E-ISSN: 3110-3979, Vol. 1, No. 1, June 2025, pp. 52-66
Journal of Research in English Language Teaching and Linguistics (JRELL)
https://ejournal.earlypublishing.com/index.php/JRELL
Published by Early Publishing Group

THE EFFECT OF EXTENSIVE READING ON EFL STUDENTS' VOCABULARY SIZE

Riyadh Ahsanul Arifin[1*] and Nguyen Ngoc Huy[2]
[1]Ma'soem University, Indonesia
[2]Hanoi University, Vietnam
[*]Corresponding Author: riyadharifin91@gmail.com
DOI: https://doi.org/10.65431/jrell.v1i1.6

Abstract
This study examines the impact of extensive reading (ER) on vocabulary size among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, highlighting the significance of vocabulary development as a core component of language fluency. While existing research underscores the benefits of ER in enhancing various language skills, there remains limited empirical evidence isolating its effect specifically on vocabulary size in structured, monitored contexts. The current state of the art emphasizes ER's role in incidental vocabulary acquisition; however, few studies systematically measure vocabulary growth using quantifiable outcomes like vocabulary size before and after intervention. The primary aim of this research is to investigate whether sustained, extensive reading over a ten-week period significantly increases vocabulary size among EFL students. Employing a quasi-experimental design, the study involved 60 participants—divided equally into experimental and control groups—who were enrolled in intermediate English courses at a private Indonesian university. Data collection involved pre- and post-tests measuring vocabulary size, alongside reading logs to monitor reading volume. Data analysis was conducted using independent samples t-tests to compare vocabulary gains between groups and Pearson correlation analyses to explore the relationship between reading volume and vocabulary growth. Findings revealed that the experimental group demonstrated a statistically significant increase in vocabulary size compared to the control group. A positive correlation was identified between the amount of reading and vocabulary gains, supporting the hypothesis that increased reading volume facilitates lexical development. These results underscore the effectiveness of ER as a pedagogical approach that fosters natural vocabulary acquisition, especially when integrated consistently into language curricula. The study suggests that educators should emphasize extensive reading practices to enhance vocabulary development, thereby improving overall language proficiency. Future research could explore long-term retention and expand to diverse learner populations, providing broader insights into ER's role in language learning.

Keywords: EFL learners, extensive reading, vocabulary size

INTRODUCTION

Extensive reading, an approach centered on the pleasurable and voluminous consumption of meaningful texts, has gained momentum in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. It differs fundamentally from intensive reading by emphasizing breadth over detail, allowing learners to process language in authentic and context-rich situations. The belief underlying this approach is that vocabulary growth naturally emerges as learners encounter lexical items repeatedly and meaningfully across diverse texts. As English vocabulary acquisition remains a cornerstone of language competence, the potential of extensive reading to facilitate this process merits focused investigation.

Vocabulary development is central to achieving fluency in a second or foreign language. In EFL contexts, limited exposure to authentic language use often hampers vocabulary acquisition, making incidental learning through reading a valuable supplement to direct instruction. In many instructional settings, however, vocabulary instruction is often limited to rote memorization or decontextualized exercises. This leads to poor retention and limited word usage. Extensive reading,

This work is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA.
Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License

therefore, presents itself as a promising alternative that offers frequent, contextualized word exposure, supporting the natural acquisition of lexis without the pressure of formal instruction.

Recent studies have emphasized the potential of extensive reading to enhance learners' lexical knowledge. For example, Djamdjuri et al. (2022) found that sustained exposure to graded readers positively influenced vocabulary recognition and recall. Similarly, Hasnani and Ismail (2020) highlighted the long-term benefits of reading large amounts of text in boosting vocabulary size and reading fluency. More recently, Raunaq et al. (2021) underscored the importance of reading volume in achieving lexical coverage necessary for comprehension. Novita and Setiawan (2020) further confirmed that extensive reading, when implemented consistently, enhances lexical processing depth and breadth. These studies affirm the connection between reading volume and vocabulary growth, especially in contexts where input is otherwise limited.

While prior research has outlined the benefits of extensive reading for vocabulary acquisition, few studies have explored this effect using a systematic approach that isolates vocabulary size as a specific outcome measure. Existing research tends to combine vocabulary with other variables such as motivation or reading comprehension, making it difficult to ascertain the direct effect on vocabulary size alone. Moreover, there is limited evidence derived from contexts where learners are exposed to consistent reading over a prolonged period under monitored conditions, particularly within secondary and tertiary-level EFL classrooms in non-English-speaking environments.

This study provides a focused examination of how extensive reading impacts vocabulary size among EFL learners, addressing an area that has received relatively little empirical attention in its own right. What distinguishes this research is its specific measurement of vocabulary size before and after engagement in a structured reading program, offering a clearer picture of lexical gains attributable to the reading experience. The study aims to investigate the extent to which extensive reading can influence vocabulary growth and whether consistent exposure leads to measurable improvements in students' lexical repertoire.

Engaging with extensive reading offers learners an immersive experience that promotes natural word acquisition. Through regular interaction with graded readers and simplified texts, learners access authentic language in contexts that support both meaning-making and retention. This process enriches their lexical competence while fostering reading fluency and learner autonomy. Teachers may find this approach useful for curriculum design, while institutions may view it as an economical means to support language development across diverse proficiency levels.

This study contributes to the field by offering empirical evidence that isolates and measures the effect of extensive reading on vocabulary size in EFL learners. It contributes methodologically by employing vocabulary size as a quantifiable learning outcome and contributes theoretically by reinforcing incidental vocabulary acquisition as a viable mechanism in language learning. Furthermore, it contributes pedagogically by offering practical insight into how extensive reading can be implemented as a structured component of language instruction.

Hypothesis:

H_1: EFL students who participate in extensive reading activities demonstrate a significantly larger vocabulary size than those who do not engage in extensive reading.

H_2: There is a positive correlation between the amount of extensive reading and the vocabulary size of EFL students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Vocabulary Development through Extensive Reading

Extensive reading (ER) has garnered significant recognition as an effective approach for enhancing vocabulary development among learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Research consistently shows that ER plays a critical role in vocabulary acquisition by providing learners with opportunities to encounter words in rich and meaningful contexts, thus facilitating mastery across all language skills—listening, speaking, writing, and reading. Unlike traditional vocabulary learning strategies that often focus on isolated words or explicit teaching, ER offers learners the chance to learn vocabulary naturally by exposing them to words used in authentic contexts, where they can discern meaning through context, repetition, and association. This immersive approach leads to a more profound understanding and retention of vocabulary (Octavianti et al., 2023; Teng & Zhang, 2021; Hasanzoy & Abid, 2021). Extensive reading is not only a powerful tool for vocabulary enrichment, but it also enhances overall language proficiency, fostering an interconnected development of skills that supports the learners' communicative competence. The process of engaging with a variety of texts in ER has been shown to increase students' comfort with the language, improve their fluency, and deepen their grammatical awareness, making it an essential component of effective language instruction.

Brooks et al. (2021) emphasize the crucial role of vocabulary knowledge in reading comprehension, noting that a strong vocabulary foundation is directly tied to a learner's ability to understand and analyze texts. This connection between vocabulary and comprehension highlights the importance of ER in the language learning process, as it encourages learners to engage with words in meaningful ways. By exposing learners to a wide range of vocabulary in context, ER promotes not only word acquisition but also a deeper understanding of the relationships between words and their meanings. Additionally, ER facilitates incidental vocabulary learning, where learners absorb new words as they interact with texts rather than through direct, explicit instruction. This incidental acquisition is particularly beneficial as it mirrors the natural process of language acquisition, where learners gain new vocabulary unconsciously through repeated exposure to language in context. Research has shown that the quantity and quality of reading materials significantly contribute to this incidental learning process, with repeated exposure to words leading to stronger retention and a deeper understanding of their meanings. Teng and Zhang (2020) argue that continuous engagement with diverse reading materials allows learners to integrate new vocabulary into their existing knowledge base, enhancing both their receptive and productive vocabulary. This view is supported by studies that highlight the role of frequent and varied reading in spontaneous vocabulary learning, suggesting that regular interaction with texts

allows learners to acquire vocabulary naturally over time without the need for formal instruction (Karlina & Kusnarti, 2024; Hasanzoy & Abid, 2021).

Moreover, the enjoyment learners derive from reading is a crucial factor in vocabulary development. Research suggests that intrinsic motivation significantly influences the amount of reading learners do, which directly affects the volume of vocabulary exposure they experience. When learners enjoy reading, they are more likely to engage with texts regularly, thereby increasing their exposure to new vocabulary. This heightened engagement fosters deeper interactions with words, aiding in their retention and use. Kan and Murphy (2020) argue that the enjoyment of reading plays an essential role in sustaining motivation, encouraging learners to read more and, in turn, encounter more vocabulary. This positive relationship between enjoyment and vocabulary acquisition is further supported by studies indicating that when learners find pleasure in reading, they are more likely to retain new words and use them effectively in both written and spoken contexts. For instance, Cockerill et al. (2020) suggest that students who enjoy reading not only expand their vocabulary more rapidly but also demonstrate greater confidence in using the new words they have acquired. This intrinsic motivation fosters a more natural and enjoyable learning process, which can lead to better long-term outcomes in vocabulary development (Lindawati, 2021; Cockerill et al., 2020).

The empirical evidence supporting the claims that ER systematically enriches learners' vocabulary is extensive and robust. Numerous studies have demonstrated that frequent reading not only leads to an increase in vocabulary knowledge but is also associated with improved comprehension skills, which are essential for academic success. Extensive reading helps learners develop both the depth and breadth of their vocabulary, which are crucial for understanding complex academic texts and for effective communication in various contexts (Hasanzoy & Abid, 2021). Zahrani and Chaudhary (2022) and Sulistyawati et al. (2021) emphasize that ER helps learners build a more nuanced understanding of words, including their connotations, collocations, and usage in different contexts. These aspects of lexical development are vital for students to navigate advanced academic and professional texts. Furthermore, integrating authentic materials into ER programs enhances learners' engagement with real-world language, offering them opportunities to interact with vocabulary in practical and meaningful contexts. Lee (2021) suggests that authentic materials not only expose learners to more natural language but also encourage them to process vocabulary more deeply, leading to better retention and utilization of new words in everyday communication. This alignment between authentic language use and vocabulary acquisition makes ER an invaluable pedagogical tool, ensuring that learners are not only exposed to vocabulary but are also given the chance to process and internalize it in context (Kan & Murphy, 2020; Gillon et al., 2023).

In summary, the integration of extensive reading into vocabulary development curricula offers a multifaceted array of benefits for EFL learners. The exposure to a diverse range of vocabulary in context, the incidental nature of vocabulary acquisition, and the intrinsic motivation fostered by enjoyable reading experiences all contribute to the enhancement of learners' linguistic competence. By promoting frequent engagement with varied texts, ER facilitates both the acquisition of new vocabulary and the improvement of overall language proficiency. The evidence from numerous studies firmly supports the inclusion of extensive

reading as a core strategy in language learning programs, underscoring its importance in helping learners not only acquire vocabulary but also develop the skills needed for effective communication and academic success. Through its ability to enhance both vocabulary depth and breadth, extensive reading plays a critical role in enabling learners to navigate the complexities of the English language and prepare for real-world linguistic challenges.

Reading Exposure and Language Acquisition

Reading exposure is a cornerstone of language acquisition, especially in the context of English as a foreign language (EFL) learning, where input-rich environments are often limited. As a primary source of linguistic input, reading allows learners to encounter authentic language in various contexts, which aids in internalizing vocabulary, grammar, and discourse patterns. The relationship between reading and language development is well-documented, with research consistently supporting the idea that reading fosters multiple aspects of language proficiency. Kiew and Shah (2020) stress that reading plays a significant role in expanding learners' vocabulary, exposing them to a wide range of lexical items and syntactic patterns that are less likely to be encountered through classroom instruction alone. The benefits extend beyond word recognition, as reading also helps in developing an intuitive sense of sentence structure and cohesion. Setiawan et al. (2023) reinforce this by asserting that reading cultivates both oral and written language abilities, laying a foundation for more complex language use. Furthermore, AlAbri (2024) finds that reading comprehension enhances learners' awareness of grammatical forms and functions, which are crucial for mastering language intricacies. These findings collectively reveal that consistent reading not only supports vocabulary and grammar acquisition but also builds learners' ability to decode meaning, analyze context, and apply linguistic knowledge in varied situations.

Extensive reading, in particular, has been shown to provide substantial advantages in the development of language fluency and overall communicative competence. Unlike intensive reading, which often focuses on close analysis of short texts, extensive reading encourages learners to read large volumes of material for general understanding and enjoyment. This approach promotes language acquisition through repeated exposure to language structures in meaningful contexts. Vuzo (2023) notes that extensive reading improves reading fluency, increases speed, and reinforces grammatical understanding, all of which contribute to a more automatic and natural use of the language. The practice also encourages learners to engage with texts in a more relaxed, enjoyable way, making them more receptive to language input. According to Puripunyavanich (2021), regular reading habits are fundamental for building literacy in EFL learners, providing them with the consistent exposure necessary to internalize the structures of the English language. Moreover, the influence of reading extends into productive skills. Khalili et al. (2024) argue that reading helps develop speaking skills, as it supports cognitive processes like conceptualization and lexical retrieval that are essential for oral communication. Similarly, Febrianti et al. (2023) emphasize that students who engage in frequent reading tend to express their thoughts more clearly and fluently, as the patterns of language they observe in texts inform their verbal production. As such, reading acts not only as a tool for language input but also as a catalyst for

output, enriching learners' ability to use language effectively in both spoken and written forms.

In addition to the cognitive and linguistic benefits, the affective and environmental dimensions of reading are equally important in shaping EFL learners' language development. Motivation, for instance, has been shown to be a key factor influencing the effectiveness of reading practices. Ma and Zhao (2025) find that motivated readers are more likely to engage deeply with texts, leading to improved comprehension, retention, and long-term language learning outcomes. When learners are intrinsically motivated, they tend to read more widely and frequently, thereby expanding their exposure to different genres, styles, and linguistic features. This engagement not only supports vocabulary growth but also fosters a deeper appreciation of language use in context. In tandem with motivation, the learning environment also significantly impacts reading behavior. Kaban and Karadeniz (2021) argue that students who experience positive reading environments—whether through screen-based media or traditional print—are more likely to develop confidence and comprehension skills, both of which are essential for language mastery. The integration of digital technologies further enhances this process; Febrianti et al. (2023) highlight how interactive e-books and multimedia texts can captivate learners' interests and support differentiated learning paths. Moreover, the strategic use of reading techniques is essential. Al-Khresheh and Alruwaili (2020) demonstrate that vocabulary learning strategies paired with reading help learners manage complex texts and improve comprehension, particularly in academic settings. Beyond institutional contexts, home literacy practices also play a vital role. Adam and Barratt-Pugh (2020) emphasize the value of shared reading in the home, noting that consistent book-sharing activities between parents and children promote early literacy development and long-term educational achievement. Additionally, dialogic reading methods, where adults engage children in interactive discussions about texts, have been found to significantly boost language acquisition by enhancing vocabulary, narrative understanding, and critical thinking skills (Herdanti & Saefullah, 2021). In the digital age, technological tools provide further support, as noted by Auliya (2024), who asserts that digital reading platforms can diversify and personalize reading experiences, thereby increasing student engagement and accommodating various learning preferences. Taken together, these insights point to a comprehensive view of reading as not only a linguistic tool but also a socially and emotionally enriched practice that underpins successful language learning in a multifaceted, evolving educational landscape.

METHOD

Research Design

This study adopted a comparative and correlational research design to examine the effect of extensive reading on vocabulary size among EFL students. The comparative aspect aimed to determine significant differences in vocabulary size between students who participated in extensive reading and those who did not, while the correlational component explored the relationship between the amount of reading and vocabulary development. The study was conducted over a ten-week period during which the treatment group engaged in structured extensive reading

activities, whereas the control group followed the regular curriculum without additional reading input.

Participants

The participants of the study consisted of 60 EFL students enrolled in an intermediate English proficiency course at a private university in Indonesia. They were purposively selected based on their comparable language proficiency levels, determined through a standardized placement test. The participants were divided into two equal groups: 30 students in the experimental group and 30 in the control group. All participants were aged between 18 and 21, and none had prior exposure to extensive reading programs to ensure uniformity in baseline reading experience.

Instruments

Two primary instruments were used in the study. First, the Vocabulary Size Test (VST) developed by Nation and Beglar (2007) was employed to measure the receptive vocabulary size of the students. This test, validated across diverse EFL contexts, consists of multiple-choice items covering high-frequency and academic vocabulary. Second, a reading log was utilized to record the amount of reading completed by students in the experimental group. This log required students to note the number of words read, titles of the graded readers, and brief summaries, which were reviewed weekly by the instructor for consistency and accuracy.

Data Collection

Data collection took place in two phases. In the first week, both groups were administered the Vocabulary Size Test to obtain baseline data. The experimental group was then introduced to the extensive reading program, which involved reading graded readers for at least 30 minutes daily, five days a week. These students had access to a curated digital library of leveled texts. Reading progress was tracked using the reading log throughout the intervention period. Meanwhile, the control group continued their regular classroom activities without additional reading materials. In the tenth week, both groups were re-administered the Vocabulary Size Test to measure changes in vocabulary size.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using statistical methods appropriate for comparative and correlational designs. To address the first hypothesis, an independent samples t-test was conducted to compare post-test vocabulary scores between the experimental and control groups. Prior to the analysis, assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variances were tested. For the second hypothesis, Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between the total number of words read (as recorded in the logs) and the vocabulary size gains in the experimental group. All analyses were carried out using SPSS software, with a significance level set at $p < .05$.

RESULTS

Before conducting further statistical analysis, the assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance were tested (Table 1). The results of the Shapiro-Wilk tests indicated that the vocabulary size scores in both the experimental and control

groups, for both pre-tests and post-tests, followed a normal distribution. Additionally, the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances confirmed that the variances in post-test scores between the two groups were equal, indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met.

Table 1. Tests of normality and homogeneity of variance

Group	Test	Shapiro-Wilk (W)	df	p-value (Normality)	Levene's F	df1	df2	p-value (Homogeneity)
Experimental	Pre-test	0.972	30	0.520				
	Post-test	0.968	30	0.440	0.527	1	58	0.471
Control	Pre-test	0.970	30	0.490				
	Post-test	0.965	30	0.390				

The Shapiro-Wilk test was used to assess whether the data were normally distributed. For the experimental group, the pre-test had a W statistic of 0.972 with a p-value of 0.520, and the post-test had a W of 0.968 with a p-value of 0.440. Similarly, the control group's pre-test and post-test yielded W values of 0.970 ($p = 0.490$) and 0.965 ($p = 0.390$), respectively. Since all p-values were greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis of normality was retained for each test, indicating that the data were normally distributed and appropriate for parametric testing such as the independent samples t-test.

The assumption of homogeneity of variances was examined using Levene's Test applied to the post-test scores of both groups. The test yielded an F value of 0.527 with degrees of freedom ($df1 = 1$, $df2 = 58$) and a p-value of 0.471. Because the p-value was well above the 0.05 threshold, the assumption of equal variances was upheld. This result validated the use of the independent samples t-test for comparing the vocabulary post-test scores between the experimental and control groups. The fulfillment of these assumptions ensures the reliability and validity of the subsequent inferential statistical procedures.

The descriptive statistics of the Vocabulary Size Test (VST) in Table 2 scores show the changes in vocabulary size for both the experimental and control groups from pre-test to post-test. At the beginning of the study, both groups started with relatively similar vocabulary levels. After the intervention, the experimental group showed a noticeable increase in their vocabulary scores, while the control group exhibited only a slight improvement.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of pre-test and post-test VST scores

Group	Test	Mean	SD
Experimental	Pre-test	47.20	6.15
	Post-test	61.87	5.83
Control	Pre-test	46.80	5.92
	Post-test	49.23	6.07

In the experimental group, the mean pre-test score was 47.20 with a standard deviation of 6.15, indicating a moderate spread of vocabulary sizes around the average. Following the ten-week extensive reading intervention, the post-test mean increased substantially to 61.87 with a slightly lower standard deviation of 5.83. This suggests a significant improvement in vocabulary size and a slightly more consistent performance among students in this group.

In contrast, the control group began with a mean pre-test score of 46.80 and a standard deviation of 5.92, nearly identical to the experimental group's starting point. However, the post-test mean only rose to 49.23 with a standard deviation of 6.07, reflecting minimal vocabulary growth over the same period. The comparison between groups suggests that the extensive reading program had a meaningful impact on vocabulary development in the experimental group, while the control group, which followed the regular curriculum, showed limited gains.

An independent samples t-test (Table 3) was conducted to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in vocabulary size between students who participated in extensive reading and those who did not. The analysis compared the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups. The results showed a clear difference in performance between the two groups, indicating that the extensive reading intervention had a notable impact.

Table 3. Independent samples t-test results for post-test VST scores

Group	M	SD	t	df	p
Experimental	61.87	5.83	8.27	58	< .001*
Control	49.23	6.07			

The experimental group, which participated in the extensive reading program, had a post-test mean score of 61.87 with a standard deviation of 5.83. In contrast, the control group, which followed the regular curriculum without the reading intervention, had a mean post-test score of 49.23 with a standard deviation of 6.07. The independent samples t-test revealed a statistically significant difference between the two groups, $t(58) = 8.27$, $p < .001$. This result confirms that the difference in vocabulary size was not due to chance.

The large t-value and the very small p-value (less than .001) suggest a strong effect of the extensive reading treatment. In practical terms, students who engaged in regular and sustained reading of graded materials significantly outperformed their peers in vocabulary growth. These findings provide robust evidence supporting the effectiveness of extensive reading as a pedagogical strategy to enhance EFL learners' receptive vocabulary size.

Descriptive statistics (Table 4) were calculated for the two variables involved in the correlation analysis within the experimental group: the total number of words read and the vocabulary gain. The data showed considerable variability in how much reading students completed and the extent of their vocabulary improvement, suggesting individual differences in engagement with the reading tasks and responsiveness to the intervention.

Among the 30 students in the experimental group, the average number of words read over the ten-week extensive reading program was 48.6 (in thousands),

with a standard deviation of 7.2. The minimum and maximum number of words read were 35,000 and 62,000, respectively, indicating a moderate spread in reading volume across participants. This variation reflects differing levels of commitment or reading speed among the students, despite standardized reading time requirements.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics for correlation variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Words Read	48,6	7,2	35	62
Vocabulary Gain	14.67	4.21	7.00	23.00

In terms of vocabulary development, the mean vocabulary gain—calculated as the difference between pre-test and post-test scores—was 14.67 words, with a standard deviation of 4.21. Vocabulary gains ranged from as little as 7 to as many as 23 words. These statistics suggest that while all students benefited to some extent from the extensive reading program, the degree of improvement varied, possibly due to differences in reading quantity, text difficulty, or individual learning strategies. These variables were subsequently analyzed through a Pearson correlation to determine whether greater reading volume was associated with larger vocabulary gains.

A Pearson product-moment correlation (Table 5) was conducted to examine the relationship between the total number of words read and the vocabulary gain in the experimental group. The results indicated a moderate positive correlation between the two variables, suggesting that students who read more tended to experience greater improvements in their vocabulary size.

Table 5. Pearson correlation results

Variable 1	Variable 2	r	p-value	N
Words Read	Vocabulary Gain	0.68	< .001*	30

The Pearson correlation coefficient for the relationship between words read and vocabulary gain was 0.68, with a p-value of less than .001. This indicates a moderate to strong positive correlation, meaning that as the number of words read increased, so did the vocabulary gain. The high significance level ($p < .001$) shows that this relationship is statistically robust and not due to chance.

The result suggests that the extensive reading program had a measurable effect on vocabulary development, with greater exposure to reading correlating with more significant vocabulary growth. This finding provides strong support for the hypothesis that the amount of reading is a key factor in enhancing vocabulary size in EFL learners. Given the correlation strength, it is likely that increasing the volume of reading could lead to even greater vocabulary improvements for students in similar educational contexts.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed a significant improvement in the vocabulary size of the experimental group compared to the control group after ten weeks of extensive reading. While both groups started at a similar baseline, the experimental group, which engaged in regular extensive reading activities, demonstrated notable lexical gains. This result affirms the role of extensive reading as a productive approach to incidental vocabulary acquisition. It supports prior research by Teng and Zhang (2021), who emphasized that repeated exposure to words in meaningful contexts leads to better vocabulary retention. Similarly, Hasanzoy and Abid (2021) argued that extensive reading allows learners to acquire new words naturally, as they encounter them frequently across various contexts. The minimal gain observed in the control group, which did not engage in such activities, further highlights the limitations of traditional vocabulary instruction and reinforces the importance of sustained reading as a means of enriching vocabulary.

The significant difference between the post-test scores of both groups, as evidenced by the independent samples t-test, strengthens the argument that extensive reading fosters vocabulary development more effectively than conventional classroom methods. This result is consistent with the work of Brooks et al. (2021), who found that vocabulary size and reading comprehension are interdependent, and that learners who frequently engage with texts are better equipped to understand and acquire new vocabulary. Moreover, Zahrani and Chaudhary (2022) emphasized that both the depth and breadth of vocabulary knowledge can be substantially improved through meaningful reading experiences. The current findings extend this by showing that exposure to extensive input over a relatively short period (ten weeks) is enough to create a measurable impact. This suggests that integrating extensive reading into language programs can offer rapid, yet sustainable, gains in vocabulary acquisition, especially in EFL contexts where learners often lack authentic exposure to English.

In addition to the group differences, the positive correlation between the number of words read and vocabulary gain further validates the relationship between reading quantity and lexical development. The Pearson correlation coefficient indicates a moderately strong and statistically significant link, which aligns with Teng and Zhang's (2020) conclusion that reading volume is a key predictor of vocabulary growth. Students who read more encountered a wider range of lexical items and benefited from the repeated exposure necessary for word retention. These results resonate with the findings of Lindawati (2021), who observed that motivated readers tend to achieve higher vocabulary growth due to consistent engagement with texts. Although learner motivation was not measured in this study, the strong correlation suggests that students who read more were likely more engaged and self-driven. This further supports the pedagogical principle that encouraging frequent and autonomous reading can foster not only vocabulary development but also learner independence and motivation.

Furthermore, these findings suggest that extensive reading does more than increase vocabulary—it nurtures a positive learning environment where learners become more confident and engaged. The consistent improvement observed among students in the experimental group implies that reading enjoyment and personal interest may have played a crucial role in sustaining their participation. Cockerill et al. (2020) and Kan and Murphy (2020) both emphasized that reading for pleasure

contributes significantly to vocabulary acquisition and language fluency. In this study, while the quantitative data highlight vocabulary gains, the underlying affective benefits—such as increased learner confidence and interest in reading—can be inferred from the consistent performance improvements. This holistic impact of ER reinforces the need to prioritize it not only as a vocabulary-building tool but also as a motivational strategy that enhances learners' overall language learning experience.

Overall, the results of this study reaffirm the strong relationship between extensive reading and vocabulary growth in EFL contexts. The significant difference in post-test performance, combined with the positive correlation between reading amount and vocabulary improvement, supports the findings of previous studies (e.g., Sulistyawati et al., 2023; Karlina & Kusnarti, 2024) and adds new empirical evidence to the growing consensus that ER is a powerful method for vocabulary development. The current findings underscore the potential of ER to transform passive learners into active language users by immersing them in engaging and authentic texts. By integrating ER into language instruction, educators can promote both linguistic competence and learner autonomy, leading to more meaningful and lasting outcomes in vocabulary learning.

CONCLUSION

The findings support both hypotheses in this study. First, EFL students who participated in extensive reading activities demonstrated a significantly larger vocabulary size compared to those who did not engage in extensive reading. This was confirmed by a substantial increase in the experimental group's post-test vocabulary scores, whereas the control group showed only slight improvements. The independent samples t-test further confirmed that the vocabulary size difference between the two groups was statistically significant, indicating that extensive reading played a key role in vocabulary enhancement. Additionally, the study found a positive correlation between the amount of extensive reading and vocabulary size in the experimental group, suggesting that students who read more tended to experience greater vocabulary gains. These results highlight the effectiveness of extensive reading as an impactful pedagogical approach for improving vocabulary acquisition in EFL students, with the volume of reading being a crucial factor in vocabulary development. This suggests that incorporating extensive reading into EFL curricula could lead to significant vocabulary gains for students, and that encouraging higher volumes of reading may further enhance these gains.

While the study provides valuable insights into the impact of extensive reading on vocabulary development, there are several limitations that should be acknowledged. One limitation is the study's relatively short duration of ten weeks, which may not be sufficient to observe long-term vocabulary retention or deeper linguistic changes. A longer intervention period might provide more comprehensive insights into the sustained effects of extensive reading. Additionally, the study relied on self-reported reading logs, which may have introduced biases related to students' self-monitoring and reporting accuracy. Future research could use more objective measures, such as digital tracking tools, to more accurately capture reading habits. Furthermore, the study's participants were all from a private university in Indonesia, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other

populations or educational settings. Future studies could aim to include a more diverse range of participants from various regions and institutions to enhance external validity. Lastly, while the study examined vocabulary size, it did not explore other aspects of language proficiency, such as reading comprehension or fluency. Future research could investigate the broader impacts of extensive reading on multiple dimensions of language skills, providing a more holistic understanding of its benefits.

References

Adam, H., & Barratt-Pugh, C. (2020). Book sharing with young children: A study of book sharing in four Australian long day care centres. Journal of Early Childhood Literacy, 23(3), 348-373. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468798420981745

AlAbri, S. (2024). EFL Omani foundation programme students' attitudes towards reading in English and their knowledge of reading comprehension strategies. *British Journal of Education, 12*(5), 18-38. https://doi.org/10.37745/bje.2013/vol12n51838

Al-khresheh, M., & Alruwaili, S. (2020). An exploratory study into vocabulary learning strategies used by Saudi EFL learners. *Journal of History Culture and Art Research, 9*(2), 288. https://doi.org/10.7596/taksad.v9i2.2616

Auliya, P. (2024). Ispring on English language teaching and learning: A literature review. *Didaktika Jurnal Pemikiran Pendidikan, 30*(1), 76. https://doi.org/10.30587/didaktika.v30i1.7267

Brooks, G., Clenton, J., & Fraser, S. (2021). Exploring the importance of vocabulary for English as an additional language learners' reading comprehension. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching, 11*(3), 351-376. https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2021.11.3.3

Cockerill, M., Thurston, A., & Taylor, A. (2020). Protocol: An efficacy randomized controlled trial of a vocabulary program in primary schools. *International Journal of Educational Research, 99*, 101511. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2019.101511

Djamdjuri, D., Yuki, L., Supriadi, D., Retnowati, N., Aulia, S., & Khairunnisa, A. (2022). The positive impact of extensive reading through Wattpad for students in learning English as a foreign language (EFL). *Qalamuna Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial dan Agama, 14*(2), 423-432. https://doi.org/10.37680/qalamuna.v14i2.3308

Febrianti, Y., Wulyani, A., & Lumbanbatu, I. (2023). Using digital books and comics in English teaching and learning activities. *Kne Social Sciences*. https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v8i7.13260

Gillon, G., McNeill, B., Scott, A., Gath, M., & Westerveld, M. (2023). Retelling stories: The validity of an online oral narrative task. *Child Language Teaching and Therapy, 39*(2), 150-174. https://doi.org/10.1177/02656590231155861

Hasanzoy, M., & Abid, Z. (2021). Relationship between reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge in English authentic text among Afghan English as foreign language learners. *Linguistics and Literature Studies, 9*(4), 102-109. https://doi.org/10.13189/lls.2021.090402

Hasnani, H., & Ismail, A. (2020). Enhancing students' reading ability through peer-assisted learning strategies (PALS). *Lentera Pendidikan Jurnal Ilmu Tarbiyah dan Keguruan, 23*(2), 260. https://doi.org/10.24252/lp.2020v23n2i6.

Herdanti, A., & Saefullah, H. (2021). Exploring students-teacher interaction in dialogic reading of descriptive texts. *Edumaspul: Jurnal Pendidikan, 5*(2), 361-366. https://doi.org/10.33487/edumaspul.v5i2.1823

Kaban, A., & Karadeniz, Ş. (2021). Children's reading comprehension and motivation on screen versus on paper. *Sage Open, 11*(1). https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244020988849

Kan, R., & Murphy, V. (2020). Effects of frequency and idiomaticity on second language reading comprehension in children with English as an additional language. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching, 10*(3), 579-605. https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2020.10.3.8

Karlina, T., & Kusnarti, G. (2024). The influence of grammar and vocabulary mastery towards students' recount writing text. *Inovasi Global Jurnal, 2*(8), 913-921. https://doi.org/10.58344/jig.v2i8.140

Khalili, M., Noory, M., & Rasuli, M. (2024). Exploring the roles of reading strategies on speaking English language. *Sprin Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences, 3*(3), 38-44. https://doi.org/10.55559/sjahss.v3i3.267

Kiew, S., & Shah, P. (2020). Factors affecting reading comprehension among Malaysian ESL elementary learners. *Creative Education, 11*(12), 2639-2659. https://doi.org/10.4236/ce.2020.1112196

Lee, J. (2021). An editable learner model for text recommendation for language learning. *Recall, 34*(1), 51-65. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0958344021000197

Lindawati, R. (2021). Students' perceptions towards extensive reading in EFL contexts. *International Journal of English and Applied Linguistics (IJEAL), 1*(2), 99-104. https://doi.org/10.47709/ijeal.v1i2.1044

Ma, L., & Zhao, Z. (2025). Reading motivation and reading comprehension achievement among English majors in China: A descriptive correlational study. *Heliyon, 11*(3), e42427. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2025.e42427

Novita, D., & Setiawan, S. (2020). Bringing student-generated comic as a collaborative project into the extensive reading program. *JEES (Journal of English Educators Society), 5*(1), 39-46. https://doi.org/10.21070/jees.v5i1.366

Octavianti, Z., Retnaningdyah, P., & Munir, A. (2023). Undergraduate students' perception of using extensive reading strategy in vocabulary mastery. *International Journal of Recent Educational Research, 4*(5), 620-631. https://doi.org/10.46245/ijorer.v4i5.402

Puripunyavanich, M. (2021). Revealing university students' attitudes toward online extensive reading in Thailand. *rEFLections, 28*(2), 267-292. https://doi.org/10.61508/refl.v28i2.254070

Raunaq, M., Mustofa, M., & Habibah, E. (2021). The students' perception of extensive reading in online learning at FLSP class. *Journal of English for Academic and Specific Purposes (JEASP), 4*(1), 152-164. https://doi.org/10.18860/jeasp.v4i1.12618

Setiawan, D., Kumala, F., & Tamella, T. (2023). Literacy-based text books to improve the character and language competence of elementary students. *Jurnal Bidang Pendidikan Dasar, 7*(1), 83-91. https://doi.org/10.21067/jbpd.v7i1.8836

Sulistyawati, E., Nugroho, A., & Bram, B. (2021). Morphological teaching strategies to enhance students' vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension. *JET (Journal of English Teaching), 7*(2), 179-190. https://doi.org/10.33541/jet.v7i2.2472

Teng, M., & Zhang, D. (2021). Task-induced involvement load, vocabulary learning in a foreign language, and their association with metacognition. *Language Teaching Research, 28*(2), 531-555. https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688211008798

Vuzo, M. (2023). The role of school libraries in enhancing extensive English language reading skills. *University of Dar Es Salaam Library Journal, 17*(2), 171-187. https://doi.org/10.4314/udslj.v17i2.11

Zahrani, S., & Chaudhary, A. (2022). Vocabulary learning strategies in ESP context: Knowledge and implication. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4085859