classes in technological universities is often pre-determined by a teacher committee, it may fail some students’ individual needs. In consequence, these students, mostly low achievers and thus already low-motivated tend to have even lower motivation to learning English. To search for ways to help these learners, this study adopts and examines a modified ER program in three beginning-level college GE classrooms for one-and-a-half-semester. The results show that although learners do not perform differently on the reading comprehension tests after the ER program, their perceptions towards learning English and developing a reading habit become more positive.

Keywords: Extensive Reading, general English (GE), technological university, learning perception, reading habit

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Introduction

There have been many techniques associated with extensive reading (ER) such as sustained silent reading (SSR), adoption of graded readers, and designation of a reading corner in classroom, etc. Some of these techniques work mostly well with intermediate to advanced ELLs in ESL settings, while others seem to work better in EFL contexts with beginners of English in terms of helping them develop an interest in reading. While previous studies have mainly focused on the cause-effect relationship between extensive reading (ER) and English learners’ growth in reading abilities, this study aims to find out how ER may help beginning-level ELLs who do not even enjoy reading in their L1 develop positive perceptions of reading in English.

This paper reports extensive reading practices on one and a half semesters as a supplementary program involving three classes of EFL learners. The teacher researcher administered a set of reading comprehension tests and questionnaires to the classes in determining the EFL students’ English proficiency level and investigating their reading habits and perceptions toward learning English, which helped the teacher tailor instructional approaches and class materials for the ER program. The pre-test results demonstrated that the students’ average English reading ability was below the A1 level of Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). North, (2007) specifies that Level A1 is the point at which the learner can

interact in a simple way, ask and answer simple questions about themselves, where they live, people they know, and things they have, initiate and respond to simple statements in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics, rather than relying purely on a rehearsed repertoire of (tourist) phrases. (p. 5)

In view of the participants’ low English proficiency and hesitant learning perceptions in general, a variety of ER practices such as guided independent reading (GIR) and sustained silent reading (SSR) had been employed to alleviate students’
negative perceptions, anxiety and fears, toward reading in English. The primary
goal of the modified ER program was to help students enjoy reading more, and
become better readers who are able to process reading materials more easily and
quickly. To this end, both qualitative and quantitative research methods were ad-
opted to assist the teacher researcher in keeping track of students’ reading prog-
ress throughout one and a half semesters. A set of post-tests and post-question-
naires were given to the participating students in the end of the second semester of
the academic year 2010-2011, to find out whether they had become more frequent
readers with better English proficiency and positive learning perceptions. Results
demonstrated that although the students’ reading proficiency did not seem to make
a progress, their general perceptions and reading habit towards English improved
significantly.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Why ER?

One problem is generally existed among L2/EFL readers, which described by
Chang (2010: 284) that “L2 learners read much more slowly in L2 than in their
native language (L1) (Haynes & Carr, 1990; Segalowitz, Poulsen, & Komoda,
1991; Fraser, 2007)” since they often read word by word and check unknown
words whenever they read. The habit of slow reading is probably due to their in-
sufficient reading exposure, hence, a lack of automaticity of word recognition that
attention is diverted to decoding the word meaning. If learners spend too much
attention on word decoding, then less attention will be allocated to comprehending
the content. Anderson (1999, Improving Reading Speed) states that the frustration
resulting from slower reading turns into the “vicious circle of the weak reader”
(Nuttall, 1996: 127). In order to overcome the problem, Nuttall (1996: 127) sug-
gests that the more learners read, the more they increase their reading abilities.
Stanovich (1986) also echoes Nuttall’s viewpoint, and points out a phenomenon
recognized by Merton (1968) as the Matthew Effect, which indicates that “readers
who read well and who have good vocabularies will read more, learn more meanings, and hence read better” (cited from Anderson, 1999). In short, if learners are exposed to a language by reading more, it is very possible that their overall language proficiency will improve.

To increase learners’ reading ability, automaticity is the key leading to fluent reading. As Segalowitz & Hulstijn (2005: 371) put it, automaticity refers to “the absence of attentional control in the execution of a cognitive activity” (cited from Chang, 2010: 285). Chang (2010: 286) explains that reading fluency can be achieved by automatization of word recognition, which allows a reader to focus on the meaning of the content rather than on decoding words. In this way, readers can put more attention on acquiring the meaning of the text more effortlessly without checking unknown words every once a while. However, automaticity of word recognition is not the only component attributed to good comprehension. Grabe (2004) indicates that another factor needs to be considered is background/topical knowledge (Chang, 2010: 287). The adoption of “i-1” and reading extensively, proposed by Day & Bamford (1998), is then a possible way to enhance background knowledge and foster learners’ automaticity. Day & Bamford (1998) claim that reading a variety of and a quantity of easy readers of which slightly below learners’ reading competency allows learners to process the text faster and thus will help activate background knowledge and develop a large sight vocabulary (Chang, 2010: 287).

B. Extensive Reading (ER)

Extensive Reading, by definition, is a way to teach reading by allowing students to select a variety of materials that interest them and accommodate their reading levels. Ideally, no or minimal teacher intercessions are seen during the process, and only a few or even no assignments are given afterwards, for the primary goal is to lower learners’ affective filters and increase their interests in learning English. Sheu (2004) indicates Davis’ (1995) notion of extensive read-
ing: “pupils are given the time, encouragement and materials to read pleasurably, at their own level, as many books as they can, without the pressures of testing or marks.” (p. 329)

Bell (1998) claims ER plays a crucial role in developing and improving learners’ reading competence for the following reasons:
1. It provides “comprehensible input”.
2. It enhances learners’ general language competence.
3. It increases the students’ exposure to the target language.
4. It increases knowledge of vocabulary.
5. It motivates learners to read.
6. It consolidates previously learned language.
7. It facilitates the development of prediction skills.

Previous studies, pointed out by Day (2008) and Alshamrani (2003), provide evidence of the benefits of extensive reading on all perspectives of English learning: vocabulary development (Smith, 1994; Krashen, 1985, 1989; Twaddell, 1973; Cho & Krashen, 1994; Day, Omura, & Hiramatsu, 1991; Elley & Mangubhai, 1983; Hayashi, 1999); motivation and attitude (Elley, 1991); listening and speaking abilities (Krashen, 1994); writing proficiency (Elley and Mangubhai, 1981; Janopoulos, 1986); reading rate & general language proficiency (Iwahori, 2008); reading proficiency and speed (Masuhara et al., 1996); reading proficiency, attitude and motivation (Elley, 1991); and reading proficiency, general language proficiency, attitude and motivation (Elley & Mangubhai, 1981).

C.Reading Instructions in Taiwan

The current reading instructions in Taiwan have been emphasized on skill-based learning and practices with a close study on vocabulary and grammar (Alderson & Urquhart, 1984; Robb & Susser, 1989). Students in technological
universities, in particular, are traditionally low achievers who have low or no motivations to learn English in general due to unsuccessful and unpleasant learning experiences in the past. Yet not many students are born low achievers with negative perceptions toward learning English. Freire (1993) indicates that lecturing as the primary mode of teaching should both be responsible for low achievers with negative perceptions toward learning English. Therefore, reading programs such as ER that can motivate students to learn and help them gradually become better and happier readers are even more urgently needed. Nonetheless, according to Sheu (2004), not only had ER been excluded from English teaching syllabi, but it has also lacked recognition among English language teachers and English teaching circles. As Davis (1995) stated, “Any ESL, EFL, or L1 classroom will be poorer for the lack of an extensive reading program of some kind, and will be unable to promote its pupils’ language development in all aspects as effectively as if such a program were present” (Day & Bamford, 2000). Hence, it is imperative to put ER into practice in foreign language classrooms with low level students, specifically in technological universities in Taiwan.

D. Modified ER

The ER program in the study was initiated by a college English instructor and implemented mostly during the third hour in each class meeting. In order to document students’ reading progress, the study was commenced from the beginning of November 2010 to the end of May 2011, including a period of approximately one and a half semesters and one winter break.

Due to students’ low English proficiency, the instructor decided to reduce the reading demands, i.e., two books a semester and as minimal as one book during winter break to prevent the students from feeling overwhelmed. During the first semester of the academic year 2010-2011, students were expected to read at least one graded reader inside and outside of the classrooms to get accustomed to reading as a habit. By the end of the semester, a list of graded readers was given to
the students, who then could choose from the list or look elsewhere for texts that they preferred to read independently. Students were expected to finish at least one book during winter break. For the second semester of the academic year 2010-2011, another two to three books were assigned.

Moreover, in order to keep a record of students’ feedback on the ER program, the students were asked to submit a synopsis and reflection on each chapter they read in a designated book report form (Day and Bamford, 1998) written either in Chinese or English. To keep students’ stress level low, no further assignments were given.

E. Research Questions

The present study stresses on the impact of extensive reading on college freshmen and sophomores’ reading perceptions and habit development. Hence two major questions were examined in order to find out:

1. How may extensive reading programs influence EFL students’ perceptions toward learning English and reading habit formation?
2. What difficulties do the students report they have faced during reading?

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Participants

The students of the three classes were freshmen and sophomores from different academic disciplines except English. The general class size went from 30+ to 60. According to the pre-reading test (a mock TOEIC Bridge) conducted prior to implementing the ER programs, most students’ general English proficiency was close to elementary level, with an average reading score failing to achieve the A1 level based on the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment) criterion. Only 4 out of 57 students (8.5%) in one class passed the A1 level in reading, whereas none of the other two
classes passed that level. In addition, almost all participating students mentioned on the pre-questionnaires given right after the pre-reading test, that English is very difficult to learn, particularly when it comes to grammar and vocabulary.

B. Reading Materials

The instructor attempted to select stories from some series of graded readers, such as Compass Classic Reading Series, Cambridge English Readers, Penguin Active Reading, Macmillan and Cambridge Discovery Readers. In the end, stories from Compass Classic Reading Series were chosen for three reasons. First of all, the starter level readers contain 400 headwords, which would suit the overall low English proficiency of the classes. Secondly, the audio CD recordings that come with every title cost lower than other series. Thirdly, the adapted stories such as Aesop’s Fables and Grimm’s Fairy Tales are well-known among the students in accordance with the Bookstrap Hypothesis that successful initial experiences will feed back into later ER, which results in greater success in reading in the L2 and in increasing growth of positive attitudes, motivation and pleasure. When the ER program began, the instructor read a chapter of a title aloud to her classes and then had the students read silently for 15 to 20 minutes in each class meeting.

C. ER in Practice

The ER program of this study devoted each last class hour to the following practices. The instructor selected a graded reader and read aloud a chapter to her classes without other guided reading before asking the classes to read silently for 15 to 20 minutes since the first class meeting. After each reading session, students were required to write a synopsis/reflection of each chapter they read, which was then distributed and read aloud in the beginning of next class meeting.

Next, peer sharing was adopted in all the three classes for the purpose of constructing an optimal environment for fun and autonomous learning. The instruc-
tor sent the classes to work in small groups, so that the students could share their feelings about the book that they just read for 10 minutes before turning to writing short phrases or summaries for another 5~10 minutes. In addition, each small group was led by a leader (student who scored comparatively higher on the pre-reading test) who was responsible for guiding group discussions after SSR so as to designate more learner autonomy to the students and to have them monitor their own reading progress.

D. Data Collection

(A) Pre-reading and post-reading tests
A mock TOEIC Bridge test was administered at the beginning of the first semester of the academic year 2010-2011 to access all participating students’ English reading abilities. The test lasted for about an hour, including the time for test takers to put down their personal information such as name, class year, student ID number, etc. At the end of the test, all the answer sheets were mailed back to TOEIC Bridge Company to be graded. The reading comprehension section consisted of two main parts: incomplete sentences (30 questions) and reading materials (20 questions), both in the form of multiple-choice questions. To pass the A1 level, test takers must score no less than 46 in both listening and reading sections. The same test was conducted before the end of the second semester of the academic year 2010-2011. Perhaps due to the limited amount of reading materials read by the participants, results showed that there was no obvious improvement between the pre- and post-tests.

(B) Pre-reading and Post-reading Surveys
Apart from the set of reading tests, an English version of pre-questionnaire with Chinese translations was given to all the students right after the pre-test. Questions on the pre-questionnaire, mostly conforming with Day and Bamford’s suggestions (1998), inquired about learners’ previous ex-
experiences of learning English, preferences for leisure activities (in an attempt to find out whether students have a habit for reading), frequency of reading in English, preferable books, etc. The major purpose of the pre-reading survey was to document students’ overall interests, perceptions and general preferences prior to receiving ER programs. Subsequently, a post-questionnaire was given to the classes after the ER programs during the second semester of the academic year 2010-2011 to find out whether and in what ways students might have changed their perceptions and habits in reading and learning English.

(C) Field notes
A teacher who was teaching General English classes in the same school as the instructor was involved in this study as an observer in one of the three participating classes for the period of the second semester of the academic year 2010-2011. Since the aim of the observation was to understand and interpret the instructor’s practice of the modified ER program and the students’ responses to it, unstructured observation was adopted which is within the interpretivist paradigm that “acknowledges the importance of context and the construction of knowledge between researcher and ‘researched’” (Mulhall, 2002). The notion of “unstructured” refers to the fact that the observer entered ‘the field’ with no pre-determined assumptions.

E. Data Analyses

(A) Quantitative
Numerical data collected from the reading tests and questionnaires were processed via SPSS to generate a correct portrait of students’ current English ability and reading behavior. The two sets of data were then compared to determine how and to what level ER programs relate to improved learning perceptions and reading comprehension.

(B) Qualitative
Several non-numerical questions on the questionnaires were looked at closely, alone and with respect to specific numerical questions, to find out whether the students ‘do what they say’, and to obtain quality information about especially students’ perceptions and reading habits toward reading and learning English. Structured interviews with selected individual/group students were carried out and analyzed to further explore issues such as: what accounts for the noticeable discrepancy between a student’s perceptions toward reading English and reading comprehension performance. Finally, field notes taken by a teacher observer were collected and interpreted by both the instructor and the observer for the purpose of not only to check whether what participants said they did was the same as what they actually did, but also capture the process and context of the modified ER program.

### IV. RESULTS

Two sets of questionnaires were administered to 153 college freshmen and sophomores in a technological university in Taiwan during the first and the second semester of the academic year 2010-2011, respectively. There were 27 students who did not continue to participate in the study during the second semester. Comparisons of pre- and post-ER data are illustrated below to demonstrate how language teachers can help their low-motivated students become better readers and more pleasant language learners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Frequency of leisure reading in any language</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-survey</td>
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<td>Post-survey</td>
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</table>
It is worth noted that in the pre-survey, more than half of the participants (55.91%) spent no or very little time (1-2 times a year) on leisure reading. Only 21.8% of students spent time on reading more than 1-2 times a week. In consequence, most of the students did not seem to have a reading habit. They preferred instead going shopping, playing online games, surfing on the Internet, etc. As shown in Table 1, when the same classes were matched on their leisure reading frequency in pre- and post-survey, a paired samples t-test shows that the changes from pre- to post-survey were significant (t= -3.801, P=0.001< 0.05). t< 0 means the frequency of leisure reading in any language had significantly increased from the time of doing pre-survey to that of post-survey.

Table 2. Frequency of leisure reading in English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>mean</th>
<th>sd</th>
<th>paired samples t test</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-survey</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>1.222</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-survey</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>1.255</td>
<td>-2.485, 37, .018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should be made clear that in the pre-survey more than half of the respondents (59.53%) did not read English for pleasure during their leisure time, and yet only 5.88% of all the participants spent time on leisure reading in English more than 1-2 times a week. Accordingly, it is safe to assume that reading English had not been a pleasant leisure activity for most students at this point of responding to the pre-survey, which gave all the more reason to try changing their perceptions on reading and learning English with the help of ER programs. In Table 2, when the class was matched on their frequency of English leisure reading in pre- and post-survey, a paired samples t-test shows that the changes from pre- to post-survey were significant (t= -2.485, P=.018< 0.05). t< 0 means frequency of English leisure reading had significantly increased from the time of doing pre-survey to that of post-survey.
Table 3. Do you think developing a reading habit in English can help improve your general English ability?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>mean</th>
<th>sd</th>
<th>paired samples t test</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-survey</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>1.781</td>
<td>t df Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-survey</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>.948</td>
<td>-3.032 37 .004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over half of the participants (60.2%) agreed that developing a habit for reading in English can help advance their general English competence, whereas 22.1% of the students disagreed based on the pre-survey results. Those who agreed on this viewpoint may benefit more from the ER programs in terms of developing a reading habit and improving their general English abilities. Nonetheless, a variety of ER practices should still be explored to help the 22.1% of the students read with more confidence and pleasure.

According to Table 3, a paired samples t-test shows that the changes between pre- and post-survey were significant (t= -3.032, P=.004< 0.05). t< 0 implies more students agreed that developing a reading habit in English could help improve their general English ability comparing the results of pre-survey with that of post-survey.

Interviews

The reasons for low or no improvement in students’ reading proficiency may lie in several dimensions listed below.

1. Reading materials: Based on the interview results, students responded that teacher-selected readers/stories were harder than those of self-selected. In addition, some of them had difficulty in choosing appropriate materials because of insufficiency of vocabulary and grammar rules to comprehend the stories, including starter level of graded readers.

2. Students’ low to no reading habits: Due to their negative past learning experience, students reported that they had not developed a routine of reading
extensively. Their reading comprehension was constrained with limited background knowledge. Some even replied that they had no interests in reading English stories at all.

3. Minimal teacher guidance: Students’ lack of lexical, semantic, and grammatical competence had led to their low or no confidence in reading English, which implies that they needed more strategies training and teacher guidance before the reading programs.

Table 4. Reported difficulties encountered by students when doing reading activity by number and percentages of the participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>number of students (n=34)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content is difficult to comprehend (vocabulary, grammar, etc.)</td>
<td>27 (79%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low or no interest in reading English</td>
<td>9 (26%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No confidence in reading English</td>
<td>7 (21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ low to no reading habits in English</td>
<td>6 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depending on teacher guidance</td>
<td>5 (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know how to read appropriately</td>
<td>5 (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low reading fluency</td>
<td>2 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack background knowledge</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (bothered by noise)</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The students were allowed to give as many comments as they wished, so the total frequency exceeds the number of participants.

V. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

Although the statistical analysis showed no significant differences before
and after the program, observable improvement was found in both perceptions toward the reading program and a habit formation of reading in English for the three groups. Due to the restricted class hours for doing extensive reading and lack of repeated reading practice, the improvement was only modest. The teacher met participants only once a week with one hour allocated to the ER programs in each meeting. In addition, after each reading practice, students did not have the time to reread the texts because they need to hand in their writing summary or answer comprehension questions after the 15-20 minute reading practice as well as pair/group discussion. Therefore, many students reported to encounter a lot of unfamiliar vocabulary which hinders their comprehension of the text.

Despite reading comprehension, this study examines individual difficulties facing the students. The following excerpts show what they think when doing the reading activity...

- “I have a fear of studying English so when my teacher asks me to read on my own, I have no motivation to understand what the story is about.”
- “If without the teacher guidance, I will never understand a bit of the story.”

On the other hand, students also reported that reading program improved their reading ability and helped develop reading habit shown as below:

- “By reading more, I feel that my reading fluency has been improved. And I will probably continue to read at leisure after the program.”
- “I’ve learned some vocabulary, sentence patterns, and grammar from reading story books, which has helped develop my reading fluency. I will not give up on reading extensively after the program because I want to improve my English.”
- “I’ve read more in quantity through this program in which my vocabulary and reading ability has been increased.”

The reading activity not only improved the participants’ reading ability but also increased their background knowledge and self-confidence.

- “I like the reading program because the teacher always introduces the sto-
ry to let us know what it is about. I wish that I will be able to chat with foreigners and pass GEPT elementary level someday."

- "I think that reading story books is fun. I can enjoy reading stories without pressure, and getting familiar with grammar by reading them."

The above excerpts show that the participants regarded the reading programs helpful. Nevertheless, there are some limitations of the study are worth mentioning. First, there is no control group involved in the study since the teacher researcher considered it as a classroom action research rather than an experimental study. Second, the degree of students’ motivation in improving their reading ability requires investigation which is absent before the program. Future research may conduct a survey before the research begins to compare improvement between students of high motivation and those of low motivation.

Although the quantitative data did not demonstrate any significant improvement in the participants’ reading proficiency, this does not imply that the adoption of the reading program is not worthwhile because many students reported positive perceptions toward it. Applying repeated reading strategies and starting from the fundamental level of stories may help low-achievers obtain better comprehension in reading. Briefly stated, the results of the study indicate that including the ER program in the regular curriculum can enhance learners’ positive learning attitudes and reading habits.

The primary emphasis of the study is on the correlation between ER programs and students’ learning perceptions and change of a reading habit. Based on the test results, the participants’ reading competence was somewhat at the elementary level. Accordingly, the researcher decided to reduce their affective filters by presenting them with the benefits of ER and providing them with some easy reading materials. An introduction of ER was included at the beginning of the reading programs. The short-term goal of the study aims to decrease students’ negative perceptions, anxiety and fears, toward learning English. Though the students did not show distinct improvement in their reading proficiency tests, their perceptions and reading habits toward learning English had progressed. As we all know,
it takes time for learners to nurture and develop a reading habit, so do vocabulary acquisition and reading ability enhancement. Based on the findings of the study, interesting materials are more likely to attract learners’ attention, so the selection of materials plays a crucial role in which appropriate levels of language will increase learners’ reading motivation. Since the students had not developed sufficient abilities to read for pleasure, they reported to have difficulties in reading graded readers or authentic youth novels. Basically, they could not abandon to use bottom-up approach (i.e., decoding each sentence word-by-word and looking up dictionaries for any unknown words) when reading any texts. Therefore, it is essential to give the students more training in reading strategies (e.g., guessing from the context) so that they will be able to resolve reading problems more efficiently when necessary. With all these in mind, if students are given a more variety of choice of books (e.g., easier texts such as children’s books for native speakers in English), and strategies training from the beginning of the programs, they would be more likely to cultivate an interest in reading and learning English so as to become more competent readers in the long run (Sheu, 2004). Last but not least, more teacher guidance as well as teacher serving as a role model to read in class are also important alongside the techniques associated with extensive reading. We will direct our research goals in accordance with the findings to further investigate what works best for beginning-level EFL college students in the future.
REFERENCES


