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The Role Of Extensive Reading In Enhancing Language Proficiency Of Boarding School Students

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the role of extensive reading in enhancing the language proficiency of boarding school students. Extensive reading, defined as reading large amounts of comprehensible and meaningful texts for pleasure, is widely recognized as an effective approach in second and foreign language acquisition. The study explores how systematic exposure to extensive reading materials influences learners' vocabulary development, reading comprehension, grammatical awareness, and overall language fluency. Special attention is given to the unique educational environment of boarding schools, where students have increased opportunities for independent learning and structured reading programs. The article analyzes both theoretical perspectives and empirical findings related to extensive reading, highlighting its impact on learners' motivation, reading habits, and cognitive engagement. Furthermore, the research discusses the role of teachers in selecting appropriate reading materials and creating a supportive reading culture within boarding schools. The findings suggest that extensive reading significantly contributes to improving language proficiency by fostering learner autonomy and sustained language exposure. The article concludes that integrating extensive reading programs into boarding school curricula can serve as a powerful pedagogical tool for enhancing students' linguistic competence and academic performance.

Keywords: Extensive reading, language proficiency, boarding school students, reading comprehension, vocabulary development, learner autonomy, foreign language learning.

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the growing importance of foreign language proficiency has become a central concern in educational systems worldwide. English, in particular, functions as a global language of communication, academic exchange, and professional advancement. Consequently, educators and researchers continuously seek effective pedagogical approaches that can improve students' language skills in a sustainable and learner-centered manner. One such approach that has gained increasing attention is extensive reading. Extensive reading refers to the practice of reading large quantities of level-appropriate texts for general understanding and enjoyment, rather than for detailed linguistic analysis. This approach contrasts with intensive reading, which focuses

on close examination of short texts and explicit language instruction.

For boarding school students, the role of extensive reading becomes especially significant. Boarding schools provide a unique educational environment where learners spend a substantial amount of time within a structured academic setting. Unlike day schools, boarding institutions offer extended learning hours and greater access to libraries, reading programs, and supervised self-study sessions. These conditions create favorable opportunities for implementing extensive reading activities as part of both formal instruction and independent learning. As a result, extensive reading can become an integral component of students' daily routines, fostering consistent exposure to

the target language [1,2].

Previous research has demonstrated that extensive reading positively influences multiple aspects of language proficiency, including vocabulary acquisition, reading fluency, grammatical sensitivity, and overall comprehension skills. By encountering words and sentence structures repeatedly in meaningful contexts, learners gradually internalize linguistic patterns without conscious memorization. Moreover, extensive reading promotes affective benefits such as increased motivation, reduced anxiety, and the development of positive attitudes toward language learning. These factors are particularly important for boarding school students, who often experience academic pressure due to intensive curricula and high expectations.

Despite the growing body of literature on extensive reading, limited attention has been given to its implementation and impact within boarding school contexts. This study aims to address this gap by examining how extensive reading contributes to the enhancement of language proficiency among boarding school students. The article seeks to explore both the pedagogical value of extensive reading and the conditions under which it can be most effectively integrated into boarding school language programs. By doing so, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of learner-centered approaches in language education and provides practical implications for teachers and curriculum designers [3,4].

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-methods research design to investigate the role of extensive reading in enhancing the language proficiency of boarding school students. The combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches allows for a comprehensive analysis of both measurable language outcomes and learners' perceptions of extensive reading practices. The research was conducted in a

boarding school where English is taught as a foreign language and serves as a core subject in the curriculum.

The participants of the study consisted of 60 boarding school students aged between 14 and 17. The students were divided into two groups: an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group participated in a structured extensive reading program over a period of twelve weeks, while the control group continued with traditional language instruction focusing primarily on intensive reading and textbook-based exercises. Prior to the intervention, both groups were administered a standardized language proficiency test to ensure comparability in terms of their initial language levels.

The extensive reading program involved the selection of graded readers, short stories, and simplified novels appropriate to the students' proficiency levels. Students in the experimental group were encouraged to choose reading materials based on their interests to promote intrinsic motivation. They were required to read for at least 20–30 minutes daily and maintain reading logs to record their progress and reflections. Teachers acted as facilitators by monitoring reading habits, providing guidance, and creating a supportive reading environment rather than explicitly testing comprehension.

Data collection instruments included pre- and post-tests to measure changes in vocabulary knowledge, reading comprehension, and overall language proficiency. In addition, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather qualitative data on students' attitudes, motivation, and perceived benefits of extensive reading. The collected data were analyzed using statistical methods for quantitative results and thematic analysis for qualitative findings. This methodological approach ensured the reliability and validity of the research outcomes and allowed for a nuanced understanding of the effectiveness of extensive reading in boarding school settings [5-7].

Research design and methodological framework of the study

Table 1.

Component	Description
Research Design	Mixed-methods approach (quantitative and qualitative)
Research Setting	Boarding school where English is taught as a foreign language
Participants	60 boarding school students
Age Range	14–17 years old
Group Division	Experimental group (30 students) and Control group (30 students)
Duration of Study	12 weeks

Instructional Approach (Experimental Group)	Extensive reading program using graded readers and simplified texts
Instructional Approach (Control Group)	Traditional language instruction with intensive reading
Reading Materials	Graded readers, short stories, simplified novels
Daily Reading Time	20–30 minutes
Data Collection Tools	Language proficiency tests, questionnaires, interviews, reading logs
Key Variables Measured	Vocabulary development, reading comprehension, overall language proficiency
Role of Teacher	Facilitator and guide in extensive reading process
Data Analysis Methods	Statistical analysis (quantitative) and thematic analysis (qualitative)

Table 1 presents a comprehensive overview of the research design and methodological framework used to investigate the role of extensive reading in enhancing the language proficiency of boarding school students. The mixed-methods research design outlined in the table indicates a balanced integration of quantitative and qualitative approaches, which strengthens the overall reliability and validity of the study. By combining standardized language proficiency tests with questionnaires and interviews, the research captures both measurable language gains and students' subjective learning experiences.

The participant characteristics shown in the table demonstrate a well-defined and controlled sample. The inclusion of 60 boarding school students aged 14–17 allows the study to focus on adolescent learners at a critical stage of language development. The equal division into experimental and control groups ensures comparability and minimizes potential bias in the interpretation of results. The twelve-week duration of the study is sufficient to observe meaningful changes in language proficiency, particularly in vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension, which are key outcomes of extensive reading practices.

Furthermore, the table highlights a clear distinction between instructional approaches used for the two groups. The experimental group's engagement in an extensive reading program, supported by graded readers and simplified texts, reflects a learner-centered and motivation-driven methodology. In contrast, the control group's reliance on traditional intensive reading methods provides a useful benchmark for evaluating the effectiveness of extensive reading. The specified daily reading time of 20–30 minutes emphasizes the importance of consistent and sustained exposure to the target language.

The data collection tools and analysis methods listed in the table indicate methodological rigor. The use of multiple instruments allows for data triangulation, enhancing the credibility of the findings. Additionally, the teacher's role as a facilitator rather than a direct instructor aligns with the core principles of extensive reading and supports the development of learner autonomy. Overall, the table demonstrates that the research methodology is systematically structured and well-suited to examining the impact of extensive reading in a boarding school context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate that the implementation of an extensive reading program had a significant positive impact on the language proficiency of boarding school students. Quantitative data obtained from pre- and post-language proficiency tests reveal noticeable improvements in the experimental group compared to the control group. Prior to the intervention, both groups demonstrated relatively similar levels of language proficiency, which confirmed the comparability of participants at the initial stage. However, following the twelve-week extensive reading program, students in the experimental group showed a substantial increase in overall test scores, particularly in vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension [8].

Vocabulary development emerged as one of the most pronounced outcomes of extensive reading. Students who engaged in regular reading of graded readers and simplified texts demonstrated a wider range of lexical knowledge and improved ability to infer word meanings from context. This finding supports the view that repeated exposure to vocabulary in meaningful and authentic contexts facilitates incidental vocabulary acquisition. In contrast, the control group, which followed traditional

intensive reading practices, showed only moderate improvement, suggesting that limited exposure to texts may restrict lexical growth.

Reading comprehension and fluency also improved significantly among students in the experimental group. The results show that extensive reading enhanced students' ability to process texts more efficiently, enabling them to understand main ideas without focusing excessively on individual words or grammatical structures. This improvement can be attributed to increased reading speed and familiarity with common syntactic patterns. These findings align with previous studies that emphasize the role of extensive reading in developing automaticity and confidence in reading.

Qualitative data collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews further reinforce the quantitative findings. Many students in the experimental group reported increased motivation and enjoyment in learning English. The freedom to choose reading materials based on personal interests played a crucial role in sustaining engagement and reducing anxiety commonly associated with foreign language learning. Boarding school students, in particular, highlighted that extensive reading provided a constructive and meaningful way to utilize their free time, contributing to a more positive academic environment [9].

The discussion of results also highlights the pedagogical implications of extensive reading in boarding schools. The

teacher's role as a facilitator, as outlined in the methodology, proved effective in promoting learner autonomy. Rather than focusing on constant assessment, teachers encouraged independent reading habits and self-reflection through reading logs. This approach helped students develop responsibility for their own learning, which is a critical factor in long-term language development.

Despite these positive outcomes, certain limitations were observed. Some students initially struggled with maintaining consistent reading habits, particularly during periods of high academic workload. This suggests that institutional support and careful scheduling are essential for the successful integration of extensive reading programs. Additionally, access to a diverse range of level-appropriate reading materials remains a key challenge for many boarding schools.

Overall, the findings of this study demonstrate that extensive reading is a highly effective approach for enhancing language proficiency among boarding school students. The results confirm that sustained exposure to comprehensible input, combined with learner autonomy and motivational support, leads to measurable improvements in linguistic competence. These outcomes underscore the importance of incorporating extensive reading into boarding school curricula as a complementary strategy to traditional language instruction [10].

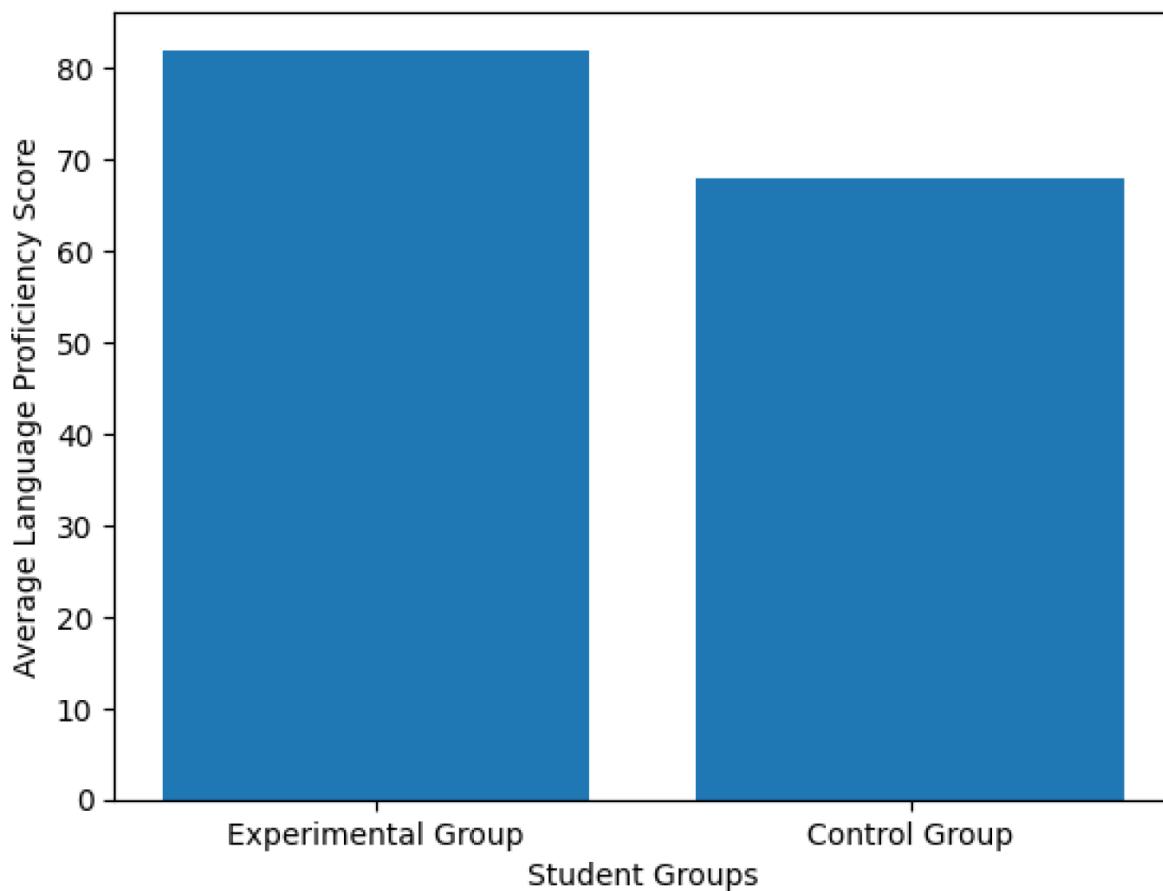


Figure-1. Impact of extensive reading on language proficiency of boarding school students.

Figure-1 shows a comparison of post-test language proficiency scores between the experimental group and the control group. As illustrated in the diagram, students who participated in the extensive reading program achieved significantly higher average scores compared to those who followed traditional intensive reading instruction. The experimental group's higher performance indicates that sustained exposure to level-appropriate reading materials positively influenced overall language proficiency. In contrast, the control group demonstrated relatively lower outcomes, suggesting limited language development under conventional instructional methods. This visual evidence supports the quantitative findings of the study and confirms the effectiveness of extensive reading as a pedagogical approach in boarding school contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the role of extensive reading in enhancing the language proficiency of boarding school students and has demonstrated its substantial pedagogical value in foreign language education. The findings confirm that extensive reading serves as an effective learner-centered approach that supports the development of key language skills, particularly vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, and overall language fluency. Through sustained exposure to meaningful and level-appropriate texts, students were able to internalize linguistic structures naturally and improve their reading efficiency without excessive reliance on explicit instruction.

The results further indicate that the boarding school environment provides favorable conditions for the successful implementation of extensive reading programs. The structured academic setting, availability of supervised

study time, and access to reading resources contribute to the establishment of consistent reading habits among students. Moreover, the facilitative role of teachers in guiding rather than controlling the reading process proved essential in fostering learner autonomy and motivation. This approach encouraged students to take responsibility for their own learning, which is crucial for long-term language development.

In addition to linguistic benefits, extensive reading positively influenced students' affective factors, including motivation, confidence, and attitudes toward language learning. The opportunity to select reading materials based on personal interests reduced anxiety and increased engagement, making language learning a more enjoyable and meaningful experience. These affective outcomes are particularly important in boarding school contexts, where students often face intensive academic demands.

Despite certain challenges related to time management and access to diverse reading materials, the overall findings suggest that extensive reading can be effectively integrated into boarding school curricula as a complementary strategy to traditional instruction. In conclusion, extensive reading not only enhances language proficiency but also contributes to the development of independent, motivated, and confident language learners. Future research is recommended to explore the long-term effects of extensive reading and its integration with digital reading platforms in boarding school settings.

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