

The Effect of English Extensive Reading Activities on Students' Reading Proficiency and Reading Motivation

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Abstract. This paper explores whether the Extensive Reading has a positive effect on students' reading motivation and proficiency. For this study 36 high school students in two separate classrooms from Gyeonggi-do, South Korea were surveyed. To control for extraneous variables in the samples, ANCOVA analysis was utilized. The result indicates that Extensive Reading activities led subjects to have higher intrinsic levels of reading motivation, and, at the same time, to have higher levels of reading proficiency.

Keywords: Extensive Reading activities, reading motivation, reading proficiency

1. Introduction

With Palmer (1969)'s first applying the term Extensive Reading (ER), definitions of ER have been mentioned by many of educators. Today, Richard R. Day & Julian Bamford (2003) views Extensive Reading 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. On the other hand, Stephen Krashen (2004) called ER 'pleasure reading'. Considering both definitions above, this paper was designed to shed light on the following questions:

Do ER activities applied to students improve their reading proficiency?

Do ER activities have a positive effect on students' intrinsic levels of motivation to read?

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 The benefit of Extensive Reading in EFL

According to a study by Greta Andrea (2008), conducted in Indonesia, numerous studies have proved that Extensive Reading is a way of advancing learners' vocabulary competence as well as their general proficiency.

2.2 Reading Motivation and Proficiency

Edward Deci (1975) defined intrinsic motivation as behaviors which are aimed at bringing about certain internally rewarding consequences. Byeong-Sang, Moon (2011) said the influence that intrinsic reading motivation has on both students' reading activities and their proficiency was positively significant.

3. Research Method

3.1 Subjects and Procedure

For this study, 36 students, two 2nd year high school classes in Gyeonggi-do, South Korea were selected. The research was conducted from March through December 2014. For the experiment group, both the 1st class period (50 mins) every Monday morning and 20 minutes in another designated class per week were set aside for 'sustained silent reading'. Then, they were instructed to read 'class readers' (The young adults books *Frindle* (1996) and *Room One* (2006) by Andrew Clements) which were carefully chosen books by English teachers. They were also led to ways of successful ER models — for example, no dictionaries, *i minus I*, fun materials (Samuels, 1994) and maximization of 'sight vocabulary'.

3.2 Instrument and Data Collection

To measure students' reading motivation, a questionnaire, revised with reference to Suk-Ki, Choi (2010), Kathleen (1986) and Clement (1994) was utilized. The survey was made up of 8 questions with the use of the Likert Scale 1-5. The values of Cronbach's about the questionnaire are above .8, which indicates good reliability. For analyzing the reading proficiency, subjects took two reading tests (pretest and posttest), which the researcher made for the purpose of this experiment.

3.3 Data Analysis

First, the reliability of the questionnaire used to check students' reading motivation was measured. Second, since the experiment group and the control group were selected randomly by the researcher and may have been affected by extraneous variables, ANCOVA analysis was run to find out the difference in reading motivation, pretest and posttest. Third, 'IBM SPSS Statistics version 21' was utilized for data analysis.

Table 1. Questionnaire Reliability of Reading Motivation

N of items	Cronbach's Alpha (Experiment group)		Cronbach's Alpha (Control group)	
	Pre-	Post-	Pre-	Post-
	0.823	0.920	0.840	0.912

4. Results

4.1 Extensive Reading and Reading Proficiency

Table 2. Comparison between Two Groups about Reading Proficiency

Group	N	Pre			Post		
		M	SD	Sig	M	SD	Sig
Experiment Group	20	5.22	2.06	0.233 (*P>0.05)	6.46	1.60	0.025 (*p<0.05)
Control Group	19	5.87	2.30		5.39	2.19	

As shown in Table 2, from the result of the pre-test, we found out that since p-value was 0.233, which is bigger than 0.05, there was no statistically significant difference between two groups. However, according to the result of the post-test which was taken ten months after the pre-test, p-value was 0.025 ($p < 0.05$), which means that it is statistically significant.

Table 3. Analysis of Covariance for Intrinsic Motivation

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Covariate	9.721	1	9.721	23.779	0.000***
ER	2.336	1	2.336	5.889	0.020*
Error	16.332	44	0.387		
Total	28.389	46			

$p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

According to the Table 3, ER activities used to improve intrinsic motivation turned out to be statistically significant ($F=5.889$, $p < 0.05$).

5. Conclusion

This paper has shown that Extensive Reading activities have a positive influence on students' reading proficiency and their intrinsic motivation. Even if this research has not proved whether ER activities would affect students' motivation in other areas, such as extrinsic, instrumental and integrative motivation, it is highly probable that English teachers in EFL should take ER activities into consideration when designing their curriculum to improve students' reading proficiency and motivation.

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