Effects of Extensive Reading on Thai University Students

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Abstract

This study investigated the effects of extensive reading (ER) on the proficiency in and attitudes toward reading English of Thai university students. Fifty-one final year students at a Thai regional university completed a 15-week project in which they engaged in ER, completed a pre- and post-test of reading ability and a pre- and post-questionnaire about attitudes, and maintained journals recording their completed readings and mid- and post-project evaluations. Results of the pre- and post-test of reading ability in English showed little change in the performances of the more able students but students who performed at a lower level in the pre-test improved considerably. Results of the pre- and post-questionnaire and evaluations showed an overall positive development of attitudes to reading in English. The study shows that Thai students' proficiency in reading English, especially those whose proficiency is not highly developed, and the attitudes to reading English can be improved by engaging in ER.

Keywords: Extensive reading, Thai university students, English reading ability, attitudes to reading English

บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยนี้ศึกษาผลของความสามารถการใช้ภาษา และทัศนคติต่อการใช้ Extensive Reading (ER) ในการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษในกลุ่มนักศึกษามหาวิทยาลัย นักศึกษาชั้นปีสุดท้ายใน มหาวิทยาลัยภูมิภาคในประเทศไทยจำนวน 51 คน เข้าร่วมโครงการเป็นเวลา 15 สัปดาห์ นักศึกษาฝึก อ่านภาษาอังกฤษโดยการใช้ Extensive Reading ทำการสอบความสามารถในการอ่านก่อนและหลัง การอ่าน และทำแบบสอบถามเกี่ยวกับทัศนคติต่อการอ่านโดยการใช้ Extensive Reading และทำ บันทึกเกี่ยวกับการอ่านของตนเอง รวมทั้งการประเมินในระหว่าง และหลังการอ่าน ผลจากการสอบ เกี่ยวกับความสามารถในการอ่านก่อนและหลังการอ่านพบว่ามีการเปลี่ยนแปลงน้อยในกลุ่มนักศึกษาที่ มีความสามารถทางด้านภาษาสูง แต่ในกลุ่มนักศึกษาที่มีความสามารถทางภาษาต่ำพบว่ามีการพัฒนา มาก ผลจากแบบสอบถามความคิดเห็น และการประเมินพบว่า มีการพัฒนาในด้านดีเกี่ยวกับการอ่าน โดยทั่วไป การศึกษานี้แสดงให้เห็นว่า ความสามารถในการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษาไทย โดยเฉพาะในกลุ่มที่มีความสามารถในการใช้ภาษาที่ยังไม่ได้รับการพัฒนามากนัก รวมทั้งทัศนคติต่อ การอ่านภาษาอังกฤษ สามารถพัฒนาได้โดยการใช้ ER

คำสำคัญ: Extensive reading, นักศึกษาระดับมหาวิทยาลัย, ความสามารถในการอ่าน ภาษาอังกฤษ, ทัศนคติต่อการอ่านภาษาอังกฤษ

Introduction

English is generally recognized as an international language and is used as the official means of communication in the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). Of the four language skills, reading is considered by many researchers to be an important source for language learning in an English as a foreign language (EFL) context (Grabe, 2009). Nuttall (1996, p. 128) expressed a similar view, stating that "The best way to improve one's knowledge of a foreign language is to go and live among its speakers. The next best way is to read extensively in it." Others who have addressed the key role that reading in a foreign language plays in foreign language learning include Grabe and Stoller (2002), Hedgecock and Ferris (2009), Hudson (2007), Koda (2005), Russell and Spada (2006), Shin (2013), Swaffar and Arens (2006), and Yang (2010).

EFL learners are exposed to a foreign language more through reading than any other mode; therefore, it is not surprising that the development of students' ability to read in English is one of the main goals of university EFL programs in Thailand. Throughout the Thai educational system, students experience considerable difficulties with English on entering university education. At university, students must read extensively to succeed, and they need to be able to read effectively in English since many course books and reference materials are in English. The development of effective reading in English adds to the contribution that young Thais can make to their country's role in the AEC and the world generally.

The aim of the study was to investigate the effects of the introduction of extensive reading (ER) on English reading proficiency and attitude to reading in English of a group of Thai university students.

The study posed two research questions:

1. What progress was made by the students in their reading ability in English due to exposure to ER?
2. What were the changes in the students' attitudes to reading in English due to exposure to ER?

Literature Review

Extensive Reading (ER)

ER is an approach designed to improve students' reading proficiency in a foreign language by encouraging them to read large quantities of easy and interesting texts that they select. It contrasts with the *intensive reading* approach in which the stress is on the foreign language via word-by-word and line-by-line analysis and translation of short, difficult texts (Renandya, Rajan & Jacobs, 1999).

The most careful description of ER was done by Day and Bamford (2002) who posited ten key principles of an ER approach. They advocated a successful ER program is characterized by:

1. easy reading material – students are able to understand the grammar and vocabulary of the texts without using their dictionaries or asking their teachers for help
2. varied reading material – students are able to find books and other reading materials on a wide variety of topics that encourage them to read for different reasons and in different ways
3. student selection – students choose what they want to read
4. a great deal of reading – students are encouraged to read, read, and read some more, both in and out of class
5. reading for pleasure, information and general understanding – students read according to their personal interests
6. reading for its own reward – there are few or no follow-up exercises
7. reading quickly – reading speed is fast as students are reading texts that are relatively easy and interesting
8. individual and silent reading – students work on their own and determine the time and location of reading
9. teacher guidance – teachers play an active role in advising, helping, and checking students
10. teacher reading – teachers are a powerful role model for their students, showing them by example their interest and ability in reading.

ER has been used in English as a foreign language and English as a second language contexts and other languages (Bell, 2001; Camiciottoli, 2001; Elley & Mangubhai, 1983; Mason & Krashen, 1997; Nash & Yuan, 1992; Renandya, Rajan, & Jacobs, 1999; Tsang, 1996; Tse, 1996; Walker, 1997) and in a Spanish language class (Rodrigo, 1995) and a Japanese language class (Leung, 2002).

Numerous studies showing the benefits of extensive reading suggest the impact on language learning. Many of the research findings suggest positive effects on reading comprehension, reading speed, vocabulary, grammar, writing, and L2 proficiency (Day & Bamford, 1998). Iwahori (2008) reported the effectiveness of ER in developing reading fluency, as well as reading comprehension skills. In their investigation, Beglar, Hunt, and Kite (2012) found that all of the three groups of Japanese university students who engaged in ER for an academic year statistically significantly improved their reading rate, while an intensive reading group did not. In a case study conducted by Nishino (2007), two Japanese junior high school students who engaged in ER for 2.5 years increased their reading rate from 72 to 137 words per minute (wpm) and from 58 to 111 wpm respectively. Imamura (2012) reported that a group of high school students who did ER as homework increased their reading rates. Huffman (2014) studied the reading rate of first-year Japanese nursing college who took a one-semester ER course, with students in an intensive reading (IR) course serving as the comparison group. The ER group achieved significantly higher reading rate gains than the IR group. He also found that there was no decrease in the comprehension of the students in the ER group. Tanaka and Stapleton (2007), in a study of Japanese high school students, found that the ER group scored significantly higher in reading rate and comprehension than the control group that did no extensive reading.

Positive influence on gains in vocabulary has also been suggested, considering the exposure to language the learners get through reading a large amount of books (Horst, 2005; Pigada & Schmitt, 2006). Similarly, a study by Poulshock (2010) not only supported that learners can enjoy and be motivated, but can also increase vocabulary. Kweon and Kim (2008) investigated the incidental acquisition of vocabulary with 12 Korean university students. They

were tested on their knowledge of vocabulary before engaging in ER, immediately after the program, and one month later. The results showed a significant word gain between the first and the second tests, and the final test.

One of the first studies that clearly mentioned the relationship between reading and speaking was conducted by Cho and Krashen (1994). Four adult ESL learners made clear gains in vocabulary through fanatically engaging in reading the Sweet Valley series. Interestingly, participants reported in their interview that reading seemed to be helping their oral language proficiency. Cho and Krashen speculate that the specific type of book the participants read contained useful colloquial language, which language learners often miss in formal language learning instructions. Although this may be true, the study lacked theoretical framework concerned with the connection between reading and listening and speaking. Moreover, the small number of participants can also be considered as their limitations.

Nakanishi and Ueda (2011) investigated the effects of shadowing activities on extensive reading, specifically on the comprehension of text. Shadowing is the task of listening in which the learner tracks the target speech and repeats it immediately as exactly as possible. In their study, students performed the shadowing activity with the text in front of them. The study included two groups of students: one group engaged solely in extensive reading, whereas the other group combined shadowing with ER. The results of the study showed that the group of students engaging in ER with shadowing read more words, and had substantial improvement in comprehension scores on their post-test. Nakanishi and Ueda concluded that when extensive reading is combined with shadowing, it improves the learners' reading comprehension, listening, and speaking. Therefore, it may be as effective as conventional teaching methods in classrooms. In addition, they implied that students would be able to familiarize themselves with the English phonological system, and it helped them feel a sense of achievement by being able to produce the right sounds.

The effect of ER on writing has also been studied. Mermelstein (2015) investigated the impact of an ER program on third-year university students in Taiwan on their writing skills. His results showed a significant increase on four areas of writing: vocabulary, language use, spelling, and fluency. Park (2016)

used ER in three sections of an intermediate-level writing course designed for international students at a university in the United States. The primary goal of the writing course was to help ESL students improve their general and academic writing ability in order to support their smooth transition to an academic environment. Her results showed the students' significant development in different areas of writing: content, organization, and language use.

The affective dimension of foreign language learning and ER has also been investigated. Takase and Otsuki (2012) found positive effects of ER on learners in EFL contexts. An interesting and significant point about this study is that the participants were "remedial students", who had failed their English classes in university and ended up registering for a repeater class. They were unmotivated and reluctant to study English because of their negative experiences. Takase and Otsuki's study involved 81 non-English major EFL university students who had failed their previous English courses. They participated in extensive reading for approximately three months, during which students were also involved in Sustained Silent Reading in class. Over the course, many of the participants read over 100 books, which led them to gain self-confidence and the feeling of self-efficacy. The post-questionnaires showed participants building a positive attitude towards extensive reading and motivation to learn English. Takase and Otsuki suggested that students experienced implicit learning by reading an abundance of easy books with complete storylines, rather than excerpt-like passages that are frequently used in school textbooks. The Edinburgh Project on Extensive Reading Placement/Progress was administered as a pre-test and post-test to examine participants' English ability, and the results showed improvements in the participants' English ability after three months. Thus we can see that ER is not only effective for developing English proficiency, but also fostering the joy and pleasure to read in the target language.

An example of Extensive Reading in a second language context – a Japanese course using Extensive Reading at the University of Hawaii

Hitosugi and Day (2004) outlined a program in a Japanese course dealing with Japanese speaking, listening, reading, and writing for students with some background in the language at the University of Hawaii using ER. The classes in

the course, each containing about 15 students, met five times per week over 16 weeks. ER was used with one class containing 14 students instructed by Hitosugi over a period of 10 weeks only, due to a shortage of texts. As all classes covered the same content, no part of it could be eliminated to accommodate ER, so the ER part was completed as an extra component by Hitosugi's class.

A total of 266 books written for children learning Japanese as their first language were collected and these were graded and color-coded from level 1 (easiest) to level 6 (hardest). As an incentive to complete the reading, 30% of the total mark was at the teacher's discretion. For Hitosugi's class, 10% was for the ER component. The following scale was used for the award of marks: 19 books - 2.5%; 20-29 5%; 30-39 7.5%; 40 10%; > 40 1% extra for every 4 books. The reading was completed as homework and 30 minutes per week of classroom time was devoted to activities based on the reading, such as telling others about their favorite books and using new vocabulary from the readings. The students' reading ability was assessed by the use of a three-part assessment that included: a) Part A – summarize in English a short memo written in Japanese; b) Part B – answer in English some short questions about a travel ad written in Japanese; c) Part C – state in English some details about a letter written in Japanese. The students' motivation to learn Japanese was assessed by the use of a 22-item questionnaire.

These assessments were administered to the ER class and to a regular *Japanese 102* class before the commencement and at the conclusion of the program to be able to measure the effects within each class and between the class exposed to ER and the regular *Japanese 102* class not exposed to ER.

The researchers acknowledged the small sample size but highlighted a) the high amount of reading – one student read 53 books; a total of 443 books were read; the average was 32 books per student; b) the ER class improved greatly in part C, a reading comprehension assessment, while the regular class had lower scores; c) that the ER class had much higher to read than the regular students.

Methodology

Participants

The study involved Thai university students, who use Thai as their first language. These students must take English in their General Education Program as compulsory courses. Fifty-one fourth (final) year Tourism major students in a regular compulsory course (*English in Business*) in the Bachelor of Arts program being presented by the researcher at the time of the study. The study was conducted over a 16-week period in the final semester of the students' degree program. ER was included as part of the regular course; therefore, all students in the course participated.

Procedure

The students were introduced to ER. I explained the benefits and went over the major aspects (e.g., self-selection, easy books, reading for overall understanding). Most of the reading was done outside of class. I gave them about ten minutes of in-class reading time. There were no tests. The students were offered the following incentives to read a number of books during the 16 weeks that constituted the period for the course *English in Business* in which the ER project was presented:

Complete 15+ books 5%; Complete12-14 books 4%; Complete 9-11 books 3%;

Complete 5-8 books 2%; Complete 1-4 books 1%; Complete 0 books 0%

Materials The study involved a collection of approximately 300 graded readers of different difficulty levels from the Oxford, Cambridge, and Heinemann publishers. This collection was available at the Self-Access Center in the Faculty of Liberal Arts at Ubon Ratchathani University. The study was introduced as part of the *English in Business* course over 16 weeks and procedures were organized to be of minimal disruption to the regular course for students and the lecturer.

Instruments A number of quantitative and qualitative instruments were used:

- **a pre- and post-test** – in Weeks 1 and 15, students completed a pre- and post-test developed by the researcher, respectively (see Appendix 1).
- **a pre- and post-questionnaire** – in Weeks 1 and 16, students completed a pre- and post-questionnaire, adapted from Hitosuki and Day (2004) with permission, respectively (see Appendix 2).
- **journals** – students were asked to keep a journal of their reading that included a record of the title, publisher, level, start and finish dates, number of pages, reading time in minutes, comments on appropriateness of levels (too easy, good, too difficult), ratings of the materials (good, fair, poor), total reading in minutes, and total reading pages. Students were informed of the following award of marks in the *English in Business* course for satisfactory completion of journals:

Completed 15+ books 5%; 12-14 books 4%; 9-11 books 3%; 5-8 books 2%; 1-4 books 1%; 0 books 0%

Journals were collected for checking in Week 8 and marks were awarded for submission of completed journals in Week 15.

- **students' comments –** in Week 16, students were invited to write comments about ER in any language (see Appendix 3).

ER activities Nine ER activities were designed and conducted in the first 10 minutes of course lectures (see appendices 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10). These activities were short, easy, involved no preparation by the students, and no marking by the researcher. They were also intended to act as motivators for students to read and as checks on the completion of their reading. One of these ER activities was titled **WHAT DO YOU THINK?** and was used in the measurement of students' attitudes.

RESULTS

Pre- and post-test Fifty-one students completed both pre- and post-test parts of the study. Their pre- and post-test results and the changes between their performances in these two tests are shown in Appendix 11. There was an increase

in the average score out of 50 (pre-test 34.78; post-test 35.39). However, this increase was not of statistical significance.

The 51 students were placed in one of two groups, higher ability and lower ability, based on the scores in the pre-test. The scores ranged from 45/50 to 22/50, the mid-point being 33/34. Those in the 34-45 bracket were placed in the higher ability group, and those in the 22-33 bracket were placed in the lower ability group.

As a result of this placement, the former group contained 30 students and the latter 21 students.

Higher ability group

The average pre-test score for this group was 38.89/50 and the average post-test score was 37.73/50. This represented a decrease in performance of 2.91%. This decrease was not statistically significant. Eighteen students recorded lower scores (average loss 3.3) in the post-test compared to the pre-test, nine improved their scores (average gain 3), and three remained the same (see Appendices 11 and 12).

Lower ability group

The average pre-test score in this group was 28.95/50 and the average post-test score was 32.04/50. This represented an improvement in performance of 10.69%. This improvement was statistically significant. Seven students recorded lower scores (average loss 2.4) in the post-test compared to the pre-test, 14 improved their scores (average gain 5.9), and none remained the same (see Appendices 11 and 12).

Pre- and post-questionnaire (The same questionnaire was used in the pre- and post- situations.) Forty-nine students completed the pre-questionnaire and fifty-eight completed the post-questionnaire. These questionnaires consisted of 20 statements related to reading and learning English, and the students were asked to complete them by selecting *strongly agree*, *agree*, *disagree*, and *strongly disagree*. The statements sought to investigate any changes in the students' attitudes to their use of English before and after the course. The results of the pre-/post-questionnaire are displayed in Appendix 13.

Responses to WHAT DO YOU THINK? One of the ER activities completed by students in Week 8 of the project involved a class activity in which students responded to a series of statements about ER. These statements aimed to briefly reveal the students' feelings about ER and reading in English. Their responses are shown in Appendix 14.

Students' comments about ER Fifty-seven students made comments about ER, 34 in Thai, 22 in English, and 1 in Thai and English.

The main comments were – improved vocabulary (21 mentions); improved grammar (3); difficult (4); interesting (11); improved reading skills (8); improved English skills (7).

Some interesting comments were – books not linked to course (1); no time to read (2); need better ways to make sure that students actually read the books (1); changed from not liking reading to liking reading (1); proud to finish reading a book (1); liked being able to choose for oneself (1).

Also, the following were comments as written by students:

One of my hobbies is to read. Especially the books about children, travelling or others culture. The books that I read from SAC are interesting and fun. I will keep reading to implove my reading skill, my English and open my mind to get any idea from books.

I think it is really that I can practice my English with Extensive Reading. It made me love reading, it gave me a lot of knowledges.

(The above comments were written by the students in English themselves. They contain some grammatical mistakes. Both comments were not edited by the researcher.)

DISCUSSION

Pre- and post-test The results of the post-test compared to the pre-test were generally disappointing. Even though there was an increase in the average score out of 50 (pre-test 34.78; post-test 35.39), this increase was not statistically significant.

The results of the post-test compared to the pre-test based on groupings into higher ability and lower ability students were revealing. The average post-test score for the higher ability group was lower than that for the pre-test (pre- 38.89/50; post- 37.73/50; decrease of 2.91%). This decrease was not statistically significant. The average post-test score compared to the average pre-test score for the lower ability group was statistically significantly different (pre- 28.95; post- 32.04; increase of 10.69%).

An explanation of the differences in performances between the students with higher ability and those with lower ability may be due to the motivation related to assessment provided to the students to complete the readings (see above).

The students' journals were collected for checking in week 8. A number of students had already at this stage completed the recordings for the maximum number of readings for the award of the allocated 5% and were awarded the marks. When the journals were again collected in week 15 for a final check, it was noticed that many of these students had not read any more books – they had achieved their maximum mark in the first half of the semester and realized that they could not improve their mark by reading any more! If the students who completed all their readings early were the better ones, this may partly explain the poor performances of the better students in the post-test. They may have completed the pre-test to the best of their ability, done their readings in the first 8 weeks, achieved the maximum marks available, gone on to concentrate on other academic tasks to the best of their ability, and completed the post-test for the ER project as quickly as possible in week 15, having had nothing to do with the project since week 8.

The *English in Business* course was the only course in which it was possible to implement the ER project at the time. The appropriateness of *English in Business* for the project may be questioned. The course was not a reading course – it involved activities oriented to writing applications for employment, completing interviews, and fulfilling tasks associated with roles in the work situation. It was a compulsory course for Tourism majors and was offered only in the final semester of their final year. This meant that it was a stressful time for the

students who were completing assessments in a number of areas and many were seeking opportunities for employment and/or further study.

Pre- and post-questionnaire Comparison of the students' responses to the pre-questionnaire (n=49) and post-questionnaire (n=58) revealed an encouraging development of attitudes to reading English. In cases where the item was positive, there tended to be an increase in numbers of strongly agrees and agrees and a corresponding decrease in strongly disagrees and disagrees. For example, item 6, a positive statement, showed an increase in students who chose "Strongly agree" from 0 in the pre-questionnaire to 6 in the post-questionnaire. There was a decline from 5 to 1 of students who selected "Strongly disagree" for the same item (see Table 1):

Table 1 Comparison of pre- and post-questionnaire responses to a positive item (pre-n=49; post- n=58)

No	Item	Strongly agree A (pre-/post-)	Agree B (pre-/post-)	Disagree C (pre-/post-)	Strongly disagree D (pre-/post-)
6	I have confidence in my ability to read English.	0/6	17/35	27/16	5/1

In cases where the item was negatively phrased, the movement of numbers was in the opposite direction. Item 20, a negative statement, showed a reduction from 2 to 0 in students who chose "Strongly agree" and an increase from 3 to 14 in the number who chose "Strongly disagree" (see Table 2):

Table 2 Comparison of pre- and post-questionnaire responses to a negative item (pre n=49; post n=58)

No	Item	Strongly agree A (pre-/post-)	Agree B (pre-/post-)	Disagree C (pre-/post-)	Strongly disagree D (pre-/post-)
20	I feel uneasy when I see English.	2/0	15/13	29/31	3/14

The responses to the pre- and post-questionnaire suggested that there was a general development of confidence in reading and/or using English on the part of the students involved in the ER project.

Responses to WHAT DO YOU THINK? As part of the ER project, students were asked to indicate their agreement or otherwise with a number of statements. These were general statements of a mixed nature. The most interesting response was to the statement *ER has been useful to my English.* Fifty-one students agreed with this and only 2 disagreed. This is an extremely encouraging response about the value of reading generally and ER specifically from a group of students who were involved in a course that was not focusing on reading.

Students' comments about ER The students' comments about ER were also positive overall. They indicated a positive attitude to reading as a means of improving English skills and developing interests in a wide range of topics.

Limitations In the consideration and discussion of the results of this study, it is important to take into account some limitations that may have had an influence on the outcomes.

The participants in the study were fourth (final)-year Tourism major students in the Bachelor of Arts program. The fact that they were final year students may have tested their feelings of the relevance of such a project at such a late stage of their undergraduate careers when they may be less focused on academic skills of reading and more concerned about their career skills and prospects.

These same feelings may also have been reinforced by the professional-oriented nature of their major – Tourism – and the practical skills-based approach of the course in which the project occurred – *Business in English*.

The implementation of the project at a late stage in their study program and the professional nature of the students' major and the course may have been limitations on the outcomes of the study. Such limitations may be overcome by the implementation of the ER project in the first year of study at university and in a basic academic course taken by all students, such as *Foundation English.*

Recommendations

1. ER is justified in any English context and/or course as reading is an integral part of the language situation in which all skills are interrelated. It, however, may have more relevance in reading-oriented courses in which the students are able to recognize its relevance in such courses.

2. It may be more appropriate to use ER in an earlier situation than the final semester of the final year of students' programs. If so, it needs to be introduced early in the program so that students develop their reading skills to allow use in other areas of study.

3. It is recommended that the project be repeated with students from different disciplines and different years of study to enable comparison of the effectiveness of ER across academic areas and stage of study.

4. The graded readers that were used in the ER project provided a number of texts that suited the range of students' abilities. It is recommended that these readers be used again.

5. The texts were stored in the Self-Access Center in the Faculty of Liberal Arts and students accessed them using this institution's procedures. This relieved any loaning burden on the researcher and made the texts readily available to the students. This system needs to be retained.

CONCLUSION

The focus of this research was on the effects of ER on the proficiency in and attitudes toward reading English of Thai university students. The results of the study obtained from the pre- and post-test showed that students of lower ability who participated in the ER project improved their general English reading ability. However, the data suggested little improvement in the general English reading ability of the students of higher ability. But data collected by other methods (the pre- and post-questionnaire, agree/disagree responses, and anonymous written comments) indicated that most students responded favorably to ER. The affective dimension of ER increases when Thai university students studying EFL read easy and interesting books that they select. They are motivated to reading in English and they enjoy reading in English.

These findings are important for EFL instructors in Thailand for they demonstrate that ER can help Thai EFL students who struggle with reading. It is highly recommended that ER be implemented at the beginning of students' first year at university. This is especially important, given the finding that students generally enjoy ER. ER can be used in any course where listening, speaking, writing and reading are taught.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix 1 (The same test was used for the pre- and post-test.)

PRE-/POST-TEST
Student's I.D.

You have 30 minutes to complete the passage below.

FILL IN EACH GAP WITH ONE APPROPRIATE WORD:

My name is Huckleberry Finn. My friends call (1)_____ Huck. I am fourteen years old.

Have (2)_____ heard about me? Have you heard about me (3)_____ my friend, Tom Sawyer? Mr Twain wrote (4)_____ book about us. The book was about both (5)_____ us, but Mr Twain called it *The Adventures (6)____ Tom Sawyer*. The stories in that book are (7)____. But Mr Twain didn't tell you everything about (8)____. He didn't know everything about us. He (9)____ a writer, not a boy. Writers don't (10)____ everything about boys!

Now *I'm* going to tell (11)____ some more of my story. But first, (12)____ going to remind you about myself.

I was (13)____ in St Petersburg in Missouri. St Petersburg is (14)____ the western shore of the Mississippi River. My (15)____ died a long time ago. After that, (16)____ father left town and I lived alone.

Tom's (17)_____ were dead too. But Tom lived with his (18)____ Polly. I didn't have any aunts. I (19)_____ alone for many years. In the summer, (20)____ slept in barns on farms near town. I (21)____ go to school and I didn't learn lessons. (22)____ didn't go to church on Sundays and I didn't (23)____ prayers. I didn't wash my face and I (24)____ comb my hair. My life was good!

____ didn't have any aunts. I didn't have any (25)____ or sisters. But I had many friends.

(26)____ of the boys in town were my friends. (27)____ their mothers and fathers weren't my friends! Their (28)____ and fathers didn't want me to come to their (29)____. They didn't want me to talk to their (30)____. Why? Because their children didn't like going (31)____ school. And their children didn't like going to (32)____. All my friends wanted to be me. (33)____ parents didn't like that.

So, what about (34)____ father? I didn't see him very often. (35)____ he came to St Petersburg. But he was (36)____ bad man. He was always drunk. He (37)____ hit me and he stole things from me. (38)____ was afraid of him.

…………

Two years ago, (39)____ 1844, Tom and I had an adventure. (40)____ were two bad men in our town. They (41)____ stolen some money and they had hidden it. (42)____ wanted to attack a widow, Mrs Douglas. (43)____ of the men hated this widow. Her husband (44)____ dead. He had been a judge. Some (45)____ before, Mrs Douglas' husband had sent this man (46)____ prison. The man and his friend wanted to (47)____ Mrs Douglas. They wanted to get into her (48)____ and attack her.

Tom and I found out (49)____ the men's plan. And Tom and I told (50) _____ Thatcher about it…………………

Total   /50

PRE-QUESTIONNAIRE (adapted from Hitosugi & Day, 2004, with permission)

Select A, B, C or D for the following statements (10 minutes).

No	Item	Strongly agree A	Agree B	Disagree C	Strongly disagree D
1	I don't know many English words.				
2	It is easy for me to read English.				
3	I read English books, comics, newspapers, etc., outside of class.				
4	I find English difficult.				
5	I would like to do well in this English course.				
6	I have confidence in my ability to read English.				
7	When I read English, I need to look up many words in the dictionary.				
8	When I read English, I am very interested in what I read.				
9	I find studying English boring.				
10	After reading English, I am very interested in what I read.				
11	I would like to read more English.				
12	I look forward to coming to this English class.				
13	I do not enjoy reading English.				
14	Considering how I study English, I can honestly say that I do just enough to pass.				
15	I am a slow reader when I read English.				
16	When I read English, I understand relatively little.				
17	I like to watch English television programs.				
18	I try to speak English outside of class at every chance I get.				
19	It is hard for me to read English words.				
20	I feel uneasy when I see English.				

<center>**Appendix 3**</center>

When you have finished the post-questionnaire, please write your comments IN ANY LANGUAGE below on what you think about Extensive Reading. Thanks.

<center>**Appendix 4**</center>

<u>**ER 1 and ER 2**</u>

<u>**Discussion questions**</u> **– discuss with a partner in any language:**

1. What are your first memories of reading?
2. Did anyone read to you? No – why not? Yes – who, where and what?
3. What reading material did you enjoy the most?
4. Do you still enjoy the same material or has your reading changed? How?
5. What role does reading now play in your life as a student, a young Thai…..?

<u>**Extensive Reading**</u>

1. Read, read, read, read, read, read, read, and then read some more
2. Read easy
3. Read interesting
4. Re-read interesting
5. Read for general understanding
6. Ignore unknown or difficult words – just keep reading
7. Avoid dictionaries – just keep reading
8. Expand your reading comfort zone
9. Set reading goals and keep a reading log
10. Enjoy your reading

Appendix 5

<u>ER 3</u>

Most books have a "blurb." This is a short description of the book and is usually found on the back cover of the book. To make your choice of a book quicker, you need to be able to read the blurb and decide if the book is appropriate to you.

Read the 9 blurbs below and write the titles of books on display that you think they describe. Record also why you made these decisions.

Blurb 1 – England – 1828 to 1840. Maggie Tulliver is beautiful and intelligent. But she is lonely and unhappy.

Philip Wakem loves her. But she cannot meet him. The Tullivers and the Wakems are enemies.

Then Maggie meets Stephen Guest. They fall in love. But Stephen is going to married to Maggie's cousin.

Title………………………………………………………..

Why?………………………………….

Blurb 2 – Ikuko goes to England to study, promising to return to Japan to get married. But in Birmingham, Ikuko not only discovers another way of life but also a great deal about herself.

This is a powerful story about love that is carried across 3 continents and even time itself...

Title………………………………………………………….

Why? ………………………………….

Blurb 3 – "Mr Scrooge," said the gentleman. "I have come to ask for your help because it is Christmas. I want money to help the poor people who have no money and no homes."

"Aren't there any prisons?" asked Scrooge. "Put these poor people in prison."

"But prisons are not very pleasant places. I'm sure you want people to have a merry Christmas."

"I don't have a merry Christmas," said Scrooge. "Christmas is nonsense. I don't believe in Christmas. I'm not giving anyone money so they can have a merry Christmas."

Title………………………………………………………..

Why? …………………………………

Blurb 4 – This is a love story you won't forget. Oliver meets Jenny. He plays sports, she plays music. He's rich, and she's poor. They argue, and they fight, and they fall in love.

They get married and make a home together. They work hard, they enjoy life and they plan for the future. Then they learn that they don't have much time left.

Title……………………………………………………

Why? ………………………………………….

Blurb 5 – In the mountains of Transylvania, there stands a castle. It is the home of the Count – a dark, lonely place, with wolves howling at night.

In 1875, Jon Harker comes to do business with the Count. But Jon does not like the castle. Strange things happen at night, and very soon, he begins to feel afraid…

Title…………………………………………………….

Why?……………………………………………

Blurb 6 – These enjoyable stories offer 8 slices of life in England today. The themes include food, the media, immigration, student life, football and leisure. These stories provide a fascinating picture of the country at the start of a new century.

Title……………………………………………………

Why?………………………………………….

Blurb 7 – Liz teaches archaeology in Athens. She works hard and needs a holiday, so she goes to the beautiful and peaceful island of Sifnos. But the peace does not last long when a mysterious yacht arrives. Liz becomes involved with some dangerous people.

Title……………………………………………………

Why?……………………………………………..

Blurb 8 – "I sleep with my eyes open. My ears hear the smallest sound and I wake. You may see something moving the corner of your eye. If you turn to look, there will be nothing there. But I am following in the darkness behind you. I am your worst dream."

Title……………………………………………………………

Why……………………………………………

Blurb 9 – Frank Wormald is a writer. He doesn't have much money and his wife is unhappy. To help him finish one of his stories he starts to use a computer. But the computer gives him more than he wants. Then he really needs help!

Title……………………………………………………………

Why?……………………………………………

Appendix 6

ER4 – <u>FIND YOUR LEVEL</u> – WRITE ON <u>THIS</u> PAPER – DO <u>NOT</u> WRITE ON THE TEXTS.

1. CHOOSE 1 OF THE TEXTS (THEY ARE THE FIRST PAGES OF SOME OF THE CAMBRIDGE GRADED READER BOOKS.)

2. RECORD THE CODE (LETTER AND NUMBER, E.G. B2 – THE NUMBER TELLS YOU THE LEVEL OF THE BOOK)

3. QUICKLY READ THE TEXT AND RECORD BELOW ANY WORDS OR PHRASES YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND – <u>DON'T WRITE ON THE TEXT</u>.

4. IF YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH THE TEXT….

5. IF YOU RECORD MORE THAN 5 WORDS OR PHRASES….

	CODE (LETTER AND NUMBER)	WORDS OR PHRASES YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND	IS IT YOUR LEVEL?
FIRST TEXT			
SECOND TEXT			
THIRD TEXT			

Appendix 7

ER 5 – NEW VOCABULARY

Complete the table for **5 new words** that you have discovered in your Extensive Reading.

New word	Part of speech, e.g. noun etc.	Meaning	Synonym(s)	Antonym(s)	Other forms of word, e.g. adjective
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

ER 6 – SHARED NEW VOCABULARY

Complete the table for new words from **others'** Extensive Reading.

New word	Part of speech, e.g. noun etc.	Meaning	Synonym(s)	Antonym(s)	Thank you
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					

ER7 <u>WHAT DO YOU THINK?</u>

	I agree	I disagree
Reading in my first language is fun.		
ER has been useful to my English.		
Reading in English is difficult.		
I feel comfortable reading the ER texts.		
I look up new English words in the dictionary.		
If I read quickly in English, I don't understand the text.		
I enjoy reading out loud in English.		
The ER texts are too easy.		

Appendix 10

ER 8 – RE-ORIENTATION

(Going in the right direction; keeping on track)

Your aim is to read and record in your journal <u>at least 15 books</u> to achieve the 5% allocated for Extensive Reading.

- You started in week 1 at zero.
- This is week 12 – you should have read and recorded <u>at least 12 books</u>.
- How many have you read and recorded? _____. Are you on track? _____.
- Check the 10 points about Extensive Reading that you were given in ER 1.
- You have to hand in your journals on 9.2.07 (week 15).

ER 9 – MY FAVOURITE PASSAGE/BOOK

With a partner, tell each other what your favourite passage/book that you have read in ER is. Tell each other:

1. title, author, type of book (love, history, adventure…)
2. brief description of the passage/book
3. reasons for liking the passage/book

Appendix 11

Pre- and post-test results and changes between pre- and post-test (n=51)

Student number	Pre-test score /50 h – higher ability l – lower ability	Post-test score /50	Change between pre- and post-test
1	45 h	41	-4
2	37 h	38	+1
3	25 l	30	+5
4	24 l	28	+4
5	26 l	35	+9
6	32 l	29	-3
7	40 h	39	-1
8	32 l	29	-3
9	40 h	33	-7
10	43 h	47	+4
11	33 l	39	+6
12	40 h	39	-1
13	42 h	38	-4
14	34 h	25	-9
15	26 l	32	+6
16	34 h	31	-3
17	37 h	35	-2
18	37 h	32	-5
19	39 h	36	-3
20	39 h	42	+3
21	28 l	37	+9
22	43 h	46	+3
23	31 l	32	+1
24	39 h	38	-1
25	35 h	35	0
26	33 l	40	+7
27	42 h	40	-2
28	30 l	38	+8
29	44 h	44	0
30	31 l	30	-1
31	39 h	41	+3
32	41 h	39	-2
33	31 l	38	+7
34	27 l	26	-1
35	43 h	37	-6
36	37 h	38	+1
37	37 h	34	-3
38	36 h	40	+4

39	22 l	26	+4
40	37 h	36	-1
41	35 h	34	-1
42	29 l	34	+5
43	28 l	31	+3
44	38 h	38	0
45	33 l	41	+8
46	29 l	28	-1
47	25 l	24	-1
48	34 h	40	+6
49	33 l	26	-7
50	39 h	34	-5
51	40 h	42	+2

<u>Appendix 12</u>

Higher and lower ability groups' pre- and post-test averages and % differences in performances

Ability level	Pre-test average/50	Post-test average/50	% difference
higher	38.89	37.73	-2.91
lower	28.95	32.04	+10.69

Appendix 13

Results of pre-/post-questionnaire titled Responses to statements about ER

No	Item	Strongly agree pre-/post	Agree pre-/post	Disagree pre-/post	Strongly disagree pre-/post
1	I don't know many English words.	2/1	32/25	13/28	2/4
2	It is easy for me to read English.	1/5	18/41	28/12	2/0
3	I read English books, comics, newspapers, etc., outside of class.	1/6	20/43	22/8	6/1
4	I find English difficult.	2/1	25/24	21/32	1/1
5	I would like to do well in this English course.	28/32	18/24	3/2	0/0
6	I have confidence in my ability to read English.	0/6	17/35	27/16	5/1
7	When I read English, I must look up many words in the dictionary.	9/6	28/21	12/31	0/0
8	When I read English, I am very interested in what I read.	5/11	39/45	5/2	0/0
9	I find studying English boring.	0/1	5/4	33/31	11/21
10	After reading English, I am very interested in what I read.	5/13	37/43	7/2	0/0
11	I would like to read more English.	19/20	20/34	10/4	0/0
12	I look forward to coming to this English class.	11/12	29/35	9/10	0/1
13	I do not enjoy reading English.	0/0	10/4	33/36	6/17
14	Considering how I study English, I can honestly say that I do just enough to pass.	0/4	22/34	23/12	4/8
15	I am a slow reader when I read English.	9/5	29/25	10/28	1/0
16	When I read English, I understand relatively little.	3/0	35/29	11/29	0/0
17	I like to watch English television programs.	16/21	19/29	9/8	5/0
18	I try to speak English outside of class at every chance I get.	10/8	25/26	10/12	4/2
19	It is hard for me to read English words.	3/2	16/10	28/35	2/11
20	I feel uneasy when I see English.	2/0	15/13	29/31	3/14

(pre- n=49/post- n=58)

Appendix 14

Results of class activity WHAT DO YOU THINK? (n=54)

	I agree	I disagree
Reading in my first language is fun.	53	1
ER has been useful to my English.	51	2
Reading in English is difficult.	22	31
I feel comfortable reading the ER texts.	40	13
I look up new English words in the dictionary.	52	0
If I read quickly in English, I don't understand the text.	26	27
I enjoy reading out loud in English.	31	22
The ER texts are too easy.	13	40

Biodata

Patareeya Wisaijorn was an assistant professor at Ubon Ratchathani University, Thailand. She graduated with first class honors from the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University, majoring in English. She received a Fulbright scholarship to further her study of MA (TEFL) at the University of Kansas and later a Fulbright grant as a senior researcher to conduct her research work at the University of Hawaii (Manoa). She received her PhD in the same area of study from the University of Canberra. She is presently a guest lecturer at the Language Institute, Chulalongkorn University. Her research interests are in the area of reading and learner autonomy.