

THE EFFECTS OF USING GUIDED EXTENSIVE READING TO ENHANCE INCIDENTAL VOCABULARY ACQUISITION FOR SECOND-YEAR STUDENTS AT THAI NGUYEN UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

Pham Thi Thu Trang

TNU - University of Agriculture and Forestry

ARTICLE INFO		ABSTRACT
Received:	23/3/2023	This research investigated the effects of extensive reading on improving incidental vocabulary learning for second-year students at Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry (TUAF). Action research was conducted by using data collection devices such as pre-test, post-test, and delayed post-test, as well as questionnaires. Using the results of the T-test and Cronbach's alpha coefficient, the research's validity and internal consistency reliability were assessed. It was found that extensive reading boosted students' vocabulary knowledge considerably and improved their long-term vocabulary retention. Besides, the project showed that students had a positive attitude toward vocabulary learning through extensive reading. Therefore, it encouraged individuals to form reading habits. Also, pedagogical implications for schools, teachers, and students who would teach and learn English through extensive reading were examined. In addition, some recommendations for future research were offered.
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KEYWORDS		
Extensive reading		
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Vocabulary retention		
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ẢNH HƯỞNG CỦA VIỆC SỬ DỤNG ĐỌC RỘNG CÓ HƯỚNG DẪN ĐẾN VIỆC NÂNG CAO NĂNG LỰC HỌC TỪ VỰNG NGẪU NHIÊN CHO SINH VIÊN NĂM THỨ HAI TẠI TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC NÔNG LÂM THÁI NGUYÊN

Phạm Thị Thu Trang

Trường Đại học Nông Lâm – ĐH Thái Nguyên

THÔNG TIN BÀI BÁO		TÓM TẮT
Ngày nhận bài:	23/3/2023	Nghiên cứu này điều tra tác động của việc đọc mở rộng trong việc cải thiện việc học từ vựng ngẫu nhiên cho sinh viên năm thứ hai tại Trường Đại học Nông Lâm Thái Nguyên (TUAF). Nghiên cứu hành động được sử dụng với các công cụ thu thập dữ liệu như bài kiểm tra trước, bài kiểm tra sau, bài kiểm tra trì hoãn và bảng câu hỏi. Độ giá trị nghiên cứu và độ tin cậy nhất quán nội bộ được đánh giá thông qua kết quả kiểm định T-test và hệ số Cronbach's alpha. Nghiên cứu chỉ ra rằng việc đọc rộng đã mở rộng đáng kể vốn từ vựng của sinh viên và cải thiện khả năng ghi nhớ vốn từ vựng lâu dài của họ. Bên cạnh đó, bài nghiên cứu cho thấy sinh viên có thái độ tích cực đối với việc học từ vựng thông qua đọc mở rộng. Đồng thời, nó cũng khuyến khích người học tạo thói quen đọc sách cho họ. Nghiên cứu cũng thảo luận về một số ý nghĩa sư phạm đối với nhà trường, giáo viên và học viên sẽ dạy và học tiếng Anh bằng cách đọc mở rộng. Ngoài ra, một số đề xuất cho nghiên cứu sâu hơn đã được đề cập.
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Email: phamthithutrangnn@tuaf.edu.vn

1. Introduction

Because it links the four language skills in English as a Foreign Language, vocabulary is the most important aspect of learning a foreign language (EFL). To communicate effectively in a foreign language, students must acquire a large vocabulary and understand how and when to use each term.

Although students are aware of the importance of vocabulary when learning a language, the majority of EFL learners acquire vocabulary passively. This is due to a number of causes. Initially, students were used to the instructor's methods, such as defining or explaining meaning. As such, language learners have nothing to do other than listen to their teacher during a vocabulary segment. Second, students are solely concerned with understanding the basic meaning of new terms. Third, learners typically acquire new vocabulary only through contextualized new words in their textbooks or through classroom instruction.

Incidental vocabulary learning can be characterized as a way of language acquisition by reading, listening, speaking, or writing as learners focus on the content of passages or texts. In other words, according to Pigada and Schmitt [1], this strategy includes learning by substantial reading, listening to tales, viewing English films, or engaging in discussion outdoors or in the classroom. This incidental acquisition typically occurs when the word is repeatedly encountered in various comprehensible contexts.

Reading extensively is an essential means of acquiring vocabulary knowledge. Students who read widely will be exposed to a variety of reading comprehension-related vocabularies. Extensive reading (ER) is a vital component of any English as a foreign language/second language reading program. According to Bell [2], ER is a sort of reading instruction program utilized in EFL contexts as an efficient method for fostering reading fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary growth.

Graded readers are books of various genres that are specially created for learners of foreign languages. They were described as either a condensed version of a previously published work or an original work produced in plain language [3]. Choosing a suitable level for prolonged reading is evidently a difficulty for EFL instructors and students. The Extensive Reading Foundation's (ERF) scale is thus suggested. The ERF graded scale was made by the Extensive Reading Foundation, a not-for-profit, charitable organization whose purpose is to support and promote extensive reading. This scale is clearly separated into seven distinct levels, each having sub-levels for further categorization. The headword count of the books should be determined and compared to the scale; then, reading materials should be labeled at the appropriate level to facilitate student selection. Undoubtedly, the categories of graded readers aid EFL students in locating reading materials according to their English skill, hence enhancing their pleasure of reading.

Many studies, ranging from large-scale adoption across entire school districts to case studies of single participants, have proven the benefits of ER. The usefulness of ER has been summarized broadly as giving intelligible information to enhance reading speed and comprehension, which leads to learners' motivation and confidence, and particularly to reinforce, confirm, and deepen vocabulary knowledge [2], [4], [6]. As ER provides numerous graded, engaging resources on a variety of topics in a stress-free learning environment for general language progress, it boosts learners' motivation and fosters a more positive attitude toward the target language. It is considered that since the student is reading for enjoyment, he will be anxious to see what comes next and try to read faster. Moreover, ER can assist students in recognizing the terms that commonly appear in books that are enjoyable to read. Learners are engaged in reading materials as naturally and comfortably as possible, without mandatory or strict follow-up assessments or explicit confirmation of meaning by teachers, so that they experience fun and reward rather than stress during the ER process [4], [7], which can aid in the development of students' learning independence, confidence, and autonomy [2], [5], [8].

Extensive reading was the strategy implemented by teachers to improve vocabulary learning since previous studies completed by Liu & Zhang [9], Chavangklang et al. [10], Sevy-Biloon [11] explained in detail how extensive reading in EFL classrooms could foster reading, improve

vocabulary, improve in general English language knowledge and student motivation to learn autonomously. In Vietnam, some studies by Nguyen [12] and Nguyen [13] also stated that reading extensively aided in the expansion and improvement of the students' language skills. It effectively broadened students' vocabulary knowledge, improved their reading skills, and motivated them to read.

At Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry (TUAF), although the students had previously studied English at schools for several years, their vocabulary learning strategies were limited. Students favored monolingual dictionaries, guessing from context and asking teachers or friends for meaning, and concentrated mainly on memorizing spoken form to consolidate the meaning of new words [14]. Thus, extensive reading strategy was chosen, it can improve reading and increase vocabulary knowledge by absorbing it naturally in different contexts and introduce a long-term retention strategy for learning vocabulary for TUAF students. When interviewed informally, these students revealed they had never read outside of school. Yet, they expressed a readiness to participate in the study since they desperately needed to improve their vocabulary and experiment with a novel method for learning vocabulary. All of these factors inspired the instructor to perform the research: "The effects of guided extensive reading to enhance incidental vocabulary acquisition for second-year students at TUAF."

This action research intends to increase the incidental vocabulary learning of second-year students at TUAF through guided extended reading.

To attain the aims, the researcher supposes two research questions as follows:

- To what extent can guided extensive reading enhance the students' incidental vocabulary acquisition?
- What are the students' opinions about the extensive reading program?

2. Methodology

2.1. Research approach

The research completed in this article was action research in a pre-intermediate level classroom of second-year university students in TUAF. The problem students struggled with was improving vocabulary because the author identified that students' vocabulary was at low level. Most of them were using a limited range of techniques in learning vocabulary. The researcher explored extensive reading to improve students' vocabulary throughout the semester.

The intervention included students choosing a graded reader to read at their level in groups and completing scaffolded activities throughout the semester in 15 weeks to learn new vocabulary and consolidate new words at their level through reading books that they were interested in at their own pace. The students were given a pre-test at the beginning of the treatment, and they also took a post-test at the end of the semester and a delayed post-test two weeks later, where they showed general improvement in vocabulary. Finally, the students completed a questionnaire related to extensive reading activities and described their thoughts.

2.2. The population

The study was conducted with the involvement of 31 students from one English class majoring in Land Management at TUAF. They are not majoring in English. All of them passed the entrance exams, including the English test. They had spent their first year studying English at the elementary level, so they were regarded to be at a pre-intermediate level of English proficiency when the research was conducted.

2.3. Reading materials

The selection of books for the lengthy reading assignment was determined by the pre-intermediate English ability levels of the participants. So, the researcher chose graded readers at level 2 range of 600-700. Furthermore, the usual characteristics of graded readers cannot include

complex sentence structure and the usage of headwords that are typically employed by native speakers. As a result, a series of graded Oxford Read and Imagine readers served as the participants' major source of reading material.

2.4. Data collection instruments

2.4.1. Tests

To examine the effects of intensive reading on vocabulary acquisition, a pre-test, a post-test, and a delayed post-test were administered. Analysis and comparison of test results aimed at measuring the students' improvement in incidental vocabulary acquisition by employing graded readers. A receptive vocabulary size Yes/ No test, XK-Lex [15], was adapted to measure the participant's vocabulary knowledge. The test consisted of 100 important words listed at the end of the graded readers plus 20 high-frequency terms culled from the materials by the researcher. The tests allowed for the rapid examination of a huge quantity of products. In addition, it was simple to construct, administer, and score.

2.4.2. Questionnaire

At the end of the research, a questionnaire was distributed to participants in order to determine their perspectives on the intensive reading program. Several elements were adopted from Nguyen's [12] since the objectives of this study were similar to those of this research.

3. Findings and discussions

3.1. Pre-test and Post-test results

Table 1 presents the statistics about the pretest and posttest results of the vocabulary test based on the mean score and standard deviation.

Table 1. Paired Samples Statistics between pre-test and post-test

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre-test	5.30	31	0.691	0.124
	Post-test	6.68	31	0.556	0.099

It demonstrates that the post-test mean (6.68) was higher than the pre-test mean (5.30). Hence, it appears that between the two examinations, there was an increase of 1.38 points. The pupils improved their vocabulary by over 1.38 points on the post-test. Thus, it is hypothesized that students' language knowledge increased.

Table 2 indicates the sample T-test of the pre-test and the post-test.

Table 2. Paired sample T-test of the pretest and the post-test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Mean	Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pretest – Posttest	-1.371	0.386	0.069	-1.512	-1.229	-19.744	30	0.000

It indicates that the essential value of the degree of freedom for a two-tailed test was 30. According to conventional criteria, the difference between the means of two tests is $t = -19.744$, $p = 0.000$ (0.05). It indicates that the difference reached a level that is statistically significant. It indicates that students' vocabulary learning improves after substantial reading. It also indicates that the comprehensive reading program was successful because it contributed to the students' vocabulary development.

3.2. Post-test and delayed post-test

Table 3 compares the post-test and the delayed post-test results of the vocabulary test in terms of the mean score and standard deviation. The mean scores on the post-test were 6.68, while the

mean scores of vocabulary knowledge on the delayed post-test decreased slightly. The students scored 6.56 in the delayed post-test (reduced by only 0.12). The standard deviations of the post-test were all lower than the pre-test.

Table 3. Paired Samples Statistics between post-test and delayed post-test

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Post-test	6.68	31	.556	0.099
	Delayed post-test	6.56	31	.574	0.103

Table 4. Paired sample T-test of the posttest and the delayed post-test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Posttest – Delayed posttest	0.113	0.212	0.038	0.035	0.191	2.958	30	0.006

Table 4 shows the results of paired samples T-test of the posttest and delayed posttest. The difference in means of two tests is $t=2.958$, $p=0.006$ which is higher than 0.05. This indicates no significant difference in the results of the two posttests.

The finding above shows slightly decreased vocabulary learning in the delayed posttest. However, the percentages were still higher than the ones in the pretest. In addition, students still retained more vocabulary after two weeks.

3.2. Questionnaire

As shown in Table 5, the overall comparison of student responses to attitudinal statements after the projects were completed by calculating the mean scores for individuals and groups of statements.

Table 5. General reading attitudes after the project

Categories	Statements	Mean	SD	Overall mean
Cognitive component of reading attitudes: Beliefs	1. My background vocabulary knowledge has been improved thanks to ER	3.95	0.878	4.00
	2. The ER materials were suitable for me	4.11	0.679	
	3. The ER project helped me develop reading habits	4.05	0.688	
	4. Writing weekly report was useful in improving my vocabulary retention	3.55	0.835	
	5. The ER activity helped me to expand my vocabulary	4.36	0.647	
Affective component of reading attitudes: Feelings	6. The ER activity gave me more pleasure in learning English	4.15	0.518	4.10
	7. I feel interested in participating in this ER project	4.25	0.506	
	8. The ER materials were interesting	4.13	0.865	
Conative component of reading attitudes: Intentions	9. I like post-extensive reading activities	3.85	0.548	3.94
	10. I wish I had been encouraged to read extensively before	4.01	0.860	
	11. I start to feel like reading stories and texts in English in my free time	3.95	0.657	
	12. I would like to continue reading in the same way next year	3.86	0.760	

Reviewing the mean scores for each item in the table above reveals that item 5 received the highest rating, with a mean score of 4.36. In addition, SD is tiny, with a value of 0.647%. This number indicates that the majority of pupils had a very positive scale. It indicates that they strongly believe that intensive reading has expanded their vocabulary. Comparable to item 5, item 6 had a mean score of 4.15 and a standard deviation value of 0.518. Students are delighted in reading graded readers and delighted in learning English through comprehensive reading exercises. All items obtained high ratings with mean scores between 3.55 and 4.36, and their SD

values are rather tiny, ranging between 0.506 and 0.877. In addition, the mean scores for three components of attitudes, namely beliefs, feelings, and intentions, are 4.00, 4.10, and 3.94, respectively. The results indicate that the pupils viewed the extended reading program favorably.

Students' suggestions for improving future extensive reading assignments were compiled in response to the open-ended inquiry. The results were coded into five main categorizations and presented in Figure 1.

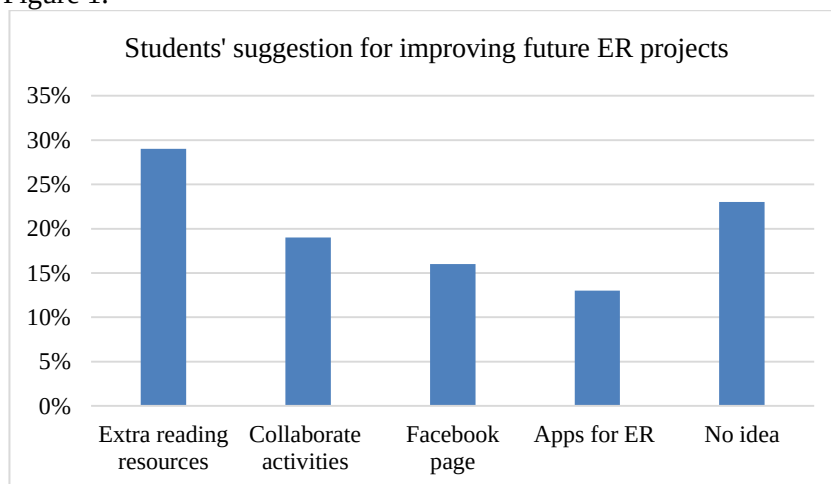


Figure 1. *Students' suggestion for improving future ER projects*

The bar graph shows that 29% of the statistics indicate that the future extensive reading project would provide students with extra reading resources and allow them to read more graded readers after class. In detail, more well-known works by renowned authors published in Vietnamese should have been included to make it easier for the participants to acquire the target language. In addition, nearly one-fifth of the data presents that collaborative activities should have been planned in the classroom so that students might have used words in their stories. They would have more fun and memorable experiences if they worked with other students. In addition to soft copies of graded readers, some data reports establish a Facebook page or a Facebook group to exchange learners' stories and reading strategies, share methods for overcoming difficulties in extensive reading, and discuss complicated phrases or sentences to comprehend. Last but not least, 13% of the evidence cited that some mobile apps for extensive reading should be introduced so that students could practice extensive reading whenever they like.

In summary, the results demonstrate the excellent effects of extensive reading. Initially, the vocabulary size and long-term memory of the pupil were increased. Second, extensive reading aided in developing favorable attitudes about extended English reading. Third, as students read more, reading becomes more straightforward for them. In addition, the information in the open-ended question describes that reading extensively encouraged students to read more. Students who are mostly expected to self-study at university must have strong reading habits. In addition, the students' responses to the surveys demonstrate that they valued the long reading project. Many found reading during the project pleasurable and beneficial, and most participants wish to continue reading substantially over the next year.

4. Conclusion

4.1. Conclusion

After examining the data and debating the outcome, the author wishes to reach the following conclusion:

First, the participants' vocabulary learning was enhanced, as seen by their improved post-test scores. With prolonged reading, students acquired incidental vocabulary, which contributed to the

improvement of their vocabulary test scores. In addition, the small difference between the results of the post-test and delayed post-test indicates that substantial reading helped to the long-term retention of students' vocabulary. It can be stated that graded readers contributed to the expansion and improvement of students' vocabulary skills.

Second, reading-graded readers had a positive effect on the reading attitudes of students. It is an effective method for expanding children' vocabulary and encouraging them to read. Pupils changed from relying heavily on the dictionary to guessing the meaning of unfamiliar terms based on context. So, their reading skills improved.

4.2. Limitations

The project was conducted with a small population 31 students. Therefore, the sample size must be more significant to generalize the findings. In addition, although the scores used for analysis were normally distributed, the limited number of students precluded the researcher from understanding the consequences of reading graded readers at varied levels of ability. Hence, it needs to be determined if the same lengthy reading project could solve the same issue with other people.

Besides, the results are based on a small number of self-rated words (120 items), which only cover headwords and frequency terms in the reading materials provided. As more unknown terms have been met in the reading materials and the words that students absorb incidentally are distinct, a more extended word checklist will be more trustworthy and offer more opportunities to assess vocabulary improvement. In addition, two assessments could not capture the participants' vocabulary development totality. This study used only word lists to assess the students' vocabulary. Therefore, additional research should be conducted to quantify vocabulary gains by lengthy reading using tools more sensitive to acquisition levels.

4.3. Recommendations

With classroom-based action research, the teacher is able to advocate the use of extensive reading and other real tactics to promote EFL growth and overall motivation among English language learners. The educational institution should provide settings that encourage teachers and students to engage in extensive reading, since it has been demonstrated to be an effective strategy for advancing vocabulary learning. Owing to its practical merits, an extensive reading approach or a practicable extended reading project should be incorporated at university level. This program could foster a welcoming environment in which students read as they would in their everyday lives. To make university libraries more engaging and motivating for students, they should be stocked with graded readers that are culturally relevant and appropriate for their age group. These sorts of real learning in the classroom can motivate students to learn independently and challenge them to enhance their English language proficiency. This research can also be used to enhance these authentic instructional tactics for future classes with varying skill levels.

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