

# THE INFLUENCE OF EXTENSIVE READING ON VOCABULARY RETENTION IN EFL LEARNERS AT DONG NAI TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY

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## GENERAL INFORMATION

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*Vocabulary retention.*

## ABSTRACT

This study looks into the impact of extensive reading on vocabulary retention among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students at Dong Nai Technology University. A total of 137 non-English major students took part in an eight-week extensive reading program that included graded books and self-selected online reading resources. A pre- and post-test design assessed vocabulary retention, while reflective journals and a post-treatment questionnaire explored students' perceptions of extensive reading. Quantitative data were analysed using paired-sample t-tests, while qualitative responses were thematically investigated. The findings show a significant improvement in students' vocabulary retention after prolonged reading exposure, which is consistent with meta-analytic data indicating extended reading promotes vocabulary learning in EFL contexts (Saito & Webb, 2020; Yamashita, 2013). Furthermore, the students reported improved motivation and confidence in acquiring new vocabulary through contextualised reading, which supports previous research that suggests repetition and context are critical for long-term vocabulary retention (Thongsan, 2023; Waring & Takaki, 2003). These findings confirm the usefulness of extended reading as an effective instructional method in EFL environments, implying that prolonged reading activities should be included in university English programmes to improve vocabulary development. The pedagogical implications and directions for future research are discussed.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the study

Vocabulary knowledge is an important component of second language ability and is usually recognized as a prerequisite for successful language learning (Nation, 2013). Without a sufficient vocabulary, students fail to grasp texts and participate successfully in academic or real-world communication settings. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, particularly in Vietnam, vocabulary retention remains a persistent challenge for university-level learners because classroom instruction frequently emphasizes memorization and testing over natural language exposure (Nguyen & Nation, 2011; Vu & Peters, 2022). As a result, many learners have low long-term recall and struggle to apply terminology in authentic communication scenarios.

Extensive reading is increasingly regarded as a successful input-based technique that exposes learners to meaningful language and contextualized vocabulary use (Day & Bamford, 2002; Elgort & Warren, 2014). It promotes reading huge volumes of comprehensible literature at or somewhat below learners' competency levels, allowing acquisition to occur by chance rather than through direct instruction. Previous research indicates that extended reading promotes vocabulary growth, reading fluency, and learner motivation (Yamashita, 2013; Saito and Webb, 2020). Furthermore, rich contextual exposure promotes lexical retention by recycling vocabulary in meaningful contexts (Waring & Takaki, 2003).

Despite global evidence supporting substantial reading, actual research on vocabulary retention in Vietnamese tertiary EFL environments is scarce, particularly in technologically oriented institutions. As a result, this study examines the impact of extensive

reading on vocabulary retention among 137 EFL students at Dong Nai Technology University. The findings are intended to provide pedagogical insights into how extensive reading might be included into curriculum design to improve vocabulary acquisition outcomes and encourage independent language development among Vietnamese university students.

### 1.2. Literature review

#### 1.2.1. Extensive reading in EFL contexts

Reading a lot of readable books for pleasure, general comprehension, and language exposure rather than for specific linguistic analysis is known as extensive reading (ER). Through frequent and contextualized exposure to lexical items, ER is a potent source of meaningful information that supports language development, according to a large body of research (Waring & Takaki, 2003; Nation, 2015). ER has been repeatedly linked to gains in vocabulary expansion, reading fluency, and learner motivation in EFL contexts (Yamashita, 2013; Elgort & Warren, 2014).

Vocabulary training has historically depended on rote memorization and translation-based methods in many EFL contexts, including Vietnam. These methods frequently result in limited long-term and fractured lexical information, which restricts learners' ability to communicate (Nguyen & Nation, 2011; Vu & Peters, 2022). In light of this, ER has been suggested as an additional teaching strategy that promotes learner autonomy and engagement while offering prolonged exposure to lexical elements in relevant settings (Jeon & Day, 2016; Saito & Webb, 2020).

#### 1.2.2. Extensive reading and vocabulary retention

Long-term retention is mostly dependent on frequent exposure to words in context, according

to research on ER and vocabulary acquisition. By encouraging lexical recycling, contextual inferencing, and the slow consolidation of form-meaning relationships, ER facilitates incidental vocabulary learning from a cognitive standpoint (Webb & Chang, 2015; Schmitt, 2019). Learners exposed to extensive reading programs typically have better vocabulary retention, according to empirical studies comparing ER with only explicit teaching (Waring & Takaki, 2003; Thongsan, 2023).

Meta-analytic research, which synthesizes results from individual studies, shows that ER leads to significant incidental vocabulary gains, especially when students read frequently, choose texts appropriate to their level of proficiency, and come across target words several times (Yamashita, 2013; Saito & Webb, 2020). However, research indicates that vocabulary retention results are not consistent and are influenced by variables like reading volume, learner motivation, and level of text engagement (Schmitt, 2019; Webb & Chang, 2015). These results emphasize the necessity to investigate not only the effectiveness of ER but also the motivational and instructional circumstances that lead to the best retention.

### ***1.2.3. Motivation, self-determination theory, and extensive reading***

One important mechanism that underlies ER's efficacy has been found to be motivation. According to Self-Determination Theory (SDT), students' continued engagement is fueled by the fulfillment of three fundamental psychological needs: relatedness, competence, and autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 2000). By enabling students to choose reading resources according to their own interests, succeed with texts that are appropriate at their level, and, in certain instructional designs, share their reading experiences with others, ER closely corresponds with this concept

(Day & Bamford, 2002; Takase, 2013).

Autonomy-supportive ER contexts have been shown to improve reading persistence and intrinsic motivation, both of which lead to improved vocabulary outcomes (Yamashita, 2013; Ryan & Deci, 2020). According to Nguyen and Boers (2021), learners who believe they are proficient readers are more likely to read for extended periods of time and analyze words more thoroughly, which helps with retention. These results imply that motivating factors are essential to comprehending how ER facilitates language acquisition over time rather than being incidental.

### ***1.2.4. Previous studies***

When considered collectively, prior research offers strong proof that reading widely improves vocabulary acquisition and retention through contextual learning, repeated exposure, and increased learner motivation. ER has been shown to have beneficial impacts on incidental vocabulary learning and reading development in a variety of EFL environments, such as Japan, Taiwan, and Vietnam (Waring & Takaki, 2003; Webb & Chang, 2015; Vu & Peters, 2022). The overall efficacy of ER when used methodically and maintained over time is further supported by meta-analyses (Jeon & Day, 2016; Saito & Webb, 2020).

An increasing amount of research has shown how extensive reading (ER) benefits EFL learners' vocabulary growth and retention. Waring & Takaki (2003) discovered that although retention varied according to the frequency of contacts with target words, Japanese university students were able to recall new vocabulary using graded readers. The significance of plentiful input was also highlighted by Webb and Chang's (2015) findings that Taiwanese learners who participated in ER had noticeably larger

vocabulary increases than those who received only explicit instruction.

These findings are further supported by meta-analytic research on Extensive Reading (ER). For instance, Jeon and Day demonstrated that ER significantly improves both vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension across diverse learning contexts. Similarly, Saito and Webb showed that sustained engagement in ER promotes incidental vocabulary retention over time. In addition, Yamashita found that ER enhances vocabulary acquisition through natural exposure, highlighting the crucial role of repeated lexical encounters in long-term memory consolidation. Together, these meta-analytic and empirical findings reinforce the effectiveness of ER in fostering durable vocabulary development.

In the Vietnamese context, research has started to show how important ER is for English language learners in higher education. According to Nguyen and Nation (2011), Vietnamese students need exposure to relevant texts and significant vocabulary support in order to develop lexical competence. More recently, Vu and Peters (2022) discovered that reading-based exposure improves Vietnamese EFL learners' incidental vocabulary acquisition, highlighting the necessity of integrating ER into university courses. Additionally, Nguyen and Boers (2021) observed that ER programs that promote autonomy help Vietnamese students, bolstering the motivational mechanisms outlined in Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2020).

There are still a number of gaps in the literature despite these contributions. First, a lot of research focuses on vocabulary acquisition without doing enough research on long-term retention or the motivational factors that keep learning going after the intervention. Second, only a small number of empirical studies have

specifically incorporated SDT variables into examinations of ER and vocabulary retention, despite the fact that SDT has been extensively applied to language learning motivation. Third, the majority of research in Vietnamese higher education has focused on English majors, leaving non-majors underrepresented, especially when it comes to how ER affects learner motivation and vocabulary retention.

### ***1.2.5. Theoretical Framework***

In order to explain how extended reading (ER) promotes vocabulary retention in EFL situations, this study uses an integrated theoretical framework that combines input-based, cognitive, and motivational viewpoints. Learner motivation, depth of lexical processing, and recurrent exposure to lexical information are thought to interact to produce vocabulary retention.

From an input-based standpoint, ER offers a lot of comprehensible input that makes it possible to repeatedly come across vocabulary items in relevant circumstances. Such exposure is thought to encourage incidental vocabulary acquisition and the progressive consolidation of lexical knowledge, in line with Krashen's Input Hypothesis. The choice of graded reading materials in this study reflects this premise, which is empirically investigated using word retention tests.

Furthermore, it is suggested by cognitive models of vocabulary learning that the depth of semantic processing determines long-term retention. By incorporating lexical items into lengthy discourse, ER promotes semantic elaboration and contextual inference over rote memorization. This viewpoint offers a foundation for analyzing variations in retention results seen in the numerical results.

Self-determination theory (SDT), which highlights the importance of autonomy,

competence, and relatedness in maintaining learning behavior, serves as the framework's motivational foundation. By giving students a choice, encouraging effective comprehension, and creating enjoyable reading experiences, ER satisfies these needs. SDT is utilized in this study to explain differences in vocabulary retention among learners and to interpret qualitative data pertaining to learner engagement. By combining these viewpoints, the framework methodically connects theoretical ideas to the empirical data, allowing for a thorough understanding of how and why extensive reading supports EFL learners in vocabulary retention.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1. Research questions

This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of extensive reading on vocabulary retention among EFL learners. The research was guided by the following questions:

- (1) To what extent does extensive reading improve vocabulary retention among non-English-majored students at Dong Nai Technology University?
- (2) What are students' perceptions of the extensive reading program in relation to vocabulary learning and motivation?

### 2.2. Participants

The study included 137 second-year non-English majors participating in General English classes at Dong Nai Technology University during the academic year 2024-2025. Convenience sampling was used because of accessibility and course structure. The participants had studied English for at least six years at the secondary level and had pre-intermediate skill levels, as indicated by institutional placement examinations. Participation was optional, and informed consent was acquired. The study was conducted with

great adherence to ethical principles such as anonymity and confidentiality.

### 2.3. Research Instruments

To address the research objectives, multiple instruments were employed and described as follows:

#### *Vocabulary Tests (Pre-test & Post-test)*

The vocabulary pre-test and post-test, which had 40 multiple-choice questions aimed at high-frequency vocabulary levels (1,000–3,000 word bands), were modified from the Vocabulary Size Test (Nation & Beglar, 2007).

- Format: 40 questions with four possible answers and one right response.
- Content areas: common subjects (health, education, technology, and the environment).
- Difficulty: piloted with thirty similar students to ensure clarity and aligned to the CEFR B1 level.
- Reliability: Good internal consistency was indicated by the pilot tests Cronbach's alpha of 0.86.
- Validity: Two English lecturers evaluated each item for subject relevance; disagreements were handled until they were fully agreed.

#### *Questionnaire*

Eighteen items from validated Extensive Reading Motivation Scales made up the post-treatment questionnaire (Takase, 2013; Yamashita, 2013).

- Structure:
  - + Ten Likert-scale questions about attitudes and motivation
  - + Four questions about perceived vocabulary improvements
  - + Four questions about independence and pleasure

- 5-point rating system Likert scale (5 = strongly agree; 1 = strongly disagree).

- Reliability: This study's Cronbach's alpha is .91, indicating outstanding internal reliability.

- Validity: Two prominent Applied Linguistics instructors conducted expert review to guarantee content validity.

## 2.4. Data Collection Procedures

The intervention was carried out over eight weeks. During the first week, participants finished the vocabulary pre-test. Students were introduced to the lengthy reading program, guided in selecting graded readers, and instructed to read for 45-60 minutes per week. Students read independently and completed weekly reflective notebooks from weeks 2 to 7. In week 8, participants finished the vocabulary post-test and a perception questionnaire. All data were collected in classrooms and via the university's learning management system.

## 2.5. Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS. A mixed-methods approach was employed to gain a thorough grasp of the impacts of extended reading on vocabulary retention and learner perceptions. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data enabled triangulation, which improved internal validity and reduced potential bias in interpretation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Quantitative data from the vocabulary pre-test, post-test, and perception questionnaire were statistically examined to assess improvements in vocabulary knowledge and students' attitudes about the intensive reading intervention. Meanwhile, qualitative data from weekly reflective notebooks and open-ended questionnaire items were analyzed thematically to discover emergent patterns in students' learning experiences, motivation, and engagement with reading materials. The

combined findings provided a comprehensive overview of both measured learning outcomes and subjective learner experiences throughout the intervention.

## 2.6. Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data were evaluated with SPSS version 26. To ensure data integrity, data screening methods such as accuracy checks, missing data inspection, and normalcy testing were carried out before to the analyses. Descriptive statistics (mean, median, and standard deviation) were used to compare participants' vocabulary performance before and after the intervention. A paired-sample t-test was used to determine whether the increase in vocabulary scores between the pre-test and post-test was statistically significant at the 0.05 confidence level. Effect size (Cohen's d) was also determined to quantify the level of improvement, allowing for a more meaningful interpretation of learning gains.

The questionnaire data was analyzed using frequency counts and percentage distributions to determine students' opinions of the comprehensive reading program in terms of interest, perceived vocabulary development, confidence, and motivation. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to determine the questionnaire's internal reliability. When appropriate, Likert-scale responses were translated into composite scores to help analyze trends in learner attitudes about lengthy reading.

## 2.7. Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data from weekly reflective journals and open-ended questionnaire responses were analyzed using thematic analysis in accordance with Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework: (1) familiarization with data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and

naming themes, and (6) reporting. All journal entries were transcribed and checked multiple times to ensure accuracy and immerse the researcher in the data. The codes were then constructed inductively, collecting significant phrases and repeating patterns relating to vocabulary acquisition tactics, motivation, engagement with reading materials, perceived barriers, and emotional responses to reading.

Themes were then improved through iterative comparison and condensation to guarantee their consistency and relevance to the study questions. To increase reliability and trustworthiness, a second qualified rater performed peer-review coding. Inter-coder agreement was calculated, and coding differences were reviewed until a consensus was reached. Member-checking approaches were also used, in which selected participants confirmed interpreted interpretations in order to eliminate researcher bias and increase data accuracy. Representative student extracts were given in the findings to help support thematic interpretations.

The study included a number of verification techniques to guarantee the reliability of qualitative analysis.

*Dual Coding:* Thirty percent of the reflective diaries were examined by two separate coders.

*Inter-coder Reliability:* Strong agreement was indicated by the estimated Cohen's Kappa coefficient of  $\kappa = .82$ .

*Audit Trail:* Every coding choice, theme modification, and inconsistency was methodically recorded.

*Member Checking:* Ten participants examined the themes that were interpreted and verified that they appropriately reflected their experiences.

These steps increase the reliability and validity of the qualitative results.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 3.1. Quantitative Results

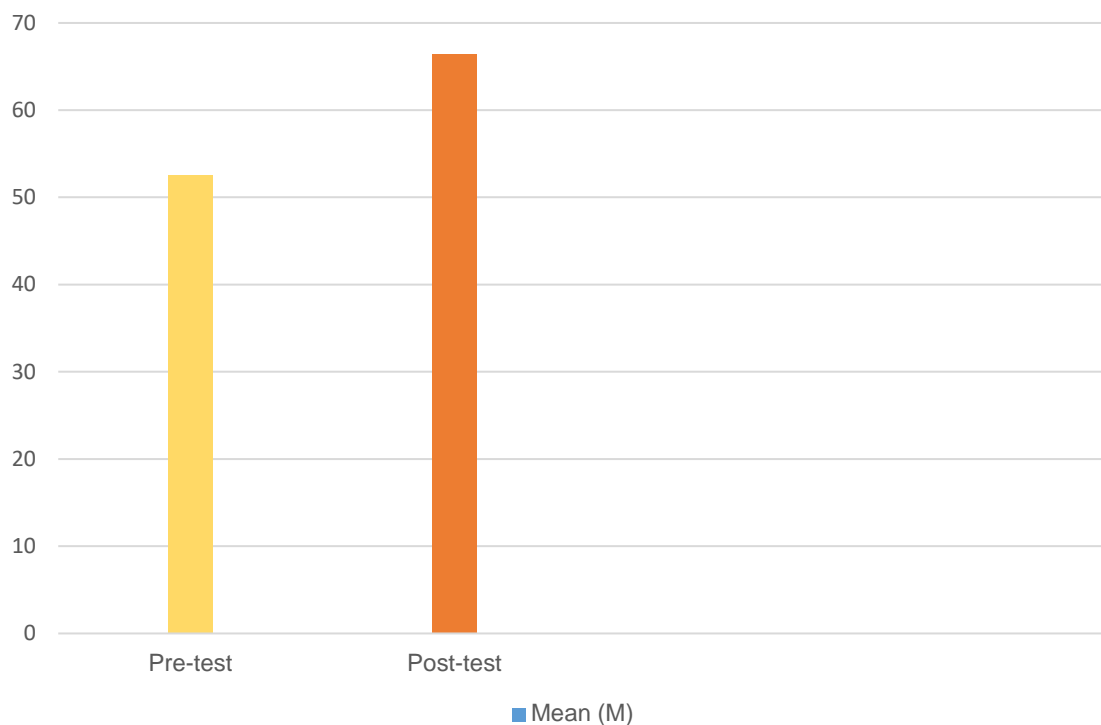
##### 3.1.1. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were computed for both the pre-test and post-test vocabulary scores in order to investigate the overall changes in students' vocabulary performance before and after the lengthy reading intervention. The distribution of scores for the 137 individuals is shown in Table 1, together with the mean, standard deviation, and score ranges. Table 1 summarizes the descriptive statistics of the pre-test and post-test vocabulary scores for the 137 EFL students.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics for Vocabulary Test Scores ( $N = 137$ )

Test	N	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Minimum	Maximum
Pre-test	137	52.68	8.94	35	72
Post-test	137	66.42	9.21	48	85

Figure 1 illustrates the substantial increase in vocabulary scores after the eight-week extensive reading program.



**Figure 1.** Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Vocabulary Scores

After the comprehensive reading program, students' vocabulary knowledge clearly improved, as Table 1 demonstrates. The participants' starting vocabulary level was moderate, as shown by the mean pre-test score of 52.68. The mean score rose significantly to 66.42 following the intervention, representing an average gain of 13.74 points. This significant rise implies that learners' vocabulary memory was positively impacted by the extended reading activities.

The standard deviation numbers (pre-test SD = 8.94, post-test SD = 9.21) stayed comparatively constant, suggesting that there was no change in the degree of student score variability. In other words, even while aggregate scores increased, the distribution of students' performance did not change between the two testing points.

Additionally, there was an upward

movement in both the lowest and maximum scores. The highest score went from 72 to 85, while the lowest score went from 35 to 48. This increase in the range of scores indicates that both lower- and higher-performing students benefited from the intervention, in addition to average learners. The improvement over the whole spectrum demonstrates how well the extensive reading approach supports vocabulary development for a range of skill levels.

Overall, the descriptive results show a significant improvement in students' vocabulary acquisition, offering preliminary quantitative evidence for the beneficial effects of intensive reading on EFL learners.

### **3.1.2. Paired-Sample t-Test**

Students' pre-test and post-test vocabulary scores were compared using a paired-sample t-

test to see if the observed gain in vocabulary performance was statistically significant rather than the result of chance. Table 2 displays the findings.

**Table 2.** Paired-Sample t-Test Results

Comparison	t	df	p	Cohen's d
Post-test – Pre-test	14.83	136	< .001	1.27

Table 2 demonstrates that there was a statistically significant difference in vocabulary scores between the pre-test and post-test. A highly significant improvement after the lengthy reading intervention was indicated by the paired-sample t-test, which produced a t-value of 14.83 with 136 degrees of freedom and an accompanying p-value of <.001. This demonstrates that the rise in vocabulary scores seen in the descriptive statistics was not coincidental but rather a significant shift related to the program.

According to standard standards, the effect size, as determined by Cohen's d, was 1.27, which is regarded as large. This effect size indicates that the comprehensive reading program had a practically significant as well as statistically significant impact on pupils' vocabulary retention. An effect size greater than 0.8 is typically considered strong in educational research, signifying that the intervention resulted in a significant change in students' performance.

When combined, the paired-sample t-test findings show that the comprehensive reading program significantly improved pupils' vocabulary. The intervention's practical usefulness is further supported by the substantial effect size, which implies that prolonged reading can be a useful instructional strategy for

enhancing vocabulary acquisition among EFL learners.

### 3.1.3 Questionnaire Results

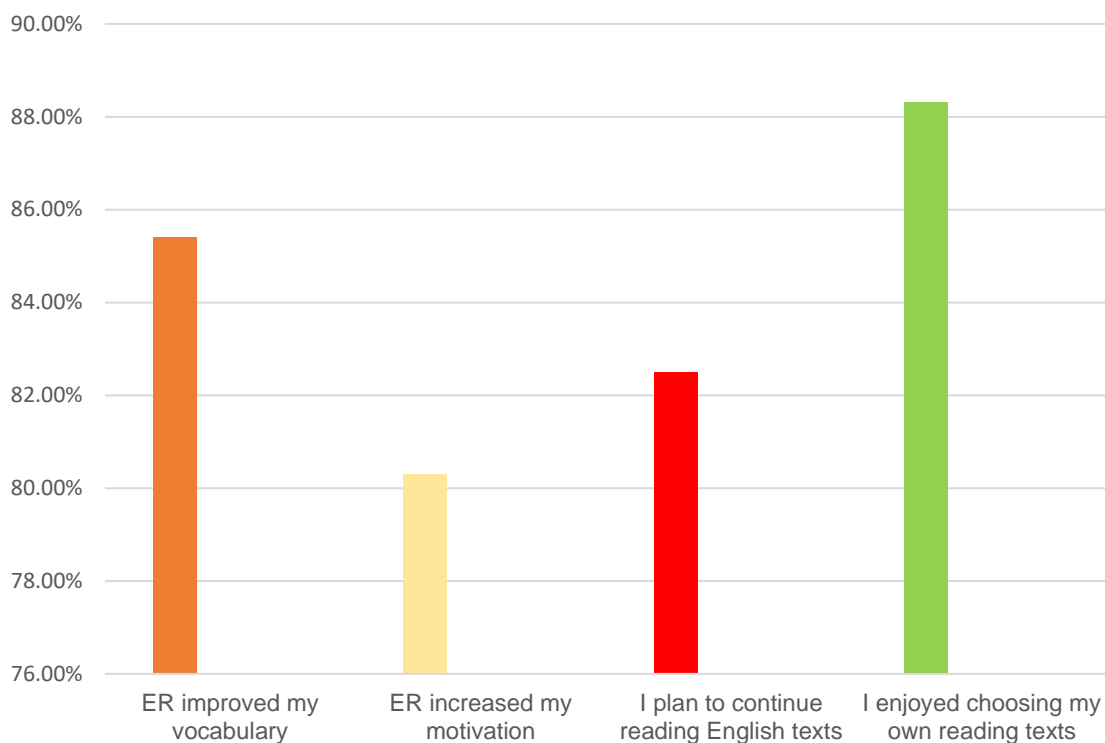
A post-intervention questionnaire was used to assess students' opinions of the extended reading program in addition to test results. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather information about learners' motivation, attitudes about learning vocabulary, and general experiences with extended reading. The distribution of answers to the four main claims is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Students' Perceptions of Extensive Reading (N = 137)

Statement	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
ER improved my vocabulary	85.4	11.7	2.9
ER increased my motivation	80.3	14.6	5.1
I plan to continue reading English texts	82.5	13.1	4.4
I enjoyed choosing my own reading texts	88.3	9.5	2.2

*Note.* Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

The figure illustrates students' highly positive perceptions toward autonomy, motivation, and vocabulary gains through extensive reading.



**Figure 2.** Students' Agreement Rates on Key Perception Statements

According to Table 3, most students had favourable opinions of the extensive reading intervention. Notably, only 2.9% of participants disagreed with the statement that reading a lot improved their vocabulary, whereas 85.4% of individuals agreed. This suggests that students' attitudes and performance outcomes are in line, as evidenced by the significant gains in vocabulary test scores.

In a similar vein, 80.3% of students said that reading a lot boosted their desire to study English. This high degree of agreement suggests that the program improved learners' affective qualities, such as interest and willingness to interact with English texts, in addition to improving vocabulary memory.

Following the survey, 82.5% of students said they intended to continue reading English-language books in the future, which was a very positive reaction. This implies that the

intervention might help foster long-term reading habits, which are crucial for language development over time.

Additionally, the statement about pupils' satisfaction of selecting their own reading resources had the greatest agreement rate (88.3%). This outcome emphasizes the value of autonomy, a fundamental component of motivation theory (such as Self-Determination Theory), in encouraging participation and advancing a more customized educational experience.

Overall, the results of the questionnaire show that students responded favorably in terms of motivation, engagement, and future learning aspirations in addition to benefiting cognitively from the lengthy reading program. In addition to the quantitative test results, these attitudinal findings provide a more thorough insight of the impact of the intervention.

### 3.2. Qualitative Results

Over the course of the eight-week extensive reading (ER) program, 137 participants' weekly reflective notebooks provided qualitative data. Recurring patterns pertaining to language acquisition, motivation, reading habits, and difficulties were found using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). There were four main themes that came out.

#### 3.2.1 Theme 1: Context-based vocabulary reinforcement

Students stated that rote memorization was less successful in helping them retain words than frequent exposure to the target language in relevant contexts. Numerous participants reported that repeated exposure to new terms in stories improved comprehension and long-term memory.

Examples include:

- "I remember new words better because I see them in stories repeatedly."
- "I can infer the meaning without constantly consulting the dictionary thanks to context." This supports Nation's (2015) claim that regular exposure to terms in relevant situations enhances vocabulary memory.

#### 3.2.2 Theme 2: Increased autonomy and motivation

Enhanced Independence and Inspiration

One of the main tenets of Self-Determination Theory is intrinsic motivation, which was promoted by letting students select their own reading materials (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Many participants emphasized that reading about subjects they were personally interested in made learning fun and promoted long-term engagement.

Examples include:

- "I enjoyed picking books that I like." Unlike homework, reading is enjoyable.
- "I read more because I could choose stories that I enjoyed."

#### 3.2.3 Theme 3: Enhanced confidence and reading habits

Students reported feeling more confident in their English skills and developing regular reading routines. Reflective journals revealed that participants grew more at ease using new vocabulary in writing or speaking exercises and inferring word meanings from context.

Examples include:

- "I now read at least 30 minutes every day."
- "I'm more confident because I can understand more words without looking them up."

These results corroborate other studies that shown the motivational advantages of ER (Takase, 2013; Jeon & Day, 2016).

#### 3.2.4 Theme 4: Difficulties with unknown words

Despite the advantages, some students reported having trouble at first with foreign vocabulary, especially when readings included a lot of new phrases at once. Cognitive strain resulted from this, particularly for learners with lower competence levels.

Examples include:

- "Sometimes I meet too many new words, and it is hard to follow the story."
- "I try to guess from context, but I get frustrated when I don't know words."

This result is in line with Teng's (2020) observation that vocabulary development in ER programs can be aided by scaffolding (such as glossaries or reading-while-listening).

### 3.3. Discussion

#### 3.3.1 Vocabulary Retention

Vocabulary scores significantly increased following the intervention, according to quantitative results ( $t(136) = 14.83$ ,  $p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 1.27$ ), suggesting a strong effect size. This result is consistent with earlier studies that demonstrate how repeated contextual exposure to target words through ER promotes incidental vocabulary learning (Waring & Takaki, 2003; Webb & Chang, 2015). The notable increases in scores imply that learners are better able to encode, store, and recall language when exposed to understandable and meaningful texts than when rote memorization is used exclusively (Nation, 2015; Yamashita, 2013).

These conclusions were supported by qualitative data. According to Nation's assertion that contextual repetition is essential for lexical retention, students often said that seeing new words in context helped them naturally recall vocabulary. To support lower-proficiency learners, scaffolding tactics like glossaries or reading-while-listening are necessary, as several participants experienced initial difficulty with foreign language (Nation, 2015; Yamashita, 2013).

#### 3.3.2. Motivation and self-determination theory

In line with Self-Determination Theory (SDT), the study's qualitative findings emphasize the significance of learner autonomy and motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2020). The approach promoted autonomy, a crucial component of intrinsic motivation, by letting students choose reading materials that matched their interests. Students expressed greater interest and satisfaction, indicating that self-directed reading promotes long-term involvement.

Additionally, students felt more competent, as seen by their increased confidence in their ability to guess word meanings and use new terminology in conversation. In language acquisition, this feeling of mastery can boost motivation and perseverance (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Additionally, cooperative exercises like exchanging reading reflections encouraged a feeling of connection, which strengthened students' intrinsic drive. These findings suggest that ER can promote both psychological needs satisfaction (autonomy, competence, relatedness) and cognitive growth (vocabulary retention).

#### 3.3.3 Reading habits and learner engagement

Reflective journals revealed that ER assisted students in establishing consistent reading routines and developing healthy reading habits. This finding is consistent with Takase's (2013) observation that ER improves regular reading behaviors and enhances exposure to language in relevant circumstances. The combination of organized ER time, text selection, and reflection tasks appears to be particularly helpful at maintaining engagement and motivation throughout the eight-week program.

## 4. CONCLUSION

### 4.1. Conclusion

This study looked at how an eight-week extensive reading (ER) program affected the vocabulary retention of 137 EFL students at Dong Nai Technology University who did not major in English. The results show that: Post-test scores increased ( $t(136) = 14.83$ ,  $p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 1.27$ ), indicating a considerable improvement in vocabulary retention.

Autonomy in choosing texts, perceived vocabulary proficiency, and a sense of community in group reflection exercises all

contributed to a rise in students' enthusiasm and engagement.

Students developed regular reading routines and techniques for deducing word meanings from context, strengthening their reading habits.

There were still difficulties, especially with handling new vocabulary, indicating the need for scaffolding and directed support.

According to Self-Determination Theory, ER has been demonstrated to be a successful teaching method that supports learners' psychological requirements as well as vocabulary learning by combining cognitive and motivational advantages (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2020).

#### 4.2. Limitations of the study

Despite the positive results, there are several limitations acknowledged.

First, because participants were chosen primarily on accessibility rather than randomization, convenience sampling may increase sampling bias. This limits how broadly the findings may be applied to other student demographics.

Second, the study gave students the freedom to choose their own reading materials, which could result in differences in the volume and degree of difficulty of the texts selected. Because of this self-selection bias, students who chose shorter or easier texts might have learned differently from those who chose more difficult readings.

Third, the lack of a control group in the study's design limited its capacity to establish causation. Furthermore, long-term impacts are uncertain because vocabulary retention was only assessed right after the training.

To overcome these limitations, future research should make use of randomized

sampling, standardized reading materials, comparable control groups, and delayed post-tests.

#### 4.3. Implications for EFL Teaching

The study's results have various instructional implications:

- Integrating ER into postsecondary EFL programs improves vocabulary retention and reading engagement.

- Material Selection: Providing graded readers and diverse topics enhances learners' autonomy and motivation.

- Reflection and Feedback: Journaling and guided reflection increase awareness of learning processes and terminology.

- Scaffolding Strategies: Optional glossaries, reading-while-listening, and peer discussion can assist learners to manage cognitive load when learning new terminology.

#### 4.4. Pedagogical Implications

Several practical recommendations for teaching EFL are put out in light of the findings:

- (1) Curriculum Integration: To give students ongoing exposure to real, graded texts, ER should be methodically integrated into university English courses.

- (2) Learner Autonomy: To boost intrinsic motivation and engagement, students should be given the freedom to select reading materials that correspond with their own interests.

- (3) Reflection and Journals: Vocabulary noticing, self-monitoring, and metacognitive awareness can all be strengthened by keeping a weekly reflective journal.

- (4) Scaffolding: Students can manage new terminology and lessen cognitive load by using support techniques like glossaries, reading-while-listening, or guided discussion groups.

(5) Assessment: By using vocabulary pre-tests and post-tests, learning progress can be tracked and instructional modifications can be made.

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# ẢNH HƯỞNG CỦA VIỆC ĐỌC HIỂU ĐỐI VỚI VIỆC GHI NHỚ TỪ MỚI CỦA SINH VIÊN KHÔNG CHUYÊN TIẾNG ANH TẠI TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC CÔNG NGHỆ ĐỒNG NAI

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## THÔNG TIN CHUNG

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## TỪ KHÓA

*Sinh viên EFL;*

*Đọc hiểu;*

*Động lực học ngôn ngữ;*

*Sinh viên đại học;*

*Ghi nhớ từ mới.*

## TÓM TẮT

Nghiên cứu này tìm hiểu tác động của việc đọc hiểu đến khả năng ghi nhớ từ vựng của sinh viên không chuyên tiếng Anh tại Đại học Công nghệ Đồng Nai. Có tổng cộng 137 sinh viên không chuyên tiếng Anh đã tham gia nghiên cứu này kéo dài tám tuần bao gồm sách đọc có chấm điểm và các tài nguyên đọc trực tuyến được lựa chọn. Thiết kế bài kiểm tra trước và sau đánh giá khả năng ghi nhớ từ vựng, trong khi phân đánh giá phản ánh và bảng câu hỏi sau khi có can thiệp thăm dò quan điểm của sinh viên đối với việc đọc hiểu. Dữ liệu định lượng được phân tích bằng kiểm định mẫu ghép đôi, trong khi các câu trả lời định tính được xem xét theo chủ đề. Các kết quả cho thấy khả năng ghi nhớ từ vựng của sinh viên được cải thiện đáng kể sau khi tiếp xúc với việc đọc hiểu kéo dài, điều này phù hợp với dữ liệu phân tích tổng hợp cho thấy việc đọc hiểu mở rộng thúc đẩy việc học từ vựng trong bối cảnh học ngôn ngữ (Saito và Webb, 2020; Yamashita, 2013). Hơn nữa, sinh viên nói rằng họ có động lực và sự tự tin hơn trong việc tiếp thu từ vựng mới thông qua việc đọc theo ngữ cảnh, điều này ủng hộ các nghiên cứu trước đây cho rằng sự lặp lại và ngữ cảnh rất quan trọng đối với khả năng ghi nhớ từ vựng lâu dài (Thongsan, 2023; Waring & Takaki, 2003). Những phát hiện này khẳng định tính hữu ích của việc đọc hiểu mở rộng như một phương pháp giảng dạy hiệu quả trong môi trường học ngôn ngữ, qua đó các hoạt động đọc hiểu mở rộng nên được đưa vào chương trình tiếng Anh ở các chương trình giáo dục đại học để cải thiện vốn từ vựng. Các hệ quả sư phạm và ý tưởng cho nghiên cứu sâu hơn sẽ được làm rõ hơn sau này.