

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SELF-SELECTED READING TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION IN EXTENSIVE READING COURSE

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Accepted :

1 July 2025

Published :

24 July 2025

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of Self-Selected Reading (SSR) on enhancing students' reading comprehension within the Extensive Reading Course at La Tansa Mashiro University. Utilizing a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design, the research involved 20 undergraduate participants who engaged in interest-driven reading over two instructional cycles. Data were gathered through comprehension tests, classroom observations, and student reading logs, then analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Findings from the first cycle revealed that 62.5% of students demonstrated active engagement, yet only 35% achieved the benchmark score of 70 or higher. In contrast, the second cycle showed significant improvement, with 86.7% of students actively participating and 95% attaining the targeted comprehension score. These outcomes highlight a marked advancement in reading performance following the integration of SSR. The study concludes that embedding SSR into the Extensive Reading curriculum significantly enhances not only students' reading proficiency but also cultivates a more positive disposition toward reading. It recommends that educators incorporate SSR to promote reading engagement and support the development of autonomous, motivated readers.

Keywords: *Self-Selected Reading, Extensive Reading, Reading Comprehension*

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading comprehension is one of a crucial language skill and tools for academic success, and become the main focus of the Foreign Language Learning. It can be defined as a process of recognizing the words, spelling, and its relation to construct meaning. In Indonesia, EFL students need to master reading in order to communicate and receive information in any kind of written materials effectively (Baleghizadeh & Maryam, 2019; Ng et al., 2019; Jaya et al., 2025). Unfortunately, reading in a foreign language is not easy for learners. Although in university, the students need to be continually exposed to plentiful comprehensive input in the target language to develop their reading ability, most of students lack motivation, interest or participate in reading activity. The purpose of reading activity varies widely, although it is generally done to gain as much knowledge as possible (Kasper, M., Uibu, K., & Mikk, 2018; Magnusson, Roe., & Blikstad-Balas,

2018). In this case, to help students familiarize with the reading materials, the teacher should employ an effective techniques that foster students' interest, boost their reading motivation and confidence, and provide them with guidance to strive for comprehending what they read. One of the technique that can be applied is extensive reading (Kaforina et al., 2023; Fadilah et al., 2023).

Extensive Reading (ER) is widely recognized as an approach which exposed students read a large amounts of materials not only for understanding of the material, but also leads them to enjoy reading in the new language. ER is basically reading for pleasure, where the students do reading activities in any area they like reading and there is not any force to do reading (Adhitya & Novita, 2021; Taembo, 2023). It means they read and educate independently where students genuinely enjoy what they are reading, not because it is assigned, but because they chose it

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themselves. Moreover, Krashen (2019) and Salsabila et al. (2021) stated that reading for pleasure is a significant component of the language development and essential for piquing students' interest in the content of the books they have chosen. In other word, ER boosts a student's desire to read and provides opportunity to become active and critical readers. These ER activities can improve students reading skills same as intensive reading, but without burden, since students choose their book.

At La Tansa Mashiro University, researchers found the fact that teaching reading with little consideration given to the students to select Reading that is relevant to their interests resulted in unsatisfactory reading abilities of students. According to O'Brien (2020), the decline of pleasure reading amongst school-aged students over the past few decades can also be attributed to two other factors: (1) school's curriculum implement preselects the reading material and requires students to read uninteresting texts; and (2) tying reading to tasks and assessments to demonstrate proficiency of a skill. Nowadays, students are opting to be on their devices rather than grabbing a book to read for fun. Twenge, Martin and Spitzberg (2018) also asserted that the number of students reading for enjoyment has dropped from 44% to merely 16% since the late 1970s. In fact, to improve students' reading comprehension, the best solution is in the form of innovative and creative teaching method is needed. Extensive Reading programs address this problem by flexibly providing a variety of readings whether it is printed or digital text, inside or outside the class. In addition, Ng et al. (2019) stated that students generally have positive attitude and perceptions toward extensive reading. Moreover, one of the key feature of ER is allowing learners to choose texts based on their preferences, commonly referred to as self-selected reading. This strategy increases the students' motivation, confidence, reading frequency and comprehension effectively.

In the context of reading, self-selection can transform reading from perspective task into enjoyable and purposeful activity for lifelong love of reading to improve comprehension. Mason and Smith (2021) study indicate that self-selected reading (SSR) lowers anxiety when readers engage in

compelling readings appropriate to their level. It showed the benefits of free-voluntary reading that the language teachers have not incorporated into their daily classroom routine. Krashen (2019) also stated that this problem rooted from the tension between teachers who instruct using a skills-based approach focuses on grammar and vocabulary drills and a comprehension based approach that focuses on providing interesting texts at EFL learner's level to develop language.

Based on the description above, through the process of SSR, students gain access to an extensive classroom library of texts in the target language that relate to a variety of interests. The researcher are interested in examine the effectiveness of self-selected reading to improving students' reading comprehension in extensive reading course. While extensive reading leads to the act of reading lots of enjoyable, accessible books to help with fluency and vocabulary, it can also show a real difference in how well they understand what they read.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is a complex cognitive process between reader's interaction and background knowledge, the text, and reading context. It is a core to academic progress, because it underpins content-area learning in all subjects to enhance knowledge (Smith et al., 2021). It emphasize the importance of background knowledge in understanding the information and critical thinking for successful comprehension. Aida et al. (2020) declared that critical thinking is crucial skill to assist reading comprehension as an exchange from brain to mind. Hence, it provides self-evaluation process by bridging the logic and insight about the information in real world context. According to Kircher and Mostert (2017) that reading comprehension includes understanding the main idea, supporting details, inferences, and author's purpose. To improved comprehension often results from regular, enjoyable reading.

Extensive Reading

Extensive reading offers a new way of reading, encouraging reading for pleasure and overall language growth. It involves reading large amounts of text that are level-appropriate and interesting to students, with a focus on reading fluency and comprehension rather than testing or translation. Extensive reading includes skimming, scanning, word-attack skills, vocabulary building, recognizing text organization, interpreting reference, and making inference in order help students comprehend the reading text (Lindawati, 2021; Nation & Waring, 2019; Renandya & Richards, 2002). There are some types of extensive reading that are suitable for different level of education whether it is fiction or non-fiction. For example, the reading materials that would be suitable for university students are classic short stories, novel, book, newspaper, journal and other types based on their proficiency.

In language learning, during extensive reading process, the teacher take an important role to maintain students' motivation and engagement by giving the students some activities related to their extensive reading material. Students receive comprehensible input from the reading materials (e.g. graded readers, digital novel), engage in meaningful tasks such as opinion exchange or decision-making tasks, and produce written reports, review or oral presentations. As Chen (2018) stated that when extensive reading is incorporated in a task-based approach with to assist the completion of tasks leads to meaningful task. There are numerous studies (Lekawael & Fernandus, 2021; Moon & Kwan, 2022; Wijaya, 2020) stated the benefits of extensive reading are: 1) a role in helping students become better readers by improving fluency and expand vocabularies, 2) enhance students desire to read many texts as possible if they find the reading materials enjoyable and appropriate for their learning goals, 3) enhance reading comprehension, writing and language proficiency, 4) expose learner to cultural awareness, and 5) development of learner autonomy.

Therefore, in ER, students not only just reading words, they're engaging with stories and topics they genuinely care about. This intrinsic motivation is key to help them

dive deep into the text, truly grasp its meaning, and remember what they have learned. Despite all of these explanation about extensive reading and the freedom of self-selected books, many English learners still find reading comprehension a real hurdle and not aware of their language level or what type of book would be the best place to start, leading many to give up early, disengage, and lose motivation (Mason, 2019). Hence, in recent years, many scholar encourage encouraged the implementation of a guided stage to self-selected reading called guided self-selected reading for second language acquisition (Krashen, 2019; Mason, 2019; Mason & Smith, 2021; Smith, K., Mason, B., & Krashen, 2021; Smith et al., 2021).

Self-Selected Reading

Self-selected reading aligns with extensive reading to help students become more independent learner. It is an autonomy-based strategy where learners choose their own reading materials. It has been shown to increase learner engagement and motivation (Krashen, 2019). By choosing reading materials that resonate with their interests or existing knowledge, students will become more active and making comprehension more natural and less effortful. Moreover, During SSR, students read a book of their choice without any comprehension activities or assessments attached (Mason & Smith, 2021). The autonomy inherent in SSR encourage students to develop and apply critical thinking, they can adjust their reading when they no longer enjoys the book they are reading to find something that intrigues them.

In addition, the other role of teacher in SSR is to guide novice readers in the selection process to find texts that match each individual student's interests and language level. As Nurpratiwi (2024) said that teacher not only help students acquire information, skills, value, ways of thinking, and means of expressing themselves, they are also teaching them how to learn. The goal of guided self-selected reading (GSSR) is to create autonomous readers who have the confidence to select level-appropriate reading material and enjoy these texts at their own pace (Mason, 2019; Krashen, 2019). Through their own choice, students can explore the content of the reading materials and expand their knowledge independently. That way

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students feel they have gained something useful for themselves, and what they have just learned (Acharya, 2019; Al-Obaydi, L. H., Nashruddin, N., Rahman, F. F., & Suherman, 2021). Hence, the teacher helps students make connections between prior knowledge and new knowledge through the reading activities through SSR strategy.

3. METHODS***Research Design***

This research employed a classroom action research by using Kemmis & McTaggart (2014) model to examine and explore the effectiveness of self-selected reading in extensive reading course. The location of this research is in La Tansa Mashiro University. The research subjects are 20 students enrolled in an Extensive Reading Course consist consisting of 5 male students and 15 female students. The classroom action research is carried out in two cycles consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection. There are two types of data in this study, namely quantitative data obtained from student extensive reading test, and qualitative data representing student activities and student responses or reflection to self-selected reading (Leavy, 2017).

Data Collection Technique

The instruments for data collection in the present study were: (1) Extensive Reading Test to find out how the students' reading comprehension was improved by using the self-selected reading in the extensive reading course, (2) observation to obtain data about the students activeness and how students' attitudes during the learning process took place, and (3) Students' Reading log as reading tool to record students reading activity and reflection during the lesson (Anufia, 2019; Mauliddiyah, 2021).

Data Analysis Technique

The data that has been collected is then analysed using qualitative and quantitative analysis techniques. Qualitative analysis consist of data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusion and verification. For the quantitative analysis technique, descriptive statistics are used,

namely describing the increase in students' reading comprehension by using self-selected reading in ER course (Herdayati & Syahrial, 2019).

Moreover, to determine students' reading comprehension achievement into classification as below:

Table 1. Classification of Reading Achievement

Category	Score
Very Good	85-100
Good	75-84
Moderate	60-74
Poor	40-59
Very Poor	0-39

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION***Result***

In the first cycle the Self-Selected Reading that was applied in extensive reading course as an initial implementation was not perfect. The researchers found the ability of students in reading comprehension, 4 students (20%) got a score of between the range 75-84 or categorized as good, 11 students (55%) got a score of between the range 60-74 or categorized as moderate, 5 students (25%) got a score between the range 40-59 or poor categorized, and there were no students got a score lower than that. The results of the students' reading comprehension test in extensive reading can be seen in the following table 2:

Table 2. The Result of Extensive Reading Test in Cycle I

Statistic	Value
Number of students	20
Ideal Score	100
Highest score	75
Lowest Score	55
Score Range	20
Average Score	64.3
Median	62.15

Standard Deviation 6.88

The result obtained based on the evaluation of the first cycle showed that the highest score was 75 and the lowest score was 55. This value was far from the predetermined of the percentage calculation benchmark that students who get a score of 70 and above are only 7 students (35% of the total number of students). It means that it is still less than the research target, that is, 75% students get score of 70 and above. Moreover, the number of students' average scores in the aspect of reading comprehension obtained was 64.3. So, it can be said that the students' reading comprehension in the first cycle are still moderate.

Furthermore, the observation result on students' engagement during activities at the first meeting can be seen in table 3 below:

Table 3. Students Activity Observation in Cycle I

No	Observed Indicator	Cycle I				Average (%)
		Frequency (%)		Percentage (%)		
		W1	W2	W1	W2	
1	Students' attendance	19	20	95	100	97.5
2	Students' Engagement	10	15	50	75	62.5
3	Students' seek guidance about the reading text	14	12	70	60	65
4	Students taking notes during lesson	16	18	80	90	85
5	Students use of reading logs	9	12	45	60	52.5
6	Students peer-feedback or reflection session	5	8	25	40	32.5
7	Students who are doing other activities during learning	6	5	30	25	27.5
Total Average						60.36

Based on the data from observations at table 2 above, at the beginning of the implementation of the first cycle in two weeks shown there were still some lack of students' engagement in the ER activity with the average 62.5%. Around 65% students shown seeking guidance from the teacher

during the reading activities. Although, most of student (85%) actively taking notes, but only 32.5% in span of two weeks are actively respond and reflect to question. It is also shown that 27.5% students behave negatively during the lesson. Based on these result, the lack of student engagement in the ER need to be improved. Therefore, cycle II is conducted, rhe test scores obtained by students in cycle II are shown in table 4 below:

Table 4. The Result of Extensive Reading Test in Cycle II

Statistic	Value
Number of students	20
Ideal Score	100
Highest score	95
Lowest Score	74
Score Range	21
Average Score	84.25
Median	85
Standard Deviation	4.26

Based on the result of students extensive reading test in Cycle II shown by table 3, it can be seen that 19 students (95%) scored 70 and above. Only 1 students (5%) scored below 70. It means that most of students showed a positive attitude towards learning. The number of students' average scores in the aspect of reading comprehension obtained in Cycle II was 84.25. So, it means that the students' level of mastery is in the very good category. This is in accordance with the results of observations on student activities during the learning process in cycle II. The activeness of students in teaching and learning can be seen from the results of observations in cycle II, there were three meetings as shown in table 5 below:

Table 5. Students Activities Observation in Cycle II

No	Observed Indicator	Cycle II						Average (%)
		Frequency (%)			Percentage (%)			
		W1	W2	W3	W1	W2	W3	
1	Students' attendance	20	18	20	100	90	100	96.7
2	Students' Engagement	15	17	20	75	85	100	86.7

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3 Students' seek guidance about the reading text	12	10	7	60	50	35	48.3
4 Students taking notes during lesson	18	18	19	90	90	95	91.7
5 Students use of reading logs	12	14	17	60	70	85	71.7
6 Students peer-feedback or reflection session	10	12	17	50	60	85	65.0
7 Students who are doing other activities during learning	4	4	2	20	20	10	16.7
Total Average							68.10

Based on the data from observations at table 5 above, the result shown that there is an improvement in overall aspect that has been observed. The total average of students' activity increase from the initial 60.36% to 68.10% in the extensive reading activity. Meanwhile, the student engagement average from the initial 62.5% increase to the average of 86.7% student are engaged in the ER activity. Around 48.3% the decrease of students who were seeking guidance from the teacher during the reading activities. There are 91.7% students actively taking notes, now they actively respond, able to reflect and give feedback increase to 65% in span of three weeks of intervention in cycles II. Moreover, it is shown the decrease of the number of students who behave negatively during the lesson from the initial 27.5% to 16.7%. It means that student respond is progressing to positive attitude and more enjoying in their reading activity.

Discussions

The result of the finding of this classroom action research demonstrate that the implementation self-selected reading (SRR) significantly improve students' reading comprehension in extensive reading text. In cycle I, the number of students' average scores in the aspect of reading comprehension obtained was 64.3. This baseline score indicate that prior to intervention, students' reading comprehension in the first cycle are moderate and still adapting to different kind of

extensive reading texts. This result is consistent with Sunata (2019), who stated that the students were still less active in class are still less familiar with the learning especially when it is are in accordance with the wishes of students.

The observation result of SSR implementation in the first cycle shown there were still some lack of students' engagement in the extensive reading activity. Especially, the data that stood out was that students who ask, answered and gave responses were relatively still very few. Although, some students who took notes during the lesson express good cooperation to participate in peer-feedback and reflection, there are still some students who was less passive and less supportive in learning. The students who still behaved negatively, were unmotivated, chatted or whispered with each other, played phones and leads to a noisy class. It means that they were not enthusiastic in learning and seem still confused about the reading materials. Another cause for students' negative behavior is because they were uninterested or still have not found their desire in reading text, their use on reading log also only a few and not complete.

Therefore, the researcher continued to conduct the research to cycle II by maintaining the achievements in cycle I and guide students in selecting and exploring more extensive reading materials they interested. As Naqia (2019) stated that the benefits of using extensive reading is as a supportive material to the students' reading competence such as developing reading habits and they get prepared for further reading.

Based on the result of the extensive reading test and observation in cycle II, the researcher found there was a huge change in the attitude, attention and activity of the students, and the most prominent thing was that students who behave negatively in the class was decreased significantly. The number of students who ask or seek full guidance about the reading text from the initial 65% are decreased in cycle II to 48.3% the decrease of students who were seeking guidance from the teacher during the reading activities. Likewise, students who take notes, respond to question, give peer-feedback or

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reflection showed very good progress. The most prominent thing is also shown in the activity of students in using Reading Logs on their extensive reading activity with more detailed and completely record their reading activities. Therefore, the result of the observation and extensive reading test in cycle II showed that self-selected reading enhances comprehension.

Autonomy in reading choices increased student motivation and engagement to read for enjoyment, especially in extensive reading. These results align with previous studies highlighting the benefits of self-selected reading in ER practices. If reading material is compelling, comprehensible, rich, and abundant, the learner will be more inspired to read, lowered levels of anxiety, and will naturally gains language without any unnecessary strings or assessments attached to the process (Mason, 2019; Smith, K., Mason, B., & Krashen, 2021). Based on the result in Cycle II, 86.7% of students actively participated in learning. This shows that there is a significant effect of self-selected reading in student activity in the extensive reading activities, which is 24.2% from the initial 62.5% in cycle I. The average score also indicate the increase students' reading comprehension from 64.3 to 84.25. The target has been met in cycle II so that the research no longer needs to be continued to the next cycle.

Hence, the research confirms that Self-Selected Reading (SSR) is an effective strategy to improve reading comprehension for EFL students in Extensive Reading Course. The successful implementation of SRR in extensive reading course reflects a shift toward reading for pleasure and independent learning. By adopting SSR in learning process can make English language education more enjoyable, engaging, effective, and align with students' interest in any kinds of extensive reading texts.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion of the research, it can be concluded that students' reading comprehension in extensive reading course have increased through the use of the Self-Selected Reading (SSR)

strategy. This is proven by the results of the evaluation of students' reading comprehension after using SSR in extensive reading course. In the cycle I, only 35% of the student scored 70 and above. In the cycle II, 95% of the students scored 70 and above. Hence, Self-selected reading is an effective strategy to improve reading comprehension in university-level Extensive Reading courses.

In addition, students' activeness in participating the learning process shown a positive attitude of students also increased. In the first cycle, the number of students participated in active learning was only 62.5% and increased in the second cycle to 86.7%. Observation also showed that students become more motivated, leading to better reading and usage of new knowledge during the extensive reading class. This indicates that there is an improvement in student engagement and motivation as a result of the learning process using SSR. By providing students with the freedom to choose their texts fosters autonomy, motivation, and meaningful reading experiences.

It is also recommended for future research to include a longer intervention period to further validate the findings and expanding the various reading texts involving multiple genre could also provide more generalizable findings on the genre that students' interest.

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