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## Practical Strategies of Implementing Extensive Reading in English Language Teaching Classrooms

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**Annotation** *This article examines how Extensive Reading can be effectively used in English Language Teaching classrooms. ER helps improve vocabulary, reading fluency, and learner motivation. The study involved students from a university and a specialized boarding school in Gulistan. Findings show that students who engaged in ER activities can have increased reading speed, better vocabulary, and higher enjoyment when allowed to choose reading materials freely. However, many learners still rely heavily on translation, with fewer demonstrating higher-order reading skills such as inference and critical evaluation. The study underscores the importance of learner autonomy and the integration of diverse, interest-based texts to foster critical thinking and sustained engagement. It also discusses key challenges, including resource limitations and institutional barriers, while emphasizing the need for a balanced approach between extensive and intensive reading. The article offers practical insights for English language educators trying to implement ER effectively. Despite its benefits, ER faces challenges such as lack of resources and limited critical reading skills.*

**Keywords** *Extensive Reading, English language teaching, vocabulary acquisition, reading fluency, learner motivation, critical thinking, implementation.*

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## Практические стратегии внедрения экстенсивного чтения в учебный процесс преподавания английского языка

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**Аннотация** *В данной статье рассматриваются вопросы эффективного использования экстенсивного чтения (Extensive Reading – ER) в процессе преподавания английского языка. Экстенсивное чтение способствует расширению словарного запаса учащихся, повышению скорости чтения и усилению их мотивации. Исследование проводилось среди студентов университета и учащихся специализированной школы-интерната в городе Гулистан. Результаты показали, что студенты, вовлечённые в процесс экстенсивного чтения, демонстрируют более высокую скорость чтения, обогащение лексики, а также получают большее удовольствие от чтения, особенно при возможности самостоятельно выбирать тексты. Тем не менее, многие учащиеся по-прежнему в значительной степени полагаются на перевод, а такие навыки высшего порядка, как формулирование выводов и критическая оценка текста, встречаются среди них крайне редко. Исследование подчёркивает важность предоставления учащимся права*

самостоятельного выбора и привлечения их к чтению разнообразных материалов, основанных на личных интересах, для развития критического мышления и устойчивой мотивации. Также в статье обсуждаются основные проблемы, такие как нехватка ресурсов и институциональные ограничения, подчёркивается необходимость сочетания методов экстенсивного и интенсивного чтения. Статья содержит практические рекомендации для преподавателей английского языка по эффективному внедрению экстенсивного чтения. Несмотря на свои преимущества, данный подход сталкивается с такими трудностями, как дефицит учебных ресурсов и низкий уровень критических навыков чтения у студентов.

**Ключевые слова** Экстенсивное чтение, преподавание английского языка, усвоение словарного запаса, беглость чтения, мотивация учащихся, критическое мышление, внедрение.

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## Ingliz tili darslarida ekstensive o'qishni joriy etishning amaliy strategiyalari

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**Annotatsiya** Ushbu maqolada ingliz tili o'qitish jarayonida ekstensiv o'qish (Extensive Reading – ER) dan samarali foydalanish masalalari ko'rib chiqiladi. Ekstensive o'qish o'quvchilarning so'z boyligini oshirish, o'qish tezligi va motivatsiyasini kuchaytirishga xizmat qiladi. Tadqiqot Guliston shahridagi universitet va ixtisoslashtirilgan maktab-internat o'quvchilari ishtirokida olib borildi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatdiki, ekstensiv o'qish bilan shug'ullanishga jalb qilingan talabalar o'qish tezligi, so'z boyligi oshiradilar hamda o'zlari tanlagan matnlar asosida o'qish jarayonidan ko'proq zavqlanadilar. Shunga qaramay, ko'plab o'quvchilar hanuzgacha tarjimaqilishga kuchli tayanib qolganalar, ishtirokchilar orasida xulosa chiqarish va tanqidiy baholash kabi yuqori darajadagi o'qish ko'nikmalari kamdan-kam uchramoqda. Tadqiqot o'quvchining mustaqil tanlov huquqiga ega bo'lishi va qiziqishga asoslangan turli matnlarni o'qishga jalb qilish orqali tanqidiy fikrlash va davomli motivatsiyani shakllantirish muhimligini ko'rsatadi. Shuningdek, maqolada manbalarlar yetishmasligi va muassasaviy cheklovlar kabi asosiy muammolar muhokama qilinib, ekstensive va intensiv o'qish metodlarini uyg'unlashtirish zarurati ko'rsatilgan. Ushbu maqola ingliz tilini o'qitayotgan pedagoglar uchun ekstensiv o'qishni samarali joriy etish bo'yicha amaliy tavsiyalarni beradi. Mazkur foydali jihatlariga qaramay, ekstensiv o'qish bilan shug'ullanuvchilar resurslar yetishmovchiligi va tanqidiy o'qish ko'nikmalarining pastligi kabi qiyinchiliklarga duch kelmoqdalari.

**Kalit so'zlar** Ekstensive o'qish, ingliz tilini o'qitish, lug'at boyligini oshirish, o'qish tezligi, o'quvchi motivatsiyasi, tanqidiy fikrlash, joriy etish.

## Introduction

Extensive Reading (ER) has been widely used as a valuable approach in English Language Teaching (ELT) since it enhances language acquisition, reading fluency, and learner motivation. Extensive reading offers learners the opportunity to develop language skills through exposure to a wide range of texts. Unlike intensive reading, which focuses on close analysis of short passages, ER encourages students to read large amounts of material for pleasure and comprehension. Over the past few decades, researchers have investigated its effectiveness, implementation strategies, and challenges in language learning environments. This article explores the practical aspects of ER in ELT classrooms, examining its benefits, strategies for integration, and potential challenges. By reviewing existing literature and real-world applications, this discussion aims to provide educators with insights into how ER can enhance language learning and create an engaging classroom experience.

## Literature review

According to L. Kelly the term "extensive reading" was first used in the context of foreign language teaching by Harold Palmer in 1969. Palmer described extensive reading as a method where students read a large amount of material quickly, both for language learning and enjoyment (Kelly, 1969). Another key figure in the development of extensive reading methodology was Michael West, who referred to it as "supplementary reading" in 1955 (West, 1965). Extensive reading is also called pleasure reading, free voluntary reading, and sustained silent reading by E. Jean and R. Day (Jean & Day, 2016). Richard Day and Julian Bamford formalized ER principles, proposing that

learners should read large amounts of text at an appropriate level to develop fluency and comprehension. According to R. Day and J. Bamford, successful extensive reading is guided by several core principles:

1. Reading materials should be simple and accessible for learners.
2. There should be a wide selection of texts covering diverse subjects.
3. Students are encouraged to select reading materials based on their own interests.
4. The quantity of reading should be maximized to promote improvement.
5. Reading is primarily done for enjoyment, gaining knowledge, and overall comprehension.
6. The act of reading is considered valuable in itself.
7. Readers are generally expected to maintain a quicker reading pace.
8. Reading is done silently and individually.
9. Instructors provide initial direction and ongoing support.
10. Teachers model good reading habits by being readers themselves (Day & Bamford, 2002).

Many studies highlight the benefits of ER in improving vocabulary acquisition, reading speed, and motivation. For example, P. Nation argues that ER facilitates incidental vocabulary learning (Nation, 2001). W. Grabe and F. Stoller suggest that ER develops learners' ability to process texts more efficiently (Grabe & Stoller, 2011). Additionally, research by W. Renandya and G. Jacobs demonstrates that ER enhances language proficiency by fostering positive reading habits (Renandya & Jacobs, 2016).

## Research methodology

In this study a qualitative and descriptive research design was used to examine the practical aspects of Extensive Reading (ER) in English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms. The methodology integrates both theoretical

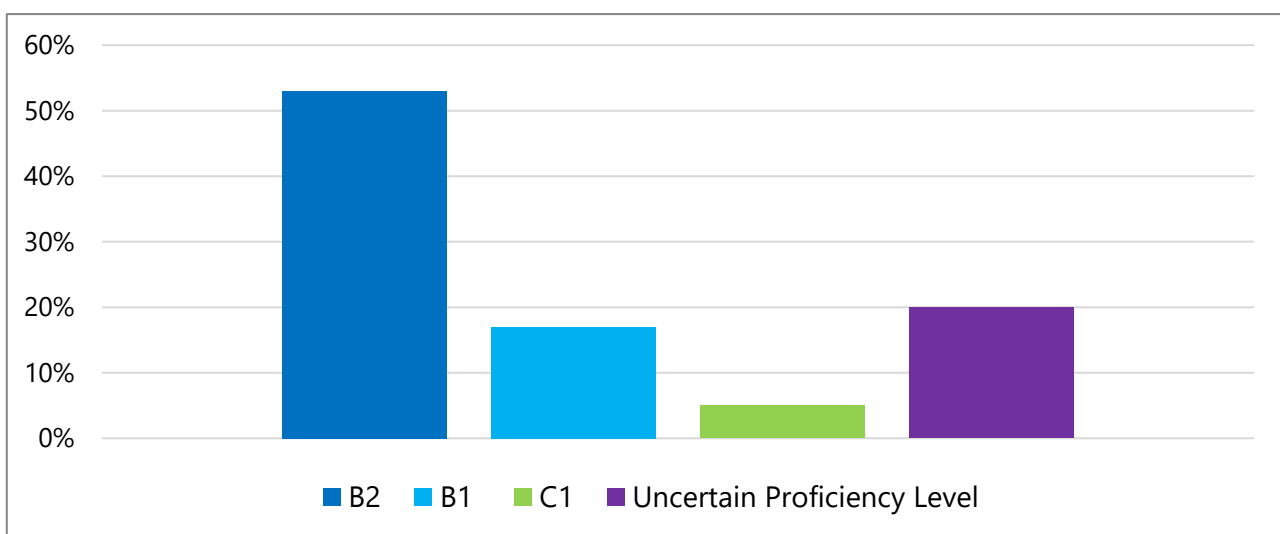
analysis and practical applications, drawing upon existing literature and classroom-based observations to explore the effectiveness of ER. The study focuses on ELT classrooms in two educational settings, including Gulistan specialized boarding school and Gulistan State University. The participants include 64 students who engage in ER practices. Structured interviews with students helped to gather data about practical application of ER in ELT classrooms in two different leveled educational establishments. By monitoring reading activities, book selection processes, and student engagement real observations have appeared. While the study provides valuable insights into ER, potential limitations include:

- Variability in classroom environments and learners' backgrounds.

- The challenge of generalizing findings across different educational institutions.
- Constraints in assessing long-term impacts of ER on language proficiency.

### Results and discussions

The participants' English proficiency levels were distributed as follows: out of 64 participants, 34 (53%) self-assessed their proficiency as Upper-Intermediate (B2). A total of 11 (17%) participants identified themselves as having Intermediate (B1) proficiency. Meanwhile, 6 participants (5%) reported possessing Advanced (C1) or higher proficiency, indicating that the proportion of students with high-level language competency remains relatively low. Additionally, 13 (20%) participants stated that they were uncertain about their proficiency level (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Participants' Language Proficiency Indicator

This distribution suggests that the majority of students have a functional command of English for communication and text comprehension (B2 level). Consequently, they are well-prepared to engage with more complex and critical-thinking-oriented materials through extensive reading.

Students who engaged in ER showed noticeable improvements in vocabulary retention and usage. Learners demonstrated increased reading speed and comprehension over time. ER helps develop fluency by

exposing students to large amounts of text. Interviews indicated that students enjoyed ER when they had autonomy in selecting reading materials.

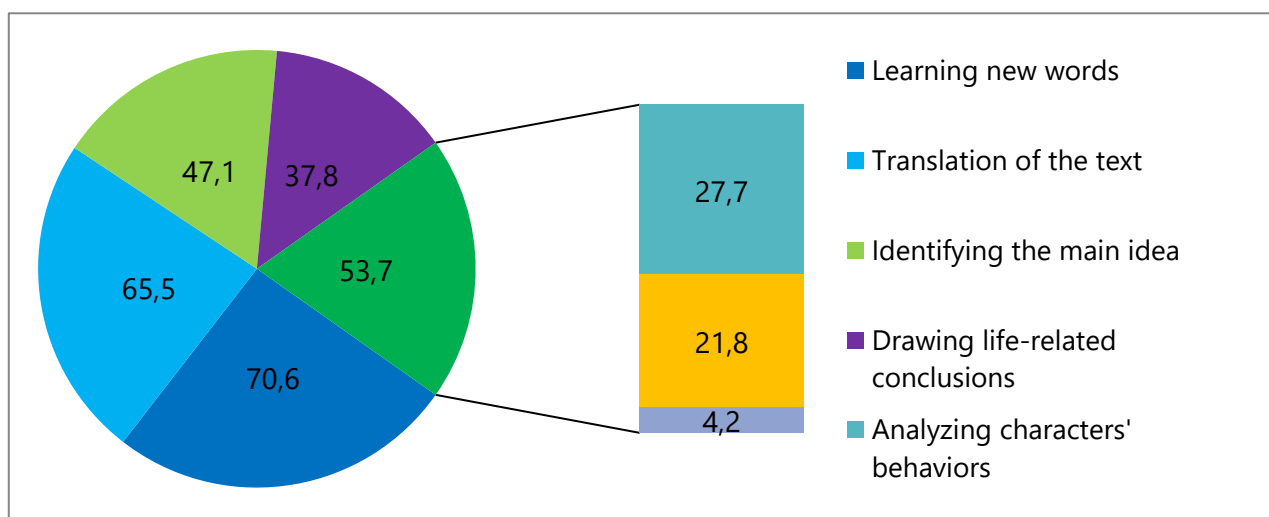
Following books have been mostly selected: *The Secret Garden*, *Jane Eyre*, *Lady Susan*, *It Ends with Us / It Starts with Us*, *Harry Potter*, *Sherlock Holmes*, *The Little Prince*.

The types of activities students engage in while working with English texts also reflect their approach to reading and learning objectives. Since multiple selections were

possible, the results are expressed in percentage indicators. According to the analysis, learning new words (70.6%) was identified as the primary activity in working with texts. This result suggests that vocabulary acquisition still remains a primary goal for learners when engaging with texts, aligning with common pedagogical practices in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) contexts. A significant proportion of students (65.5%) reported translating texts, indicating that translation continues to play a central role in text comprehension, especially among learners who may rely on their first language for meaning-making. However, excessive focus on translation may limit the development of inferencing and analytical skills. Interestingly, only 47.1% of students concentrated on identifying the main idea, which is a crucial skill in developing reading comprehension and critical thinking. Moreover, 37.8% of students drew life-related conclusions from the texts, reflecting an initial step toward applying textual content to real-world contexts - a key

component of higher-order thinking. Meanwhile, activities requiring deeper analysis, such as analyzing characters' behaviors (27.7%) and evaluating the author's opinion (21.8%), were less frequently practiced. This may reflect a gap in instructional focus on interpretive and evaluative reading skills, which are essential for fostering critical thinking. Finally, only 4.2% of students mentioned engaging in other activities, which may indicate limited exposure to diverse text-based strategies such as predicting, summarizing, or debating ideas. (see figure 2).

These findings suggest that while surface-level engagement with texts (e.g., vocabulary and translation) is common, there is a need to promote deeper, more analytical reading practices in English language classrooms. Encouraging students to interpret, question, and critique what they read may enhance both language proficiency and critical thinking abilities.



**Figure 2.** *Students' Engagement in Text-Related Tasks*

Another important aspect observed during the study was the level of learner autonomy in selecting reading materials. When given the opportunity to choose texts based on their personal interests, a significant number of students showed increased motivation and

deeper engagement with the content. This shift was particularly evident among first-year university students, who were more likely to explore authentic texts such as short stories, news articles, or online blogs when not restricted by a fixed syllabus.

In contrast, pupils from the specialized boarding school tended to rely more heavily on teacher-selected texts, often limiting their exposure to a narrow range of vocabulary and ideas. While this ensured uniformity, it sometimes constrained critical engagement and creativity in post-reading activities.

These findings highlight the need to balance guided reading with student choice in order to foster both language development and independent thinking. Providing a curated list of varied texts and encouraging learners to reflect on their reading experiences can promote a more meaningful and personalized learning process.

The study also revealed that learner motivation significantly increased when students engaged in extensive reading activities that aligned with their personal interests. Participants who were allowed to choose texts freely reported feeling more emotionally connected to the material, which, in turn, fostered greater enthusiasm for reading in English.

Notably, students mentioned that reading stories or articles related to real-life topics, such as travel, relationships, or technology, helped them see English as a practical tool, rather than just an academic requirement. This intrinsic motivation played a key role in encouraging students to read more frequently and reflect more deeply on what they had read.

In contrast, when reading materials were imposed without consideration of learners' preferences, students demonstrated lower levels of engagement and treated reading as a mere task to complete. This suggests that motivation is closely linked to autonomy, relevance, and the perceived usefulness of the reading material.

Therefore, integrating learner-centered reading options into English language instruction can enhance both motivation and learning outcomes, especially when paired

with reflective and interactive follow-up activities.

Despite its advantages, ER faces challenges such as student resistance, lack of resources, and institutional constraints. Teachers must address motivational barriers to sustain ER programs, by highlighting the importance of integrating ER with intensive reading practices.

### **Conclusion**

Extensive Reading has proven to be a powerful tool in English Language Teaching, offering meaningful opportunities for learners to improve their language skills through sustained and engaging reading experiences. The findings from this study, supported by literature and real classroom observations, confirm that ER not only enhances vocabulary acquisition, reading speed, and comprehension but also boosts learners' motivation and autonomy. The practical implementation of ER in classrooms at different educational levels in Gulistan demonstrates that when students are given the freedom to choose materials aligned with their interests, their engagement and language development improve significantly. However, to maximize the benefits of ER, teachers must play an active role as facilitators and reading role models. While vocabulary learning and translation remain dominant activities among students, there is a clear need to promote deeper cognitive engagement with texts through character analysis, opinion evaluation, and critical reflection. Addressing challenges such as resource availability, student motivation, and institutional support is essential for the sustainability of ER programs.

Ultimately, integrating ER with other teaching approaches can create a balanced and learner-centered language learning environment. By adopting practical strategies and fostering a positive reading culture, educators can unlock the full potential of ER and enrich the language learning journey of their students.

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