IMPACT OF EXTENSIVE READING

ON ECUADORIAN LEARNERS' ATTITUDES

TOWARD L2 READING: A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH STUDY

Katherine Anabelle Salvador Cisneros

Thesis presented to Escuela Superior Politécnica del Litoral - ESPOL and Centro de

Estudios de Lenguas Extranjeras – CELEX to fulfill the requirements for the

Master's Degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Dara Gay Shaw, ED. Dr.

Dennis P. Maloney, MAP

Emma Pedley, Lcd

Guayaquil . Ecuador

2010

Acknowledgements

God is the author of my life and the one whom I thank for His many gifts.

Thanks to my parents and family for their support.

Thanks to my master's professors for all their time and trust.

Thanks to my dear students who teach me every day how to reach their hearts and souls.

Thanks to Denis Maloney, God gave you a vision, you shared it with us.

Thanks to Dara Shaw, my mentor and friend.

Thanks to Kattyta and Arturo for their patience, encouragement and love.

May the Lord bless you all!

Katherine Anabelle

Dedication

To my parents and sisters:

Hector, Aura, Alex, Rossi and Marita;

with God everything is possible.

To Katty and Arturo:

My musa and my engine,

my inspiration and my strength.

I love you.

Katherine Anabelle

Table of Contents

Table of Appendixes

Table of Figures

Pg

Table of Figures

Table of Tables

Pg

Chapter 1

Introduction

Globalization trends have pushed Ecuadorians into the need to read texts in foreign languages such as English. People in Ecuador need to read English texts for many different purposes in business, academic and social contexts. In addition, Ecuadorian business people need to be able to read in English in order to better understand legally binding commercial documents which facilitate international relationships. Many people from other places where Spanish is not spoken visit Ecuador, so speaking and reading English texts become a way to interact with these people as tourists and in social situations.

Academic reading in English is also necessary for Ecuadorians, who seek to improve their English for professional reasons. These Ecuadorian language learners attend English language centers or take private classes.

There are different second language reading curricula. Some programs offer courses in Reading for Business, where learners obtain reading skills based on specific vocabulary according to the purpose of the learners and the fields where they work. Other programs focus on academic reading strategies to encourage students to understand the required reading texts in that particular learning environment. Still other programs may focus on how to comprehend information given in a variety of texts such as newspapers, informal letters and magazines, among others, that foster everyday communication. Reading in English is a necessity for people in the present millennium, and many different ways of improving second language reading competence can be used.

According to my own observations and reflections, Ecuadorians do not seem to have developed a positive attitude toward reading. I have observed this absence of a culture of reading in the courses I have taught. Many of my students read books with poor understanding. This poor culture of reading could also be the reason why in our country very

few local publishing houses exist, which means most of the books that come to Ecuador have to be imported. The lack of in-country publishing venues could also be the cause of the high cost of books making them less accessible to people.

Several governments of Ecuador have been working for a long time to reduce illiteracy in Ecuador. The Ecuadorian Institute of Statistics and Census (INEC) in 2001 reported that 8% of Ecuadorians fifteen years old and older are considered illiterate. According to a former Ecuadorian ministry of education, the literacy rate had increased to 9.1% by 2006 which is very high in comparison to several other Latin American countries. It is also worrisome that in our country in 2006, it was known that out of the population of Ecuador 21% of the people are functional illiterates which means the population can barely understand what they read or are not able to read fluently (Diario Correo, 23/5/2006).

There are other reasons why people in Ecuador might not be accustomed to reading a lot. First, good reading behaviours or attitudes may not have been passed from generation to generation, even though we have great writers among our people. A second cause for the disregard for reading could be the lack of awareness of the importance of reading as a way to develop a country by establishing a good basis for constructing a culture of reading from the very early ages. This fact is also reflected in the existence of very few public libraries in our country, as was published in one of our local newspapers (Diario El Telégrafo, 2008). The same source informs us that there is also little evidence that Ecuadorian schools encourage a culture of reading among children in their elementary and high school levels. Some of the problems may include: low salaries for teachers, low budgets for educational programs and facilities, lack of good training for teachers, and poor educational conditions. Also, there is little published evidence of a national agenda with a curriculum focused on teaching children and teenagers to love reading and develop a reading culture based on appropriate strategies

and techniques to be used during their whole academic life from the beginning years up to their higher levels of education. (Expolibro website, 2008)

When young adults arrive at Ecuadorian universities, they probably carry these problems and sometimes traumas from their previous learning experiences; that may be why some students do not succeed at this level and start having poor results in their academic achievement. Many students feel frustrated when they notice a deficiency in their scores as a result of unsatisfactory reading performance in terms of comprehension and speed; they have huge amounts of information to process in a short time. This weakness in reading, both in their native Spanish, or Quechua, and English, may be a result of a lack of the explicit teaching of good strategies and techniques which were not taught in their previous studies.

University students in Ecuador are facing the requirement of skilled L2 reading throughout their programs of study. Relevant and up-to-date information is mainly found in English on the Internet and in magazines, journals, and books, among other information sources, so if students want to have access to this information they must be able to comprehend texts and articles that are written in this language.

In addition, because of the explosion of information that is accessible, there are huge quantities of information to be read, so, speed is also an important factor for the students. As a result of the lack of a culture of reading and good reading strategies and techniques that were not properly taught at an early age, university students seem to face many problems in understanding how to handle their L2. Low achievement in reading skills seems to aggravate students' increasingly negative attitudes towards reading. This I have observed in young adult learners during eight years of teaching at local universities. This apparent aversion toward L2 reading could be the reason for the increased lack of interest of university students in trying to improve this language skill performance. Therefore, there is a need to design good reading programs to address the problems related to the poor L2 reading skills at the university level.

First, reading programs need to be good enough to change students' attitudes toward L2 reading. Second, the program must persuade the students, that the experience of reading is both useful and enjoyable. The program needs to provide explicit instruction in the most appropriate strategies and techniques that the students need to apply when reading L2 texts. The design of an appropriate reading program focused on students' attitudes and the most appropriate strategies and techniques may provide the solution for improving students' performance at university levels.

Statement of the Problem

Many of my students complain every time they are asked to read an article. A big group of my L2 students have expressed that not only is reading the most difficult function of the language to be managed, but that they also just do not like reading because they do not understand some words. L2 reading is also a task that demands lots of their time. Although they are conscious of the importance of comprehending English written information at an appropriate pace for their personal and professional development, they seem to have a sense of hopelessness which sometimes causes them to give up trying to improve their reading skills. They have also said that they have never been taught or given strategies to be used when reading. In observing them, I have noticed that generally, students try translating every single word they do not understand which takes hours and sometimes makes the text less understandable. In spite of the efforts my students have made on their own in order to improve their reading skills, frustration is observably high. I perceive a reluctant attitude toward L2 reading caused by their former unsuccessful reading experiences.

The purpose of this action research study was to describe the impact on EFL students' attitude toward reading in a foreign language during and after working within an extensive reading program.

Research Questions

The specific research questions are:

1) What are learners' attitudes towards L1 reading?

2) What are learners' attitudes toward L2 reading?

3) What are the main factors that influence learner's attitudes toward L2 reading?

4) How do learners perceive and compare their strengths and weaknesses in reading in the L1 and L2?

5) How can the impact of explicitly taught reading strategies be described in a program that emphasizes extensive reading?

6) How can student perceptions of motivation to read extensively be identified and described?

Importance of the Study

EFL programs which face problems with struggling readers may find this research useful in terms of design and implementation of an extensive reading program which seeks to increase students' motivation toward L2 reading.   The research may also inform the field of the relationship of an extensive reading program to students' perceptions, attitudes and performance regarding L2 reading.

Definition of Terms

Action research. This can be defined as the process of studying a real situation to understand and improve the quality of actions and instruction in the teaching practice (Johnson, 2005; Hensen, 1996; McTaggart, 1997; Schmuck, 1997)

Authentic texts. Real-life texts that are not written for the purpose of pedagogy. (Wallace, 1992)

Brainstorming. Brainstorming is described by San Diego State University as a group technique aimed at generating new and useful ideas and promoting creative thinking. (http://edweb.sdsu.edu/triton/guides/Brainstorming.html)

Cloze activities. Cloze activities involve deleting part of the text and requiring the reader to provide appropriate words or phrases to insert in the blank spaces. (Hood, Solomon and Burns, 1996; Wallace, 1992)

Competency. Competency is a description of a standard of performance. (Hood, Solomon and Burns, 1996)

Comprehensible input. A term introduced by Krashen (1981) to refer to language which a learner can understand by means of clues such as gestures, situations, or prior information.

Data. (plural) Any form of information, observations, or facts that are collected or recorded. (Johnson, 2005)

Environmental print. Printed messages which we see around us in everyday settings. (Wallace, 1992)

ESL (English as a Second Language). This refers to the learning of English for use in a setting where English is the principal language.

EFL (English as a Foreign Language). This refers to the learning of English for use in a setting where English is not the principal language.

ESP (English for Specific Purposes). This refers to the learning of English for use in academic or specialized settings.

Language experience approaches. Approaches where a student's own language and experiences form the basis of a written text, either written by him or herself, or by the teacher acting as scribe. (Wallace, 1992)

L1 (first language). This term refers to the mother tongue, the native language, which is Spanish for the purposes of this thesis.

L2 (second language). This term refers to the target language that is English for the purposes of this thesis.

Metacognitive awareness. A conscious awareness of how learners are reading and why. (Hood, Solomon and Burns, 1996)

Predicting. This term is used when referring to learners making guesses or assumptions about the meaning of what they are about to read. (Hood, Solomon and Burns, 1996)

Prereading questions. These questions refer to those questions which are asked to learners to bring to the surface what they know about the topic and help them familiarize themselves with the text motivating them to read it. (Hood, Solomon and Burns, 1996)

Process approach. An approach to reading concerned with the manner in which meaning is created by the reader in the course of reading. (Wallace, 1992)

Psycholinguistics. The study of the mental processes involved in language production and reception. It is concerned with the relationship between language and the mind. (Finch, 1997, 2003:237)

Readability. This term refers to those factors affecting success in reading and understanding a text. (Fry, 1977)

Regression. The action of the eyes moving backwards in a text when reading to check previous words instead of sweeping steadily forwards. (Nuttall, 1982)

Research method. A means of gathering, analyzing and interpreting data using generally recognized procedures, i.e. interviewing. (Richards, 2003)

Research technique. A specific procedure for obtaining information informed by the research methodology employed, i.e. asking open-ended questions. (Richards, 2003)

Scanning. Involves locating particular information in a text while ignoring the rest. (Hood, Solomon and Burns, 1996)

Skimming. Involves looking quickly over a text to get a general idea of what a text is about. (Hood, Solomon and Burns, 1996)

Strategies. Ways of reading employed flexibly and selectively depending on the text-type, the context and purpose of reading; a strategy approach to teaching reading is concerned with the ways in which the reader processes the text. (Wallace, 1992)

Subvocalizing. This term refers to forming the sounds of the words that are being read, and even murmuring them aloud. (Nuttall, 1982)

Suggested endings. This activity involves giving students unfinished articles or stories and asking them to suggest endings or to select from a range of possible endings. (Hood, Solomon and Burns, 1996)

Text. According to some authors, a text is the core of the reading process, which has meaning and accomplishes a communicative function. (Nuttall, 1982; Wallace, 1992)

Top-down processing. Ways of reading texts which attend to global meaning and are activated largely by existing knowledge of the world rather than the specific linguistic features of the text. (Wallace, 1992)

Word collocation. This term refers to words that 'go together' to construct a meaningful item. There are collocations within a noun group, classifier/noun and process/participant collocations. (Hood, Solomon and Burns,1996)

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Many theorists and researchers have expounded their views regarding reading. I have reviewed the literature so as to establish a appropriate background to support my research. I have also read extensively on the topic of research methods with the goal of learning to analyze the collected data, in order to state my own findings and conclusions. In the process of crafting this review of the literature, I have discovered a number of reading theories on the process, purpose and social role of reading. Another topic, which experts have explored, is the vicious cycle of the poor reader, and what it means to the student's reading performance and motivation. Different approaches to teaching for reading competence are also included in this review.

Finally, some strategies to improve reading skills are laid out as they have been helpful in the design of the methods to be used in this action research.

Reading as a Process

Some authors, such as Hood, Solomon and Burns (1996) among others, state that reading is much more than decoding from print to sound but involves cultural, social and personal knowledge. It also requires the ability to bring this knowledge to the sampling of the text and the understanding of its meaning. Other authors like Wallace (1992) define the reading process as social, interactive, personal and private. These principles are applied in the United States where there is a bookclub movement, which is essentially social and interactive. Candlin and Widdowson, in their introduction to Wallace's book (1992), comment that teachers are the ones who can explore principles and experiment with techniques in their classroom, showing that the reading process is not an individual but also a sociably interactive process.

Nuttall (1982) is another author, who proposed a model of the communication process, where she states that reading implies the ability to decode the message produced by the writer who is the encoder or sender in this process.Taken from this point of view the reader does not have a passive role but an active one when interacting with the text. In order to ensure effective communication between the reader and the writer, not only is it necessary for both to use the same code, but reading depends on the reader's previous knowledge and the level of difficulty of the concepts expressed.

Wallace (1992) gives more support for seeing reading as a dynamic process. One of the researchers who describes reading as a process and still defines it as a "reduction of uncertainty'" is Smith (2004, pg 59). Authors like Goodman (1967) identified three miscues in the reading process: graphophonic, syntactic and semantic. She is a supporter of reading aloud to further the readers' process.

In contrast to this, Cavalcanti (1987) preferred learners to read silently and express themselves through 'thinking aloud'.

L1 reading process. One of the things Goodman (1967) and Smith (1971) agrees on is the idea of reading as a unitary process. This idea is supported by such researchers as Lunzer and Gardner (1979) who carried out a detailed study of secondary school children reading in their first language. As a result of their studies, they found that effective or competent readers were not the ones who could handle appropriate subskills which they were unable to identify and order by hierarchies. Effective readers according to Lunzer and Gardner were the students who had the ability and willingness to reflect on what they were reading. So they called it 'unitary aptitude' which is consistent with the approach of Goodman and Smith. Many authors agree with Wallace (1992) when he suggests that reading is a unitary process which cannot be separated into skills, which is why reading researchers talk about strategies rather than skills.

L2 reading process. Buck (1979) is one of the thinkers who states that the reading process is similar across languages and contexts. Cummins and Swain (1986) referred to a 'Common Underlying Proficiency' as the transfer of literacy skills from first to second language within the reading process.

The Purpose of Reading

Wallace (1992) states that there are two main aspects to consider when defining reading which are the fact that it encloses a purpose and can make sense when the context is properly determined. She lists three main reasons for reading: reading for survival, reading for learning, and reading for pleasure. Hood, Solomon and Burns (1996) have also suggested that reading is carried out for a purpose, and within a particular context which is also related to broader cultural and social experience.

As Nuttall (1982) maintains, it is important to see reading as focused on meaning and the way a learner tackles a reading task is strongly influenced by the purpose of reading. When the purpose for reading is authentic, it is useful in learners' daily lives, and for language improvement, which will become a natural by-product of reading.

Based on the theories of these reading researchers, I would like to find out and describe in this study, some ways that reading improvement directly influences language improvement.

Another aspect of this study is to explore the effect of training learners to read at an appropriate speed depending on the kind of texts and purpose for reading, without losing effectiveness, as it is one of the characteristics of competent readers, according to Nuttall (1982).

The Social Role of Reading

The work of researcher Shirley Brice Heath (1983) suggests that reading skills are developed under the strong influence of the cultural and social environment. Hood, Solomon

and Burns (1996) commented that when teaching reading to learners from different cultural backgrounds, it may be necessary to explore their cultural, social and individual beliefs about reading, as well as their previous and current reading experiences and needs, the role of reading in their daily lives and their familiarity with a whole range of different types of text.

Smith (1983), Brice-Heath (1983), Turner & Paris (1995) and Gambrell (1996) agree that reading communities can have a positive effect on learners' attitude and support their effort to become independent and effective readers. They observed that motivation is not solely within the reader, but results from the interaction between students and their literacy environments. These authors also mention that literacy events and literate communities such as the custom of adults telling stories to young children, having discussions about something they have read and sharing information from any printed source to a group of friends help them become engaged readers due to their social interaction. Furthermore, Wallace (1992) refers to classrooms as literate communities where the teacher and students are the ones who create their own context within their roles and goals. Vacca and Linek (1992) highlight the importance of the teacher in their role of a facilitator so that students can relax and share freely. This concept will be applied in this study by allowing learners to state their own objectives and level of participation during the time of the study.

Some L2 Reading Theories

Reading theory in the context of language teaching was not given much importance at the very beginning. It has been in the last thirty years that reading has started to take its place in language teaching theories.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, language teaching was theorized within the grammar translation method where theorists believed that language learning involved the understanding of how the language was structured. Therefore, reading was believed to be a cognitive process dealing with how the brain mentally applied the grammatical rules of the

language to written text in order to understand. It gave more importance to the physical action of reading than teaching it explicitly in language classes, as explained by Larsen-Freeman (2000)

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the appearance of the 'bottom-up' approach to language teaching and the influence of developments in behavioral psychology gave rise to the teaching of reading with a 'phonics approach' where learning to read involved the mastery of sounds and the alphabetic symbols for those sounds, words, simple sentences, complex sentences and so on.

Later, with the appearance of the psycholinguistic approach, theorists introduced the 'top-down' approach which states that meaning is more important than structure and places great emphasis on the process of reading where the reader has an active role when interacting with the written text (Goodman, 1967). Supporting this theory, authors like Smith (1978) also consider the readers' knowledge of the world or prior knowledge to have a relevant role in the reading process where readers' predictions facilitate reading.

Based on the previous approaches, a combination of both bottom-up and top-down processes is suggested by writers like Rumelhart (1977), Stanovich (1980) and Carrell, Devine and Eskey (1988). This interactive approach which draws on 'schemata theory' suggests that successful readers use a number of cognitive decoding and prediction strategies in order to arrive at meaning and that the use of these strategies and skills depends on the kind of text to be read. New social theories on reading, proposed by theorists such as Street (1984), Cook-Gumperz (1986) and Barton (1994), refuted the theories of psychologists in which the relationship between the writer and the reader was viewed as a one-way process. These reading experts stressed the importance of social and cultural context in reading practices.

Finally, critical literacy theorists such as Freire (1983), Wallace (1988, 1992), Kress (1989) and Gee (1990), have argued that readers need to be socialized into reading processes and practice from a critical point of view rather than only through the development of technical skills.

Reading Approaches

According to Wallace (1992) it is not easy to determine when the reading process begins in the early stages as it could be when children start turning the pages of a book, or when they are able to recognize their own name in print, or when they join and take part in the reading of a story, to give some examples.

There is research on views of the reading process as was demonstrated by studies of Harste (Weaver, 1980). It was known that student's perception of what reading is depends on the teacher's performance and approach to reading in their classes. The researcher concluded that the children's perception of the reading process can be transferred from L1 to L2 as well. Children commonly associate the experience of learning to read with the 'pronunciation of words' which is called the 'phonics method' by some authors like Cook (1989), because the emphasis is on the content to be taught rather than on how the learning takes place. It is also mentioned by Wallace (1988 and 1992), that good young readers, who are able to read fluently by the age of five, are rarely observed to use phonic decoding. Thus, Krashen (2004), discovered from fifteen studies that phonetic awareness training seems to be more helpful in results of tests of phonetic awareness rather than tests of reading comprehension. He also reported that children and adults with low phonetic awareness could learn to read by providing them with huge amounts of interesting and comprehensible reading.

As Wallace (1992) states, reading is a unitary process which cannot be divided into skills, so she prefers talking about developing reading strategies rather than teaching specific skills. She also mentions that those strategies involve the processing of the text and depend

on the reader's purpose, nature of text and the context of situation. Wallace also recommends keeping learners exposed as much as possible to many sources of printed material to facilitate learning processes.

When working within the strategy-based approach, Wallace (1992) also stresses that teachers should focus more on the process and not just on the product. That means that teachers should observe and perceive what learners do when facing printed material and then suggest strategies to them that have been observed to work well. Several studies by Hosenfeld (1977 and 1984) showed that poor readers were helped when strategies used by good readers were figured out and shared with them. Some strategies that are the product of the research of these writers are, for example, the skipping of unnecessary words, guessing meaning from context, reading in broad phrases, and continuing to read when faced with words that are difficult to decode. Wallace's (1988) findings about those strategies also coincided with some of Hosenfeld's research (1977, 1984) when observing good L1 readers.

Wallace's research (1992) has been particularly helpful in informing this study, especially with regard to the application of metacognitive and reading strategies like pre-reading, during the reading and after reading activities which make learners aware of the reading process *per se* and promote the sharing of experiences of what have they found easy or difficult when reading L2 as well as exploring how to confront those reading difficulties. She also comments on the influence of out-of-school literacy experiences on readers' performance and mentions that reading is inevitably integrated with speaking, listening and writing and cannot be viewed as an isolated skill. Therefore, a strategy based approach implies a connection between early reading and more advanced reading where the approach to the text depends on the purpose, context and previous knowledge of the topic. The reading development program which was proposed in this action research study incorporated some of the reading process strategies suggested by Wallace.

The Role of Texts in Reading

Many authors explain the important role of texts in reading and they give their own definition of what a text is. Their definitions were considered in this study. According to Brown and Yule (1983, p. 6) a text is 'the verbal record of a communicative act'; for Wallace (1992, p.8) a text is 'any chunk of written language which carries a whole meaning'. Other authors like Hood, Solomon and Burns (1996) comment that learners need to be introduced to various kinds of written texts in order to expand their language resources, reading strategies and skills.

When selecting a text for my learners, I followed Hood, Solomon and Burns (1996) suggestion of drawing on what is already known about them, their abilities, topics that appeal interesting to them and their goals for learning to read. These authors also consider a text to be relevant if it is meaningful for learners' lives, experiences, needs, goals and objectives and that we, as teachers, should explain to our learners our reasons for selecting a given text.

In this study I also kept in mind some important aspects about text readability. Nuttall suggests (1982, p. 26-28) that a text for extensive reading purposes needs to have no more than one percent of unfamiliar lexical items as a good range to be managed by learners who are expected to read a great deal without getting distracted or stuck by having to refer to a dictionary. It is important to cite Krashen (2002), here and his Comprehension Hypothesis which was formerly known as the Input Hypothesis. Krashen asserts that language can be acquired when the message is understood as subconscious learning, so here there is a necessity for texts to be clear and easy enough for the learners to understand them, so as to be readable for L2 readers.

Another indicator of readability mentioned by Nuttall (1982) and Wallace (1992) is the cloze test which was first introduced by Taylor in 1953, where deletion of words in a text is done every five to ten words in order to allow learners to complete the text and according

to some authors the percentage of work done reflects the level of readability of it. In other words, readability should assess the level of ease with which the reader is able to assign meaning to the missing pieces of text. Harrison (1980) suggests that the percentage of right answers in cloze test should be 60 % or more for independent readers and about 45% for class users; while 38% or less could be a frustrating level for EFL learners. I found the simplest way to assess text readability when reading Hastings (1990). She sustains that a text must be easy enough for the students to understand without too much difficulty in terms of the overall comprehension.

There is a relevant criterion for text selection which according to Nuttall (1982) is the level of interest it could generate in learners. She suggests that a text needs to tell learners things they do not know by introducing them to new and relevant ideas they have not thought about before. Nuttall also asserts that a text has to be challenging enough, which means, not too easy or too difficult, which is possible if it contains appropriate lexical terms and structures for their level.

When selecting texts for students, Wallace, (1992) also lists desirable features to consider. The text should:

- be a vehicle for teaching specific language structure and vocabulary which are called 'language focused' texts as they are written for teaching the language and are characterized for the repetition of particular structures or lexis;

- offer the opportunity to promote key reading strategies;

- present content which is familiar and of interest to the learners;

- be at the appropriate language level;

- be authentic, that means not specially written for pedagogical purposes; and,

- be exploitable in the classroom, that is to lead to a range of classroom activities

(p. 71)

The Vicious Cycle of the Weak Reader

Nuttall (1996) refers to the 'vicious circle of the weak reader' (p.127) through a very close relationship between speed, enjoyment and comprehension. This shows that slow readers cannot find their reading enjoyable, so they read less and, therefore, without understanding which makes their reading slow. Supporting this cycle effect, Stanovich (1986) explains the *Matthew effect* by saying that because unskilled readers read less, the 'poor-get-poorer effects may help to explain certain aspects of reading failure' (p.382).

On the other hand, the virtuous circle of the good reader, according to Nuttall (1996), shows that reading faster makes learners read more while increasing understanding and reading enjoyment which causes them to increase their reading speed. Gee (1999) explains this virtuous cycle where successful readers' positive attitude toward reading make them read more and, as a result of that, they become better readers as they acquire a larger vocabulary, are familiar with structures and have a broader knowledge base. They are then motivated to read more difficult books and become even better readers developing a cumulative advantage. So he concludes that 'good readers get better by reading more' (p.4) and that 'ESL students need to read' (p.4).

In addition, Wallace (1992) asserts that if readers do not read for pleasure in their L1, they will not do it in their L2, and that a product of reading for pleasure is fluency. These factors create a vicious or a virtuous cycle where the speed and ease of reading can increase or decrease motivation for the development of the L2 reading skills.

The Role of Motivation in Developing Reading

Motivation has been identified as a very important factor in developing reading. Hood, Solomon and Burns (1996) assert that there are different reasons for people to improve reading skills such as their desire to improve their academic level, employment status or independence in an English-speaking community. This highlights the fact that there is a direct

influence on the ability to read well in English on all other areas such as writing. Other authors like Cramer and Castle (1994), Mathewson (1994) and Gaskins (1996) also establish a strong link between motivation, positive attitude, affect and reading competence. Gambrell (1996) states that readers do not only need skills, but also the will to read and that 'the central and most important goal of reading instruction is to foster the love of reading' (p.14)

As Anderson (1999) concludes, motivation and success are not merely a lucky coincidence in the reading classroom. Therefore, he suggests that teachers provide the most convenient environment to help learners be optimistic by facilitating the process as much as possible.

Developing Competent or Effective Readers

Many authors explain what a competent or effective reader is and how to help learners achieve a level of competency in reading. According to Nuttall (1982) there is a close relationship between reading speed and comprehension. Goodman (1987) claims that effective readers are the ones who are able to skip irrelevant information. Carrell, Devine and Eskey (1988) assert that second language readers need to focus more on bottom-up features than first language readers. In addition, Gee (1999) comments that 'competence in reading, or at least a perception of competence, promotes reading. Conversely, reading promotes competence' (p.3)

Extensive Reading Programs

In this section, I will cite literature that has guided me in the design of the extensive reading program which was used in this study.

Wallace (1992) has shown some findings on specific cases of groups of learners with different educational and language backgrounds and different purposes to learn to read in English which she considers to be the main influencing factors when designing a reading program.

A very important point is stated by Cummins (1979) when arguing that a firm foundation of first language competence accompanied by first language literacy is the best route into second language acquisition of oral and written language modes.   Wallace and Goodman's (1989) studies corroborate Cummins' idea that the necessity of learners to read in English is motivating enough as a purpose to improve reading skills.

Wallace (1992) claims that print material is a good way to stay in touch with the target language outside classrooms, especially when it is learned outside an English speaking environment which I consider a good reason to develop an extensive reading program in order to help learners familiarize themselves more with the language outside the context of classroom learning.

Dubin (1989) mentions that including a wide range of genres and topics in early stages of an ESP (English for Specific Purpose) reading course could be helpful for developing learners' background knowledge before facing more specialized knowledge.

I agree with Wallace (1992) where she wrote that an example of a shared goal in a reading community might be the wish to read for pleasure in the second language which is a major guiding principle of strategy-based approaches besides providing learners with opportunities to read a wide range of interesting material. I did this when I was conducting this study. Wallace (1992) also maintains that when selecting texts for an extensive reading program, it is important to consider the readability level because the purpose is to offer appropriate material for students to read; that means the readings should neither be too easy nor too difficult. In addition, she states that for a text to be readable for an extensive reading program purposes it should not contain too many uncertain or unknown words. That is why Hedge (1988), the editor of Oxford Bookworms, recommends adapting published novels by retelling them, and after that, finding out which level they fit in.

Extensive L2 Reading in EFL Context

An interesting study reported by Elley (1984,) showed that Fijian secondary students had very poor competency in reading due to two reasons: first, the lack of availability of children's books in any language because teachers thought that reading was not a way of learning language; and second, because of the audiolingual-based approach used in the English language instructional program in elementary schools which played down reading as a source of learning the language. Those findings led Elley to conclude that the delay in introducing written language denied the learners exposure to it and that is why he asserted that English is largely learned through reading. He also concluded that fluency is improved when the students have more exposure to the key structures and vocabulary. Many authors also support this point, Dupuy, Tse, & Cook (1996), Kim & Krashen (1997), and Krashen (1993) all recognize that reading is an important source of input for second language acquisition. Krashen (2004) has presented his Comprehensive Hypothesis which highlights the importance of an appropriate extensive reading program in the development of language and in language acquisition by means of unconscious learning.

Considerations When Planning a Reading Program

When planning objectives for a course or lesson, extensive L2 reading program designers should keep in mind that they need to help learners in the achievement of their goals by describing knowledge, skills, strategies and attitudes toward reading. According to Hood, Solomon and Burns (1996), L2 readers are expected to learn and develop skills such as:

skimming texts for the gist or general meaning;

scanning for specific information;

predicting meaning from available clues;

guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words;

reading for main ideas;

reading for detailed explicit meaning;

reading for implicit meaning;

reading critically;

reading strategically;

decoding the text into speech;

answering questions about the text;

discussing the ideas in the text;

reading for pleasure (p.44)

Wallace (1996) proposes some ways of helping learners to approach the text they are reading through pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading activities. Wallace recommended Pre-reading activities such as questions the reader is required to find the answer to, mainly through scanning. These activities are also aimed at activating the readers' prior knowledge to help them get into the context of the text to be read. Brainstorming, according to Wallace, is the most popular kind of pre-reading task due to its multiple advantages. It requires little teacher preparation, allows learners to be free to bring their own prior-knowledge and opinions, and involves the whole class. This same author explains that While-reading activities encourage learners to be flexible, active, and reflective readers. Despite being very time-consuming to prepare and being known to interrupt the reading flow, they are very useful in helping learners to be aware of the reading process and their own reading strategies. Some of the suggested activities of this type are group discussion tasks, 'information-gap' (Doughty and Pica, 1986) and filling in a matrix or grid. Finally, we have post-reading activities, which for Wallace (1996) include any form of questioning that follows a text like multiple choice questions and role plays.

Anderson (1999) introduces his ACTIVE pedagogical framework which summarizes his six reading strategies in one word; activating prior knowledge, cultivating vocabulary, teaching for comprehension, increasing reading rate, verifying reading strategies and evaluating progress. Anderson feels these strategies should be considered when designing a reading program.

Reading Critically and Acquiring Awareness

Wallace (1992) mentions that both texts and tasks that are designed should encourage learners to be alert to culture-specific content. This is achieved through the selection of texts and the production of appropriate texts and tasks. Learners should become more aware of their strategies and roles as readers and how these are socioculturally influenced. Finally, learners should be offered critical reading strategies so as to become critical readers. In addition, Freire (1976) viewed literacy as the route to empowerment, a means of involving and externalizing people's places in the wider society.

One of the things that interested me from Wallace (1992) was the idea of having learners produce literature themselves, through what it is called a 'language experience' approach where learners are invited to be creative and produce by themselves oral narratives of a personal experience, or compose oral texts such as poems or stories to be used with other learners. Sylvia Ashton-Warner first introduced this method of creating relevant text.

Wallace (1992) also proposes several ways for heightening the learner's awareness of their strategies and roles as readers. One is by guiding them to become aware of their individual learning strategies in terms of metacognitive awareness mentioned by Hood, Solomon and Burns (1996) and another focuses on thinking and learning behavior individually and therefore within a reading society or community where they also have a role to perform as a reader.

A critical reading procedure, according to Kress (1985), starts with three questions:

- 'Why is the topic being written about?

- How is the topic being written about?

- What other ways of writing about the topic are there? (p.7)'

The same author also suggests pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading phases. Some pre-reading activities to develop critical reading are, for example, allowing learners to state their own questions, statements, or hypotheses to be solved throughout reading. While-reading activities are based on offering learners alternative ways for reading a text, so they can have more than one approach to it. Post-reading activities can lead learners to other ways the text could have been written.

Developing Reading Strategies and Rate Through An Extensive Reading Program

Nuttall (1996) comments that an extensive reading program which promotes reading out of class is necessary to help learners to achieve both fluency and efficiency. I therefore incorporated this principle in the extensive L2 reading program of this research. The same author also states that reading aloud is not a practice done naturally outside the classroom when reading L1, so teachers need to help learners avoid reading aloud. This makes the reading more fluent, as was suggested by Krashen and which is supported by his research (2004).

Nuttal (1982) considers foreign language knowledge improvement as an incidental bonus that results from reading lessons, but not the main one. Thus we have to plan reading lessons focused on the skills learners need. They need to understand how language is used for conveying content in order to become effective independent readers. Those skills are listed as follows:

- skills involving flexibility of technique: variations in reading rate, skimming, scanning, study reading, etc.

- skills in using information that is not strictly speaking part of the text: reference apparatus, graphic conventions, illustrations and diagrams

- word attack skills to tackle unfamiliar lexical terms: using morphology inference from context, using a dictionary, etc.

- text attack skills which enable learners to interpret the text as a whole (pp. 31-32)

Some work has been done on the improvement of reading speed, based on very early research from Banton Smith (1966) who showed that good readers do not need to read every word and mentioned it is better to make fewer eye movements in order to become a better reader. I used some strategies for speed reading based on that work as well as other useful skills such as skimming and scanning. Nuttall (1982), based on Banton-Smith findings, comments that it is recommendable to give short and easy texts to learners when working on extensive reading programs and suggests some types of texts that are helpful for reading speed purposes such as simple material where the information is presented in an extended way in order to develop the skills of skimming and scanning to ensure success when trying to read faster. Nuttall also mentions that the text level should be below the current course level with no language difficulties so that students can move on to reading more difficult levels when they are ready to handle these kinds of texts. Nuttall (1996) concluded from her research that 120-150 wpm was an appropriate rate for secondary school pupils in countries where English is a second language (ESL). She also stated that, for university students, 200 wpm is a good rate when reading and 60 wpm when studying; while 40 wpm is the average rate for university students where there is little tradition of reading even in their L1. The same author mentions that an L1 speaker of English of average education and intelligence can read 300 wpm with an average increase in speed of about 50 percent.

Anderson (1999), based on his investigations on the role of reading rate in second language instruction, concluded that increasing reading rate is helpful to reading fluently and automatically. It makes readers 'able to devote greater cognitive capacity to comprehension skills' (p54). He also suggests some reading rate development activities that focus more on fluent processing of large quantities of text rather than just reading as quickly as possible. These activities include a sequence of steps starting from teaching learners to read in chunks, then doing scanning and skimming of the text before reading it to rate speed. These are based on Harris' (1966) suggestions in his book *Reading Improvement Exercises for Students of English as a Second Language*. Another type of practice is to tell students to use fingers or pencils as a reading guide slows down their rate and cuts fluent reading. They would be better advised to use bookmarks or make their own and move them from line to line at the beginning, then from paragraph to paragraph, and finally to the bottom of the page. As Anderson comments, many teachers found this practice really useful and effective in helping students focus more on the content, avoiding eyes regression, and increasing their reading rate.

According to Nuttall (1996), reading speed is not useful when the reader has no comprehension of the text, so comprehension must also be measured by objective tests such as multiple choice and true/false questions. A score of over 70 percent seems to be enough from a general point of view. There is a strong transfer of reading habits from L1 to L2, so it is extremely important to find out how well learners perform on L1 and what the educational traditions toward reading effectively in L1 are.

Anderson (1999) mentions the influence of some research on his thinking about reading rate such as the results of a study conducted at UCLA by Weigle and Jensen (1996) where advanced readers began with average rate of 184 wpm and after nine weeks improved

to as much as 400 wpm, The authors report that 'the increase was statistically significant at p<.05 based on a matched t-test' (p. 59)

To support Anderson's point of view that speeding up the reading rate is favorable to enhancing comprehension, he cites Grabe (1991) who states that 'fluent reading is rapid; the reader needs to maintain the flow of information at a sufficient rate to make connections and inferences vital to comprehension' (p.378).

Many authors state rates resulting from their studies. Higgins and Wallace (1989), for instance, find 180 wpm 'too low for efficient comprehension or for enjoyment of text' (p. 392); while Dubin and Bycina (1991) state that 200 wpm is the minimum recommended to 'read with full comprehension' (p. 198). On the other hand, Jensen (1986), Carver (1990) and Nuttall (1996) agree that second language readers should approximate native speakers' rates suggesting 300 wpm as the optimal rate for efficient readers. To conclude, Anderson (1999) states that 200 wpm is the class goal he sets in his reading classes as he has found it reasonable to avoid overwhelming students. Class-paced reading and self-paced reading are also suggested as activities to increase reading rate (p.63) where students agree on setting goals for the reading class and for themselves.

L2 Reading and Vocabulary Development

According to Nuttall (1996), the most effective way to improve vocabulary is by reading. She states that increasing the amount of material to read is really the best way to develop vocabulary in L2 learners. The same author comments that with the promotion of extensive reading, the learners' vocabulary grows naturally and they increase their reading rate.

Many different theories and approaches toward reading in L1, L2 and the connection between these two have been discussed in this chapter. Most of the cited authors agree on the importance of reading appropriate material in terms of readability and motivation within the

framework of an extensive reading program as one way to improve language acquisition.

Some of these theories and research have been considered in designing a model for studying

learners' attitude within an existing extensive reading program. There is no evidence of any

previous or similar research done in Ecuador.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The present study uses qualititative research to collect sufficient information to describe learners' perceptions and attitudes towards an extensive reading program. The study and analysis of the collected data are triangulated and analysed to obtain the findings and conclusions of this study. In this section, I will refer to some of the literature that helped me identify the methods to be used for this research. The methods and procedures will also be described in this chapter.

According to Goodman (1987) effective readers are the ones who are able to skip irrelevant information. I decided to train my students in this strategy in order to enhance their reading and achieve an acceptable comprehension of texts.

While Goodman (1987) and Smith(2004) have influenced the teaching of reading in both L1 and L2, other researchers such as Carrell, Devine and Eskey (1988) have claimed that second language readers need to focus more on bottom-up features than first language readers. In addition, Nuttall (1996) asserts that there is a close relationship between reading speed and comprehension, so this research study explores and describes how reading speed can vary according to the type of text and the purpose for reading in a particular group of students while considering other aspects such as an acceptable level of comprehension and their attitude towards L2 reading.

Following Hedge (1988) and Wallace's (1992) recommendation about selecting readable texts for learners in order to have a successful extensive reading program, I selected and recommended a group of graded readers from Oxford University Press as reading material for the students in this study.

When reading Richards (2003) and his definition of research as a conclusion that is reached on the basis of a purposeful analysis and evidence, I understood that it was necessary

to have a design as well as an appropriate procedure to take me deeper into the inquiry process itself and that the results shown as collected data should be later analysed adequately to allow me to respond to the initially stated questions and before stating claims. I knew I had to conduct a qualitative research study after reading Richards (2003) and his statements on the three main reasons to adopt it which are; firstly, the fact that qualitative research can explore the complexities of the world when it is not possible via quantitative research methods; secondly, the fact that it is the most appropriate one for the language teaching practice as it is learner-centred; and finally, the fact that inquiry research can have strong influence on the researcher when he or she is closely engaged with the lived world.

Richards (2003) goes on to state that, 'the broad aim of qualitative inquiry is to understand better some aspect (s) of the lived world' (p.10). In order to understand my study group's lived world better, his description of the characteristics of qualitative inquiry was helpful in the design of this study. Therefore, this design was addressed to the study of subjects in their natural setting. i.e. in the context of their everyday world, to understand the meanings and significance of those actions from their own perspective, to focus on a small number of individuals, groups or settings, to employ a range of methods to establish different perspectives on the relevant issues, to base the analysis on a wide rage of features, and to use quantification for specific purposes and as part of a broader approach.

The method of collecting data was selected after reading Denzin and Lincoln (2005) and Johnson (2005). As a result, the data was collected through the use of varied empirical methods such as personal experience, introspective method, interviews, observational method, interactive and visual texts to reach understanding. All the collected data from multiple information sources helped to increase the accuracy of the information by means of what is called 'triangulation' (Jick, 1979) and is intended to describe the individuals in the natural context by finding the differences and similarities between those data sources.

Most of the design of this action research was based on Johnson's descriptors (2005) regarding the steps of the process to be followed, length, and number, kind of and periodicity of observations.

Participants

This study was a qualitative action research which was conducted with a group of ten university students, randomly selected from a group of volunteers who were interested in collaborating with this research study in exchange for learning some reading strategies to improve this skill. The students were also offered a discount in their registration fee as part of the benefits of participating in this program. All the students were contacted via email and were asked to attend weekly meetings during the time of this study which was six weeks in length. In those weekly sessions, I provided the students with a set of suggested material to be read during the course, and some instructions as well as strategies to improve their reading skills. All the students were asked to participate in a more formal and individual way by signing a consent form (see Appendix A) which includes the purposes, requirements, benefits and confidentiality policies in order to ensure their voluntary participation.

Materials and Procedures

The suggested material to be read included online reading from cdlponline and graded books from OUP, CUP, Macmillan or others from the students' choice. The online site was accessed at www.cdlponline which is a free online website where students found many articles to read.

The participants received a handout with a complete description of how to use this site along with additional instructions (see Appendixes B and C). There was also a bank of paperback readers from different levels available for the participants who could borrow them from the University's library. The students were allowed to choose if they would read online materials, paperback readers or both.

The students were trained in how to calculate readability percentage of the text before starting to read. I told the students a good text for them could be the one with no more than one unknown every 100 words. I made this decision based on Nuttall's recommendation (1982, p. 26-28), where she suggested that a text have no more than one percent of unfamiliar lexical items as a good range to be managed by learners who are expected to read a great deal without getting distracted or stuck by having to refer to a dictionary in extensive reading programs.

The participants were also taught how to calculate their own reading rate and how to fill in the progress logs. The procedure for getting their reading rate was the one proposed by Mikulecky and Jeffries (1998, p17) which I found to be a very simple and effective way to obtain the reading rate (see Appendix D). The goal speed for my thesis group was established according to the consensus of the students each week. In order to analyse the data, I compared their reading rates with some indexes provided by a variety of authors as results of their reading teaching experiences and research. (Higgins and Wallace, 1989; Carver, 1990; Nutall, 1996; Weigle and Jensen, 1996; Anderson, 1999)

Before allowing the students to start reading, they were asked to state their reading level by doing an online placement test at one of these three sites, depending on the publisher of the books they were going to be reading The sites are:

1.- Oxford Online Reading Placement test: found at

http://www.oup.com/elt/global/products/bookwormsleveltest/ which includes cloze test for seven different levels (starters to stage 6). The passing mark was 80%, if the learner gets a score above 95%, he or she was asked to take the test of the next level.

2.- Cambridge University Press Online Reading Placement Test: found at

http://www.cambridge.org/elt/readers/placement_test/placement_test.htm which includes a

test based on the vocabulary entries the learner can recognize to be placed in any of the seven levels (Starter to Level 6).

3.- Macmilan Online Reading Placement Test: found at

http://www.macmillanenglish.com/readers/studentsite/level-test.htm which includes both vocabulary entries recognition and a cloze test to state which of the six levels from starter to upper-intermediate the students belong to.

During the first sessions I provided some strategies and instructions to the participants to help them increase their rate and help them read as much as possible during the study time. It was suggested that participants:

1. Choose a book or text according to their interests and at their reading level.

2. Try to use both online and paperback sources of texts in order to have a wider source of data.

3. Take notes each time they read and enter them on their progress logs and write comments about their reading time and their perception of progress or difficulties in using the suggested strategies.

4. Try to avoid translating every single word or using a dictionary.

5. Practise silent reading instead of reading out loud to help them concentrate more on the reading process rather than on the pronunciation of words.

6. Try not to point at the words as they are reading. They were instructed to use a piece of cardboard which would help them to move their eyes faster and more fluently along the text.

7. Try to infer meaning from context as much as possible and to skip words they do not know in order to get general ideas (skimming).

8. Establish their reading rates. They were advised to push themselves to read more without being worried about competing with their classmates.

9. As the most important point, I told the participants to just enjoy their reading time and relax.

The six weekly meetings with the participants were established to allow them to share their experiences while working on their strategies and logs in open class discussions conducted mainly in L1 which was their preference. The participants were also allowed to report what they read weekly by giving a summary of their weekly reading. All the participants received immediate feedback for each task which was completed and reported on. The feedback was provided via email or posted as comments on their journals and logs. I decided to give prizes to the class when they managed to reach their class set goals in order to increase extrinsic motivation and their sense of teamwork and progress. The prizes included small special notebooks to register new vocabulary, posters of USA states maps, charts of grammar structures and vocabulary, cardboard discs of more common irregular verbs and phrasal verbs, lollipops, candies, and chocolates.

Starting in week 2, I gave the students some reading comprehension quizzes which I had already selected from *Stories for Young Readers, Book I* that were retrieved from www.esl-images.com. After I classified them in three levels, based on the structured, grammar, extension of the reading and kinds of comprehension tasks, I allowed the students to decide which level they wanted to try, based on their own reading levels. I gave equal scores to each comprehension exercise in order to have a final score totalling 100 points. The time the students had to complete the task was set according to the average reading rates of the group for every week.

The activities that were part of the Extensive Reading Program from this study are summarised in Table 1:

Table1.

Extensive Reading Program Research Timeline.

Week	Date of Weekly Session	Activities
WEEK 0	October 11, 2008.	+ Give instructions to students about the program + Sign in Participant's Consent Form + Hand in guidelines, logging charts, handouts, journal logs, bookmarks + Introduce the person in charge of the library + Collect participants email addresses + Collect participants' expectations
WEEK 1	October 18, 2008	+ Get reading level online + Explore and collect information about the comments + Give more instructions and suggestions based on comments + Get group initial reading rates in L1 and L2 + Allow the group to set their goal for the next week + Instruction in the use of cdlponline for online readings + Apply online Inventory 1 + Apply First Interview + First book selection + Interview teachers
WEEK 2	October 25, 2008	+ Get group reading rates + Set goal for the next week + Do reading comprehension task + Collect comments on experiences during the week reading time and reports about the progress of the program + Book selection for the next week
WEEK 3	November 1, 2008	+ Get group reading rate + Allow the group to set their goal for the next week + Collect comments from the program progress and difficulties or achievements + Do a reading comprehension task + Give more instructions and suggestions based on their comments + Book selection for the next week + Agree with the students to have emails communication during next week instead of face to face meeting
WEEK 4	November 8, 2008	+ Collect students reading rates from their emails + Collect comments and requests + Collect students results from the cdlponline activities + Attend participants' requests via email + Send an email with some more strategies and instructions to improve reading + Encourage students to follow the instructions and keep reading
WEEK 5	November 15, 2008	+ Get the group reading rate + Set the group goal for the next week + Do reading comprehension task + Collect comments and information from students' oral reports + Book selection for the last week
WEEK 6	November 22, 2008	+ Get the group final reading rate + Collect overall comments about the reading program + Apply Inventory 2 + Apply Interview 2 + Share my research on bibliography with the class + Closing pizza party

Data collection

As it is suggested by Johnson (2005) no more than four types of data were used in this action research in order to keep it focused. Based on that suggestion, I collected data from four different sources to be triangulated when analyzing the data in order to get conclusions and recommendations. The data were collected through:

1. Interviews with the participants and colleagues regarding their attitudes and experiences when working on extensive reading programs. As I read Wallace (1992), I formulated these questions for an interviewing instrument to be applied to the student study group (see Appendix E) and another for a group of experienced teachers. (see Appendix F)

2. Scores and other quantifiable data collected from participants' record sheets of their reading rates, comprehension scores, and records of the material read during the research. I adapted three charts from Mikulecky and Jeffries (1998:269-273) to make a single chart where students could include information about their reading level, dates, type of reading material, reading rate, reading comprehension level and comments on the strategies they used and the main problems they had to face while reading and how they handled them (see Appendixes G and H)

3. Surveys were conducted both online and personally to obtain information regarding common reading attitudes and experiences from a wide group of people as a referential data. The questions on the surveys were mainly closed-response while those addressed to the study group and teachers about their own reading instruction were open-ended. Those questions emerged while reading Wallace (1992) (see Appendix I). Attitude and rating scales were also used in the surveys to explore participants attitudes and the occurrence of events throughout that inventory. They were adapted from Wenpeng Zhang (1995) *Inventory of Motivation for Language*

Learning IMLL and from Neil J. Anderson (1999) *Reflective Questions*. The questions were designed to obtain the perception of learners before and after the extensive reading program toward L2 reading.

4. Notes were kept on observations and comments from the participants during the six week study. I kept a journal to record every event during the sessions and the study, as well as the weekly average reading rate and goals set by the group for the following sessions which resulted from their individually set goals.

Analysis

Triangulation of four sources of data was used to analyse data before coming to the presented conclusions. Those sources were (a) interviews with participants and teachers, (b) students' charts and journals of reading rates and comprehension scores, (c) surveys and inventories of the participants including attitude and rating scales, and (d) my field notes of weekly-session observations and records of our six-week study time.

All the information was organised into charts and tables in order to facilitate analysis. Some quantitative data were employed such as average reading rates and reading comprehension scores.

Chapter 4

Findings

The purpose of this action research study was to describe the impact of EFL students' attitudes towards reading in a foreign language during and after working within a specially designed extensive reading program.

The research questions were:

1) What are learners´ attitudes towards L1 reading?

2) What are learners' attitudes toward L2 reading?

3) What are the main factors that influence learner's attitudes toward L2 reading?

4) How do learners perceive and compare their strengths and weaknesses in reading in the L1 and L2?

5) How can the impact of explicitly taught reading strategies be described in a program that emphasizes extensive reading?

6) How can student perceptions of motivation to read extensively be identified and described?

The description of the data sources which were used along the six week program is shown in Table 2:

Table 2.

Schedule for Data Collection. Weeks 0 to 6.

Week	Date	Description
WEEK 0	October 11, 2008.	During this session, all the participants were allowed to share their expectations and their difficulties in learning the language and reading in English openly with the rest of the class. All of them expressed their need to improve this skill. I took notes. Students decided to share their thoughts in the group in Spanish. At the end of this initial session the students were told that they were going to be sent through their emails, a link to log in and answer some questions, and an inventory to state their beginning perceptions towards reading.
WEEK 1	October 18, 2008	All the participants attended bringing the reading material they had been using during the week. They reported about their reading experiences and a brief summary of what they had been reading

		with the group while I registered their comments in my notebook. I also collected information from Inventory 1 and from the first individual interview. During this week I also collected information from interviews with a group of teachers.
WEEK 2	October 25, 2008	Each student had time to share with the class their oral report on the book they were reading as well as their experiences during their reading time. They preferred to report it in their L1.
WEEK 3	November 1, 2008	The perceptions of the students became more specific on certain points. I took notes in my observation notebook. I also collected data from their journals and logs.
WEEK 4	November 8, 2008	Our fourth session was not held face to face. The participants sent written reports via email. I collected data from their emails and journals for this week.
WEEK 5	November 15, 2008	Students were asked to share their improvements in their reading time and to give a brief report of the material they had been reading. I took notes in my observer notebook
WEEK 6	November 22, 2008	This was the final session. All the students were allowed to share their final reflections and comments about their participation in this extensive reading program. I also collected data from a final Inventory and Interview.

The data collection and analysis process revealed many patterns, which I describe in this section. They were:

- Motivation for Joining the Program

- Extensive Reading Program's Impact on L1 Reading Habits and Attitudes

- Perceptions of Strengths and Weaknesses in L1 Reading

- Extensive Reading Program's Impact on L2 Reading Habits and Attitudes

- Perceptions of L2 Strengths and Weaknesses

- Reading Level Awareness

- Extensive Reading Program's Impact on Reading Rate

- Extensive Reading Program's Impact on Reading Comprehension

- Perceptions of the Relationship Between Reading Rate and Comprehension

- Extensive Reading Program's Impact on L2 Reading Strategies Acquisition

- Extensive Reading Program and Vocabulary Acquisition

- Extensive Reading Program's Impact on Overall Language Performance

- Extensive Reading Program's Impact on Motivation

- Rewards Presented in the Reading Program

- The Social Role of the Extensive Reading Program

- Overall Perception of the Extensive Reading Program

- Unexpected Findings.

Motivation for Joining the Program

There were several reasons why the members of the participant group volunteered to participate in the Reading Program. The most common reasons were: the discount, helping them read the technical texts required in the classes and to make them more competitive in their fields.

When I interviewed the participants about their reasons for joining the reading program, eight of the ten students referred to the discount, which was explained in the Methodology section of this study. Sara´s comment represents the perceptions of the group:

… la idea de tener un descuento me parece bien pero la verdad me gusta leer y al hacerlo en inglés me parece interesante [the idea of having a discount is good, but the truth is that I like reading and doing it in English seemed interesting]

Four of the ten students said that the reading program would be useful for helping them to read technical books in their fields. They mentioned that reading skill improvement was important as Roberto stated:

*…q*uiero mejorar el idioma para leer libros de mi carrera de los cuales no hay traducción a mi lengua nativa"* [… I want   to improve the language in order to read books related to my degree that are not available in my native language]

Monica's words represent what three of the ten students commented about having an advantage over other people while being more competitive as their main reason to join this program:

...me interesa ampliar mi conocimiento, y destrezas, tener mas ventaja de quienes tan solo saben inglés pero no son capaces de leer textos enteros en inglés" [… I am interested in broadening my knowledge and skills and have more advantage over the ones who only know English but are not able to read whole texts in English]

Extensive Reading Program's Impact on L1 Reading Habits and Attitudes

The first interview with students showed that eight of the ten participants enjoy reading in the L1. Regarding their reading habits, five of the ten participants read between 5 to 6 hours per day while the other 5 participants read between 1 to 4 hours per day.

The interviews provided important information about the participants' previous L1 reading experience both among the frequent readers and those students who said they were not used to L1 reading.

The five participants who read in their native language an average of 5 to 6 hours per day had had positive experiences in their early years when learning to read in their L1 at school. Felipe's words are a good example of this:

...en la escuela tuve una buena experiencia porque siempre nos enviaban a leer cuentos, esos de los Siete Enanitos, La Bella y la Bestia, Pinocho... y nos hacían hasta actuar en una pequeña obra de teatro... [...I had a good experience at school because they always assigned us stories, like the one of the Seven Dwarfs, The Beauty and The Beast, Pinocchio… and they made us act in a small play...]

Home support was also a positive influence in frequent readers, four of the five participants with 5-6 hours per day of reading time were well supported at home, they responded similarly to Monica's words:

...aprendí a leer mediante juegos y con la ayuda de mis padres… [I learned to read through games and my parents' help]

Parental modeling positively influenced on the frequent readers, three out of five students with higher reading hours answered that they always saw their parents reading at home, Sara's comment represents their words:

...mi mamá y papá leen aproximadamente quince horas semanales... [my mother and father read approximately fifteen hours per week]

On the other hand, non-frequent L1 readers had no memory of any important reading experience in their early years. The five participants who read few hours per day evidenced a lack of parental modelling, as they said that they do not see their parents reading a lot, Ramón words were:

...mis padres no leen más de cinco horas en español...a la semana [my parents read no more than five hours in Spanish …. per week]

Internet also influenced changes in reading habits as all the students said in the first interview that when they got into university, they were more used to Internet reading for researching purposes. One of the impacts of the Internet on their reading habits was that they read less than before Three of the ten students said searching for information on the Internet requires less reading time than searching for material from books, as Sara answered:

...la diferencia es que para encontrar algún tema de interés ya no se tiene que leer mucho sino que los buscadores se encargan de una manera más directa... […the difference is that to find any topic of interest you don't have to read a lot because the search engines do it more directly…]

Four out of the ten students showed similar responses regarding reading more specific information on the web, Roberto's comment is representative of this:

…ahora leo cosas mas especificas, cuando me mandan a hacer deberes…[…now I read more specific things, when they send me homework…]

Seven of the participants concluded that searching for information online was easier than going to libraries to search for information in books. Monica's comment was:

…es mucho más fácil encontrar las cosas por Internet que buscarlo en libros esto evita   el tener que leer una gran cantidad de material para llegar a algo en especifico…[…it is much easier to find things on the Internet than in books, which cuts down on having to read huge quantities of books to get to something specific…]

The first inventory also provided information about the material the participants were more used to reading in their L1 as is shown in Table 3.

Table 3.

More frequent L1 Reading Material of the Study Group - Inventory 1.

Frequent L1 Reading Material	Number of students
1. Newspapers	8
2. Magazines	9
3. Textbooks	7
4. Manuals and other technical texts	7
5. Internet	7
6. Novels	5
7. Bible or inspirational materials	4

A comparison chart to evidence the only positive change regarding L1 reading attitude, perceptions or habits from the first and final inventory is shown in Table 4.

Table 4.

Positive Changes in L1 Reading- Inventory 1 and 2

	Inventory 1	Inventory 2
Students who preferred reading textbooks in L1	70 %	100 %

Table 5 shows negative or no changes in students' perceptions, attitudes or habits regarding L1 reading as follows:

Table 5.

Negative or No Changes in L1 Reading- Inventory 1 and 2

	Inventory 1	Inventory 2
Students who strongly enjoy L1 reading	50 %	30 %
Students who enjoy L1 reading	40 %	40 %
Average daily reading time		
0 – 1 hours	30 %	30 %
2 – 4 hours	40 %	40 %
5 – 6 hours	30 %	30 %
8 – 10 hours	0 %	0 %
More than 10 hours	0 %	0 %
Students who read newspapers in L1	80 %	80 %
Students who read novels in L1	50 %	40 %
Students who read Bible or inspirational materials in L1	40 %	40 %
Students who read magazines in L1	90 %	60 %
Students who read Internet in L1	70 %	70 %
Students who read manuals and technical texts in L1	70 %	60 %

Perceptions of Strengths and Weaknesses in L1 Reading

The most recurrent answers about students' perceptions of their strengths in L1 from inventories 1 and 2 were: good comprehension, speed, concentration and an ample vocabulary. Table 6 lists the strengths the participants perceived in their L1.

Table 6.

Perceptions of Strengths in L1 Reading- Inventory 1 and 2

Strengths	L1 Times mentioned	L2 Times mentioned
Good comprehension	9	7
Speed	8	4
Good concentration	3	4
Ample vocabulary	3	3
Skills	3	0
Interest	2	1
Good pronunciation	1	1

Enjoyment	1	0
Get general idea	1	0
Curiosity	1	0
Recall information	1	0
Patience	1	0
Good Grammar	0	3
Good imagination	0	2
Good at tests	0	1
Previous knowledge	0	1
Perseverance	0	1

Table 7 lists the most recurrent weaknesses the participants perceived in their L1. The most

recurrent themes were lack of technical vocabulary, lack of concentration, and boredom.

Table 7.

Perceptions of Weaknesses in L1 Reading- Inventory 1 and 2

Weaknesses	L1 Times mentioned	L2 Times mentioned
Lack of technical vocabulary	9	4
Lack of concentration	2	4
Get bored	2	3
Lack of appropriate speed	2	1
Lack of interest	1	2
Get tired	1	2
Lack of time	1	1
Subvocalization	1	0
Poor grammar	1	0
Laziness	0	1

Extensive Reading Program's impact on L2 Reading Habits and Attitudes

Most of the students were more neutral toward reading in L2 in the first inventory, as

is shown in Table 8.

Table 8.

Student Enjoyment of L2 Reading- Percentages from Inventory 1

Enjoyment Level	Percentage (%)
Somewhat enjoy reading L2	40%
Enjoy reading L2	30%
Enjoy reading a lot in my L2	10%
Don't enjoy reading in my L2	10%
Don't enjoy reading L2 at all	10%

The results collected in the initial inventory evidenced relevant information about the students reading habits before being part of the extensive reading program as shown in this table:

Table 9.

Initial L2 reading time per week – Inventory 1

Hours reading in L2 per week	Number of Participants	Percentage of Participants
0 – 1	7	(70 %)
2 – 4	3	(30 %)
5 – 6	0	
8 -10	0	
more than 10 hours	0	

In the initial inventory and in the first interview eight students commented on the reasons they read very little in their L2. The most recurrent reasons were lack of vocabulary, lack of interest in the topics and lack of good pronunciation. These were their comments:

Rosa's comments represent the best expression the eight participants' words related to a lack of vocabulary being a problem when reading L2:

...yo no domino el idioma y por eso tengo que interrumpir la lectura para recurrir al

diccionario todo el tiempo [I don't have mastery of the language which means I have

to interrupt my reading to consult the dictionary all the time]

Eight of the ten students commented that they are not interested in reading when the

topic is not relevant or motivating for them. Monica's words best represent this:

...me gusta leer pero depende si la lectura parece ser interesante o no... [I like

reading but it depends if the reading seems to be interesting or not]

Three of the ten students at this stage of the study tended to confuse reading skills

with reading out loud, so they mostly mentioned having pronunciation problems as one of

their weaknesses in L2 reading. José's comments which he wrote in his journal, are

representative of the three student's comments.

.... mi mayor problema al leer en Inglés es que no pronuncio bien las palabras...[...my

main problem in reading English is that I don't pronounce the words correctly...]

Participants responded similarly in the interview and inventory about the importance

of reading English in their professional lives which was their main motivation to learn the

language and read more in English, as Roberto commented:

...primero que todo porque es un idioma muy importante para el ámbito

laboral...[...first of all because it is a very important language in the work

environment...]

Monica's comment represents eight of the ten participants' responses about

vocabulary improvement being one of the reasons L2 reading is important:

...estoy motivada porque quiero aumentar mi vocabulario... [...I am motivated

because I want to increase my vocabulary ...]

Four of the ten participants agreed that L2 reading was necessary for studying for their

courses in their career areas, as Roberto wrote in his journal:

…en mi caso… por necesidad ya que en mi carrera veo varias materias dictadas en

ingles y no quiero que eso sea un problema[in my case …it is necessary to be able to

read well in English because in my degree I have some courses that are taught in

English and I don't want it to be a problem]

Five of the ten participants' responses were similar to Sara's words referring to

potential opportunities for getting better jobs as the importance of L2 reading:

… para buscar un buen empleo...[… to find a good job…]

The initial inventory results also supported this point. When they were asked about

the importance of reading English for a command of English they indicated the hope that

their efforts might provide them with better job opportunities as shown in Table 10:

Table 10.

Reading in English and Potential Job Opportunities - Student Perceptions- Inventory 1

English knowledge influence on finding new job	Number of participants	Percentage of participants
Strongly disagree	0	
disagree	0	
are neutral	0	
agree	1	(10%)
strongly agree	9	(90%)

In weekly session 3, seven of the ten participants shared that their reading habits were

changing as they were reading more, and that they felt satisfied with the reading program. I

was struck by Roberto's words when he said:

…la semana anterior determiné leer un libro del nivel 1 en dos días y lo logré y estoy

contento por esto, mis compañeros de mi facultad se sorprendieron de verme leyendo

en inglés pues confieso que no es un hábito común en mí[…I decided to   read   a

book from level 1 in two days and I am glad to have done it. My faculty classmates

were surprised to see me reading in English as I confess it is not a common habit for me...]

During the week 3 session, all the members of the group agreed that they were enjoying reading in L2 a lot. Luisa's comment best describes this, even though she had said that she did not like reading before:

.	*…antes no me gustaba leer pero ahora si me gusta y estoy disfrutando al leer en inglés…* […I didn't like reading before, but now I do, and I am enjoying reading in English…]

Also, during the same week, six of the ten students wrote similar comments about their joy of reading and their determination to take the risk and read higher-level selections. They perceived their reading to be more fluent when they decided not to use the bookmarks, and they showed evidence of reading more frequently. Roberto's words in his journal represent this group experience:

…hoy leí Pocahontas (nivel 1) escogí este libro porque me pareció una historia fascinante…fue muy fácil y entendí todo…decidí no usar el separador línea por línea y esto me hizo más fácil la lectura y aumentó la rapidez…en la primera parte leí pocas hojas porque leí en el bus, después al leer en mi casa terminé de leer todo el libro… la próxima semana quiero leer un nivel más alto… [today I read Pocahontas (level 1). I chose this book because it seemed to be a fascinating story…it was easy and I understood everything…I decided not to use the bookmark line by line and it made the reading easier and it increased my speed… In the first part I read a few pages because I read on the bus. Then when reading at home I finished the whole book…I want to read at a higher level next week]

Half of the students reported reading one or two complete books by week 3 of this study.

During week 4, six of the students wrote in their journals that they were enjoying reading more than before, as Sara wrote:

…terminé de leer el libro, esta vez si estuve más concentrada en un lugar tranquilo y sola sin interrupciones, por lo que disfruté realmente la lectura…[…I finished reading the book. I was more concentrated this time in a quiet place with no interruptions, so I really enjoyed the reading…]

A comparison chart showing evidence of any positive change regarding L2 reading attitude, perceptions or habits from the first and final inventory is shown in Table 11.

Table 11.

Positive Changes in L2 Reading- Inventory 1 and 2

	Inventory 1	Inventory 2
Students who enjoy L2 reading	30 %	50 %
Students who enjoy L2 reading a lot	10 %	40%
Students who enjoy reading English texts very much	50 %	80 %
Reading hours per week: 0-1 h/w	70 %	40 %
2-4 h//w	30 %	50 %
5-6 h/w	0 %	10 %
Students who perceive L2 reading not to be difficult	20 %	40%
Students who strongly perceive good L2 comprehension	10 %	40 %
Students who perceive confidence when reading L2	30 %	90 %
Students who perceived to have good reading skills	20 %	50 %
Students who know how to read English texts	30%	80%
Students who perceive they are good L2 readers	20%	60%
Students who strongly perceive L2 reading is not a waste of time	70 %	80 %
Students who disagree that L2 reading is boring	20 %	40 %
Students who are strongly motivated to read in English	40 %	60 %
Students who would read more English if had more chances	80 %	90 %
Students who perceive a strong positive L2 reading attitude	30 %	60 %
Students who perceive using L2 reading strategies well	20 %	80 %
Students who would improve if they read more	80 %	100 %
Students who consider they are fluent L2 readers	10 %	40 %

Students who strongly perceive English to be very useful	70 %	80%
Students who are interested in reading more English texts	60 %	80 %

Table 12 shows negative or no changes in students' perceptions, attitudes or habits regarding L2 reading as follows:

Table 12.

Negative or No Change in L2 Reading- Inventory 1 and 2

	Inventory 1	Inventory 2
Students who strongly perceive L2 reading to be difficult	10 %	10 %
Students who strongly perceive excellent L2 reading skills	0 %	0 %
Students who perceive L2 reading important to get a good job	100%	100 %
Students who are very interested in reading English texts	90 %	90 %
Students who are motivated to read English texts	20 %	20 %
Students who strongly perceive good L2 reading strategies use	20 %	20 %

The interviews also explored participants' attitudes toward L2 reading after the extensive reading program. Eight of the ten students answered that it was easier for them to read English material after participating in the reading program, Rosa commented:

> *...después del programa de lectura veo que leer en inglés ahora es más fácil, antes ni siquiera me gustaba leer en inglés, ahora lo disfruto...* [...after the reading program, I find reading in English is easier now. I didn't even like to read in English before, now I enjoy it...]

One of the other two students commented that he was still experiencing some problems when reading in terms of full comprehension of texts, as Ramón said:

> *...cuando leo se me hace dificultoso leer porque a veces se presentan cosas que no sé, para poder entender necesito una explicación del profesor o más práctica para poder lograr tener mejor comprensión...* […when I read it is difficult because sometimes

there are things I don't know and I need the teacher to explain or more practice to get

a better comprehension…]

It can also been seen in the data from the first and last inventory about the change in

students' perception of difficulty in L2 reading before and after their participation on this

extensive program as shown in Table 13.

Table 13

Perceptions of the Difficulty of Reading in English Before And After the Program

	Before	After
Students who found reading English difficult	40 %	10 %

During the last session, the change in the participants' attitude and habits were

notable. Out of the group of ten students, seven admitted they did not like reading before they

started this reading program. Danny's comment provides a good example:

: *"...antes nunca me había interesado en leer, ni había leído historias..."* [...I had

never been interested in reading, I hadn't read stories either...].

All of the students said it was the first time they were invited to read novels as they

mainly read their English textbooks and a few materials from the Internet or magazines for

their studies. Danny for example said:

"...en este curso he leído historias que jamás imaginé, generalmente leía solamente

el libro de inglés del curso, o revistas para mi carrera..." […in this course I have

read stories I never imagined. I usually read only English course books, or journals for

my career…]

During the last interview, all ten participants said that they found reading novels in

English a really interesting experience, as Monica commented:

"...me gustó leer novelas y me pareció muy interesante; cuando terminaba de

leer una ya estaba pensando en la siguiente que iba a leer..." [… I liked reading

novels and I found it very interesting; when I finished reading one I was thinking of which one was going to be the next to read…]

A group of six teachers were interviewed about the material they preferred using in their reading classes. The collected data are shown in Table14.

Table 14.

Most frequent L2 reading material used by teachers – Interviews

Preferred material	Number of times the material was mentioned
Textbooks	*5*
Newspapers	*2*
Internet	*2*
Novels	*1*
Bible and inspirational material	*1*
Magazines	*0*
Manuals and other technical texts	*0*

I found how the participants' attitudes and habits changed after being exposed to several sources of reading material from the results of the final inventory and the reports of the online readings, journals and final interviews. Table 15 shows the preferred online titles within each category, a complete list of them can be seen at Appendix J:

Table 15.

Titles that Students Preferred to Read the Most Online in the Extensive Reading Program.

CDLP ON LINE Title	Categories	Number of times the articles were read
Baby Born at Train Station	Health & Safety; Family; Service	4
Google It!	Science; School	3
Crime	Family	3
Alzheimer's Disease	Health & Safety; Family	2
Bad Fish to Be Destroyed	Nature; Science & Technology	2
Birds of Alcatraz	Service	2

In the last session, eight of the students said that they were amazed by the knowledge they had acquired through reading. They found important information in the articles they read online at cdlponline's website. Ramón commented:

> *...aprendí muchas cosas interesantes en las lecturas online...* [I learned a lot of interesting things in the online reading…]

Table 16 lists the students' preferred novels and readers. I have included only those titles that were read more than once. A complete list of all the titles they chose can be found in Appendix K:

Table 16.

Titles that Students Preferred to Read the Most from Books in the Extensive Reading Program.

Novels or readers Titles	Publisher, Level	Number of times the title was read
Outstanding Short Stories	OUP, level 3	6
A Little Princess	OUP, level 1	4
Pocahontas	OUP, level 1	4
The Love of a King	OUP, level 2	4
Good Bye Mr Hollywood	OUP, level 1	3
The President's Murderer	OUP, level 1	3
The Wizard of Oz	OUP, level 1	3
The Piano	OUP, level 2	3
A Pair of Ghostly Hands and Other Stories	OUP, level 3	3
Amistad	Penguins Readers, level 3	3
Christmas Carol	OUP, level 3	3
The Last Sherlock Holmes Story	OUP, level 3	3
The Mystery of Alegra	OUP, level 3	3

In Figure 1, there is a list of other materials the students chose to read during the extensive reading program. Some of them were Spanish materials they needed to read for their current studies:

Figure 1.

Other Titles the Students Preferred to Read during the Extensive Reading Program

Technical Texts	Inspirational	University Course	Other
Fundamentals of VOTUand DATA Database Wireless (CISCO)	The Bible Articles of Faith	The official site to life after high school Shakira's Biography (English coursebook)	El Perfume (Spanish material)

Instrumentación industrial Cableado Voz y Datos (Spanish material from CISCO)	Physics (Serway)

The last entries in the journals showed evidence that after the extensive reading program experience, nine of the ten students perceived feeling more motivated to read English texts than before because they had learned how to persevere without getting stuck or frustrated in their reading even if they found unknown words, Felipe's words give a good example of this pattern:

> ... *Ahora me siento muy motivado a leer en ingles porque perdí el miedo...antes de este programa de lectura, pensaba que llegaría un momento de la lectura q no sabría el significado de ciertas palabras y perdería el interés en seguir leyendo y no podría seguir adelante...me parecía frustrante...*[…Now, I feel motivated to read in English because I lost the fear…before this reading program, I thought that there would be a moment in the reading where I wouldn't know the meaning of some words and lose interest in keeping reading and I couldn't go ahead…it seemed frustrating to me…]

Perceptions of L2 Strengths and Weaknesses

The students' initial perception of their own general performance as fluent readers were highly varied. Table 17 summarizes their answers to inventory:

Table 17.

Perceptions L2 Reading Fluency-Inventory 1

Fluent L2 Reading	Number of participants	Percentages of response
Strongly disagree	3	(30%)
disagree	2	(20%)
neutral	4	(40%)
agree	1	(10%)
strongly agree	0	

Teachers also perceived that the lack of good reading habits in both L1 and L2 could be the reason why students cannot be effective L2 readers. Lorena's comment best represented this:

... [It] is mainly their lack of interest in reading, not only in L2 but also in L1…

Four teachers commented that the lack of a rich vocabulary was a problem for students when they wanted to read, and they ended giving up because of their frustration. Paul's words best represented this theme of student frustration when reading in the L2:

…It's when they don't understand the vocabulary. If they don't understand the words they immediately seem to get frustrated...

The most recurrent answers about students' perceptions of their strengths in L2 from inventories 1 and 2 were: good comprehension and appropriate vocabulary. Table 18 lists the strengths the participants perceived in their L2.

Table 18.

Perceptions of Strengths in L2 Reading- Inventory 1 and 2

Strength	Inventory 1 Times mentioned	Inventory 2 Times mentioned
Good comprehension	7	6
Appropriate vocabulary	4	4
Get the main idea	2	0
Interest	2	1
Speed	1	4
Good Grammar	1	3
Curiosity	1	0
Don't use dictionary	1	0
Patience	1	0
Good at tests	0	1
Good concentration	0	1
Imagination	0	1

Table 19 lists the weaknesses the participants perceived in their L2 collected from first and final inventories. The most recurrent were: lack of vocabulary, speed and comprehension.

Table 19.

Perceptions of Weaknesses in L2 Reading- Inventory 1 and 2

Weakness	Inventory 1 Times mentioned	Inventory 2 Times mentioned
Lack of vocabulary	9	6
Lack of appropriate speed	8	2
Lack of good comprehension	2	3
Lack of good grammar	1	1
Subvocalization	1	1
Don't get the main idea	1	0
I get bored	1	0
Eyes regression	1	0
Lack of perseverance	1	0
Lack of interest	1	0
Poor concentration	0	4
Can't recall information	0	2
Laziness	0	2

Three students perceived to have the same strengths and weaknesses in their both languages by the end of the program, as Rosa mentioned:

…creo que mis debilidades al leer son iguales en los dos idiomas, aunque en inglés mi rapidez al leer ha mejorado mucho…[…I think my reading skills are the same in both languages. My English reading speed has improved lots though…

Reading Level Awareness

After gaining awareness of their reading level through the online reading tests that were provided, five of the ten students agreed that Oxford's Placement Test was the most difficult one while Cambridge's was the easiest. Collected comments were similar to the one José wrote in his journal:

> *…inicié con la página de Oxford y probé el nivel 3, me salió de respuesta que debo*
>
> *coger un nivel inferior a pesar que sí entendí la lectura. Luego probé el de Macmillan*
>
> *y me salió que pertenezco a un nivel elemental, pero los ejercicios no me parecieron*
>
> *muy específicos. Al hacer el de Cambridge se me hizo más fácil y decidí empezar*
>
> *desde ese nivel que era Preintermedio* [I started with the Oxford website, and tried
>
> Stage   3. It suggested that I take a lower level even though I understood the text.
>
> Then, I tried Macmillan and I got an elementary level but the exercises were not very
>
> specific.When doing the Cambridge one, it was easier and I decided to start from that

level   which was Pre-intermediate]

From the group of ten students, four started at a beginner level (starter and level 1),
four belonged to an intermediate level (level 2 and 3) and two were placed in upper-
intermediate level (level 4). During one of the sessions, nine of the ten students said that they
were comfortable at their placed level.

Nine of the ten students shared in their reading logs that knowing their reading level
was helpful for better understanding when they chose the books they wanted to read so it was
an important factor in developing autonomy in the books selection. Robertos's comment in
his journal represents the words of his group mates:

> *…el iniciar la lectura en un nivel intermedio me ha facilitado la lectura, aunque al*
>
> *principio algunas palabras eran desconocidas, después relacioné la situación y*
>
> *comprendía.* [...Starting to read at an intermediate level has made reading easier, even
>
> though at the beginning some words were unknown. I related them to the situation
>
> and I understood]

Supporting this, along the sessions, eight of the ten students agreed in saying that
reading level awareness helped them to select the appropriate book. Sara's comment best
represented this theme:

...considero que el nivel de lectura es importante para la comprensión y el reading rate... [...I consider that the reading level is important for comprehension and reading rate...]

While the students were changing and picking up books for the next week, I observed them, and wrote this in my observation journal during the second week session:

...This week I observed the students choosing the book according to their level, genre and topic. They read the back cover information of the books before picking them out from the library shelf. Three students took three books; the others took only one...

Similarly, nine students told the class and wrote in their journals that the books they chose were easy for them to read and they said it was because of the right level. So they were more motivated to read extensively. After that, students' autonomy in their book selections due to reading level awareness became an intrinsic motivator. Sara's comment about it is the most representative of the group's experience:

...hice tal como usted nos indicó y seleccioné un libro de acuerdo a mi nivel, la lectura se me hizo muy fácil y por eso terminé de leer el libro y ahora estoy interesado en leer otro... [I did as you instructed and I chose a book according to my level. The reading was easy, and that is why I finished the book. And now, I am interested in reading another one]

During the second week, all the participants said that they found it really motivating when they were allowed to read material from their preferences as Monica shared in the session:

...me interesé más en leer el libro que seleccioné... [I got more interested in reading the book I chose]

When reading the students' logs for the second week, I realized that eight students were reading material at their level. Just two read lower levels, none above level. I wrote this in my notebook for the week:

…I am amazed by their confidence when talking about their levels while choosing books or material to read in class.

Participants commented during week 3 that they liked being allowed to select their own reading material as it was useful for their reading speed and interest in continuing to read, as Sara commented:

…me gusta tener la opción de escoger las lecturas; creo que esto ayuda a que lea más rápido y me mantenga interesado en seguir leyendo. Mi reading rate incrementó esta semana… […I like having the option of choosing the texts. I think it helps me to read faster and to be interested in reading more. My reading rate increased this week…]

After the last session, I realized that all the students could read at least one level above their initial one. One student, who started at reading level 3, ended at reading level 5 with no struggle.

Extensive Reading Program's Impact on Reading Rate

The average initial reading rate in L1 was 190 words per minute (wpm) and 114.9 wpm in L2, which were considered the starting scores for this study.

The average reading rate in L2 for the first week was 121 wpm. The group stated their goal for the upcoming week to be 130 wpm.

When checking the students' logs, I could see that eight of the ten were happy to find out that their reading rates were increasing along the extensive reading program, which they considered to be a signal of progress. Jose's comment best represents this:

...estoy contento porque siento que estoy progresando... [I'm happy because I feel I am making progress]

The same eight students said that they could read more material as their reading rate increased. As José kept commenting in his journal:

...avancé en una hora más de la mitad del libro... [… In one hour, I had read more than half of the book…]

During the second week, seven of ten participants increased their reading rates. Their comments also showed their knowledge of vocabulary as being a reason for them being able to read faster without affecting comprehension, as Luisa wrote in her reading journal:

...mi reading rate mejoró de 87 a 125 wpm pero creo que esta vez fue porque en el texto anterior la página que leí tenía más de tres palabras desconocidas y en el de hoy solo desconocía una por lo que me demoré menos... y la comprensión fue la misma que la vez anterior... [my reading rate improved from 87 to 125 wpm but I think it was because in the previous text the page that I read had more than three unknown words and in today's I only had trouble with one so I spent less time and the comprehension was the same as the last time]

The average reading rate for week 3 was 190 wpm while the rate for week 4 was 191 wpm. The group surpassed their goal of 160 wpm for week 4. As they noticed that half of the students were not present, they stated their goal for the upcoming week to be 160 wpm again.

During the session for week 5, the participants smiled when they found out that their average reading rate was 193 wpm, as they had passed their goal. The group agreed to set their goal for the coming week at 200 wpm. They were curious to know what the research literature said on reading rates.   They wanted to know whether they had reached this study's goal or not. I told them I would share the progress towards the goal with them in our last session. All of them were really looking forward to knowing it. As Sara wrote in her journal:

...creo que sí he progresado en la lectura pero me interesa saber lo que la profesora ha investigado en su tesis para ver como estamos, ella dijo que nos enseñaría los datos de su tesis la próxima semana y estoy con curiosidad de saber... […I think I have progressed in reading but I am interested in knowing what the teacher has researched in her thesis to see how we are. She said that she was going to show us her data next week and I am curious to know...]

In the last session, I shared some EFL literature about reading rates with the participants and all of them were happy and satisfied with knowing that they could reach acceptable levels of reading rates. As Ana commented:

...he mejorado en este curso de lectura, mi reading rate al inicio era 100 wpm y ahora es 200, estoy muy contenta con el curso y me siento satisfecha con mis resultados pues al ver los datos de su tesis me di cuenta que estoy bien y si tuve progreso... [I've improved in this reading course. My initial reading rate was 100 wpm and now it is 200. I am very happy with the course and I feel satisfied with my results as I could see your thesis data and I realized that I am fine and I had progressed…]

By the end of the extensive reading program, three students noticed that their reading rate was similar to their L1 rate, which they found interesting and satisfying. Sara, for example said:

...mi reading rate aumentó y ahora está casi igual a mi rate en español como en inglés, me siento muy contenta por eso y realmente me pareció interesante... [my reading rate increased and now it is almost the same in Spanish and English. I am very happy and I really found it interesting…]

The final average reading rate in L2 was 212.6 wpm. The group was able to surpass their goal which was 200 wpm. Individual initial and final reading rates are shown in Table 20 as well as the percentage of the increase:

Table 20.

Individual Initial and Final Reading Rates.

Students	Initial Reading Rate (wpm)	Final Reading Rate (wpm)	Increase (%)
Felipe	160	308	92.5
Mónica	140	240	71.4
Roberto	113	218	92.9
Ana	87	216	148.2
Danny	125	215	72.0
Rosa	91	200	119.8
Sara	139	199	43.1
Ramón	120	191	59.1
Luisa	87	185	112.6
Group Average	114.9	212.6	88.89

I collected data from the weekly sessions on overall reading rates and group set rates which I later confirmed with students reading logs. Table 21 shows a brief analysis of these data:

Table 21.

Group Weekly Reading Rate and Goals.

Group Reading Rate	Average Reading Rate (wpm)	Increase (%)	Group Goal Rate (wpm)
Spanish Rate	190	-	-
Week 0	114.9	-	-
Week 1	121	5.3	-
Week 2	138	14.0	130
Week 3	190	37.7	145
Week 4	191	0.5	160
Week 5	193	1.0	160
Week 6	212.6	10.2	200

Extensive Reading Program on Reading Comprehension

The comprehension of the online material was measured through the scores given by the cdlponline website. The average comprehension score for the first week was 65 %. Four of the ten participants shared in their journals that they found it easier to comprehend when the topic was related to their fields or interests. The most representative comment was Roberto's, who chose a topic titled Google it!:

> ...*fue más interesante porque el tema se relaciona a mi carrera...* [...it was more
>
> interesting because it was related to my degree program...]

Five of the ten students said knowledge of the terms included in the text helped them to get good comprehension scores. As Sara wrote in her journal about Alzheimer 's disease, a topic on which she had background knowledge.

> ...*el nivel de comprensión fue fácil porque es un tema del cual tenía conocimiento y*
>
> *los términos sí los conocía...* [...the comprehension level was easy because it was a
>
> topic I had knowledge of and I knew the terms...]

During week 2, the average comprehension rate which I collected from their log data on the readings online was 77%. In addition to this, they wrote in their logs that they perceived their own comprehension to be between 75 and 80 %. The average score for the reading comprehension task during the weekly session was 88%, where the students were allowed to select the reader level to be tested.

In the third weekly session, nine of the ten students shared that they perceived an increase in their comprehension of the general ideas from their books. Roberto's words best represent this:

> ...*leí el libro Amistad y si pude deducir el contenido en base al contexto cuando no*
>
> *entendía algunas palabras. Ahora quiero leer otro libro del mismo nivel...* [I read

Amistad and I could deduce the content from the context when I didn't understand some words. Now I want to read another book at the same level.]

During the same session, I gave some quizzes. The students decided to take levels 2 and 3. The average comprehension percentage was 86%. By checking the students' reading logs, I calculated an average comprehension rate from the readings online of 80% which was similar to the score they got in this week's session.

The average comprehension rate from the readings online in week 3 was 77%. In their journals the students wrote that they perceived between 80 to 90% of comprehension, as Felipe wrote in his journal:

"Leí las Aventuras de Tom Sawyer y comprendí el 80% sin usar el diccionario" [I read The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and I comprehended 80% of it without using the dictionary]

The improvement in comprehension also helped the students read and comprehend better both technical and academic texts. Five of the ten students commented that they understood more when reading technical texts in English without using a dictionary. As Sara wrote: *"esta semana tuve que leer un libro en Inglés para mi carrera y pude comprender de manera general lo cual antes no podía hacer, tenía que leer con un diccionario a lado"* [This week I had to read a book in English for my degree and I could understand it in general, which I couldn't do before when I had to read with a dictionary beside me]. I could confirm this when during week 5's session, five of the students shared with us that they were doing well in reading English material related to their fields of study. Sara's comment was:

...comencé a leer un libro de base de datos durante veinte minutos y me ayudé con la imágenes para comprender...hasta ahora he leído dos libros... […I started to read a book on databases for twenty minutes, and I got used to the images helping me understand…up to now, I have read two books]

The average comprehension rate from the readings online for week 6 was 90%.   I asked the students to do a reading comprehension quiz. Half of them decided to take the level 3 one and the other half went to level 1. The average percentage of correct answers was 91%. The quiz required them to remember information as they were not allowed to go back to the reading to find the answers.

During the last week's session, all the students ended up reading higher level readers than the ones they started with. Five of the students finished the program reading Level 3 books and they said with good comprehension. Felipe's comment is representative of the reported experience of the group:

> ...he mejorado en la comprensión de textos, he leido diferentes niveles, y en todos la comprensión ha sido buena; inicié leyendo nivel 1 ahora estoy leyendo nivel 3...[...I have improved in understanding texts. I have read different levels and I have had a good comprehension in all of them. I started reading level 1 books and now I am reading level 3...]

The last average comprehension rate from the readings online was 87%, eight of the ten students declared in their journals that they perceived a 90% of comprehension on the texts they had been reading. As Felipe wrote:

> ...estimo que comprendí alrededor del 90% de la lectura, es decir pude saber de qué se trataba el libro... [...I estimate that I comprehended about 90% of the reading, I mean I knew what the book was about...]

Perceptions of the Relationship Between Reading Rate and Comprehension

At the beginning the students did not report a positive influence of speeding reading rate on their text comprehension. All the students wrote in their journals during the second week that they had been experimenting with reading rate vs comprehension and they had

found out that when they reduced reading rate they increased comprehension and viceversa. Roberto's words best represent this:

...esta semana..., leí rápido pero comprendí muy poco. Sin el televisor pude avanzar mucho más rápido y entendí un poco más de lo que se trataba el cuento, pero aún comprendo menos del 50% de la lectura en los dos casos... […this week … I read fast but could understand very little. Without the TV I could advance much more and comprehend what the story was about, but I still comprehend less than 50% in both cases]

From week 3 and on, reports in the students' journals were more favorable toward increasing reading rate and its influence on a better comprehension. Seven of the ten students agreed that they did not reduce their rates but increased comprehension. Sara's comment best represents this:

…aumenté la comprensión pero mantengo la rapidez... [I increased comprehension but keep my speed].

Ana's words are a good example on the perception of the influence of speeding reading rate on comprehension. That is what she said during the final interview:

…Al finalizar el curso de lectura mi velocidad de lectura aumento considerablemente con la que tenía al iniciar el curso a la par de mi comprension... […At the end of the reading course my reading rate increased a lot from the one I had at the beginning of the course as well as my comprehension…]

Extensive Reading Program's Impact on L2 Reading Strategies Acquisition

All the teachers agreed in saying during the interview that the most effective strategies are the ones which are aimed at increasing motivation and comprehension.

One of the strategies and activities that the teachers perceived as increasing student motivation was providing interesting topics. As Luis stated:

"...I increase motivation by using texts that are relevant to their common interests",

Perla also commented, about activating prior knowledge as another strategy to increase motivation: *"Activating their previous knowledge using songs, videos, TV programs and pictures has helped me to get them motivated"*

In addition, the strategies and activities that the teachers perceived to be effective in increasing comprehension of the texts were appropriate pre-reading activities. As Natalia said: *"I do a little pre-teaching of vocabulary and use prediction techniques",* and giving them texts they have some knowledge about. As Luis commented: *"I use topics they know something about"*

Before the reading program, only one of the students had been advised to work on vocabulary as one strategy to improve reading skills before participating in this reading program. Roberto said in the first interview:

…la única estrategia que me han sugerido es practicar bastante vocabulario…

[…the only strategy they have suggested is to practice a lot of vocabulary…]

Regarding the use of the bookmark as a strategy for improving reading, eight of the ten participants wrote similar comments in the first and second week's journals that the bookmark was helpful for increasing their concentration, as Sara wrote:

…con el separador pude concentrarme más pues me desconcentro rápidamente

cuando leo… […I could concentrate more with the bookmark because I lose

concentration fast when I read…]

Six students reported that the use of a bookmark was useful for focusing on one line at the time instead of reading word by word. José's comment is a representative of this:

…usé el separador para leer línea por línea… […I used the bookmark to read line

by line…]

By Week 3, half of the students stopped using the bookmarks as they said bookmarks interrupted their fluency in reading, as Monica commented:

...Ya no estoy usando el separador de libro porque creo que me corta la fluidez de la lectura. Al principio me ayudaba a mantenerme concentrado en la lectura pero ahora me hace leer más lento... [I am not using the bookmark anymore, because it cuts the fluency of the reading. At the beginning it helped me to keep concentrated on the reading, but now it makes me read slower].

The students' journals also provided information about the use of the bookmark. All the students commented that the use of the bookmark was helpful at the beginning of the program as it helped them to concentrate on a line at a time. But after week 2, they preferred not to use it when they realised that it was slowing their reading rate and fluency. Danny's answer best represents the groups comment:

... el uso del separador me sirvió al principio para enfocarme en línea por línea y aumentar mi concentración pero después dificultaba la lectura porque reducía mi rapidez y fluidez... […the use of the bookmarker was useful at the beginning to focus on line by line and increase my concentration but then it made the reading difficult because it reduced speed and fluency…]

Avoiding subvocalization was another strategy that was recommended to the participants. Nine of the students agreed when sharing their thoughts with the class, and again later writing in their journals that their reading rate and comprehension were lower when they subvocalized or read out loud. As Monica commented in her journal:

...al principio leia en voz baja pero luego seguí sus instrucciones y sí pude leer más fluidamente y comprendía un poco más…[…at the beginning I subvocalized, but then I followed your instructions and I could read more fluently with a bit more comprehension…]

Participants were also told not to look up every unknown word in the dictionary. By the second week, all the participants were less focused on pronunciation of words and more on reading speed and overall comprehension of the text. They wrote in their journals that they were using the dictionary only when necessary to check some words after their reading time, and they realised that their predictions of unknown words were right. Monica's words best represent this:

…terminé de leer el libro, ya que cuenta con pocas páginas y además se me hizo muy fácil entender, creo que comprendí todo el contenido sin necesidad de la ayuda del diccionario. Con respecto a las lecturas de la página cdlponline, los temas que escogí fueron interesantes y a la vez fueron de lectura extensa de dos páginas, tenía palabras nuevas pero no evitó que entienda la lectura... […I finished reading the book, as it had few pages and it was very easy to understand, I think I comprehended all the content without the need of dictionary help. Regarding the reading on the cdlponline site, the topics I chose were interesting and extended for two pages. It had new words, but it didn't prevent me from comprehending the reading]

Skipping unknown words was also mentioned as a strategy used by three of the ten students as Felipe commented:

…leí un libro en inglés mientras me encontraba en la biblioteca. Aunque no entendía algunas palabras, podía saber de lo que se trataba... […I read a book in English while I was in the library. I didn't understand some words but I knew what it was about…]

During the week 3 session, I elicited information about the strategies participants were applying, and all of them were skipping unknown words. As Sara commented: *"...me estoy saltando las palabras que no conozco, tal como usted nos recomendó, y si comprendo todo el texto"* [I am skipping unknown words, as you suggested us to do, and I have complete

comprehension of the texts]; no dictionary use, as Felipe shared: *"No estoy usando el diccionario y me concentro mejor en la lectura"* [I am not using a dictionary and I concentrate more]

Another strategy that was mentioned in week 3 was getting meaning from context. This strategy was the one which eight of the ten students used the most to obtain more comprehension without sacrificing speed. Roberto's comment was:

...*leo con la misma rapidez y ahora hay muchas palabras nuevas y algunas las pude sacar del contexto...* [I read with the same speed and now there are many more new words and I could get them from context]

Reading an at or below level text was another strategy the students perceived to be successful. Nine of the ten students said in one of the sessions that reading at their level or below was really motivating. As Monica said:

...*leí un libro de un nivel de lectura menor y terminé de leer el libro en un día porque me gustó mucho la historia...* [...I read a lower level book and I finished reading the book in one day because I liked the story]

Six of the ten students shared openly during a session that they did not need to use a dictionary to help them in their reading time. As Sara commented:

...*no usé el diccionario porque entendía la idea principal...* […I did not use the dictionary because I could understand the main idea…]

From this first class session I wrote down the following observations:

…the participants showed an acceptable comprehension of the reading material as they were able to summarize it quite well. One student finished a book in this week. Another student said he had reduced his comprehension when he stopped translating word by word. I suggested that they keep trying to apply the strategies given in the

handouts and to choose a lower level book when they find too many unknown words per page...

In the last session, all the participants commented that the reading program was quite difficult at the beginning but all the strategies and techniques were useful for helping them work with it, Roberto's words best represent this:

...el curso me ha ayudado a mejorar mucho mi lectura, fue difícil al inicio pero cuando comencé a aplicar las técnicas y estrategias fue más fácil y agradable...

[...the course helped me a lot to improve my reading. It was difficult at the beginning but when I started applying the techniques and strategies it was easier and it was nice...]

In the last interview, eight students mentioned reading English had become easier for them. When I collected information from their journals, the weekly sessions and the last interviews, I listed the most used strategies and techniques that they had acquired through this reading program and the ones which helped them to read more and with more comprehension, as is shown in Table 22:

Table 22.

Helpful Reading Strategies and Techniques-Journals

Strategy or Technique	Number of times the strategy use was mentioned
Spend more time on reading and read as much as possible	*14*
Selecting a text of interest or preference	*9*
Read in a calm place to avoid distractions, without pressure	*7*
Inferring meaning of unknown words from context	*7*
Selecting below level texts	*6*
Use the bookmark	*5*
Getting the general or main idea of a text	*5*
Avoid using a dictionary to check up every unknown word	*4*
Avoid subvocalization	*4*
Selecting on level texts	*3*

Read for pleasure with no pressure	*2*
Avoid eyes regression	*1*

Extensive Reading Program and Vocabulary Acquisition

In Week 5, eight students commented that they had increased their vocabularies through the reading program. Sara commented in the weekly session:

...como no tuve tiempo de leer ningún libro, aproveché el tiempo para leer en el sitio online...me gusto mucho la historia pues se refería a mi carrera y me ayudo a incrementar mi vocabulario...[as I didn't have time to read any book, I used the time to read at the online site…I liked the story because it referred to my degree subject and it helped me to increase my vocabulary]

The students also commented that the online readings had been helpful to learn more vocabulary and to get to know important information about current events and topics. Rosa wrote in her journal for week 5:

...las lecturas on line me ayudaron a incrementar mi vocabulario y a aprender más pues los temas eran muy interesantes y actuales...[…the online readings helped me to increase my vocabulary and to learn more as the topics were very interesting and up-to-date…]

In the Week 6 session, all the students agreed in saying that they noticed an increase in their vocabulary through reading more, Felipe, said:

"mi vocabulario es mayor, ahora conozco más palabras lo que me ayudó a comprender mejor las lecturas" [my vocabulary is larger. Now I know more words which help me to comprehend the texts better].

Extensive Reading Program's Impact on Overall Language Performance

In week 5, six of the ten students commented that their reading and listening in their current English course had improved a lot, and they said it was due to the extensive reading

program as they had increased vocabulary and comprehension. Monica's comment during the weekly meeting best represents this emerging theme:

...estoy en un curso de Inglés y en el último examen me fue mejor en la sección de Reading y Vocabulary, ah el Listening también mejoré... [...I am in an English course, and in the last exam I was better in the Reading and Vocabulary section, ah I also improved in the Listening...]

In the last session, all the students reported that they had improved their grades in their current English courses, in all their skills and not only in reading. Rosa commented:

...mejoré mi desempeño en mi curso de Inglés, no solo en reading sino en las otras destrezas como writing, grammar, vocabulary...¡sí inclusive mi Listening mejoró!... [...I improved my performance in my English course not only in Reading but also in the other skills like Writing, Grammar and Vocabulary...yes, even my Listening improved!...]

Perception of overall English performance improvement was another benefit of the extensive reading program, which was confirmed from the information collected in the students' journals, where nine students mentioned that their performance in their current English courses improved a lot. Six students mentioned that they could participate more in class as they learned more vocabulary and recalled grammar structures. Roberto stated:

"...este curso me ayudó mucho en mi materia de Inglés, he recordado gramática y vocabulario..." […this course helped me in my English course. I recalled grammar and vocabulary…]

Nine students improved their reading exam scores as they used to spend too much time with low comprehension before their participation in the program. Sara's words best represents this:

…Si estuve registrada en un curso y me ayudó mucho en los exámenes sobre todo en las lecturas en las cuales demoré menos tiempo y con una comprensión mayor comparada con mis experiencias en los exámenes anteriores... […Yes, I was registered in a course and it helped me a lot in the exams mainly in the readings where I spent much less time and with a higher comprehension compared with the previous exams…]

Six participants mentioned that their listening and speaking skills also improved as they knew more words, and they were more confident when using the language in class activities.

Extensive Reading Program's Impact on Motivation

Teachers' perceptions of common problems of L2 readers revealed that lack of motivation was the main reason that students give up on their reading tasks. Frank's answer best represents the comments of the six teachers who were interviewed: *"Students just have a lack of motivation. They don't want to read"*

Eight of the ten students said during the second session, that they were enjoying the reading program and that they felt more motivated to read than before. As Rosa commented:

…me está gustando leer, me siento motivada y por eso durante la semana terminé de leer mi libro… […I am enjoying reading, I feel motivated and that is why I finished reading my book in the week…]

In the last session, all the students agreed that the reading program helped them to be motivated to read more, and they expressed their desire to keep reading after this program. Danny's comment represents the group's words:

… ahora me gusta leer más, leo cuando voy en el bus, cuando estoy esperando a que empiece una clase, y lo voy a seguir haciendo… [now I like reading more, I read when

I go on the bus, when I am waiting for a class to start, and I am going to keep

doing…]

All the students commented in their journals that after this program they were more

motivated to read English, not only because of their enjoyment but because they were aware

of the benefits of reading to improve their use and knowledge of the language. Ana's words

best represent this:

> *… estoy motivada a leer más, ya que a la vez que aprendo ingles, leo historias*
>
> *interesantes y me di cuenta que me gusta…si no hubiera participado en este*
>
> *programa de lectura, no me hubiera dado cuenta que me gusta leer…* […I am
>
> motivated to read more, because at the same time that I learn English, I read
>
> interesting stories and I realised that I liked it. If I hadn't been in this program I
>
> wouldn't have realised that I like reading…]

Rewards Presented in the Reading Program

The students shared in their journals their thoughts about the prizes they received each

time they managed to reach the reading rate goal which was set by the group. Nine students

commented that it was motivating for them. As Rosa wrote in her journal:.

> *…me gustó mucho los premios que nos daba la profesora porque eso nos motivaba…*
>
> [I liked the prizes that the teacher gave to us a lot because it motivated us...]

Three of the participants found the prizes educational and useful. As Monica wrote

later in her journal:

> *…los premios eran pedagógicos y me pareció interesante las metas que nos poníamos*
>
> *en el grupo para ganarlos…* [...the prizes were pedagogical and I found the goals we

set in group to get them to be interesting...]

In the session for Week 6, all the students shared that receiving rewards and prizes when they reached their goals was motivating Monica's comment was representative of the comments of the other group members:

...y los premios fueron siempre una motivación y además educativos... [...and not only were the prizes always motivating, but they were educational as well....]

The Social Role of the Extensive Reading Program

I wrote this in my journal after the second session regarding the reading community that was formed along with the extensive reading program:

...The average reading rate in L2 was 138 wpm. The group's collective goal for this week was 130 wpm, so I gave them prizes of some notebooks and small gifts. All of them agreed to set their next goal at 145 wpm. They started to become interested in their partner's rates to reach the settled goal and they shared how to improve with the slower ones. The reading community had begun to be built...

I later confirmed that when during the Week 3 session, the group noticed that half of the students were not present so they stated their goal for the upcoming week as 160 wpm.

For week 4, we decided not to have a face to face session but to communicate online through our emails to share reading rates, experiences and comments. I found out that it was not successful, because three of the students stopped reading that week, and they later wrote in their journals that it was due to the lack of the face-to-face session. Rosa wrote in her journal:

...creo que al no tener la reunión semanal si me afectó porque no leí casi nada esta semana...[I think not having the weekly meeting affected me because I read almost nothing this week].

After the Week 5 session, I wrote this in my observation notebook: *"All the students were reading leveled books and they said they had been enjoying reading different titles. I noticed that they had also been exchanging and suggesting books to each other"*

In the last session, all of the participants commented that they liked and enjoyed the weekly meetings, and not only did they say that the sessions were a main factor in pushing them to read more and to beat their reading rates. They also said that they were pleased that they were allowed to establish their own pace and goals during the program as they felt more responsible and motivated to reach them for the sake of the whole group. Luisa's comment best represent this:

> *...me gustó interactuar con el grupo porque se comparten experiencias, creo que el hecho que nosotros mismos pongamos metas fue importante porque era nuestra propia presión y no la del profesor, todos queríamos lograr nuestros objetivos para beneficio del grupo...*[…I liked to interact with the group because we could share experiences. I think that the fact that we set our own goals was important because it was our own pressure and not the teacher's. All of us wanted to reach our goals for the benefit of the group.]

The final journals evidenced students' comments on the social role of reading. Three mentioned that the change in their reading habits had permitted them to make new friends as Roberto commented:

> *... cuando estoy leyendo en el bus de la universidad y se dan cuenta que estoy leyendo en Inglés, ellos me preguntan si hablo Inglés y a veces de allí inicia una nueva amistad... [...*when I am reading on the university bus and someone realizes that I am reading in English, they ask me if I speak English and sometimes there is a beginning of a new friendship]

Three students said that their family and friends are picking up their new reading habit. Rosa's words best represent this:

...estoy motivando a mi familia y amigos a leer...y algunos de ellos ya lo están haciendo... [I am motivating my family and friends to read...some of them are already doing it].

Overall Perception of the Extensive Reading Program

When the program started, eight of the participants were delighted when they saw the quantity of books available for them to read. They were very interested in knowing their reading level so they could get started with the Reading Program. I wrote down in my notebook some of their expressions and comments, Monica's words best represent the whole group's comments:

... quiero saber qué nivel puedo leer, hay muchos libros interesantes, ya quiero saber qué nivel soy para empezar a leer... [I want to know what level I can read, there are many interesting books. I want to know my level to start reading]

By the end of the program, I obtained from the final interview the average time the students spent in the reading program being 3.5-4 hours, 1.5 to 2 hours per week plus the 2-hours session. They mentioned that they had not been able to spend more time because they were attending current classes in their major fields. Sara commented:

...en el programa de lectura empleé una a dos horas por semana más las dos horas de la reunión semanal, me hubiera gustado darle más tiempo pero no podía porque estaba cogiendo materias... [I spent one or two hours per week in the reading program plus the two hours of the weekly meetings, I would have liked to spend more time but I couldn't because I was taking subjects…]

During the last interview, students talked about what they liked, disliked, found more interesting and less interesting during this reading program their responses are listed in

 Figure 2.

Figure 2.

Students' Perceptions after the Extensive Reading Program.

They liked the most:

- Team work and the weekly meetings with time to share and know what the others had read and their experiences during the week.
- Learning reading strategies and techniques
- Availability of books
- Teacher's guide and her patience
- Speed reading rate
- Discovering enjoyment in reading
- That the course was not scored, it was a different course with no pressures
- The course was enjoyable
- Students also liked being able to share in class

They disliked the most:

- Saturday meetings
- Not reading out loud
- The course was too short

They found very interesting:

- Awareness of progress
- Finding out the reading rate and being allowed to state weekly reading rate goals
- Learning how to improve reading skills
- Being able to read topics they had never read about

They found less interesting:

- Having to fill in the logs and journals (preferred oral reports)
- Lack of pronunciation practice

The participants also answered a few questions about the researcher's role during the program and they said that some of the characteristics which helped them to succeed in this program were that she was attentive, motivating, and supportive in sharing interesting and helpful techniques and strategies to improve their skills, some of their words were:

Ana's answer represents four students' thoughts:

'las características del profesor en este caso favorecieron la participación; su

amabilidad y cortesía hacían q vaya cada sábado, a pesar que creo que los sábados

son para descansar. Si hubiese sido otro el carácter de la profesora, hubiese

abandonado el programa y no hubiera descubierto que me gusta leer...' [the

teacher's characteristics in this case favored the participation; her kindness and

courtesy made me go every Saturday despite the fact that I think Saturdays are for

resting. If the teacher had behaved differently I would have quit the program and I

wouldn't have discovered that I like reading]

Felipe commented on the overall performance of the teacher and motivation as well as

other five participants:

...la motivación e interés que la miss nos transmitió ayudo en a que estemos

interesados en el programa, su desenvolvimiento fue excelente, fue nuestra guía sin

ella no hubiésemos podido llegar al objetivo trazado... [...the teacher's motivation

and interest that she transmitted to us was helpful in keeping us interested in the

program. Her performance was excellent. She was our guide. Without her, we

wouldn't have reached our set goals...]

Roberto as well as other eight participants referred to the way the teacher taught

techniques and strategies:

... y nos daba nuevas técnicas para poder progresar más rápido... [...and she gave us

new techniques to progress faster...]

All their comments were really encouraging for me as a teacher. I wrote this in my

journal:

... I read the students comments about their progress and my performance as a

teacher in the reading program and gave me a sense of satisfaction. Everything had paid off.

I told them that they had been very helpful and collaborative as well. I recognized that having

to attend on Saturdays was really a sacrifice for them. That is why I decided to end the

program with a ´pizza party'. They deserved it...

Unexpected Findings

Something I was surprised by was the fact that nine of the ten students said they were also reading more in their native language. Rosa's words represent this unexpected result:

…ahora estoy leyendo también más en mi lengua nativa, y estoy disfrutando leer tanto en mi primera lengua como en inglés... […now, I am also reading more in my native language, and I am enjoying reading in both my first language and in English...]

Three students said they applied the same strategies to their L1 reading time with successful results in terms of comprehension and concentration. Ramón's words best represent this:

…apliqué las mismas estrategias que usted nos enseñó al leer libros en español y tuve mejor comprensión de la lectura y se me hizo más fácil concentrarme... [I applied the same strategies you taught us when reading Spanish books and I had better comprehension, and it was easier to concentrate]

In Week 4, nine of the ten students commented similarly about their improvement in their L1 reading skills and speed. Roberto's comments again summarize the groups' feelings:

…estoy usando las mismas técnicas para estudiar las materias de mi carrera en Español y ahora comprendo más cuando leo y leo más rápido, ahora estudio en menos tiempo que antes y saco mejores notas... […I am using the same techniques to study the subjects of my degree in Spanish and I comprehend more when I read. I am reading faster. Now I spend less time studying and I obtain better scores…]

Three students also commented in their journals in Week 4 that their Spanish concentration when reading had increased as well as their concentration when reading in

English to the point that they spent less time preparing for an exam while getting better grades. Roberto wrote in his journal:

…leí un capítulo entero de Cableado Voz y Datos de CISCO en español. Estaba estudiando pero leí rápido y con buena comprensión…como tenía una lección apliqué las técnicas de lectura del programa de inglés en la lectura de unas 15 páginas, avancé rápido al principio y luego fui disminuyendo para tener una mejor comprensión…salí bien en la lección... […I read a whole chapter of Cableado Voz y Datos from CISCO in Spanish. I was studying but I read fast, and with good comprehension…as I had a test. I applied the reading program techniques in a fifteen-page text. I advanced fast at the beginning but then I slowed down to get a better comprehension…I did well in the lesson]

In the last session, six students said the program was helpful for their Spanish comprehension and speed, which was evidenced when they reported that their grades went up because their ability to concentrate when reading and studying technical books in both Spanish and English in their field. Ana, for example, reported:

...este programa me ha ayudado mucho, el español también ha aumentado mi velocidad y comprensión, al igual que Roberto salí bien en una lección pues ahora me concentro mejor cuando leo y ya no necesito tanto tiempo para estudiar, esto ocurre tanto en Inglés como en Español...[…this program has helped me a lot. In Spanish it has also increased my speed and comprehension. Just like Roberto, I did well in the test and now I can concentrate more when I read and I don't need as much time to study, this happens in both English and Spanish…]

I confirmed this when I checked the answers to the interviews where all the students answered that they had improved their L1 reading skills as a result of this program. They also mentioned that some characteristics of a good reader are adequate reading speed, good

comprehension, high motivation and concentration. Luisa's comment best represents the

thoughts of the group on improving their Reading in their first language:

> *... si me considero un buen lector ahora porque mis hábitos de lectura han mejorado,*
>
> *considero que las características de un buen lector serían: excelente comprensión*
>
> *lectora, fluidez y rapidez en la lectura, mantener interés y motivación mientras se está*
>
> *leyendo...* [...I consider myself a good reader now because my reading habits have
>
> improved. I consider that the characteristics of a good reader to be: excellent
>
> reading comprehension, fluency and speed in the reading, to maintain interest and
>
> motivation while you are reading…]

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this action research study was to describe the impact of an extensive reading program on EFL university students' attitudes toward reading in a foreign language. Having more than one source for analysis was very helpful. Interviews, inventories, class observations, students' journals, logs and scores plus my field notes and reflective journal were important for reaching a deep analysis of the results.

In the process of reporting and analysing, I have found some answers to my research questions, and came to some conclusions that will be discussed in this Chapter:

Research Question 1 was: What are learners' attitudes towards L1 reading? It was important for this study to explore the attitudes, perceptions and reading habits of the participants towards L1 reading in order to compare them with literature on research on the influence of L1 on L2 reading. The inventories and interviews revealed that most of the participants in this study enjoy reading in their native language and that half of them spend 5 to 6 hours per day in L1 reading while the other half spend 1 to 4 hours. The factors that influenced frequent readers were: positive experience in early years, home support in the learning-to-read process and parental modeling all of which less frequent readers lacked. The study also revealed that the participants are more used to reading newspapers, magazines, textbooks, manuals and other technical texts, the Internet, novels and the Bible or inspirational materials.

The Internet had some influence on the participants reading habits as they stated experiencing a change in amount of their reading and the strategies they employed when they were exposed to Internet reading. The participants commented that they were more used to

reading books before Internet use and that their current strategies changed to scanning for specific information rather than reading texts in full.

The only positive change after the extensive reading program for L1 reading was evident in the comparison between first and final inventory where there was an increase of 30% in students preference to read textbooks in their L1. The reason was discovered later in the interviews and journals where the participants stated that they had better comprehension of their field's textbooks and that they needed less time to cover the same amount of texts.

Negative changes were found when comparing inventory 1 and 2 in the number of students who strongly enjoy L1 reading. The number of students who read Spanish novels, magazines, manuals and other technical books also decreased and this was due to their move to reading in L2 as they commented in the interviews and journals.

There were no changes in the number of students who enjoy L1 reading, those who use newspapers, the Bible and inspirational material or the Internet as their L1 material, and the amount of daily time in L1 reading.

Research Question 2 was: What are learners' attitudes toward L2 reading? The initial inventory and interviews revealed that the learners who participated in this study were not used to reading English material extensively before their participation in this Extensive Reading Program. However, they recognized it was important for four main reasons: first, the importance of reading in English for their professional lives; second, the benefit of vocabulary acquisition; third, better job opportunities and finally, meeting the academic demands of their major field of study.

Before their participation in this Extensive Reading Program, the students reported that they read very little L2 material. The majority of the participants (70%) only read between 0-1 hours per week while the rest read between 2 to 4 hours. The interviews confirmed this fact and helped me to explore more information about the reasons the majority

of the participants reported reading very little L2 material. The most recurrent explanations they gave were lack of vocabulary, lack of interest in the topics and lack of good pronunciation.

During this extensive reading program, students reported enjoying L2 reading more as they were more exposed to reading material that they were interested in and at their appropriate level. The introduction of graded novels and online articles as part of the extensive reading program was key to increasing of students' interest in reading as they reported in the interviews and journals. The categories of online articles the students preferred the most were about health and safety, family, service, science and school. The most read novel was Outstanding Short Stories from level 3, followed by Pocahontas, The Love of a King, and Good Bye Mr Hollywood from level 1. Students also chose to read technical texts of their fields as they commented on having better comprehension after the extensive reading program.

Participants acquired confidence in L2 reading. Most of them now perceive L2 reading to be easier and have better reading strategies use and skills for a better comprehension of English texts.

Another positive result of the program was that participants increased their reading hours per week by 40 % for the 0 to 1 hour per week group, half of the 2 to 4 hours per week group, and by 10% for the 5 to 6 hours group and they stated that they had acquired the habit of reading.

At the beginning of this study, students said they were motivated to join the program for the benefits of having a discount, being able to read and comprehend technical texts and becoming more competitive in their fields. By the end of the program they also reported an additional intrinsic motivation of a strong positive attitude toward L2 reading. They were conscious of the fact that their reading skills would improve as they read more along with a

collateral improvement of their whole language competence which they experienced and reported throughout this study.

This study did not identify any changes in the students who had strong perceptions on L2 reading ease and in those who perceived having excellent L2 reading skills and strategies use. The perception of L2 reading as an important factor to get a good job and the interest level for reading English texts showed no evident changes in the inventories.

Research Question 3 was: What are the main factors that influenced the learners' attitudes toward L2 reading? L1 reading attitude has some influence on L2 as was evident in this study. Students, who were frequent readers and who had a positive attitude toward reading in their native language, also showed a positive attitude toward L2 reading. On the other hand, infrequent L1 readers evidenced some reluctance towards reading in L2. In addition to this, teachers also perceived that students lack of good reading habits and skills in both L1 and L2. Unlike those students with similar habits of reading in both L1 and L2, reluctant L2 readers evidenced a lack of positive previous L1 reading experiences and parental modelling.

The main factors that influenced learners' attitude toward L2 reading were the explicit teaching of strategies and techniques they had not been taught before, the availability of English material at their appropriate level and that they were interested in reading, the opportunity to exchange information and interact with the reading community in the weekly sessions, and the sense of progress and achievement towards their individual and group goals during the program. Being guided and monitored during the whole program was also another factor that influenced their change in attitude toward L2 reading in terms of reading enjoyment and motivation to keep going with the reading program. Confidence as an influencing factor in students' attitude was common in both frequent readers and reluctant readers.

One thing I found interesting is the fact that all the students had sufficient motivation to learn reading skills or habits to enter the reading program. The reason they were not used to reading and enjoying L2 was more the lack of the factors that were mentioned above.

Research Question 4 was: How do learners perceive their strengths and weaknesses in reading in the L1 and L2?

The learners in this study perceived similar strengths in both L1 and L2 in terms of vocabulary and comprehension. Before the program, speed and concentration were strengths they considered important only in L1 reading. After the program, speed and concentration were also perceived as strengths in L2 reading as well as being good at testing which was not mentioned in the first inventory. Proper grammar appeared to be a strength the students mentioned in both L1 and L2 after the reading program.

L1 reading weaknesses before the program were mainly focused on lack of technical vocabulary, poor concentration and boredom while L2 reading weaknesses were perceived in terms of vocabulary, speed and comprehension. Lack of good pronunciation was also a weakness that worried some students as they subvocalized while reading. After the program students perceived laziness as a weakness in both L1 and L2. Teachers perceived that lack of reading habits and a poor vocabulary are the main weaknesses of L2 readers. By the end of the study, some learners perceived having the same strengths and weaknesses in L1 and L2. Comprehension, appropriate vocabulary and speed are factors that influence learners' perceptions of their strengths and weaknesses in L1 and L2 reading.

Research Question 5 was: How can the impact of explicitly taught reading strategies be described in a program that emphasizes extensive reading?

The extensive reading program was designed with the intention of providing the learners with a large variety of reading materials at the appropriate level complemented with the explicit teaching of strategies. Reading speed and reading level awareness were two

elements of the program that were included to help the students read more. The explicit

reading strategies and techniques that were included in the program were: deducing meaning

from context with less use of the dictionary, use of the bookmark to read longer sentences

and avoid eyes regression, silent reading, getting the main and general idea, and speeding

reading rate. Comprehension was monitored via students' oral and written reports of the

reading material, cdlponline tests scores and quizzes in class. Reading enjoyment was

included as a complement to the extensive reading program as well as the provision of a

reading support group.

The impact of explicitly taught reading strategies in a program that emphasizes

extensive reading can be described by the benefits the students were able to achieve by the

end of the program. They are described as follows:

Change in L2 Reading Attitude and Habits.

I can say that most of the students acquired a new reading habit and had a more

positive attitude toward L2 reading based on their comments and perceptions. Some of them

even realized that they liked reading after this program. Reading level awareness and the

freedom to select reading material were essential in giving them more confidence and

enjoyment.

The increase in the students' reading rates helped them to read more despite the short

program duration. One student managed to read ten books during the six weeks of the

program, which I consider to be a success, although it does not seem to be a pattern. Three

students were satisfied that their L2 reading rate increased to the point of reaching their L1

level. I consider the increase in reading rate in this reading program a success as I compare it

with Nutall's (1996) data were average ESL university students rates were reported to be 200

wpm while this study reported an average reading rate of 212 wpm in six weeks. Nutall also

stated an average increase in reading rate in ESL of 50% while this study reported an average increase of 88.89%.

The change in students L2 reading habits and attitude somehow influenced their L1 habits as they also started reading more in their native language and with more comprehension as they applied the strategies they were taught in this program. One more impact I found interesting was the influence these students reported having on their family members and friends. The other people in their lives were interested in knowing the strategies they were using which seemed to encourage more reading among the members of the learners' communities.

Students reported an increase in vocabulary and reinforcement of grammar structures by reading texts at the right level. This allowed them to read more fluently and with more enjoyment. Students also learned to deduce meaning from context so they finished the program with less dictionary use during their reading. This also helped them to read faster and more fluently.

Reading faster and more fluently also increased their comprehension as they did not focus on pronunciation or translation of every word but learnt to get general ideas of whole paragraphs instead. The final learner's perception of comprehension was between 80 to 90% of appropriate level texts. Comprehension was perceived to decrease with the increase of reading material difficulty or the appearance of technical terms or too many unknown words.

Being exposed to an ample source of reading material was the more recurrent factor students perceived to influence their change in L2 reading habits and improvement which was evident in the data collected from their journals and inventories.

Students also perceived the right selection of texts in terms of interest and appropriate level as important to be considered as well as a calm and relaxed environment to read. Reading below level was more useful than reading on level material.

The reading strategies that they found more useful were deducing meaning from context and getting the general idea of texts with a direct benefit in fluency and comprehension.

The use of the bookmark was essential to help them concentrate on a line at a time of the texts during the first three weeks of the program. After that, they decided not to use it as it was slowing their reading speed and interrupted reading fluency.

Avoiding eyes regression was not perceived as a useful strategy, but maybe because it is an intrinsic effect of using the bookmark and trying to speed up reading and as a result was acquired unconsciously.

The practice of silent reading avoiding subvocalization was one technique the students were a bit reluctant to practice as they persisted in the idea that good pronunciation is one of the strengths of good readers.

Research question 6: was: How can student perceptions of motivation to read extensively be identified and described?

The data collected from the students' interviews, inventories and journals demonstrated that the students´ motivation to read extensively increased as the program progressed. This can be identified and described in terms of the freedom the students had to select their appropriate reading material considering interest, previous knowledge and readability in terms of appropriate reading level. The students perceived the existence of a reading community as a positive influence on their motivation to read more and reach their individual and group goals. The existence of rewards given when the students reached their goals was perceived as an extrinsic motivation to read more and faster.

Intrinsic motivation and autonomy were also factors that motivated students to keep going with the reading program as it was developed in an environment of informality without

the pressures of scores or grades. The enjoyment of reading for pleasure was also another motivation for students to continue with the program.

After the program, the students were more motivated to read without worrying about having to face unknown words, because they knew how to overcome this obstacle. Furthermore, strategies acquisition was another factor in maintaining their motivation to keep reading.

Something I found really interesting from this study was the fact that some teachers think lack of motivation is one factor that makes students read little L2 material which was contradictory to the students' perception. This can be seen in the results of the interviews, inventories, sessions, and journals. I realized students were motivated and interested in reading well. They just did not how to do it successfully.

Final Reflections

Personally, being part of this extensive reading program was essential in helping me to identify its positive impact on the students. The benefits of positive reading habits and language acquisition were worth the effort. The program indeed was successful in the development of confidence in the students and the increase of their motivation to read in L2. In addition, the improvement of their reading skills and their overall performance in their current English courses reflected what some researchers such as Dupuy, Tse, & Cook (1996), Kim & Krashen (1997), and Krashen (1993) stated about extensive reading as an important source of input for second language acquisition.

This program, after being implemented and described in an Ecuadorian context, can be applied to any curriculum where the students feel a bit reluctant to read in English. The direct benefits of this program can be described in terms of the mastery of reading skills through the explicit teaching of techniques and strategies as well as an increase in reading habits and enjoyment. This explicit reading strategy training can impact students' attitudes

towards reading by providing them with a positive experience, and motivating them to read extensively for pleasure. One of the findings that personally impacted me most was the effect on L2 reading improvement in terms of speed and comprehension on L1 which was not expected as one of the direct results of this study.

This study also evidenced teachers' influence on the material the student currently read in their English courses as they are the ones who provide the material to be read during a course. My recommendation would be to conduct surveys to explore students reading material preferences or the provision of an ample source of reading material for them to choose from. The explicit instructions of how to select appropriate material taking into account interest and readability and reading strategies can ensure extensive reading program success.

Implications for further research

The present study can be used as reference for further research on L2 reading as there are very few examples of research of this type carried out in Ecuador. For future research studies, I would recommend implementing this Extensive Reading Program over a longer period of time using action research methodology.

The process outlined in this study could also be carried out in an online or virtual environment to compare the results with the ones of this study.

Future Refinement of the Reading Course

After the analysis of the study findings, I would refine the present reading program by providing the students with more titles to choose from. I would also include some oral reading in class and more instruction on how to use the listening tools of the cdlponline readings, which would help students to improve pronunciation. The instructions for using the bookmark only for the first three weeks of the program would help student to have better results in their reading rates, comprehension and fluency.

References

Anderson, N. (1999). *Exploring Second Language Reading: Issues and Strategies.* Canada:

Heinle & Heinle.

Banton-Smith, N. (1966). *Speed reading benefits and dangers.*The First International

Reading Symposium, Oxford 1964, pp 211-234 reprinted Melnik and Merritt (1972).

Barton, D. (1994). *The social impact of literacy. In L. Verhoeven (ed.). Functional*

literacy. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Brice-Heath, S. (1983). *Ways with Words.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Brown, G. & G. Yule. (1983). *Discourse Analysis.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Buck, C. (1979). *'Miscues of non-native speakers of English'* in K. Goodman (ed.): Miscue

Analysis. Urbana, Ill.: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills.

Cavalcanti, M. (1987). *Investigating FL reading performance through pause protocols.* In C.

Faerch and G. Ksper (eds.) : Introspection in Second Language Research. Briston:

Multinlingual Matters.

Carrell, P. L., Devine, J., & Eskey, D. E. (1988). *Interactive approaches to second*

language reading. The Cambridge applied linguistics series. Cambridge: Cambridge

University Press.

Carver, R.P. (1990). *Reading Rate: A Review of Research and Theory.* San Diego: Academic

Press.

Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the theory of syntax.* Cambridge: MIT Press.

Cook, G. (1989). Discourse in 'Language Teaching: A Scheme for Teacher Education'.

Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cook-Gumperz, J. (1986). *The social construction of literacy.* Cambridge: Cambridge

University Press.

Crammer, E.H., & Castle, M. (1994). *Developing lifelong readers.* In E.H. Cramer & M. Castle (Eds.), Fostering the love of reading (pp. 3.9). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Cummins, J. and M. Swain, (1986). *Bilingualism in Education*. London: Longman.

Cummins, J. (1979). *'Linguistic Interdependence and the educational development of biliingual children'* Review of Educational Research 49/1: 222-51

Denzin, N. & Lincoln Y. (2005). *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Third Edition. Chapter 1: p.3. USA: Sage Publications Inc.

Doughty, C. & T. Pica. (1986). *'Information gap tasks: do they facilitate second language acquisition?' TESOL Quaterly*. 20/2: 305-24

Dubin, F. (1989). 'The odd couple: reading and vocabulary'. *ELT Journal* 43/4.

Dubin, F., & Bycina, D. (1991). *Academic Reading and the ESL/EFL Teacher.* In M. Celce-Murcia (ed.). Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language (2nd. Ed.) New York: Newbury House, 195-215.

Dupuy, B., Tse, L., & Cook, T. (1996). *Bringing books into the classroom:First steps in turning college-level ESL students into readers.* TESOL Journal, 5:10-15.

Elley, W.B. (1984). *'Exploring the reading difficulties of second-language readers in   Fiji'* in C. Aldersonand A. Urquhart (eds.).

Ellis, G. & B. Sinclair. (1989). *Learning to learn English: A Course in Learner Training.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Finch, G. (2003). *How to Study Linguistics: a guide to understanding language. Second edition.* Palgrave Macmillan Publishers.

Fish, S. (1980). *Is there a text in this class?* The authority of interpretative communities. Boston, Mass.: Harvard University

Freire, P. (1973). *Education: The Practice of Freedom*. London: Writers and Readers

Publishing Cooperative.

Freire, P. (1983). *The importance of the act of reading. Journal of Education*, 165, 1: 5-11.

Fry, E. (1977). *'Fry's readability graph: clarification, validity, and extension to level 17'.*

Journal of Reading 20: 242-52.

Gambrell, L. B. (1996). *Creating classroom cultures that foster reading motivation.* The

Reading teacher, 50, 14-25.

Gaskins, R.W. (1996). *'That's just how it was': The effect of issue-related emotional*

involvement on reading comprehension. Reading Research Quarterly, 31: 386-405.

Gee, R.W. (1999). *Encouraging ESL students to read.* TESOL Journal, Vol.8, No. 1: 3-7

Goodman, Y.M. and Burke C. L. (1972). *Reading Miscue Inventory: complete kit: procedure*

for diagnosis and evaluation. New York: Macmillan.

Goodman,K. (1967). Reading: A psycholinguistic guessing game. *Journal of the*

Reading Specialist, (6)126-135.

Goodman, K. (1987). *Lecture on 'Reading as a psycholinguitstic process' at the University*

of Arizona

Grabe, W. (1991). *Current Developments in Second Language Reading Research.* TESOL

Quaterly 25:375-406.

Harris, D. (1966). *Reading Improvement Exercises for Students of English as a Second*

Language. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Harrison, C. (1980). *Readability in the Classroom* Cambridge: Cambridge Educational.

Hastings, A. (1990). *United Arab Emirates University English Teacher's Manual.* Texas:

Focal Skills Resources. Retrieved, May 31, 2006, from

http://bbd.su.edu/courses/1/TSOL623-101.SP06/content/_1623654_1/modules.htm

Heath, S. B. (1983). *Ways with Words*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hedge, T. (1988). *Guidelines to Oxford Bookworms*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hensen, K. T. (1996). *Teachers as Researchers.* In J. Sikula (Ed.). Handbook of research on
teacher education (2nd ed., pp. 53-66). New York: MacMillan.

Higgings, J,. and R. Wallace. (1989). *Hopalong: A Computer Reader Pacer.* System 17: 389-
399.

Hood, S., Solomon N. and Burns A. (1996). *Focus on Reading New Edition.*
National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research. In Anderson, Neil.
Exploring Second Language Reading: Issues and Strategies.1999. *Reflective*
Questions Pg.6-7.

Hosenfeld, C. (1977). *'A preliminary investigation of the reading strategies of successful*
and non-successful second language learners'. System 5:110-23.

Hosenfeld, C. (1984). *'Case studies on ninth readers'.* In Alderson and Urquhart
(1984)

Jensen, L. (1986). *Advanced Reading Skills in A Comprehensive Course.* In F. Dubin, D.E.
Eskey, & W. Grabe (eds.), Teaching second language reading for academic purposes.
Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 130-124.

Jick, T.D. (1979) *Mixing qualitative and quantitative methods: triangulation in action.*
Administrative Science Quarterly, 24, 602-611.

Johnson, Andrew P. (2005). *A Short Guide To Action Research.* USA: Minnesota State
University, Mankato. Pearson Education, Inc.

Kim, H., & Krashen, S. (1997). *Why don't language acquirers take advantage of the power*
of reading?. TESOL Journal, 6: 26-29.

Krashen, Stephen. (1981). *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning.*
New York: Oxford, Pergamon Press

Krashen, S. (2002). *The comprehension hypothesis and its rivals. Selected papers from the Eleventh International Symposium on English Teaching/Fourth Pan- Asian Conference.* (pp. 395-404). English Teachers Association/ROC. Taipei: Crane Publishing Company.

Krashen, S. (1993). *The Power of Reading.* Englewwok, CO: Libraries Unliminted.

Krashen, S. (2004) *The Power of Reading: Insights from the Research.* Heinemann

Kress, G. (1985). *Linguistic Process in Sociocultural Practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lado, R. (1957). *Linguistics across cultures.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Larsen-Freeman, D. (2000). *Techniques and Principles in language Teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 11 - 22*

Lightbown, P. and N. Spada. (1999). *How Languages are Learned* Revised Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 172-179

Lunzer, E and Gardner, K. (1979). *The Effective use of reading:Illuminating account of study of reading in British schools, with many useful conclusions and suggestions.* London: Heinemann Educational Books for the Schools Council.

McTaggart, R. (1997). *Reading the Collection.* In R. McTaggart (Ed.). Participatory action research (pp.1-12). Albany: NY: SUNNY Press.

Mikulecky, B. and Jeffries, L. (1998). *Reading Power*. Second Edition. NY: Addison Wesley Longman.

Nuttall, C. (1982). *Practical Language Teaching No. 9 Teaching Reading Skills in a Foreign Language* Heinemann Educational Books.

Nuttal, C. (1996). Teaching Reading Skills in a Foreign Language. (new edition) Oxford: Heinemann.

Richards, K. (2003). Qualitative Inquiry in TESOL. Palgrave Macmillan. Great Britain.

Rumelhart, D. (1977). *Towards an interactive model of reading.* New York: Academic Press. *In S. Dornic (ed.). Attention and performance, Vol VI*

Smith, F. (1978). *Reading.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Smith, F. (1983). *The Promise and the Threat of Microcomputers for Language Learner.* Washington FC: TESOL

Smith, F. (2004). Understanding Reading: A Psycholinguistic Analysis of Reading and Learning to Read. Sixth Edition. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Schmuck, R. A. (1997). *Practical Action Research for Change.* Arlingthon Heights, IL: IRI/Skylight Training and Publishing, Inc.

Stanovich, K. (1980). *Towards an interactive compensatory model of individual differences in the development of reading fluency.* Reading Research Quaterly, 16: 32-71.

Stanovich, K.E. (1986). *Matthew effects in reading: Some consequences of individual differences in the acquisition of literacy.* Reading Research Quarterly, 21, 360-407.

Street, B. (1984). *Literacy in theory and practice.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Turner, J., & Paris, S.G. (1995). *How literacy tasks influence children's motivation for literacy.* The Reading Teacher, 48. 662-675.

Vacca, R.T., & Linek, W.M. (1992) *Writing to Learn.* In J.W. Irwin & M.A. Doyle (Eds.) Reading/Writing connections (pp. 145-159). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Wallace, C. (1988). *Learning to read in a multicultural society: The Social Context of Second Language Literacy.* New York: Prentice Hall.

Wallace, C. (1992). *Reading.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wallace, C. and Y. Goodman. (1989). 'Research currents: language and literacy development of multilingual learners'. Language Arts 66/5: 524-41.

Weaver, C. (1980). Psycholinguistics and Reading; From Process to Practice. Cambridge,

    Mass.: Winthrop Publishers.

Wenpeng, Zhang. (1995).*Inventory of Motivation for Language Learning IMLL.*

Kinney Brothers Publishing 2003. *Stories for Young Readers, Book I* . Retrieved from

    www.esl-images.com

http://www.diariocorreo.com.ec/archivo/2006/05/23/alarmantes-cifras-de-

    analfabetismo-en-el-pas

http://www.telegrafo.com.ec/quitometropolitano/noticia/archive/quitometropolitano/20

    08/05/12/Bibliotecas-populares-motivan-el-aprendizaje.aspx

http://www.expolibro.com.ec/html/noticias.htmlhttp://edweb.sdsu.edu/triton/guides/Br

    ainstorming.html

http://english.byu.edu/novelinks/reading%20strategies/Anthem/cloze%20general.htm

http://www.cdlponline.org Copyright ©2005 California Distance Learning Project

http://www.oup.com/elt/global/products/bookwormsleveltest/

http://www.cambridge.org/elt/readers/placement_test/RPT_last.swf

http://www.macmillanenglish.com/readers/studentsite/level-test.htm

Appendix A

Participant Consent Form
IMPACT OF EXTENSIVE READING ON ECUADORIAN LEARNERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD L2 READING: A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH STUDY

Please indicate your position: check all that apply.
( ) Program Administrator
( ) Student Participant
( ) Teacher / Professor
( ) Parents of participants under 18 years of age
( ) Other (explain) _____

I _____, have been invited to participate in this research study, which has been explained to me by **Katherine A. Salvador C.**
This research is being conducted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Master's degree in the **Master's Program in Teaching English as a Foreign Language.**
The purpose of this research study is to describe the impact on EFL students' attitude toward reading in a foreign language during and after working within an extensive reading program.

Description of the research study methods
The participants will be instructed in some strategies and ways to record their comments. The data will be collected thru Interviews with the participants and colleagues regarding their attitudes and experiences when working on extensive reading programs, scores and other quantifiable data collected from participants' records sheet of their reading rates, comprehension scores, and records of the material read during the research. Surveys will be conducted both on line and personally plus Attitude and rating scales.

Requirements of the participants
All the students will be contacted via email and will be asked to attend weekly meetings during this study time that is six weeks in length. In these weekly sessions, I will be giving the students a set of suggested material to be read during the course, some instructions and some strategies to improve their reading skills.
Benefits to the participants
The group of volunteers who would be interested in collaborating on this research will receive some reading strategies in order to improve this skill. They will also be granted with a 25% discount in their next English course.
Risks and Discomforts
The only possible discomfort will be the time and effort required of the participants to attend the meetings and carry out the reading activities.
Contact persons
The researcher can be contacted via email at **ksalvado@espol.edu.ec** any time during the study.
Confidentiality
I understand that any information about me obtained as a result of my participation in this research will be kept as confidential as legally possible In any publications that result from this research, neither my name nor any information from which I may be identified will be included.
Voluntary participation
Participation in this study will be voluntary. I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent to participate in this study or any specific activities at any time. I understand that neither my employment status, nor my academic status will be affected if I decided not to participate in this study. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the research, and I have received answers concerning areas I did not understand. The data I provide in this study will remain anonymous. By signing this attached consent form, I signify that I understand the terms associated with the study. Upon signing this form, I will receive a copy. I willingly consent to participate in this study.

_____   _____
                Signature of the Participant   Date

_____   _____
                Signature of the Researcher   Date

Appendix B

To work on some online readers, visit this site: http://www.cdlponline.org

Adult Learning Activities, California Distance Learning Project

These tasks have remained constant from the project's initiation in 1995. However, the activities continue to change over time. It is a free site designed to build reading and life skills. It displays several topics classified into eleven different areas as follows:

Working	Law and Government	Family
School	Health and Safety	Housing
Money	Science and Technology	Services
Going Places	Nature	

Steps when using CDLPONLINE:

1.- Choose an area and then a topic to read among a list of several choices.

2.- The paragraph is displayed. Get the readability of the text and if it suits to your reading level, proceed to read it.

3.- The first one is a vocabulary task where students you can hear the pronunciation of key words from the text.

4.- Then you will be asked to do a Spelling task based on the revised words and the site gives them a mark over 100% according to the correct spelled words.

5.- The next task will be offering you a a Matching activity where you have to match words with its meaning

6.- Ten Reading comprehension multiple choice questions is the next task and you will also get a score over 100%.

7.- After that, a new set of five multiple choice questions are displayed later which requires you to show a deeper comprehension of the text and it is also scored but over 10 points this time.

8.- Finally, a question where you need to type an answer based on what you have learned is displayed.

9.- When you finish, save your answers.

10.- If you want you can also visit the proposed websites where you will find out more information related to the topic.

11.- After that you will be asked whether you want to print your scores or send them to someone, here you send them to my email address at ksalvado@espol.edu.ec

Appendix C

Instructions for Participants

Please, keep in mind these instructions and recommendations along this
Extensive Reading Program:

1) First, go to any of these sites and get your Reading Level, email it
   to me as soon as you have done it.
* Oxford Online Reading Placement test:
http://www.oup.com/elt/global/products/bookwormsleveltest/
* Cambridge University Press Online Reading Placement Test:
http://www.cambridge.org/elt/readers/placement_test/placement_test.htm
* Macmilan Online Reading Placement Test:
http://www.macmillanenglish.com/readers/studentsite/level-test.htm
2) Choose a book or text from your interest and on your right reading
   Level or below. (Remember, if you have more than two unknown words in
   20 words from a text, that means that the text is above level from
   yours).
3) Try to use both sources of texts on line and paperback to have a
   wider source of data.
4) Take notes everytime you read on your progress logs and write
   comments on your reading time and your own perception of progress or
   difficulties in using the suggested strategies in your journal.
5) Try to avoid translating every single word or using a dictionary. It
   will be difficult at the beginning but keep trying.
6) Practice silent reading instead of reading out loud to make you
   concentrate more in the reading process rather than in the
   pronunciation of words. (reading out loud is called subvocalizing)
7) Try not to point at the words as you read. Use the bookmark I gave
   you or a cardboard which will help you to move your eyes faster and
   more fluently along the text.
8) Try to infer meaning from context as much as possible and to skip
   words you don't know in order to get general ideas (that strategy is
   called skimming).
9) Establish self-aimed reading rates for yourself everyweek.
10) And… enjoy your reading time and relax, relax, relax. ☺

If you have any comments or questions, please feel free to ask me.
Thanks,

    Katherine ☺

Appendix D

Figure out your reading rate

1. Find a full page in your book or online screen

2. Count the number of words in three lines: _____ words.

3. Divide that number by three to get the average number of words in one line: _____ words.

4. Count the lines on one page: _____ lines.

5. (number of lines) x (average words in one line) = (words on a page)

6. Open your book or reading site and mark the page your are on. Before you start to read, write down the starting time: _____ min _____ sec.

7. When you stop reading, write finishing time: _____ min _____ sec.

8. To get how many minutes did you read, calculate by subtracting starting time minus finishing time which will be your reading time: _____ min _____sec.

9. Write down how many pages did you read; _____

10. Write down how many words did you read by multiplying the number of pages by the number of words on a page: _____ words

11. To find your reading rate, divide the number of words by the number of minutes and you will have your reading rate in words per minute.

Appendix E

Interview For Study Group Participants

1. Were you introduced to literature at home before starting school? How? Please explain

2. How were you taught to read in school? Explain

3. Was that experience good or bad for you? Explain

4. Did you find it difficult or easy to read? Explain your answer.

5. Did you use to love reading when a child? Why? What materialdid you use to read?

6. Did your teachers motivate you to read more? How?

7. Did your parents model or influence somehow your attitude toward reading? How?

8. Did your teachers at school model somehow your attitude toward reading? How?

9. Where did you use to read more at school or high school? Why?

10. What kind of material did you read in high school?

11. How did the emergence of 'technology' (computers, Internet) affect your reading habits?

12. Do you consider yourself a good reader? Describe the qualities or abilities of a good reader. Do you consider your reading speed and comprehension appropriated? Why?

13. Describe the reading practices in your home. (newspaper, novels, magazines, technical manuals, children's books)

14. How much do you estimate that the members of your family read each week?

15. Describe the difficulties that you had in the past or have now when you are reading L1.

16. Is it difficult or easy for you to read in L2?

17. What are the easy or difficult parts of reading in your L2 it? Explain

18. Were you taught strategies to handle reading in L2?

19. Which strategies are they?

20. Explain how those strategies were helpful when you had to start facing reading in L2? Why yes or no?

21. Why do you feel reluctant or motivated for reading in L2? Explain in full

22. What things motivate you to read in L2?

23. What things force you to read in L2?

Appendix F

Interview for English As A Foreign Language Teachers

1. Were you trained to conduct a reading program in your classroom? Explain

2. Which strategies do you use with your students to increase their motivation toward L2 reading?

3. Which strategies seem to be more effective when trying to help students read more and with good comprehension?

4.- In your opinion, what factors make students give up with reading in their L2?

5 .In your opinion, what are the factors that make students find a text easy and enjoyable to read ?

6. Do you use questions in your reading classroom as a way of help them comprehend the text or as a way of assessing? Explain how you do it. (One way would be to write out a typical way you check your students' comprehension.)

7. Do you focus more on the reading process or the reading product when teaching your reading class? How?

Appendix G

Students Reading Progress Chart

Student's Name: Reading Level:

Date	Text source and type (source/level)	Reading Time (minutes)	Reading Rate (words per minute)	Reading Comprehension Rate (%)	Comments on strategies used, content, problems found, etc

Appendix H

Name: _____

MY JOURNAL (Please, feel free to use English or Spanish in your journal)

DATE:	MY THOUGHTS: (TODAY I LEARNED, I STILL NEED TO LEARN ABOUT)

Appendix I

Inventory-Survey On Learners Attitude And Former Experiences With L1 And L2 Reading

Please, respond to the following questions:

1. I enjoy reading in my native language

1	2	3	4	5

Strongly disagree disagree   are neutral   agree   strongly agree

2. How long do you read daily (on average) in your native language?

0 - 1 hours   2 – 4 hours   5 – 6 hours   8 -10 hours   more than 10 hours

3. What do you read in your native language? Check all that apply.

___ newspapers

___ novels

___ textbooks

___ Bible or inspirational materials

____magazines

____Internet

____manuals and other technical texts

4. I enjoy reading in my second language

1	2	3	4	5

Strongly disagree disagree   are neutral   agree   strongly agree

5. Why? Why not? Please explain.

_____

_____

6. How long do you read daily (on average) in your second language?

0 - 1 hours   2 – 4 hours   5 – 6 hours   8 -10 hours   more than 10 hours

7. List three things you consider strengths about your reading in your first language.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

8.   List three things you consider strengths about your reading in your second
     language.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

9. List three things you consider weaknesses about your reading in your first language.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

10. List three things you consider weaknesses about your reading in your second language.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

11. Do you have difficulty with any kind or part of reading in your first language Explain

_____

_____

12. English is a very difficult language for me to read.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	are neutral	agree	strongly agree

13. I believe that I understand what I read in English.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	are neutral	agree	strongly agree

14. I have no confidence in reading English texts.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	are neutral	agree	strongly agree

15. I believe that my English reading skills are excellent.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	are neutral	agree	strongly agree

16. I have no idea about how to read English texts well.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	are neutral	agree	strongly agree

17. I am not good at reading English texts.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	are neutral	agree	strongly agree

18. Reading English is important for me, for a command of English may provide me better opportunities to get a good job.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	are neutral	agree	strongly agree

19. Reading English is a waste of time for me.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	are neutral	agree	strongly agree

20. I am very interested in reading English texts.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	are neutral	agree	strongly agree

21. Reading English texts is boring.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	are neutral	agree	strongly agree

22. I enjoy reading English texts very much.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	are neutral	agree	strongly agree

23. I am not motivated to read English texts at all.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	are neutral	agree	strongly agree

24. If I had opportunities to read English texts outside of school/high school / university/course, I would read as much as possible.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	are neutral	agree	strongly agree

25. I think I have a positive attitude toward reading English texts.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	are neutral	agree	strongly agree

26. I think I am good enough at managing Reading strategies to understand English texts.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	are neutral	agree	strongly agree

27. I think I can improve my English by reading more.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	are neutral	agree	strongly agree

28. I consider myself a fluent L2 reader.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	are neutral	agree	strongly agree

29. Reading English texts is very useful for me now.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	are neutral	agree	strongly agree

30. I am interested in reading more English texts than I do now.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	are neutral	agree	strongly agree

Appendix J

Titles that Students Preferred to Read the Most Online in the Extensive Reading Program.

CDLP ON LINE Title	Categories	Number of times the categories were visited
Baby Born at Train Station	Health & Safety; Family; Service	4
Google It!	Science; School	3
Crime	Family	3
Alzheimer's Disease	Health & Safety; Family	2
Bad Fish to Be Destroyed	Nature; Science & Technology	2
Birds of Alcatraz	Service	2
Body Scan	Science & Technology; Health & Safety	1
Burning Wood Bad for the Air	Nature; Science & Technology; Housing	1
California Toxic Spill	Nature	1
Californians Want to Fight Global Warming	Nature	1
Cancer Center Announces Expansion	Service	1
Children from Russia Spend Summer in California	Going Places; School; Family	1
Civil Service	Working	1
Computer Virus	Service; Family	1
County Starts Using Electric Buses	Working; Going Places; Service	1
Couplet Adopts Children	Going Places; Family	1
Family Costs are Increasing	Money; School	1
Farmers and the Weather	Family	1
Farmers Plant Different Crops	Working; Money; Family	1
Fast Car	Going Places; Service	1
Fire in Colorado	Going Places; Housing	1
Girl Dies	Housing; Family	1
Healthy Baby	Housing; School	1
High Seas	Going Places; Service; School	1
Kid's Café	School	1
Looking for a Job	Family	1
Milk Prices	Working; Service	1
9,000 Year-Old Man Found	Science & Technology	1
Organ Donations	Going Places; Service	1
Police Arrests Parents	School; Family	1
Power Protest	Service	1
Preschool Saves Money	Going Places; School	1
Save the Forest	Working; Going Places; Service	1
Students and Satellites	Going Places; Housing	1
Teen Drinking	Money; Housing; School	1
Video Games	Going Places; School	1

Appendix K

Titles that Students Preferred to Read the Most from Books in the Extensive Reading Program.

Novels or readers Titles	Publisher, Level	Number of times the title was read
Outstanding Short Stories	OUP, level 3	6
A Little Princess	OUP, level 1	4
Pocahontas	OUP, level 1	4
The Love of a King	OUP, level 2	4
Good Bye Mr Holywood	OUP, level 1	3
The President's Murderer	OUP,level 1	3
The Wizard of Oz	OUP, level 1	3
The Piano	OUP, level 2	3
A Pair of Ghostly Hands and Other Stories	OUP, level 3	3
Amistad	Penguins Readers, level 3	3
Christmas Carol	OUP, level 3	3
The Last Sherlock Holmes Story	OUP, level 3	3
The Mystery of Alegra	OUP, level 3	3
The Picture of Dorian Gray	OUP, level 3	3
The Scarlet Letter	OUP, level 3	1
Mary Queen of Scots	OUP, level 1	1
Remember Miranda	OUP, level 1	1
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer	OUP, level 1	1
The Monkey's Paw	OUP, level 1	1
Life in the Forest	OUP, level 2	1
Return to Earth	OUP, level 2	1
The Children of the New Forest	OUP, level 2	1
The Death of Karen	OUP, level 2	1
Voodoo Island	OUP, level 2	1
The Railway	OUP, level 3	1
The Whispering Knights	OUP, level 4	1
Treasure Island	OUP, level 4	1
Sense and Sensibility	OUP, level 5	1

Appendix L

Final Interview to the Participants of the Extensive Reading Program

Please, respond to the following questions:

1. Do you consider yourself a good reader in your native language? What are the qualities or skills of a good reader in your own words?

2. Do you consider your actual reading speed and comprensión in your native language to be appropriated? Why yes or why no?

3. Is it easy or difficult for you to read English material?

4. What do you find to be the ease or difficulties of reading English?

5. Have you been instructed in strategies to improve your reading skills? If yes, which ones have been more and less useful for you?

6. Do you feel reluctant or motivated to read English? Please, explain.

7. What are the factors that motivate you to read English texts?

8. What are the factors that oblige you to read English texts?

9. Has this extensive reading program been of some help for you? Please explain why?

10. If you have been registered in a current English course, how this program has influenced your overall performance in your course?

11. Please comment about this extensive reading program, what did you like the most? What you didn't like? What did you find interesting and less interesting?

12. How did the teacher or instructor influence your performance during the reading program? Please explain.

13. Which suggestions could you offer to improve forthcoming reading programs like this?

14. What could you tell to a friend to convince him /her to participate in a similar reading program?

15. Has this program affected somehow in your career studies? Please, explain.

16. Has this program affected somehow your personal life or your family? Please, explain.