

**USING EXTENSIVE READING TO DEVELOP
READING ABILITY AND MOTIVATION FOR NON – MAJOR ENGLISH STUDENTS
AT PEOPLE’S POLICE UNIVERSITY IN VIETNAM**

Abstract

Extensive reading was defined such as an approach to the teaching and learning language in which learners read large amount of books and lots of other materials that are appropriate to learners’ linguistic competence (Day & Bamford, 1998). The purposes of this paper were to investigate how the extensive reading can develop the reading ability, especially vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension in the text for non-majored English students in the People’s Police University (PPU). The second purpose of this study delved into the extensive reading can enhance their reading motivation as well as the learners’ attitudes toward the extensive reading. The study addressed a main research question and two sub-research questions which relate to the extensive reading: How does the extensive reading develop non-major English students’ reading ability, especially reading comprehension and improving vocabulary at the People’s Police University in Vietnam? Two sub-research questions: To what extent could extensive reading help to enhance students’ reading motivation? How do students feel about the use of extensive reading in their foreign language learning? The participants of this study were 42 second-year non-majored English students at PPU in Vietnam. The research instruments used in this study to collect data were three main instruments namely Reading Tests (including Pre-Reading Test and Post-Reading Test), Questionnaire, and Interview. The result of data analysis revealed the significant difference. The findings suggested that lecturers should help students to improve their reading ability, particularly reading comprehension and vocabulary learning by engaging them in a systematic extensive reading program.

Keywords: extensive reading, reading motivation, reading ability

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, many countries in the world consider English is the second or foreign language. Thus English is one of the most important subjects is taught as a second language or foreign language in schools and universities. The students need to improve English language skills to meet their needs and purposes.

English is taught as a foreign language at People’s Police University (PPU), because it is like many foreign language academic contexts in which English is required at university level. In order to use English effectively and successfully, non-major English students in universities need to develop all language skills, especially reading skills. Nevertheless, the most non-major English or foreign language students often use reading more frequently, because it is the most essential skill in their academic environment. If these students want to study in higher education, they need to have improvement English reading abilities.

According to the curriculum of People’s Police University (2010), English is a main subject in which non-major English students are taught in total 260 periods (a period is 45 minutes). There are three terms in their course. The first two terms are general English and

the last is English for Specific Purpose (ESP) – English for Police. Each of the students have to gain level A2 - following Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) at the end of the course. Thus, they need to read more and more to search information by reading texts from library and Interpol website to fulfill their study and their tasks. The sources on the Interpol website are produced in English and if students can read effectively, they will get more knowledge and can learn independently as autonomy learners.

However, most non-major English students do not read much; they get many problems and difficulties for reading in English. It was revealed in the lack reading skills in comprehending texts of students. They do not have enough vocabulary for reading. A lot of teachers in the universities complained that the non-major English students' reading ability was quite low; they had low motivation to read. Other problem, the teaching reading method in the class is based on translation method. This method does not encourage students' motivation to read because reading materials for students were chose by teachers, so students have to read the same books, or the same materials. This has led to low motivation to learn to read. In order to find effective techniques of the reading teachers to develop learners' reading ability and enhance their vocabulary more successfully is very necessary, I see the need to implement the extensive reading program since many researchers (Mason & Krashen, 1997; Takase, 2007; Mori, 2002; Hitosugi & Day, 2004; Pigada & Schmitt, 2006 and Nishino, 2007) point out that extensive reading is the most effective way for ESL and EFL learners to improve vocabulary and reading competence.

There are three purposes in this study. The first purpose, I'd like to find out if extensive reading can develop non-major English students' reading ability in researcher's university. The second, using extensive reading can motivate students in reading. The last, I want to investigate the students' opinions when they use the extensive reading.

From the purposes above, research questions in this study are:

How does the extensive reading develop non-major English students' reading ability and motivation at the PPU in Vietnam? To what extent could extensive reading help to enhance students' reading motivation? How do students feel about the use of extensive reading in their reading?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY

Definition and concepts about Extensive Reading

Day & Bamford (1998) defined Extensive reading in a second language as “an approach to the teaching and learning of second language reading in which learners read large quantities of books and other materials that are well within their linguistic competence”.

Other researchers, Richards and Schmidt (2002) determine "extensive reading is the activities of reading in quantity to gain a general understanding what is read" (p. 193). Similarly, (Jacobs, Rcnandy, & Rajan, 1999) defined extensive reading that "it is the independent reading with large quantity of book and material to get information or for pleasure.”

Day and Bamford (2002) proposed "top ten principles for teaching extensive reading" for definitions of extensive reading. First is easy material. Second is available reading material with wide range for topic. Third, learners can choose what they want to read. Fourth is reading as much as possible. Fifth is the reading for pleasure, information. Sixth, reading is its own reward. Seven is individual and silent reading. Next, learners were oriented and guided by teacher. The last, the role model in reading is the teacher. Among these principles, there are some important issues in ER have been addressed. They are the reading materials, reading amount, reading purpose, and the role of the reader and the language teacher.

The concepts of extensive reading in a foreign or second language can be summarized and illustrated by (Nation, 1997) "in extensive reading, learners can work individually and can read at their own level without depending on class program or curriculum, learners choose interesting materials or books to read, it provides the opportunity for learners read outside the classroom." According to (Krashen, 1982), extensive reading can provide comprehensible input language that learners read or hear what they can understand and improve language acquisition ability.

Benefits and Characteristics of Extensive Reading

Mason & Krashen (1997) describe that when foreign language students read level-appropriate materials for extensive reading, they can gain following benefits: improving their vocabularies and positive attitude in learning language; reading more fluently; improving their writing ability. In the same manner, Bell (1998) shows that the benefits of extensive reading in language learning as "enhancing learners' language competence and exposure to language; increasing vocabulary; building confidence with texts; development prediction skills".

The benefits of extensive reading are diversification and wide-ranging. Day & Bamford (1998), Nation (1997) give benefits of extensive reading included building automaticity of word recognition; Automatic recognition of a word allows lexical access; building vocabulary knowledge, awareness of grammatical structures, the ability to quickly, and accurately process sentence structures; enhancing learners' background knowledge; promoting learners' positive attitude toward reading or increasing learners' confidence and motivation to read.

Many studies on extensive reading have discussed about its benefits and they have been recognized by many researches. Day and Bamford (1998) agree that learners who read more and more they will become better and more confident readers, they will also improve their language skills such as reading, writing, listening and speaking abilities, and they can improve their vocabularies.

Reading Motivation and Extensive Reading

Motivation has an important role to gain successfully second language reading in the reading strategies. Motivation was defined as "what makes people do (or not do) something" Day and Bamford (1998). Day and Bamford then gave four major variables in the expectancy

model for second language reading motivation. The variables in the model include materials, reading ability, attitudes, and the sociocultural environment. The first is interesting reading materials which are at appropriate level for learners. The second, the learners who have low reading ability are not worry or afraid because they can read at levels appropriate to their reading ability. They can select material easily, and they can read from a large variety of materials that range from difficult to easy. The third, the free choice of reading material makes positive attitudes toward reading in the second language. The time is not limited for them to finish their reading; they can read inside or outside class. The last, the extensive reading program creates a sociocultural environment to encourage reading abilities. In the variables, materials and attitudes are the key variables to determine motivation in reading, attitudes and motivation can be developed positively using extensive reading.

There are some different opinions about reading motivation between first language and second or foreign language. In first language reading motivation was divided into eleven sub-components by Wigfield and Guthrie (1995). Among these sub-components included five in the competence and social aspects of reading as "reading efficacy, challenge, work avoidance, compliance, and social reasons". These others are in extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. While, second language or foreign language Mori (2002) showed that reading motivation can be redefined into four sub-components. They are intrinsic, extrinsic utility, attainment value of reading, and expectancy. In the research of Takase (2003), an extensive reading program was used to investigate foreign language reading motivation of Japanese university students. The results in the study showed that participants' motivation has changed greatly by using extensive reading.

METHODS

Participants

Forty two second- year non-major English students in course D21S at the People's Police University were selected to participate in this study. The site of my research was set at the People's Police University, my workplace. It is one of the biggest universities and it located in District 7 of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The PPU trains their students become police officers who work for the official organization that is responsible for protecting people and property, making people obey the law, and solving crime, and catching people who have committed a crime. The PPU provides graduate and postgraduate levels of jurisprudence for police force in Vietnam.

Research procedures

The study was conducted with 42 students who voluntarily participated in the extensive reading program. They are non-major English students in course D21S at PPU. These participants were divided into two classes (experimental class, and control class). The length of this study was 8 weeks.

The procedure for implementing the extensive reading program:

Before the program, students in both classes did the Pre-reading Test.

For experimental class:

- The students were introduced and provided a wide range of books available in library of PPU to support students' interest.

- At the beginning of the program, the participants were informed the objectives of this study and the procedure of the eight-week extensive reading program. Students will choose any books in the PPU's library they want to read by themselves. The length of the books in library may be not very long, so students would finish each book in 4 days. The students were supposed to read at least 10 books during the program.

- Students could read in their free time at school, but no need to finish at school depends on their reading pace. Then they also could continue their reading at their dormitory.

- After finishing each book, the students filled in the book report form. The students were encouraged to read books on their own for eight weeks by avoiding using dictionary or they could use a dictionary only when necessary.

- The students filled in the reading record sheet after they finished each book.

- The researcher spent an hour during the class time to ask all students to tell how they felt about the books, and documents they read and talk about their reading problems.

At the end of the program

The forty two participants were asked to do the Post-reading Test and they completed the Reading Motivation Questionnaire and then 9 students in the experimental class were interviewed by choosing randomly.

Data analysis

The data was analyzed by both quantitative and qualitative methods. To answer the research question, the data from the Pre-Reading Test and Post-Reading Test of the reading test were analyzed as follows: using Paired t-test of SPSS 16.0 for WINDOW to determine the Mean scores (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) in pre-reading test of both classes (experimental class and control class).

Then the results were compared to examine whether there was a statistically significant difference.

To answer the sub-research questions, the data from the RMQ will be analyzed by using descriptive statistics. The Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) in each class from the self-ratings of the Questionnaire were determined by using SPSS 16.0 for WINDOW to find the difference between the mean score from the self-ratings of RMQ. The RMQ comprised 30 items and based on four factors of the motivation related to reading: Intrinsic Value of Reading, Extrinsic Utility Value of Reading, Importance of Reading, and Reading Efficacy. The results revealed the difference between level motivation of experimental class before and after the extensive reading program.

The aims of the individual interview were to investigate more about the learners' opinions toward ER and to find out the students' attitudes on the ER. Nine participants (43%) out of 21 students (7 male and 2 female students) in experimental class were interviewed in depth and one to one at the end of ER program, and of course all the interviewees volunteered to give their opinions. It took about 10 minutes for each interview. All of the interviewees agreed to have the interviewer used digital media to record and take some notes during the interviews. In order to analyze the interviews, the interview verbatim was transcribed in a word document, each transcription was read carefully to find out the relations of these codes. Then, the data was classified.

The results from the interview questions related to students' attitudes toward extensive reading (ER) revealed that most of the students had a positive attitude toward ER by giving four similar answers that they had gains in vocabulary and comprehension, more confident in reading English. Their opinions also mentioned about their free time, it was used effectively, and they can read longer texts in English.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to examine if the extensive reading program can develop students' reading ability and enhance students' reading motivation. The purposes of study also find out the students' attitudes toward the extensive reading program. The results of the study from quantitative and qualitative data analysis are presented in this part. Particularly, the first section is presented the results of data analysis from students' scores of the pre-reading test and post-reading test, and then the discussions about results of pre- and post-reading test also are presented in this section. The results from the self-ratings of the Reading Motivation Questionnaire with the discussing are presented in the second section. The last section is presented the codes and the themes from the individual interview. The students' attitudes toward Extensive Reading are discussed.

Results and discussions from pre- and post-reading test

The analysis of the students' overall means of the pre-and post- reading test in both control class and experimental class, the reading tests were examined. First, the results from pre-reading test in both classes show the mean scores are about the same or approximate score. Second, the results from post-reading test are different between 2 classes. The mean scores of students' pre-and post- reading of control class and experimental class are presented.

Table 1:

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	pretest_ experiment_class	6,19	21	,680	,148
	pretest_ control_class	6,01	21	,726	,158

The mean scores of experimental class were 6.19 and 6.01 were the mean scores of control class. Table 1 shows the same between the mean scores of control and experimental

class. The results were compared in table 2, the mean was just 0.17 with the SD of 0.411 (t=1.987).

Table 2:

Pair 2	pretest_ experiment_class- pretest_control_class	Paired Differences					t	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			
					Lower	Upper		
		0,17	0,411	0,089	-,008	,366	1,987	,061

So, the analysis of results revealed that the mean scores of experimental class are nearly the same the mean scores of control class. That is to say, students' English competence or reading ability is the similarity at the time before ER.

Differences between the mean scores of students' posttest reading

Results of post-reading test in both classes, the mean scores of experimental class were 7.29 with SD of 0.578 and the mean scores of control class were 6.14 with SD of 0.752. Table 3 showed that the mean scores of experimental class were higher than control class.

Table 3

Pair 3		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
		Post-test_experiment_class	7,29	21	,578
	Post-test_control_class	6,14	21	,752	,164

The mean scores of control and experimental class after ER were compared in table 4, the result showed the difference of the mean scores (1.15) with the SD of 0.502 (t=10.521).

Table 4

Pair 4	Post-test _experiment_class Post-test _control_class	Paired Differences					t	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			
					Lower	Upper		
		1,15	,502	,109	,925	1,383	10,521	,000

As show in table 3 and 4, the results revealed students' reading ability in experimental class is higher than control class after ER.

Differences between the mean scores of students' pre- and post-reading test in experimental class

The further analysis of the mean score of the reading pretest and posttest after the ER showed that the students in the experimental class outperformed in their reading test. Table 5 showed the mean score of the posttest before ER was 7.29 with SD of 578 but the mean scores of pre-test after ER was 6.19 with SD of 680. It was higher than mean scores of the pretest.

Table 5

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 5	Post_test_experimental_class	7,29	21	,578	,12633
	Pre-test_experimental_class	6,19	21	,680	,148

Table 6 showed the differences between means of the reading test before and after the ER.

Table 6

Pair 6	posttest_experimental_class vs. pretest_experimental_class	Paired Differences				t	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			
					Lower			Upper
		1,10	,464	,101	,895	1,318	10,91	,004

Overall mean score was significantly higher than the former. That is to say, the results of the paired t-test indicated that overall the students have developed their reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge. The results mean that overall the students have made a substantial improvement in their reading ability.

According to the findings above, the students in the experimental class have improved their reading ability for both reading comprehension and vocabulary. It can be concluded that the extensive reading program can develop students' reading ability.

Results and discussions from the Students' Reading Motivation toward the ER

This section also aimed to answer another part of main research question "How does the extensive reading develop non-majored English students' reading ability and motivation at the PPU in Vietnam?" it focuses on developing non-majored English students' reading motivation with sub-research question "To what extent could extensive reading help to enhance students' reading motivation?"

The analysis of the students' scores of the pre-and post-reading motivation questionnaire were examined. The results show the differences between the mean scores of students' pre-and post- reading motivation in four variables: Intrinsic Value, Extrinsic Utility Value, the Importance of Reading and Reading Efficacy are presented.

The analysis of the self-ratings from the pre- and post- Reading Motivation Questionnaire in accordance with the four variables also showed that the students have made a significant change in each variable of the reading motivation after the ER as presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Categories of Reading Motivation	N	Before ER		After ER		t-value	p
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation		
Intrinsic Value of Reading	21	2.56	.87	4.23	.67	14.23	0.00
Extrinsic Utility Value of Reading	21	2.73	.89	4.09	.70	16.87	0.00
Importance of Reading	21	2.88	.86	4.42	.72	19.29	0.00
Reading Efficacy	21	2.16	.86	4.33	.71	20.04	0.00
Overall	21	2.58	.87	4.27	.71	17.61	0.00

As illustrated in Table 7, the overall means of the self-ratings from the Reading Motivation Questionnaire (RMQ) were classified into 4 categories. First, in terms of Intrinsic Value of Reading, the overall means of the self-ratings from the pre- and post-Reading Motivation Questionnaires were 2.56 and 4.23, respectively. Second, regarding Extrinsic Utility Value of Reading, the overall means of the self-ratings from the pre- and post-Reading Motivation Questionnaires were 2.73 and 4.09, respectively. The significant difference was found between the means of the pre- and the post questionnaires with SD of 0.89 and 0.70 ($t= 16.87$). Third, with regard to the Importance of Reading, the overall means of the self-ratings from the pre- and post-Reading Motivation Questionnaires were 2.88 and 4.42, respectively. The significant difference was found between the means of the pre- and the post questionnaires SD of 0.86 and 0.72 ($t= 19.29$). Last, in term of the Reading Efficacy, the overall means of the self-ratings from the pre- and post- Reading Motivation Questionnaire were 2.16 and 4.33, respectively. The significant difference was found between the means of the pre-and the post questionnaire SD of 0.86 and 0.71 ($t=20.04$). The results indicated that after participating in the ERP the latter mean scores of students' reading motivation in all 4 categories was higher than the former.

The analysis of these results revealed that four categories of reading motivation have effected students' reading motivation.

The evidences as mentioned previously can be concluded that the extensive reading program helps students in increasing their reading motivation and students reading.

Results and discussions from interview

The results from the interview questions which related to students' attitudes toward extensive reading (ER) show that most of the students had a positive attitude toward ER by giving similar opinions with valued positive reading experiences: The students had gains in vocabulary and comprehension texts, their confidence were increased in reading English, they were also happy to be able to read much and longer English texts, and their spare time was used effectively when they took part ER.

The first interview question is “Do you often spend a lot of time to read English books before this ER program? Why or why not?” All of the answers are ‘no’, the reasons they did not spend much time to read books in English are they though all English books were difficult with lots of new words made them not understand as the same books they had to read in their previous courses.

The second interview question is “How long do you spend time on extensive reading in a day?” Five out of nine students had spent more two hours a day; four out of nine students had spent over a half and an hour. The average time is approximate two hours which was used for ER.

The third interview question is “How many books have you read during 8 weeks?” Two out of nine interviewees read 12 books, three out of nine students read 9 books and four out of nine students read 8 books. So average books they had read are more than 9 books.

The forth interview question is “Do you finish all the books you read?” All of nine students (100%) answered ‘no’. Then they were asked an open-end question “Why?” They gave some reasons such as lack of time to read, some books were too thick.

The fifth interview question is “Do you enjoy using ER? Why? Or why not?” All students answered ‘yes’ They like ER because they could select their own books, these books helped them improve their vocabulary as they are exposed to more words.

The sixth interview question is “Do you think ER is very useful for you?” The answer was the same question 4th and 5th, 100% students answered ‘yes’. Then they were asked open-ended question “why do you think ER is useful for you?” Student L: “*ER helped me know a lot of vocabulary. I was very happy if I know the meanings of unknown words. I could remember the words after I looked up in the dictionary*” Student K: “*after reading I know more vocabulary. It made me improve my vocabulary.*” So, the vocabulary improvement is one of the usefulness for them.

Other usefulness is their interest and self-confidence in reading English was increased. Student N: “*I like reading English more*” Student M: “*I have read 12 books but I was able to finish 9. I was encouraged to read by ER. I can select my own books and I read on my own.*” Student B: “*Last term I didn't like to read, I rarely read an English book, but now I'm very happy and felt more confident in reading English*”

The last interview question is “Do you going to continue using ER in the next time?” All of students answered ‘yes’ and they wanted to use ER in their English courses.

These findings above maybe show that when students have a feeling of improvement in their reading ability, they tend to have a positive attitude toward what they have experienced. It is like this “**improved reading ability ⇔ positive attitude**”. That means their reading proficiency was improved a great deal, it held a positive attitude toward the reading English.

CONCLUSION

The findings in quantitative data showed that students have developed their reading ability. The mean scores of the posttest were significantly higher than the pretest. Surprisingly, they can read and understand the whole story though they do not know meaning of every word. It can be consisted that the extensive reading program helps students to improve their reading comprehension, and to gain more words. So, it can be concluded that the extensive reading program can improve students' reading ability.

As the findings from the Reading Motivation Question and interviews showed that the reading motivation has been significantly increased. The results of the students' motivation revealed that the ERP helps students in increasing their reading motivation. During the 8 weeks extensive reading program students enjoyed reading and felt comfortable to read. As a result it can be concluded that the students have been satisfied with the extensive reading program.

Biodata

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