Current Practice of Extensive Reading in Asia: Teachers' Perceptions

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated teachers' perceptions of the practice of extensive reading (ER) in the Asian context. One hundred and nineteen L2 teachers in Asia responded to an online questionnaire that probed into their reasons for implementing ER, the difficulties they encountered, and their perception about the effectiveness of different ways of organizing reading materials. The results show that L2 teachers in Asia held strongly positive beliefs about the effectiveness of ER in improving students' overall language competence. However, many reported encountering numerous difficulties in implementing ER, which mainly stemmed from students and teachers themselves. Student-related difficulties included lack of interest in reading, not used to doing independent reading, and reluctance to do voluntary reading. Teacher-related difficulties were mostly concerned with the difficulty of monitoring the type and quantity of books that students actually read. Another key finding of the study is that teachers perceived wide reading (reading a variety of texts) to be more effective than narrow reading (i.e., reading genre-specific texts). We conclude by offering a set of suggestions that could help ER practitioners implement their reading program more efficiently and effectively.

INTRODUCTION

Many studies have investigated second language (L2) learners' attitudes and feelings on extensive reading (ER), but teachers' voice has rarely been heard. Recent studies (Macalister, 2010; Mah and Yeo, 2016) showed that teachers may face a number of challenges when implementing ER, and this might be particularly so in the Asian context (Robb, 2002). This study hence attempted to investigate L2 teachers' perceptions of ER in Asia, focusing in particular on the kinds of practical problems that these teachers encountered in selecting

suitable materials, in integrating ER in the curriculum, in getting the support from the school administrator and in motivating students to read more widely. We believe that if we understand these teachers' concerns, we will be in a better position to provide just the kind of support that they need to implement ER more effectively.

Extensive reading is a familiar term for many language teachers and has become a popular practice in past two decades; its importance and popularity can be seen from the establishment of ER associations, journals, and the ER world congress. Empirical evidence demonstrating the positive effects of ER on L2 students' English proficiency is well documented, and hundreds of articles can be found in the *Annotated Bibliography of Works on Extensive Reading in a Second Language* (http://erfoundation.org/bib/bibliocats.php). ER improves reading comprehension, reading speed, vocabulary, writing, speaking, and listening - nearly all aspects of language competence. Although a growing number of L2 teachers are keen to integrate ER in their teaching, not many are able to fully and successfully implement ER due to curricular or contextual factors, (Macalister, 2010; Robb, 2002). Robb (2002) for example commented that "…in institutionalized settings in many parts of Asia, where the priorities of the students favor extra-curricular activities, such as part-time jobs, clubs and social life, over learning, simple encouragement will not be effective with a large number, and perhaps the majority, of one's students" (p. 146). It is apparent that L2 teachers implementing ER in their classes would encounter a number of difficulties. Some researchers therefore suggest that ER must be incorporated into the reading curriculum; if not, students would find reading unrewarding (Yu, 1993). Others suggest additive ER (Robb & Kano, 2013), that is, students do ER outside the normal curriculum but they are held accountable for their work through an online monitoring system, such as using the Moodle Reader. There are many other different approaches to implementing ER that have been reported in the literature. We will review some of the more recent ER studies to see how L2 teachers implemented their ER programs.

Our review of the literature shows that L2 teachers in different learning contexts or courses adopt different methods for implementing ER in their schools. Some teachers require their students to read in class only, some to read as homework (outside the classroom), and some both in and outside the classroom. In terms of monitoring, some teachers check if their students actually read by giving them quizzes, asking them to write book reports, or asking them to give class presentations. However, in other situations, some students are allowed to read without being required to do any post-reading tasks. Different ways of implementing ER lead to different learning outcomes, as shown by the studies discussed in the following section.

Some researchers recruited voluntary participants to read outside of school. For example, de Burgh-Hirabe & Feryok (2013) conducted an in-depth qualitative study with nine secondary students who studied Japanese as a foreign language in New Zealand for two or three terms. All of them read Japanese readers outside the classroom. Through comparing their

reading amounts and self-report of materials and intensity of reading, the study showed that 4/9 of the students' motivation increased over time, 3/9 decreased, and 2/9 remained low throughout. The main factors influencing the changes in motivation were their many external demands, such as high-stakes examinations, sports, part-time jobs, and friends. Although all the participants had initially held a positive value of ER, this became considerably weakened when external demands crowded their daily routines. Because doing ER earned them no credits, other demands took precedence over their ER activities.

van Amesvoort (2016) attempted to foster intrinsic reading motivation by encouraging 123 Japanese university students to read extensively outside the classroom. No quizzes, no book report, and no mandatory record keeping were required. At the end of the 14-week ER program, 29% of the students did not read any books, 40% read only 1-3 books, 5.7% students read up to 12 books, but only two students read the most number of books, reading one book per week. It is apparent that the program failed to cultivate students' intrinsic motivation through simple encouragement. The researcher suggested that to get students to read more, it may be necessary to create a system for holding students accountable while at the same time allowing students to check their own progress.

Tien (2015) conducted a large-scale ER study with 5,711 Taiwanese university students for a period of 36 weeks (two semesters). All students were required to read four graded readers outside the classroom each semester. Thirty-six instructors were involved. It is unknown, however, how many books the students actually read, and no monitoring systems were reported. After the program, 1,583 (28%) students responded to an on-line questionnaire regarding their perceptions of reading outside the classroom. The results showed that students' perceptions were overall positive, with an average of 3.83 out of a 5-point scale. Although the result was positive overall, only 28% of the students who did ER answered the survey questions. It is unknown how the other 62% of the students perceived the program.

To find out whether students actually read outside the classroom, Robb and Kano (2013) used a Moodle Reader Module (called the M-Reader) to monitor students' reading. In their large-scale of ER study with Japanese university students over the entire general English curriculum, the students were required to read five graded readers *outside* the class time. The researchers were able to monitor what students read via the M-Reader. This online tool not only allowed students to take a short quiz after finishing a book but also reduced the instructors' workload as they did not have to spend so much time keeping track of their students' reading. Similar to all previous ER studies, the students receiving ER outperformed those who did not. Many teachers who did not show enthusiasm for ER in the beginning became converts of the ER approach after observing the beneficial effect of ER on their students' reading proficiency.

Requiring students to write book reports is another way for teachers to monitor students' reading activities. Yamashita (2013) investigated how a 15-week ER program affected 61 EFL university students' reading affect and cognition, which were measured using pre- and

post- questionnaires. All students did silent reading for 45 minutes per week in class and had to write a book report for each book they read to earn the course credit. The study found that ER had a large effect on increasing students' feelings of comfort toward L2 reading and a medium effect for reducing anxiety, a small effect on intellectual value and a marginal effect on practical value. The results suggested that weekly structured reading could have a positive effect on readers' attitudes towards reading.

Macalister (2008) studied the feasibility of integrating extensive reading into an English for academic purposes program. Three classes of varying language proficiency received three different ways of doing ER. The first class involved low-level students, who read graded readers in class for 20 minutes per day with no pre or post reading activities. The second class of an intermediate proficiency level also read 20 minutes in class, followed by Say-it activities (retelling activities) and the third class, whose language proficiency was the highest, did a write-before-you-read activity and read 20 minutes in class. The results showed that students' reactions toward ER were similar despite the differences in approaches, whether or not students were engaged in pre or post reading activities did not seem to have any noticeable effect. Macalister (2008) noted that "any extensive reading program is going to be affected by a range of factors and so the program must be flexible in order to suit the particular learners" (p. 31).

The above studies have shown different ways that teachers have used in ER programs, and each seemed to lead to a somewhat different outcome. In general, students held positive views toward ER; however, the students did not usually engage in it when simple encouragement was used. They also did not seem to consider ER their first priority in their learning and might put ER aside when there were other more pressing demands. Another study hence focused solely on how teachers perceived the ER practice. Macalister (2010) interviewed 36 English teachers by telephone and found that most teachers believed that ER had positive effects on language acquisition. Interestingly, though, two thirds (24/36) of the teachers did not incorporate ER as part of their teaching program, the main reasons being that ER was not appropriate for their current classes and they did not have a system to monitor their students's independent reading outside the classroom. The most common methods the teacher participants used for monitoring students' reading were filling out written records, book review sheets, or reading logs.

Some teachers in Macalister's study reported being constrained by the fixed curriculum; however, in other studies the teachers were not very interested despite that fact that ER was incorporated into their school curriculum. Tien (2015), for example, reported that many of the teachers at her institution were initially reluctant to carry out ER. After great persuasion and a period of trial and error, many of them complied and began to take ER more seriously. Encouragingly, after they had become more knowledgeable about the theoretical rationales behind ER, they developed more positive attitudes towards ER at the end of the program. The

study thus suggested that if ER is embedded in the school curriculum, teachers are likely to be more willing to give ER a try. One major problem observed in this study, however, was that the teachers who engaged in ER might have not been given proper training and support; that is, they were just told to fulfill the requests of their institute without making any changes to suit their students' needs. If this is the case, the L2 teachers will encounter a number of difficulties when implementing ER.

The studies reviewed above did not report on what the students read and how they selected the reading materials for their independent reading. In other words, students were simply encouraged to read a wide range of materials. While wide reading is good, research shows that another form of reading, called narrow reading (reading a series of related texts), may reduce vocabulary load (Rodgers & Webb, 2011; Schmitt & Carter, 2000), increase vocabulary learning rate (Kang, 2015), and improve reading rates (Chang & Millett, to appear). Related texts can be those on the same genre or texts written by the same author. Whether L2 teachers have recognized and adopted this concept is one of the questions that the present study intended to address. Because of the gap in teachers' perceptions of ER practice in the literature, we developed a questionnaire to address the following three research questions:

1. What are the main reasons for L2 teachers to implement extensive reading?
2. How often did the L2 teachers encounter difficulties and what difficulties did they experience when implementing extensive reading?
3. What ways of selecting reading materials did the L2 teachers consider more effective and would advise their students to read?

METHODOLOGY

Participants

A total of 257 L2 teachers responded to the questionnaire. One hundred and thirty-three teachers filled in their responses via the online questionnaire and 124 teachers completed the paper version of the questionnaire. If the paper data were included, there would be too many respondents from Taiwan; therefore, to consider the data from diverse contexts, we decided to use only the data collected from the online questionnaire. Since this study focused on the Asian context only, 14 teachers' data were excluded because they were not teaching L2 courses in Asia. Thus, a total of 119 teachers' data were used for the present study, among whom 116 taught English, one taught French, and 2 taught other languages. Fifty four of the participants were female and 28 were male; the other 37 did not specify their gender. The respondents were from nine Asian countries with the majority coming from Vietnam, Indonesia, Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan. Other information about the respondents is presented in Table 1. As shown in the table, more than 60% of the respondents had had more than 10 years of teaching

experience with majority (75%) teaching at the university level. Some 62% of the teachers had had 1-6 years of implementing extensive reading, and 49% of the teachers "often" or "always" did ER practice; 41% "sometimes" and 10% "hardly ever" or "never" did it.

Table 1: Respondents' teaching profiles

Years of teaching		
1-5: 15 (12.6%)	6-10: 33 (27.7%)	11-15:25 (21%)
16-20: 22 (18.5%)	> 20:24 (20%)	
Levels of students		
Preschool: 0 (0%)	elementary: 4 (3.4%)	junior high: 4(3.4%)
Senior high: 10 (8.4%)	university: 89 (74.8)%	multi-level: 12 (10.1)%
Country taught		
China: 4 (3.4%)	Indonesia: 24 (20%)	Japan: 11 (9%)
Malaysia: 4 (3.4%)	Philippines: 1(0.8%)	Singapore: 2 (1.7%)
Saudi Arabia: 2 (1.7%)	South Korea: 13 (10.9%)	Taiwan: 21 (17.6%)
Thailand: 3 (2.5%)	Vietnam: 34 (28.6%)	
Years of ER practice		
1-2: 27 (22.7%)	3-4: 22 (18.5%)	5-6: 25 (21%)
7-8: 12 (10.1%)	9-10: 12 (10.01%)	> 10: 21 (17.6%)

Frequency of extensive reading practice				
Always	often	sometimes	rarely	never
29 (24.4%)	29 (24.4%)	49 (41.2%)	10 (8.4%)	2 (1.7%)

Instrument

A twenty-three item questionnaire was developed for the purpose of this study. Five items were about the teachers' background, as shown in the participants section, nine items on extensive reading and another nine on extensive listening. The data for extensive listening was excluded from the present study. The questionnaire was developed based on an extensive review of the ER literature (e.g., Macalister, 2010; Robb & Kano, 2013) and was piloted twice before it was administered. The nine items on extensive reading focused on the total time and the frequency of the teachers' ER practice, their reasons for doing ER practice, the difficulties they encountered when carrying out ER, and their perception about how ER materials should best be selected and organized (see the appendix). Two versions of the questionnaire were developed: paper and online. Most of the paper questionnaires were filled out by conference participants at a conference site, most of whom were L2 teachers teaching English in Taiwan. The link to the online version was sent to L2 teachers via email and Facebook. The online

questionnaire was accessible for one month for teachers to respond to.

Data analysis

As was mentioned earlier, the data used for the present study came from the online questionnaire. SPSS version 23 for Windows was used to analyze the data, mainly on frequency counts and percentages only. On one item regarding the perceived effectiveness of different methods of selecting reading materials, one-way repeated measures ANOVA (alpha level set at .01) was used to compare whether the respondents' responses to the four methods differed significantly. Pairwise comparisons using a Bonferroni correction was used to compare the differences between each method. In addition to the quantitative data collected from the fixed selections, the questionnaire also allowed the respondents to add their opinions if they had any. Their written responses, if different from the fixed options, were also classified and integrated into the discussion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first research question investigated the reasons the L2 teachers wanted to do ER. The respondents were allowed to give multiple responses. As shown in Table 2, 82.4% of the teachers considered ER important for enhancing overall language competence and 69% of them believed that ER was an effective way for developing reading proficiency. It is interesting that 41% of the teachers considered extensive reading to be enjoyable, and because of that, they asked their students to read extensively, too. Despite all these positive beliefs, only a small proportion of the teachers responded that ER was a part of their curriculum (13.4%) and required by their respective institutions (5%).

Table 2: The main reasons that L2 teachers asked students to read extensively
(Multiple responses)

Statement	Frequency and percentage of responses
ER is important to improve overall language competence.	98 (82.4%)
An effective way to develop reading competence	82 (68.9%)
A pleasure	49 (41.2%)
A part of curriculum	16 (13.4%)
Others:	15 (12.6%)
Reading will be tested in the joint examinations	13 (10.9%)

ER is required by the school or the department.	6 (5.0%)

Although ER was not a part of the curriculum or required by most of the schools or departments, a large number of L2 teachers still implemented ER in their teaching due to their strong belief that ER could improve students' overall language competence. This is very encouraging as the implementation of ER does not always depend on institutional decisions. Individual teachers can choose, if they so wish, to allocate curriculum time for independent reading. For example, Yamashita (2013) set aside half her teaching time for ER. The teachers in Macalister's study (2008) were able to include 20 minutes of silent reading in their programs. This might be because the majority of the respondents (75%) were university teachers who can exercise more flexibility in their teaching.

Another main reason for doing ER was that teachers considered reading enjoyable, so they thought their students would also find enjoyment in reading. This finding, however, does not seem to have received empirical support as not all students find reading enjoyable. For example, in the study by van Amesvoort (2016), 30% of the students did not read even one book during the entire semester, and only 2 of 123 students could reach the goal of reading one book per week. This also explains why reading will not be done if it is not included as part of the curriculum or does not count for students' final grades. If extensive reading were perceived to be a truly pleasurable activity, the students should in theory be able to read on their own with or without encouragement.

In addition to selecting from among the options given in the question, 15 respondents gave their own reasons. Leaving out the comments that were similar to the options in the questionnaire, their supplementary reasons can be largely classified into two main categories: (i) to help improve their language skills and reading motivation and (ii) to help them understand the socio-cultural values of the target language community. Some of their comments are listed below:

To help improve their language skills and reading motivation
- to enhance students' intrinsic motivation for learning
- to gain confidence
- to set their habit of reading
- to develop a positive L2 reading self
- to foster lifelong reading habits
- to ignite a joy for reading
- Reading is vital in any academic setting.
- Reading is needed in their careers.
- Reading is for their life goals and plans.
- Reading increases knowledge.

- Extensive reading means extensive knowledge.

To help them understand the socio-cultural values of the target language community
- Reading is a normal activity that includes students in the community of L1 users rather than being a foreign language.
- to improve self-identity as an English user
- to learn about other cultures
- to make them realize what it feels like to really understand something in English.

These reasons seem to reflect the core value of ER, but they are difficult to quantify and it takes time to fulfill them. Many language learners, however, are eager to see the effects of ER in the shortest possible time and so may quit reading because of its delayed effect. These are perhaps the reasons ER scholars (Robb & Kano, 2013) suggest creating a system by which learners can see their progress or learning gains. Without the system, it is difficult to get students to continue reading for a longer period of time.

We now turn to the second research question which explored how often L2 teachers encountered difficulties and what major difficulties they had when implementing ER. As can be seen in Table 3, half the teachers "often" or "always" (50%) had difficulties getting their students to read; 41% of the teachers "sometimes" and only 8.4% "hardly ever" or "never" had difficulties.

Table 3: Frequency of difficulty encountered by L2 teachers when asking students to read extensively

always	often	sometimes	rarely	never
18 (15.1%)	42 (35.3%)	49 (41.2%)	5 (4.2%)	5 (4.2%)

Given that such a large proportion of teachers experienced difficulties, the sub-question focused on the types of difficulties they encountered. As shown in Table 4, the difficulties they encountered came from three main sources: students, teachers, and the institutions. The top four difficulties the teacher respondents encountered were: students were not interested in reading (60.5%), it was difficult to monitor whether students actually read (48.7%), students were not able to read independently (44.5%), and it was difficult to get students to read materials that were not assessed (40.3%). The other difficulties were these: students had no time for extra reading (29.4%), it was difficult to assess what is learned from ER (26.1%), it is difficult to find suitable reading materials (22.7%), the institute does not have many books for students to read (21.8%), and the curriculum has a fixed schedule (18.5%). Overall, it is apparent that the major difficulties experienced by the L2 teachers came from the students themselves, who were not interested in reading, were unmotivated, and were unable

to read independently, and had no time to do extra reading. These were followed by some problems from the teachers themselves: not being able to monitor and assess what students actually read. The difficulties from their institutions seemed to be minor: not having enough books and having a fixed curriculum.

Table 4: Major difficulties that L2 teachers experienced on ER practice
(multiple responses)

Statement	Frequency and percentage of responses
Students are not interested in reading.	72 (60.5%)
It's difficult to monitor whether students actually read.	58 (48.7%)
Reading independently is difficult for students.	53 (44.5%)
It's difficult to ask students to read materials that will not be assessed.	48 (40.3%)
Students have no time for extra reading.	35 (29.4%)
It's difficult to assess what students actually learn from reading.	31 (26.1%)
It's difficult to find suitable reading materials.	27 (22.7%)
The institute does not have many books for students to read.	26 (21.8%)
The curriculum has a fixed schedule	22 (18.5%)
Others.	4 (3.4%)

In addition to the options given in the questionnaire, another three respondents added their difficulties experienced when doing ER practice:

- Other teachers do not understand ER and interfere or stop students from reading
- Smart phones have killed students' ability to focus on anything for more than two minutes
- Sleepy students. Students are demotivated in learning

The majority of the difficulties reported by the teachers in fact might be interrelated to each other. For example, because students are not interested in reading, they become sleepy or look at their cell phones instead of reading. These frustrating phenomena might be reduced if students were required to write book reports or take quizzes after reading, and these after reading tasks may count for their partial grades or scores. Robb (2002) commented that his students did not read for themselves but to fulfill a course requirement (i.e., to earn extra points). Although the top ten principles by Day and Bamford (2002) do not include tests after reading, some studies (Stoeckel,, Reagan, & Hann, 2012) have shown that after-reading quizzes do not negatively affect reading attitudes. Stoeckel et al reported that students' anxiety, comfort,

linguistic value, and practical value were not affected by the quizzes; on the contrary, students' intellectual values were slightly enhanced, which means that students who took quizzes felt somewhat greater intellectual benefits from ER. These findings suggest that L2 teachers may have to be flexible (Macalister, 2008) because in the test-oriented learning context, retaining some of students' past learning habits may make them feel more secure as they can see the immediate outcome of reading a book. L2 teachers also have to be aware that before students have the intrinsic motivation to read for their own benefits, some external incentives, such as earning a course credit or receiving a certificate, could be used to get students started on their reading journey, and gradually encourage them to read independently. Two respondents in fact reported that the easiest way to overcome the difficulties may be to make ER a required course. One teacher also reported having little or no difficulties "… because ER is required."

The third research question explored the extent to which the L2 teachers gave advice to their students on the the type of materials they should be reading. The inclusion of this question was motivated by a more recent interest in narrow reading, which has been found to be more effective than wide reading on developing students' vocabulary breadth and depth (see Kang, 2015), and improving reading speed (Chang & Millett, to appear).

This item allowed multiple responses. Table 5 showed that 73% of the teachers asked students to read a wide range of graded readers (wide reading), and only a small proportion of the teachers suggested that their students read many graded readers based on the same genre or author or title (narrow reading). As shown in Table 6, 58% of the teachers were unsure or did not know what narrow reading was. The data seems to suggest that narrow reading may not be a common practice for these teachers. Some of them may have the impression that narrow reading has little or no pedagogical value and they may not be fully aware of the recent literature on narrow reading and how it can serve as a springboard for wide reading.

Table 5: Which way(s) of reading did you suggest to your students?

(Multiple responses)

Statement	Frequency and percentage of responses
Reading a wide range of graded readers	87 (73.1%)
Reading many graded readers of the same genre	23 (19.3%)
Reading many graded readers by the same title	15 (15.6%)
Reading many graded readers by the same author	7 (5.9%)

Table 6: L2 teachers' familiarity of narrow reading

Yes	Not sure	No
50 (42%)	49 (41.2%)	20 (16.8%)

The sub-question regards teachers' perception about the effectiveness of four ways of selecting reading materials. The teachers had to give a score (1 to 10) to each way of organizing reading texts. The results presented in Table 7 show that L2 teachers ranked the practice of reading a wide range of graded readers the most effective way, with a mean score of 7.81/10, followed reading many readers of the same genre (6.39/10). Reading many readers written by the same author or the same title published by different publishers was ranked the lowest, with a mean score of 5.68/10 and 5.41/10 respectively. A one-way repeated measures ANOVA analysis showed that there was a significant difference in the perceived effectiveness of the four ways of selecting reading materials, Wilks' Lambda = .55, F (3, 108) = 29.25, p< .001, multivariate partial eta squared = .55. The effect size, by Cohen's guidelines (1988), was very large. Pairwise comparisons show that teachers considered reading a wide range of materials significantly more effective than reading materials of the genres, authors, and titles. Reading the same genre texts was also perceived more effective than reading the texts by the same authors or the same titles, but reading same author texts and same title texts showed no significant difference.

Table 7: Perceived effectiveness of four ways of selecting extensive reading (n =111)

Statement	Mean (SD)
Reading a wide range of graded readers	7.81 (2.46)
Reading many graded readers of the same genre	6.39 (2.36)
Reading many graded readers by the same author	5.68 (2.36)
Reading many graded readers by the same title	5.41 (2.50)

The answer to the third research question is that the majority of the L2 teachers would advise their students to read a wide range of graded readers because it was considered more effective than reading materials of the same genre or materials written by the same authors. The result might be attributed to the fact that research into the effectiveness of reading the same authors or the same themes is so limited that it is less understood by L2 ER practitioners. This can be seen from Table 6 which shows that 58% of the respondents were not sure about or not familiar with narrow reading and its potential benefits for L2 readers, especially beginning L2 readers.

Recent corpus-driven research also shows that reading related materials - for example the texts on the same theme or genre - provides an optimal condition for L2 learners to learn vocabulary words (Rogers & Webb, 2011; Schmitt & Carter, 2000). This is because reading related materials provides ample opportunities for multiple encounters of familiar vocabulary words in different contexts, thus allowing them to understand these words at a deeper level.

Other empirical studies (Cho, Ahn, & Krashen, 2005; Kang, 2015) also support the conclusion that L2 learners acquire more words through reading related texts than through random, unrelated texts.

The evidence from reading related texts suggests that there might be a need to guide the low-level learners or beginners on how to choose materials, so it can be easier for them to see the effects of ER. As we know, there are many ways of organizing text. It can be organized according to its genre. For example, *Love or Money; Death in Freezer; The Mysterious Death of Charles Bravo* (Oxford Bookworm series), *My Cousin Rachel* and *A Kiss Before Dying* (Macmillian) belong to the love and crime genre. Texts can also be organized by author. For example, *Inspector Logan, Logan's Choice,* and *A Puzzle for Logan* were all written by Richard MacAndrew, who used the same names for the main characters in the three crime stories. Within each type (same genre or same author), the materials can be grouped according to their linguistic levels, from Levels 1, 2, 3 and so on. More research is needed in this area so that the effect of narrow reading for beginning and more advanced L2 readers can be better understood.

CONCLUSION

This study found that the majority of the respondents had some experience in implementing ER and had strong beliefs regarding the effects of ER on language development; however, the difficulties they encountered cannot be ignored. Based on the results of the study, we offer the following suggestions to help teachers implement ER more efficiently and with more profound impact on student learning:

1. Incorporating ER in the language curriculum. The results of this study show that the majority of the L2 teachers encountered many difficulties. One respondent noted that he did not encounter any difficulties because ER was required, but only 13% of the respondents responded that ER was a part of their language curriculum. This finding indicates that ER is not compulsory in language learning; it also shows that ER is often considered dispensable if students' have other things to do. Incorporating ER into the language curriculum seems to be the most effective way to make students read (see Green, 2005). When L2 teachers incorporate ER into the curriculum, they can ask students to read during curriculum time. This would address the commonly heard complaint that students do not have time to read.

2. Monitoring whether students actually read. One of the difficulties that L2 teachers encountered was their inability to track what and how much students read and to hold them accountable for their work. Nowadays, there are many convenient and useful ways by which teachers can monitor whether students actually read. For teachers who want to give students quizzes after reading but have no access to the computer and Internet, the graded readers published by Oxford Bookworms series, Cambridge English Readers, and

MacMillan Readers are ideal because the three publishers have developed quizzes for each reader and teachers can freely use these quizzes to monitor students' reading. Quizzes such as Moodle Reader developed by Robb or Xreaders by Goldberg, can be taken online. This will not give L2 teachers extra work. Students can select whatever interests them to read, and then give themselves a quiz when they finish.

3. Starting an ER program with class readers. The number one difficulty that L2 teachers encountered is that students are not interested in reading. Many L2 learners or very low-level students have never read any texts beyond the prescribed ones. It is therefore very difficult for them to choose the books that they can read and will read on their own. If this is the case, L2 teacher may begin their ER program with class readers, perhaps one that involves class discussions (see Webb & Chang, 2015). For example, the first author usually starts an ER program with a class reader called *The Elephant Man,* which has always been rated "very interesting" in the past 10 years and serves as an excellent introduction to the joy of reading

Before drawing the conclusion, it is worth pointing out that the context of the study was limited to Asian countries, so the suggestions above may not be suitable for other ER practitioners working in other contexts. Because the majority of the respondents were from tertiary institutions, teachers from different educational streams or in other contexts may experience different difficulties. Unanswered questions arising from experiences in other countries and contexts must rely on future studies to answer. Finally but not the least important, implementing an ER program smoothly takes a few months or even years; therefore, teachers must not give up too easily when students do not seem to be interested in reading.

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APPENDIX: Teachers' Perceptions of Extensive Reading

Note: You can select more than one answer for the items with asterisk (*).

PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. ***What language(s) are you teaching?**
    □ English □ French □ Spanish □ German □ Other(s):

2. What is your gender? □ male □ female

3. How many years of teaching experience have you had?
    □ 1-5   □ 6-10   □ 11-15 □ 16-20   □ more than 20

4. ***What level(s) of students are you teaching?**
    □ preschool □ elementary □ junior high □ senior high   □ university
    □ non-student adults

5. In what country are you teaching? _____

EXTENSIVE READING

6. Do you ask your students to extensively read any materials that are not required in
    the prescribed reading curriculum? (If you choose <u>never</u>, please go to question 12)
    □ always   □ often   □ sometimes □ rarely   □ never

7. How many years have you been asking students to read extensively?
    □ 1-2   □3-4 □ 5-6   □ 7-8 □ 9-10   □ more than 10

8. ***If you have ever asked students to read extensively, which way(s) of reading did you
    suggest to your students?**

    ☐ Reading a wide range of graded readers.

    ☐ Reading many graded readers written by the same author.

    ☐ Reading many graded readers of the same genre.

    □ Reading many the same title readers written at different levels .

9. ***If you have asked students to read extensively, what are the main reasons that you
    have done so?**

    ☐ Extensive reading is important to improve overall language competence.

    ☐ Extensive reading is required by the school or the department.

    ☐ It is a part of our curriculum.

    □ Reading is a pleasure.

☐ Reading competence will be tested in the joint examinations.

☐ Extensive reading is an effective way to develop reading competence.

☐ Others (please specify): _____

10. If you have asked students to read extensively, did you find it difficult to get students to do so? (If you choose <u>never</u>, then go to question 13.)
□ always   □ often   □ sometimes □ rarely   □ never

11. ***If you found it difficult to ask students to read extensively, what are the major difficulties you have experienced?**
□ Students are not interested in reading.
□ Reading independently is difficult for students.
□ Students have no time for extra readings.
□ The curriculum has a fixed schedule (ER is not included in the curriculum.)
□ It is difficult to get students to read the materials that will not be assessed.
□ It is difficult to monitor whether students actually read or not.
□ It is difficult to assess what students actually learn from reading.
□ The institute does not have many books for students to read.
□ It is difficult to find suitable reading materials.
□ Others (please specify): _____

12. ***If you have never asked students to read extensively, what are the main reasons you have not asked your students to do so?**
□ Students are not interested in reading.
□ Students will encounter many difficulties when reading independently.
□ It is difficult to ask students to read books other than their textbooks.
□ Extensive reading is not included in the curriculum.
□ It is difficult to get students to read books on which they will not be assessed.
□ It is difficult to monitor whether students actually read or not.
□ It is difficult to assess what students actually learn from reading.
□ The institute does not have many books for students to read.
□ It is difficult to find suitable titles for students to read.
□ Others (please specify): _____

13. Are you familiar with narrow reading?
□ Yes □ Not sure □ No

14. Based on your teaching experience, to what degree do you think beginning or low-level L2 students would benefit from the following way(s) of reading? Please select a number from 1 to 10 and fill it in the box.

(Least useful) 1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10 (Most useful)

☐ Reading many graded readers written by the <u>same author</u>.

☐ Reading many graded readers of <u>the same genre</u>.

☐ Reading many the <u>same title</u> graded readers written at different levels.

☐ Reading <u>a wide range</u> of readers regardless of author, genre, or title.